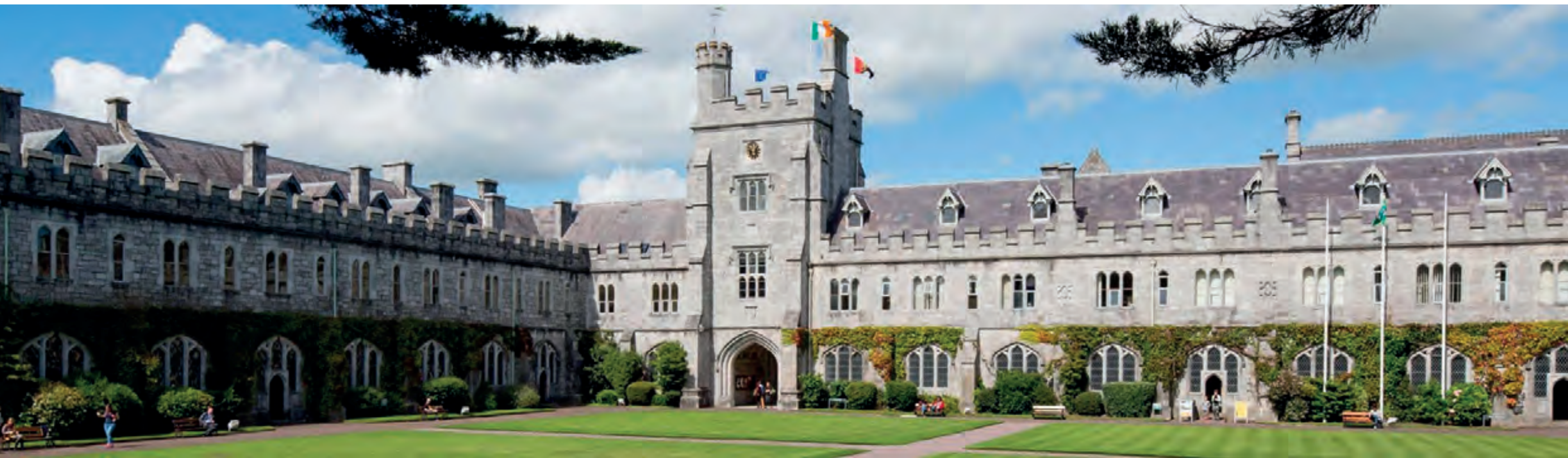
Proceedings of the 57th Academy of Marketing Conference

Cork 2025

Saints and Scholars



University College Cork
8-10 July 2025

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Contents

Welcome from the Conference Chairs

It is a great source of pleasure to welcome the Academy of Marketing Conference to Cork University Business School at University College Cork, Ireland.

University College Cork has a long and rich business and marketing history which has bolstered the establishment of the new Cork University Business School in 2015. Today, it is proudly accredited by both AACSB International and AMBA. Established in 1845 our beautiful university opened its gates to just 115 students in 1849, UCC now accommodates a student population of over 26,000 students and 3,500 staff. With a history of independent thinking spanning over 180 years, UCC is proud to be ranked in the top 2% of universities worldwide. One of our most renowned scholars, Professor George Boole made pivotal advances in mathematics, logic, and probability, providing the essential groundwork for modern mathematics, microelectronic engineering and computer science. His influence is such that he has been called the Father of the Digital Age. In 2015 UCC marked the bicentennial of his birth.

Set against the rich cultural and intellectual backdrop of one of Ireland's most historic universities, this year's conference embraces the theme **"Saints and Scholars"** — a tribute to the country's storied past as a beacon of both spiritual reflection and academic excellence. Ireland has long been known as the land of saints and scholars, a phrase that captures the deep intertwining of cultural identity, moral inquiry, and intellectual pursuit. At this year's gathering, we invite our global community of marketing scholars to explore the intersections of heritage and innovation, values and value creation, and tradition and transformation in marketing research and practice. In a time when marketers must navigate complex cultural, ethical, and technological landscapes, the insights drawn from our theme feel especially timely.

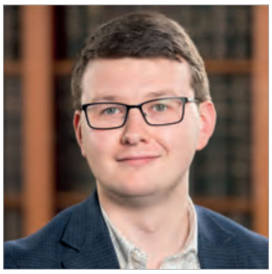
We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to the many individuals who have made this conference possible: our track chairs, reviewers, presenters, and discussants; the dedicated staff and volunteers at UCC; and the Executive Committee of the Academy of Marketing for their continued support and vision. Whether you are joining us for scholarly exchange, new collaborations, or simply to enjoy the hospitality and history of Cork, we hope this conference inspires you — intellectually and personally — to continue shaping the future of marketing research.

Welcome to Cork. Welcome to AM25.

Dave, Seán and Mary,

Conference Co-Chairs

Dr Dave Alton



Dr Seán Tanner

Professor Mary McCarthy

UCC University College Cork, Ireland Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

CORK UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

Cork University Business School

Shaping Leaders for a Sustainable Future

Cork University Business School (CUBS) is Ireland's largest business school, we produce over 1,000 graduates annually, many of whom go on to reach the highest echelons of organisations across the world and create real world impact. Adopting a research led and practice informed approach, CUBS offers a high-quality student learning environment that delivers talent pipelines to transform the future of organisations regionally, nationally and internationally.

With a proud heritage dating back over a century, business education in University College Cork (UCC) is undergoing a rebirth since our unprecedented investment in 16 new professors to launch the business school in 2015 which is AACSB and AMBA accredited. Leading on our theme "*Shaping leaders for a sustainable future*", CUBS offers a fresh and bold ambition to be globally recognised for attracting, nurturing and channelling diverse talent to deliver sustainable, productive organisations which contribute positively to societal health and well-being.

Under the auspices of Securing Our Future: UCC Strategic Plan 2023–2028, our focus is on positively shaping the world in which we live to serve future generations and transform the future of business and society. This stems from the values and skills we seek to impart in our students and the innovative research undertaken. With UCC ranked in the top 2% of universities, as reflected in our highly ambitious staff and students, CUBS seeks to take its place among the leading business schools of the world. In sum, we seek to make a positive difference in individuals, business and society.

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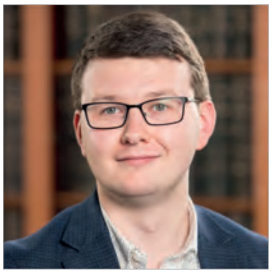

Dr Seán Tanner

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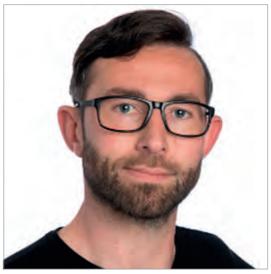
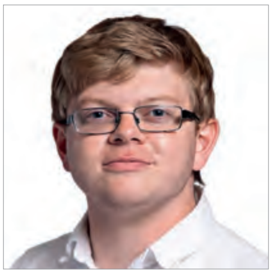
Doctoral Colloquium Co-Chairs



Dr Stephen O’Sullivan



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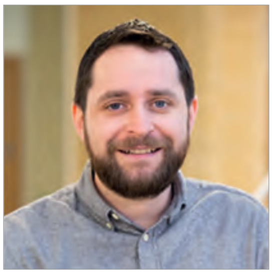

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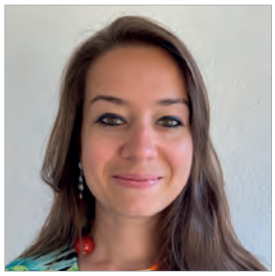

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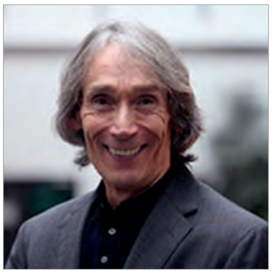
ACADEMY OF MARKETING

Keynote Speakers

Prof. Diane Martin

Diane M. Martin is an Established Professor of Marketing at the University of Galway. She has published in numerous top journals and is the co-author of the book *Sustainable Marketing*. Her award-winning research employs ethnographic methods in relationships between consumers, communities and culture. Her research interests are situated at the confluence of stakeholders influence on business and business influence on stakeholders where she hopes to make an impact toward a more sustainable future. Professor Martin is an American Leadership Forum Senior Fellow.



Prof. Michael Saren

Michael Saren is a Professor of Marketing in Birmingham Business School where he is involved in the responsible and critical marketing research group in the department of marketing. He holds a Ph.D. in the management of innovation from the University of Bath and his research interests are in the development of marketing theory, particularly regarding marketing knowledge, technology, and sustainability. His "somewhat idiosyncratic" textbook *Marketing Graffiti* (Routledge 2006/2018) has been translated into six languages including Mandarin and Russian. He was a founding editor in 1999 of the journal *Marketing Theory* (Sage Publications) and is an Honorary Fellow and lifetime member of the UK Academy of Marketing.

Patrick Kennedy (Global Head of Scaled Measurement at Pinterest)

Patrick is currently Global Head of Scaled Measurement at Pinterest, leading a team of Measurement experts to deliver thought leadership, product & tooling innovation, and measurement education. He and his team focus on Marketing Mix Modelling, Attribution, and Incrementality solutions as part of a measurement system of truth, to support measurement accuracy and strategy development. He's been with Pinterest for nearly three years and has worked directly with some of Europe's biggest brands, e.g. Nike, On Running, H&M, and Inditex. Prior to Pinterest, Patrick worked as a Marketing Science Partner at Meta, working with advertisers across France, Belgium, Middle East, and Africa to determine their marketing effectiveness. Before this, he was a Research Director at Dunnhumby, leading the Shopper Thoughts research solution. He has previously worked with Amarach Research, conducting qualitative and quantitative research among Irish consumers for some of Ireland's largest brands.

Special Sessions

Harnessing the Power of Large Language Models in Higher Education: A Hands-on Workshop

Convenor: Dr Alan Shaw (Founder of Strategic Planet, Chair of X-PERT Heath and Part-Time Senior Lecturer at Leeds Beckett University)

Overview: This interactive 90-minute workshop explores how Large Language Models (LLMs) can be effectively integrated into teaching, learning, and assessment practices in higher education. Aimed at educators, the session focuses on two practical applications: creating module-specific chatbots and using LLMs to support assignment marking. Participants will gain hands-on experience building chatbots using tools such as OpenAI GPTs, Google Gems, Anthropic's Claude, and NotebookLM. The session will also demonstrate how LLMs can assist with marking through prompt engineering, rubric alignment, and ethical human-AI collaboration. The workshop begins with a brief overview of LLMs and their implications for academia, followed by two interactive segments, and concludes with an open Q&A. Attendees should bring their own laptops; WiFi access is required. By the end, participants will have developed practical skills, gained insights into LLM-supported assessment, and explored strategies to design assignments that foster originality in an AI-enabled academic landscape.

Do Stakeholders Trust Non-Profits to Address Change?

Convenors: Dr Sarah-Louise Mitchell (Oxford Brookes University) and Dr. Fran Hyde (University of Suffolk)

Overview: The purpose of non-profit brands is to achieve societal impact for people and/or the planet: to effect change. To succeed they need strong stakeholder relationships such as with donors (to fund services), volunteers and staff (to deliver services) and trustees (for effective governance). However, the dynamic nature of these stakeholder relationships is changing: the role of the state as service funder, competition with private providers and a move towards social enterprises, competition with for-profit cause related marketing, external pressure for charity-charity collaboration to find solutions, as well as sector disruption due to direct cause giving, bypassing nonprofit brands all together. The question is whether these stakeholders trust non-profit brands to effect change.

Session Format: The session is planned in three parts. First, context setting with an introduction to the topic and the connected Journal of Marketing Management Special Issue. Second, a panel discussion from participants submitting a concise 'thought piece', including Dr. Matthew Higgins (Open University), Prof. Roger Bennett (Kingston), Prof. Chris Chapleo (Bournemouth). Third, audience and panelist involvement in a hands-on nonprofit stakeholder mapping exercise to develop thinking and share different perspectives on brand trust in context. This format builds on learning from the successful SDG workshop at AOM2024 (Lawson et al.) which stimulated strong audience engagement.

Unstructured Data, Real-World Insights: Methods and Applications for Social Change

Session Convenor: Seongsoo (Simon) Jang (Cardiff University)

Overview: This session explores advanced methods for analysing unstructured data and their applications in tackling societal challenges such as prosocial behaviour. It comprises three sub-sessions:

BERTopic & generative AI in unstructured data analysis – Ahmed ELKattan (University of Exeter)

A comparative overview of traditional models like LDA versus modern approaches such as BERTopic, focusing on topic coherence, flexibility, and interpretability. The session also explores clustering, embeddings, topic seeding, and data processing techniques. It highlights how generative AI enhances thematic mapping and labelling, addressing issues like noise, sparsity, and ambiguity.

Telemarketing call data analysis – Seongsoo (Simon) Jang (Cardiff University)

A case study from a KTP project with Cerebra charity, analysing donor-agent conversations to identify language that boosts donation success and value. The session shows how unstructured dialogue data can inform marketing strategies and resource optimisation.

Panel discussion – Challenges and future of unstructured data analytics

An open dialogue with presenters and attendees on methodological hurdles, emerging models, and the transformative potential of unstructured data in driving social impact.

Pedological Approaches in Marketing Analytics and Digital Analytics Modules

Convenors: Mohamed Sobhy Temerak, Senior Lecturer in Marketing Analytics (University of Surrey) Anabel Gutierrez Mendoza, Senior Lecturer in Marketing (Royal Holloway University of London)

Overview: Join us at the Academy of Marketing 2025 for a crucial special session on "Pedagogical Approaches in Marketing and Digital Analytics" Business schools are facing unprecedented demand to equip graduates with strong marketing and digital analytics skills that align with the needs of the job market. However, the challenge remains: How can educators effectively structure and deliver modules to meet industry expectations while keeping up with the fast advancements in analytics?

This interactive session brings together academic and industry professionals to share best practices and innovative teaching methodologies. Attendees will explore effective pedagogical strategies for engaging students in marketing analytics and current practices for bridging the gap between academic instruction and professional application.

Through discussion and collaboration, we will identify actionable opportunities to enhance curriculum design, student engagement, and employability outcomes, shaping graduates who are ready for a data-driven marketing world.

Building Distinctive Food Marketing Theorisation

Convenors: Andrea Tonner (University of Strathclyde), Benedetta Cappellini (Durham University), Juliette Wilson (University of Strathclyde)

Overview: Caring for our disciplinary boundaries and theoretical positioning has been evident in the marketing literature for many years with a consensus on the need to take proactive responsibility to develop *theory* that helps us understand and address the urgency of social problems (Day and Montgomery, 1999). In this interactive workshop led by the Food Marketing SIG we invite food marketing scholars to explore possible theoretical framings specific to food marketing that help us understand and tackle the wicked problems within the global food landscape.

Gustaffson et al (2019) argue that food by its multidimensionality and embeddedness in everyday life is productive lens for examining social realities. Yet, they also (2019: 2) recognise that while there is a 'burgeoning' field of food research there is a lack of theoretical clarity and delineation of a theoretical understanding that can derive from food.

Our discipline has the opportunity for a powerful voice in the interdisciplinary field of food studies which investigates the role of food in human existence, integrating food science, social sciences and arts and humanities (see Albala 2013). With strong theoretical underpinnings we also see the potential for marketing academia to have an influential voice in the food sector, one that encompasses an entire value chain and a multiplicity of stakeholders. Yet, food is an often-overlooked field in marketing academia, too mundane and every day to spark academic interest; yet strong, equitable and resilient food systems are critical for the well-being of all (Scott and Vallen 2019).

This workshop will explore ways of broadening food marketing scholarship using a wider range of theoretical underpinnings than extant in food marketing scholarship to date. It will explore the value of food for social connectivity, centrality in cultures, understanding value chains and multi-level perspectives.

The Food SIG convenors will open the workshop with their results of a systematic review of current food theorisation. Thereafter this workshop will consist of participative buzz group exercises with the aim of producing idea boards representing the potential of food as a theoretical lens. Exercises will be focussed on generating novel theoretical approaches to cost of living and food insecurity; food waste and sustainable food systems; food and family; rural food systems and other pressing topics that emerge from the expertise within the room. These exercises aim to refresh our cannon of theoretical perspectives for understanding and tackling food marketing's grand challenges.

Albala, K. (2013) *Routledge International Handbook of Food Studies*, London, Routledge.
Day, G.S. & Montgomery, D.B. (1999) 'Charting new directions for marketing,' *Journal of Marketing, 63* (Special Issue) 3-13
Gustafsson, U., O'Connell, R., Draper, A., & Tonner, A. (Eds.). (2019). What is Food?: Researching a Topic with Many Meanings. Routledge, London.
Scott, M. L. & Vallen, B. (2019) 'Expanding the Lens of Food Well-Being: An Examination of Contemporary Marketing, Policy, and Practice with an Eye on the Future,' *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 38* (2), 127–35.

Decolonising the Business School - Perspectives from Marketing

Convenors: Emma Surman, Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Co-Lead Birmingham Business School Decolonising Project, Finola Kerrigan, Professor of Marketing and Deputy Dean, Pilar Rojas Gaviria, Associate Professor of Marketing, Rohit Varman, Professor of Marketing, Yannick Gibson, Doctoral Researcher (All Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham, UK)

Overview: Marketing scholars, as students of culture, power, and influence, are uniquely positioned to engage with the impact of colonialism and the movement to decolonise business schools. Rohit Varman (Eckhardt et al., 2021: 179) highlights the absence of a 'political grammar' in these institutions, where Euro- and Ameri-centric knowledge often dominates over other traditions. Our workshop presents findings from a three-year decolonising project at Birmingham Business School, which focused on education, research, and operations. Central to our mission of "working towards a responsible future," the project aimed to embed inclusive values and a culture of responsible business into all aspects of academic life. Building on our Diversity, Inclusion, and Equality pledge, we affirm our commitment to understanding how colonial legacies persist in academic structures and to dismantling these systems to create a more equitable school. In this session, we will share key insights from our work and invite participants to contribute their own experiences. Together, we aim to co-create a set of guiding principles to inform decolonising practices in marketing education and research, grounded in an awareness of the historical power dynamics shaping institutions and scholarly contexts.

Reference:

Giana M. Eckhardt, Russell Belk, Tonya Williams Bradford, Susan Dobscha, Güliz Ger & Rohit Varman (2022) Decolonizing marketing, *Consumption Markets & Culture, 25*:2, 176-186, DOI: 10.1080/10253866.2021.1996734

Servicescape and Consumer Wellbeing

Convenors: Professor Sunil Sahadev (Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University, UK)
Dr. Xia Zhu (The Open University Business School, UK)

Contributors: Dr. Pallavi Singh (Sheffield Business School, Sheffield Hallam University, UK); Dr. Francisca Farache Aureliano Da Silva (Brighton University Business School, Brighton University, UK); Dr. Dimitri Kennedy (Leicester Castle Business School, De Montford University, Leicester, UK)

Overview: The session aims to bring together and discuss the increasing interest in the role of servicescape characteristics on positive consumer outcomes, especially consumer wellbeing. With greater emphasis on consumer well-being as a crucial outcome of marketing strategies, servicescape designs are now focusing on creating the positive and negative emotional factors that contribute to well-being. The practical relevance of this research stream is thus increasingly being realised. Drawing on recent studies conducted by the session convenors as well as contributors, the special session will discuss a variety of ideas and themes within this fast-emerging research stream. Discussion themes will include: (i) critique of the theoretical frameworks used to predict the role of servicescape characteristics in consumer well-being (ii) methodological issues that challenge future exploration of this topic (iii) Opportunities for developing interdisciplinary insights into this stream of research (iv) Emerging research opportunities in this field.

Marketer Behaviour: Charting New Directions for a Socially Real Field of Research

Convenors: Dr Aron Darmody (Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada); Dr Alex Hiller (Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, UK); Dr Richard Howarth (UK), John Clay

Overview: This session (linked to an upcoming Special Issue of the *Journal of Marketing Management*, edited by the Special Session convenors) proposes to generate discussions, debates, and insights about an overlooked aspect of marketing, the behaviours of the marketing practitioners who *do* marketing. The proposed format is a roundtable discussion.

As marketer behaviour cuts across areas of research and does not fit neatly into existing marketing domains or tracks, we welcome a range of contributions and ideas. Our organising questions are:

1. What are the benefits of researching marketer behaviour, for researchers, educators, and practitioners?
2. What are the boundaries of marketer behaviour and what topics should be included within this field of research?
3. Will the topics and 'marketing space' of marketer behaviour sufficiently guide this as a field of research?
4. What specific questions or issues should research explore to surface insights to marketer behaviour?
5. What are some important next steps or directions in marketer behaviour research?

AI and Robotic Technologies in Marketing and Consumer Research: Challenges and Opportunities for Research

Corresponding convenor: Melis Ceylan (Heriot-Watt University)

Co-convenors: Rodrigo Perez-Vega (Henley Business School, University of Reading), Ezgi Merdin-Uygur (Brunel University of London), Selcen Öztürkcan (Linneaus University), Chrysostomos Apostolidis (Durham University), Jamie Thompson (Napier University)

Overview: This session explores the impact of AI and robotics on marketing, consumer research, innovation, and societal challenges. AI applications are revolutionizing areas such as product design, customer service, advertising, healthcare, education, branding, and business model management. The session will feature a roundtable discussion with academics sharing insights on AI and robotic technologies and their broader implications for researchers, marketers, and society. Potential discussion topics include (but are not limited to):

- Key uses of AI and robotics in domains like product recommendations, education, design, innovation, and customer engagement, along with their contributions to society, the economy, and the environment
- Barriers and facilitators of AI and robotics adoption, including cultural and regional differences, societal factors, and varying consumer perceptions
- The role of AI and robotics in enhancing decision-making, well-being, and marketing strategies
- Growing concerns around data governance, labour markets, consumption patterns, and future research priorities

- Ontological and ethical dilemmas arising from the potential realization of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI)

The session will consist of a one-hour roundtable followed by a 30-minute Q&A.

Participants will gain insights into how AI advancements can be utilized in marketing strategies, ensuring alignment with public interest and fostering interdisciplinary partnerships to strengthen research and secure funding.

Transitional Families: Parents as Agents of Transformative Consumption

Convenors: Dr. Jane S. Priest (Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University), Dr. Elaine L. Ritch (School of Business and Society, Glasgow Caledonian University), Dr. Christopher A. Dodd (Edinburgh Business School, Heriot-Watt University)

Overview: Parents are key players in the consumer socialisation of other family members and, as societies develop more responsible, sustainable and technological outlooks, often become agents of this transformative marketing change. For marketers, there is clear value in understanding the nature, role, practices, beliefs and associated worlds of parents and families. For society, there is an imperative to know how these pivotal agents of change see their own and other consumer worlds, if the many societal changes and challenges are to be negotiated positively for themselves and their (co-) dependents.

There is a need, therefore, for a revised research agenda that positions parents at the heart of understanding. Hence, a recalibration of the nature and role of parenting is required (e.g. from a redefinition, positioning and categorisation of the role through marketing and consumption lenses). This session will seek to explore the following core propositions/questions:

1. What does it mean to be a parent within today's (and future) consumer culture(s)?
2. What key challenges face parents (through the consumption/marketing lens)?
3. What opportunities exist for marketers (and others) to support positive, transformative, parental agency within and beyond families, and how might they be operationalised?

The session is aimed at anyone with an interest in family and parental marketing and consumption. In particular, those with a desire to develop and/or update contemporary understandings of parental agency within consumer socialisation and activity. Participants will have an opportunity to engage in discussions surrounding parental and family marketing, as well as debate current opportunities for marketers and other parties to shape engagement with parents and families in positive ways, through policy and practice.

The Future of Marketing Education in the Age of AI: Bridging Theory and Practice

Corresponding Convenor: Dr. Lucy Gill-Simmen (Royal Holloway, University of London).

Co-Convenor: Dr. Chahna Gonsalves (King's Business School)

Overview: As artificial intelligence continues to transform the marketing profession, this special session explores how marketing education must evolve in response. Bringing together expert voices from academia and industry, the session will delve into the practical and theoretical implications of AI on curriculum design, teaching practice, and the future skillset of marketing graduates. Through a dynamic panel and interactive discussion, delegates will co-develop strategies for navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by AI-enhanced learning.

Centring Consumer Culture/ Subculture in Marketing Practice

Session Chair: Finola Kerrigan, Professor of Marketing and Deputy Dean (Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham)

Contributors: Viv Chambers, MD and Director of Strategy, Bricolage, David Fanning, Strategic Marketing and Customer Insights Manager, Electric Ireland, Christina Goulding, Professor of Marketing, Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham, Scott Jones, Assistant Professor of Marketing, Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham, Maria Lichrou, Senior Lecturer in Marketing, Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick

Overview: This workshop explores how consumer culture research can bridge the gap between academic theory and marketing practice, aligning with the growing emphasis on research relevance, resonance, and rigour in business schools (Jack and Dala, 2024). In light of initiatives such as the Research Excellence Framework and AACSB's focus on research impact, the session highlights how critical, creative, and interpretive research approaches—often grouped under Consumer Culture Theory—can offer rich insights into consumer behaviour beyond the limits of traditional empirical models. The workshop features marketing strategists Viv Chambers (Bricolage) and David Fanning (Electric Ireland), who will share how consumer and subcultural insights inform their strategic decisions. Four academic projects will then be presented, focused on the themes of death and dying, sustainability, loneliness, and cultural identity. Each case will be discussed in terms of both academic contribution and practical relevance. Participants will be encouraged to share their own related research via an online whiteboard and reflect on the implications for policy and practice. The session aims to foster dialogue between academics and practitioners, showing how nuanced, culturally grounded research can shape real-world marketing strategy and contribute to broader societal impact.

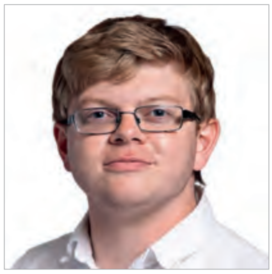
Notes

30th Academy of Marketing Doctoral Colloquium

Welcome to the **30th Academy of Marketing Doctoral Colloquium** hosted by Cork University Business School, University College Cork. The Doctoral Colloquium is a forum for doctoral students to meet and discuss their work with each other and experienced research mentors. Each participant is allocated 20 minutes to discuss their work with distinguished scholars within the marketing discipline. We are grateful for all members' support in reviewing delegates' submission and providing constructive feedback.

Doctoral Colloquium Co-Chairs

Dr Stephen O'Sullivan



Dr Conor Drummond

Doctoral Keynote:

Devising research in a new area: the problem of researching branded litter – Prof Stuart Roper

Doctoral Workshops:

Alternative Representation and Alternative Audiences – Dr Stephen O'Sullivan

Surviving the PhD Journey and Preparing for a Post-Doctoral Career – Dr Chris Moran and Dr Conor Drummond

Doctoral Colloquium Mentors:

Prof Lloyd Harris, University of Manchester
Prof Rob Angell, University of Stirling
Prof Matt Robson, Cardiff University
Prof Christina Goulding, University of Birmingham
Prof Vicky Story, Loughborough University
Dr Maria Lichrou, University of Limerick

The 30th Academy of Marketing Doctoral Colloquium is sponsored by the Marketing Trust.

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The Academy of Marketing would like to acknowledge the extremely generous support received from the Marketing Trust towards the Academy of Marketing 2025 Doctoral Colloquium.

The Marketing Trust (registered as The Chartered Institute of Marketing Charitable Trust) is an independent charity which exists to provide financial assistance to marketing projects for public good. These include initiatives in education, practical training and research into the art and science of marketing which can deliver an enhanced understanding and/or execution of the role of marketing and demonstrate a wider societal impact. More information about the Trust can be found at their website ***https://www.marketingtrust.org/***

Conference Etiquette and Code of Conduct

Conference Etiquette

The Academy of Marketing aims to provide a safe, welcoming and professional conference experience for all participants.

Delegates are asked to respect the fact that many submissions are work-in-progress. Material presented at AM2025 should therefore be treated as personal communication and is to be shared only with the express consent of the author(s). Sessions will not be recorded without the consent of participants, and the taking of photographs, screenshots, videos, and/or downloading or saving any material is strictly prohibited. When talking about the event on social media, we request that delegates do not share images of slides or posters.

Please switch digital devices to silent mode.

Please be on time and do not arrive/leave during a presentation. If you must leave one track session to move to another, this should only be done at a changeover in presenter.

Conference Code of Conduct

All delegates are respectfully requested to behave in a professional manner. All communications should be appropriate for a professional audience including people of many different backgrounds.

The Academy will not tolerate harassment of delegates in any form. Harassment includes sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate sexual attention or innuendo, deliberate intimidation, stalking, and recording of an individual without consent. It also includes offensive or belittling comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, physical appearance, body size, ethnicity or religion (or lack thereof), or technology choices.

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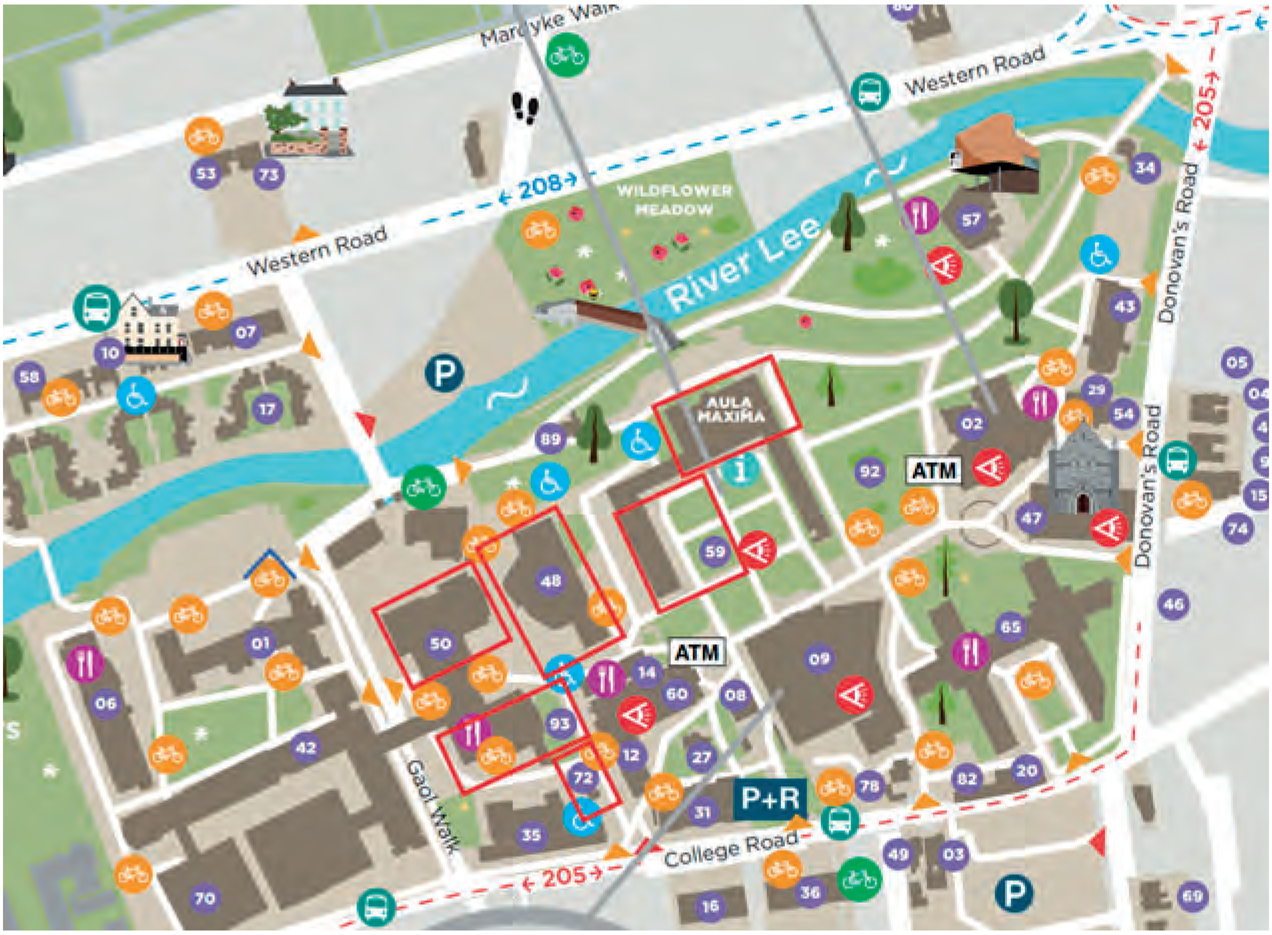
Notes

Venue Map



Key Locations

48 – The Hub	**Delegate Registration, Information Stand, Exhibitors, Tea/Coffee Breaks, Special Sessions**
93 – The Mini Rest	**Lunch (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)**
72 – The Boole Theatres	**Keynote Sessions, AGM, Parallel Sessions**
59 – West Wing	**Parallel Sessions**
50 – The Kane Building	**Parallel Sessions**
Aula Maxima	**Welcome Reception (Tuesday July 8th at 18:15)**

Notes

Schedule

Monday July 7th (Doctoral Colloquium Participants Only)

Monday July 7th (Invited ECR Writing Workshop Participants Only)

Tuesday July 8th (Main Conference)

08:00-09:00	Conference Registration – The Hub
09:00-09:30	Welcome Address – Boole 3
09:30-11:00	Parallel Sessions – Boole/Kane/West Wing/Hub
11:00-11:30	Refreshment Break – The Hub
11:30-13:00	Parallel Sessions - Boole/Kane/West Wing/Hub
13:00-14:00	Lunch – Mini Rest
14:00-14:45	Keynote – Prof Diane Martin – Boole 3
14:45-15:00	Break
15:00-16:15	Parallel Sessions - Boole/Kane/West Wing/Hub
16:15-16:45	Refreshment Break – The Hub
16:45-18:00	Parallel Sessions - Boole/Kane/West Wing/Hub
18:15-20:00	Welcome Reception – Aula Maxima

Wednesday July 9th (Main Conference)

08:30-09:00	Conference Registration – The Hub
09:00-10:30	Parallel Sessions – Boole/Kane/West Wing/Hub
10:30-11:00	Refreshment Break – The Hub
11:00-12:00	Keynote – Prof Mike Saren – Boole 3
12:45-13:15	AGM
13:15-14:15	Lunch – Mini Rest
14:15-15:00	Keynote –Patrick Kennedy (Pinterest) – Boole 3
15:00-15:15	Break
15:15-16:45	Parallel Sessions - Boole/Kane/West Wing/Hub
19:00-23:00	Gala Dinner – City Hall

Thursday July 10th (Main Conference)

09:00-09:30	Conference Registration – The Hub
09:30-11:00	Parallel Sessions – Boole/Kane/West Wing/Hub
11:00-11:30	Refreshment Break – The Hub
11:30-12:45	Parallel Sessions - Boole/Kane/West Wing/Hub
12:45-13:45	Lunch – Mini Rest
13:45-14:00	Conference Closes

**** Please note, the Outline Programme and Paper Schedule was correct when the Proceedings were prepared, however, delegates should check the Online version of the Programme in case of any last minute changes.***

Outline Programme*

MONDAY 7th July – Doctoral Colloquium and ECR Writing Workshop

TUESDAY 8TH JULY – Main Conference

Session name	Day	Date	Start	End	Submission Ids
TRACK - B2B	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	109, 198, 325, 327, 334
TRACK - Consumer Research	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	2, 154, 179, 288
TRACK - Digital Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	83, 256, 242, 228
TRACK - Marketing Pedagogy	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	5, 16, 63, 166
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	47, 84, 159, 180, 234
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	74, 111, 177, 22
TRACK - Tourism & Place Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	57, 100, 280, 210, 369
TRACK - Advertising & Marketing Communications	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	11:30	13:00	130, 187, 359, 36, 165
TRACK - Brands & Branding	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	11:30	13:00	58, 366 , 370, 235
TRACK - Consumer Research	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	11:30	13:00	52, 86, 140, 144
TRACK - Consumer Research	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	11:30	13:00	14, 82, 214 , 225
TRACK - Digital Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	11:30	13:00	66, 102, 143, 164
TRACK - Marketing Pedagogy	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	11:30	13:00	32, 291, 315, 88
TRACK - Political Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	11:30	13:00	73, 264, 349
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	11:30	13:00	339, 375 268, 104, 191
TRACK - B2B	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	11:30	13:00	96, 155, 422, 37, 278
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	11:30	13:00	107, 224, 365, 381
TRACK - Tourism & Place Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	11:30	13:00	171, 300, 409, 281
TRACK - AI	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	15:00	16:15	113, 118, 18, 125
TRACK - CCT	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	15:00	16:15	35, 319, 394
TRACK - Consumer Research	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	15:00	16:15	156, 168, 183, 289
TRACK - Marketing in Context	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	15:00	16:15	162, 95, 128, 223
TRACK - Marketing Strategy	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	15:00	16:15	77, 221, 362, 367
TRACK - Political Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	15:00	16:15	184, 255, 396
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	15:00	16:15	92, 108, 203, 314
TRACK - Retail & Services Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	15:00	16:15	170, 296, 335, 363
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	15:00	16:15	269, 316, 190
TRACK - AI	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	16:45	18:00	98, 112, 169
TRACK - Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	16:45	18:00	10, 237, 240, 416
TRACK - CCT	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	16:45	18:00	332, 175, 176
TRACK - Consumer and Advertising Research	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	16:45	18:00	137, 200, 227, 149
TRACK - Marketing in Context	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	16:45	18:00	49, 150, 244, 303
TRACK - Marketing Strategy	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	16:45	18:00	222, 330, 352
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	16:45	18:00	348, 354, 243, 239
TRACK - Retail & Services Marketing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	16:45	18:00	54, 205, 204, 254
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Tuesday	8th Jul 25	16:45	18:00	115, 414

WEDNESDAY 9TH JULY – Main Conference

Session name	Day	Date	Start	End	Submission Ids
TRACK - Advertising & Marketing Communications	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	09:00	10:30	44, 134, 220, 232, 309
TRACK - AM Funded Research	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	09:00	10:30	196, 253, 333, 392, 59
TRACK - Consumer Research	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	09:00	10:30	50, 188, 238, 429
TRACK - Marketing in Context	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	09:00	10:30	192, 193, 218, 267
TRACK - Marketing Pedagogy	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	09:00	10:30	266, 292, 301, 411
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	09:00	10:30	138, 158, 241, 368, 272
TRACK - Teaching Cases	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	09:00	10:30	23, 30, 79
TRACK - AI	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	11:00	12:00	152, 216
TRACK - Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	11:00	12:00	55, 85, 328
TRACK - Brands & Branding	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	11:00	12:00	172, 185, 371
TRACK - Consumer Research	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	11:00	12:00	295, 329, 373
TRACK - Marketing in Context	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	11:00	12:00	186, 194, 312
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	11:00	12:00	145, 426
TRACK - Retail & Services Marketing	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	11:00	12:00	28, 247, 45
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	11:00	12:00	282, 285, 404
TRACK - Advertising & Marketing Communications	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	15:15	16:45	153, 251, 262
TRACK - AI & Digital Marketing	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	15:15	16:45	127, 384, 398, 206, 178
TRACK - Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	15:15	16:45	11, 19, 124, 133, 209
TRACK – Brands, Branding and Marketing Strategy	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	15:15	16:45	136, 389, 311, 323
TRACK - CCT	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	15:15	16:45	27, 97, 116, 263, 318
TRACK - Consumer Research	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	15:15	16:45	33, 147, 378, 393, 230
TRACK - Digital Marketing	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	15:15	16:45	76, 78, 337, 357
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	15:15	16:45	265, 271, 342, 424
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	15:15	16:45	110, 167, 208, 60, 75
TRACK - Teaching Cases	Wednesday	9th Jul 25	15:15	16:45	91, 119, 338, 13

THURSDAY 10TH JULY – Main Conference

Session name	Day	Date	Start	End	Submission Ids
TRACK - Advertising & Marketing Strategy	Thursday	10th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	101, 215, 9, 80
TRACK - AM Funded Research	Thursday	10th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	94, 117, 201, 310
TRACK - Consumer Research and Consumer Culture Theory	Thursday	10th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	199, 376, 388, 347, 343
TRACK - Digital Marketing and AI	Thursday	10th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	61, 189, 340, 344, 412
TRACK - Entrepreneurship & Innovation	Thursday	10th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	213, 313, 341, 410
TRACK - Marketing Pedagogy	Thursday	10th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	72, 141, 294, 400, 38
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Thursday	10th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	146, 350, 407, 406
TRACK - Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing	Thursday	10th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	345, 195, 70, 182, 308
TRACK - Tourism & Place Marketing	Thursday	10th Jul 25	09:30	11:00	304, 399
TRACK - AI	Thursday	10th Jul 25	11:30	12:45	39, 233, 320
TRACK - Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit	Thursday	10th Jul 25	11:30	12:45	56, 403
TRACK - Consumer Research	Thursday	10th Jul 25	11:30	12:45	379, 395, 302
TRACK - Marketing in Context	Thursday	10th Jul 25	11:30	12:45	21, 212, 372, 7
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Thursday	10th Jul 25	11:30	12:45	121, 148, 356, 34
TRACK - Tourism & Place Marketing	Thursday	10th Jul 25	11:30	12:45	53, 207, 336, 297
TRACK - Responsible & Sustainable Marketing	Thursday	10th Jul 25	11:30	12:45	217, 276, 361

Notes

Competitive Short Papers for Oral Presentation

2

How Information Overload Influences Post-Purchase Dissonance and Purchase Delay Behavior? The Mediating Effects of Shopping Fatigue, Consumer Confusion, and Information Anxiety

Track: 7. Consumer Research

Li-Wei Wu[1], Tzu-Chi Lin[1], Yu-Hsuan Wu[2], Yun-Chia Tang[1]

[1]Tunghai University, Taiwan. [2]University of California San Diego, USA

Summary Statement

The rapid growth of e-commerce has led to an overwhelming abundance of information, which can negatively impact the shopping experience. Understanding how these factors influence is crucial for both consumers and retailers. By exploring the intricate causes and consequences of adverse online shopping experiences such as information overload, consumer confusion, shopping fatigue, and information anxiety. This study offers a comprehensive analysis aimed at reducing consumers' purchase delay behavior and post-purchase dissonance in the digital realm.

Competitive Short Paper

With the development of the Internet, electronic commerce has gradually emerged, fundamentally altering consumer habits. The shift in shopping patterns and the prevalence of online shopping have become significant trends. However, negative reactions that arise during the online shopping process are phenomena we aim to investigate. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to explore the reasons behind consumers' negative purchasing behavior. The current study examines the impact information overload on consumers' psychological states during online shopping, focusing on features such as shopping fatigue, consumer confusion, and information anxiety. These elements can ultimately lead to negative purchase behaviors, including purchase delay behavior and post-purchase dissonance. Specifically, information overload through the combination of shopping fatigue, consumer confusion, and information anxiety can lead to purchase delay behavior, as consumers may take longer to make decisions or abandon their carts altogether. Furthermore, even after a purchase, they might experience post-purchase dissonance, questioning whether they made the right choice. Based on the above, this study develops the following nine hypotheses:

H1: Information overload has a positive effect on shopping fatigue.

H2: Information overload has a positive effect on consumer confusion.

H3: Information overload has a positive effect on information anxiety.

H4: Consumer confusion has a positive effect on shopping fatigue.

H5: Consumer confusion has a positive effect on information anxiety.

H6: Shopping fatigue has a positive effect on purchase delay behavior.

H7: Consumer confusion has a positive effect on purchase delay behavior.

H8: Consumer confusion has a positive effect on post-purchase dissonance.

H9: Information anxiety has a positive effect on post-purchase dissonance.

