



Themenvorschläge Masterarbeiten im Sommersemester 2025

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MA01. More Human than Bot? How Anthropomorphism and Emotion shape Chatbot Interactions

With the increasing prevalence of chatbots in various industries, understanding their psychological effects on users is crucial. Anthropomorphism—the attribution of human-like characteristics to non-human entities—plays an important role in how users perceive and interact with chatbots. Additionally, chatbots' ability to express emotions could strengthen or harm this, depending on the anthropomorphism condition. This master thesis aims to explore how chatbot anthropomorphism and the expression of emotions influence user responses through a dual process model (e.g., Kahneman 2011), differentiating between cognitive and emotional processing mechanisms. The primary objectives of this thesis are, first, to investigate the independent and interactive effects of chatbot anthropomorphism and emotional expression on user perceptions through an experimental approach. Furthermore, the thesis aims to analyze user responses on both cognitive and emotional levels using a dual-process model and to derive insights that inform the design and implementation of more effective and engaging chatbot interactions.

- Blut, Markus, Cheng Wang, Nancy V. Wunderlich und Christian Brock (2021), "Understanding anthropomorphism in service provision: a meta-analysis of physical robots, chatbots, and other AI," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (49), 632–658. DOI: 10.1007/s11747-020-00762-y.
- Chandra, Shalini; Shirish, Anuragini und Srivastava, Shirish C. (2022): To Be or Not to Be ...Human? Theorizing the Role of Human-Like Competencies in Conversational Artificial Intelligence Agents. In: *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 39:4, 969-1005, DOI: 10.1080/07421222.2022.2127441
- Epley, Nicholas; Waytz, Nicolas und Cacioppo, John T. (2007), "On seeing human: a three-factor theory of anthropomorphism," In: *Psychological Review*, 4 (114), 864–886. DOI: 10.1037/0033-295X.114.4.864.



- Han, Elizabeth; Yin, Dezhi und Zhang, Han (2023): Bots with Feelings: Should AI Agents Express Positive Emotion in Customer Service? In: *Information Systems Research*, 34(3):1296-1311. DOI: 10.1287/isre.2022.1179
- Kirk, Roger E. (2013). *Experimental design: Procedures for the behavioral sciences* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.



MA02. The Impact of Chatbot Anthropomorphism on Sustainable and Prosocial Consumer Behavior

As chatbots become increasingly integrated into digital interactions, understanding their influence on consumer behavior is essential. Anthropomorphism—the tendency to attribute human-like characteristics to non-human entities—has been shown to affect trust, engagement, and decision-making in human-chatbot interactions. While research has explored anthropomorphism in various contexts, its impact on sustainable and prosocial consumer behavior remains underexplored. This master thesis aims to examine the effects of chatbot anthropomorphism on sustainable and prosocial consumption behavior through an experimental approach. Specifically, the study should explore how different levels of anthropomorphism in chatbots influence e.g., consumers' willingness to engage in sustainable and prosocial actions, such as choosing eco-friendly products or donating to charities. Anthropomorphism will be manipulated primarily through visual elements (e.g., human-like avatar representation) and/or potentially through linguistic style (e.g., human-like conversational tone).

- Blut, Markus, Cheng Wang, Nancy V. Wunderlich und Christian Brock (2021), "Understanding anthropomorphism in service provision: a meta-analysis of physical robots, chatbots, and other AI," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (49), 632–658. DOI: 10.1007/s11747-020-00762-y.
- Epley, Nicholas; Waytz, Nicolas und Cacioppo, John T. (2007), "On seeing human: a three-factor theory of anthropomorphism," In: *Psychological Review*, 4 (114), 864–886. DOI: 10.1037/0033-295X.114.4.864.
- Kirk, Roger E. (2013). *Experimental design: Procedures for the behavioral sciences* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Schanke, Scott; Burtch, Gordon und Ray, Gautarm (2021), "Estimating the Impact of "Humanizing" Customer Service Chatbots" In: *Information Systems Research*, 32(3), 736-751. DOI: 10.1287/isre.2021.1015.
- Schindler, David; Maiberger, Tobias; Koschate-Fischer, Nicole und Hoyer, Wayne D. (2024), „How speaking versus writing to conversational agents shapes consumers' choice and choice satisfaction" In: *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 52, 634-652. DOI: 10.1007/s11747-023-00987-7.



MA03. The Influence of Parasocial Relationships on the Effectiveness of Virtual Influencers

In a world where social media is increasingly reshaping the way we perceive brands, a new dimension of influencer marketing is emerging: virtual influencers. These computer-generated avatars, which appear on social networks much like real people, have the potential to foster a profound connection with their followers – one that extends far beyond mere digital interaction. The aim of this master's thesis is to examine the influence of parasocial relationships on the effectiveness of virtual influencers. To this end, an experimental research approach will be adopted to establish causality between specific characteristics of virtual influencers, the intensity of parasocial relationships, and their impact on influencer effectiveness. As part of the experiment, (1) various characteristics of virtual influencers could be systematically manipulated to investigate their effect on the formation of parasocial relationships. Furthermore, (2) the extent to which these relationships influence the effectiveness of virtual influencers could be analyzed, and (3) whether parasocial relationships act as a mediator between the influencers' characteristics and their effectiveness.

