

Consumer Research

Master

Summer Term 2020

--- last updated 02.03.2020 ---

Application			
	Application submission deadline 15.4.	1 pm via Moodle	https://moodle.europa-uni.de LS Marketing (Brunk & Eisend) (Bewerbungsverfahren)
Lecture			
Prof. Dr. Katja Brunk M.Sc. Anna Rößner	Thursday 23.4.** Friday 24.4.**	10 am - 4 pm 10 am - 4 pm	GD 04 GD 05
Project consultations*			
Prof. Dr. Katja Brunk M.Sc. Anna Rößner	Monday 11.5.*	10 am – 3 pm	tba
Prof. Dr. Katja Brunk M.Sc. Anna Rößner	Monday 25.5*	10 am – 3 pm	tba
Examination			
Group paper submission	Monday 15.6.	1 pm via Moodle	
Group project presentations	Thursday 18.6.** Friday 19.6.**	10 am – 6 pm 10 am – 4 pm	HG 217 HG 217

* One-to-one consultations by appointment

** Attendance compulsory

Important information

This course contains a group project in teams of two students (no other team sizes admissible). It is possible to self-select your team partner. For students without a partner, teams will be determined by drawing lots.

Relevance

Today we live in a consumer society, a society in which the buying and selling of goods and services is the most important social and economic activity. For any commercial business, the end consumer of its goods and/or services is a vital stakeholder. Understanding consumer behavior is an important cornerstone of effective marketing and, as a consequence, an essential strategic tool for overall business success.

Learning how consumers think, feel, perceive and behave is also relevant from a societal perspective. Governments' control over corporations and businesses is steadily diminishing. On the one hand, this can be attributed to increasing corporate influence in politics, e.g. through lobbying activities and party funding. On the other hand, this is a result of ever increasing globalizing business activities and thus complex international supply chains which complicates holding companies accountable. It has therefore become the consumers' role and responsibility to function as a social and environmental control of business. Thus, bringing about societal and environmental change related to consumption (e.g. reducing carbon emission or plastic waste; banning unethical corporate practices such as slave labor) strongly hinges upon mobilizing and convincing consumers to make ethically motivated purchase decisions and therefore 'vote' with their consumption choices, e.g. by means of boycotts and buycotts or changing habitual practices.

Understanding and influencing consumer behavior at the individual, social and cultural level is therefore a vital challenge of our time and of interest to businesses, governmental organizations, NGOs and overall society alike.

Objective

This course aims to provide an introduction to the topic of consumer research for students at the Master level.

Participants will:

- 1) acquire an overview of the most commonly applied methods of qualitative and quantitative consumer research
- 2) understand each method's strengths and weaknesses
- 3) learn to apply one of these methods by engaging in a small research project broadly related to ethical consumption in *teams of two students*. The exact research topic will be announced on day two of the seminar.

For students unfamiliar with empirical data collection, this course can serve as a suitable introduction and practice exercise for writing a Master thesis.

Course Format

Learning objectives shall be achieved through a mixture of class meetings (lecture style), individual team consultations with the lecturers, as well as independent team work.

Overview of content (preliminary)

Thursday 23.4.

General introduction

- Importance of consumer research
- Introduction to philosophy of science and paradigmatic assumptions of qualitative vs. quantitative research (epistemology and ontology)
- Key differences between qualitative and quantitative research

Qualitative research

- Setting up qualitative research
- Analytical procedures (coding, interpretation, data triangulation)

Specific qualitative data collection methods

- Interviews
- Observation
- Ethnography and digital ethnography (netnography)
- Projective techniques, e.g. collages

Friday 24.4.

Specific qualitative methods (ctd)

- Focus groups

Quantitative research

- Setting up quantitative research (design considerations, measurement, questionnaire design)
- (Quantitative) observation method (content analysis)
- Survey research
- Experimental research (lab and field experiments)

Research Ethics

Introduction to the group project

- The research topic
- Logistics: selection of teams and allocation of data collection methods for each team

Literature

The lecture part of the seminar will be oriented along the following sources:

Qualitative research

- *Textbooks:*
 - Hackley, C. (2019). *Qualitative Research in Marketing and Management, Doing Interpretive Research Projects*, 2nd edition, Routledge (available in the library).
 - Belk, R. (2006). *Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing*, Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar.
- *Interviews:* Arsel, Zeynep (2017). Asking questions with reflexive focus: A tutorial on designing and conducting interviews. *Journal of Consumer Research*. 44(4), 939-948.
- *Netnography/online ethnography:*
 - Heinonen, K., & Medberg, G. (2018). Netnography as a tool for understanding customers: Implications for service research and practice. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 32 (6), 657–679.
 - Langer, R., & Beckman, S. C. (2005). Sensitive research topics: Netnography revisited. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 8(2), 189–203.
 - Kozinets, R. V. (2010). Netnography 2.0. In R. Belk (Ed.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing* (pp. 129-142), Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar.
- *Projective methods/collage technique:*
 - Herz, M., & Brunk, K. H. (2017). Conceptual advances in consumers' semantic and episodic brand memories: A mixed methods exploration. *Psychology & Marketing*, 34(1), 70-91.
 - Rook, D. W. (2006). Let's pretend: Projective methods re-considered. In R. Belk (Ed.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing* (pp. 143–155), Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar.
 - Boddy, C. (2005). Projective techniques in market research: valueless subjectivity or insightful reality? A look at the evidence for the usefulness, reliability and validity of projective techniques in market research. *International Journal of Market Research*, 47(3), 239-254.
- *Focus groups:*
 - [Chapter 16] In Hoyle et al. (2002), *Research Methods in Social Relations*, 7th edition, Wadsworth Publishing.
 - Caterall, M., & MacLaren, P. (2006). Focus groups in marketing. In R. Belk (Ed.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing* (pp. 255-267), Cheltenham, Northampton: Edward Elgar.
- General example for writing up qualitative research: Hartmann, Benjamin J., and Katja H. Brunk. "Nostalgia marketing and (re-) enchantment." *International Journal of Research in Marketing* 36.4 (2019): 669-686.

Quantitative research

- De Vaus, D. (2001), *Research Design in Social Research*, Sage.
- Hoyle, R., Harris, M., Judd, C. (2002), *Research Methods in Social Relations*, 7th edition, Wadsworth Publishing.
- Groves, R., Fowler, F., Couper, M., Lepkowski, J., Singer, E., Tourangeau, R. (2009), *Survey Methodology*, 2nd edition, Wiley.
- Shadish, W., Cook, T., Campbell, D. (2002), *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*, Houghton Mifflin.
- Hair, J., Black, B., Babin, B., Anderson, R. (2013), *Multivariate Data Analysis*, International Edition, 7th edition, Pearson.

Prerequisites

- The course will be taught and evaluated in English, i.e. the lectures, consultations, seminar paper and final presentations will be in English. The collection of the data for research project may also take place in German, in which case the data needs to be translated for use in the seminar paper and final presentations. No other languages for data collection are admissible.
- A basic understanding of statistical methods and quantitative data analysis is assumed (e.g. a previously taken Quantitative Methods course or equivalent knowledge).
- Successful completion of the/a Consumer Behavior course is a benefit, but not a requirement.
- The number of students that can participate in this seminar is limited. If the number of applicants exceeds the spaces available, students will be selected based on their motivation letter and their grades in previous marketing classes.
- Attending the lecture days (23.+24.4.) and presentations (18.+19.6.) is compulsory. **No exceptions will be made and absence will lead to failing the course.**
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Application Procedure

In order to apply, please fill in the application form adding a record of your grades (“Notenausdruck” for bachelor and master) and answering the following questions (**maximum one page** length in total)

- Why are you interested in this course?
- Describe an instance where you were surprised about your own consumption behavior or acted against your convictions (this can be anything, e.g. when you bought something you didn't intend to buy or didn't buy something you intended to purchase etc.) and reflect on your decision and why you think it turned out the unexpected way it did.

We accept records in German or English. If you have a different grading system at your home university, please make sure to convert your grades to the German grading system.

Examination

In order to receive 6 ECTS course credits, you have to attend both lectures (23.4. and 24.4.), hand in your seminar paper in accordance with the deadline (Monday 15.6.2020 at 1 pm via Moodle) as well as present your project. No alternative examination procedures will be offered. No exceptions will be made and late submissions will not be accepted and evaluated with a 5.0. Since this is a team project, you need to clearly indicate which part of the seminar paper was authored by each team member. If you fail to comply with this request, both team members will fail the course in the case of plagiarism.

The seminar paper (70%) and the project presentation (30%) will make up the final grade.

Expectations for the seminar paper:

Please carefully read the thesis manual provided on the website of the chair of marketing II (https://www.wiwi.europa-uni.de/en/lehrstuhl/mm/marketing-II/schriftl_-Arbeiten/index.html). General guidelines for writing a seminar thesis will apply and can be found in the thesis manual. However, please note that this will be an empirical, not just a theoretical, seminar paper. Thus, any additional requirements above and beyond a theoretical thesis will be provided at the beginning of the seminar.

Slides

Slides from the lectures will be uploaded on Moodle (<https://moodle.europa-uni.de>).

Contacts

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