The research targeted consumers who regularly engage in online shopping. A total of 305 questionnaires were distributed, resulting in 297 valid responses analyzed using SPSS 24 and AMOS for data analysis. The findings reveal that information overload positively affects shopping fatigue, consumer confusion, and information anxiety. Furthermore, consumer confusion significantly influences both shopping fatigue and information anxiety. Both shopping fatigue and consumer confusion contribute to purchase delay behavior, while consumer confusion and information anxiety lead to post-purchase dissonance. Meanwhile, shopping fatigue, consumer confusion, and information anxiety play crucial mediating roles between information overload and its effects on post-purchase dissonance and purchase delay behavior. Together, these three psychological states mediate the impact of information overload on post-purchase dissonance and purchase delay behavior, highlighting the need for marketers to streamline the shopping experience and reduce consumers' information burden.

This study emphasizes that in the context of online shopping, consumers are significantly affected by negative emotional experiences, ultimately resulting in adverse purchasing behavior. It contributes to a deeper understanding of the challenges consumers face in the online shopping environment, providing valuable insights for online shopping platforms and businesses. Finally, the study offers recommendations and managerial implications based on these findings.

5

Transforming Marketing Education: Integrating Freirean Praxis and Sociocultural Theory for Ethical and Sustainable Practice

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Lucy Gill-Simmen[1], Teresa Pereira Heath[2], Chahna Gonsalves[3], Sarah Montano[4], Nicki Newman[4], Laura Chamberlain[5]

[1]Royal Holloway University of London, United Kingdom. [2]University of Minho, Portugal. [3]King's College London, United Kingdom. [4]University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. [5]University of Warwick, United Kingdom

Summary Statement

This presentation introduces an integrative pedagogical framework combining Freirean praxis and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory to transform marketing education. It aims to equip students with critical thinking, ethical awareness, and cultural competence, preparing them to navigate challenges such as sustainability, inequality, and technological disruption. The framework fosters socially responsible marketing practice and addresses the ethical and environmental demands of the modern marketing landscape.

Competitive Short Paper

The rapid transformation of the marketing landscape, driven by environmental crises, technological disruption, and societal demands for ethical responsibility, necessitates a rethinking of marketing education in line with the evolving global challenges. Traditional pedagogical models, which focus on managerial efficiency and profit maximization, are insufficient for preparing students to navigate the complex ethical and societal dimensions of contemporary marketing (Burton, 2001; Hackley, 2009). This paper introduces a transformative pedagogical framework that integrates Freirean praxis and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory to address these deficiencies. This approach aligns with the conference's theme of fostering innovative educational practices that meet the ethical, societal, and technological challenges of modern marketing.

At the heart of this framework is Freire's concept of praxis, which emphasizes the dynamic relationship between reflection and action aimed at social change (Freire, 1970). Praxis fosters critical consciousness, encouraging students to critically evaluate the ethical dimensions of marketing practices rather than passively accepting dominant managerialist perspectives (Giroux, 2020). Freire's critique of the traditional "banking" model of education, which positions students as passive recipients of knowledge, is particularly relevant to marketing education, where broader societal and environmental concerns are often marginalized in favor of corporate profit maximization (Chandy et al., 2021; Tadajewski, 2016).

Complementing Freirean praxis, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory provides the pedagogical tools necessary to ground critical reflection in specific cultural, social, and historical contexts. Vygotsky's emphasis on the social nature of learning, particularly through his concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD), highlights the importance of collaborative learning experiences in marketing education (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). This framework encourages students to critically engage with real-world marketing challenges, while examining the socio-historical forces that shape both consumer behavior and marketing strategies (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). This integration of praxis and sociocultural theory offers a holistic approach to preparing students for the complexities of modern marketing practice.

The proposed framework empowers students to reflect critically on pressing issues such as sustainability, social inequality, and technological disruption. For example, students are encouraged to examine the ethical implications of AI-driven marketing, greenwashing, and the exclusion of marginalized communities from mainstream marketing efforts (Chatzidakis et al., 2021; Heath & Tynan, 2023). This approach not only equips students with technical marketing skills but also fosters a commitment to social equity and sustainability, preparing them for the complex ethical dilemmas that characterize 21st-century marketing (Jamil et al., 2024).

However, implementing this framework presents challenges. Educators must rethink entrenched pedagogical assumptions, shifting from traditional models of knowledge transmission to one that prioritizes critical engagement and social responsibility (Biggs, 2014; Freire, 1970). Additionally, assessment methods must evolve to value ethical reasoning and critical reflection alongside technical proficiency (Paul & Elder, 2007). Institutional support and professional development are critical for realizing this pedagogical transformation, which is essential to preparing students for the ethical, technological, and environmental challenges that define modern marketing education.

7

Let 'Freedom' ring or shut up and sing? Political marketing, popular music and the U.S. 2024 election

Track: 13. Political Marketing

David Allan

Saint Joseph's University, USA

Summary Statement

The 2024 U.S. election has cast the *spotlight* on the role of popular music and artists in the marketing of political candidates. While there is a tendency to say the current is *brighter* than the past, this political (Taylor Swift) *era* it's true. Nonetheless, it is a rich, current, political environment to academically explore popular music integration and artist endorsement no matter the outcome. This paper serves to lay the foundation and provide the soundtrack.

Competitive Short Paper

The 2024 U.S. election has cast the *spotlight* on the role of popular music and artists in the marketing of political candidates. While there is a tendency to say the current is *brighter* than the past, this political (Taylor Swift) *era* it's true. Nonetheless, it is a rich, current, political environment to academically explore popular music integration and artist endorsement no matter the outcome. This paper serves to lay the foundation and provide the soundtrack.

The right song with the rights[1] and artist permission[2] to use it combined with artist participation can make for powerful political marketing. At the 2000 Democratic Convention, Bill Clinton ended his nomination acceptance speech with: "And don't stop thinking about tomorrow," followed by the Fleetwood Mac song "Don't Stop." They reunited to play it at Clinton's inauguration. In 2024, Beyonce' gave Harris her endorsement and the rights to her song "Freedom" (Garcia, 2024) and Charli xcx declared Harris "brat' (Demopoulos, 2024). Lee Greenwood gave Trump permission to use his song "God Bless the U.S.A." (Trunsky, 2024). Greenwood has a long history with Republican candidates beginning with Reagan in 1984 and has endorsed Trump along with other artists including Kanye West, Jason Aldean and Kid Rock (Dailey, 2024). Trump has played songs at rallies without artist permission (Dailey, 2024) and with legal consequences (Scribner and Kingsberry, 2024). Trump has historically been vocally and lyrically criticized by artists like U2 (Greene, 2017).

Celebrity endorsements can affect political environments. Oprah Winfrey endorsed Barack Obama before the 2008 Democratic presidential primary. Garthwaite and Moore (2012) found her endorsement increased Obama's votes, financial contributions, and overall turnout. As for artists, Taylor Swift began a more active role in politician endorsement and voter registration in 2018.[3] In the 2020 election she endorsed Biden. The anticipation of Swift's endorsement in the 2024 election of Biden, then Harris garnered a significant amount of domestic and international pre- (de Metz, 2024; Grose, 2024; Helmore, 2024) and post- (Nehames, et al., 2024; Sullivan, 2024) endorsement media attention. Swift endorsed Harris (Appendix 1) after her debate with Trump in June (2024), and following a 'deepfake' reposted by Trump (Appendix 2). Preliminary results for the Swift endorsement suggested a positive effect. In the 24-hour period following Swift's Instagram post a total of 405,999 visited Vote.org from her custom link (Bohannon, 2024). On National Voting Day (Sept. 19), Swift urged her 272 million Instagram followers to register to vote through Vote.org which resulted in more than 35,000 registrations (Peters, 2024). Swift has received some academic attention as a potential music artist endorser (Jackson, et al., 2024).

[1] If a politician is using the music at live events it should secure a "public performance" license to comply with copyright law. Many venues already have public performance licenses but they may exclude music used during conventions, expositions and campaign events.

[2] If a politician doesn't get the artists' permission they liable for Right of Privacy, Lanham Act, or False Endorsement

[3] See Netflix documentary 'Miss Americana'

9

Defining the Market and Identifying Market Shaping in a Global Green Hydrogen Economy Context

Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

Mossen Randeree

University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

Summary Statement

Within the context of the nascent green hydrogen market, which will become established by incorporating factors such as environmental consciousness, technology acceptance, global relationships and regulation, this conceptualisation develops an understanding for directing strategy, gained through Market Shaping, to offer viewpoints for market development. This leads to tailoring innovation acceptance through education, investment, infrastructure development, structured messaging and broader collaboration. The concepts could be extended to other contexts of global disruptive technology markets.

Competitive Short Paper

The market development of innovative technologies is influenced by a variety of factors, including institutional, cultural, and economic forces. From sustainability perspectives, individuals and organisations with high environmental consciousness and a willingness to adopt innovative solutions are more likely to embrace new technologies. However, price sensitivity and regulatory factors can significantly impact adoption rates.

The context here is green, or more inclusively, sustainable hydrogen (Ball & Weeda, 2015). Global factors relating to production, export, logistics, import and localised consumption, and their related regional structures are involved (Veal & Mouzas, 2012). To understand the market dynamics of green hydrogen this research delves into dimensions relating to acceptance, leading to a conceptualisation that could yield descriptions for a range of global disruptive technologies.

Novel definitions of the hydrogen economy is formed from a responsible consumption and market-shaping view to give a deeper understanding of market dynamics and market perspectives (Vargo et al., 2017). Key factors shaping the green hydrogen market include government support, infrastructure development, and global collaboration. Technological breakthroughs and cost reductions are impactful in the pace of change in a competitive landscape, but dependent on acceptance and levels of control. The development of hydrogen infrastructure, including production, storage, and distribution facilities, is essential for reducing costs and facilitating widespread adoption. International cooperation and standardisation are necessary to facilitate the global trade of green hydrogen.

The market is a complex system involving many interconnected actors, including producers, consumers, policymakers, and researchers. Understanding the social and technical factors influencing this market is crucial for its successful development. By analysing the relationships between these actors and considering factors like regional policies, supply chain logistics, and consumer preferences, we can identify opportunities for collaboration and innovation. A network perspective, inspired by Actor-Network Theory, can help us map these relationships and understand the dynamics of the market.

By adopting a network approach, we can accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy and enhance the effectiveness of policies aimed at promoting green hydrogen (Granovetter, 1985).

Potential next steps should explore societal readiness, looking at the role of trust and crisis management in shaping public perception, potentially applying ANT to analyse the complex interplay between technology and society (Rosa et al., 1999), examining the impact of local policies, regional variations, and their interplay for international cooperation in shaping the hydrogen economy. The conceptualisation could be applied to other disruptive technology areas such as AI and healthtech (Liljenberg, 2022).

10

Effective Disclosure of Overhead Expenditures by Fundraising Charities

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

Roger Bennett[1], Rita Kottasz[1], Haseeb Shabbir[2]

[1]Kingston University, United Kingdom. [2]City University, United Kingdom

Summary Statement

Many donors to charities dislike charities spending substantial amounts on "overheads", e.g., expenditures on advertising, marketing, managerial salaries, and general administration. We examine public attitudes towards disparate levels of overhead spending via: (i) an eye tracking and galvanic skin response exercise to measure a person's arousal when viewing an emotive charity image, and (ii) a questionnaire exploring participants' regulatory focus (promotion or prevention, advertising scepticism, persuasion knowledge activation, and perceptions of a charity's organisational legitimacy.

Competitive Short Paper

Research has established that many actual and potential donors to charities believe that a charity should spend as little as possible on "overheads", i.e., a term that describes the conflation of expenditures on advertising, marketing, managerial salaries, and general administration (see Sargeant et al., 2000; Rossi et al., 2020; Bennett, 2024). However, what exactly is regarded as "high" overhead expenditure is open to question (Allred and Amos, 2023). Trussel and Parsons (2008) and Rossi et al. (2020) cited several studies which concluded that charities perceived by donors as "efficient" generated greater total contributions, but without any consensus regarding the role of overheads in donors' interpretations of the meaning of "efficiency".

The present investigation examines public attitudes towards disparate levels of charity overhead spending via: (i) an eye tracking and galvanic skin response exercise to measure the intensity of a person's arousal when viewing an emotive charity image, and (ii) the distribution of a questionnaire exploring participants' regulatory focus (promotion or prevention [Higgins, 1997]), advertising scepticism, persuasion knowledge activation, and perceptions of a charity's organisational legitimacy.

A model has been constructed hypothesising that the regulatory frame of a message (containing either a sad prevention focused image of a starving child or a promotion focused image of happy children) generates certain levels of persuasion knowledge activation and directly affects a viewer's acceptance of a particular level of a charity's overhead expenditure (cf. Choi and Park, 2021; Yoon et al., 2012; Zemack and Rugar, 2018). The latter link is assumed to be moderated by the amount of information provided regarding the disbursement of a charity's spending on various types of overhead, (marketing, salaries, etc.) (cf., Baek and Reid, 2013; Bullard and Penner, 2017). An individual's regulatory focus is posited to moderate connections between (a) the frame of a message and the amount of persuasion knowledge activation it invokes (Choi and Park, 2021), and (b) the effects of disclosing different amounts of detail on overhead disbursement (Ewe et al., 2017; Roy and Phau, 2014).

The eye tracking and GSR exercise is being conducted separately and the results on arousal levels obtained will be incorporated into the model, albeit using a smaller number of respondents than for the wider survey. So far, a pre-test of the model, excluding arousal levels, has been completed using a convenience sample of 167 students at the home university of two of the authors. The results suggest that sad (prevention focused) imagery significantly and negatively affects persuasion knowledge activation, which itself has a significantly negative influence on attitudes towards messages featuring a high level of overhead expenditure. An individual's regulatory focus had significant moderating effects on the strengths of the connections between (i) the regulatory focus of a message (sad or happy images) and persuasion knowledge activation, and (ii) the proposed moderating influence of the amount of information provided. As anticipated, perceived organisational legitimacy had a significantly positive effect on acceptance of a charity's relatively high spending on overheads, while advertising scepticism had a significantly negative impact on this variable.

11

Identification of Target Population Segments for Mental Disability Anti-stigma Campaigns: Observer Social Status and Perceptions of the Employment Situations of People with Mental Disabilities

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

Roger Bennett[1], Rohini Vijaygopal[2]

[1]Kingston University, United Kingdom. [2]Open University UK, United Kingdom

Summary Statement

People with intellectual disabilities are frequently stigmatised and subjected to unfair discrimination. Charities and government disability support organisations need therefore to understand the possible causes of intellectual disability stigmatisation in order to develop effective anti-stigma promotional campaigns. Our study examines the influence on public attitudes towards intellectual disability of the employment status of an intellectually disabled person, i.e., whether the individual is fully employed and financially self-sufficient, or instead relies on state social security payments.

Competitive Short Paper

Effective mental disability anti-stigma public information campaigns executed by government agencies and charities need to identify and reach those members of the public most likely to engage in discriminatory behaviour. The present study examined a particular segment of members of the public, namely individuals with specific levels of (i) social status, (ii) social dominance orientation, and (iii) need for cognitive closure. Stigmatising attitudes were investigated with respect to whether an observed person with a mental disability was in paid employment or lived entirely on state welfare. Sample members' demographic and other characteristics (e.g., familiarity with mental disability, religiosity) were also queried.

Chung, Jung and Lee, (2017) reported studies suggesting that prejudice is often lower among people of higher social status, who tend to be better educated, travel more, have more extensive social experience, etc., whereas lower social status people can on average be less well-educated and less tolerant. However, research cited by Duckitt and Sibley (2010) found that higher social class people sometimes exhibit "social dominance orientation", i.e., prejudice due to their favouring dominance over lower classes to which they feel superior, and which relates negatively to empathy (Hodson, Hogg and MacInnis, 2009) and positively to prejudice (Sibley and Duckitt, 2008). Moreover, stigmatising attitudes towards people with mental disabilities have been found to be greater among individuals with high "need for cognitive closure" (NFCC), i.e., the "desire for firm answers to questions and an aversion toward ambiguity" (Kruglanski, 2006, p. 64).

Questionnaires covering these considerations were distributed to members of the consumer panel of a commercial market research company, resulting in 401 responses. Each questionnaire contained a brief description of a person with a mild mental disability, who was either in paid employment with no dependence on state welfare or unemployed and totally dependent on state welfare. Self-perceived social status of a sample member was measured via the MacArthur Ladder (Adler et al., 2000) whereby respondents were asked to place an "X" on the rung of the ladder that best represents where they think they stand. This can reflect not only current social circumstances but also a self-assessment of the individual's socioeconomic, educational, and economic background, along with future prospects. Hayes' (2022) model 15 was employed to estimate a model wherein social status was posited to have (i) a direct effect on each of four dependent variables relating to stigmatising attitudes, and (ii) an influence on a mediating variable "social dominance orientation". Connections between social status and the dependent variables were assumed to be moderated by a participant's level of need for cognitive closure.

Participants informed that the person with a mental disability was fully employed expressed more favourable attitudes on all four favourability measures when compared to people advised that the person lived entirely on welfare benefits. Social status exerted a significantly positive influence on all favourability measures. This was not the case for people in sample two (told that the person lives on welfare). Social status did not determine social dominance orientation significantly in either group.

13

From Concert Tour to Campaign Trail: Do Music Celebrities Influence Politics?

Track: 18. Teaching Cases

David Allan, Natalie Wood

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Summary Statement

This teaching case study examines endorsements by music artists in the 2024 U.S. Presidential election to explore the intersection of celebrity influence, social media, and political marketing. Students will evaluate the strategic implications of celebrity endorsements in current political campaigns, focusing on how authenticity, audience alignment, and social media platforms can affect voter engagement. Students will gain insights into the challenges and opportunities of leveraging music celebrity influence and social media in political contexts.

Competitive Short Paper

On September 10, 2024, shortly after a pivotal U.S. presidential debate between candidates Kamala Harris (Democrat) and Donald Trump (Republican), artist and celebrity Taylor Swift took to Instagram to announce her support for Harris. With her message, "I'm voting for @kamalaharris because she fights for the rights and causes I believe need a warrior to champion them," Swift leveraged her platform of over 283 million followers to endorse Harris, surprising not only her fans but also the Harris-Walz campaign team, who were reportedly unaware of her endorsement plans. Swift's endorsement, along with other artists such are artists such as Beyonce and Bruce Springsteen, presented the Harris campaign with the opportunity to engage the often-underrepresented young voter demographic (ages 18–29), which has historically shown lower turnout rates than older age groups (Hartig, Daniller, Keeter, & Van Green, 2023).

While celebrity endorsements have sometimes proven effective—such as with Oprah Winfrey's backing of Barack Obama (Garthwaite & Moore, 2013) their success is often mixed and context-dependent (Wood & Herbst, 2007; Knoll & Matthes, 2017). For Harris's campaign and others courting voters, the challenge lies in harnessing the initial enthusiasm and positive PR generated by these music artist endorsements to sustain young voters' engagement up to election day, culminating in them casting their votes for the endorsed candidate.

By the end of this case study, students will be able to:

Evaluate the Dynamics of Music Celebrity Endorsements

Examine how celebrity credibility, audience alignment, and perceived authenticity impact the effectiveness of celebrity endorsements in political campaigns.

Investigate Social Media Amplification

Investigate how social media platforms magnify the reach and impact of celebrity endorsements, facilitating direct and unfiltered communication with audiences.

Assess Risks and Mitigation Strategies

Critically assess potential risks for the political candidate and the celebrity endorser, such as backlash, brand dilution, and misalignment with campaign values, and explore strategies to mitigate these risks.

14

The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility on Consumer Perspectives and Buying Behaviour in the UK Retail Sector

Track: 7. Consumer Research

Ioanna Yfantidou, Sami Larbi-Cherif

Liverpool John Moores University, United Kingdom

Summary Statement

The study examines the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on consumer perceptions and purchasing behaviour within the UK retail sector, focusing on culturally diverse international students. Addressing an important gap in the literature, this research investigates how varied cultural backgrounds specifically shape responses to CSR initiatives. By applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Carroll's CSR Pyramid, the paper investigates how CSR practices influence consumer perception and purchasing intent across varied cultural dimensions.

Competitive Short Paper

This study examines the impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on consumer perceptions and purchasing behaviour within the UK retail sector, focusing on culturally diverse international students. Addressing an important gap in the literature, this research investigates how varied cultural backgrounds specifically shape responses to CSR initiatives. By applying Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1983) and Carroll's CSR Pyramid (Carroll, 1991), the paper investigates how CSR practices influence consumer perception and purchasing intent across varied cultural dimensions. Findings reveal that while CSR enhances brand perception, its effectiveness is mediated by cultural values that shape consumer expectations and responses to CSR.

The results indicate that among Hofstede's cultural dimensions, **Individualism/Collectivism** and **Masculinity/Femininity** significantly shape how international students perceive and respond to CSR initiatives. Specifically, students from collectivist cultures displayed a more positive attitude toward companies engaging in CSR, scoring notably higher in support and trust toward socially responsible brands compared to their individualistic counterparts. This aligns with Hofstede's observation that collectivist cultures often prioritize community welfare and ethical responsibility, which enhances CSR's appeal (Hofstede, 1983; Hur and Kim, 2017). In contrast, individualist students showed a more measured response, reflecting preferences for CSR that directly benefits their individual needs (Vitell et al., 2003).

Additionally, The **Masculinity/Femininity** dimension has a significant relationship with CSR perception, with students from masculine cultures exhibiting stronger support for CSR initiatives associated with achievement and competition, while those from feminine cultures favoured CSR efforts focused on care, quality of life, and societal welfare (Ho et al., 2012). Interestingly, **Power Distance** showed no significant connection to CSR perception, suggesting that hierarchy and authority may not strongly influence how CSR is viewed among this student demographic, a finding that contrasts with some previous studies suggesting Power Distance's relevance in shaping ethical perspectives (Gjølberg, 2009).

Regarding **Carroll's CSR dimensions**, economic factors played a significant role across all cultural groups. underscoring the practical influence of affordability on purchasing decisions, despite positive attitudes toward CSR. This economic consideration aligns with findings by Parung (2019), who noted that financial constraints often moderate ethical consumer choices, especially during times of economic strain. The research thus emphasizes the importance for UK retailers to align their CSR communication with the cultural values of a diverse consumer base to better resonate with consumer expectations and foster loyalty across different demographic segments.

The insights contribute to a growing discourse on CSR's role in consumer behaviour, particularly in multicultural environments, by highlighting the nuanced ways in which cultural background shapes responses to CSR. Furthermore, this study offers practical implications for enhancing CSR strategy within the retail industry, suggesting that targeted CSR initiatives aligned with specific cultural expectations can maximize consumer engagement and improve brand perception.

16

How Does a COIL Support Student Communication And Collaboration Skills?

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Nilay Balkan

University of Glasgow, United Kingdom

Summary Statement

The study investigates the students' perceptions of how a COIL project contributed towards their skills development in communication and collaboration. In-depth interviews with 25 students are employed. The study aims to contribute to our pedagogical knowledge of building soft skills for sustainable business practises. The results are of interest for supporting the student learner journey in higher education and for COIL integration into university programmes.

18

Generative AI in Marketing Agencies: Implementation Drivers and Outcomes

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

Generative AI transforms marketing agencies through data-driven personalization and automated content creation, offering competitive advantages. However, its adoption introduces ethical risks and impacts marketing and employee performance. This research aims to identify technological, market, and organizational drivers of GenAI implementation, examine how ethical culture moderates GenAI's effects on ethical risks, marketing performance, and employee performance, and evaluate interrelationships among outcomes. A mixed-methods approach, including interviews and surveys of UK marketing agency employees, will be used.

19

Lessons from the Past - HARVEST (Hertfordshire Agriculture: Researching a Victorian Enterprise for a Sustainable Tomorrow)

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

Susan Davies[1], Fabian Hiscock[2], Derek Ong[1]

[1]University of Hertfordshire Business School, United Kingdom. [2]Three Rivers Museum Trust, United Kingdom

Summary Statement

The HARVEST project uncovers vital lessons from a 19th-century farmer's success during agricultural depression, revealing strategies crucial for modern sustainable marketing. Analyzing John White's records, researchers identified key factors: diversification, networking, balanced technology adoption, environmental stewardship, and circular practices. This historical perspective enriches contemporary marketing approaches, emphasizing resilience and sustainability. The study underscores the value of integrating past wisdom with present challenges to create a more sustainable, equitable economy through innovative marketing

21

To Watch or Not To Watch: The Curious Case of OTT Bollywood Film Trailers on Instagram

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

Eshani Mahtre, Derek Ong

University of Hertfordshire Business School, United Kingdom

Summary Statement

Abstract changes: This research investigates the different elements in the trailer for an OTT Original Bollywood film (OOBF) influencing the audience's perceived entertainment value (PEV) of the film and how that in turn influences the audience's decision to watch it. The research also studies the mediating role of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) generation in the decision-making process and explores the moderating role of gender in e-WOM generation.

22

Towards Fintech service analytics: a case of mobile banking adoption by senior population in Taiwan

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

The entire mobile banking service lifetime and how it affects the adoption and experience of senior population are investigated in this study, which has not been seen in current studies. The study will contribute to the literature with a consolidated and holistic understanding of the analytics that is related to seniors' user behaviour and preferences in mobile banking and inform and improve their adoption of mobile banking services.

Competitive Short Paper

Mobile banking is a prevalent application adopted by traditional financial institutions and new fintech non-bank companies. These services benefit consumers and financial service providers with convenience and efficiency. Nevertheless, most mobile banking interfaces or applications are designed with young people and professionals in mind (Ubam et al., 2021), excluding seniors. Most seniors are struggling to use their smartphones without assistance (Wong et al., 2018), and they don't intend to adopt mobile banking. However, COVID-19 has accelerated the global shift to a fully online banking experience and led to heavily reduced provision of in-person financial services. Seniors, therefore, have been forced to use mobile banking services.

The current studies took the classic quantitative survey approach (Touchaie and Hashim, 2024; Ubam et al., 2021; Rajaobelina et al., 2020; Jayachandran, 2019), qualitative interview/focus group approach (Msweli and Mawela, 2021) or conceptual review approach (Msweli and Mawela, 2020), focusing on enablers or barriers to the adoption, e.g., trust, reputation, digital literacy, etc. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) are widely adopted by these studies, and a group of researchers (Yang et al., 2023; Sinha and Singh, 2021; Rajaobelina et al., 2020; Klimova and Poulova, 2018) have extended TAM with specific considerations to senior populations. Nevertheless, current studies lack an understanding of the entire mobile banking service lifetime and how this affects the adoption by senior population.

Institute for Information Industry Taiwan (KPMG, 2021) suggested that the awareness of mobile banking in Taiwan has increased from 83.6% in 2016 to 97.8% in mid-2020, whilst the digital banking ecosystems in Taiwan started to mature since 2016. Therefore, it is critical to investigate the mobile banking adoption by senior population.

This study aims to explore the analytics that could inform and improve mobile banking services for senior population, based on the understanding of the entire mobile banking service lifetime. The understanding of seniors' adoption of mobile banking services is essentially an investigation of Business Process Analytics (Vera-Baquero et al., 2013), which could be a challenging task that requires complex and robust supporting systems. This study investigates senior population's experience during the mobile banking lifetime, based on the understanding of Business Process Analytics.

A quantitative survey strategy is adopted in this study. The targeted samples for this study are senior population in Taiwan who adopt or do not adopt mobile payment. The retirement age is selected at a reference to how 'senior' is perceived, as this is how senior population is defined in many countries. Social Security Programme (SSA, 2016) stated the retirement age in Taiwan is 65 since 2015. Therefore, the targeted samples are Taiwanese who are aged 65 and above since 2016. As previously explained, 2016 is decided because mobile banking is perceived as maturing in Taiwan since then. A pilot study to test the survey question were completed in summer 2024, followed by the first phase of data collection. We are currently analysing the data collected for the first phase of this study.

23

No Paserán! An Old Spotted Dog, Spanish Political History and the Manufacture of Football Shirts

Track: 18. Teaching Cases

Michael Harker, Anthea Mendes

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

Summary Statement

This **teaching case** covers the fascinating story of the away strip for Clapton FC - a London based team well down the footballing pyramid - that went on to sell in its tens of thousands. The social, cultural and political context of the 'No Paseran!' motto is outlined in respect of forming connections across clubs and nations. alongside a wider consideration of shirt sales and sponsorship deals.

Competitive Short Paper

This **teaching case** covers the fascinating story of the away strip for Clapton FC - a London based team well down the footballing pyramid - that went on to sell in its tens of thousands. The ethical and unethical manufacture of football shirts and other forms of revenue generation by football clubs is covered using up to date data and also practical and ethical issues in respect of shirt sponsorship deals. The social, cultural and political context of the 'No Paseran!' motto is outlined in respect of forming connections across clubs and nations.

The case study covers material relevant to the following UNSDG goals: 3 - Good Health and Well-Being, 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth, 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure and 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production

Eight case questions are supplied, and the case is suitable for a wide range of classes and levels.

27

The Art of Consumer Research

Track: 6. CCT

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[1]Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain. [2]Universitat de Barcelona, Spain. [3]Universitat Rovira I Virgili, Spain

Summary Statement

This paper explores the integration of nonrepresentational, arts-based approaches in consumer studies, highlighting their potential to expand traditional research boundaries. Through four creative projects—a board game, a soundwalk, a concept album, and a sound sculpture—it illustrates how artistic methodologies can foster conceptual advancements, enhance dissemination, and engage diverse audiences. By embracing the "inner academic artist," the paper underscores the value of creative methodologies in deepening our understanding of consumer experiences and cultural narratives.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

This paper examines the integration of nonrepresentational, creative, arts-based approaches in research in consumer studies, illustrating their value in expanding traditional research boundaries. Marketing, a naturally creative discipline, increasingly explores innovative methodologies to expand its scholarly scope. While the concept of the "Academic Artist" has traditionally been confined to creative faculties like Fine Arts (Azagra-Caro et al., 2022), recent trends in marketing academia reflect a growing embrace of artistic methods. Recent special issues in a number of marketing and consumer studies journals have underscored the potential of creative nonrepresentational forms of academic expression, legitimizing alternative representational styles that surpass the limitations of traditional journal articles.

Embracing the Inner Academic Artist

Arts-based approaches are an emerging paradigm that harnesses artistic processes, such as performance, visual art, and storytelling, to address complex topics. Within marketing and consumer studies, these approaches offer fresh pathways to engage with enduring themes, providing more nuanced and multisensory representations of consumer experiences (Burge et al., 2016; Seregina, 2020). Over the past several years, I have embraced this, not as a deliberate shift, but as an instinctive reaction to the constraints of conventional journal article writing. Through reflective accounts of four creative projects, this paper highlights how artistic and creative approaches enhance research by fostering conceptual advancements, facilitating broader dissemination, and engaging diverse audiences.

Showcasing Four Projects

The Waiting Game: A Board Game on Waiting in Services

The Waiting Game gamifies the universal experience of waiting in services, using a board game format. Set in a supermarket, players navigate delays and accelerations that simulate everyday waiting scenarios. Beyond making abstract concepts tangible, the game fosters intergenerational engagement and illuminates the emotional dimensions of waiting, aligning with Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) by transforming mundane experiences into meaningful insights.

Electromagnetic Soundwalk: Listening to Consumption

This soundwalk investigates the sonic dimensions of consumer spaces by juxtaposing the ambient sounds of a retail store with electromagnetic waves detected using specialized devices. While electromagnetic sounds are imperceptible to consumers, their inclusion serves as an analogy for hidden marketing tactics. Inspired by the "sonic turn" in consumer research (Patterson & Larsen, 2019), this project seeks new ways to "listen to consumption".

Concept Album: Post-Plagiarism

Post-Plagiarism, the album, critiques the conventional notions of originality and intellectual property through music and art. The album exclusively samples existing sounds, blending them into new compositions. Accompanied by liner notes summarizing an academic paper lost to the peer-review process, the album critiques traditional dissemination formats while advancing scholarly discussions on creativity. Released on vinyl, and displayed at the V&A's Selling Songs exhibition, it exemplifies how arts-based research can engage with cultural narratives and foster public dialogue around academic concepts.

Sound Sculpture: The Duality of Waiting

The sculpture (featuring intertwined shopping trolleys), part of a sound installation in Barcelona's Convent de Sant Antoni, February of 202[4], embodies the dual nature of waiting, inviting participants to explore its reflective and oppressive aspects. It bridges CCT concepts with sensory experiences, fostering dialogue about consumerism, time, and the sensory layers of waiting.

28

Together in Electric Dreams: Cognitive Dissonance While Waiting for the Car to Recharge

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

Gerard Ryan, Deepika Sharma, Maria del Mar Pàmies

Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Spain

Summary Statement

This study examines how electric vehicle (EV) owners adapt to longer charging times compared to petrol refueling. Drawing on waiting in services and cognitive dissonance theory, it explores how users reframe waiting as an opportunity for productivity or leisure, leveraging planning tools and fast-charging options to mitigate inconvenience. Insights from interviews in the US and the EU reveal strategies for managing delays, enhancing satisfaction, and addressing barriers to EV adoption.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Electric vehicles (EVs) offer significant societal and environmental benefits but face barriers to adoption due to the perceived inconvenience of recharging compared to traditional petrol refueling. This study explores how EV owners adapt to the longer waiting times associated with charging, with a focus on cognitive dissonance and its role in shaping user perceptions and behaviors during delays. By reframing waiting as an opportunity for productivity or leisure, EV owners mitigate the challenges of extended charging times, offering insights for both consumer behavior theory and services marketing.

Waiting to Recharge

Charging an EV involves multiple temporal elements beyond the act itself, such as locating suitable stations, traveling, connecting, and handling payment systems. Delays caused by occupied stations further exacerbate time-related anxiety, impacting user satisfaction and travel efficiency. While innovations like fast charging and real-time data-driven scheduling improve the user experience, waiting remains a significant challenge (Bansal et al 2021). EV drivers demonstrate diverse strategies for managing delays, including planning, aligning charging with downtime, and selecting charging stations near amenities to make waiting more productive or enjoyable (Hussain et al., 2022).

Cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) provides a framework for understanding how EV owners reconcile the inconvenience of charging with their positive perceptions of EVs' environmental and economic benefits. Dissonance occurs when individuals experience conflicting beliefs or actions, prompting attitude adjustments to achieve consistency. This study finds that EV owners frequently reframe waiting as an opportunity for leisure or productivity, such as dining or walking, reducing the psychological discomfort associated with delays. Effective planning using navigation systems and a willingness to pay for faster charging further illustrate strategies for mitigating dissonance.

Methodology

This study adopts a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 2017), analyzing data from 32 semi-structured interviews with EV owners in the EU and USA. Participants discussed their charging habits, waiting experiences, and strategies for managing delays. Open coding identified themes related to charging routines, productive waiting behaviors, and the perceived value of fast charging. Axial coding grouped these themes into categories such as adaptation strategies, environmental and economic benefits, and planning behaviors. Selective coding identified "Adaptation to Electric Vehicle Charging" as the core category, emphasizing how users align behaviors with expectations to enhance satisfaction.

Findings

Findings reveal that EV owners manage charging delays by leveraging advanced technology, such as navigation systems for trip planning, and integrating charging into daily routines. Fast chargers are highly valued for long trips, with many participants willing to pay premiums for convenience. These behaviors align with research on positive waiting, where the quality of the waiting experience and perceived benefits significantly influence satisfaction. Transparency in waiting processes and realistic expectations, often set before purchasing an EV, further enhance user experiences.

This study extends cognitive dissonance theory to the context of EV charging, demonstrating how consumers mitigate dissonance through reframing and strategic adaptation. It highlights the importance of planning, perceived fairness, and the integration of charging into broader routines. These findings suggest practical strategies for improving EV adoption by addressing waiting-related barriers.

30

He Left Them on the Beaches

Track: 18. Teaching Cases

Urszula Roman-Kamphaus, Michael Harker

University of Strathclyde, United Kingdom

Summary Statement

This **teaching case** is about the poster that was created after Rishi Sunak left the Normandy beaches early. Its main themes are opinion research, advertising, AI and regulation.

32

TikTok or Not TikTok: Students' TikTok Utilization and Academic Engagement

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

TikTok is being investigated in the United States for societal harm apart from other possible harms. This research examines the students' TikTok utilization, their academic involvement and relationship between those two. The aspects driving TikTok engagement and its consequent effect on academic performance have been analyzed through the data collected from university students. Our results provide valuable insights into the dynamics of TikTok, showing a negative association between students' self-reported TikTok utilization and academic success.

Competitive Short Paper

TikTok is all about short videos. It is the creation of short-length videos that range in length from fifteen seconds to one minute (Yélamos-Guerra et al., 2022). This analysis aspires to investigate the influence that TikTok usage has on student academic engagement, with the hypothesis that higher TikTok engagement correlates with academic disengagement.

The objective of this study is to determine the correlation between TikTok utilization and social media impact on the students' education and to analyze if there is a gender impact for both of the variables.

TikTok significantly influences students' learning motivation and achievement, supported by data from interviews and a Google Form questionnaire (Putri et al., 2023). The integration of Instagram and TikTok improves student outcomes, fostering active participation and leveraging social media (Widarti et al., 2022).

We gathered statistics on TikTok usage among students by employing a quantitative method approach that integrated self-reported questionnaires. The judgmental sampling method was used for this research methodology (Tyrer & Heyman, 2016).

Overall results showed that students' TikTok utilization is in the "Low" range with a mean of 2.21 and SD of 0.21. The highest mean score 3.49 with 0.70 SD was for "My academics are my main focus." and reflecting that respondents' focus on their academics. The lowest mean 1.10 with SD of 0.49 was rated for "I use my TikTok to communicate for group projects," which showed the ineffectiveness of TikTok for academic team studies.

Students' academic engagement were also analyzed. Overall mean 3.00 with 0.11 SD falls under the category of "Very High" interpretation category which is higher than TikTok utilization results. "Getting a good grade" points out the highest mean of 3.47 with 0.60 SD. It lends evidence to students' focus on their academic achievement. The lowest mean 2.03 with SD of 1.02 measured with the "Going to the professor's office hours to review assignments or tests, or to ask questions.".

The results of independent T-test analysis show that there is statistically significant difference between gender, $t(237) = -3.243$, $p = 0.001$ which is lower than .05. That means there is a meaningful relationship between TikTok utilization and students' gender, and female has a higher level of academic engagement ($M= 3.28$, $SD= 0.21$) than male ($M= 3.08$, $SD= 0.25$).

The Pearson correlation is showing the range ($r=0.351$, $p <.001$) and the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). That means there is meaningful and positive correlation between TikTok utilization and students' engagement.

Our findings reveal that while TikTok usage appears to have a certain level of impact on students' academic engagement, the overall importance of academic priorities among respondents is evident. The "moderately high" level of academic engagement observed indicates the seriousness of the student body regarding their studies. Conversely, TikTok utilization was found to be "low," suggesting that students are aware of its potential as a time-consuming social media channel. Besides, our statistical analysis revealed that female has higher academic engagement versus male and it confirms the gender component.

33

Targeting The Invisible Generation Of Women: Is Age Still Relevant?

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the self-perceived age identity of Gen X women and challenges the use of chronological age as a marketing segmentation tool for this generational cohort. The study suggests that chronological age has no congruity with self-identity, and Gen X women emerge as a group of individuals with diverse self-perceived ages.

Competitive Short Paper

Chronological age is extensively used as a market segmentation variable (Chaney et al., 2017). It enables consumers to be portrayed as archetypes (Yankelovich 1964) and is a convenient, easy, and portable throughout the life course, demographic (Settersten 2017). Yet, its limitations have long been recognised; it is considered too simplistic (Sudbury and Wright 2006; Yannopoulou et al., 2023) and deemed an unreliable measure (Kuppelwieser and Klaus 2021a).

Consumers age at different rates and in different ways, becoming more dissimilar and diverse (Moschis 2003) with people in their 50s experiencing more frequent life changes than those in their 20s (Silvers 1997). Age-identity, defined as 'labels that reflect how people perceive themselves in terms of age' (Logan et al., 1992, p.452) has moved from being a relatively defined, socially entrenched state to one that is fluid and flexible (Gilleard and Higgs 2014). Women now possess the agency to conceal the appearance of chronological age and create their individual age identity (Cecil et al., 2022). They may elect to dress younger (Thorpe 2018), alter their physical appearance (Reisenwitz and Fowler 2018) or use youth-oriented brands to reinforce a younger identity (Amatulli et al., 2015). However, one of the challenges that women still face is gendered ageism (Itzin and Phillipson 2005), the intersection of gender inequality and inequity of age leading to negative ageing experiences for women (Voss et al., 2018).

Society values youth and beauty over maturity and wisdom (Kornadt et al., 2018) and women may adopt a younger self perceived age (SPA) to protect themselves from negative stereotypes and the association with ageing. The identity of women is frequently misunderstood by marketers (Veresiu and Parmentier 2021) and the representation of midlife women often reduced to stereotypes or tokenism (Kornadt et al., 2023).

This study explores the age identities of Generation X women in the UK. Born between 1965 and 1980, these women have grown-up in a consumer culture and are more likely to resist identity expectations (Jung and Siedlecki 2018). Overshowed by the more prominent 'boomer' and 'millennial' cohorts, GenX was initially perceived as nameless, lost and invisible (Coupland, 1991). A mixed-methods approach was employed, using a self-administered online questionnaire and solicited diary research, which provided nuanced insights of this female cohort's age identities, exploring their attitudes and lived experiences. Initial findings suggest that for these GenX women, age-identity is found to be more gendered than generic chronological or generational labels suggest. Chronological age has no congruity with their self-identity, and they make conscious efforts to reject chronological age anchoring and labels, rather they emerge as a group of individuals with diverse self-perceived ages.

The study has implications for marketing. Age segmentation can lead to stereotyping as it assumes homogeneity within both chronological and generational groups. GenX women are a heterogenous group, who frame age as an attribute of self-concept, idiosyncratically and fluidly, and who seek authentic visibility for their age identities. For marketing to reach these women, traditional age categorisations may need to be re-evaluated.

34

Sustainability on the Plate: Examining the Impact of Environmental Consciousness and Green Perceived Value on the Adoption of Alt-Meat Products among South African Consumers

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Tina Giannopoulos, Shir Meiry, Siphiwe Dlamini

University of Cape Town, South Africa

Summary Statement

This study examines the impact of Environmental Consciousness (EC) and Green Perceived Value (GPV) on South African consumers' willingness to purchase alternative meat (alt-meat) products. It reveals a strong positive link between EC and GPV, showing that environmentally aware consumers are more likely to value the green benefits of alt-meats, increasing their willingness to buy. The research suggests targeted marketing highlighting alt-meat's environmental benefits can foster sustainable consumption, with EC as a key driver.

35

In a Parallel Reality, where Vinyl Records, not Journal Articles, are the Currency in Academic Discourse

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

This paper advocates for the vinyl record album as an innovative medium for academic discourse in marketing and consumer studies. By blending sound, visual art, and materiality, the vinyl concept album transcends its traditional role, becoming a compelling tool for disseminating Consumer Culture Theory. Drawing on examples, the paper highlights how this medium fosters creative expression, challenges conventional norms, and enriches engagement with consumer culture.

Competitive Short Paper

This paper explores the not entirely ridiculous idea that marketing scholars should embrace the vinyl record album as a new medium for academic discourse. Drawing from personal experience, it illustrates how the vinyl concept album—blending representational and non-representational elements—can transcend its traditional role as a music delivery system. Brown and Kerrigan (2020) highlight the increasing acceptance and potential of nontraditional forms of academic expression, noting their ability to enrich the discipline by challenging conventional norms. Indeed, the integration of creative and artistic methodologies into academia has gained considerable momentum in recent years, reflecting a broader shift toward more innovative and engaging forms of nonrepresentational academic expression (Burge et al., 2016).