- Dabiran, Ehsan, Samira Farivar, Fang Wang, und Gerald Grant (2024), "Virtually human: anthropomorphism in virtual influencer marketing," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 79, 103797.
- Pereira, Manuel Joaquim De Sousa, António Cardoso, Ana Canavarro, Jorge Figueiredo, und Jorge Esparteiro Garcia (2023), "Digital Influencers' Attributes and Perceived Characterizations and Their Impact on Purchase Intentions," *Sustainability*, 15 (17), 12750.
- Sun, Luping und Yanfei Tang (2024), "Avatar effect of AI-enabled virtual streamers on consumer purchase intention in e-commerce livestreaming," *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 23 (6), 2999–3010.
- Zhou, Qi, Bin Li, Huajun Li, und Yueqiu Lei (2024), "Mere copycat? The effects of human versus human-like virtual influencers on brand endorsement effectiveness: A moderated serial-mediation model," *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 76, 103610.



MA04. Technology Acceptance along the Customer Journey – A Customer Experience view on Digital Channel Adoption

Due to the ongoing digitization, companies are increasingly using digital touchpoints along the customer journey to sell their products or interact with their customers. Since it is of utmost interest, that customers accept and use the provided technologies, companies try to improve the customer experience for these digital touchpoints. A common concept to understand drivers and factors of technology acceptance is the technology acceptance model (TAM). The aim of this master thesis is therefore, to first analyze drivers and obstacles of digital channel adoption along the customer journey and second, based on consumer interviews, develop a TAM that integrates a customer experience perspective. The following research questions can be answered: (1) What drives the acceptance of digital channels, like apps and retail platforms, from a customer perspective? (2) Are there any differences of these drivers along the customer journey? (3) What role does the customer experience play in the technology acceptance (model)?

- Davis, Fred D. (1989), "Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and User Acceptance of Information Technology," *MIS Quarterly*, 13 (3), 319.
- De Keyser, Arne, Katrien Verleye, Katherine N. Lemon, Timothy L. Keiningham, und Philipp Klaus (2020), "Moving the Customer Experience Field Forward: Introducing the Touchpoints, Context, Qualities (TCQ) Nomenclature," *Journal of Service Research*, 23 (4), 433–55.
- Shen, George Chung-Chi (2015), "Users' adoption of mobile applications: Product type and message framing's moderating effect," *Journal of Business Research*, 68 (11), 2317–21.



MA05. A systematic literature review on the measurement of customer experiences

Despite the high relevance of customer experience (CX) for research and business practice, there is currently no universal measurement tool that captures the multidimensionality of CX. While classic survey-based approaches are widely used as a measurement tool, text-based methods are becoming increasingly important. The aim of this master's thesis is to conduct a systematic literature review in order to obtain a comprehensive overview of existing approaches, scales and methods for measuring CX. In addition to the procedure, the different methods should also be critically analyzed with a view to their definitions and evaluated with regard to their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, research gaps are to be identified and future research questions derived.

- Gahler, Markus, Jan F. Klein, und Michael Paul (2023), "Customer Experience: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Application in Omnichannel Environments," *Journal of Service Research*, 26 (2), 191–211.
- Kuppelwieser, Volker G. und Phil Klaus (2021), "Measuring customer experience quality: The EXQ scale revisited," *Journal of Business Research*, 126, 624–33.
- Lemon, Katherine N. und Peter C. Verhoef (2016), "Understanding Customer Experience Throughout the Customer Journey," *Journal of Marketing*, 80 (6), 69–96.
- Villarroel Ordenes, Francisco, Babis Theodoulidis, Jamie Burton, Thorsten Gruber, und Mohamed Zaki (2014), "Analyzing Customer Experience Feedback Using Text Mining: A Linguistics-Based Approach," *Journal of Service Research*, 17 (3), 278–95.



Masterarbeiten in Praxiskooperation

MA06. Entwicklung einer datengetriebenen Social-Media Kommunikationsstrategie für ein Start-Up im Wassersport

Ziel: Im Rahmen dieser Masterarbeit soll in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Lehrstuhl für Marketing und dem Institut für Flugzeugbau der Universität Stuttgart eine effektive Social-Media-Kommunikation zur Ansprache potenzieller Kunden im Wassersportsegment entwickelt werden. Das Hauptaugenmerk liegt dabei auf einem innovativen Tragflügelbootkonzept, das 2023 auf den Markt gebracht werden soll. Vor der Markteinführung des Bootes soll eine passende Social-Media-Kommunikationsstrategie entwickelt werden, um die Bekanntheit und Reichweite des Projekts zu erhöhen.