The projects discussed leverage both the tactile and intangible qualities of vinyl to create interdisciplinary narratives. These narratives unfold through auditory experiences, incorporating sound, noise, music, spoken word, and song lyrics. Additionally, they utilize the physical aspects of vinyl, such as cover art, inner sleeves, inserts, liner notes, and even accompanying music videos, to engage audiences with themes of consumer culture in innovative ways. Historically, concept albums have served as vehicles for addressing complex cultural themes, from Pink Floyd's *The Wall* to David Bowie's *Ziggy Stardust*. This paper extends this tradition into academic dissemination.

The *Vicarious Life* (Le Cliché, 2022) album critiques the commodification of health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The cover art featured unique, hand-assembled designs containing consumer products emblematic of the pandemic—such as hand sanitizer, syringes, and COVID test kits. The packaging became a tangible narrative device, encouraging listeners to reflect on the consumerist dimensions of the pandemic.

In the album *Post Plagiarism* (Le Cliché, 2019), the inner sleeve provides space for an essay on plagiarism, illustrating how vinyl packaging can serve as a platform for academic reflection. *The Product is You* (Le Cliché, 2019) uses its title and tracklist—including songs like *Terms & Conditions*, *Am I Still Real*, and *Thank U 4 Holding*—to critique contemporary consumer society. The repetitive lyrics of *Thank U 4 Holding* mimic the monotony of waiting in line for services.

In *Fabriqué*, the lyrics consist entirely of French brand names, paired with a music video constructed from 1980s TV commercials, offering a playful critique of branding. Visual and physical elements further enhance the narratives. One version of the album *Consumer Behaviour* (Le Cliché, 2014) features multiple human figures (architectural models) on its cover, symbolizing the homogenization of consumer identities. The merchandise included in *Look at My PowerPoint* (Le Cliché, 2017) extends the critique to educational and corporate spaces, with floppy disks, overhead transparencies, and student notes accompanying the vinyl.

By adopting the vinyl record as a medium for academic discourse, scholars can explore new avenues for critical and creative expression. These examples demonstrate how vinyl albums, as multisensory platforms, can articulate complex consumer culture themes in ways that transcend traditional academic formats. This paper argues that the vinyl record offers marketing scholars an innovative, evocative, and accessible means of engaging audiences and enriching academic inquiry.

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Exploring Consumer Responses to LGBTQ+ Family Inclusive Advertising

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

This multi-study project examines consumer responses to advertisements featuring heterosexual, gay, and lesbian parents, focusing on attitudes toward inclusivity and perception towards brand's inclusivity. Results from two experiments reveal that gay portrayals often elicit negative reactions, especially with explicit intimacy, while inclusivity attitudes significantly moderate responses. Perceived brand inclusivity enhances positive consumer perceptions. These findings offer insights for brands on leveraging inclusive advertising to connect with socially conscious audiences while managing potential backlash.

Competitive Short Paper

The inclusion of same-sex couples in advertising reflects an evolving societal acceptance of diverse family structures, particularly after the legalization of same-sex marriage in the United States in 2015. Prominent brands have embraced LGBTQ+ representation in their campaigns, but the consumer reception to these depictions—especially in family contexts—remains under-explored. This study aims to fill that gap by examining how consumers react to advertisements featuring heterosexual, gay, and lesbian parents. It evaluates the role of social identity, gender norms, and attitudes toward inclusivity in shaping consumer perceptions. By understanding these dynamics, brands can navigate the challenges of inclusive advertising while fostering meaningful connections with their audiences.

Drawing on social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), this research explores how in-group and out-group dynamics influence consumer attitudes toward LGBTQ+ family portrayals. Prior research suggests that heterosexual viewers may misinterpret or reject ads featuring LGBTQ+ families due to cultural and gender norm incongruities (Angelini & Bradley, 2010). Additionally, studies on LGBTQ+ representation in advertising indicate gender roles mediate audience responses, with male-male intimacy often viewed less favorably than lesbian or heterosexual portrayals (Eisend & Herman, 2019; Oakenfull & Greenlee, 2004). The role of priming and explicit intimacy in shaping consumer attitudes further complicates this landscape. Priming through adjacent content (e.g., articles on LGBTQ+ parenting) can heighten sensitivity to same-sex family imagery, while explicit intimacy challenges entrenched heteronormative assumptions, leading to mixed reactions (Forehand & Deshpandé, 2001; Borgerson et al., 2006).

Methodology

Two experiments were conducted. **Study 1** utilized a 3x2x2 factorial design to manipulate couple type (heterosexual, gay, lesbian), priming (sexual orientation vs. neutral control), and intimacy level (explicit vs. implicit). A total of 1,650 participants recruited through Prolific Academic were randomly assigned to conditions. Participants viewed ads featuring family units and completed surveys measuring ad attitudes, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions on 7-point Likert scales. Manipulation checks ensured the validity of the priming and intimacy stimuli. **Study 2** recruited 295 participants to assess how inclusivity attitudes moderated responses to LGBTQ+ family portrayals. Additional measures introduced in this study included perceived brand inclusivity and attitudes toward inclusivity.

Results

Study 1 revealed that ads featuring gay parents elicited lower ad attitudes and purchase intentions compared to heterosexual or lesbian portrayals. Explicit intimacy and priming amplified negative responses, while heterosexual portrayals remained unaffected. These results underscore the influence of gender norms, particularly the role of traditional masculinity in shaping responses to male-male intimacy. **Study 2** highlighted the importance of inclusivity attitudes. Participants with high inclusivity attitudes showed favorable responses to gay and lesbian portrayals, reporting stronger ad engagement, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions. In contrast, low-inclusivity participants demonstrated resistance to non-traditional family depictions. Across both studies, perceived brand inclusivity emerged as a critical factor in shaping positive consumer perceptions, suggesting opportunities for brands to connect with socially conscious audiences.

Conclusion

This research highlights how inclusivity attitudes and biases influence consumer responses to LGBTQ+ family advertising. Brands should tailor their messaging to foster loyalty among inclusivity-minded consumers while addressing potential backlash from conservative segments.

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Do External Financial Auditors Value Marketing Assets? The Case of Customer Satisfaction

Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

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Summary Statement

This study explores whether and how customer satisfaction, a market-based performance metric, affects the external financial auditor's pricing decision. We theorize and empirically confirm that customer satisfaction of a client firm reduces the business risk for the external financial auditor and consequently the fees charged for auditing the client's financial statements and such reduction is more pronounced for larger firms, more profitable firms, firms with heavier debt leverages, and firms in more litigation-prone industries.

Competitive Short Paper

Customer satisfaction is a critical aspect in the firm's relationship with its customers. A satisfied customer base is key to the firm's product sales, market share, and future business growth. As a market-based asset, its importance to the firm's current and future well-being is well documented in the finance as well as marketing literatures. One market participant that seems to have evaded the research attention is the external financial auditor, who plays a pivotal role in maintaining the confidence of all participants in the financial market and the integrity of the free enterprise system as a whole. In this research, we ask the question whether the auditor, whose focus is on the accuracy and truthfulness of the client firm's financial statements, will pay attention to market-based, non-financial performance metrics such as customer satisfaction. More specifically, we examine whether customer satisfaction has an impact on audit price, which is a relatively obscure, backstage aspect of the financial market. This research aims to extend our understanding of the impact of a critical product market performance variable on the financial services market and contributes to the discussion of marketing accountability.

We theorize that customer satisfaction may improve the financial performance and lower the auditor's assessment of engagement risk with the client, and thus we hypothesize that firms with higher levels of customer satisfaction will enjoy lower audit fees, ceteris paribus. We further suggest that customer satisfaction may reduce engagement risk and audit fees more for larger firms, more profitable firms, firms with greater debt leverage, and firms in litigation prone industries. We collect data from multiple sources and test the relationship between customer satisfaction and audit fees. The results confirm our hypotheses and provide strong evidence that auditors view customer satisfaction as favorable market information that reduces their business and audit risk and they pass the expected lower cost to their clients. This suggests that firms reap benefit of their marketing investment not only from demonstrated participants of product and financial markets but also from auditors, a key, behind the scenes, financial market participant.

The contributions of this research are three-fold. First, research on marketing accountability and marketing-finance has not studied the impact of marketing on the financial auditor as a critical participant in the financial market. This study calls attention to the auditor and relate marketing to audit engagement. Second, we establish a negative relationship between the client firm's customer satisfaction as a marketing performance metric and auditing pricing. Third, we theorize that the main mechanism through which customer satisfaction reduces auditing fee is the lower assessment of audit engagement risk. We are able to empirically demonstrate four known client-side risk factors interact with customer satisfaction to further reduce the audit fees. Marketers continue to face the challenge of demonstrating the value of marketing investment at strategic and tactical levels. This research helps to meet this challenge.

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Feedback Kitchen - Improving Feedback Speed, Substance and Effectiveness for Large Classes Through Semi-Automation

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

It is widely accepted that good quality – and also quantity – of feedback for formative assessments is key to student development and learning (Ackerman, Domneyer and Gross, 2017; Hedtrich and Graulich, 2018). This paper reports on the development of a tool to allow feedback for formative assessments in Marketing to be generated more quickly whilst also supporting and enhancing its intrinsic quality.

Competitive Short Paper

It is widely accepted that good quality – and also quantity – of feedback for formative assessments is key to student development and learning (Ackerman, Domneyer and Gross, 2017; Hedtrich and Graulich, 2018). This paper reports on the development of a tool to allow substantive feedback for formative assessments in Marketing to be generated more quickly whilst also supporting and enhancing its intrinsic quality (Pishchukina and Allen, 2021).

The resultant Excel based system is free and simple to use, and can be adapted to different classes very quickly. In just moments it produces a good-sized block of feedback text which can then be copied into a VLE or other receptable and then edited – giving both quality and quantity in feedback very quickly. The intention being that that text would be tailored and improved, but that the basis is done very quickly.

Importantly, the system is designed so that the feedback material can be edited by an individual user with minimal training before or during the marking of a batch of coursework. This allows specificity to the particular needs of both class and marker.

For a cohort of 750 students, even saving just two minutes marking time per assignment would result in a time-saving of 1500 minutes, or 25 hours! This tool does a lot better than that. It will be made available to interested parties, with technical support available if needed.

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Beyond the Algorithm: Decoding Human-Machine Engagement

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

How do humans truly engage with machines? This study unravels the intricacies of Human-Machine Engagement (HME), revealing a striking typology of behaviors that shape our interactions with GenAI like ChatGPT. Delving into the emotional and cognitive drivers behind these forms, the study uncovers their profound impacts on users and service providers. Offering fresh insights, this research challenges assumptions, paving the way for businesses to harness GenAI's potential while navigating its uncertainties.

Competitive Short Paper

The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in service and marketing contexts has fundamentally altered how customers engage with businesses (Huang & Rust, 2024). While current research has extensively explored AI's adoption and the characteristics of AI-driven tools (e.g., Le et al., 2024; Pantano & Scarpi, 2022), less attention has been paid to engagement with AI itself. The engagement literature has predominantly focused on how AI facilitates engagement with brands or services (Hollebeek et al., 2024), rather than examining the direct engagement of individuals with the AI itself as the primary object of interaction. Addressing this gap, this research introduces the concept of Human-Machine Engagement (HME), offering a typology and a nomological network to conceptualize, measure, and understand engagement with generative AI (GenAI) technologies.

Drawing on actor engagement literature, computer science research, and socio-technical systems, we define HME as actors' voluntary resource contributions (e.g., time, knowledge, and effort) during interactions focused on AI. Through a two-phase netnographic study and two experiments, we identify four distinct HME forms: *informative, experimenting, praising, and apprehensive,* differentiated by their valence and intensity. Our findings highlight the emotional and cognitive drivers of HME, including *excitement, concern, and advocacy*. We also uncover how these forms evolve over time and influence both individual users and service providers. Experimenting HME, characterized by high intensity and real-world demonstrations of GenAI outputs, emerges as the most impactful form, fostering positive perceptions of HME value and affinity while reducing perceived risks. Conversely, apprehensive HME, marked by low intensity and negative valence, heightens perceived risks and dampens affinity. Informative and praising HME yield nuanced effects, with informative HME enhancing perceived value and praising HME strengthening emotional affinity. The experiments further explore the implications of HME for service providers under varying levels of competitor pressure. We find that high-intensity forms like experimenting HME drive stronger adoption intentions and perceived value of HME, particularly in competitive contexts. This underscores the role of competitor pressure as a catalyst for firms' AI adoption strategies.

This study broadens engagement literature by incorporating non-human actors into frameworks (Storbacka, 2019; Brodie et al., 2019), moving beyond the brand-customer focus (e.g., Bowden & Mirzaei, 2021; Azer et al., 2024; Dolan et al., 2019). It enhances socio-technical systems theory by exploring the interaction between individual behaviors and organizational responses in AI-driven services (Akbarighatar et al., 2023). Additionally, it advances human-technology interaction, shifting from human-AI differences (Fortunati & Edwards, 2020) to engaging with machines, facilitating the development of more intuitive, trust-building AI.

Our research offers marketers insights into managing customer perceptions of GenAI, addressing concerns, and using HME forms to strengthen relationships and competitiveness. It also highlights opportunities for further exploration in areas like healthcare and education and suggests future studies on HME's long-term effects on loyalty, finances, and ethics, especially regarding privacy and misinformation. This work bridges service marketing and human-technology interaction, providing a foundational framework for leveraging HME in the evolving AI landscape.

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Ad Circumvention in Esport Streaming

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

Video gamers who broadcast (stream) their gameplay are required by platforms to run disruptive advertisements. To circumvent the disruptiveness of these advertisements, many streamers are enacting strategies so their audience don't miss any gameplay. This acts as a form rebellion against the platforms that control advertising. From a Marxist conflict theory, this study conducts an innovative screen recording methodology to explore how streamers circumvent commercial advertising and the impact ad circumvention has on audience attitudes.

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Employees as heroes: Rebuilding customer relationships through post-crisis communications

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

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Summary Statement

After large-scale service disruptions, organizations communicate with customers as part of their crisis recovery efforts. The present research demonstrates that, in such circumstances, organizations can benefit from attributing the recovery to employees' heroism. The positive effect of heroism is explained by its ability to elicit feelings of admiration toward employees. Across five experiments, we examine the positive impact of emphasizing employees' heroism on customers' responses, as well as the boundary conditions of this effect.

Competitive Short Paper

After large-scale service crises, organizations often rely on communication strategies to rebuild trust and loyalty among customers (Rasoulian et al., 2017). In such circumstances, organizations can benefit from attributing recovery to employees' heroism, framing employee efforts as heroic rather than simply due to exceptional talent or strenuous effort. Bolstering heroism is proposed as a secondary strategy (Coombs, 2007) that complements an apology to customers negatively impacted by the crisis by emphasizing employees' courage, sacrifice, and selflessness (Allison and Goethals, 2015; Stanley et al., 2023). Through five experiments, we demonstrate that the effectiveness of bolstering heroism lies in its ability to elicit admiration toward the employees. Admiration is an emotion linked to reverence for extraordinary acts of courage and sacrifice (Onu et al., 2016). The transfer of admiration from employees to the organization elicits positive customer responses (Aaker et al., 2012). We compare the effect of bolstering heroism to comparable messages focusing on effort or talent. Study 1a finds preliminary evidence for our proposed strategy and Study 1b tests its persuasiveness in a real-life crisis: a 2023 cyberattack on the British Library. Compared to messaging focused on employee effort, bolstering heroism significantly increased feelings of admiration toward employees (Study 1a β = .43*; Study 1b β = .83*). Through the mediation of admiration, the message increases positive word-of-mouth (Study 1a β = .32*; Study 1b β = .23*) and donations (Study 1b β = 2.57*). In Study 2 we demonstrate that the positive effect of bolstering heroism depends on the presence of risk. When the risk incurred by heroes is high versus low, bolstering heroism, through the mediation of admiration, has a stronger effect on loyalty intentions (high risk β = .28* versus low risk β = .13*) and positive word of mouth (high risk β = .26* versus low risk β = .12*). Furthermore, contextual evidence can discount heroism. Viewing a job as inherently demanding reduces the perceived extraordinariness of heroism. Study 3 shows that when perceived job demands are low (versus high), the effect of heroism is significantly stronger than the focus on effort (loyalty intentions: β= .17*; positive word of mouth: β = .13*). However, when job demands are high, there are no significant differences(loyalty intentions: β = -.11; positive word of mouth: β = -.08). Study 4 shows that information suggesting that an organization is a good employer also normalizes heroism. Bolstering heroism is effective only when there is no information presenting the organization as a good employer information (loyalty intentions: good employer badge absent β = .38* versus good employer badge present β = -.05; positive word of mouth: good employer badge absent β = .36*versus good employer badge present β = -.001). Bolstering heroism can be a powerful tool for organizations during crisis recovery, especially when employees are perceived to act beyond their typical roles, displaying courage and sacrifice.

* the confidence interval (95%) does not include zero.

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Retailers' Sustainability Practices and Consumers Patronage of Online Outlets in Emerging Economies: The Role of Trust and Cultural Values

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

In the phase of increasing online shopping since COVID-19 (Young, et al., 2022), there are concerns on the continuous destruction of ecosystems. Studies have not sufficiently examined specific dynamics (like, generational cohort, developing economies context and combine effects of trust and cultural values) potential in shaping the relationships between retailers' sustainability practices and consumers' patronage using the stimulus–organism–behaviour–consequence framework and mixed method, which this study tends to unravel.

Competitive Short Paper

Arguments on inseparability of marketing and sustainability in addressing global challenges is growing (Kandpal, et al., 2024; White, et al., 2019) and forecast from a joint study by McKinsey and NielsenIQ suggest that consumers now care more about sustainability and are willing to back it up with their wallets (Frey et al. 2023; Vadakkepatt, et al., 2021). Amid the debate and the optimism, customers increasingly expect retailers to demonstrate sustainable practices to minimise environmental harm and bring about positive social impact (Ghaffar & Islam, 2024; Abdelmoety, et al., 2022) as they are fascinated by responsible practices and repudiate the irresponsible initiatives of businesses depending on their values and trust (Sahelices-Pinto, et al., 2018). Thus, this study evaluates the role of consumer trust and cultural values in the relationship between online retailers' sustainable practices and consumers' patronage especially across generational cohorts and cultural context. SOBC framework (Xuan, et al., 2023), we unravel the antecedents and subsequent pro-environmental behaviour of online consumers, by investigating how a combination of environment, the society, and individual choices and values influences consumer's sustainable attitudes and behaviour among different generations of online consumers in emerging economies. Based on SOBC framework, the flow of the hypotheses is assessing the influence of external and internal stimulus on organism (attitude towards retailer's sustainability practices and personal norms). In turn, whether this drives consumer's patronage of online retail outlets (behavioural responses) and their consequences (repeat patronage-based on sustainability practices), by examining both consumer trust and cultural values as moderators which previous studies have not examined (Anand, et al., 2024; Kumari & Bhateja, 2022). The focus on emerging economy stems largely from evidence that since COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a rising trend in the number of consumers who have moved online for their shopping needs (Hattingh & Ramlakan, 2022).

This study adopts mixed method of qualitative and quantitative approach in establishing findings across different cohorts (Gen X, Y, and Z) and countries (Egypt, Kenya, and Nigeria) to gain insights into cohort-country specific differences and make the results more generalisable. The survey method will be adopted to collect the required quantitative data through administration of questionnaire to 1000 respondents across the three countries on a ratio 3:3:4, while interview will be conducted for 10 online shoppers per country totalling 30 interviewees to unravel the nuance of consumers trust and cultural values in different countries. The data from questionnaire will be analysed using structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) and the qualitative data will be analysed using a thematic and content analysis, aided by MaxQDA would be utilised for systematic exploration data. This is to benefit from their main differences of data quantification opportunity and gain more in-depth understanding of the reasons behind consumers' behaviours (Mogaji, et al., 2021; Vaismoradi, et al., 2013).

This study aims to make the following contributions to understanding and determine role of consumers trust and cultural values in the relationships between the demand and supply sides of online patronage based on retailers` sustainability practices among generational cohorts in emerging economies.

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A Q methodological Analysis of Non Alcoholic Beer (NAB) Consumption

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

No-and low-alcohol (NoLo) drinks are growing in popularity due to mindful drinking trends and product innovation. Hybrid drinkers, who consume both NoLo and full-strength beverages, are on the rise, with policymakers supporting NoLo to reduce alcohol-related harms. This study uses Q-methodology to explore consumer perceptions of non-alcoholic beer (NAB). Findings reveal full-strength drinkers view NAB as poorly branded, while hybrid drinkers see it as a premium, health-conscious option. Targeted branding and promotions can encourage hybrid-consumption.

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How Does Not "Paying" For Electricity Matter? Using Smart Sockets To Explore Behaviour Change

Track: 7. Consumer Research

Joanne Swaffield, Savvas Papagiannidis, Diana Gregory-Smith

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Summary Statement

This paper explores how energy consumption feedback from smart sockets can influence consumer decisions when the only 'cost' is to the environment. Drawing on a study with university students for whom financial cost was not a consideration, the paper investigates how users respond to these devices. It focuses on three key areas: (i) drivers for and barriers to adoption, (ii) comprehension of feedback mechanisms, and (iii) potential for behaviour change aimed at reducing carbon emissions.

Competitive Short Paper

The past two decades have witnessed an unprecedented growth in the availability of smart technologies for the home, which can provide information about levels and patterns of energy use, as well as indicating periods of peak demand (Vasicek *et al*., 2018). Historically, however, research has focused on the technological aspects of the smart home, with only more recent studies considering the user perspective (e.g, Gøthesen *et al.* 2023). The paper will address this gap by focusing on consumer engagement and looking at it in the context of a particular type of smart technology: smart plug sockets. Specifically, it will assess the potential for this device to reduce carbon emissions by exploring its appeal, comprehensibility, and effectiveness in the absence of cost as a motivating factor.

Smart sockets are electrical devices that connect ordinary appliances to the internet and perform a range of functions. They can be used to control one or more appliances remotely (Lin *et al.* 2018) and deliver information about power consumption and time of use (TOU) (Kang *et al.* 2016). This kind of device can therefore play an integral role in facilitating one of the key functions of a smart home: to reduce energy use and promote environmental sustainability (Chen et al., 2017). The sockets in this study provide information about energy use and carbon emissions as well as indicating the source of the electricity coming into the socket via an LED traffic light system (green indicating that energy is coming from renewable sources, red indicating non-renewables and amber signalling a mixture of both).

The devices were distributed to university students whose monthly rent was inclusive of utility bills. They had no cost incentive to reduce their energy consumption, making it possible to focus on sustainability as a motivating factor for behaviour change. Participants used the smart socket in their room for a period of three weeks, with the device initially deactivated. The LEDs were switched on at the end of week one and an energy usage report was sent out at the end of week two. Participants engaged in a short interview before and after the study to assess their motivations for engagement and their response to the device and information about their energy use.

Findings suggest that, although sustainability was a concern for the students, they would be more likely to adopt the technology when cost was once again a factor in their decision making. While they were interested in both the source of the electricity and the variations in usage, this information did not have a significant impact on the choices they made when it came to plugging in appliances. The perceived need for energy use at certain levels and particular times of the day could not be challenged when sustainability was the only concern. In addition, there was some confusion around the LED and graphical feedback, indicating that the effectiveness of the device under any circumstances may be contingent on a better understanding of the information that is being relayed to the user.

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Antecedents and consequences of luxury brand consumption among consumers with psychopathic tendencies.

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This study seeks to conceptualise the antecedents and consequences of luxury brand consumption by consumers with dark personality traits. Our research contributes by extending the literature on the personality traits of frequent luxury consumers. Thus, considering societal uplift, imposter syndrome, entitlement, and manipulation as a consequence of luxury consumption.

Competitive Short Paper

Democratised luxury has driven global luxury consumption amounting to 1.5 trillion dollars in 2024 with approximately 330 million consumers[1]. Luxury brands are synonymous with status (O'Cass & Siahtiri, 2013) and are marketed to sell a dream (Dubois & Paternault, 1995). Consumers of luxury goods have a high need for uniqueness, to project a desired self-image (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012), and in effort to stand out of the crowd (Tafani et al., 2024). Previous research in the field asserts that luxury brand consumption can bring about positive social consequences and societal uplift (Furnham et al., 2013; O'Cass & Siahtiri, 2013; Tafani et al., 2024). Moreover, consuming luxury brands is a learned strategy to induce beneficial treatment from others (Lee et al., 2015). This social approval and status signalling can be seen as a key driver of luxury consumption (O'Cass & Siahtiri, 2013). Thus, the social value of luxury consumption is intertwined with the conspicuousness of these items (Tafani et al., 2024). This results in materialistic gains (Bharti et al., 2021), and luxury consumers often prioritising material possessions and wealth (Dubois et al., 2021).

Despite these purported benefits of luxury goods consumption, there are also negative connotations (Dubois et al., 2021). So far, much of the research has examined the negative perceptions that others may hold toward luxury consumers' characteristics (Garcia et al., 2019) and the negative impact luxury consumption has on consumer's behaviour (Wang et al., 2021). However, little is known regarding the inherent rather than perceived personality traits, specifically dark triad personality traits, of luxury brand consumers. The dark triad personality traits, which include Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (Boddy, 2010), have been associated with luxury consumption (Furnham et al., 2013). Thus, this study seeks to conceptualise the antecedents and consequences of luxury brand consumption by consumers with dark personality traits.

Dark personality traits are tied to detrimental behaviour toward others and a manipulative interpersonal style (Boddy, 2010; Razmus et al., 2023). It is estimated that 5% to 25% of individuals across the globe display elevated levels of dark triad traits (Neumann et al., 2020). The cornerstones can be seen as the dark triad of narcissism, machiavellianism and psychopathy (Boddy, 2023). Antecedent traits such as materialism can also influence luxury consumption (O'Cass & Siahtiri, 2013). This research addresses the subsequent consequences of luxury consumption, such as impostor syndrome (Goor et al., 2019; Wong et al., 2024), psychological entitlement (Goor et al., 2019; Piff, 2014), the celebration of social and economic inequalities (Berg & Eger, 2003; Schor, 1999) and manipulation (Razmus et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2021). This study contributes to the field through conceptualising the interplay between dark personality traits and luxury brand consumption, benefiting luxury brand managers seeking to appeal to these consumers.

This information was retrieved from: https://www.bain.com/about/media-center/press-releases/2024/global-luxury-spending-to-land-near-1.5-trillion-in-2024-remaining-relatively-flat-as-consumers-prioritize-experiences-over-products-amid-uncertainty/ on 18 December 2024

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Questioning Business Model Innovation in the Winter Sports Industry – Preparing Changes Ahead of French Alps 2030 Winter Olympics

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

Jessica Lichy[1], Maher Kachour[2], Vincent Dutot[3], Peter Stokes[4], Fraser McLeay[5]

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Summary Statement

This study explores the challenges and opportunities for Business Model Innovation in the winter sports industry, ahead of the 2030 Winter Olympics in the French Alps. It focuses on ski resorts' reliance on artificial snow production and limited diversification of activities due to climate change. Using a multi-method approach, the research highlights

environmental and socio-economic risks, advocating for regenerative business models to restore the ecosytem. The study offers actionable insights for policymakers and industry leaders.

Competitive Short Paper

This study critically examines the evolving winter sports industry in light of climate change, ahead of the 2030 Winter Olympics, branded as 'French Alps 2030'. Drawing from Business Model (BM) theory, it explores the risks and opportunities of Business Model Innovation (BMI) in ski resorts, focusing on artificial snow production and the diversification of activities as responses to environmental and market challenges.

The winter sports industry is vital to the French economy, encompassing diverse organisations including ski resorts, hotels, equipment providers and transport services. Yet, climate change and declining snowfall have created a pressing need for strategic BMI (Berard-Chenu et al., 2024). Today, ski resorts rely on artificial snow production to ensure operational continuity, but this solution poses environmental costs, including high energy consumption and excessive use of drinking water (Crédoc, 2024). Furthermore, there is limited evidence of activity diversification to reduce dependency on skiing. Our study examines these concerns, highlighting the paradox where winter sports enthusiasts claim environmental awareness while engaging in activities that contribute to greenhouse gas emissions.

Our aims are to (i) analyse how business owners and managers in the six-village Les Sybelles ski area are adapting their BMs to address environmental and socio-economic challenges; (ii) investigate the impact of BMI on consumer demand for winter sports; and (iii) develop actionable recommendations for sustainable and regenerative BM practices.

We employ a multi-method approach, using focus, survey and in-depth interviews to gain insights into the challenges and opportunities in BMI.

Initial findings suggest that the heavy reliance on artificial snow enables ski operations amid warmer winters but exacerbates environmental issues such as water scarcity and high energy usage. There is little evidence of efforts to diversify activities beyond skiing. Instead, the ski area continues to focus on property development, which intensifies resource pressures. While customers value the continuity of ski services, they express concerns about the environmental implications of artificial snow production and lack of sustainable alternatives.

These findings underscore the need for a strategic shift beyond sustainability to restore degraded ecosystems by aligning BM practices with self-renewing capacities (i.e., regenerative BM), and using marketing communications to inform and educate customers about the environmental impact of their choices and eco-friendly alternatives.

Above all, our study highlights the urgent need for transformative BMI in the winter sports industry to address the challenges of climate change. As France prepares for the 2030 Winter Olympics, the research provides timely insights for policymakers, business owners, and scholars. It calls for integrated solutions that balance economic viability with environmental and social responsibility, ensuring the long-term resilience of the winter sports industry.

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Older Customers and Barriers to Mobile Banking – investigating Trust, Satisfaction, and Brand Equity outcomes.

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

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Summary Statement

With the growth in digital (online and mobile) banking, older customers merit special consideration. This segment is growing faster than any other cohort, and they have less exposure to technology, yet it is assumed they will stay with a service brand for longer. We present findings from a survey of 310 US-based banking customers aged 60+ , investigating perceived barriers to mobile banking, customer trust in their bank, as well as brand equity and customer satisfaction.

Competitive Short Paper

Technological advances are leading to more digitalised (online and mobile) banking provision. With newer, digital-based banks such as Revolut growing its Irish customer base by over 20% in one year (Walsh, 2024), it is easy to forget that some customers have concerns about digital banking. For example, Age UK (2023) found 75% of older customers wanted to carry out at least one transaction in a branch, with only 9% using a smartphone to bank.

Scholarship generally regards 'older customers' as those aged approximately 60+ (Franco, 2023). These customers merit special consideration, as this segment is growing faster than any other cohort (Rajaobelina et al., 2020; UN, 2022). They also have less exposure to technology over their lifetimes compared with younger consumers (Obal & Kunz, 2013) and an assumption remains that they will stick with a service brand for longer (Nunan & Di Domenico, 2019).

Studies exploring older consumers and the digitalisation of banking have focused on factors influencing adoption of digital banking (Hanif & Lallie, 2021; Jiang et al., 2022), resistance to using mobile payment services (Cham et al., 2022), or response to service robots (McLeay et al., 2020). Yet little is known about how digitalisation could be associated with their trust in the bank, their perceptions of the bank brand and with their satisfaction.

Financial matters may be perceived as a risky activity when using unfamiliar technologies and, for older customers, this can affect their trust in the bank (Age UK, 2023). Perceived barriers to banking technologies such as mobile banking, can erode older customers' trust (Rajaobelina et al., 2020). Research distinguishes between functional and psychological barriers (Cham et al., 2022). Functional barriers encompass usage barriers – doubts about the effectiveness of the technology; value barriers - value for money; and risk barriers - the perception of the degree of threat presented (Chaouali & Soudien, 2019). Psychological barriers encompass tradition barriers – striving for a status quo; and image barriers – negative attitudes about the service (Chaouali & Soudien, 2019). While these barriers were investigated in relation to mobile banking resistance (Cham et al., 2022; Chaouali & Soudien, 2019), they could also provide insights about trust and brand outcomes.

We present findings from a survey of 310 US-based banking customers, aged 60+, who have their own bank account and/or share a bank account, and who have used mobile banking. We investigate the relationship between psychological and functional barriers to mobile banking, and trust in the bank. We also explore general self-efficacy as an antecedent of trust in the bank. Finally, we examine the relationship between trust in the bank and brand equity and customer satisfaction.

Findings indicate a positive association between tradition barriers and self-efficacy and trust in the bank. Both risk and usage barriers are negatively associated with trust in the bank. Trust in the bank is positively associated with brand equity and customer satisfaction. We advocate that banking managers would support older customers to overcome psychological and functional barriers to using new technologies, and support their self-efficacy, to protect customer trust.

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Analyzing the Relationship between Visitor Experiences and Short-term Impact in Performing Arts

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

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Summary Statement

Current studies in the performing arts do not provide clear insights about the relationship between visitor experiences and impact. In this quantitative study of two musical productions, the relationship is investigated between visitor experiences (perception of production elements and outcome-based experiences) and short-term impact (memorable, meaningful, transformational). Exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling is applied. Emotional connection, intellectual stimulation, cultural aesthetics and the quality of the cast significantly influence impact levels.

Competitive Short Paper

The attention in society and in the academic world is shifting from investigating the relationship between customer experiences and outcomes relevant for businesses (such as word-of-mouth), to studying individual outcomes like impact, meaning, well-being and transformation (Agapito & Sigala, 2024; Neuhofer, 2024). The focus of this study is experience impact in a performing arts setting. Although several studies describe the visitor impact of performing arts, these studies do not provide clear insights about the relationship between antecedents and impact (Bilder et al., 2022; Carnwarth & Brown, 2014; Gattenhof et al., 2022; Walmsley, 2013). Therefore, it remains unclear how impact may be enhanced. In this study, we investigate the relationship between visitor experiences and short-term impact.

Impact is defined as any effect of services on an individual (Streatfield & Markless, 2009). We apply the theoretical framework of Duerden et al. (2018) which distinguishes three levels of experience impact: memorable (creating emotions), meaningful (discovering new insights), and transformational (creating a change in attitude or behaviour). In line with marketing literature, we distinguish between two main components of visitor experiences: the cognitive assessment of the service organization and the affective response to the consumption process (Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown, 2019; Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). There is no common understanding of how visitor experiences in the performing arts should be subcategorized based on these two components. In this study, we include (1) the perception of a range of production elements such as the topic of the play, the cast and stage design, and (2) several outcome-based experiences such as captivation, emotional connection, and intellectual stimulation (Boerner & Jobst, 2013; Chan et al., 2019; Tung Au et al., 2017).

Two musical productions in the Netherlands are evaluated with a questionnaire (musical one: 'Come From Away', 200 responses; musical two: 'Diana & Sons', 339 responses). The measurement instrument contains six production elements, six outcome-based experiences, and three experience impacts. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) with the data of the first musical showed six visitor experience dimensions (cast, topic of the play, emotional connection, cultural aesthetics, intellectual stimulation and social connectedness). These results were tested in a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using the second dataset. Finally, we tested the relationships between the six factors and three impact outcomes by structural equation modeling (SEM). The results show that emotional connection influences all three impact types. This demonstrates the importance of feelings of connection related to the musical characters or to the performers. Intellectual stimulation influences the meaningful and transformational impact. The quality perceptions of the cast affect the memorable impact. Cultural aesthetics positively affects the memorable impact, but it slightly negatively influences the meaningful impact. To the best of our knowledge, this is one of the first studies investigating the relationship between visitor experiences and impact in a performing arts setting. Managers should carefully select the characters in a performance, and provide challenging messages to enhance impact. Future studies should pay attention to improve the reliability and validity of experience dimensions.

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Understanding Memorable Visitor Experiences and Impact in a Performing Arts Context

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

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Summary Statement

There is a lack of knowledge in understanding experience impact and the factors that contribute to increased impact. The visitor experience is divided into the perception of production elements and outcome-based experiences. A cultural impact domain framework is used in combination with an impact level framework. The Critical Incident Method (CIT) is applied to collect visitors' stories in a performing arts context. The results show a deepened understanding of the relationship between experiences and impact.

Competitive Short Paper

Academics show a growing attention for investigating experience effects in terms of memorability, meaningfulness and transformation (Duerden et al., 2018; Neuhofer et al., 2021). Insights into experience impact allow professionals to evaluate their goals and enhance experience design (Vermeulen & Maas, 2021). There is a lack of knowledge in understanding experience impact and the factors that contribute to increased experience impact (Lundberg et al., 2022; Neuhofer et al., 2020).

In this qualitative study, a distinction is made between visitor experiences of a performing arts event and impact as an effect of these experiences. The visitor experience is divided into the perception of production elements (such as the topic of the performance, stage directing, acting and singing) and outcome-based experiences (such as captivation, emotions, social connections) (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Boerner & Jobst, 2013; Carnwarth & Brown, 2014). Two theoretical impact frameworks are applied. Firstly, based on Dunphy (2015) and Dunphy et al. (2020) we distinguish cultural impact domains such as creativity stimulation, aesthetics enrichment, cognitive stimulation, and hedonic wellbeing. Secondly, in line with Duerden et al. (2018), we distinguish two impact levels: meaningful impact (new insights) and transformational impact (change in attitude or behaviour). We apply a practice approach as a framework to analyse experiences, impact, and actor- and context-related factors (Bargeman & Richards, 2020). The research objective is to understand memorable experiences and impact, and to understand the relationship between memorable experiences and impact in a performing arts setting.

The Critical Incident Method (CIT) is applied, which is a qualitative research method to collect visitors' stories (Gremler, 2004). The context is a Dutch theatre. Visitors received a short questionnaire with two open questions. They were invited to write down their own story about a memorable theatre performance: (1) what happened at the time of the performance (the experience) and (2) what the performance brought to them (the impact). In total 6400 visitors received a questionnaire via email, 435 persons opened the survey (6.8% of the total), and 81 respondents shared their stories (1,3% of the total).

The results show that almost all respondents refer to emotions to describe the outcome-based experience, which seems to be a precondition for creating impact as suggested by Duerden et al. (2018). Respondents clearly memorize their perceptions of production elements such as the quality of acting, singing or stage direction. The majority of the respondents describing an impact, also describe their perceptions of production elements. Therefore, it seems that the perception of production elements triggers emotions, which drive experience impact. The two most important cultural impact domains are cognitive stimulation and hedonic wellbeing. In terms of impact levels, around one third of the respondents mentioned a meaningful impact. The results show that meaningful is not only related to insights, but also to other facets such as personal memories and wellbeing, thereby broadening the framework of Duerden et al. (2018). Only a few respondents mention transformational impact. Both visitor experience and experience impact are influenced by actor-related and context-related factors.

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Echoes of war: unveiling the sociocultural emotions in historic documents of battlefield tourism marketing

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

This paper explores how historic documents from the Vietnam War (1954–1975) elicit sociocultural emotions in local tourists visiting Vietnam's Demilitarized Zone battlefield. Initial findings reveal that these documents provoke profound emotions, foster intergenerational understanding, and deepen reflections on national history and identity, helping tourists contextualize historical events while transforming battlefield tourism into an immersive and meaningful experience.

Competitive Short Paper

The integration of historic documents into battlefield tourism marketing underscores their profound role in fostering sociocultural emotions (Chronis & Hampton, 2008; Chhabra, 2010). These emotions, shaped by social norms, cultural values, shared identities, and relationships, are relational and expressive phenomena that reflect and influence social structures and interactions (Barbalet, 2001; Slaby & Von Scheve, 2019). They are context-dependent, varying across time and space, and evolving in response to social and cultural changes (Turner, 2007; Mesquita & Boiger, 2014). In battlefield tourism, artifacts - ranging from martyrs' letters to poignant photographs and evocative poems - serve as bridges across time, evoking sociocultural emotions in local tourists, linking their personal stories to collective historical memories (Ashworth & Hartmann, 2005; Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Seaton, 2000). However, despite these documents' immense potential, their use in tourism marketing has been inconsistent and often lacks a cohesive strategy, leading to missed opportunities for deeper emotional engagement of tourists (Light, 2017; Winter, 2019).

Historic documents significantly enhance the perceived authenticity of battlefield tourism - a crucial factor in visitor engagement and satisfaction (Chhabra et al., 2003; Rickly-Boyd, 2012). Soldiers' letters bring history to life by offering intimate reflections of wartime experiences, fostering empathy and connection (Frew, 2012; Lloyd, 1998). Photographs add a visual dimension, capturing the stark realities of war and situating them within a broader socio-political context (Winter, 2009). These photographs also make complex historical events more accessible to diverse audiences (Packer et al., 2014). Meanwhile, poems encapsulate collective emotions, providing insights that deepen interpretive experiences (Chronis, 2012). Together, these documents create rich and nuanced narratives that elevate battlefield tourism from passive observation to active reflection (Chhabra, 2010; Frew, 2012).

This study used key documents from the Vietnam War (1954 -1975) including martyrs' letters, photographs, and veterans' poems to elicit sociocultural emotions of local tourists visiting Vietnam's DMZ battlefield. Using open-ended questions, participants reflected on these documents, revealing how these artifacts shaped their emotional experiences (Timothy & Boyd, 2003; Uzzell, 1998). Local tourists, like families and students, highlighted how the documents provoked emotional responses and cultivated intergenerational understanding of national history and identity. Especially, veterans shared personal connections, recalling vivid memories and expressing their deep emotional attachment to the war's legacy.

Initial findings highlight the profound emotional impacts of historic documents. Soldiers' letters evoke empathy by connecting tourists with the personal struggles of those who endured war. Photographs amplify this connection by vividly depicting human costs of conflict, serving as visual witnesses to history. Poems invite reflection on the cultural and emotional legacies of war, adding poetic depth to the visitor experience. These artifacts blend emotional resonance with educational value, helping tourists contextualize historical events within broader narratives.

Historic documents have the potential to transform battlefield tourism into immersive and meaningful experiences. By integrating letters, photographs, and poems into cohesive marketing strategies, tourism operators can enhance emotional engagement and foster a deeper appreciation for sociocultural heritage (Chhabra et al., 2003; Frew, 2012).

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Consequences Of Brand Availability During Panic Buying On Consumer-Brand Relationships, Brand Attachment And Brand Loyalty: An Emerging Market Context

Track: 5. Brands & Branding

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Summary Statement

Through the lens of brand attachment theory, this study investigates the effect of brand availability during panic buying on brand attachment, consumer-brand relationships and brand loyalty. Brand focused studies are typically set in stable market conditions and do not account for panic buying. This research takes a novel approach in adopting an emerging market context, a setting largely overlooked when considering panic buying. This study underscores the crucial role of the brand during crisis situations.

Competitive Short Paper

Exemplified by the COVID-19 pandemic, global crisis fundamentally alter patterns of consumer behaviour during and after the period (Morgeson et al., 2024). For instance, it has been demonstrated that crisis can trigger product shortages and supply chain disruptions, compelling consumers to change their purchasing patterns and altering brand dynamics (Knowles et al., 2020). Within this context, crises present opportunities for consumers to gain a better understanding about their behaviours (Mende et al., 2024, p.1322). However, during times of crisis negative emotions such as fear drive purchase decisions, often resulting in panic buying (Papagiannidis et al., 2023). Panic buying, an intrinsic human response during crises (Billore and Anisimova, 2021) can be defined as "an impulsive buying behaviour that leads consumers to stockpile food and non-food items in times of uncertainty to face a potential threat (Hita et al., 2023, p.135). Panic buying problems due to supply chain disruptions are becoming commonplace (Tsao et al., 2019, p.209). Cases of panic buying have escalated since 2020, yet there is limited scholarly research on its effects (Billore and Anisimova, 2021) and an acute lack of work considering its impact on brands. It is noteworthy that the majority of prior panic buying studies have been conducted in developed markets, resulting in a profound gap in work based in high growth emerging markets.

Existing brand focused studies have predominantly adopted stable market conditions, leaving the dynamics of panic buying largely unexplored. There is a notable absence of studies examining the effects of panic buying on brands during crises. We address this significant knowledge gap by investigating the relationships between brand availability during panic buying, brand attachment, consumer-brand relationships and brand loyalty in the context of panic buying.

Our study draws from brand attachment theory (e.g. Park et. al., 2010; Japutra et al., 2019). Using a large scale sample of 403 Indian consumers, we test the relationships between the key constructs within our model. India is one of the fastest growing economies of the world and is set to continue on this path (World Bank, 2024) making it a key emerging market and an exemplar for our study to be set. We used the personal care product category which is heavily impacted during times of crisis given that these products can bring comfort during times of stress and panic (Rayburn et al., 2022).

Our findings show that brand attachment significantly directly influences brand loyalty and mediates the relationship between brand availability during crisis and brand loyalty. We demonstrate that during crises, when consumers find their preferred brand readily available, they develop a deeper emotional attachment, this is turn drives stronger brand loyalty. Although we found consumer-brand relationship positively influences brand loyalty, contrary to expectations, we find it does not mediate this relationship in crisis situations. Therefore, during panic buying, consumers prioritise immediate product availability over established brand relationships.

We conclude with practical outcomes and fruitful future directions for scholars to follow in order to better understand the phenomena of panic buying and different brand dynamics.

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Tackling water scarcity in the Midlands (UK) through effective communication strategies.

Track: AM Funded Research

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Summary Statement

This paper proposes theoretical and practical solutions for effectively communicating water scarcity in the East Midlands, to raise public awareness around the phenomenon. The paper will combine a) digital material, b) legacy media content and c) interview data to produce a large and innovative database with original insights on the production and reception of water scarcity. The findings seek to address both theoretical and practical gaps around this growing sustainability phenomenon.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Water scarcity constitutes one of the most threatening environmental problems for the 21st century (Barbier, 2019). Very limited research exists on the effective communication of water shortages and sustainable water use, mainly stemming from the water-stress contexts of Australia (Phipps and Brace Govan, 2011; Phipps et al, 2013; Lowe et al, 2014; Lowe et al, 2015). In the United Kingdom, although floods generate dramatic headlines, summer droughts - due to climate change and water mismanagement - have been escalating, particularly over the last twenty years (Environment Agency, 2024; Patsiaouras, 2024). Their most visible causes, extreme heatwaves, have become more frequent too, such as during the summer of 2022, prompting the government to declare drought in several areas. Consequently, and contrary to popular perceptions, it is predicted that the United Kingdom will be facing ongoing water scarcity and water supply shortages in the following decades (UK Gov, 2024).

Context and Research Objectives

Accordingly, this study proposes a thorough examination of the effective communication of water scarcity in the East Midlands, to raise public awareness around the phenomenon. The project will focus on the geographical area of the Midlands, a water drought status region that experienced heatwaves and 'exceptionally low' levels of rainfall during the summer of 2022 (UK Gov, 2024). Focusing on the production, communication and reception of water scarcity related information in the East Midlands, during the summer of 2022, this study addresses three interrelated research objectives:

To analyze the visual, data-driven and textual elements of how water scarcity was communicated by leading local newspapers and local Councils' social media, in East Midlands, during the summer of 2022.

To examine the perceptions of local council water managers, NGOs campaigners, and household consumers towards the capacity of those communications in fostering sustainable forms of water use.

To synthesize and analyze the empirical data and produce an innovative pilot social media communications campaign, that will be utilized by the government, and NGOs at local and national level.

Research Design and Sampling

First, we focus on the Twitter and Facebook accounts of 40 Councils in the East Midlands, between the 1st of June and 31st of August 2022. Search keywords and hashtags related to 'water saving', 'heatwave' and 'hydration', for example, were employed to identify the presence of water-related digital material. Second, we focus on the newspaper material of the six most popular East Midlands newspapers. Using key relevant search terms, similar to the first data set and for the same period, a corpus of newspaper articles was built. For the third data set, we employ fifteen interviews with a sample comprised of four local council water managers, four NGO water campaigners and seven water users in the East Midlands (age 25-45).

We analyze the dataset via a multimodal discourse analysis, containing both quantitative content analysis and qualitative textual analysis. Exploring the invisible nature of water shortage, the study suggests that water scarcity is a complex challenge, requiring multi-stakeholder co-operation and interdisciplinary perspectives to alter behaviors and perceptions.

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Breaking Barriers: Addressing Women's Ignored Needs

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

This research investigates the needs leading women to opt-out of aviation careers. In problem-centered in-depth interviews with airline employees we identify primary and secondary barriers. Linking them in a systematic analysis to Maslow's Theory of Human Motivation, we find that social needs—relating to family life, motherhood, and partnership dynamics—are most central in motivating women to avoid a career as a pilot, which is primarily adapted to a male life course and everyday reality.

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Online Shopping Non-Adoption: An Explication Using the Inverted Social Exchange Theory and Trust Transfer Theory

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study investigates the factors that inhibit the non-adoption of online shopping, drawing on the inverted Social Exchange Theory and Trust Transfer Theory. By integrating these two theoretical frameworks, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the underlying reasons for the non-adoption of online shopping.

Competitive Short Paper

Online shopping behaviour has been extensively studied over the last two decades. The research interest in the concept seems to be persistent due to the ever-changing digital landscape. It is noteworthy that most of the previous studies have been fixated on explaining factors that influence consumers to accept and participate in online shopping and very few mixing motivating factors with inhibiting factors. While the scholarly work on explaining online shopping behaviour has been impressive, there is a yawning gap in explaining the non-adoption of online shopping especially while a number of retailers have migrated to online platforms and have maintained that infrastructure since the emergence of COVID-19 and beyond. No study known to the researchers has so far investigated this phenomenon to bridge the gap. This study investigates the factors that inhibit the non-adoption of online shopping, drawing on the inverted Social Exchange Theory and Trust Transfer Theory. By integrating these two theoretical frameworks, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the underlying reasons for the non-adoption of online shopping. This study adopted a quantitative (descripto-explanatory) research design wherein data were collected from a sample of 451 participants who were selected through convenience and purposeful sampling. An online questionnaire was used to collect data and SPSS was used to analyse the data. The findings indicate that lack of reciprocity and social presence, and distrust in online payments positively influence distrust in online shopping channels, which also positively predicts the lack of intention to shop online. These findings are crucial for e-commerce as understanding and addressing these inhibiting factors is first step in developing strategies to encourage in the adoption of online shopping.

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Exploring the role of Professional Bodies in Marketing Education: A Student and Graduate Perspective

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

Marketing courses offer students a variety of extra-curricular opportunities to enhance their employability ahead of graduation. Many institutions also accredit their marketing courses with various professional bodies, something which has been shown to influence student institution and course choice. As well as acting as a student recruitment badge, these accreditations also offer students opportunities to undertake professional qualifications. This study investigates student and graduate perceptions of marketing professional bodies and their influence on graduate employability.

Competitive Short Paper

Maximising student numbers in established subject areas is a high priority in the current UK HEI financial climate. Business Schools have often been labelled as 'cash cows' owing to their ability to deliver cost-efficient education to large cohorts (Hogan et al., 2021; Pitelis, 2022). More students undertake Business and Management related degrees than any other, with marketing a particularly popular subject choice (HESA, 2024).

With circa 1500 undergraduate and postgraduate marketing courses available across the UK (UCAS, 2024), universities seek to offer immersive experiences that differentiate their offering from competitors. In developing their student-choice model, Vrontis et al. (2007) identified a multitude of factors that influence a student's choice of institution. These range from practical issues such as campus facilities and location, to more economic considerations such as perceived employment opportunities (Waseem & Zarif, 2012). Despite absolute clarity on what constitutes employability, and inconsistencies between students, academics and employers as to the most important employability skills (Bhatti et al., 2022), business students have demonstrated a desire to develop skills that are critical to securing graduate employment (Tymon, 2013).

Consequently, marketing educators are tasked with enhancing the marketing curriculum with content that reflects the needs of employers (Graham et al., 2020). Experiential techniques such as simulations and client-facing projects can be used in combination to address both the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of marketing concepts (Zhang & Scribner, 2023). Work placements, internships and study abroad semesters all seek to complement the taught component of marketing degrees with real-world experiences, although data suggests the majority of students do not take advantages of such interventions (Divan et al., 2022; Universities UK, 2024).

One strategy utilised to differentiate marketing programmes is professional body accreditation. Institutions partner with bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Marketing, Market Research Society, Data Marketing Academy, the Digital Marketing Institute and others to accredit their programmes, using the resulting badge to communicate currency and relevance in their offering. In many cases, accrediting bodies also offer students the opportunity to undertake professional qualifications during their degree at an additional cost.

Towers and Towers (2020) recently uncovered that such partnerships and related employability interventions were central to postgraduate marketing students' choice of university and course. Despite this, little is known about student perceptions of professional bodies and their role in their wider marketing career development. By undertaking semi-structured interviews with both current students and graduates who undertook professional qualifications as part of their degree course, the current study will address the following questions:

To what extent do students consider professional body accreditation and associated opportunities when selecting a university?

What are current student perceptions of how a professional body qualification will assist their development and career progression?

How do graduates feel the undertaking professional qualifications has impacted their careers?

It is hoped the outcomes of this work will allow universities to better appreciate the role of professional bodies in course development, student recruitment and employability intervention design.

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Behavioral reasoning on consumers' intention to use In-vehicle Infotainment system

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

Drawing on behavioral reasoning theory, this study investigates how openness to change value and reasons for and against using In-Vehicle Infotainment (IVI) system influence attitudes towards IVI and usage intentions. Based on a survey in China, we find that openness to change significantly influences reasons and attitude towards IVI; reasons for/against IVI positively/negatively influence the attitude towards IVI, but only reasons for IVI has significant and direct influence on intentions to use IVI.

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A Netnography Approach to Exploring Enhancement of Well-being, Spirituality and Value Creation

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

Using the hospice service context, this project employs a netnography method to investigate value creation in an online hospice community. The authors in this study advocate for applying a broader and nuanced perspective of spirituality to support service providers to design and provide inclusive service for individual customers to enhance individual well-being and quality of life.

Competitive Short Paper

There are increased calls for marketers to attend to social issues to improve well-being and reduction of human suffering by providing inclusive and sustainable services for societal enhancement (Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Fisk et al. 2018; Kabadayi and Tsiotsou, 2022). Religious and spiritual beliefs and services provide one pathway towards supporting the well-being of individuals and communities to improve the quality of life of individuals and society. Although religious beliefs at times evoke divisive connotations (Rao, 2012; Karakas, 2010), all religions emphasise the common good to enable the well-being of individuals and society.

Studies have presented a nuanced perspectives of the differences between religiosity and spirituality. For example, Schnell (2012) pointed out that some people may be spiritual but not religious and vice-versa. These perspectives show that spirituality and religiosity are not synonymously similar for everyone but differs by degree for everyone. Puchalski et al. (2009) believe that all humans possess and experience spirituality in different ways. For some, spirituality is expressed through religiosity, while for others, spirituality is channelled through other means, such as artistic expression, reflection on the purpose of life, immersing oneself with nature, undertaking physical activity like yoga, hiking, meditation, living morally and ethically. Hence, spirituality is recognised as "a private, inclusive, non-denominational, universal human feeling" (Karakas, 2010, p. 91) or "an individual's sense of peace, purpose, and connection to others, and beliefs about the meaning of life." (Cohen et al., 2012, p.804). Cohen et al. (2012, p.804) further distinguishes religiosity and spirituality by referring religiosity to "membership and participation in the organizational structures, beliefs, rituals, and other activities related to a religious faith, while spirituality…has a more existential and experiential focus upon an individual's internalized faith, values, and beliefs along with their consequences in daily behaviour." For example, Higgins and Hamilton (2019) found that therapeutic servicescapes offer spiritual restoration and revitalization to individual humans. The focus on spirituality moves away from the constricted and mutually exclusive domains of specific religions. The emphasis on spirituality focusses on the commonality of values and beliefs to override religious divisions to create consumption value for actors.

The authors in this study advocate for applying a broader and nuanced perspective of spirituality to support service providers to design and provide inclusive service for individual customers to enhance individual well-being and quality of life. Using the hospice service context, this project employs a netnography method to investigate value creation in an online hospice community. The authors opine how marketing consumption value and relational approaches can support value creation for individuals and communities for the context of the study. This study highlights inclusive service provision by hospices with a focus on spirituality to enhance well-being and quality of life. This study also advocates how service marketing contributes to value creation by being socially inclusive and broadens marketing relevance into the social domain.

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Artificial Intelligence as a Pedagogy of Wonder: A Theoretical Framework

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

This paper proposes a theoretical framework for understanding Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a pedagogy of wonder, grounded in classical philosophical perspectives and contemporary educational theory. Drawing from Descartes' conceptualisation of wonder and supported by modern educational theorists, the author examines how AI can systematically enhance pedagogical approaches that cultivate intellectual curiosity and sustained engagement.

Competitive Short Paper

Wonder has been fundamental to learning since antiquity, with Descartes (1649/1989) positioning it as the first of all passions. Despite its centrality to knowledge acquisition, wonder is often marginalised in contemporary education systems that prioritise measurable outcomes over intrinsic motivation (Schinkel, 2020). This paper argues that AI can systematically support wonder's core elements whilst bridging historical theories with modern educational practices.

For Aristotle, Socrates and Descartes, wonder was perceived as the gateway to all knowledge (Glăveanu, 2020). In *The Passions of the Soul* (1649), Descartes spoke of wonder arising from encounters with the extraordinary, pausing cognitive judgment to enable attention and inquiry. This intellectual suspension creates space for understanding, which is further enriched through reflection. Descartes emphasises three key components of wonder: novelty, which captures attention; focused engagement, which sustains inquiry; and reflection, which integrates insights into broader understanding.

Dewey's perspective complements and extends this framework, highlighting wonder's iterative and relational nature. He argues that wonder emerges from interactions between the learner and environment, driving cycles of questioning, exploration, and synthesis (1938). Unlike Descartes' static view, Dewey frames wonder as dynamic, requiring active participation. Dewey also connects wonder to moral and social learning, suggesting its potential to foster creativity and ethical awareness (Thorburn, 2017).

More recent scholars have reinforced the transformative power of wonder. Schinkel (2017) introduces "contemplative wonder," which disrupts habitual thought patterns and invites learners to engage with alternatives. Parker (2023) frames wonder as a blend of awe, curiosity, and discovery, emphasising its role in creating meaningful and emotionally resonant learning experiences. Together, these perspectives provide a robust philosophical and practical foundation for embedding wonder in educational practices.

The theoretical framework proposed builds upon the three key components of wonder identified in Cartesian philosophy: novelty, attention, and reflection. Descartes emphasises wonder's role in creating cognitive suspension, enabling deeper understanding through focused engagement. Dewey (1938) extends this conceptualisation, framing wonder as dynamic and iterative, emerging from learner-environment interactions. Their combined perspectives provide the philosophical foundation for understanding how AI can scaffold wonder-building in education. A three-pronged scaffolded approach to wonder creation is proposed. AI offers unique opportunities to operationalise wonder through a. creating moments of novelty via generative tools that present unexpected perspectives, b. sustaining attention through adaptive complexity management and c. supporting reflection through systematic questioning and exploration. Furthermore, AI tools can operationalise wonder through fostering novelty, attention, and reflection, aligning with Descartes' emphasis on cognitive suspension and Dewey's iterative inquiry process (Parker, 2023; Schinkel, 2017).

Whilst AI holds promise for enhancing wonder-based pedagogy, consideration must be given to preventing mechanistic reduction of wonder (Selwyn, 2020). Equity is another concern, as access to AI tools varies widely. Ramos and Roberts (2021) highlight the importance of inclusive pedagogical practices, cautioning against approaches that reinforce existing inequalities and thus squander opportunity for wonderment. These considerations must be addressed to ensure that AI-mediated wonder supports diverse learners equitably. Thus, the framework provides a foundation for examining how AI can foster genuine wonder equitably whilst preserving human elements of discovery and insight.

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Exploring Political Spectatorship: Definition, Motivations, and Implications on Voter Behaviour

Track: 13. Political Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores political spectatorship as a dynamic psycho-political phenomenon shaping voter behaviour. Using focus groups, it identifies motivations like civic duty, social engagement, and partisan loyalty, showing how spectatorship transcends passive observation to foster political awareness and connection. Findings highlight its significant role in influencing voter awareness and motivation, while underscoring its dual potential to enhance or hinder democratic participation, offering critical insights for fostering active civic engagement.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Political spectatorship has become an essential yet underexplored aspect of democratic engagement. It encompasses observation, emotional resonance, and behavioural influence, all of which shape political participation (Green, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2015). In highly performative political contexts, spectatorship transcends passive observation to cultivate socio-political discourse and connection (Borja et al., 2024). Traditionally, spectatorship has been associated with disengagement and passive participation, a stance reflected in critiques by figures like former US president George W. Bush and Ghana's outgoing President Akufo-Addo. However, scholars argue that it holds significant potential to enhance civic and voter engagement (Green, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2015; Borja et al., 2024). This study aims to define political spectatorship, investigate its motivations, and assess its implications for voter behaviour, contributing to ongoing discussions about political consumerism and the evolution of democracy.

Methodology

The study utilised focus groups comprising 16 participants, aged 18 and above and with a demonstrated interest in politics and thematic analysed was used to uncover patterns and key insights.

Findings

Defining Political Spectatorship

Political spectatorship is defined as a psycho-political phenomenon where individuals, actively or passively, observe political events in shaping their understanding and behaviour. This definition challenges traditional notions of spectatorship as inherently passive (Mihai, 2014; Rancière, 2021), and rather highlights its empowering potential for voter engagement (Green, 2010; Fitzgerald, 2015).

Motivations for Political Spectatorship

Fan Enthusiasm: Political events often serve as engaging spectacles. Participant 12 likened rallies to "a big concert," emphasizing the escapism and emotional pleasure they provide.

Civic Duty: Spectatorship acts as a means to stay informed. Participant 7 explained, "Listening to discussions helps me learn about politics," demonstrating its cognitive value.

Political Affiliation: Partisan identity was a recurring theme. Participant 15 stated, "I attend political events to show my support," underscoring a sense of belonging.

Social Engagement: Spectatorship fosters communal connections. Participant 4 remarked, “We talk about it afterward,” highlighting its role in relational and discursive interactions.

Polyvalent Drivers: Spectatorship blends fun, socialization, civic duty, and ideological loyalty into a holistic experience. As Participant 3 noted, “I go to rallies because they’re fun, I learn about issues, and it’s great to see everyone I know.”

Behavioural Responses

Political spectatorship significantly influences voter behaviour in terms of awareness and voting motivation. Illustrative examples include:

Participant 8: “Watching political debates on TV encourages me to vote.”

Participant 14: “Hearing them speak changes my perception about politicians.” These findings affirm the effect of spectatorship on voters attitudinal and behaviour intentions.

Implications and Conclusion

Political spectatorship when actively engaged, emerges as a transformative force in democratic participation. By integrating entertainment, social interaction, and cognitive engagement, it influences voter behaviour, however, its dual potential for fostering both engagement and disengagement merits careful consideration. Mischaracterizing spectatorship as solely passive risks neglecting its complexities and its role in shaping voter behaviour.

In conclusion, political spectatorship represents a dynamic interplay of psychological and political factors that enrich democratic engagement. stakeholders must leverage the multifaceted nature in nurturing an active and participatory democratic culture.

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Critical Review of the Prototype Willingness Model: Insights from Non-Western and Ethnic Minority Perspectives

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

This paper critically examines the Prototype Willingness Model (PWM), emphasizing its cultural limitations and Western-centric biases in understanding adolescent risk behaviours. By analyzing its theoretical foundations and empirical applications, the study highlights the PWM’s narrow focus on Western contexts and universal prototypes. Recommendations include integrating culturally specific influences, addressing systemic inequalities, and exploring acculturation dynamics. The paper proposes adaptations to enhance the model’s relevance for diverse socio-cultural contexts and marginalized populations.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

The Prototype Willingness Model (PWM), developed by Gerrard et al. (2008), offers a dual-pathway framework for understanding adolescent risk behaviours by addressing reasoned and social-reactive pathways. While applied globally (Barati et al., 2015; Tang et al., 2020; Moslehi et al., 2024), criticism has been levied for its limited attention to ethno-cultural differences. These critiques highlight its cultural assumptions particularly in its application across cultures (Kalebić & Martinac, 2015; Armenta et al., 2015). This paper critically examines the PWM from a cultural perspective and proposes recommendations for its adaptation to diverse socio-cultural contexts.

Theoretical and Empirical Underpinning

The fundamental conceptualization of the PWM is questionable, as Gray’s theory faces cultural critiques due to its limited global relevance, with emotional responses and reward mechanisms differing between individualistic and collectivist cultures (Robinson, 1986). Epstein’s CEST, in addition to promoting gender stereotypes and facing validity issues with age-mismatched, relies on a fuzzy definition of self-concept and an invalid link between trauma and rational processing (Harb et al., 2024; Liu, 2019). It also has cultural limitations, as collectivist societies prioritize intuitive, relational decision-making, while Western cultures emphasize rational thinking (Choi et al., 2003; Nisbett et al., 2001; Kim & Markus, 1999). Both theories overlook diverse cultural influences, which undermines the cross-cultural validity of PWM.

The empirical application of the Prototype-Willingness Model (PWM) shows cross-cultural limitations, with most research focusing on Western contexts, particularly involving White adolescents, and very few studies including African American adolescents (e.g., Gerrard et al., 2005). This narrow focus limits its generalizability. Findings from African American adolescents may not be applicable to non-Western societies, where prototypes are influenced more by authority figures and collective values.

Conceptual Issues in Prototypes

“In the PWM, prototypes refer to the mental images or representations of people who perform specific behaviours, which influence adolescents’ willingness to engage in those behaviours. The PWM’s conceptualization of prototypes lacks universality. In Western cultures, role models are often selected based on age homophily, fostering self-expression and identity formation (Schmid & Klimmt, 2011; Arnett, 2002). Conversely, in collectivist cultures, authority figures, elders, and spiritual leaders are more influential, diminishing the importance of age similarity. Additionally, non-Western contexts often emphasize positive prototypes, reflecting aspirational behaviours shaped by societal, family, and religious values (Alavi, et al., 2020; Jabareen & Zlotnick, 2023). These differences underscore the context-dependent nature of prototypes (Todd & van Lettow, 2016) and highlight the model's limitations in addressing diverse cultural norms.

Recommendations and Conclusion

To improve cultural applicability, the PWM should incorporate prototypes that reflect the social influences specific to each culture. For example, in collectivist societies, prototypes could include elders or community leaders. Additionally, the role of acculturation in shaping the relationship between prototypes and behavioural willingness warrants further investigation. Additionally, the model should address systemic barriers like racism and socio-economic disparities, which shape behavioural intentions and willingness. In conclusion, the PWM is a valuable tool for understanding adolescent risk behaviours but requires socio-cultural adaptations to remain relevant in diverse cultural contexts particularly amongst ethnic minorities and non-Western cultures.

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The Impact of Social Marketing Campaigns on Mental Health Awareness in Nigeria.

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

This empirical study investigates the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns in enhancing mental health awareness and reducing stigma in Nigeria. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, we analyzed data from surveys and focus group discussions conducted among diverse demographic groups. The findings reveal significant improvements in mental health knowledge and attitudes towards mental health issues post-campaign, highlighting the potential of social marketing as a tool for public health intervention in Nigeria.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Mental health issues in Nigeria are often shrouded in stigma, leading to inadequate awareness and treatment. Social marketing, which employs marketing principles to influence behavior for social good, presents a viable strategy for enhancing mental health awareness. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns in improving mental health knowledge and attitudes among Nigerians, particularly in urban and rural settings.

Literature Review

Stigma surrounding mental health is prevalent in Nigeria, with cultural beliefs often exacerbating the issue (Gureje et al., 2006). Social marketing has been effectively used to address health-related issues, including HIV/AIDS and maternal health (Adebimpe et al., 2019). However, limited research focuses on mental health awareness through social marketing in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative focus group discussions. A total of 500 respondents were surveyed across urban and rural areas in Nigeria. The survey assessed mental health knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors before and after exposure to social marketing campaigns. Additionally, three focus group discussions were conducted with participants to gain deeper insights into the campaign's impact.

Data Collection

Surveys: A structured questionnaire was administered pre- and post-campaign, measuring participants' knowledge of mental health issues, perceived stigma, and willingness to seek help.

Focus Groups: Discussions were guided by open-ended questions aimed at understanding participants' perceptions of the campaigns and their effects on personal attitudes toward mental health.

Quantitative Findings

Analysis of survey data indicated a significant increase in mental health knowledge, with correct responses rising from 45% pre-campaign to 78% post-campaign. Additionally, the stigma score (measured on a scale of 1-10) decreased from an average of 7.2 to 4.5, indicating a reduction in negative attitudes toward mental health issues.

Qualitative Findings

Focus group discussions revealed that participants felt more empowered to speak about mental health issues and expressed a greater willingness to seek help. Many reported that the campaigns utilized relatable messaging and local languages, enhancing their understanding and acceptance of mental health topics.

Discussion

The findings suggest that social marketing campaigns can effectively raise awareness about mental health issues in Nigeria, leading to reduced stigma and improved knowledge. The culturally relevant approaches employed in the campaigns resonated with participants, highlighting the importance of tailoring messages to local contexts.

1. Policy Implications: Stakeholders should integrate social marketing strategies into national mental health policies to enhance public awareness.

2. Future Research: Further studies are needed to evaluate long-term impacts of social marketing campaigns on mental health outcomes and to explore the efficacy of different messaging strategies.

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Para-social Interaction and Gen Z's Brand Engagement on TikTok: The Mediating Role of Brand Evaluation in Virtual Influencer Marketing

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This research examines how para-social interaction influences Generation Z's brand engagement through brand evaluation in virtual influencer marketing on TikTok. While previous studies have explored para-social relationships between influencer attributes and purchase behaviour, brand evaluation in virtual influencer contexts remains understudied. Using data from 500 Gen Z TikTok users globally, this study expands the Theory of Persuasion beyond purchase behaviour to understand how para-social relationships with virtual influencers translate into broader consumer brand engagement.

Competitive Short Paper

This research is positioned within the influencer marketing literature and examines how para-social interaction influences consumer brand engagement through brand evaluation to predict Generation Z's engagement with brands promoted by virtual influencers on TikTok. Whilst many current studies have examined attributes of influencers, para-social interaction, and brand evaluation with human influencers, whether these results and findings could be transferred to virtual influencers is still under exploration (Masuda et al., 2022; Zha et al., 2023). Building on prior research that documented the relationship between influencer attributes and para-social interaction within the Theory of Persuasion framework (Liu et al., 2019; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020; Masuda et al., 2022; Hien et al., 2020), this study addresses a theoretical gap by examining how para-social interaction translates into consumer brand engagement through brand evaluation, thereby expanding the Theory of Persuasion beyond purchase behaviour in the context of virtual influencer marketing. While studies have established links between influencer attributes, para-social interaction, and purchase intention (Masuda et al., 2022; Nicolas et al., 2023), the mediating role of brand evaluation remains understudied, particularly for virtual influencers. Additionally, while existing research has focused primarily on direct relationships between para-social interaction and purchase behaviour, less attention has been paid to understanding how these interactions influence broader consumer brand engagement (Sokolova and Kefi, 2020; Masuda et al., 2022).

Within this dynamic ecosystem, virtual influencers have emerged as powerful marketing tools, fostering unique relationships with their followers through para-social interaction (Arsenyan and Mirowska, 2021). These digital relationships play a crucial role in shaping consumers' attitudes and behaviours towards both influencers and the brands they promote, creating foundations for deeper brand connections and significantly influencing consumers' brand evaluations (Kim and Park, 2023; Ryding et al., 2022). With the influencer marketing industry projected to reach $24 billion by 2024 (Statista, 2024), understanding how digital relationships translate into brand value becomes increasingly critical (Zha et al., 2023).

The Theory of Persuasion provides valuable insights into the mechanics of the social media influencer market, with previous research documenting how followers' perceptions of influencers' attributes shape their behaviours (Liu et al., 2019; Sokolova and Kefi, 2020). While the Theory of Persuasion has traditionally focused on how influencers' attributes (social attractiveness, physical attractiveness, and attitude homophily) shape followers' purchase behaviour (Masuda et al., 2022), its application to broader consumer brand engagement remains underexplored, particularly in the context of virtual influencers.

Building on this foundation, this research examines the relationship between para-social interaction and consumer brand engagement among Generation Z users on TikTok, with a specific focus on the mediating role of brand evaluation in virtual influencer marketing. The study develops a theoretical framework examining how followers' para-social interaction with virtual influencers affects consumer brand engagement through brand evaluation. The study will collect data from 500 Generation Z (aged 18-29) TikTok users globally through a quantitative approach, online questionnaire, with data analysed using SPSS software including Exploratory Factor Analysis.

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Omnichannel Marketing Strategies and Their Impact on Customer Experience in Nigeria

Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

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Summary Statement

This empirical study investigates the effectiveness of omnichannel marketing strategies in enhancing customer experience in Nigeria. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from surveys and focus group

discussions with Nigerian consumers. The findings reveal that businesses employing omnichannel strategies significantly improve customer satisfaction and engagement, emphasizing the need for tailored approaches in the Nigerian market.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

As Nigeria's retail landscape evolves, businesses are increasingly adopting omnichannel marketing strategies to meet the demands of tech-savvy consumers. Omnichannel marketing integrates various channels—physical stores, online platforms, mobile applications, and social media—to create a seamless customer experience (Verhoef et al., 2015). This study aims to explore the effectiveness of omnichannel marketing strategies in Nigeria and their impact on customer experience.

Literature Review

The rise of digital technology in Nigeria has transformed consumer behavior, with many customers now expecting a cohesive shopping experience across multiple channels (Nwokah & Nwokah, 2020). Research shows that omnichannel strategies can lead to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty, as they provide consumers with flexibility and convenience (Brynjolfsson et al., 2013). However, the unique socio-economic conditions in Nigeria, including varying levels of internet access and smartphone penetration, present challenges for implementing these strategies effectively.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative focus group discussions. A total of 400 respondents were surveyed in urban and semi-urban areas of Nigeria, with a structured questionnaire assessing their experiences with omnichannel marketing. Three focus group discussions were also conducted to gather deeper insights into consumer perceptions and expectations.

Data Collection

Surveys: The questionnaire evaluated respondents' awareness of omnichannel marketing, their experiences across different channels, and their overall satisfaction levels.

Focus Groups: Discussions focused on participants' preferences for shopping channels and their perceptions of brand consistency across these channels.

Quantitative Findings

Survey results indicated that 75% of respondents had interacted with brands using omnichannel strategies. Among these, 65% reported a positive impact on their shopping experience, citing convenience and accessibility. Additionally, customers who engaged with multiple channels exhibited a 50% higher likelihood of recommending brands to others compared to those who engaged with a single channel.

Qualitative Findings

Focus group discussions revealed that participants appreciated the flexibility offered by omnichannel marketing. Many noted that the ability to research products online before visiting a physical store enhanced their shopping experience. However, concerns were raised about inconsistent messaging and inventory availability across channels, which detracted from the overall experience.

Discussion

The findings indicate that omnichannel marketing strategies significantly enhance customer experience in Nigeria. The high level of consumer engagement across various channels highlights the importance of a seamless integration of marketing efforts. However, businesses must address the challenges of brand consistency and inventory management to fully realize the benefits of these strategies.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates the potential of omnichannel marketing to improve customer satisfaction and engagement in Nigeria. To maximize effectiveness, brands must tailor their strategies to the unique preferences and behaviors of Nigerian consumers. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of omnichannel marketing on customer loyalty and brand perception in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Brand Consistency: Companies should ensure consistent messaging and inventory across all channels to enhance customer trust.

Future Research: Further studies are needed to investigate the challenges and best practices in implementing omnichannel strategies in the Nigerian context.

Mobile Marketing Trends and Their Impact on Consumer Engagement in Nigeria

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This empirical study investigates the effectiveness of mobile marketing strategies in enhancing consumer engagement in Nigeria. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research analyzes data from surveys and focus group discussions with Nigerian consumers. Findings indicate that mobile marketing significantly influences consumer behavior, highlighting the importance of tailored strategies in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

In Nigeria, mobile technology has become a cornerstone of communication and commerce, with over 100 million mobile phone users (National Communications Commission [NCC], 2020). As businesses increasingly adopt mobile marketing strategies, understanding their impact on consumer engagement is crucial. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of mobile marketing trends in Nigeria and their implications for consumer behavior.

Literature Review

Mobile marketing encompasses various strategies, including SMS marketing, mobile apps, and social media advertising, all designed to reach consumers on their mobile devices. Research indicates that mobile marketing can enhance customer engagement by providing personalized content and real-time communication (Chaffey, 2020). However, the unique socio-economic context of Nigeria poses both challenges and opportunities for mobile marketers. High mobile penetration rates combined with diverse consumer behavior necessitate a tailored approach to mobile marketing (Afolabi & Ojo, 2021).

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods design, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative focus group discussions. A total of 400 respondents were surveyed across urban and rural areas in Nigeria, using a structured questionnaire to assess their engagement with mobile marketing strategies. Additionally, three focus group discussions were conducted to gain deeper insights into consumer perceptions and experiences with mobile marketing.

Data Collection

Surveys: The questionnaire evaluated respondents' awareness of mobile marketing campaigns, frequency of engagement, and preferred mobile marketing channels.

Focus Groups: Discussions focused on participants' attitudes toward mobile marketing, perceived benefits, and challenges faced in mobile engagement.

Quantitative Findings

Survey results indicated that 68% of respondents reported receiving promotional messages via SMS or mobile apps. Among them, 55% stated they were likely to engage with brands that utilized mobile marketing. Furthermore, respondents who interacted with mobile ads showed a 40% increase in brand recall compared to those who did not engage with mobile marketing.

Qualitative Findings

Focus group discussions revealed that participants valued the convenience and immediacy of mobile marketing. Many expressed appreciation for personalized offers tailored to their preferences. However, concerns about data privacy and unsolicited messages were prevalent. Participants emphasized the need for brands to respect consumer privacy while delivering relevant content.

Discussion

The findings underscore the effectiveness of mobile marketing in enhancing consumer engagement in Nigeria. The high engagement rates demonstrate the potential of mobile marketing strategies to capture the attention of consumers in a crowded marketplace. However, the concerns regarding data privacy highlight the necessity for brands to establish trust with consumers through transparent practices.

Conclusion

This study illustrates that mobile marketing is a powerful tool for engaging Nigerian consumers. To maximize effectiveness, brands must tailor their strategies to the unique preferences and concerns of the Nigerian market. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of mobile marketing on consumer loyalty and behavior in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Policy Implications: Brands should prioritize consumer privacy and transparency in mobile marketing strategies.

Future Research: Further studies are needed to investigate the evolving landscape of mobile marketing and its long-term effects on consumer behavior in Nigeria.

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Service Innovation with AI: Transformation of Value Proposition and Market Segmentation in Digital Commerce

Track: 18. Teaching Cases

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Summary Statement

This teaching case examines how Klarna leverages AI to enhance value propositions, drive service innovation, and refine market segmentation in digital commerce. By integrating NLP and machine learning, Klarna's AI-powered assistant addresses consumer decision fatigue and personalizes the shopping experience. The case highlights marketing strategies, operational benefits, and ethical challenges associated with AI adoption, offering a practical exploration for students in digital marketing, AI applications, and consumer behavior courses.

Competitive Short Paper

This teaching case investigates the transformative role of artificial intelligence (AI) in enhancing value propositions, driving technological service innovation, and refining market segmentation and targeting strategies in the context of Klarna. Recent advancements in financial technology (FinTech) have introduced Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL), a model enabling customers to make purchases and pay in future installments without interest, and Klarna is a global leader in BNPL services. Developed in collaboration with OpenAI, Klarna's assistant leverages advanced natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning (ML) to address consumer decision fatigue, provide highly personalised experiences, and transform retail dynamics. The case illustrates how AI-powered shopping assistants can address critical challenges in digital commerce.

By aligning AI innovation with customer-centric strategies, Klarna provides a frictionless consumer journey from product discovery to purchase. Its features include real-time personalisation, unbiased category comparisons, and integration with flexible payment options. These advancements not only enhance operational efficiency but also demonstrate the power of generative AI in reshaping digital marketing strategies. The assistant's success stems from leveraging behavioural analytics, customer feedback, and contextual factors to meet evolving consumer expectations.

The case emphasises three pivotal marketing concepts: (i) Enhanced Value Proposition: AI systems redefine consumer value by offering convenience and personalisation. Klarna's assistant enriches both utilitarian and hedonic value propositions, fostering customer loyalty through hyper-personalised recommendations; (ii) Technological Service Innovation: AI transforms retail operations, from dynamic pricing to real-time decision support. Klarna's assistant exemplifies innovation by blending NLP and generative AI to empower consumers with tailored insights and streamlined shopping experiences; and (iii) Market Segmentation and Targeting: AI enables precise segmentation by analysing behavioural data, purchase patterns, and demographic trends. Klarna's approach effectively targets tech-savvy millennials, frequent online shoppers, and BNPL users, showcasing AI's role in driving engagement and retention.

While the teaching case highlights the benefits of AI, it also addresses the ethical and operational challenges businesses face in adopting such technologies. These include data privacy concerns, algorithmic bias, and the complexities of scaling AI across diverse markets. The case prompts critical reflection on how companies can balance innovation with ethical considerations, ensuring transparency, inclusivity, and trust.

This teaching case is tailored for courses on digital marketing, digital transformation strategy, AI applications in business, and consumer behaviour. By exploring Klarna's strategies, students gain insights into the evolving role of AI in business, preparing them to navigate the complexities of technology-driven markets. Discussion questions and group exercises encourage critical thinking, such as analysing Klarna's segmentation strategies or reflecting on the implications of over-personalisation in marketing.

The case underscores the importance of aligning AI-driven service innovations with customer needs and ethical responsibilities, offering a nuanced perspective on the future of marketing in the AI era. It serves as a valuable pedagogical tool for bridging theoretical concepts with practical applications, fostering a deeper understanding of AI's potential and challenges in reshaping the digital commerce landscape.

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How Personality Traits Shape Consumer Ethnocentrism and Attitudes Toward Imported Products?

Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study examines how the Big Five personality traits influence consumer ethnocentrism (CE) and its impact on attitudes toward imported products, using data from Taiwanese consumers. Agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness reduce CE, while neuroticism increases it. Cultural dimensions such as power distance and collectivism amplify CE's negative effect on attitudes. These findings provide insights for tailoring marketing strategies in ethnocentric markets by integrating personality traits and cultural orientations.

Competitive Short Paper

This study investigates the role of personality traits and cultural dimensions in shaping consumer ethnocentrism (CE) and its subsequent impact on attitudes toward imported products. Using survey data from 485 Taiwanese respondents, the research applies the Big Five personality framework (McCrae and Costa, 1985) and Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001) to offer insights into consumer behavior in ethnocentric markets.

Key Findings

The analysis highlights that personality traits significantly influence CE. Agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness to experience are negatively associated with CE, indicating that individuals with these traits exhibit lower ethnocentric tendencies. Conversely, neuroticism positively correlates with CE, suggesting that emotionally unstable individuals are more likely to reject foreign products (Talwar et al., 2022).

CE was found to negatively affect attitudes toward imported goods (Shimp and Sharma, 1987), as consumers with strong ethnocentric tendencies prefer domestic products over foreign alternatives. Among cultural dimensions, power distance and collectivism amplify the negative impact of CE on attitudes. For instance, individuals with high power distance align CE with cultural pride, resulting in unfavorable views of imported goods (Yoo and Donthu, 2005). Similarly, collectivist consumers prioritize group loyalty, strengthening CE's adverse effects (Han, 2017).

Other cultural orientations, such as masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation, did not significantly moderate the relationship between CE and attitudes. Additionally, demographic factors like age were found to influence CE, with older individuals exhibiting stronger ethnocentric tendencies (Huddleston et al., 2001).

Implications

This study emphasizes the importance of integrating psychological and cultural factors in understanding CE. Marketing strategies targeting ethnocentric consumers should account for personality traits and cultural orientations. For instance, campaigns for agreeable or open-minded consumers could highlight innovation and global connectivity, while messaging for neurotic individuals might focus on reliability and alignment with local values.

The findings also highlight the need for tailored strategies in high power-distance and collectivist societies. Emphasizing societal benefits and endorsements from credible figures can mitigate the negative effects of CE. For younger, less ethnocentric consumers, marketers can focus on modernity and global trends to promote foreign products.

Conclusion

This research contributes to the understanding of CE by demonstrating the role of personality traits and cultural dimensions in shaping consumer attitudes toward imported goods. It underscores the necessity for nuanced marketing approaches that address the psychological and cultural characteristics of target audiences. Future studies could explore these relationships in different cultural contexts or incorporate additional psychological traits to deepen insights into consumer behavior (Balabanis and Siamagka, 2022).

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The Influence Of Online Reviews On Consumer Choices In The Purchase Of Sports Products: Examining the Impact of Review Characteristics

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

Online reviews are used by almost every online shop nowadays, but the impact of them on the purchase decision is not fully explored. Therefore, this paper focusses on the influence of online reviews and their characteristics on the buying intention of sports products. The findings of the study expand existing literature and reveal the importance and influence of online reviews in the sports sector.

Competitive Short Paper

Online reviews are a relevant source of information for customers to get more details about products and services than from their mere description. Nowadays online reviews are an inherent part of online purchases, and most consumers base their decisions on them (Deges, 2021). Reviews represent the experiences and opinions of customers and typically focus on the positive and negative evaluation, i.e. the valence (Zhang et al., 2014; Poppe & Gampfer, 2023). Furthermore, online reviews consist of different characteristics like review text, star-rating, date or author (Deges, 2021). According to sales data in Austria the online purchase of fitness and sport products keeps rising since 2016 (Handelsverband Österreich 2022). As to date, extant literature has not yet covered the impact of online reviews nor their characteristics on the purchase decision of sports products. The current study addresses this gap in literature. To assess the effects of online reviews and their characteristics a mixed methods study was carried out, consisting of a qualitative focus group and an experimental online questionnaire. The experimental design included manipulation items with two scenarios each. Both scenarios showed a sport product and either a positive or negative example of reviews and asked about the probability of purchase. The participants were selected randomly for one of the scenarios. Based on prior literature and the findings of the focus group, it was hypothesized that negative online reviews are more important, and some characteristics increase the probability of purchasing sports products. The data from the questionnaire shows

that online reviews are an important source of information for purchase decisions in the sports sector. Most of the participants read both positive and negative reviews. Despite that negative reviews are significantly more influential for the purchase intention in the fitness sector, because review readers are more interested in knowing the problems and errors of the products. Less people indicate to be willing to buy sports products with solely positive reviews. These results underline earlier findings that claim higher influence of negative online reviews in comparison to positive ones (Li & Shimizu, 2018; Zhang, Ma & Cartwright, 2013). Nevertheless, the importance of a mix of positive and negative reviews was clearly pointed out in the focus group. The purchase decision is based on negative online reviews, but the average rating of the products must be positive in order to induce the purchase of a fitness product. Also as confirmed in prior research, a high quantity of reviews combined with a high star-rating of the product shows positive effects on the purchase decision (Majumder, Gupta & Paul, 2022; Kim & Kim, 2022). The findings also show a significant influence of a high number of reviews on the purchase intention of sports products and therefore support extant literature.
The present research reveals a high relevance of online reviews for sports product. Managerial decisions in marketing should therefore motivate satisfied customers to share their honest experiences with products. Future research should deepen the understanding of characteristics of reviews that are relevant to promote purchase intention.