Inhalt/Methode: Im Rahmen dieser Arbeit sollen zunächst verschiedene Social-Media-Plattformen hinsichtlich ihrer Eignung für das Bootkonzept analysiert und geprüft werden. Auf Basis dieser Analyse soll dann eine datengetriebene Social-Media-Kommunikationsstrategie entwickelt werden, die darauf abzielt, Aufmerksamkeit, Reichweite und Bekanntheit des Start-Ups und seines innovativen Bootkonzepts zu generieren und langfristig sicherzustellen. Dabei können bereits vorhandene Daten zu Wettbewerbern, potenziellen Kunden und bestehenden Preissegmenten genutzt werden, um eine effektive Kommunikationsstrategie zu entwickeln.

Die Betreuung der Arbeit wird einerseits durch den Lehrstuhl für Marketing (Theorie und Anwendung der Analyse), andererseits durch das Institut für Flugzeugbau am Standort Stuttgart-Vaihingen (Umsetzung und technischer Hintergrund des Projekts) gewährleistet.

Die Abschlussarbeit bietet eine hervorragende Möglichkeit, theoretisches Wissen in der Praxis anzuwenden und wertvolle Erfahrungen in der Entwicklung von Marketingkonzepten zu sammeln.

Voraussetzung: Motivation und Spaß am Projekt; die Aufgabe lässt sich an die Fähigkeiten der Kandidatin/des Kandidaten anpassen!

Wenden Sie sich bei konkreten Fragen zum Projekt gerne an Hrn. Dr. Peter Schnauffer (**Mobil:** 0163 76 40 826, **Mail:** schnauffer@IFB.Uni-Stuttgart.de). Die Betreuung dieser praxisorientierten Abschlussarbeit kann jederzeit und unabhängig von den Bewerbungsfristen der Abt. VI erfolgen.

Literatur zum Einstieg:

- Alves, Helena, Christina Fernandes and Mário Raposo (2016), „Social Media Marketing: A Literature Review and Implications“, *Psychology & Marketing*, 33(12), 1029- 1038.
- Floreddu, Paola B. and Cabiddu, Francesca (2016), „Social Media communication strategies“, *Journal of Services Marketing*, 30(5), 490-503.



- Li, Fangfang; Jorma Larimo, and Leonidas C. Leonidou(2021), „Social media marketing strategy: definition, conceptualization, taxonomy, validation, and future agenda“ , *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49, 51-70.
- Reto, Felix; Philipp A. Rauschnabel and Chris Minsch (2017), „Elements of strategic social media marketing: A holistic framework“ , *Journal of Business Research*, 70, 118- 126.



MA07. Kommunikationsstrategie für ein innovatives Projekt im Wassersport: Best-Practice-Analyse und Empfehlungen

Ziel: Im Rahmen dieser Masterarbeit soll in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Lehrstuhl für Marketing und dem Institut für Flugzeugbau der Universität Stuttgart eine effektive Kommunikationsstrategie zur Ansprache potenzieller Kunden im Wassersportsegment entwickelt werden. Das Hauptziel der Abschlussarbeit ist, ein Benchmarking wettbewerbsbezogener Kommunikationsmaßnahmen im Wassersportsegment durchzuführen und "Best-Practice-Beispiele" für die Entwicklung einer geeigneten Kommunikationsstrategie zur Markteinführung des Tragflügelbootes (geplant: 2023) zu identifizieren. Basierend auf den gewonnenen Erkenntnissen soll eine geeignete Kommunikationsstrategie abgeleitet werden.

Inhalt/Methode: Aufbauend auf bereits durchgeführten Analysen sollen Kommunikationskonzepte anderer innovativer Anbieter im Wassersport identifiziert, analysiert und bewertet werden. Schließlich sollen die gewonnenen Informationen genutzt werden, um die passende Kommunikationsstrategie für das Projekt im Wassersportbereich zu entwickeln.

Die Abschlussarbeit bietet eine hervorragende Möglichkeit, theoretisches Wissen in der Praxis anzuwenden und wertvolle Erfahrungen in der Entwicklung von Marketingkonzepten zu sammeln.

Voraussetzung: Motivation und Spaß am Projekt; die Aufgabe lässt sich an die Fähigkeiten der Kandidatin/des Kandidaten anpassen!

Wenden Sie sich bei konkreten Fragen zum Projekt gerne an Hrn. Dr. Peter Schnauffer (**Mobil:** 0163 76 40 826, **Mail:** schnauffer@IFB.Uni-Stuttgart.de). Die Betreuung dieser praxisorientierten Abschlussarbeit kann jederzeit und unabhängig von den Bewerbungsfristen der Abt. VI erfolgen.

Literatur zum Einstieg:

- Floreddu, Paola B. and Cabiddu, Francesca (2016), „Social Media communication strategies“, *Journal of Services Marketing*, 30(5), 490-503.
- Li, Fangfang; Jorma Larimo and Leonidas C. Leonidou(2021), „Social media marketing strategy: definition, conceptualization, taxonomy, validation, and future agenda“, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 49, 51-70.
- Mohr, Jakki and John R. Nevin (1990), „Communication Strategies in Marketing Channels. A Theoretical Perspective“, *Journal of Marketing*, 54(4), 36-51.
- Porter, Michael. E. (1997), „Competitive Strategy“, *Measuring Business Excellence*, 1(2), 12.17.