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User-Centred Digital Strategies for Enhancing NGO Engagement

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the intersection of user experience (UX) and marketing strategies within non-governmental organisations. Using the Component of User Experience framework, the study analyses qualitative data from user interactions with NGO websites, identifying six key themes that inform effective digital marketing practices. Balancing usability and emotional engagement, this research provides actionable insights for NGOs aiming to enhance user satisfaction, loyalty, and long-term engagement, reaffirming the framework's relevance while showcasing its adaptability in non-commercial contexts.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) increasingly depend on digital platforms to engage stakeholders, raise funds, and build community connections. The Component of User Experience (CUE) framework (Thüring & Mahlke, 2007) provides a robust method for examining how pragmatic (functional) and hedonic (emotional) qualities shape user behaviour and satisfaction. Recent studies, such as Kansei Engineering for emotional UX optimisation (Mat Razali et al., 2022) and mobile platform evaluations (Van der Linden et al., 2024), demonstrate the framework's versatility across various applications. This study applies the CUE framework to analyse user interactions with NGO websites, identifying strategies to meet diverse user needs and enhance digital engagement.

Key Findings

User Characteristics and Interaction Contexts

Diversity among users significantly affects the effectiveness of NGO digital platforms. Demographic factors, such as age and location, alongside varying levels of technological proficiency and cultural context, shape user expectations and experiences. For example, users in regions where mobile access dominates prioritise platforms designed with a mobile-first approach. Such insights underscore the importance of tailoring digital strategies to accommodate diverse user characteristics, ensuring inclusivity and relevance (Van der Linden et al., 2024).

Pragmatic and Hedonic Qualities

Effective platforms balance pragmatic and hedonic qualities. Pragmatic attributes, such as efficient navigation and clear information, are essential for usability and satisfaction. However, hedonic qualities, including visual appeal and emotionally resonant storytelling, foster deeper engagement. This interplay between functionality and emotional impact aligns with findings by Tuch et al. (2012) and Hassenzahl (2010), which emphasise the necessity of addressing both rational and emotional user needs.

Emotional Responses and Behavioural Outcomes

Emotional engagement significantly influences user behaviour on NGO websites. Content such as mission-driven narratives, impactful visuals, and testimonials strengthens emotional connections, fostering user loyalty and encouraging repeat visits. These findings echo earlier research by Desmet and Hekkert (2007), which highlights the critical role emotions play in driving user actions. For NGOs, investing in emotionally engaging content is pivotal for inspiring long-term support and building meaningful connections with their audience.

Recommendations for NGOs

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can enhance user engagement by adopting a user-centred approach that caters to diverse needs. This includes prioritising features like multilingual support, adaptive navigation, and accessibility to ensure inclusivity (Kujala et al., 2017). Balancing usability with emotional engagement is also critical; streamlined transactional processes, such as efficient donation workflows, should be paired with mission-driven visuals to create impactful experiences (Mat Razali et al., 2022). Leveraging advanced UX metrics like sentiment analysis and behavioural tracking allows NGOs to assess both usability and emotional impact, enabling continuous improvements (Van der Linden et al., 2024). Additionally, storytelling through culturally resonant narratives, testimonials, and videos fosters emotional connections, driving loyalty and long-term support (Tuch et al., 2012).

Conclusion

This study highlights the CUE framework's value in shaping user-centred digital strategies for NGOs. Balancing pragmatic and hedonic qualities fosters user satisfaction, loyalty, and deeper connections. Future research should examine integrating emerging technologies, like AI-driven personalisation, to further optimise user experiences and enhance NGO platforms in mission-driven contexts.

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By going after "brand purpose", are Brands trying to become Saints?

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

The notion of brand purpose has rocketed on the marketing scene. However its academic definition is very recent, highlighting "how brand management intends to achieve social impact" (AMA, 2022). This research aims at consolidating brand purpose conceptualisation and building a measurement scale. Our sample consists of marketing practitioners (from brand managers to CMOs). Early findings show strong tensions on how brands seek to "do good" and reach a state akin to sainthood.

Competitive Short Paper

The concept of Brand purpose has become central in marketing. In 2019 the CEO of Unilever announced that Unilever brands taking action for people and the planet grew 69% faster than the average. In the 2022 Cannes Lions, the equivalent to the Oscars for marketing, 28 of the 32 winners were somehow connected to a higher societal purpose.

However, it was only as recently as 2022 that "brand purpose" was defined by academia as "a statement that sets out how brand management intends to achieve social impact through brand-related actions. It generally includes specific societal causes that will be supported through its day-to-day operations, non-business special events and lobbying efforts" (AMA, 2022).

By using the word "purpose", marketing uses a powerful anthropomorphism that connects with "life purpose" and therefore "meaning in life". This connection was conceptualised by linking brand purpose with consumer eudaimonic well-being (Williams, Escalas, Edson, Morningstar, 2022), a notion encapsulating fulfilment and happiness through the pursuit of virtues (Aristotle, 384-322BC).

Our research aims at consolidating brand purpose conceptualisation and building a measurement scale for the concept. Because of the link to "purpose", we have framed our research using positive psychology, a branch of psychology that seeks to foster human well-being. Within positive psychology, we zoomed in on the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011).

Our project design has 3 steps: 1/ a qualitative research with a sample of marketing practitioners at various position levels (from brand managers to chief marketing officers) from the UK and other countries in order to extract key dimensions of brand purpose 2/a quantitative refinement to a smaller set of items 3/a quantitative test of the scale.

Our interviews covered experts in world-class marketing companies, complemented by gold-standard FMCG companies and professionals from the digital world. To add contrast, we engaged with companies working on "doing good" (environment, physical activity) and also companies sometimes accused to "do bad" (environment, addiction). We added experts from categories where there is an experience via someone else (pet food and parenting). Finally we added high-level creative agency experts with a multi-brand, multi-year, independent perspective.

Early learnings from the qualitative phase show a strong overlap with the theme of "sainthood". The creation and implementation of a brand purpose ignite an energy in the brand trying to act with virtue, altruism and a desire to create long-lasting good – akin to being a saint. However the reality is more complex and the tension with commercialisation remains fundamental. This duality applies to both the brand and its technical reality (can a mayonnaise do good for society?) and the practitioners who face the necessity to process the brand purpose with their own critical analysis or even their life purpose.

When some academics have defined brand purpose as "beyond profit", this research suggests that profit is a key dimension. As such, our expected contribution is a model for brand purpose called PERMAP: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement and Profit.

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Application Of The TCQ Model To Phygital Professional Dance Education

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

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Summary Statement

Customer Experience is essential for business success, however, empirical studies are limited in specific industries. Using the TCQ Framework (touchpoints/context/qualities), this ongoing research explores customer and service provider's phygital experiences in professional dance education. Preliminary findings highlight five distinct themes. Practical outcomes can be used to develop phygital programs incorporating components that build innovative journeys, generating positive experiences that embody qualities sought by consumers, fostering loyalty while enhancing the service provider's experience.

Competitive Short Paper

Purpose:

Customer Experience is at the heart of business success, however, empirical studies in its understanding and personalization are limited, particularly in specific industries (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020; Kokins et al., 2021; Kuehnl et al., 2019; Weidig et al., 2024). This study uses the TCQ Framework (touchpoints, context, qualities) of De Keyser and his colleagues' meta-analysis (2020) to address this research gap and explore customer (student) and service provider's (educator) experiences within the phygital context in professional dance education. The objectives are: 1) to reveal experience themes using the TCQ framework, highlighting similarities and differences between the educator's and dancer's viewpoints; 2) to explore the mandate of the service provider as teacher versus employee; 3) to investigate phygital training experiences, and; 4) to build understanding of innovative customer experiences and journeys while improving the service provider's experience.

Design/methodology/approach:

Rooted in the constructivist worldview, an epistemological approach to this study is based in empiricism. Inductive reasoning is applied in a qualitative mono-method, embedded exploratory emergent case study used to move from customer experience detail to general themes. With a cross-sectional time-horizon and purposive sampling, semi-structured one-on-one interviews are used with results determined through thematic inductive coding. TCQ Framework elements are a pre-coding mechanism while still allowing for the emergence of themes not previously identified. A thematic analysis derived through data combing will minimize the bias of the researcher (Chowdhury, 2015) and Leximancer's use provides further credibility to results.

Findings:

Preliminary findings highlight five distinct themes: 1) the pre-eminence and sophistication of the individual context and the psychographic elements demonstrated within the customer experience for both student and educator; 2) perceptions of customer experience subsume individual touchpoints into a comprehensive customer journey; 3) the TCQ Framework elements are nominative; 4) meeting student educational goals are served both in program participation as well as self-initiated learning, and; 5) the importance of the social qualities and context in both the decision to participate in the program and the positive valence of the experience.

Research Limitations/implications:

While single case study findings are not generalizable, it represents a step forward in creating foundations for further studies within other arts, sports and education organizations. It also highlights additional research gaps in understanding phygital customer experience. This interdisciplinary study's value is found in blending the arenas of dance, education and business operations and provides for practical and academic applications. Further, a knowledge base has been established to further understand phygital learning experiences. Given global adoption and increasing technology use, studying customer experience and the impact of its personalization within phygital training is critical for effectively incorporating technology (Forbes, 2022a, 2022b). Practical outcomes of this research can be used to develop phygital programs incorporating components that create and build innovative, personalized, authentic touchpoints and journeys, generating positive experiences that embody the qualities sought by consumers to foster loyalty and advocacy while enhancing the experience of the service provider and service provider.

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Mobile interviews on sober pub-crawls: Capturing the embodied mobilities and stasis of consumption and non-consumption experiences

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the potential of walking interviews to capture the mobility and stasis inherent within consumption experiences. It also seeks to explore how qualitative researchers can capture the interactions and interconnectedness between consumers and the places, spaces, landscapes, communities and objects which host those experiences. To do so, we undertake walking interviews with participants on 'sober pub crawls' as they experience mobile and embodied consumption and non-consumption.

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Experiential Learning – Marketing Students Modernising Kolb (1984): Insights from inside the classroom

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

Experiential Learning - Insights from Inside the Classroom.

Working from a lived experience Marketing students share experiential learning views, resulting in the development of a research informed modernised framework building upon the work of Kolb (1984)

Competitive Short Paper

A widely reported sector problem is that students are progressing through university with no practical experience. Hindering their employability opportunities, fuelling the debate around what constitutes a good quality degree. A way to address this is through experiential learning. The external environment recognises the role of engagement working with partners on live projects. Students on Marketing programmes benefit from industry connections and experience throughout their degree with value further exchanged after graduation. Embedding experiential learning within teaching modules, provides a structured yet non-prescriptive solution to gaining practical experience. Brennan (2014) suggests experiential learning methods should be used thoughtfully and where the learning goals and the cohort of students are likely to benefit from them.

The effort and time spent in developing collaboration partnerships with marketing clients pays dividends, the quality of live projects and problem solving, retains student interest with the real time opportunity to connect lecture content to practical business collaboration for the duration of a teaching semester. Knoblock (2003) critically questions if experiential learning is really authentic and details three stage criteria, construction of knowledge, disciplined inquiry, and value beyond school. Gosen and Washbush (2004) posit if students believe they are trying to do something that is interesting and important they will make an effort to believe it is worthwhile. Students get to feel the “messiness” of business associated with real world situations (Gentry, 1990). Benefits include a beyond the classroom, working to a client brief on a current marketing issue, team working with fellow students. A physical day visit to meet the client also fosters student belonging among the cohort.

Students follow the framework of an academic structure, collecting primary and secondary data to propose recommendations to their marketing clients. Creative assessments embed employability. The learning is fast paced, highly engaged and future focused, students follow a weekly planner organised around skill development. Rohm et al (2021) claim marketing educators have long identified the need for students to develop essential skills, that will effectively prepare them for future careers in marketing

The experiential learning is skill led framed around the seminal work of Kolb (1984), introducing and applying Kolb to marketing students as a lived experience recognises there is a need to modernise the learning framework. Marketing students who have undertaken a first-year experiential learning module, where Kolb is introduced both in the first and last weeks of teaching together with the work of Kolb included in a reflective assessment, formed the research population, due to their higher point of knowledge. A series of four focus groups were undertaken with students self-selecting involvement. The aim was to collect views from inside the classroom and undertake an interactive activity to re-design Kolb's (1984) framework from their lived experience.

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Smelling Opportunities: A Case of Scent Marketing

Track: 18. Teaching Cases

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Summary Statement

Dr. Suji and Dr. Jeeva Sanjeevan transitioned from selling handmade candles to launching a scent marketing agency designing scents for the physical spaces of international brands. The couple has multiple product lines and a product-service business model that operates on one-off and ongoing payments. Now, they face pivotal decisions: expand the subscription model locally, revitalise or cancel some product lines, or enter international markets. Students analyze strategic options and propose marketing-driven solutions for sustainable growth.

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Overcoming The Attitude-Behaviour Gap in Plus-size Sustainable Fashion: Female-led Initiatives

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

Plus-size women have limited access to sustainable, well-fitting clothing, despite this group comprising 47.4% of UK women. Research also highlights a mismatch between sustainable offerings and consumer requirements. A small number of women-led companies are defying this trend. This study examines two UK-based, women-led companies succeeding in this niche. Initial findings reveal differing strategies that are pertinent to each brand. These strategies highlight features desired by consumers, with sustainability as a secondary benefit.

Competitive Short Paper

Plus-size women, UK size 18 or over (Bogenrief, 2012), face significant challenges finding quality, well-fitting clothes (Lebesco, 2004; Christel et al., 2016), often resorting to fast fashion (Quirk, 2023). While a few sustainable brands are achieving some success, only a small number are size-inclusive, creating a further challenge for plus-size women with a sustainable conscience. Research also shows a gap between consumers' sustainability beliefs and purchasing behaviour (Weiderhold & Martinez, 2018; McKeown & Shearer, 2019; Cairns et al., 2021). While a small number of size-inclusive sustainable companies are achieving successful growth, inclusivity and sustainability are still not widely available across the industry and research is lacking in this area.

The clothing industry often attributes the lack of size-inclusive offerings to insufficient demand, yet evidence suggests otherwise (Dion and Tachet, 2020). Plus-size clothing is made as invisible and inaccessible as possible and is stocked with clothes considered poorly designed and ill-fitting (Mondalek, 2021). With 47.4% of UK women considered plus-size (Mys Tyler, 2024), this market is the fastest-growing clothing sector (Credence Research, 2023). Furthermore, brands that embrace inclusivity enjoy significant gains (Mondalek 2021). Similarly, responsibility for a lack of sustainable clothing provision is also shifted onto consumers (Perry & Towers, 2013).

While researching the sustainability attitude-behaviour gap, studies find reasons such as a desire for novelty (McNeill & Moore, 2015), price, fit and availability for a lack of uptake (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Solomon & Rabolt, 2004; Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018). Research also suggests that fast fashion companies promote a culture of overconsumption (Gupta et al., 2019). There is a mismatch between the sustainable offering and consumer's requirements. While the fashion industry is predominantly male-led, companies emerging as leaders in the inclusive sustainable market are women-led (Williams, 2022). This research, therefore, examines two UK-based women-led companies that are forerunners encroaching on this, as yet, niche market.

This multiple case centres on two companies and uses multiple methods. Data was gathered for Company A using interviews and field notes. Data for Company B was gathered using prior interviews and social media analysis. Initial indications reveal that these two companies are very different in product and marketing. Company A produces exclusive modern clothing from in-house woven fabric. Marketing is built around developing a local community and traditional media attention. Product features are focused on the quality and fit of their products. Company B prioritizes online brand co-creation, highlighting inclusivity, good fit, and affordability. Although both companies are open about sustainability, this is not the main selling feature of either company's products.

Nearly half the UK women's population are stigmatised by a fashion industry (Peters, 2014) that is mainly unsustainable (Brewer, 2019). These early indications suggest that with careful marketing, brands can provide size-inclusive sustainable clothing that is attractive to the consumer. This ongoing research will be of interest to those aiming to market sustainable size-inclusive women's clothing and researchers focused on the marketing of these products.

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Early Career Researchers in Business Schools: In Pursuit of Impact

Track: AM Funded Research

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Summary Statement

Amidst a funding crisis within UK Higher Education, a significant proportion of the Research Excellence Framework (2029) will focus on engagement and impact. The pursuit of impact in business schools among ECRs has received limited research attention. As the first generation of scholars facing the emergent expansion of performance criteria to include scholarly and practical impact, ECRs confront considerable challenges. Accordingly, this project addresses understanding, institutional support and barriers encountered, as ECRs pursue impact.

Competitive Short Paper

The complexity of societal challenges has engendered a renewed interest in how research can be leveraged to enhance the quality of life of citizens. A key performance metric adopted by universities and funding agencies is research relevance and the ensuing societal impact beyond traditional scholarly impact. Although there is some understanding of societal impact, extant research has not examined why and how career stage shapes the motivation to engage in impact-driven research, particularly among early career researchers (ECRs). Considering the unique carer-related challenges faced by this generation of academics, it is important to study their understanding and experiences of impact. Drawing on sustainable career theories, this Academy of Marketing funded project examines the understanding of, and challenges faced by ECRs in business schools in their pursuit of impact.

Using purposive sampling, participants were selected across universities. For a holistic perspective, the study targets ECRs and members of leadership teams, within business schools as units of analysis. Participants were approached through personal contacts, university websites and social media, followed by snowballing. ECRs were typically defined as being within 5 years of PhD completion. Our semi-structured interview guide was informed by theory, our own experiences and observations. Adopting McCracken's (1988) funnel approach, online interviews started with general questions about researchers' careers, research evolution, understanding of, ability/motivation to undertake impact, barriers encountered, support required and provided. We obtained data from a combined sample of 25 ECRs and university administrators such as research deans. Data collection will be complete by early 2025. Analysis is ongoing using thematic procedures (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Initial findings indicate that as established academics developed their research, they gradually engaged with industry/policy to deliver impact over time. However, given the importance of engagement and impact, these are being increasingly incorporated as deliverables for younger scholars. Considering the overwhelming emphasis on theory-driven research in doctoral training, career significance and resource implications of high-ranking research outputs, ECRs struggle to prioritise impact. In addition, ECRs face constraints in securing funding, endure conflicting priorities, limited job security, networks, and institutional support. Going forward, business schools need to include engagement and impact in PhD trainings, consider workload, have relevant support structures (e.g. mentors), provide incentives, consider sector, university, researcher priorities and personal circumstances. Specialisation, rather than generalisation of scholars, is key consideration for focus on academic priorities and work-life balance for sustainable careers.

This study's findings will help in articulating practical steps to help ECRs build diverse networks, identify the practice/policy relevance of their works, and pathways to operate effectively at the interface of research, policy, and practice. Findings may also guide the policy of funding bodies, workload models, mentoring support, define wider reward/recognition processes, help with staff attraction and retention. Theoretically, this project contributes to debates around being an "engaged scholar" (Hoffman, 2021), production (Aguinis et al. 2012; 2014; Ramani et al. 2022), co-creation (Gümüsay & Reinecke, 2022) of scholarly impact at an early career stage (Podsakoff et al. 2018).

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Boost the Budget: An Analysis of Football Fan Attitudes towards Crowdfunding the Team Playing Budget

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

When football clubs face financial hardship, their fans often play a critical role in preserving their team's existence through fan crowdfunding. More recently, this practice has extended to contributing towards player wages, a practice known as 'Boost the Budget' that has not previously been explored in the fan loyalty literature. This study explores football fan attitudes towards crowdfunding focused on maximising on-the-pitch success, and adds to our understanding of individuals who straddle the fan-investor boundary.

Competitive Short Paper

Fans are core stakeholders of any football club (Kelly et al., 2012) who financially support their favourite team through match attendance, merchandise purchases and digital content streaming. This study investigates football fan attitudes to a very specific form of financial support: Directly contributing towards player wages and transfers, a form of fan crowdfunding commonly referred to as 'Boost the Budget' (BTB).

England is famed for its football pyramid: An interconnected series of leagues that allow for promotion and relegation that sustains clubs at much lower levels than the Premier League. Most top-tier clubs are now owned by international organisations with limited historical connections but deep wallets (Miller, 2024). Whilst the Premier League has enjoyed significant success as a global brand, it is common for football clubs further down the football pyramid to find themselves in severe financial hardship (Evans et al., 2024). Often the result of club owners running clubs unsustainably in chase of promotion or trophies (Solberg & Haugen, 2010), recent decades have witnessed a significant number of clubs forced into administration (which comes with heavy footballing penalties) or even liquidation.

In such cases, one constant has been the determination of a team's fans, who place the club at the heart of their identity (Tapp, 2004), to invest significant amounts of money to preserve the existence of their club. This fan loyalty represents a form of communal attachment rarely seen in modern society (Szymanski, 2010) and has led to increased numbers of 'fan-owned' clubs at lower levels of the pyramid (Cocieru et al., 2019; Sánchez et al., 2021). Such financial contributions represent an emotional form of investment that is distinct from classic investments made based on expected monetary returns (Huth, 2019; Weimar & Fox, 2021). Fan crowdfunding activity has primarily sought to support a specific cause (usually one of securing the club's future and its contribution to the community). More recently, fan-owned clubs have extended the crowdfunding model into one which continuously helps to fund the salaries of the team and management staff. Often referred to as BTB, this involves fans committing to supporting their club with financial contributions across a season. The more the fans donate, the bigger the budget that can be spent on players. No monetary return is offered to investors, although contributing may come with less tangible rewards including watching a more successful team or other fan privileges (Kościółek, 2023).

The notion of crowdfunding being used to increase chances of on-the-pitch success (as opposed to club survival) is an area as yet unexplored in the football fan literature and is the focus of the current study, which will:

Identify the key drivers that encourage BTB pledges.

Explore the relationship between BTB pledges and other forms of fan loyalty.

Investigate if pledgers perceive their contribution as a donation or an investment.

In addition to enhancing our theoretical understanding of sports consumers as fans and investors of their favourite team, this work will also equip football clubs with an understanding of how to optimise future crowdfunding initiatives.

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Collaborative Pathways to SDG Integration: A Workshop-Based Study of Entrepreneurial Firms

Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

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Summary Statement

This paper examines how entrepreneurial firms align with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from a relationship perspective. Through workshops in Ireland and Scotland, researchers studied factors enabling and constraining small businesses' sustainability efforts. While literature often presents sustainability as beneficial for business performance, the findings suggest it is not always a "win/win" scenario and involves multiple tensions. Small firms particularly rely on business networks to overcome resource limitations when implementing sustainability initiatives.

Competitive Short Paper

Over the past two decades, sustainable development has become a priority in policy, practice, and academia. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a framework for addressing social, environmental, and economic issues. Much literature views incorporating sustainability into business marketing practice as a 'win/win' scenario, positively influencing competitiveness and financial performance (Karki et al., 2021; Sabatini et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2010). This rationale is echoed in policy where the UNCC (2019) stated "it is both ethical and good sense to invest in sustainable development for all people on a healthy planet" (Cited in Voola et al., 2022:12).

This paper explores factors enabling and constraining entrepreneurial firms' alignment with SDG goals from an interactive, relationship perspective. Literature in this space has emphasised the importance of ensuring sustainability across supply chains (Karki et al., 2021; Meqdadi et al., 2017) and in collaborative new product development processes (Chauhan et al., 2022; Goworek et al., 2020). Yet, much research is grounded in a large firm context, leading to calls for more empirical studies in a small, entrepreneurial setting (Rudawska, 2019). To address this gap, the purpose of this paper is to explore the factors that enable and the constrain the entrepreneurial firm in aligning their business marketing with the SDG goals, taking a collaborative, relationship perspective.

Data was collected during workshops held in the Republic of Ireland and in Scotland. We used a design methodology where the entrepreneurs were equipped to reflect on their current sustainability practices, map future perspectives, and identify key tensions experienced in aligning with the SDGs. Participating firms engaged in collaborative discussions, exchanging knowledge, experiences, and best practices.

In our analysis, a focal firm perspective was taken with the unit of analysis being the individual actor (entrepreneur) and their interactions in relationships and within the network. Initially we categorised factors at an individual actor level, as interactions by relationship type (suppliers, distributors, business customers) and within a wider network environment. We subsequently depicted them as positive or negative in their influence on the firm's alignment with the SDGs. This analytic work enabled us to develop a framework of entrepreneurial actions and interactions as related to the alignment of their business to the SDGs.

Our paper adds to the limited research addressing sustainability in an entrepreneurial and relational context (Goworek et al., 2020). Studies related to food waste have grown in recent years (Annosi et al., 2021), our study takes a broader approach in focusing on the factors enabling and constraining entrepreneurial firm alignment with the SDG goals. Our findings suggest that strategising in this way is not always a win/win scenario (Karki et al., 2021), rather replete with tensions which must be addressed. Taking an interactive perspective to addressing sustainability is particularly salient related to entrepreneurship due to a reliance on a network of business actors to mobilise external resources and capabilities to overcome liabilities associated with being new and small.

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Ludic Authenticity: Prosuming "Irishness" in Precarious Japan

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

This study investigates how a global cultural product is locally appropriated while its imagined authenticity is prosumed by community members. We use the context of Irish traditional music sessions in Japan. The interpretive data analysis of an ethnographic study reveals "ludic authenticity" of Japanized sessions, characterized by imagined Ireland, having ostensibly shared neo-agrarian communal values in facing precarious socioeconomic outlooks. Japanese musicians pursue prosuming "grooves," as a means of liberation and an index of authenticity.

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An empirical study of the impact of Artificial Intelligence on B2B sales professionals in the UK services sector

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

This empirical investigation examines the transformational effects of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on Business-to-Business (B2B) sales professionals, analysing the evolution of sales roles, organisational architectures, and customer engagement paradigms. Findings from this qualitative exploratory study with senior sales, marketing, and procurement executives indicate that AI facilitates operational efficiency and delivers strategic insights. However, human competencies remain fundamental in complex B2B sales environments. Ethical considerations in AI-driven sales are found to be significant and warrant further investigation.

Competitive Short Paper

"Sales organisations are ready to embrace the next wave of technological innovations, including artificial intelligence" (Bauer et al., 2024, p.783). Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming ubiquitous within the modern-day business landscape and there are anticipated to be significant benefits for AI both in the business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) contexts (Grewal et al., 2021). Within the B2B domain, firms are increasingly facing challenges in relation to their sales force interactions; therefore, new initiatives and innovative sales processes are needed to respond (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2025). The proliferation of AI represents a paradigm shift in B2B sales and an array of different types of AI are emerging. Exemplifying the overall economic importance of AI, one subcategory Generative AI (GenAI) alone is expected to drive global GDP by 7% (i.e. US$7 trillion) within the next decade (Kumar et al., 2025).

Theoretical frameworks have been developed to advance understanding of AI's potential impact on sales practises (c.f. (Singh et al., 2019; Rodriguez & Peterson, 2024). However, there has been a lack of empirical investigation to explore the proposed models. New research streams are emerging and recent AI work in the B2B domain examines the negative implications of AI-based decision-making in the B2B context Papagiannidis et al. (2023), propose an organisational process model in which AI facilitates communication, coordination, and customisation (Latinovic and Chatterjee, 2022) and investigates managerial perceptions of leveraging AI for enhanced B2B service recovery (Ameen et al., 2024). However, there is a significant gap in the research when it comes to understanding AI's practical applications and the transformation of B2B sales functions and processes.

To explore this knowledge deficit we interview 19 senior sales, marketing and procurement executives (C-suite) working for UK-based B2B service organisations. The triangulation of perspectives from these inter-related disciplines gives complementary insights into AI implementation within B2B sales (Biemans et al., 2022). Our work draws from the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2) (c.f. Tamilmani et al, 2021).

Our findings suggest that AI enhances salesforce operational efficiency and can optimise customer engagement (Fischer et al., 2022), particularly in process automation and data analytics. We find continual challenges exist in relation to human competencies in complex sales environments (Elhajjar et al., 2023), emphasising relationship management and emotional intelligence as increasingly vital skills (Rust, 2020). Advancing prior work by Davenport et al. (2020), our participants identify the important role of AI in emerging technology focused roles. Our findings indicate a potential convergence of sales and marketing functions under unified revenue leadership. A significant contribution is made by highlighting the critical ethical considerations in AI-driven sales. Consequently, we propose further work to develop a comprehensive cohesive ethical framework for AI implementation in B2B sales.

This research contributes to theoretical frameworks and practitioner guidance by providing empirical evidence of AI's impact on B2B sales roles and offering strategic direction for sales leadership navigating AI transformation. Our findings are timely as organisations attempt to navigate the equilibrium between technological advancement and human expertise in contemporary B2B sales environments.

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In Love With the Darkness: Topophilia and Thana-Tourism

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores place-based attachment in relation to dark sites. In doing so were reveal five topophilic domains (1) Infatuation (2) Transformation, (3) Enchantment, (4) Atmosphere and (5) Bonding ceremonies that forge and cement attachment to dark sites and a love of them. This work advances our understanding of Topophilia, place, the multiplicities of dark tourism beyond its surface and offer a stronger and more robust understanding of emotions and emotional processing at dark sites.

Competitive Short Paper

Recent studies on the subject of dark tourism (Seaton,2022) have focused on aspects of moral blindness (Thomas, 2024), rituality (Sun and Lv, 2024), emotional engagement (Sigala and Steriopoulos, 2021), motivations to visit (Min et al., 2021) and over commercialisation (Chen and Xu, 2020). Dark tourist sites or 'black spots' (Rojek, 1993; Kiráľová and Šperková, 2024) are often associated with personal feelings of sadness and pain (Zhang et al., 2023) due to the tourists 'sightseeing in the mansions of the dead" (Keil, 2005, p. 479). Consequently, individuals struggle having been exposed to these sites (Zheng et al., 2018) and grapple with the horrors of natural and manmade suffering (Peštek and Šošić 2022).

However, people's relationship with space and spaces are saturated with emotions and this has been captured via the lens of Topophilia. Topophilia has been defined as "the affective bond between people and place or setting' (Tuan, 1974, p. 4). Places can provide an array of feelings including comfort, safety, and a sense of origin (Kauko, 2003). Topophilia has invariably been associated with human habitats, urban spaces (Anderson and Erskine, 2012), 'lively' and community-based environments (Al-Mendilawi and Essa Al-Saaidy, 2024) with forays into sacred places (see Masiola, 2023), sports stadia (see Grundlingh, 2022) and environments decimated by natural disaster (see Sarkar et al., 2023). However, the aim of this research is to explore potential Topophilic bonds at dark tourism sites.

To answer this aim, multiple mini ethnographies were undertaken over a two-and-a-half-year period at the following dark sites across Europe (1) Nuremberg, (2) KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, (3) Kraków-Płaszów, (4) Sachsenhausen, (5) Oradour-sur-Glane, (6) Normandy American Cemetery Memorial, (7) Le Cambe War Cemetery, Normandy and (8) Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. 42 walking interviews were conducted across the eight sites. A content analysis was undertaken using several rounds of coding including descriptive coding, emotional coding and versus coding.

Data revealed that Topohilic intention is predicated on feelings of infatuation, enchantment, perceptions of atmospherics, feelings of personal transformation, individuation and homosocial bonding. The data reveals that some dark tourists have a mental capacity to analyse dark sites beyond traditional emotional reasoning and develop affective bonds as sites elicit positive emotions with this validity and associated reasoning seemingly paradoxical and a theoretical dislocation. The ability to interpret the emotion and profundity of the sites into favourable behavioural outcomes that improve sense of self is a unique finding and we expand literature related to Topophilia, dark tourists and dark sites as a consequence. However, these emotions seem distanced from the moral characteristics of the sites and articulated emotional bonds lacked an explicit concern for those who perished and this will need to be empirically examined.

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The role of shock advertising in discouraging misbehaviour in public transportation focusing mostly on drivers- A case study of Nigeria (Lagos and Abuja).

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

The research aims to investigate the effectiveness of shock advertising in reducing dangerous behaviours such as speeding, reckless driving, drink and drug driving, and non-compliance with traffic regulations amongst commercial bus drivers in Nigeria.It adopts a novel approach using an experimental design. We developed three shock advertisements and present them to commercial bus drivers, measuring their reactions to these advertisements and behavioural intentions.

Competitive Short Paper

Over 1.1million, people die each year from road traffic accidents (RTAs) according to the World Health organisation (WHO, 2023). Bonnet et al., (2018) proposed that the highest incident of mortality amongst teenagers and young adults in Africa are RTAs. In Nigeria, these accidents are on the rise and it is the third-leading cause of overall deaths and deformity (Onyemaechi and Ofoma 2016). According to (FRSC, 2024) 5,081 people were killed in various road traffic crashes across the country in 2023 and 10,617 road traffic crashes were recorded with 31,874 injured. In their report, many of these incidents arose from commercial drivers transporting passengers (FRSC, 2024). Adeleke et al., (2020) purports that RTAs in Nigeria is one of the worst in Africa and many of these accidents are caused by human and mechanical faults. Human factors arise mainly due to the driver's faults such as drink driving, not paying attention to traffic regulations, and dangerous driving (Highway Code, 2020). There is an urgency to address these issues, and all stakeholders need to take action in a holistic manner (WHO, 2024). The objectives of our research were investigating commercial bus drivers misbehaviour, their reaction to shock advertising, providing evidence to the effectiveness of shock advertising and recommendations to the Federal Road Safety Corporation (FRSC).

Justification for the Research

Our research adopts a novel approach using an experimental design. We developed three shock advertisements and present them to commercial bus drivers, measuring their reactions to these advertisements. Shock advertising is defined as a form of advertisement that employs unconventional language and atypical imagery to surprise and capture the audience's attention, ultimately leading to a change in behaviour (Evans, 2022). Unconventional advertising such as fear and shock are the most used in road safety awareness (Cutello et al., 2023). They are effective in raising awareness of potential risks, grabs attention and provide motivation in avoiding or changing unsafe behaviours (Thompson et al., 2009). Therefore, our research questions are as follows: how do commercial bus drivers in Nigeria react to shock advertising, how effective is shock advertising in reducing the misbehaviour of commercial bus drivers in Nigeria and what strategies should the FRSC and other policymakers adopt to effectively implement shock advertising campaigns aimed at commercial bus drivers.

We worked in partnership with the FRSC to access critical data on commercial bus drivers' behaviours, enabling us to conduct a thorough analysis. With the support of FRSC, we recruited commercial bus drivers for surveys and interviews, ensuring robust participation. We collaborated with the FRSC to provide guidance on traffic regulations and contextualising our research within the current policy framework. The research provides the FRSC with evidence-based insights to refine traffic regulations and policies. It also aims to improve road safety and a reduction in road traffic accidents amongst commercial bus drivers. The research developed a comprehensive policy for the FRSC, recommending the study's findings to improve road safety amongst commercial bus drivers in Lagos and Abuja Nigeria.

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Customers' and Influencers' e-WOM Impact on Restaurant E-Reputation Management: A Mediating Moderating Model

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

Technological advancements are transforming customers' perceptions of restaurants, shifting from traditional word-of-mouth recommendations to electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). This study examines how restaurant influencers' and customers' e-WOM affects e-reputation management and repurchase intentions. The study investigates how e-reputation management mediates influencers' and customers' e-WOM and repurchase intentions. Additionally, through the social influence theory lens, the study examines how informational social influence moderates the relationship between influencers' and customers' e-WOM and e-reputation management.

Competitive Short Paper

Technological advancements are transforming customers' perception of restaurants (Batat, 2021; Helal et al., 2024), shifting from traditional word-of-mouth recommendations to electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and online reviews based on prior customers' experiences (Chen & Law, 2016; Lee et al., 2022). Further, there is a rise of influencers who evaluate restaurant products and services to a broader customer base (Lee et al., 2021). These online reviews from customers and influencers alter customers' perspectives of a restaurant's products and services, positively or negatively, thus influencing a restaurant's e-reputation. E-reputation refers to customers' perceptions and evaluations of a business based on online sources, including social media, mobile apps, business websites, review platforms, and digital community forums (Peco-Torres et al., 2023). Consequently, managing restaurant e-reputation extends beyond only addressing customer reviews and necessitates a thorough comprehension of customer and influencer evaluations. Therefore, this study examines how restaurant influencers' and customers' e-WOM affects e-reputation management and repurchase intentions. The study investigates how e-reputation management mediates influencers' and customers' e-WOM and repurchase intentions. Additionally, through the social influence theory lens, the study examines how informational social influence moderates the relationship between influencers' and customers' e-WOM and e-reputation management.

The study gathered 356 valid online questionnaires from Egyptian restaurant customers. These questionnaires were analyzed using two programs (i.e., SPSS and Smart-PLS). The study found that influencers' and customers' e-WOM influenced restaurant e-reputation management and customer repurchase intentions. E-reputation management mediated the relationship between influencers' and customers' e-WOM and repurchasing intentions. Additionally, informational social influence moderates the relationship between customers' e-WOM and e-reputation management. However, informational social influence did not moderate the relationship between influencers' e-WOM and e-reputation management.

Accordingly, these research findings extend the current hospitality and tourism literature by providing two novel perspectives. First, the study broadens the literature to provide a more thorough knowledge of the influence of e-WOM by customers and influencers on restaurant e-reputation management and repurchase intentions. Second, the study offers a novel perspective on the moderating effect of informational social influence on the relationship between influencers' and customers' e-WOM and e-reputation management. Moreover, this study provides examples of managerial implications based on its findings and to assist restaurant managers in improving their e-reputation and customer repurchase intentions. First, restaurants should actively collaborate with influencers to develop engaging content, including meal reviews, behind-the-scenes tales, and live tastings to boost brand exposure and credibility. Second, immediate contact with customers, such as post-meal surveys, can encourage customers to talk about their experience with the restaurant. Finally, managers should use recent technologies to track and analyze influencer and customer e-WOM across platforms to respond to unfavorable evaluations quickly and professionally.

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The Sociogenesis of Sustainable Cocoa (Chocolate) 1991 -2025

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

We consider the strengths and limits of figurational sociology to analyse the development of sustainable cocoa. This reading demonstrates the human interdependencies of the producers along with the influence of other actors' in civil society over the period 1991 to 2025. We explore how cocoa figurations have promoted key processes around democratisation, formalisation, expansion and empowerment to tackle some of the most complex social and environmental problems endemic in the global cocoa market

Competitive Short Paper

There are 5-6 million cocoa growers globally, plus a further 14 million rural workers involved in the cocoa value chain (Fairtrade International, 2023). Yet the value capture in the $150bn cocoa market is highly concentrated with just nine companies controlling almost all cocoa processing, and just six companies dominating the global chocolate market (Cocoa Barometer, 2022). Most growers are smallholder farmers (1-3 hectares per farm), living in remote rural locations, where deeply embedded gender norms prevail, child labour is prevalent (Barrientos & Bobie, 2016) and low incomes persist ($0.29 per day for women and $0.9 per day for men [Fairtrade Foundation, 2021]).

The interdependencies between the different network actors in the cocoa industry are clear. Cocoa processors, chocolate manufacturers, retailers and customers (predominantly in the global north) are dependent on high-volume and high-quality cocoa production from the global south. Yet the cocoa farmers, government agencies and export intermediaries are reciprocally dependent on their upstream network partners for livelihoods and income. As such, although we have a global commodity network of highly interdepended actors, huge power imbalances are inherent in the system. Figurational sociology (Elias, 1970), otherwise known as process-sociology (Elias, 2009) has been proposed for studying people in interdependence and in structures of dynamic power relations, and has been used to theorise how peoples' behaviours, identities, practices, and relationships are formed and transformed over time (Connolly and Dolan 2017).

Opposing the unequal power ratios in conventional trade (markets and value chains) was a key motivating factor for Fairtrade's initial development (Doherty, Davies, & Tranchell, 2013). How successful this has been in these interdependent networks can be exposed by exploring the changing nature of the cocoa figuration over the last 35 years. Past studies of gastronationalism (de Soucey 2010) focused on case analysis of foie gras in France have also noted the connections between foods and politics and their interconnecting material, commercial and institutional processes. Therefore, in this paper, we address the question: What processes are at play in the emergence of third party accreditation of chocolate over the period 1991 to 2025? Drawing on a multi-qualitative methodology encompassing over 60 combined years of reflective practice amongst the author team, extensive formal and informal participant observation, more than 200 semi-structured interviews from year 2000-2024, and document analysis covering 142 industry and monitoring reports, news archives, board minutes and parliamentary papers and proceedings, this paper provides the first application of figurational sociology to the process of addressing power imbalances in global commodity trading, including the lived social reality of the authors in this process. In doing so, we are able to explore the evolving networks, processes and power ratios at play in this sector over the extended 35 year period of activity, and assess the movement towards addressing the SDGs in this critical sector. As a consequence we propose figurational sociology is a strong lens for observing market change over longer periods of time towards greater equity and sustainability.

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Navigating Gendered Impacts of Corporate Surveillance in the Digital Advertising Ecosystem: Privacy and Consumer Behaviour

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

This paper focuses on theoretical development, introducing the Feminist Data Vulnerability Model (FDVM) and Cyberfeminist Privacy Advocacy (CPA) to address systemic inequalities in digital advertising. As a summary of a full completed paper, it examines privacy exploitation and targeted advertising, offering actionable insights for academia, practitioners, and policymakers to foster ethical, inclusive digital ecosystems.

Competitive Short Paper

The increasing prevalence of corporate advertising surveillance poses significant ethical challenges, particularly regarding consumer privacy, gender equity, and societal well-being. This competitive short paper addresses these challenges through a feminist lens, exploring the dynamics of surveillance capitalism, cyberfeminism, and violence against women and girls (VAWG) within the digital advertising ecosystem.

Background

Corporate advertising surveillance operates at the nexus of surveillance capitalism and digital marketing, leveraging vast amounts of consumer data to enable hyper-targeted advertisements. While this approach enhances personalisation, it raises ethical concerns around consumer privacy and data exploitation (Zuboff, 2019). Loopholes in regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), allow companies to commodify user data globally by exploiting regions with weaker protections (Bailey & Parsad, 2021). Many users consent to data collection through misleading forms, often unaware of its implications (European Data Protection Board, 2019). Advertising surveillance disproportionately targets women, especially in areas like reproductive health, exposing them to privacy intrusions and risks to autonomy (Bol et al., 2020). The 12th United Nations Forum on Business and Human Rights emphasized the need for a rights-based, ethical approach to mitigate harms and uphold global human rights (Byrd, 2023). Cyberfeminism critically examines these dynamics, emphasizing the intersection of technology, gender, and power (Consalvo, 2002). The feminist privacy paradox illustrates the dual nature of digital spaces: while they empower advocacy and connection, they also expose users to surveillance and exploitation (Clark-Parsons, 2018).

Research Findings

This study is structured around key research questions, each addressed with targeted propositions:

How do gendered advertising practices intersect with women's data vulnerabilities?

Proposition 1: Surveillance advertising leads to increase of digital vulnerability of women.

How does the "feminist privacy paradox" manifest in digital advertising ecosystems?

Proposition 2: Women's data digital vulnerability exacerbates the feminist privacy paradox.

What role does feminist activism play in addressing gendered surveillance?

Proposition 3: The feminist privacy paradox impedes cyberfeminism.

How can policy and education mitigate gendered data exploitation?

Proposition 4: Increase in digital literacy of women enhance cyberfeminism, reduce data vulnerability and foster cyberfeminist privacy advocacy.

The Feminist Data Vulnerability Model (FDVM) integrating concepts and propositions identifying the ethical advertisers' responsibilities. It demonstrates how targeted advertising practices, such as those in femtech, exploit sensitive health data for commercial gain, exacerbating privacy risks (Mihaila, 2023).

The **Cyberfeminist Privacy Advocacy (CPA)** framework advocates for embedding gender-sensitive mechanisms in data governance and adopting privacy-preserving technologies (Boerman et al., 2017). This advocacy advances traditional privacy frameworks by addressing systemic inequalities and offering actionable strategies for policymakers and practitioners (Clark-Parsons, 2018; Consalvo, 2002).

Implications

This study provides actionable insights for academia, practitioners, and policymakers. For academia, it enriches theoretical frameworks by reimagining data ethics through a feminist lens. Practitioners are urged to adopt FDVM and CPA principles to design equitable advertising strategies. Policymakers must enforce stricter regulations addressing women's vulnerabilities and embed feminist principles into governance structures.

Keywords: Advertising Surveillance, Cyberfeminism, Privacy Paradox, Gender Equity, Digital Advertising.

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Pre-Loved and Proud? Decoding Second-Hand Clothing Adoption in Bangladesh

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This pilot study explores the cultural, social, and practical factors influencing second-hand clothing (SHC) adoption in Bangladesh using a qualitative approach. Interviews with young adults reveal motivations, barriers, and perceptions, including affordability, quality, social stigma, and sustainability awareness. The findings highlight the need for culturally informed strategies to promote sustainable consumption in developing countries. This research provides valuable insights for expanding SHC adoption and bridging the gap between developed and developing contexts in sustainable fashion.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

This pilot study explores the underlying dynamics influencing second-hand clothing (SHC) adoption in Bangladesh. Most SHC research has focused on developed countries and overlooked developing regions (Norum & Norton, 2017; Yang et al., 2024). However, research in developing countries is crucial as they represent a significant population, distinct purchasing intentions, and a growing sustainable fashion market (Ouyang, 2022). Furthermore, while cultural, social, and functional factors shape SHC adoption, these factors have received limited attention (Koay et al., 2022). The current research aims to fill this gap by using a qualitative approach to explore difficult to measure factors that can influence SHC adoption in Bangladesh and offer valuable insights for sustainable fashion in developing countries.

Methodology and Findings

Younger generations are more positive towards sustainable practices (Su et al., 2023) and more open to SHC adoption than older generations (Palomo-Domínguez et al., 2023). Given this, eleven semi-structured interviews were conducted with university students aged between 18-26. The interviews were preliminarily analyzed using the thematic analysis framework by Braun and Clarke (2022). This assisted the researchers to identify seven key themes: affordability and quality; social perceptions and stigma; cleanliness and hygiene; trust and credibility; platform preference; cultural preferences; and sustainability awareness.

While affordability was a motivator, quality expectations were identified as a barrier for participants. Many were discouraged by the lack of hygiene and cleanliness in SHC. Some questioned the authenticity (e.g., brand or label, material) of SHC items and were skeptical of the claims made by sellers. Additionally, while a few participants preferred buying SHC online, most liked physical stores better. A significant number of participants expressed reluctance to purchase traditional Bangladeshi SHC, fearing it might be seen as disrespectful to the festivals they were attending. Most of them preferred Western-style SHC. Despite being aware of sustainability issues, most participants did not choose SHC out of environmental concerns. Lastly, while many participants acknowledged buying SHC, they were uncomfortable sharing this fact with others due to the perceived social stigma attached. They feared it could negatively impact their social status leading others to perceive them as stingy or of lower financial standing. As a result, they often chose not to disclose the origin of their clothes. Consequently, this pilot demonstrates how cultural, social, and practical factors impact the adoption of SHC.

Future Applications

The pilot study lays the ground for expanding research on SHC adoption in developing countries by incorporating a larger sample and broader investigations. Future research could include comparative analyses between developed and developing countries to explore differences in motivations and barriers. Longitudinal studies may also be beneficial in tracking shifts in consumer attitudes and intention over time regarding SHC. Building on the findings, future studies could adopt mixed-method approach to gain deeper insights and validate the findings.

Conclusion

This pilot study identifies motivations and barriers to SHC adoption as well as contributes to the conversation on sustainable consumption and the need for culturally informed strategies in developing nations.

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The Influence of Brand Image on Customer Loyalty Through Relationship Marketing in B2B ISP Markets: A Study from Indonesian SMEs

Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

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Summary Statement

Underpinned by relationship marketing (RM) theory and set within the internet service provider (ISP) sector, this research investigates the effect of brand image on SME customer loyalty in the B2B setting. The importance of relationship quality and relationship value are assessed as mediators within this relationship. Findings from the survey of Indonesian SME ISP users confirm the influence of brand image on customer loyalty, RM is found to significantly mediate this relationship.

Competitive Short Paper

This study examines the influence of brand image on SME customer loyalty within the B2B internet service provider (ISP) sector, with a focus on the mediating role of relationship marketing (RM). Although there is a rich body of work investigating brand image on customer loyalty, there is limited research in the B2B context.

Importantly, RM has not been accounted for within prior frameworks and no previous B2B studies have investigated the ISP industry setting. We adopt Morgan and Hunt's (1994, p.34) heavily cited definition of RM as "all marketing activities directed towards establishing, developing, and maintaining successful relational exchanges". Subsequently, to develop our conceptual framework we use two constructs to measure RM, 'relationship value' and 'relationship quality' (c.f. Ulaga and Eggert, 2005; Pfajfar et al., 2022).

Our study is set in Indonesia, an emerging market (EM) where GDP growth is projected at an average of 4.9 percent from 2024-2026 (World Bank, 2023). However, further growth will be required if the government's goal of reaching advanced-economy status by 2050 is to be met (OECD, 2024). SMEs play an important role in Indonesia, there are over 64 million SME that contribute over 60% of Indonesia's GDP and employ 97% of the workforce (ekon, 2022). SMEs in EMs rely heavily on the internet for their daily operations; therefore, we focus on a specific challenge that brands are facing in EM (c.f. Wichmann et. al., 2022).

The number of ISP's is a measure of internet penetration and a proxy for internet adoption and usage (Sen and Tucker, 2022). There were 1,011 ISPs in Indonesia in 2023 (Statista, 2024), compared with 221 in the UK (IBISWorld, 2024). This represents high levels of internet adoption and an extremely competitive environment within the Indonesian ISP sector, this landscape is suitable to examine the effects of the measures within our study.

Grounded in RM theory we test our conceptual model using 172 valid responses to our survey of Indonesian SMEs actively using internet services. In line with expectations, we find brand image positively effects relationship value, relationship quality and SME customer loyalty. As hypothesised, we also confirm both of our RM constructs positively influence customer loyalty and mediate the relationship between brand image and customer loyalty.

Our results underscore and extend prior research in relation to the key role RM plays when considering B2B branding outcomes (c.f. Marvi et al., 2024). Specifically, we validate the importance of RM in mediating the connection between brand image and SME customer loyalty within the B2B domain. Subsequently, we recommend B2B ISP managers allocate sufficient resources for strengthening relationship quality by engaging in activities that foster trust, commitment, satisfaction and service quality (Rauyruen and Miller, 2007). We suggest employing a granular approach to appreciating ISP value propositions and how it is communicated to SME, taking account of customer insights and their priorities (Eggert et. al, 2018). Given that there is a growing recognition of emerging-market idiosyncrasies (c.f. Wichmann et. al., 2022), future research should replicate this work in a developed market setting.

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Recording Children's Exposure to Online Advertising: Kids Online Aotearoa

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

Children are increasingly targeted and particularly vulnerable to the effects of online advertising. This pilot study examines the nature and extent of children's online exposure. Analysis of screen recordings from 12 children revealed exposure to 17 advertisements per hour, mainly on TikTok and gaming apps, featuring products like games, beauty items, and food. Findings highlight the need for policy development and educational initiatives to address the risks posed by targeted, platform-specific advertising to children's well-being.

Competitive Short Paper

Literature Review

Children constitute one-third of global internet users and are increasingly targeted by advertising on social media, gaming platforms, and educational apps (OfCom, 2022). Due to their cognitive and emotional developmental stages, children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of online advertising (Rozendaal and Buijzen, 2022). Engaging formats, such as embedded advertising and influencer content, increase their susceptibility by creating emotional connections and shaping preferences, behaviours, and values (De Veirman et al., 2019).

The consequences of children's exposure to online advertising are multifaceted, affecting cognitive, social, and behavioural development. Repeated advertising exposure, for example, has been shown to foster materialistic values (Opree et al., 2014), and food advertising has been shown to contribute to childhood obesity risks (Boyland et al., 2022).

To date, there remains little observational research exploring the nature and frequency of children's total online advertising exposure. Existing research largely focuses on specific product types, such as food and beverages (Nicholson and Kelly 2023), or individual platforms, leaving gaps in understanding the broader landscape of children's online advertising exposure. This study addresses these gaps by examining advertising exposure across multiple platforms using the New Zealand Kids' Online Aotearoa (KOA) video data.

Research Objective

This pilot study aims to assess the feasibility of coding the extent of children's total online advertising exposure, to understand the nature of the exposure by platform, advertising type, and product category.

Method

The KOA study is a cross-sectional observational project investigating the online experiences of 11- to 13-year-olds from 12 schools in New Zealand. Participants use Zoom to record real-time, internet-based, screen-shared content over four consecutive days. Data includes screen-shared activity, demographic information, daily phone use, and health-related behaviours.

The pilot study analysed one hour of continuous online activity from 12 children. Advertising content was coded by platform type, advertising technique (Lapierre and Choi 2021), and product category (Watkins et al. 2018).

Results

Preliminary results using negative binomial regression indicate children encounter 17 advertisements per hour online, with the most exposure on TikTok and in gaming apps. In-game and in-app advertisements dominated, promoting products such as games, beauty items, media brands, and financial services. Food and beverage advertisements were common, alongside some exposure to alcohol, drug, and gambling advertising.

Discussion and Conclusion

Children's exposure to online advertising is extensive, shaped by personalised algorithms and characterised by innovative advertising formats. It spans various platforms, products, and techniques, some of which pose immediate health risks and all of which contribute to a pervasive online marketing environment. Documenting the nature and extent of children's online advertising exposure is a first step to informing policy discussions and educating children and parents about online advertising. Further questions arise from the pilot study as to children's privacy online, the targeted nature of the advertising they are exposed to, the dominance of certain product categories, and differences in advertising tactics between platforms. Many countries have, or are currently developing, policy on children's online advertising exposure and this research provides insight for the development of policy in NZ.

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Questioning Inclusion in Mega-Events: A Business Model Approach

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

This study explores how Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) can enhance accessibility and inclusivity for people with disabilities (PwD) at mega-events. Using a Business Model framework, the research identifies barriers PwD face, including inadequate wheelchair access, poor signage and sensory overload. We proposes innovative pictorial communication tools to address these issues. The findings stress the importance of proactive inclusivity, urging DMOs to engage PwD in decision-making and implement inclusive event designs, ensuring equitable experiences for all.

Competitive Short Paper

This study examines the role of Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) in fostering accessible and inclusive experiences for people with disabilities (PwD) at mega-events. Drawing from the Business Model (BM) framework (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010) and the concept of BM innovation (Demil & Lecocq, 2010), this research highlights how DMOs can enhance inclusivity by addressing barriers to value creation, delivery and capture. Our work aligns with the UN-SDGs by emphasising inclusivity as central to sustainable development, economic prosperity and social equity.

Mega-events, such as the Olympics and Eurovision, draw considerable national and international attention, serving as opportunities for destination branding and economic impact (Leal de Oliveira et al., 2020). However, the literature on mega-events is largely focused on sporting events, overlooking non-sporting events and the accessibility challenges faced by PwD. Our study seeks to fill these gaps by investigating how non-sporting mega-events can promote accessible tourism and inclusive community development. To do so, we explore the barriers PwD face at mega-events, and then propose inclusive pictorial communication tools (e.g., emojis and stickers) that reflect PwD's lived experiences.

Drawing from data collected using netnography (Kozinets, 2015) and focus groups (Malhotra, Nunan & Birks, 2017), the study identifies various barriers, including (i) PwD often struggle with navigating crowded venues, insufficient wheelchair access, and poorly maintained facilities; (ii) inadequate sign language services and limited inclusive visual tools hinder PwD's ability to engage fully; (iii) PwD encounter unfair treatment, such as restricted access or inappropriate use of accessible facilities; (iv) large crowds, loud noises and bright lights can overwhelm individuals with sensory sensitivities, highlighting the need for quiet spaces; (v) emergency plans often fail to adequately support PwD during evacuations.

Rich Pictures, created by the focus group participants (Berg et al., 2017), propose innovative pictorial tools to address these challenges. Suggestions include wheelchair-inclusive emojis, visual aids to guide PwD to quiet spaces, and symbols celebrating diversity within event communities. These findings can be used to inform business model design that prioritizes accessibility and inclusivity in event planning, in terms of: ensuring accessible pathways, seating, and sensory-friendly zones, alongside well-trained staff to assist PwD during emergencies; implementing inclusive signage, assistive technologies, and pictorial tools, crowdsourced to reflect diverse experiences; involving PwD and advocacy groups in decision-making to address overlooked challenges (such as stigma and sensory overload); enforcing policies against unethical practices, promote social inclusion, and mitigate discrimination.

Our study advances the discourse on creating inclusive mega-events by addressing various challenges faced by PwD. We propose a business model offering actionable strategies for DMOs to move beyond compliance and foster proactive inclusivity. Ongoing research is needed, however, to explore technological innovations for enhancing accessibility. Our insights underline the importance of embedding PwD voices in event design, thereby shaping equitable and empowering experiences for all.

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Empowering SMEs Through Generative AI: A Knowledge Transfer Approach to Ethical and Sustainable Marketing

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

The project examines a knowledge transfer initiative designed to help UK-based SMEs utilise free generative AI tools to transform their marketing strategies. Through tailored workshops and collaborative learning, the project addresses resource constraints and technological apprehensions. This study emphasises the practical, ethical, and sustainable implications of inclusive AI adoption while bridging the gap between academic research and real-world applications for SMEs.

Competitive Short Paper

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into marketing practices has demonstrated significant potential to enhance efficiency, customer engagement, and personalised strategies. However, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often encounter financial and resource constraints that hinder their ability to adopt these advancements. This study addresses this gap through a knowledge transfer project which aims to enable SMEs to leverage free generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT and Canva, to revolutionise their marketing efforts.

Funded under a university-industry collaboration initiative, this ongoing project involves the participation of 20 UK-based SMEs and is structured around three tailored knowledge transfer workshops. These workshops provide hands-on training in AI tools, focusing on real-world applications to address the specific marketing challenges faced by SMEs. Additionally, the project facilitates two semi-structured interviews with each SME to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention and its impact on marketing strategies and business performance. Preliminary findings indicate that tailored AI training enables SMEs to overcome barriers related to resource limitations and technological apprehension. The workshops have proven instrumental in fostering a collaborative learning environment, where SMEs not only acquire practical AI skills but also engage in valuable peer-to-peer knowledge exchange.

The study contributes to the broader discourse on democratising AI in marketing by showcasing how targeted knowledge transfer initiatives can address the unique needs of SMEs. Recent research underscores the barriers SMEs face in AI adoption, such as financial constraints, skills shortages, and regulatory challenges, which are often region-specific (Yusuf et al., 2024). Furthermore, university-industry collaborations are highlighted as pivotal in bridging the gap between academic research and practical business applications. For example, data labs at universities have demonstrated scalable, project-based models to enhance skills and align academic knowledge with industry needs (Chappell, 2024).

The project also yields significant implications for the ethical use of AI and sustainable skill development among SMEs. Studies on AI governance reveal that democratising AI requires addressing systemic issues like algorithmic bias, data security, and transparent decision-making (Seger et al., 2023). Moreover, the integration of responsible AI practices with IoT and enterprise systems has been shown to align ethical considerations with business objectives, enhancing long-term value creation (Akter, 2024). AI has demonstrated its ability to enhance operations and sustainability in SMEs, supporting ethical and innovative ecosystems (Vaio et al., 2020). Hence, the study is advocating for AI-driven strategies that align with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By presenting this initiative at the Academy of Marketing Conference, we seek to expand on the conference's overarching theme of advancing impactful research that integrates theory with practical applications in marketing. The presentation will provide a detailed analysis of the effectiveness of knowledge transfer workshops, the role of generative AI tools in addressing SMEs' marketing challenges, and the implications for fostering inclusive, ethical, and sustainable AI adoption practices. By offering evidence-based recommendations, the session aims to equip academics with deeper theoretical perspectives, guide practitioners in implementing AI-driven strategies, and inform policymakers on supporting frameworks for democratising AI in the SME sector.

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Pharmakon of Algorithmic Alchemy: Marketing in the Age of AI

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the strategic motivations behind marketers' adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI), examining its dual role as an enabler of innovation and a source of ethical challenges. By combining qualitative analysis of AI-driven marketing campaigns with in-depth interviews with practitioners, the study highlights the need for human-centric and inclusive AI practices. The findings offer actionable insights on balancing innovation with ethical responsibility, fostering sustainable progress, and strengthening consumer trust.

Competitive Short Paper

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become a transformative force in marketing, fundamentally altering consumer interactions, operational efficiency, and strategic decision-making. Conceptualizing AI as a pharmakon—a remedy that also acts as a poison—this research explores its dual role as both an enabler of innovation and a source of ethical and operational challenges. This study examines how marketers are leveraging AI to reshape their practices and asks the pivotal question: What are marketers trying to accomplish by using AI?

The study's objectives are twofold: first, to analyze the strategic goals marketers aim to achieve through AI, including enhanced customer engagement, data-driven decision-making, and competitive differentiation; and second, to critically evaluate the unintended consequences of AI adoption, such as algorithmic biases, privacy concerns, and the erosion of human touch in consumer-brand interactions. These dual objectives underscore the novelty of this research, which moves beyond traditional discussions of AI's technical capabilities to interrogate its broader cultural, ethical, and societal implications.

Methodologically, this research employs a qualitative approach, combining in-depth analysis of marketing campaigns that use AI with interviews conducted with marketing practitioners who integrate AI into their strategies. This dual perspective provides rich insights into the motivations and challenges associated with AI adoption, offering a grounded understanding of how AI is reshaping marketing ecosystems across industries.

This research contributes to the academic discourse on responsible AI adoption by offering actionable insights for marketers and organizations. It emphasizes the importance of aligning AI implementation with ethical standards and human-centric values, advocating for its use as a tool to enhance consumer trust, foster inclusivity, and drive sustainable progress. Furthermore, the study highlights the necessity of addressing disparities in AI accessibility and usage to ensure equitable benefits across diverse consumer demographics.

Inclusion lies at the heart of this investigation, as it critically examines the role of AI in mediating cultural shifts and redefining norms in marketing. By exploring how AI amplifies or mitigates existing inequalities, this study underscores the need for marketing strategies that prioritize fairness and inclusivity. It also raises awareness of how biases embedded in AI systems can perpetuate systemic issues, calling for ongoing scrutiny and ethical oversight in its application.

In conclusion, this research provides a strategic framework for marketers to navigate the complexities of AI adoption, balancing innovation with responsibility. By addressing the "why" behind AI's integration into marketing, it offers a roadmap for leveraging its potential to drive meaningful change, build stronger consumer relationships, and contribute to broader societal goals. This study's unique focus on the interplay of strategic motivations, ethical considerations, and societal impact positions it as a critical resource for academics and practitioners seeking to understand and optimize AI's role in marketing.

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An Integrative Framework of Patient's Vulnerability and Informational Activities during the Breast Cancer Journey

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

Vulnerability shapes breast cancer patients' informational activities and interactions with stakeholders throughout their healthcare journey. This conceptual paper develops an original framework integrating insights from marketing and social sciences to explore the dynamic relationship between vulnerability and informational activities. By categorizing these activities using dimensions of responsiveness, agency, and effort, the framework shows how vulnerability influences and is influenced by information, offering practical implications for policymakers, healthcare providers, and future research directions.

Competitive Short Paper

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), 1 in 5 individuals will develop cancer in their lifetime, with breast cancer being the leading cancer among women (WHO, 2024; World Cancer Research Fund International, 2024). A breast cancer diagnosis inherently places patients in a vulnerable position due to the physical and emotional toll of the disease (Buki et al., 2024; Tinetti & Kumar, 2010). This vulnerability is further compounded by the need to make complex decisions involving treatment risks, outcomes, and side effects (Payne, 1976). These decisions are particularly challenging as patients must process significant information while grappling with the emotional distress, physical changes, and uncertainty caused by their diagnosis, making informed decision-making even more difficult.

We argue that vulnerability is a critical dimension to consider when examining the informational activities and subsequent decisions in the breast cancer experience. Vulnerability is a pivotal concept in healthcare, which is used with varying connotations – either to highlight characteristics that expose specific populations to higher risks or to describe the physical, emotional, and cognitive response individuals have to health-related events (Boldt, 2019; Gordon, 2020; Tan et al., 2023). Importantly, vulnerability is not static but can evolve during the illness trajectory due to individual and/or environmental changes (Bower et al., 2005; de Araújo Santos Camargo et al., 2024). Existing research acknowledges the multidimensional nature of vulnerability but lacks an integrated understanding of how it affects patients' informational activities and decision-making. To unify these perspectives, we draw on the consumer vulnerability framework from marketing, which captures both the multidimensional and dynamic aspects of vulnerability (Hill & Sharma, 2020; Mende et al., 2024; Sudbury-Riley et al., 2024).

This paper adopts these perspectives and develops an integrative framework synthesising insights from healthcare and marketing literature to map the interplay between vulnerability and informational activities. The framework comprises three key components: (1) the multidimensional nature of vulnerability, (2) patient informational activities, and (3) their bidirectional relationship. Vulnerability is categorised into individual, interpersonal, and structural dimensions, varying in breadth and depth (Hill & Sharma, 2020; Mende et al., 2024). Informational activities are organised by responsiveness (proactive vs reactive), agency (high vs. low control), and effort (cognitive vs. behavioural). This framework provides a comprehensive lens to examine how vulnerability influences and is influenced by patients' informational activities throughout their breast cancer journey.

Our research makes three key contributions. First, we explore the dynamic nature of vulnerability throughout the patient journey, addressing calls to unpack its evolving forms and degrees (e.g., Salisbury et al., 2023). This highlights how changes in vulnerability influence information activities across different stages of breast cancer care. Second, we emphasise the multifaceted nature of information-related behaviours in the patient journey (Hicks, 2022) and their connection to vulnerability. By identifying three dimensions—responsiveness, agency, and effort —we introduce a novel framework that captures their interplay. Third, our framework offers practical guidance for policymakers and healthcare providers to enhance care delivery and empower patients by addressing evolving vulnerabilities (Taplin et al., 2012; Danaher & Gallan, 2016).

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Post-consumption Communities in Recoverism and Art

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

This working paper conceptualises 'post-consumption communities' formed around shared experiences of coping with what has been *abandoned* in consumers' lives rather than what is actively consumed. Drawing on the sociology of absences and ethnographic data collected amongst the art-based "Recoverism" movement that promotes recovery from addiction, we explore how retiring consumption practices can incur communal action and belonging. Through artistically representing sobriety, participants redefine what fulfilment and pleasure look like beyond the coordinates of consumption.

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Immersive Empathy and Sustainability: Using VR Case Studies from the Global South to Enhance Marketing Education

Track: AM Funded Research

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Summary Statement

This Academy of Marketing-funded research investigates how immersive virtual reality (IVR) enhances marketing education through experiential engagement with Global South sustainability challenges. Focusing on West African shea nut collectors, the study demonstrates IVR's effectiveness in developing students' empathy, ethical judgment, and cultural awareness. Results show increased understanding of supply chain complexities while challenging the "white saviour" complex and power dynamics. The research provides practical guidelines while contributing to sustainable development goals and advancing marketing education.

Competitive Short Paper

The business landscape is undergoing a fundamental shift, with 98% of global CEOs viewing sustainability as crucial for long-term success (UN Global Compact and Accenture, 2023); the integration of sustainability into business practices has transitioned from an ethical imperative to a strategic necessity (Belz & Peattie, 2012; Carvill and Butler, 2024). As sustainability skills become essential for future-proof careers (World Economic Forum, 2025), marketing education must adapt and prepare professionals to navigate these complexities, fostering empathy, ethical judgment, and global citizenship competencies (Maignan et al., 2005; Crittenden et al., 2011; Carvill and Butler, 2024).

This research investigates how immersive virtual reality (IVR) enhances marketing education through experiential engagement with Global South sustainability challenges. Focusing on shea nut collectors in Ghana and Burkina Faso, the study leverages IVR's capacity to create 'presence,' enabling students to experience the cultural, economic, and environmental dynamics of global supply networks (Herrera et al., 2018; Makransky; Lacle-Melendez et al., 2024). The theoretical foundation combines experiential learning (Kolb, 1984; Moon, 2004) with constructivist principles (Phillips, 2000). Building on IVR's demonstrated effectiveness in medicine and engineering education (Mao et al., 2021), this approach deepens students' understanding of sustainability, ethics, and marketing strategy interconnections. The research supports SDGs 4 (quality education), 10 (reduced inequalities), and 12 (responsible consumption and production), while addressing the role of marketing educators in preparing graduates for complex global business environments. Implementation involved integrating IVR content into selected undergraduate marketing modules with focus groups evaluating its impact. Students explored virtual scenarios that highlighted sustainability issues, cultural dynamics and market complexities.

Results showed enhanced awareness and empathy toward Global South communities, with participants forming emotional connections to the women shea nut collectors and gaining deeper understanding of their cultural context and challenges. Students engaged critically with sustainability issues through the VR scenarios, particularly examining labour practices and supply chain fairness fostering an awareness of the global impact of consumer decisions. The immersive nature of VR transformed abstract concepts into immediate and tangible experiences, improving attention compared to traditional teaching methods. Notably, participants demonstrated critical thinking by reflecting on power dynamics and the 'white saviour' complex, emphasising the importance of authentic representation and community empowerment. Some participants expressed skepticism about the true impact of the initiatives shown suggesting the incorporation of complementary educational materials to provide broader context. Overall, the findings demonstrate IVR's potential to foster empathy, ethical decision-making, and global citizenship competencies while identifying specific areas for pedagogical refinement. These findings echo previous research that highlights the role of interactive, technology-driven learning in enhancing student engagement and outcomes (Janssen et al., 2016; Bond and Bedenlier, 2019; Cotton, 2021).

This research yields multifaceted implications for marketing education. IVR emerges as a transformative pedagogical tool that develops skills beyond traditional curricula while providing practical implementation guidelines for educators. The scalability of such initiatives offers a model for integrating empathy-building and sustainability learning across disciplines. This contribution to educational technology discourse demonstrates how fostering empathy, ethical decision-making, and cultural awareness through IVR equips future marketers to navigate sustainability complexities.

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How To Convert A Webpage Into Structured Data For Analysis Using Generative AI

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

This methodological paper provides a step-by-step guide on capturing a webpage as an HTML file. It then demonstrates how to write an LLM prompt to extract specific data and present it as a CSV output. It highlights the legal and ethical considerations of web scraping, discussing 'fair use' and 'fair dealing' defences in common law jurisdictions.

The case study analyses Microsoft's Tech Community forum discussions to identify themes and overall sentiment.

Competitive Short Paper

Using a web scraping methodology with platforms like PythonTM (an interpreted, object-oriented, high-level programming language with dynamic semantics (Python, n.d.)) could invalidate your research. It may also breach ethical and legal guidelines, making it difficult to publish your work in any high-quality academic journal. For example, Facebook (2024), LinkedIn (n.d.) and TikTok (2024) all state in their Terms of Service that web scrapping is not allowed. The growing concerns about organisations scraping data to train Large Language Models (LLMs) have led to an increase in the number of firms implementing this restriction (Bereczki & Liber, 2024). These days, social media platforms allow researchers access to their data via a licenced social listening API. These APIs are software interfaces that allow researchers and businesses to access and analyse social media data and online conversations at scale. These APIs provide structured access to online sources but are expensive and restrictive in their use Perriam et al. (2020).

There are other alternatives, such as Shaw (2022) exploring the concept of 'fair use' in relation to copyright regulations for research. The author points out that while many researchers often disregard copyright regulations, they may be protected from infringement by invoking 'fair use' or 'fair dealing' defences. In the United States, 'fair use' is determined by Section 107 of the Copyright Act, while in the United Kingdom, 'fair dealing' is governed by Sections 29 and 30 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Both acts protect academic research and teaching from copyright infringement as long as the work's original creator is adequately acknowledged. Shaw (2020) highlights that most common law jurisdictions offer the 'fair use' or 'fair dealing' defence. However, in Continental Europe, operating as a civil law system, this legal defence does not exist. Instead, researchers need to adhere to Articles 15 and 17 of the EU Directive (EU) 2019/790 mandate.

Shaw (2022) illustrates how researchers can capture website (social media) data by simply copying the data using the 'Control C' function (or 'right-clicking' the mouse and selecting 'copy'). This paper takes the work of Shaw (2022) further by demonstrating how using the 'Control +S' function on a keyboard can capture a website's source code as an HTML file: a website's source code is the collection of instructions that tells a browser how to display a website. It's made up of HTML, CSS, and JavaScript files (Butcher, 2004). More specifically, this paper provides a step-by-step guide on:

How a webpage is captured as an HTML.

How to create an LLM prompt that extracts specific data from a web page and presents it as a CSV output.

The case study focuses on analysing Microsoft's Tech Community forum discussions related to "Issues with Copilot". The data extracted included thread title, thread question, contributor, date of contribution, number of views, number of likes, and number of comments. It then demonstrates how such data was analysed to identify themes and overall sentiment.

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BOF Case Study – Pioneering Circular Economy in Small Business

Track: 18. Teaching Cases

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Summary Statement

BOF (Bridgend Office Furniture) is an independent family run furniture business based in South Wales, specializing in inspiring sustainable office environments, in universities, the public sector, and private enterprises. Their services include sustainable furniture supply and installation, design expertise, project management, and upcycling existing furniture.

Competitive Short Paper

Small business organizations are excellent teaching case studies because they provide relatable, and multidimensional scenarios that feature relatable real-world challenges and marketing choices. Studying small local businesses, students can gain insights through with entrepreneurs including guest lectures and site visits.

BOF (Bridgend Office Furniture) is an independent family run furniture supplier based in South Wales, specializing in creating inspiring sustainable office environments, in education, the public sector, and private enterprises. Their services include sustainable furniture supply and installation, design expertise, project management, and upcycling existing furniture (https://www.bof.co.uk/).

BOF illustrates how circular economy principles can be integrated into a traditional industry - office furniture (Lauvas & Jacobsen, 2024). Their strategy to use recycled furniture items and materials and to prioritize sustainable practices, demonstrates their leadership in addressing sustainability challenges in a traditional business sector. The philosophy of designing furniture with durability and end-of-life recyclability in mind, implementing an innovative refurbishment business model, and collaborating with customers to create sustainable plans for office refurbishments is inspiring. Office furniture that demonstrates how strategic investment in sustainability drives innovation, reduces environmental impact, and meets the growing demand for eco-conscious and responsibly designed office furniture.

BOFs integration of circular economy principles into office furniture encompasses several key strategies:

Innovative business model - adopting models, which keep office furniture products in circulation for longer rather than in a skip.

Sustainable materials - using recycled, upcycled, or renewable materials.

Life span focus - designing furniture for durability, repairability, and recyclability.

BOF has a strong commitment to sustainability embracing practices that promote a circular office furniture industry,

Reupholstery and Remanufacturing - extending the life of existing furniture, reducing waste and conserving resources.

Eco Shop - offers surplus furniture at discounted prices, including pre-used items, new, refurbished, and ex-display furniture.

BOF integrates social responsibility and sustainability into its core values through the following initiatives:

Community Support - donating unwanted furniture to local charities and communities.

Sustainable Events and Local Engagement - actively supporting local sustainable events to strengthen community links.

Social Value Advocacy - committed to delivering Social Value through active participation in sustainability forums such as *NETpositiveTM* Futures.

Well-being Focus - improving lives by prioritizing stakeholders to enhance happiness, health, and overall well-being.

This teaching case will exemply the potential for traditional industries to innovate and adapt to sustainability challenges. The case has been developed through secondary research, observation, interviews and collaborative office renovation projects (see - https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/news/view/2852943-new-aberconway-student-community-hub-set-to-enrich-student-life-at-cardiff-business-school). It tells the story of a successful small business enterprise who adopted traditional strategies to respond to economic and sustainable market challenges. It is not an account of financial success or brand share, but a narrative of the journey made by an innovative small family business.

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Environmental Values as Mediators Between Moral Positions and Voluntary Simplicity Lifestyles

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

Sustainable consumption behaviours are needed to address the consequences of overconsumption. One such behaviour is Voluntary Simplicity (VS). Moral positions influence the adoption of VS but require environmental values as mediators to translate positions into actions. Using the Voluntary Simplicity Engagement Scale, a moral positions scale and the Environmental Portrait Value Questionnaire, results suggest that utilitarianism, mediated by altruistic, hedonistic and biospheric values, strongly predicts VS lifestyles. Insights offer pathways to promote sustainable consumption behaviours.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Overconsumption is recognised by the United Nations as a major contributor to the depletion of the Earth's natural resources (UN 2024), emphasising the need for more sustainable consumption (Kropfeld et al. 2018; Seck 2022). Voluntary Simplicity (VS) represents one behavioural approach to addressing overconsumption.

Voluntary Simplicity

VS refers to lifestyles characterised by the deliberate reduction of material consumption and the prioritisation of non-materialistic values (Elgin 2006; Chang 2021). Motivated by ethical concerns such as equity and environmental values, VS emphasises sustainability and ethical responsibility (Leonard-Barton 1981; Shaw & Newholm 2002; Peifer et al. 2020).

Moral Positions and Voluntary Simplicity

Moral positions guide perceptions of right and wrong, influencing lifestyle choices and consumption behaviours (Read et al. 2018; Peifer et al. 2020). Commitments to equity, justice, and environmental stewardship often lead individuals to adopt VS lifestyles. For example, concern for future generations aligns with moral integrity, where actions reflect deeply held ethical beliefs (Huneke 2005). These moral positions may stem from deontological ethics, emphasising duty and rights, or consequentialist ethics, focusing on the outcomes of actions (Schwartz 1992). While moral positions can initiate VS adoption, they require translation into specific behaviours through environmental values.

Environmental Values

Environmental values are categorised into four orientations: biospheric (nature-focused), altruistic (social welfare-focused), egoistic (self-focused), and hedonistic (pleasure-focused) (Bouman et al. 2021). These values prioritise ecological preservation over egoistic or social motivations (de Groot & Steg 2008) and link abstract moral values to VS behaviours. For example, concern for the environment can motivate VS consumption behaviours (Hunecke 2005), while intrinsic values, including ecological stewardship, align with low-consumption lifestyles (Brown & Kasser 2005).

Research Objective

This study explores how environmental values mediate the relationship between moral positions and VS adoption.

Measures and Sample

This study employed the Voluntary Simplicity Engagement Scale (Rich et al. 2020), a moral positions scale (Peifer et al. 2020), and the Environmental Portrait Value Questionnaire (Bouman et al. 2018). A sample of 854 individuals, demographically representative of the New Zealand population, was sourced via the Australasian market research panel, Research Now.

Results

Mediation analyses using PROCESS Model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap resamples (Hayes 2018) revealed a significant direct effect between utilitarianism and VS, but no significant direct effect between deontology and VS. Altruistic, biospheric, and hedonistic values significantly mediated the relationship between utilitarianism and VS.

Conclusion

While moral positions provide ethical principles for VS adoption, environmental values translate these principles into actionable behaviors. This study highlights the strong relationship between utilitarianism, mediated by environmental values, and VS lifestyles. Understanding this pathway provides insights into promoting sustainable lifestyles that address overconsumption.

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The Importance Of Saints And Saintly Behaviours To Nonprofit Organisations: Offering A New Perspective On Altruism Theory.

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

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Summary Statement

The purpose of this paper is to rethink our understanding of altruism through the lens of the nonprofit organisation (NPO). This mature domain draws on theoretical perspectives from psychology, socio-biology, economics and sociology, all of which focus on the individual, at best extended to kin or community. And yet the question remains, what does all this theoretical insight mean for the very organisations trying to harness altruism to make a positive change in society?

Competitive Short Paper

The purpose of this paper is to rethink our understanding of altruism through the lens of the nonprofit organisation (NPO). Studies of altruism span Aristotle, Marcus Aurelius, Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith (Khalil, 2004) as well as a plethora of recent scholars. This mature domain draws on theoretical perspectives from psychology, socio-biology, economics and sociology, all of which focus on the individual, at best extended to kin or community. And yet the question remains, so what? What does all this theoretical insight mean for the very organisations that are trying to harness altruism to make a positive change in society?

This paper takes the novel approach of considering the body of work on altruism from an organisational perspective, in this case nonprofit organisations (NPOs). It makes three important contributions, one theoretical and two managerial. Firstly, it repositions altruism theory within a wider body of contemporary work encompassing effective altruism, studies of kindness and the quest for well-being (Steger et al., 2008). It refocuses our understanding away from the rational language of homo economicus where motives and actions are selfish (Andreoni, 1995; Blau, 2017), including egocentric (Becker, 1976) and egoistic (Axelrod, 1984), back to the original definition of altruism: from the Latin, meaning 'for the other', caring for the 'alter' (Cipriani, 2022). This other-focus, can be driven by intrinsic motivations (Ricard, 2018; Di Domenico & Ryan, 2017) or a quest for eudaimonia (Ryan & Deci, 2001). This refocusing it considers the importance of context (Bierhoff & Rohmann, 2004; Piliavin & Charng, 1990), ideas of altruism as personality traits (Seligman, 2002), personal values (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000) or something that can be practiced (Ricard, 2015).

Secondly, it offers a theoretical bridge for NPOs to better understand contemporary altruism theory (aka saints and saintly behaviours). Through visual mapping, it identifies the key tensions and perspectives within modern altruism theory, defined as where benefit given to others acts a source of fulfilment that increases our quality of life. Conceptually, it clarifies the primary contemporary 'types' of altruism to enable NPOs to better access this complex and much disputed field.

Finally, the paper offers a 'so what'? What are the implications for NPO managerial practice from the presence in society of saints or people who sometimes behave in a saintly way. Enthusiasts of effective altruism (MacAskill, 2019) have already mapped one route, but this provides calculated path to philanthropic choice for those already deciding to give. Alternatively, genetic biologists argue the altruism gene needs activating, that it could lie dormant unless given the opportunity to surface. Both Aristotle and Piliavin (2003) argue one becomes good by doing good. Ricard (2018) believes altruism can be practiced and transformed into a lasting altruistic motivation. Karier (1984) identifies the importance of socialisation from a young age. These all present opportunities for NPOs if only they can understand and engage with centuries of theoretical thinking on altruism (Haski-Leventhal, 2009). This paper attempts to bridge that gap and in doing so, offers a practical solution to a burning 'so what' question.

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Optimizing Faculty Responsibilities Using Artificial Intelligence: A Case Study in Marketing Faculties

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

This research investigates the use of AI and optimization to improve the productivity of marketing faculty members. Through mixed-methods research, including interviews and surveys, the study aims to identify challenges and preferences regarding AI implementation. A novel framework will be developed to optimize time allocation across teaching, research, and administrative tasks, considering individual faculty needs and ethical concerns. This will culminate in prototype software to assist faculty in efficiently balancing their responsibilities.

Competitive Short Paper

Faculty members at various universities are responsible for performing various tasks, including teaching, scientific research, and administrative tasks (Hardré & Cox, 2009; Fleming, 2018). However, they face many different challenges, including managing the content of scientific courses and making necessary modifications, performing innovative research, and balancing administrative duties such as advising students, correcting exams, quality assurance tasks, and participating in administrative meetings (Grobgeld et al., 2016; Lopatina et al., 2024; Golab et al., 2025). To this end, this research aims to utilize artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced optimization techniques to enhance marketing faculty workload, thereby facilitating the distribution of these three academic responsibilities in a balanced and successful manner. More specifically, this study adopts a mixed-methods framework to investigate the application of AI and optimization techniques for managing faculty responsibilities within marketing departments. Firstly, interviews will be conducted, and a self-administered questionnaire will be distributed to faculty members to identify challenges, preferences, ethical concerns, and expectations regarding AI's role in improving their workflows. The data will then be analyzed to assess time allocation across teaching, research, and administrative tasks, identifying inefficiencies and time-intensive processes. Based on this analysis, a novel framework utilizing advanced multi-objective optimization techniques is developed, integrating these challenges as constraints to formulate a problem for effective time allocation. Subsequently, AI algorithms will be applied to generate optimized solutions for scheduling responsibilities and prioritizing tasks by importance and deadlines to enhance productivity and reduce time wastage. Finally, a prototype software will be developed using the proposed framework, allowing faculty-specific input to efficiently produce tailored schedules for balancing their duties. This methodology offers a holistic understanding of AI's potential in academic workflows and provides actionable solutions for institutions to improve operational efficiency.

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Formatting Opinions: Investigating How Generative-AI Product Review Summaries Affect Consumers' Decision-Making When Shopping Online

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

This study addresses the limited research concerning Generative AI (GAI) product review summaries and their impact on consumers' online shopping decisions. By employing a 3 (review presentation format; between-subjects) x 2 (product type; within-subjects) experiment with 750 participants, this research extends the Stimulus-Organism-Response framework to examine how GAI review summaries influence perceptions of trust, helpfulness and credibility. The findings will provide actionable insights into the role of GAI review summaries in shaping consumers' online decision-making.

Competitive Short Paper

Online retailing continues to grapple with high product return rates, driven by information asymmetries that hinder consumers' ability to evaluate products effectively (Chrimes et al., 2022). To bridge this gap, online reviews from previous buyers have emerged as a vital decision-aid, with 61% of UK internet users relying on reviews to inform purchasing decisions, especially under time constraints (Mintel, 2024). Marketing literature posits that user-generated reviews enable consumers to objectively appraise product criteria, reducing uncertainty and enhancing decision-making when shopping online (Amblee et al., 2017). The recent rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers new opportunities for retailers to augment consumers' online decision-making by reducing product information search costs. Specifically, Generative-AI (GAI) is being leveraged by marketers for review sentiment analysis and aggregation, distilling key themes from extensive product review datasets (Harreis et al., 2024; Ooi et al., 2023). Amazon introduced GAI review summaries in 2023, enabling consumers to quickly grasp key consumer sentiments about specific products without reading numerous individual reviews. Yet, concerns over credibility and trustworthiness of GAI review summaries have emerged, with 62% of consumers expressing scepticism, citing fears of exaggerated positivity or review bias to increase sales (Coopola, 2024). Marketing scholars also suggests that homogenised product reviews may erode the authenticity consumers seek in individual product reviews (Chen et al., 2024). Despite these challenges, there is a lack of research concerning how GAI review summaries impact consumers' decision-making when shopping online. Thus, this research responds to Guha et al's (2021) call for further experimental testing to better understand how consumers' respond to GAI review summaries. In doing so, this study will answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How does the presentation of product reviews affect consumers' cognitive processes (perceived trust, helpfulness and credibility) and subsequent behavioural outcomes when shopping online?

RQ2: Do consumers' cognitive processes (perceived trust, helpfulness and credibility) directly impact behavioural outcomes (purchase intentions). Moreover, do these cognitive processes mediate the relationship between product review presentation and behavioural responses when shopping online?

RQ3: Does the impact of product review presentation format on consumers' cognitive and behavioural responses vary by product type (search vs. experience)?

Grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, this study employs a 3 (**review presentation format;** between-subjects) x 2 (**product type;** within-subject) experiment on a stimulated e-commerce website with 750 respondents. Preliminary results will be presented at the conference. The findings of this study will explicate how GAI review summaries influence consumers' perceived trust, helpfulness and credibility, offering actionable insights into their role in shaping consumers' online decision-making. This research advances the S-O-R framework to the context of GAI and product review presentation, contributing novel findings to consumer behaviour and marketing literature.

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Decoding Protein Content Claims: Consumer Health Evaluations and Weight Control Motivation.

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

Nutrition claims such as 'high in fibre' or 'reduced fat' are examples of nutritional marketing. Research indicates that such claims can cause a positivity bias and potentially misguide consumers into over consuming calories and unintended nutrients. This study examines the role of diet related health goals on consumer judgments and preferences for products displaying protein nutrition claims. The study comprises two stages: a means-end chain analysis using soft laddering interviews and a between-subjects factorial experiment.

Competitive Short Paper

Since the 1970s, obesity rates have nearly tripled worldwide (Blüher, 2019) with almost half of adults predicted to suffer from obesity in the US by 2030 (Ward et al., 2019), and the UK by 2035 (Keaver et al., 2020). It is recognised that the food environment plays a crucial role in shaping food choices (Simpson et al., 2018). Increasingly, food manufacturers use food labelling as a form of nutritional marketing, by making voluntary front-of-pack nutrition information disclosures (Colby *et al.,* 2010; Kaur *et al.,* 2016). Nutrition claims such as 'high in fibre' or 'reduced fat' are examples of nutritional marketing. Research indicates that such claims can cause a positivity bias and potentially misguide consumers into over consuming calories and unintended nutrients (see Oostenbach et al., 2019). To date, research has mainly focused on the use and comprehension of nutrition claims, with less attention given to the moderating effects of individual characteristics (Steinhauser et al., 2019). This study examines the role of diet related health goals on consumer judgments and preferences for products displaying protein content nutrition claims. People motivated to eat healthily often differ from the average consumer in how they interpret food labels (Mai & Hoffmann, 2015). The study context is the breakfast bar category, where use of nutrition claims is prevalent (Hieke et al. 2016). Breakfast bars are considered by some consumers as a health snack despite often containing high amounts of sugar. Increasingly, brands launching new breakfast bar products include the term 'protein' in the product name, leveraging protein's popularity as a nutrient (Banovic *et al.,* 2018).

This study comprises two stages. Guided by spreading activation theory (Collins and Loftus, 1975; Anderson, 1983) we employed means-end chain analysis using soft laddering interviews (Grunert and Grunert, 1995) with 20 consumers who self-identified as health conscious regarding their dietary choices. We will then conduct a between-subjects factorial experiment with a sample (n = 600) of UK adults.

Preliminary findings from study 1 suggest two distinct pathways through which protein is consumed to support diet related health goals: muscle gain and weight loss/maintenance. Although both pathways have weight control in common, consumer level framing of health goals was observed to impact the salience of other product attributes and claims in product evaluations. Study 2 (ongoing) builds on study 1 by addressing the following questions: Does a protein nutrition claim prime positive evaluations of product healthfulness and influence choice outcomes? How do implicit and explicit protein source information affect the impact of a protein nutrition claim on healthfulness evaluations? Do diet related health goals moderate the effects of a protein nutrition claim and protein source information on healthfulness evaluations.

This study contributes to the existing literature on nutrition claims in three ways. First, it explores the diet related health motives associated with protein-enhanced products. Second, it examines how muscle gain and weight loss/maintenance goals moderate consumers' perceptions of protein content claims. Finally, it investigates the role of implicit and explicit information cues often associated with protein content claims.

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Are promotional activities really necessary for films?: Contemporary consumers' attitudes towards advertising in Japan

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

In recent years, there has been a string of hit films in Japan that have employed a 'no-promotion strategy'. Why has this situation arisen in Japan, where there is a strong tendency to avoid uncertainty? The survey revealed that consumers seem to feel that promotion is basically necessary for films; conversely, they think that adaptations of well-known original works or films by popular directors do not need to be promoted. The research is still ongoing.

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Does being green matter for university branding; an exploration

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

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Summary Statement

Sustainability has increasingly become key in the marketing of universities, reflecting the growing importance of environmental and social responsibility among stakeholders. Universities therefore incorporate sustainability as a core part of their branding strategy. However universities are increasingly ranked in sustainability tables that arguably link to the brand.

Therefore, this research will explore how universities apply sustainability in their branding and whether green universities' attitude impacts on branding? The UI GreenMetric is adopted for this study.

Competitive Short Paper

The concept of the sustainable university has been discussed for some time (e.g. Lukman, and Glavič, 2007). However, sustainability has increasingly become key in marketing strategies of universities, reflecting the growing importance of environmental and social responsibility among students and stakeholders. Sustainability initiatives may be promoted as unique selling proposition for universities, helping them attract international students, research collaborations, and funding. Incorporating sustainability into place branding highlights the institution's contribution to global challenges (Nguyen et al, 2019; Palmer and Koenig-Lewis, 2009).

Universities therefore inevitably incorporate sustainability as a core part of their branding strategy to appeal to environmentally conscious students, staff, and stakeholders. This can enhance their reputation as forward-thinking and socially responsible institutions. (Castro-Gómez et al, 2024; Maroto, 2022).

These branding strategies often also link to the place or city brand where the university is located, where sustainability is a significant element of that. Cities and regions often work with universities to co-brand their location as sustainable hubs, using the university's sustainability agenda to boost the city's image on a global stage (Castro-Gómez et al, 2024) Similarly, universities may partner with businesses or organisations to enhance sustainability efforts that can also reinforce place branding. These collaborations demonstrate the institution's leadership in sustainable practices and innovation, linking it to its geographical or academic identity (Bisani et al, 2022). Universities can therefore be seen as "anchor institutions" that drive local and regional sustainable development (McCowan, 2020).

Sustainability therefore links to brand at a number of levels and can be argued as a brand value that merits examination and managing. External perceptions of sustainability have helped drive external metrics and universities that position themselves as sustainable (or 'Green universities) are increasingly ranked in tables (McCowan, 2020; De la Poza et al, 2021). Some of these are country specific (People and Planet in the UK) some are international (Times Higher Impact Ranking) and others are global (UI GreenMetric). These league tables of 'green-ness' using differing but overlapping criteria to assess institutions that participate. The interesting question is, however, how are they utilised by the participating institutions and how are the rankings valued by stakeholder groups such as potential students?

Therefore, the core purpose of this research project is to explore any differences in attitude and internal community between 'green' and 'non-green' universities (NB what makes them different?) . The inherent challenge in a binary distinction of this nature is recognised (NB those that are part of a ranking or not) and will be explored.

We then explore how green and 'non-green' universities apply sustainability in their branding?

Finally, we will explore whether green universities' communities' sustainable attitude impacts on higher education branding differently from non-green universities?

The UI GreenMetric is adopted for this study, as it recognised globally and in particular in the two countries where case study institutions have been identified (UK and Hungary).

We intend to do this through qualitative work – including employing the Public Participatory GIS (PPGIS) method to explore if communities' green attitude correlates well with the ranking position

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Understanding Early Discourses of Advertising Self-Regulation

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

This paper analyses the foundational annual report of the UK's advertising regulator, the Advertising Standards Authority, in order to explore the rhetoric and arguments used to promote and defend its role in protecting consumers from offensive, harmful, and misleading advertising. Through rhetorical analysis, we identify a range of tensions in how the ASA portrays its role, power, relationships, and independence. The study contributes to current academic and policy debates about the effectiveness of self-regulatory systems.

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Will Brands With Dynamic Logos Appear More Exciting And Authentic In The Metaverse?

Track: 5. Brands & Branding

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Summary Statement

This research explores how dynamic logos, as opposed to static logos, influence consumers' perception of brand authenticity in the metaverse. An experiment in a metaverse measures responses to dynamic and static logos; particularly, brand authenticity, personality, consistency, and flow. Dynamic logos offer flexibility and adaptability beyond traditional visual identity constraints, which may better fit the exciting nature of these virtual immersive spaces and expectations about them, potentially increasing the perception of brands authenticity and excitement.

Competitive Short Paper

In today's fast-changing world, as technologies evolve and audiences adopt them, brands face a crucial challenge: how to maintain their authenticity and consistency across physical, digital and now virtual environments? Although the metaverse is still in its early stage, it is emerging as a big opportunity for brands to engage with consumers in new and exciting ways. Therefore, brands must evolve and adapt to fit in, meeting user expectations and maintaining consistency across all brand touchpoints to remain relevant. As virtual spaces have been integrated into the branding landscape, this research explores how dynamic logos—designed to evolve and adapt—influence whether consumers perceive brands as more exciting and authentic in the metaverse.

The metaverse is an immersive virtual space where people engage in activities such as gaming, socialising, shopping and attending events, in a three-dimensional environment that allows real-time interaction as avatars, regardless of their current physical location. In this new virtual landscape, brands may find it difficult to adapt their traditional visual identity. Compared to 2D physical and digital spaces, the metaverse allows for greater creativity and the opportunity to visually identify brands in a dynamic way, leaving behind static logos and rigid visual identity guidelines, becoming adaptive and "alive" to align with the fluid and exciting nature of the metaverse.

Unlike static logos, dynamic logos offer flexibility and adaptability beyond traditional visual identity constraints, which may better fit the exciting nature of these virtual immersive spaces and expectations about them, potentially increasing the perception of brand authenticity. We check whether this is due to brands with dynamic logos perceived as more exciting. We also investigate how the sense of flow, i.e., "being there" and fully immersed, could affect brand authenticity. Furthermore, we explore how dynamic logos can influence consumer perceptions of brand consistency and brand personality excitement in the metaverse.

This study will involve an experiment in which 350 participants will be randomly divided into two groups to explore two identical virtual brand spaces, one with a static logo displayed and the other with a dynamic logo. Afterward, participants will complete a questionnaire assessing brand authenticity, personality, consistency, and flow in the metaverse.

This research contributes to understanding how logos—the central element of visual identity—could be successfully adapted to this new virtual era. It provides practical guidance for brands seeking to appear consistent, exciting, and authentic in the metaverse while contributing to the knowledge about the interplay between logo design and brand perceptions. The findings could be valuable for creating innovative and adaptable brand strategies and visual identities looking to the future, considering technological advances and new generations.

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Video Gaming And Wellbeing: A Systematic Review And Research Agenda

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

The global video gaming industry is increasing rapidly and various studies have explored its outcomes on wellbeing. This systematic review consolidates findings from existing literature on gaming activities and wellbeing. The review highlights the potential benefits and risks of video gaming activities, including game playing and game community engagement, on wellbeing. Subsequently, this study calls for further research on players' wellbeing in relation to innovative game playing and video game communities.

Competitive Short Paper

Video games, as an immersive and interactive technology-based leisure activity, have become a dominant form of entertainment and socialising (Tsiotsou & Boukis, 2022). The proliferation of the internet has opened up more opportunities for those who enjoy playing video games; one can participate in gaming communities online, watch video game live streaming (VGLS), and take part in eSports competitions (Cabeza-Ramírez et al., 2022). The increasingly widespread popularity of video gaming has raised a notable question about its potential implications for wellbeing, which has attracted increasing attention from scholars (e.g., Abbasi et al., 2023; Hollebeek et al., 2022). Despite the progress of video gaming research, existing results are fragmented, and no systematic study has synthesised the literature considering the myriad video gaming activities and wellbeing. Following the systematic review guidelines provided by Tranfield et al. (2003), we endeavour to do this to identify research gaps requiring further exploration. The review identified two broad video gaming activities, namely video game playing (behaviours of general players as well as amateur and professional eSports players) and video game community (VGC) engagement (involvement in different types of social media-based VGCs, including traditional VGC like in Discord and VGLS communities like in Twitch). Under the theme related to video game playing and wellbeing, seven sub-themes emerged based on users' experiences and behaviours: presence in the virtual world, escapism, challenges, microtransactions in video games, social interaction, gaming time and problematic gaming behaviours, and passion for playing games. Despite some contradictory findings, the results indicated positive associations between video game playing (e.g., presence, escapism, challenges, and social interaction) and wellbeing (e.g., Herodotou et al., 2014; Lee & Chen, 2023; Nebel & Ninaus, 2022), but also negative effects of excessive playing (e.g., Shen & Williams, 2011). Few studies explored the impacts of microtransactions on wellbeing; interestingly, the results contradicted initial assumptions and it did not harm players' wellbeing (Etchells et al., 2022; Petrovskaya & Zendle, 2023). Given above, further studies still need to explore the outcomes of microtransaction behaviours. Additionally, most studies focused on the male population. Given the important roles of individual differences (e.g., personality and gender) on playing outcomes (Carras et al., 2017), future research should focus on all mainstream users while considering these differences. For the second theme of video game communities and wellbeing, two sub-themes are identified based on types of community channel: traditional VGC and psychosocial wellbeing, and VGLS and wellbeing. The social and utilitarian motivations as well as outcomes of VGC engagement were concluded (e.g., Bowman et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2019). However, the dark sides are overlooked. Moreover, emerging VGLS provide more interactive experiences (e.g., subscription interaction, sending virtual gifts, and reward) (Cabeza-Ramírez et al., 2022; Li et al., 2020), yet few studies have explored their outcomes on wellbeing. Based on the above, future research should broaden their focus on VGC engagement experiences by including emerging interactive features of VGLS. Furthermore, future research should consider the influences of wellbeing perceived by VGCs on further gaming behaviours.

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Moral Decoupling and Disengagement:The Case of Next-Generation Materials in Luxury Fashion Retailing

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores how moral considerations influence environmentally sustainable consumption in luxury fashion, focusing on next-generation materials. Using Norm Activation Theory, semi-structured interviews reveal that despite awareness of conventional products' environmental impact, materialism and social image consciousness drive moral decoupling. Challenges in assessing next-generation materials evoke mixed emotions, while moral disengagement mechanisms, such as justification and euphemistic labeling, rationalize unsustainable choices. The study offers a conceptual framework with theoretical and managerial insights for luxury brands.

Competitive Short Paper

Morals are powerful motivators for altruistic behavior and are crucial in influencing environmentally sustainable consumption, as explained by Norm Activation Theory. However, while consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the negative environmental impact of the fashion industry and consider making purchase decisions guided by their morals, they may face a dilemma between society-serving versus self-serving. In these instances, they may decouple their moral judgment from their actions using moral disengagement mechanisms to justify their immoral behavior, leading to purchasing conventional products over environmentally sustainable ones. Hence, understanding why and how consumers employ moral decoupling and disengagement is crucial in encouraging environmentally sustainable consumption, which this study aims to achieve. This study specifically focuses on products made from next-generation materials, which are increasingly used by luxury fashion brands to reduce their environmental impact. To achieve the research aim, it builds on Norm Activation Theory, moral decoupling and disengagement literature by conducting semi-structured interviews with 24 luxury consumers.

Our results indicate that while consumers are aware of the negative environmental impact of conventional luxury products, they exhibit a high degree of materialism and social image consciousness, leading them to employ moral decoupling, particularly as due to the novelty of next-generation materials, they have difficulty in assessing whether they evoke positive or negative emotions. Moreover, they used several moral disengagement mechanisms, such as moral justification and euphemistic labelling to justify their actions.

Based on our findings, we provide a conceptual framework, offering original theoretical contributions and novel managerial implications for luxury fashion brands.

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Food purchase intentions with and without the Nutri-Score label: New insights from an experimental study

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

Drawing on dual-process theory and the heuristic-systematic model of persuasion, this study explores how Nutri-Score labeling affects purchasing decisions among Italian consumers. The study used a 2 x 2 factorial design to assess Nutri-Score labeling and health goal activation's combined effects. The findings revealed that Nutri-Score labeling guided healthier choices via System 2 processing, with effectiveness enhanced by health goal activation and influenced by alignment or contradiction with consumers' prior beliefs.

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Answering the Existential Crisis of the Lecturer – Do we matter? Unpacking Student Self-Efficacy in Response to Varied Information Sources.

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

Self-efficacy is a key predictor of success in business. Understanding the determinants of self-efficacy at the student level is crucial for preparing future business professionals. The purpose of this study is to unpack the nuances of business self-efficacy for the 3rd level student. We investigate the role of academic and social media information sources on business student self-efficacy, business career self-efficacy and information literacy.

Competitive Short Paper

Self-efficacy is a key predictor of success in business. Students and professionals who display high levels of self-efficacy have been seen to display high levels of student achievement and self-regulation (Bartimote-Aufflick et al., 2015). Understanding the determinants of self-efficacy at the student level is crucial for preparing future business professionals. The purpose of this study is to unpack the nuances of business self-efficacy for the 3rd level student. We investigate the role of academic and social media information sources on business student self-efficacy, business career self-efficacy and information literacy.

Building on social cognitive theory and information literacy research, this study bridges the gap between university-based and career-oriented self-efficacy. Existing literature on self-efficacy has predominately focused on the development of (student) self-efficacy in the university context (e.g. Sagone and De Caroli, 2014) or career-specific self-efficacy (e.g. entrepreneurial SE - Gedeon and Valliere, 2018) yet has rarely examined the two in tandem. Furthermore, despite extensive research on information literacy, little is known about how different sources of information influence self-efficacy in academic and professional contexts. This study draws on information literacy as a key mechanism for connecting university and career self-efficacy in students.

Using structural equation modeling, we analyze how the quality and credibility of academic and social media information impact various dimensions of self-efficacy. We also consider the roles of information literacy, learning needs, and news-seeking behavior. The study sample (N = 464) comprises university students from four Irish third-level institutions.

Results indicate that business student self-efficacy has a positive significant effect on business career self-efficacy, signifying that these are connected yet disparate constructs. Business information literacy significantly enhances both forms of self-efficacy, underscoring the importance of critical literacy skills for students' academic and professional development. Among key information sources, academic lecturers emerge as crucial influencers, positively affecting business career self-efficacy through the mediating effects of student self-efficacy and information literacy. This highlights the enduring importance of academic instruction in shaping business graduates' confidence and competencies.

These findings have important implications for business schools, educators, and the broader business community. They highlight the key role of academic institutions in creating credible information environments that support students' self-efficacy. Business educators not only deliver knowledge but also equip students with critical literacy skills to navigate an increasingly complex business landscape. By strengthening students' ability to assess and apply information effectively, educators help build both academic confidence and professional readiness. This, in turn, produces graduates who are more self-assured, better decision-makers, and more adaptable to industry demands.

Furthermore, business schools must integrate information literacy as a core competency, ensuring students can critically evaluate and use diverse information sources. As businesses rely more on digital and social media information, graduates must be able to distinguish credible information from misinformation. Strengthening information literacy in business education will enhance student learning and contribute to a more informed and resilient workforce.

Ultimately, by shaping student efficacy and improving critical awareness of information, academics play a direct role in developing confident, capable, and well-prepared business professionals.

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Relational Brand Communication in Branded Apps: The Perspective of Multiple Relationship Media Gratification

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study proposes a multi-relationship media gratification model for branded apps, incorporating exchange, communal, and authority gratifications based on relational model, relationship norm, and media gratification theories. The findings validate the second-order formative and first-order reflective constructs and demonstrate that communal and authority gratifications enhance brand commitment, which in turn positively impacts continuance intentions, word-of-mouth intentions, and brand purchase. The study advances branded app research by introducing authority gratification and developing a novel measurement index.

Competitive Short Paper

Most prior studies on branded apps have focused on facilitating positive outcomes from the relationship perspective (e.g., Li and Fang, 2019; Tran *et al*., 2021; Tseng and Lee, 2018; Tseng *et al*., 2022) but fail to clarify how brands communicate and build relationships through apps. While these studies examine one type of brand relationship, relational model and relationship norm theories (Aggarwal, 2004; Fiske, 1992) suggest individuals use multiple relational models concurrently. Drawing on these theories and media gratification theory, this study proposes a multi-relationship media gratification model for branded apps.

Literature review and hypotheses

Based on relationship norms and media gratification theories (Aggarwal and Law, 2005; Simon, 2017), if brand communication aids purchase decisions, it reflects an exchange relationship. If it fosters intimacy and mutual attention with the brand, it indicates a communal relationship. These interactions provide consumers with satisfaction through exchange or communal media gratification (Simon, 2017). However, the model does not consider the authoritative relationship described in relational model theory (Fiske, 1992), where consumers hold a higher status than the brand, are valued by the company, and feel a responsibility to support it.

Media gratification across different brand relationships fosters brand commitment (Simon, 2017). Brand commitment facilitates positive brand and app outcomes (Tseng *et al*., 2022). Thus, we posit:

H1-H3: Exchange, communal, and authority media gratification positively influence brand commitment.

H4-H6: Brand commitment positively influences continuance intentions, WOM intentions, and brand purchase.

Method

Following MacKenzie *et al*. (2011), this research develops an index to measure three types of media gratification of brand relationship. Items were generated based on literature review and 10 consumer interviews. An interview with five experts in the digital marketing confirms the index's structure.

As the three relationship gratification constructs are second-order formative and first-order reflective. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is conducted to explore the factor structure of the first-order reflective constructs. Confirmatory composite analysis (CCA) is conducted to validate the index structure using PLS-SEM (Hair *et al*., 2020).

Results

The EFA identified nine factors explaining 72.68% of the variance, while CCA validated the structure of the three relationship gratification constructs. Exchange media gratification comprises savings, innovation surveillance, and shopping decision-making; communal media gratification includes individual recognition, relaxed companionship, and social connection; and authority media gratification involves membership obligation, prestige, and secretarial support.

The internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity were all achieved. VIF values (1.20–2.72) are below the threshold of 3, indicating no multicollinearity concerns. All the factor loadings are significant and the first-order constructs significantly influence the second-order constructs.

The findings reveal that communal media gratification ($B=0.40$, $p<0.001$) and authority media gratification ($B=0.55$, $p<0.001$) positively influence brand commitment, which in turn positively influences continuance intentions ($B=0.35$, $p<0.001$), WOM intentions ($B=0.73$, $p<0.001$), and brand purchase ($B=0.44$, $p<0.001$).

Conclusion

This study conceptualizes and validates relationship media gratification in the context of branded apps, contributing in three ways: adopting a multi-relationship approach, introducing authority as a novel type of media gratification, and developing an index to measure media gratification across various brand relationships.

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Substitute or not a substitute: Assessing the effect Alcohol-free drinks have around the world (80 countries) on regular alcoholic drink consumption

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

Excessive alcohol consumption causes 5 million deaths annually and significant health costs globally. Efforts to reduce harmful drinking have led to rising popularity of no- and low-alcohol (NoLo) beverages, with the UK market reaching £278 million in 2023. Research finds NoLo drinks and soft drinks often substitute each other, limiting their impact on alcohol consumption. Regional differences in sensitivity to NoLo prices underline the need for tailored policies to address alcohol harm effectively.

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Shaping Opinions Online: The Impact of Sustainability Preferences on Consumer Reviews and Ratings

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

The research examines the influence of consumers' sustainability choices on online reviews and ratings of products and services. It examines the correlation between consumer values and digital representation, as well as the impact of sustainable attributes on perceptions and consumption behaviours. The study aims to elucidate trends in how sustainability influences customer advocacy or criticism, enabling companies to adapt their products to the increasingly competitive market for ecologically and socially sustainable practices.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction and Background

The expansion of digital platforms has profoundly altered consumer interactions and decision-making, with online reviews and ratings becoming essential touchpoints (Liu et al., 2021; Roy and Shaikh, 2024). These platforms function as a storehouse of shared experiences and are crucial in moulding brand perception and influencing purchasing decisions (Huang & Pape, 2020; Zhao et al, 2024). During this digital change, sustainability preferences have become significant in changing the dynamics of online consumer behaviour (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Lim, 2020). Sustainability Preference is a consumer's tendency to consider environmental, social, and ethical issues when buying. Consumers are becoming more aware of sustainability issues, including carbon neutrality, waste minimisation, human rights, and recycled or renewable materials (White et al. (2019). As a result, sustainable brands are getting more attention and credibility in online marketplaces as modern consumers include sustainability preferences in their evaluations and ratings (Brough et al., 2022). This study examines the convergence of sustainability and digital consumer behaviour, emphasising the impact of sustainability preferences on online reviews and ratings. Platforms like Amazon, TripAdvisor, and Yelp enhance consumer voices, rendering sustainability a vital element in forming digital narratives (Chandra & Belk, 2024).

Objectives and Significance

The specific objectives of the study are to:

Analyse the impact of sustainability preferences on online consumer reviews' tone, content, and ratings.

Analyse trends in sustainability-related feedback that influence brand perception and consumer loyalty.

Examine the strategic consequences of sustainability-oriented evaluations for enterprises functioning in competitive digital environments.

Methodology

This study uses qualitative and quantitative methodologies to examine how sustainability choices affect consumer ratings and reviews (Bryman, 2016). Trustpilot and Amazon will supply data. These platforms were chosen for their enormous user communities, diverse product and service offerings, and sustainability comments (Sawitri & Alhasin, 2022; Smith & Doe, 2023). Qualitative data will include customer ratings of "eco-friendly," "organic," "recyclable," and "sustainability." The study will conduct 500 reviews evenly across Trustpilot and Amazon platforms, covering sustainable beauty, personal care, household goods, and fashion. These categories were chosen because consumers value ethics and the environment (Gleim et al., 2013). Thematically analysing the evaluations will reveal qualitative data patterns and narratives (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In the quantitative study, 1,000 reviews will be analysed, including star ratings, helpfulness votes, and overall review scores. Correlation and regression analysis will compare qualitative sustainability tales to numerical measures.

Findings and Implications

Initial studies indicate that sustainability-related ratings are frequently more comprehensive, exhibit a heightened emotional tone, and are likely to enhance trust and brand loyalty (Berry, 1983). Nonetheless, perceived greenwashing or the inability to fulfil sustainability assertions may intensify criticism and reputational hazards (Bies & Moag, 1986). These observations underscore the increasing strategic significance of sustainability as a competitive differentiation in digital domains (Dahlen et al., 2024). Therefore, understanding these dynamics provides twin benefits: academically, by augmenting the literature on digital consumer behaviour and sustainability (Makri et al., 2024), and practically, by furnishing firms with concrete information to refine their brand positioning strategies.

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Empirical Insights into the Impact of ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) Frameworks on Customer Satisfaction

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study examines the impact of ESG performance on customer satisfaction using Social Identity Theory. ESG data from Refinitiv Asset4 and regression analysis reveal mixed results: overall ESG and Governance scores negatively affect satisfaction, while Environmental and Social scores show no significant impact. Findings highlight the importance of authenticity and transparency in ESG strategies. Managers should align practices with consumer values, and future research should explore cultural contexts and evolving trends in ESG commitments.

Competitive Short Paper

This study investigates the relationship between a company's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance and customer satisfaction, emphasizing how sustainable and ethical practices influence consumer perceptions and fulfillment. Using Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) as the theoretical framework, it explores how individuals' self-concept and group affiliations shape purchasing decisions and satisfaction, particularly when corporate actions align with consumer values.

The study utilizes ESG data from the Refinitiv Asset4 dataset (Refinitiv, 2024), applying ESG ratings derived from public reports and disclosures in quantitative regression models to examine how overall ESG performance and individual pillar scores (Environmental, Social, and Governance) affect customer satisfaction. Standard regression analysis is conducted using JMP software, which facilitates advanced statistical tools like ANOVA, correlation analysis, and predictive modeling.

The empirical analysis reveals mixed results. The ESG Combined Score demonstrates a statistically significant relationship with customer satisfaction ($p = 0.0278$; LogWorth = 1.556). However, the Environmental ($p = 0.5424$) and Social Pillars ($p = 0.5063$) show no significant impact individually. In contrast, the Governance Pillar ($p = 0.0283$) and the overall ESG score exhibit significant but negative effects on satisfaction. This suggests that high ESG scores or governance practices may reduce satisfaction, possibly due to unmet expectations or perceived inauthenticity.

The intercept ($p < 0.0001$) confirms a baseline level of customer satisfaction independent of ESG factors. The findings highlight the complexity of aligning corporate ESG strategies with customer expectations, emphasizing the need for authenticity and transparency. When ESG claims appear inconsistent or inauthentic, they can erode trust and brand loyalty, aligning with Social Identity Theory, which underscores the importance of shared values in fostering consumer affiliation.

The literature review integrates perspectives on ESG, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and sustainability, analyzing customer satisfaction through indices like the ACSI and prior studies leveraging Refinitiv Asset4 data. Previous research supports the value of ESG in marketing but underscores challenges in standardizing metrics due to a fragmented landscape of rating agencies (Christensen et al., 2022).

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that governance practices and overall ESG strategies play a critical role in shaping customer perceptions. Misaligned practices can lead to neutral or negative outcomes, underscoring the importance of authenticity in ESG initiatives. Companies must ensure transparency and clarity in their sustainability and governance communication to meet consumer expectations effectively.

Future research should explore these dynamics across global markets, considering cultural contexts like Hofstede's power distance framework to examine variations in consumer identity alignment. Additionally, the growing trend of companies reversing Environmental and Social commitments, such as Meta's recent decision to eliminate DEI initiatives, highlights the evolving challenges of maintaining consumer trust.

While ESG performance holds potential for enhancing customer satisfaction, its execution must align with consumer values, ensuring authenticity and trustworthiness to maximize positive outcomes.

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The Role of Captivity and Familiarity in Brand Recognition and Its Implications for the HoReCa Industry

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

Varahi, India's largest white-labelled bottled water manufacturer, leverages consistent bottle designs to build brand recognition in the HoReCa industry without overt branding. In captive markets with limited choices, design consistency fosters familiarity and trust, reinforcing retention. Despite the absence of Varahi's branding, channel owners benefit from its uniform quality. This study, using qualitative methods, highlights how packaging aesthetics influence consumer behavior and brand equity, proving that consistency can substitute for traditional branding in constrained environments.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Branding in the HoreCa (Hotels, Restaurants, and Catering) industry relies heavily on visibility and recognition. Customers in this sector face limited choices—typically tap water or bottled mineral water. Concerns over tap water quality create a captive market for bottled water brands. Varahi (https://varahi.in/), India's biggest manufacturer of white-labelled bottled water, has adopted a unique approach by leveraging consistent bottle designs rather than overt branding. This strategy aligns with Underwood's (2003) emphasis on the communicative power of packaging in building brand identity. Varahi's design consistency enhances implicit brand recognition, supporting Keller's (1993) concept of customer-based brand equity.

Theoretical Framework

Consumer behavior theories suggest that brand awareness significantly influences purchase decisions (Hoyer & Brown, 1990). In captive markets, where consumer choices are constrained, uniform product presentation becomes crucial (Mittal, 1989). Familiarity heuristics dominate decision-making in such environments, favoring consistent design elements (Keller, 1993). Varahi's uniform bottle design fosters familiarity, playing a crucial role in customer retention (Laroche, Kim, & Zhou, 1996). Design consistency effectively substitutes for traditional brand equity in settings with limited options. Aesthetic elements also impact consumer perceptions, reinforcing the importance of visually consistent packaging in decision-making (Reimann et al., 2010).

Case Study Overview

Varahi provides bottled water solutions to eateries, hotels, and catering businesses with a focus on design uniformity. This consistency makes their bottles recognizable within the industry, fostering trust and perceived quality without explicit branding. As consumers encounter these bottles repeatedly across different establishments, brand familiarity is reinforced. However, in these captive channels, Varahi cannot place its own brand logos on the bottles. Instead, the channel owners—such as hotels and restaurants—display their own branding, making Varahi's role invisible to end consumers while benefiting from the consistent design quality. This highlights how uniform design enhances captivity's effect on brand loyalty, even without explicit brand messaging (Boz et al., 2020).

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach through interviews with key stakeholders, including salespersons to understand the impact of bottle design on sales, bottling units to examine production challenges, brand owners to assess their preference for Varahi's product consistency, and customers to gather perceptions on quality and recognition in captive purchasing scenarios

Findings and Analysis

Implicit Recognition: Varahi's consistent design fosters brand recognition (Schmitt, 2012), especially in captive markets where bottled water is the primary option. Captive markets amplify familiarity-driven recognition, leading to implicit loyalty.

Market Preference: Horeka businesses appreciate the seamless integration into their branding strategies (Underwood, 2003).

Operational Efficiency: Uniform designs simplify production, lowering costs and increasing efficiency.

Consumer Trust: Consistency builds familiarity, enhancing trust and quality perceptions (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987).

Sales Perspective: Salespersons attribute higher retention rates to the ease of integrating Varahi bottles into business branding (Hoyer & Brown, 1990).

Conclusion

Varahi's focus on design uniformity proves branding can be achieved through consistency rather than direct marketing. The findings align with theoretical perspectives on packaging aesthetics and consumer behavior, illustrating how subtle design elements enhance brand recognition and trust without overt branding efforts, particularly in captive markets.

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Building Back Greener: Accelerating Low-Carbon Material Adoption in the UK Building Industry

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study examines the adoption of low-carbon materials in the UK building industry using diffusion theory. Based on interviews with architects and builders, it identifies key barriers, including high costs, limited availability, regulatory constraints, and knowledge gaps. Solutions include government incentives, market leadership, standardised badges, educational initiatives, and stakeholder engagement. The findings offer actionable insights and scholarly contributions to promote sustainable marketing practices in the UK building industry, supporting efforts to achieve UK's net-zero goals.

Competitive Short Paper

The escalating global climate crisis presents a critical challenge for governments, policymakers, civic society organizations, and marketers alike (Carvalho, 2022; Gopaldas, 2015). Experts predict that by the end of the century, global average temperatures could rise between 1–1.5°C with significant reductions in carbon emissions, or as high as 4.5–5°C if current emission levels persist (González, 2025). Such temperature increases would lead to rising sea levels, posing severe risks to islands, coastal communities, and marine ecosystems (González, 2025). Recognising the urgency of this issue, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has taken proactive measures to engage diverse stakeholders. Through its annual Conference of the Parties (COP) summits, the UNFCCC seeks to drive coordinated global climate action, aligning with Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015).

The UK has established itself as a global leader in climate action, exemplified by hosting the COP26 summit in Glasgow in 2021. As part of its commitment to driving climate initiatives, the UK government introduced the "Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener" policy paper in 2021, outlining comprehensive policies and proposals to decarbonise all sectors of the UK economy and achieve net zero emissions by 2050 (www.gov.uk, 2021). Among the targeted sectors, the building sector and associated product use are particularly significant, accounting for 20% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions (National Statistics, 2024). Yet, research into effective mechanisms for decarbonising the UK building sector remains limited, highlighting a critical knowledge gap that demands urgent scholarly attention.

Using diffusion theory (Rogers, 1962; 1995), this study examines the drivers and barriers to adopting low-carbon materials in the UK building industry. Interviews with architects and builders in Southwest UK reveal several key findings. First the diffusion of low carbon materials in the building sector in the UK requires government incentives such as lower taxes and grants, as well as stimulation of competition to increase product availability to overcome high cost barriers. Second, while greater competition is needed, a market leader must spearhead adoption to address limited product availability on the market. Third, having case studies and prototypes to demonstrate how low carbon materials have worked in various contexts are crucial to address the performance and reliability barriers hindering adoption. Fourth, standardised assessment, verification processes, and regulatory incentives are necessary to overcome regulatory constraints in low carbon materials adoption. Fifth, to address the barriers of knowledge and skills gaps, more promotion and education are required on where the materials can be sourced from, how they can be sourced, how to use those materials, and where the value and cost of low carbon/net zero lies within the system of other materials in a building. Finally, stakeholder engagement and dialogue are required to overcome the barriers of industry nervousness and to focus on the opportunities in the adoption of low carbon materials.

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Exploring the Perceptions of Generations X, Y and Z about Product Innovativeness

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

Despite extensive research on product innovation, our understanding of how to effectively communicate product innovativeness to different segments remains limited. A total of 200 short semi-structured interviews were conducted

with Generations X, Y, and Z to explore their perceptions of innovation, product innovativeness and its communication. The preliminary results offer valuable insights into how the three generations perceive product innovativeness and their preferred communication styles, which can significantly inform marketing strategies.

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Expressing Care through Food in Transition to University.

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

In this paper we draw on data collected from students starting their first year at University in the UK and living away from home. Focusing on their meals and activities related to food purchase and preparation, we consider the ways in which care is enacted through food. Data collected through qualitative interviews showed that three forms of care were important in this transitory phase: self care, mutual care and being cared for.

Competitive Short Paper

Starting university in the UK often involves young people moving away from home. It is commonly perceived as a transitional period towards adulthood, which research has identified as being marked by three criteria 1) accepting responsibility for oneself, 2) making independent decisions and 3) being financially independent (Arnett, 2001, 2003, 2007; Nelson, Badger and Wu, 2004). Eating is a part of everyday life and an essential area that students need to take responsibility for is their diet. A meal can be a mundane act eaten alone or it can be used to celebrate rituals. Due to the physical distance from their parents when starting university students need to care for themselves by purchasing, preparing and cooking their own food which requires them to fulfil the aforementioned criteria (Arnett 2000, 2001, 2003, 2007). Previously, these food related care activities have predominantly been undertaken by their parents, usually the mothers (Cairns & Johnston, 2015) although there is evidence of participation from fathers (Mintel, 2013). Despite the physical distance between the student and the family, the family continue to provide care through food (Epp et al., 2014). Food activities may also facilitate the students in connecting and establishing a new network of friends and providing mutual care in this transitional period. This research aims to examine how care is expressed through food in relation to the self and towards others in the transition to university.

25 in-depth semi structured interviews were conducted with first year students, living away from home in the UK. Respondents were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling. Participants photographed their main meal for 7 days and these photos were used in the interview to elicit conversation (Warren 2006) around the planning, preparing, shopping and cooking and consumption of food. The interviews took place via Zoom and lasted 24 - 80 minutes. They were recorded, transcribed and analysed using thematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Food activities facilitated the giving and receiving of care at university, more specifically,

1) Self care - Respondents cared for themselves. They cooked to look after their own physical needs. They used the process of cooking to relax and unwind.

2) Mutual care - Respondents used cooking to establish and develop bonds with their flatmates and friends. They taught each other to cook, they cooked together, they cooked for each other. They shared equipment, food and cleaning. There was also a lack of mutual care; respondents complained of other people being messy, and stealing food.

3) Being cared for - The family's collective food identity was maintained in various ways. Technology was used to communicate around food activities. Parents and relatives to a lesser degree, provided ingredients, cooked meals (components and entire meals) and/or financial assistance. Parents continued to perform the food activities when respondents returned home.

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Exploring the Intersection of Responsible AI, Education and Marketing

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

This study explores how education providers can align curricula with evolving AI-driven workplace needs. Through a mixed-methods approach involving interviews and surveys, it explores synergies between education and industry, emphasising marketing strategies to raise AI awareness and foster collaboration. Anticipated contributions include insights into AI literacy, digital poverty and the role of marketing in bridging educational and workforce expectations, advancing the discourse on responsible AI integration in education.

Competitive Short Paper

Background

The rapid integration of evolving artificial intelligence (AI) technologies into workplaces presents significant opportunities and challenges for schools and colleges (Kuleto et al., 2021; Perdro et al., 2019). This research explores how educational institutions can align their curricula with the evolving needs of regional and international businesses while fostering responsible AI practices and addressing issues of digital inequality. By framing these challenges within a marketing lens, this study emphasises the role of communication, stakeholder engagement and curriculum innovation in preparing the next generation for AI-driven economies (De Bruyn et al., 2020; Domínguez Figaredo & Stoyanovich, 2023; Kshetri et al., 2024).

The transition to an AI-enhanced workforce demands re-evaluating educational practices to ensure alignment with market needs (Grewal et al., 2024). However, schools and colleges face unique barriers, including a lack of resources, insufficient awareness of AI expectations in workplaces and the compounding effects of digital poverty (McKean, 2023). While there is discourse around AI in education (Lim et al., 2023; Wong, 2024), limited research focuses on the marketing strategies needed to bridge the gap between educational institutions and the workforce. This study aims to address these gaps by exploring synergies between schools, regional businesses and global industries, emphasising marketing strategies to raise awareness and foster collaboration.

Methodology

This research will adopt a mixed-methods approach and will involve multiple phases. The first phase involves semi-structured interviews with purposively selected schools and colleges in the North East of England, ensuring representation from a diverse range of institutions. These interviews aim to uncover key challenges related to AI/digital integration, curriculum development and stakeholder engagement. The qualitative data will inform the design of a quantitative survey, which will be distributed to a broader sample of schools and colleges across the region. The survey will assess perceptions of AI/digital in education, existing marketing efforts and the alignment of curricula with workplace demands. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between education, AI, and marketing.

Potential Key Findings & Contributions

Preliminary insights suggest several anticipated findings. First, there may be a misalignment between schools' understanding of workplace AI requirements and the expectations of regional and international businesses. Second, digital poverty may emerge as a critical barrier, with disadvantaged students disproportionately excluded from AI-driven opportunities. Third, marketing strategies to raise awareness of AI technologies and workforce expectations may be underutilised in fostering collaboration between schools and businesses. This study aims to contribute to the marketing literature by highlighting the role of marketing as a mediator between educational institutions and businesses in the context of AI. By integrating a marketing perspective, this research aims to highlight the importance of strategic communication and collaboration in addressing the challenges of AI in education.

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Transforming Consumer Engagement in Global Luxury Brands through AI-Powered Marketing Solutions

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

This paper appraises the consumer experience of three luxury brands: LVMH, Capri Holdings, and Kering, and how the retail experience is being reshaped via advancements in the AI, Metaverse, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), extended reality (ER), artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain technologies and virtual influencers. The findings highlight how brands have experimented with AI with some success. However, the ethical use of GenAI advertising is a concern and, in some cases, met with backlash.

Competitive Short Paper

The instantaneous nature of social media, apps, digital technologies, and their potential for digital transformation present a valuable opportunity for businesses to strengthen consumer relationships and loyalty (Kitsios & Kamariotou, 2021). Nevertheless, digital technologies present challenges in relation to guaranteeing consumers' data privacy, consumers' eroding trust in social media, and consumers' varying expectations of newer technologies.

This paper introduces key areas where businesses are enhancing the consumer experience through social media. The digital transformation businesses are pursing has delivered a new era in social commerce. Kotler et al. (2017) coined Marketing 4.0 as the combination of brand identity, image, integrity, and interaction shifting from a traditional to a digital approach. Marketing 4.0 is accelerating the growth and accessibility of social networking and e-commerce (Shen et al., 2019)through the merging of individual social media channels into omnichannels (Sharma & Fatima, 2024). The retail experience is being reshaped via advancements in the Metaverse, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), extended reality (ER), artificial intelligence (AI), and blockchain technologies (Gleim et al., 2025). Increasing customer engagement via virtual influencers (Allal-Chérif et al., 2024), and practitioner use of AI to assist with marketing (Hartmann et al., 2024) have the potential to make each interaction between businesses and consumers more efficient.

Marketing 4.0's emphasis on digitalisation has recast the consumer journey, enabling users to be constantly connected. This continual connection necessitates businesses to consider how to employ technology to enhance the consumer experience and how to support employees in adopting this digital technology. This paper appraises the digital transformation of three luxury brands: LVMH, Capri Holdings, and Kering. Through a comparative case study, the paper considers how each brand implements digital technology to streamline operations, enhance consumer experience, and maintain brand integrity.

The findings highlight how these brands have experimented with AI with some success. However, the ethical use of generative AI (GenAI) advertising is a concern and in some cases has met with backlash. Demarketing activities, where luxury brands strategically withdraw from social media channels, is also explored. As brands pursue the digital transformation of their operations, authenticity and relatability endure as core values for consumer engagement. Businesses have considerable responsibility, especially in the way in which they communicate with consumers digitally, via greater personalisation. As businesses grapple with digital technology to enhance consumer experience, positive and valid eWOM reviews are increasing vital.

Further research is warranted on the consumer experience within the Metaverse, their level of trust in this technology, and whether consumer trust transpires into purchase intention. Research regarding the extent to which consumers perceive virtual influencers to be credible, trustworthy, and genuine is merited. Demarketing of social media has also arisen as an area for further research. Understanding why brands are strategical shifting their efforts away from social media, even though it has been the primary channel for brand-consumer communication for the past decade. As this paper focused on global luxury brands, research is required on how the technologies discussed in this paper can be adopted by smaller luxury brands.

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The Impact of Sensory Modality and Marketing Context on Consumer Response to Nostalgia Marketing: Online vs. Offline Dynamics

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This research examines the performance of nostalgia marketing across various environments, focusing on sensory triggers and online/offline context. A quantitative experimental design will be employed, featuring four conditions that reflect real-life settings where consumers encounter nostalgia marketing. Consumer behaviour will be observed through a mock shopping website, capturing realistic interactions. By incorporating authentic manipulation and measuring actual purchase behaviours, this study seeks to enhance research realism and provide actionable insights to optimize marketing campaign.

Competitive Short Paper

Research background

In today's fast paced world, people tend to look back for comfort, finding happiness in cherished memories. The act of recalling the past often evokes mixed emotions known as nostalgia-a bittersweet emotion accompanied by vivid memory recollection (Batcho, 2020). Nostalgia has become increasingly prevalent and is widely used in marketing campaign to engage consumers, often influencing their behaviours positively (Weingarten & Wei, 2023). However, whether such positive impacts vary based on the environments that give rise to nostalgia remains underexplored. Understanding how environmental factors shape nostalgic emotion and subsequent consumer responses is crucial to advancing marketing research and designing effective nostalgia campaigns.

This research seeks to understand the influence of sensory modality and online/offline environment on nostalgic emotion and consumer behaviour. Specifically, it examines how sight and scent trigger nostalgia in both physical and digital environments, representing the common settings where nostalgia marketing is conducted. Research suggests that olfactory memory is more accessible and emotionally evocative than other sensory memories, positioning scent as a potentially more powerful nostalgia trigger (Van Campen, 2014). This warrants an exploration of whether scent can be more effective than sight in nostalgia marketing. Additionally, given that scent can be perceived only in physical environment, whether olfactory imaginary offers a solution to utilizing scent in digital marketing worth exploring.

Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative experimental design to examine the influence of environmental factors on nostalgia marketing. The product chosen for this study is Play-Doh, a nostalgic item identified through a pre-test as evoking strong nostalgic emotions through its visual and olfactory element. This selection enables the investigation of how sensory modalities impact nostalgia marketing. While Play-Doh will be used to evoke nostalgia, associated products tailored to adult interests will be employed to study consumer behaviours, as Play-Doh compound primarily targets children and may lack appeal for adult consumers.

The experiment will follow a structured process, beginning with a qualification check, followed by the experimental phase, which includes four manipulations: online scent, offline scent, online visual, and offline visual. Each manipulation represents a unique environment in which consumers encounter nostalgia marketing. The final phase involves a mock shopping website designed to encourage genuine interaction and observe actual behaviours. This approach, featuring authentic manipulations and realistic product interactions, enhances research realism.

Participants will be recruited from university, as students represent a significant demographic of digital consumers, and university provide a controlled environment for pre-experimental preparations. Ethical considerations, including emotional well-being, privacy, and voluntary participation, will be addressed throughout the study.

Potential impact

By examining the influence of environmental factors on nostalgia marketing and uncovering the underlying memory processes, this research aims to contribute to the nostalgia literature by offering a comprehensive understanding. These insights can provide actionable strategies to optimize marketing campaigns.

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'Social Comfort' as a Key Construct in Nascent Urban Innovation Networks

Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

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Summary Statement

This empirical study conceptualises 'social comfort' as a key construct during the initiation of business relationships in an informal, socially-situated setting amongst members of a nascent network of technological entrepreneurs. Actors pursue this 'social comfort' by seeking out a socio-physical networking environment in which they feel comfortable. The findings enrich understanding of how conditions at informal, social events impact new business relationship formation amongst dyadic actors.

Competitive Short Paper

For technological entrepreneurs, collaboration capabilities and access to resource-rich networks are crucial success factors in creating innovative solutions to complex problems (Zukin, 2020) and extrapolating value-creating activities (Jones *et al.*, 2013). Informal innovation networks and social relationships are considered crucial for technological innovation to emerge (Salavisa *et al.*, 2012). Some of high tech industries' more complex challenges require ideas from efficacious collaborative efforts extending beyond formal contractual exchanges to 'a sea of informal interactions' (Powell *et al.*, 1996,p.120).

How entrepreneurs initiate business relationships, and how initial interpersonal connections affect future relationships (Haytko, 2004), are important topics in B2B and relationship literature (Baraldi *et al.*, 2019). However empirical works typically consider these relationships at the organisational level (Ford and Håkansson, 2006; La Rocca *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, although the social aspect of business relationships is acknowledged (Halinen and Salmi, 2001; Bories, 2009; Cayla *et al.*, 2013), empirical research exploring the environmental conditions impacting relationship initiation within business communities is scarce, particularly in informal, social settings.

This study expands and contextualises perspectives on the dynamics underlying relationship initiation (Aaboen and Aarikka-Stenroos, 2017; Aaboen *et al.*, 2017) in a socially-situated setting amongst technological entrepreneurs in an Irish city. In-person 'tech' meetups, informal socialising events credited with playing a crucial role in creating urban tech networks (Cukier *et al.*, 2016; Rossi and Di Bella, 2017), are the point of entry to the network. A qualitative methodology inductively explores the phenomenon, with fifteen respondents selected using non-probability sampling based on regular meetup attendance. Data collected through indepth semi-structured interviews is analysed using grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014).

We conceptualise 'social comfort' as a key construct of business relationships initiated in a social setting, pursued by respondents seeking a socio-physical environment in which they felt comfortable. This supports existing knowledge that physical settings which promote comfort and security during encounters contribute to psychological wellbeing and enhance actor confidence in interactions (Gardner *et al.*, 2000). However 'social comfort' involves both the physical setting and also socio-emotional aspects relating to sense of ease and security during interactions. Respondents' perceptions and interpretations of their environment were a determinant of the comfort level afforded, making 'social comfort' a subjective interpretation of surroundings (Halinen and Törnroos, 1998). 'Social comfort' is driven by an objective of maximising comfort. Thus we conceptualise 'social comfort' as combining subjective and objective properties.

Previous studies associate comfort levels in new relationships with closing a deal and the contact's pleasantness (Witkowski and Thibodeau, 1999). A rarely acknowledged challenge in networks research is that actors can find early interactions unpleasantly instrumental, transactional and inauthentic (Rossignac-Milon *et al.*, 2024) and are ambivalent towards instrumental networking, despite recognising the benefits of being well-connected (Kuwabara *et al.*, 2018). Conceptualising 'social comfort' offers new insights into this small but growing body of research into how initial interactions impact relationship formation (Martin *et al.*, 2022). Our empirical insights into the environmental stimuli, societal circumstances, norms, cultural influences and affective factors impacting relationships have practical implications for organisations strategically seeking innovative approaches to network development.

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A Taste Of Home: Exploring The Food Consumption Behaviours Of Nigerian Immigrant Women In the UK And Their Impact On Household Food Waste

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

The contributions of this study are twofold. Firstly, it extends knowledge on the food consumption behaviours of immigrants. Secondly, it contributes to sustainable consumption research by offering insights into the impact of these behaviours on household food waste in a host country. Drawing on the lived experiences of Nigerian immigrant women in the UK, it underscores the role of culture in shaping food consumption patterns with implications for household food waste.

Competitive Short Paper

Food waste is a pressing global issue with significant economic, environmental and social implications (FAO, 2022). Consumer-level food waste has the highest impact with households accounting for nearly 50% of the food waste generated annually in developed countries like the United Kingdom (UK) (WRAP, 2023). Consequently, the focus on interventions aimed at reducing household food waste (HFW) is increasing particularly with the rapid growth in global population. Global migration is a significant source of population growth. 281million people are estimated to live in countries different from where they were born according to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM, 2024). There are 270,000 Nigerians living in the UK, the second largest immigrant group after Indians (ONS,2023). Consumer research studies suggest that migration movements, whether forced or voluntary, present unique opportunities and challenges which foster a deeper understanding of the complexities of migrant consumption (Lindridge et al., 2016). The aim of this study is to foster understanding of the food consumption behaviours of Nigerian immigrant women in the UK and their implications for HFW.

Food consumption behaviours as drivers of food waste have been extensively studied in the literature (Romani et al., 2018; Wakefield and Axon, 2020). The relationship between cultural factors and food consumption patterns and behaviours is well established (Rozin, 2005). Yet, research on the role of culture in shaping behaviours related to HFW is limited (Porpino, 2015; Teng et al., 2020). Given the diversity of the UK's population, this paper suggests that understanding food consumption behaviours within the cultural context of the various immigrant groups is crucial to tackling HFW on a broader level.

Using findings from semi-structured in-depth interviews of 10 Nigerian immigrant women in the UK, the complexities of navigating food consumption in the UK and their impact on HFW are explored. The consumption choices of these women reveal their cultural perceptions regarding what constitutes a "proper" meal and unravelled a strong preference for, and attachment to traditional Nigerian staple foods and dishes which had significant implications for their food purchasing habits. The food waste attitudes and behaviours of the participants were deeply influenced by their cultural upbringing and Christian religious beliefs as they negotiated consumption amidst navigating and adjusting to changes from their home country where food is viewed as scarce with limited choice to a society where food is considered abundant in supply, replete with seemingly endless options.

Research on the impact of food consumption behaviours of immigrants on food waste in a host country remains largely underexplored in extant literature. This study helps in addressing this, by providing insight into the way food is valued and utilised within the cultural context of Nigerian immigrant households thus furthering understanding of their consumption patterns and waste behaviours. Furthermore, the study contributes to sustainable consumption research by providing insights from the perspective of a largely overlooked group. Findings can inform targeted and culturally relevant food waste intervention strategies and programmes to support countries like the UK in meeting its sustainable production and consumption targets.

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Religiosity, Spirituality, and Consumer Forgivess: A Cross-Cultural Study in India and Japan

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

Focusing on non-Abrahamic religios setup in the Eastern cultures, this study explores the roles of religiosity, spirituality, and consumer-power in shaping consumer responses to service recovery, focusing on forgiveness and punitive intentions. Religiosity, spirituality, and consumer power drive decisional forgiveness, emotional forgiveness, and punitive behaviors. Cross-cultural insights from India and Japan reveal how cultural values and recovery strategies moderate these relationships. We discuss actionable strategies for minimizing negative word-of-mouth and customer switching in Eastern contexts.

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The Impact of Green Hushing on Consumer Brand Evaluations

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

Green hushing is when companies underplay their environmental initiatives. Some green hush to avoid scrutiny, others may not see communicating their green initiatives as important. Experimental results show consumers form negative evaluations of a hypothetical company that green hushes compared to a non-green hushing scenario of the same company. Additionally, it shows trust significantly mediates the negative effect of green hushing and consumer environmental involvement moderates the relationship in some but not all cases.

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Interaction in Higher Education Digital Marketing Initiatives: A New Dimension of Information Systems Success

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

This study examines how interaction quality in digital student recruitment initiatives impacts prospective students' decision-making process when selecting higher education institutions (HEIs). Based on in-depth interviews with first-year students, findings extend the DeLone and McLean Information Systems Success Model to include interaction quality, emphasising interactivity, engagement, and entertainment. Interactive content improves information retention, system use, and decision-making, highlighting its importance for HEI marketing strategies.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Reaching and converting prospective students for higher education institutes (HEIs) is a key challenge for marketing and recruitment practitioners working in third level education. Interactive media marketing (IMM) tools and initiatives, such as social media, virtual events, and interactive tours are invaluable to the marketer's arsenal. In-depth interviews with first-year students studying a variety of subjects at Ireland's University of Galway, identify interaction quality as a contributing factor of IMM success. The exploration contributes to theory by extending the DeLone and McLean Information Systems Success Model (ISSM) and applying it to a new context (DeLone & McLean, 2003). It also contributes to practice through recommendations for encouraging prospective student use of IMM to improve students' decision-making.

Methodology

The interview sample consisted of 37 first-year students aged 18-20 from the University of Galway, who applied to HEIs via Ireland's Central Applications Office (CAO). Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted between March 2023 and November 2024. Interview questions examined students' experiences with interactive media created by HEIs during their decision-making process in choosing higher education. Interviews were transcribed and analysed through pattern matching, open coding, and axial coding using NVivo 12 software for data management and theme tracking. Coding was sensitised by the IS Success Model.

Findings and Analysis

When asked about information quality and system quality, two established ISSM dimensions, students repeatedly referred to interactivity, engagement, and entertainment. These qualities have been coded as 'interaction quality.' The position of interaction quality is nuanced, being enabled by the overall system quality and being an influence on information quality, intention to use a system, and continued use of a system. When asked what would encourage use of a system, students described the importance of interactivity in holding their interest, or, more accurately, being "less boring" than other types of media. Interaction quality is not a dimension present in the ISSM as proposed by DeLone & McLean (2003).

Students assess interaction quality based on degree to which the presentation of content is interesting, involves two-way communication, and is fun. When students describe influential IMM, they are of a highly interactive nature. Without interaction, digital experiences blend, becoming indistinguishable from one another. Interactive content is more memorable and is perceived as delivering more readily understood information. In addition, perceived interaction quality is reported to be a contributing factor to a student's intention to use IMM and to continue or repeat use of IMM. Students acknowledged interaction could sometimes be limited by a system's capabilities. Marketers and recruitment practitioners in higher education should prioritise creating highly interactive, engaging, and entertaining digital experiences. Interactive content is memorable and aids in information retention and influences the likelihood of system use and reuse, leading to improved decision-making during a student's higher education choice journey.

Future Research

Future research should examine the methods in which marketing practitioners implement interactions in recruitment initiatives and explore blockages and enablers to use. The newly extended ISSM should be explored in other contexts both in marketing and information systems.

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Enhancing Digital Customer Experience in Ghana's Telecommunications Industry: An Extended SERVQUAL Model Approach

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study examines the limitations of the SERVQUAL model in the digital age, proposing an enhanced framework for assessing digital touchpoints in Ghana's telecom sector. Focusing on MTN and Vodafone, it integrates key constructs like system reliability, efficiency, and personalization, alongside mediators such as perceived value and trust. The research aims to offer a comprehensive model for improving digital customer experiences in the rapidly evolving telecommunications industry.

Competitive Short Paper

Abstract:

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed customer engagement in the telecommunications industry, necessitating a re-evaluation of traditional service quality models (Omol, 2024; Urdea *et al*., 2021). This study critically examines the limitations of the SERVQUAL model, originally designed to measure service quality in traditional service environments (Parasuraman et al., 1988), and proposes an enhanced framework tailored to digital touchpoints within Ghana's telecom sector. Focusing on industry leaders MTN and Vodafone, the research integrates key constructs such as system reliability, efficiency, user-friendliness, responsiveness, and personalisation (Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Singh *et al.,* 2020), alongside mediators like perceived value and trust (Rust & Huang, 2014; Zouari & Abdelhedi, 2021), to offer a comprehensive model for assessing and improving digital customer experiences.

Employing a mixed-methods approach, this study combines qualitative interviews with industry professionals and quantitative surveys targeting telecom customers to validate the proposed framework (Raza *et al*., 2020). The findings reveal that traditional SERVQUAL dimensions inadequately capture the complexities of digital service interactions, particularly in addressing system efficiency, customisation, and trust-building mechanisms critical for customer satisfaction in digital environments (Singh *et al*., 2020; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The proposed model extends SERVQUAL by incorporating these digital-centric constructs, providing actionable insights for telecom providers to enhance service quality and customer loyalty.

Empirical analysis underscores the importance of seamless, secure, and intuitive digital interactions, with customers prioritising reliability and personalised service across mobile apps, websites, and automated tools (Yoo & Donthu, 2001; Raza *et al*., 2020). Trust and perceived value emerge as significant mediators, influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty (Rust & Huang, 2014; Zouari & Abdelhedi, 2021). The study advocates for telecom operators to adopt customer-centric strategies that prioritise the optimisation of digital touchpoints, emphasising consistent service quality, transparency, and proactive engagement (Pine, 1993).

By bridging theoretical gaps in existing service quality models and addressing practical challenges in the telecommunications sector, this research contributes to the advancement of service quality assessment frameworks (Parasuraman *et al*., 1988; Urdea *et al*., 2021). The findings offer strategic guidance for telecom providers in Ghana and similar emerging markets to refine digital customer engagement strategies, ultimately fostering customer satisfaction, loyalty, and sustainable growth in the digital economy.

Keywords: Digital Customer Experience, Service Quality, SERVQUAL Model, Telecommunications, Ghana, Digital Touchpoints, Customer Loyalty, Perceived Value, Trust.

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Environmental Expert vs. Consumer Spokespersons: How Green Consumerism and Scepticism Shape Trust in Green Advertising

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

This research examines how spokesperson type (environmental expert vs. consumer) General Green Consumerism (GGC) and scepticism towards green claims influence perceived trustworthiness and purchase intentions in green advertising. Results from three experiments show that GGC moderates the effect of spokesperson type, with experts being more effective for low-GGC consumers. Scepticism towards green claims weakens this moderation. The

findings advance the Source Credibility Model and offer practical insights for tailoring green advertisements to diverse consumer segments.

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Enhancing Marketing Students' Experience through GenAI: The NBS-AI Project for Personalised Academic Support

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

Sahar Bakr, David Cook

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Summary Statement

The NBS-AI project explores the use of generative AI in higher education, focusing on marketing students at Nottingham Business School. To understand students' experiences with AI, the study examines their usage patterns, challenges, and opportunities using a mixed-method approach, including focus groups and surveys. The outcomes will inform the design of a specialised AI tool integrated into the university's online platform, promoting responsible AI use and improving the academic and well-being support offered to students.

Competitive Short Paper

The NBS-AI project is an initiative designed to explore the use of generative (Gen) artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education. Focused on Nottingham Business School (NBS) Marketing students, the project seeks to understand current GenAI usage patterns, challenges, and opportunities to improve the student experience. The rapid adoption of AI tools across industries and universities (Deloitte UK, 2024), along with concerns about ethics, academic integrity, and data security, motivates this study (Yusuf et al., 2024). Given the significant influence of student experience on learning outcomes (Goh et al., 2017), findings from this research will guide the creation of a GenAI support tool tailored to enhance student engagement and well-being within NBS.

The ultimate vision is to develop an AI-powered assistant integrated into the university's online platform, NOW, to provide efficient access to academic resources, course information, and student services. Rather than replacing existing support systems, the assistant will act as a 'more-knowledgeable-other' to help students navigate available online and in-person resources (Stojanov, 2023). A key feature of this tool will be proactive support addressing academic and well-being concerns. For example, it will direct students struggling with referencing to library support and those expressing stress to mental health resources, providing personalised, confidential, and inclusive help.

The project is innovative in its co-creation collaborative approach, leveraging marketing methods and theories in its design (Dollinger et al., 2018). By combining customer journey mapping, consumer behaviour theory, and competitive analysis, the project positions itself as a forward-thinking response to the growing use of GenAI in education (ONS, 2023). It also caters to Generation Z students, who are reportedly more comfortable with chat-based technologies than traditional in-person methods (Janssen & Carradini, 2021).

The objectives are to understand students' current use of GenAI tools, identify the most helpful features, and explore how GenAI can enhance academic outcomes. The project aims to promote GenAI's ethical and responsible use among higher education students, rather than caution against it. A mixed-method approach will be used, starting with a focus group in a level 4 module (15 seminar groups of 20 students each) to gather qualitative insights on new students' experiences, perceptions, and challenges with GenAI. A large-scale survey will then be distributed to the broader NBS marketing cohort (levels 4, 5, and 6) to capture wider student experiences. The data will help compare and contrast diverse student perspectives, uncovering any level-specific opportunities or challenges for GenAI deployment.

The anticipated benefits of the project are significant. For students, the tool will reduce stress by simplifying access to university services, promoting responsible AI use, and supporting personalised well-being interventions. For staff, the assistant will alleviate administrative tasks, allowing more time for teaching and pastoral care. The project will also position NBS as a leader in AI innovation in higher education, pioneering responsible and user-centred AI tool design. The long-term goal is to create a scalable blueprint for AI-driven student support systems, shaping the future of GenAI in education with a focus on innovation, ethics, and user-centric design.

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Beyond The Hype: Unveiling the Negative Side of Influencer-Follower Relationship

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

The majority of research on influencer marketing (IM) has focused on the positive aspect of follower-influencer relationships. This study highlights the negative follower-influencer relationships that may ensue as influencers disseminate compelling content to their followers. Consequently, through the lens of attachment theory and a survey of 467 social media users, it explores how influencer content categories may result in problematic engagement by followers, thereby offering theoretical and practical implications for followers and influencer well-being.

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Exploring Financial Scarcity's Impact On Media Consumption Through An Information Processing Lens

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

Video content consumption is a pervasive part of our day-to-day life, yet little is known about how the perceived lack of financial resources influences their preference. This study explores how financial scarcity increases preference for short-form content due to shallower information processing, offering insights for content creators, marketers, and policymakers. It provides valuable insights for content creators, marketers, and policymakers seeking to effectively engage audiences in the digital landscape.

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The Influence of Generative AI in Marketing Communication on Consumer Brand Engagement: The Role of Perceived Risk, Brand Credibility, Trust, and AI Literacy

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

Generative AI (Gen-AI) is revolutionizing marketing communication but raises concerns about authenticity and trust. This study explores how Gen-AI usage in marketing communication influences perceived risk, brand credibility, and brand engagement, moderated by trust in AI and AI literacy. Using experimental data, results reveal that increased Gen-AI reliance reduces engagement due to elevated risk and decreased credibility. However, higher AI literacy and trust mitigate these effects, highlighting the importance of balanced Gen-AI integration for brands.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI) has garnered increasing attention in marketing communication because it advances personalisation, minimises costs, and streamlines content creation (Crawford et al., 2023; Kshetri, 2024). Through enabling automated decisions and recommendations, Gen-AI can support content creation, consumer segmentation, and data analysis (DMI, 2024). Yet concerns arise regarding authenticity, reliability, and regulatory compliance, particularly in light of the EU AI Act, which requires explicit labelling of AI-generated content (European Commission, 2024). Studies indicate that mistrust of AI persists among consumers, partly because they perceive AI-generated content as less credible than human-generated output (Hancock et al., 2020; Novozhilova et al., 2024). This inquiry examines how these perceptions shape consumer brand engagement.

Research Objectives

This investigation aims to assess how perceived risk and brand credibility shape consumer brand engagement in the presence of Gen-AI-driven marketing. It also seeks to determine the moderating role of trust in AI and AI literacy on these relationships. Examining these factors, the research aims to clarify how consumer scepticism may be mitigated and how Gen-AI can be integrated judiciously. The interplay among these constructs will offer insight into strategies that maintain brand authenticity and encourage stronger connections with AI-enabled approaches.

Literature Review

Numerous investigations show that AI, while beneficial for efficiency, can generate mistrust among consumers (Luo et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2024). The reliance on broad internet datasets may compromise perceived authenticity, and disclosures about AI involvement frequently reduce purchase intentions (Spais et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2022). Some consumers experience reduced autonomy when AI systems make recommendations without human oversight (Prakash et al., 2023). Signalling theory suggests that unambiguous communication helps lessen uncertainty, thereby promoting trust (Erdem & Swait, 1998). However, adoption of Gen-AI may raise questions regarding source reliability and content legitimacy, thereby undermining brand credibility. Furthermore, Source Credibility Theory indicates that perceived expertise and trustworthiness drive consumer evaluations (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). The presence of advanced AI literacy alleviates concerns about AI usage, as well-informed users are more likely to comprehend Gen-AI's practical advantages (McKnight et al., 2002). Enhanced familiarity with AI can limit perceived risk and support brand engagement by improving trust in AI (Novozhilova et al., 2024).

Methodology

A between-subjects experimental approach was undertaken, featuring a fictitious fashion brand named EverThread. Participants were randomly placed into one of three conditions: (1) absence of Gen-AI use, (2) moderate Gen-AI with human input, or (3) substantial Gen-AI with minimal human involvement. Visual marketing exemplars accompanied each scenario. Respondents then rated brand credibility (Erdem & Swait, 1998), perceived risk (Erdem & Swait, 1998), and willingness to engage (Leckie et al., 2016). They also provided data on trust in AI (McKnight et al., 2002) and AI literacy via an objective knowledge measure. Structural equation modelling and ANCOVA will be employed to investigate the proposed relationships. Initial results indicate that heightened Gen-AI reliance may diminish engagement through increased perceived risk and reduced credibility. Trust in AI and AI literacy appear to influence these relationships, suggesting a more measured Gen-AI deployment is advantageous for brands.

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The Unwelcome Plate. The Effect Of Ethnicity And LGBTQIA+ In The Service Sector - A Field Experiment.

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study investigates potential guest discrimination against ethnic minorities and LGBTQIA+ employees in Austria's hospitality sector building on taste-based theory. We test our hypotheses in a field experiment and find no significant differences in the measured variables. These results challenge existing assumptions of guest discrimination against diverse frontline employees showing visible ethnic or gender nonconform characteristics and highlight opportunities to diversify recruitment practices through hiring diverse staff, thereby addressing labor shortages.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction: Workplace diversity often gives rise to discrimination, a reality reflected in Austria's hospitality sector, where 54,6% of employees are from immigrant backgrounds (Federals ministry of the Republic of Austria, 2023). Around 10% of Austria's population identifies as LGBTQIA+ (Divörsity, 2022). Existing research confirms the presence of workplace discrimination, particularly in relation to ethnicity and LGBTQIA+ (e.g. Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2004; Weichselbaumer, 2016; Drydakis, 2021; Tommerup & Furnham, 2019). However, our knowledge is still limited about discrimination of minority groups outside an organization in particular in the hospitality sector (Weichselbaumer, 2016; Manoharan & Singal, 2017). Specific, there are no studies examining the perceptions of the guests to staff diversity in the hospitality sector (Denison, 2003; Foster Curtis & Dreachslin, 2008; Manoharan & Singal, 2017), although guest satisfaction is the primary determinant of revenue generation in this industry (Haller & Wissing, 2020). This study aims to fill this crucial research gap and examines if guests in fact discriminate against minorities among frontline employees. To develop our hypotheses, we build on Gary S. Becker's Taste-based Theory (1971), which suggests that business owners avoid hiring minorities, fearing potential customer disapproval.

Methodology: Our hypotheses test whether guests display discriminatory behavior towards frontline employees based on their ethnic or gender identity. Our field experiment with 1399 guests in a traditional Austrian restaurant features a frontline employee member in a restaurant representing a specific minority group (ethnic or crossdresser). Subsequently, the same individual provides service without disclosing their minority status. To identify potential differences, we analyzed variations in sales, tipping behavior, order quantity, and duration time.

Results: Results from ANCOVA reveal that frontline employees wearing a headscarf or a turban have no significantly lower sales, tips, order quantity and duration time compared to service staff without ethnically visible characteristics. The findings further reveal that both male and female crossdressers do not exhibit statistically significant declines in tips, sales, order quantity, or service duration. Unexpectedly, female crossdressers demonstrate significantly higher sales, order quantities, and guest duration times.

Discussion: This study complements existing studies in the hospitality sector (Houtenville & Kalargyrou, 2012; Janta et al., 2011) by addressing the lack of quantitative empirical research (Drydakis, 2021; Kalargyrou & Costen, 2017) and contributes to literature on discrimination against frontline employees (Weichselbaumer, 2016; Drydakis, 2021). The results challenge existing literature to research on LGBTQIA+ individuals (Frankel & Ha, 2020; Lee Badgett et al., 2020) and ethnic minorities (Weichselbaumer, 2016; Kalargyrou & Costen, 2017) by showing that ethnic minorities in frontline positions do not face guest discrimination, and that female crossdressers positively influence guest behavior, contributing to LGBTQIA+ discrimination research.

Conclusion and Implications: Our findings do not provide evidence of discrimination based on ethnicity or LGBTQIA+ status of frontline employees. For frontline employees, it supports individuality and offers insights into guest discrimination, aiding ethnic minorities and LGBTQIA+ individuals in securing employment. The findings may also be applicable to frontline employees in other markets. Future research employing targeted interventions or online studies that integrate stereotype analyses may offer valuable insights.

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Brand Influence On Tourists' Booking Intention: Evaluation Of Customer-Based Brand Equity Within Package Holidays

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study introduces the concept of customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) in the context of package holidays, analysing its relationship with customers' booking intention. Based on a quantitative online experiment, the research highlights how CBBE of tourism sector brands (transport, accommodation, destination) shapes CBBBE. The findings reveal the destination brand's critical role in booking decisions and provide a reliable measurement tool, advancing tourism-related CBBE literature and offering practical insights for tourism branding strategies.

Competitive Short Paper

The effectiveness and importance of branding are widely discussed within marketing literature. In particular, brand performance and the role of brands for customers' decision-making remain prominent fields of research (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019). Customer-based brand equity (CBBE) is one key model to assess the value associated with a brand (Aaker, 1992; Keller, 2001). While it is common for a single product to be associated with a single brand, the service-related tourism industry is an exception, as tourism experiences often comprise a variety of brands, e.g., airline and hotel brands. Multi-branded package holidays include a heterogeneous composition of travel agency, tour operator, transport, accommodation, and destination combined with a high level of uncertainty stemming from the intangible nature of services (Cai, 2002; Chiam et al., 2009; Dudek et al., 2019). Despite the prevalence of package sales, branding aspects of packages are rarely considered in tourism-related CBBE research.

Understanding how branding influences consumer choices in such multi-branded contexts is critical for both academic and practical applications. Although individual tourism brands have been studied extensively (Elliot et al., 2016), their collective impact when bundled together remains underexplored. This research bridges this gap by a) investigating differences in customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE) and booking intention across various bundles, and b) examining how CBBBE contributes to customers' booking intention. To address the research objectives, this study employs a quantitative online experiment that tests the relationship between CBBE of tourism sectors (i.e., transport brand, accommodation brand, destination brand) within package holidays, CBBBE, and booking intention. As no scale for CBBBE within package holidays or other bundles existed, this study required the adaptation of a suitable measurement tool based on dominant CBBE dimensions within the literature: brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty (Zeugner-Roth et al., 2008).

The bundle-specific measure of CBBBE was evaluated and validated through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (EFA, CFA), while multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and simple linear regression were employed to test the hypotheses developed to address the research objectives. The findings obtained indicate that CBBBE results from CBBE of its attributes (i.e., tourism sector brands) and that for package holidays, CBBBE is mostly shaped by the transport and accommodation brand, whereas booking intention heavily depends upon the destination brand. In addition, CBBBE was found to be positively related to booking intention.

This study expands both the general CBBE as well as the tourism branding literature. With its focus on bundles in the form of package holidays it explores a seldomly studied context and introduces the concept of customer-based bundle brand equity (CBBBE), which is shaped by the combination of individual tourism sector brands and their associated CBBE within a package holiday. Specifically, it elucidates the role of tourism brands in customers' holiday booking choices and allows for subsequent inter-sector comparisons of brand relevance. The findings of this study are especially relevant in today's competitive tourism industry, where creating a seamless and trustworthy brand experience is key to driving customer loyalty and satisfaction.

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Investigating the Problem of Incidental Exposure to Brand Litter

Track: 5. Brands & Branding

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Summary Statement

Drawing on established psychology theory, via three detailed, within-subjects experimental studies, using genuine niche brands to increase the ecological validity of the study, we provide the most robust evidence to date of how exposure to brand litter is likely to influence consumers attitudes to the depicted brands. We explain why such exposure has not had the negative effect that might be expected on the most popular, and most littered, brands over the last 20 years.

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‘Do What You Love’: Handling the Expectations and Demands of Craftwork as ‘Passionate Work’

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

We examine the evolving landscape of craftwork as a ‘dream career choice’ that merges creativity, autonomy, and self-actualisation. With the rise of so called ‘neo-crafts’, many consumers are increasingly opting out of traditional career paths in favour of ‘passionate work’. Although this transition promises fulfilment and the allure of a less alienating work, it also raises critical concerns regarding the darker aspects of ‘passionate work’. We examine how consumers handle these demands and expectations.

Competitive Short Paper

The idea that life would be more fulfilling if inner talents were not lost in the daily grind of alienating labour, but instead cultivated in ‘passionate work’ is culturally resonant (McRobbie, 2018). ‘Do what you love’ rhetoric is championed by business gurus, self-help influencers and career coaches, who sell the dream of leading others to the holy grail of self-actualisation (De Palma, 2021). This romantic view of passion underpins seminal theories of craftwork (Sennett, 2008; Crawford, 2010; Campbell, 2005). Notably, Sennet (2008, 9) defines craftwork as ‘an enduring human impulse’ centred on ‘the desire to do a job well for its own sake’. Similarly, Crawford (2009, 98) describes how the craft ethos of attentiveness and responsibility is embodied when craftworkers internalise their craft as ‘an object of passionate concern’. These perspectives view craftwork as a pathway to enriching one’s life, ultimately arguing that pursuing passion with vigour not only nurtures inner talents but also contributes to a more fulfilling existence (Sennett, 2008; Crawford 2010; Campbell, 2005).

While the potential rewards of self-expression, social status and autonomy are understandably enticing, critics caution that there is also a darker side to ‘passionate work’ (Arvidsson et al., 2010; McRobbie 2018; De Palma 2021; Hong 2023). For example, promoting creativity as an aspirational identity goal legitimises the idea of ‘symbolic remuneration’ in creative industries where workers are often overworked and underpaid (Arvidsson et al., 2010). In the gaming industry, passion is used to fuel intense level of engagement and productivity while simultaneously draining workers of expectations of job security (Chia, 2019). Rao and Neely’s (2019, 1) extensive review of passionate work, suggests that privileging passion for work and viewing it as a marker of aptitude ‘impacts social inequalities by race, gender and social class’.

To examine consumers experiences of ‘passionate work’, we turn attention to their efforts to turn craftwork hobbies into careers. Our aim is to understand whether pursuing professional craftwork helps consumers to lead more fulfilling lives, and if not to understand what impedes them. To achieve this, we ask two interrelated questions: (1) what type of lives do consumers hope to lead as professional craftworkers (2) what demands and expectations impinge on these hopes and how do they handle or let go of these impediments?

To answer these questions, we draw from a suite of qualitative data collected as part of an ongoing study with craftworkers participating furniture upcycling, pottery, and weaving. We draw on phenomenological perspectives, and in particular Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the grip, to develop a situated understanding of the struggles involved in pursuing craftwork professionally. The concept of grip focuses our attention on how our participants lives and identities are ‘situated within, and enacted through, practices that involve developing and demonstrating a capacity’ to *handle* the demands and expectations of passionate work (Riach and Tyler, 2022, 1).

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Aging Gracefully: Consuming to Reshape the Locus of Control Over the Mind-Body

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

Contemporary markets and society place a high value on youthfulness. This represents a paradox for consumers – particularly in societies that are demographically aging; how do we age gracefully in a world that values youth? We develop a complex understanding of what ‘aging gracefully’ means, the implications for self and self-worth, and the role of consumption in shifting the locus of control between the mind and the aging body within a world that valorises youthfulness.

Competitive Short Paper

Background and Aims:

The passage of time is constant and our bodies invariably age as the seconds tick by. And yet, as if to defy the laws of physics and biology, contemporary markets and society place a high value on the ideal of youthfulness (Sawchuk, 1995). This represents a paradox and site of tension for consumers – particularly in societies that are demographically aging

(Matsuno and Kohlbacher, 2020), raising important questions: how do we age gracefully in a world that values youth, what does 'aging gracefully' mean, and how can we control the chronological transformation of our bodies?

Context:

We situate this study in the context of anti-aging cosmetic surgery. Once secret procedures, cosmetic enhancements have now become everyday, readily available consumption experiences. The anti-aging arm of this cosmetic enhancement mega-industry is particularly normalised and increasingly embedded within consumer culture (Honignan and Castle 2006). Fuelled by both Influencer culture and the pharma, beauty, fashion and media industries, idealised visions of 'forever young' are seamlessly integrated into popular culture – from the Instagram posts of 'everyday' influencers to the C-suited boardroom (Chrisler 2022). Globally, consumers are attempting to 'stop the clock' with the magic of cosmetic enhancement. Medical scholars and practitioners are increasingly concerned, however, about the impact of cosmetic surgery on mental wellbeing (e.g. Honignan and Castle 2006). In addition, the 'pro-aging' movement committed to 'aging naturally' is growing. And, what about those who are left behind, unable to afford the considerable costs of cosmetic enhancements – consigned to aging in a non-aging world?

Methodology:

This qualitative study explores experiences of aging, body control, and consumption through 30 semi-structured interviews. We sought variation across our participants to ensure breadth of experience and response to the biological aging process, interviewing women who have consumed age-defying cosmetic enhancements, women who are actively resisting this consumption, and women who are excluded from this market for various reasons. Each interview combined semi-structured interview questions with image elicitation techniques (Bell and Davison, 2012). Using images selected by participants as prompts stimulates rich dialogue and generates deep insights, helping participants to express deep emotions, discuss uncomfortable topics, and reveal the otherwise unspoken (Meyer, Hollerer, Jancsary and van Leeuwen, 2013). We have taken a hermeneutic approach to iteratively analyse this data.

Key Findings:

Our data analysis develops a complex understanding of what 'aging gracefully' means to our participants, the cultural drivers underpinning this meaning making, and the implications for sense of self and self-worth as they navigate transformations of self and body within a world that valorises youthfulness. We also uncover the role that consumption/anti-consumption of anti-aging cosmetic procedures can play for these women as a resource to regain self-worth, dynamically shift the locus of control between the mind and the body and minimise the dissonance when looking in the mirror. This study contributes significant insight into impacts of consuming cosmetic procedures to control the natural transformation of the body, whilst offering broader implications of marketplace exclusion, such as taking an aging face into the workplace.

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The Role of Human Categorisation in Consuming Modern Slavery

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

Over 50 million people are working under conditions of modern slavery globally. Consumption choices are a key driver of modern slavery—but do consumers care? We investigate what is stopping consumer action against modern slavery and find that consumers engage a 'hierarchy of vulnerability' and self-categorisation techniques to determine who is 'enslaved' and worthy of concern, and who is not. The consumer categorisation of 'slavehood' contributes important insight to address this significant global challenge.

Competitive Short Paper

Background:

Over 50 million people live and work in conditions of modern slavery globally (Global Slavery Index 2023), and our consumption choices are a key driver of this severe human exploitation—but do we care? These people pick fruit and vegetables and process meat that ends up on our forks, work in service industries from construction and hospitality to domestic and illegal sex work, and many other hidden areas of our local and global economies (ILO 2014). High population growth and the low cost of a human in global trafficking and slavery markets is rendering these vulnerable people as disposable resources to be harnessed and discarded (Bales, Hedwards and Silverman 2017). The forced labour of commodified people is integral to the cost efficiencies of many contemporary business models (Crane et al. 2022).

Consumer demand for cheap, fast goods is a key factor in the perpetuation of slavery in supply chains to meet this demand with cheap, disposable labour. Consumers are "feed[ing] exploitation through their spending" (Cyrus and Vogel 2018, p.21). While Governments and NGOs are increasingly funding consumer-focused 'awareness' campaigns, these campaigns are not effectively shifting consumer demand from products of slavery (Carrington, Chatzidakis and Shaw 2021). Thus, we ask, what is stopping consumers from acting to address the modern slavery that is occurring in local and in global supply chains?

Methodology:

This study extends across the UK, Greece, and Australia, with 111 interview participants who represent a diverse range of life experiences and cultural backgrounds. Each interview combined semi-structured questions with image elicitation techniques (Bell and Davison, 2012). Using images selected by participants stimulated rich dialogue and the generation of deep insight, helping participants to express deep emotions, discuss uncomfortable topics, and reveal the otherwise unspoken (Meyer, Hollerer, Jancsary and van Leeuwen, 2013). The resultant images and interview transcripts were inductively analysed using a hermeneutic approach.

Key Findings:

Our research reveals that awareness is not enough to motivate and mobilise consumers to act against modern slavery. Once aware that their own consumption may be implicated in human slavery, participants employ a range of criteria and methods to self-categorise which individuals/groups of people were experiencing modern slavery, and those that were not. For example, using a 'hierarchy of vulnerability' to delineate those believed to be enslaved versus those identified as complicit in their living and working conditions. In this hierarchy of vulnerability, children were universally categorised as victims of modern slavery. These determinations had significant implications for who was categorised as 'enslaved' and worthy of concern, and who was not. In addition, participants engaged in validation checks to confirm 'slavehood', including: creating empathy links to 'walk in their shoes'; and looking for visual cues such as facial expressions, clothing, postures, surrounding environment.

This categorisation of slavehood determined whether participants felt a sense of personal moral concern (or not), and a sense of responsibility to act (or not). This study contributes insight into the mobilisation of consumers to act to address modern slavery, which is a significant global challenge.

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Scrolling Together: The Power Of Homophily And Flow In Continued Engagement Intentions

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

Brands find it difficult to select social media influencers (SMIs) congruent with their target audience. Drawing upon homophily and flow theory, we contribute to the consumer engagement literature by examining the role of homophily perceptions (i.e., SMI characteristics) on congruence with the SMI and its effect on continued engagement intentions (CEI). Our findings show that if consumers are congruent with SMI characteristics, they will likely continue to engage with SMIs. Behavioural experience moderates the relationship.

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Towards Sustainable Food Systems: How can edible insects gain a share in Western nutrition?

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This study explores factors influencing Western consumers' adoption of edible insects as a sustainable protein source. Interviews with Spanish consumers and industry experts reveal barriers such as visual acceptability, safety concerns, and cultural resistance. Promoters of acceptance include affordability, nutritional value, and sustainability. Recommendations focus on actionable innovative product development, educational campaigns, and marketing strategies to address barriers and highlight benefits, offering insights for advancing entomophagy in Western markets and addressing future food security challenges.

Competitive Short Paper

Entomophagy, the consumption of insects, has long been practiced in various cultures. With about 2 billion people already consuming insects (Van Huis et al., 2013) and more than 2,000 edible species available (Mitsuhashi, 2017), they offer a highly nutritious and sustainable protein source (Hlongwane et al., 2020). Their abundance, ease of harvest, and minimal environmental impact make them a promising alternative to conventional livestock (Huis et al., 2013).

In the European Union, insects have recently been classified as "novel foods" under legislation (Dobermann et al., 2017). The European Food Safety Association has approved several species for human consumption in specific forms (Tan et al., 2016), though Europeans still show phobia to eating insects (Svanberg & Berggren, 2021). Despite the advantages, the product is still perceived as nasty in Western societies (Tan et al., 2016). Studies have largely focused on cultural and psychological barriers, such as neophobia and implicit disgust (La Barbera et al., 2017) but not on overcoming them through marketing strategies and innovative product design (Sogari 2015; Deroy et al., 2015).

This study explores the factors influencing the adoption of insect-based products by Western consumers. To capture nuanced attitudes and beliefs, offering a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour in this emerging market, the study employed a qualitative research methodology, conducting 40 in-depth interviews with Spanish consumers (16 between 18-22 years old, 10 between 23-49 and 14 over 50), including 4 industry experts such as dietitians, food manufacturers and retailers.

Results indicate that the primary barriers to edible insects' consumption are both visual and related to hygiene and safety perceptions. Visually, acceptability was significantly limited to product formats where insects were not clearly visible, such as in processed forms like powders or flours incorporated into familiar foods. Hygiene and safety concerns included the insects' source, potential contamination, and dirt, alongside a general lack of trust in quality control and regulatory oversight. On the other hand, factors that could promoting acceptance include the high protein content of edible insects at a low cost compared to conventional protein sources. This was particularly relevant for consumers of protein-rich food supplements, such as gym-goers and fitness enthusiasts. However, significant price differences would be necessary to motivate adoption. Additionally, their potential as a sustainable food option with a lower environmental footprint could further encourage acceptance.

This research contributes to understanding the psychological and cultural barriers to entomophagy in Western contexts. Practical implications include recommendations for product development and targeted marketing strategies that address cultural resistance and emphasize edible insects benefits while addressing safety concerns. Incorporating insect protein as an ingredient in familiar food formats, educational campaigns and innovative packaging may enhance acceptance.

In conclusion, edible insects hold significant potential as a sustainable protein source to address future food security challenges. This study provides a foundational framework for future research and actionable insights for stakeholders in the sustainable food industry.

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Institutional Framing in Brand's Persuasion: Signalling Brand Sincerity and Manipulative Intent in Influencing Sustainable Packaging Behaviours and Marketing Outcomes

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

To accelerate SDG12 in tackling packaging waste, this study conceptualises *institutional framing* (i.e., regulative, normative, cognitive) as a persuasion tactic to promote consumers' sustainable packaging adoption. We investigate how institutional framing signals *brand sincerity* and *manipulative intent* and subsequently enhances key marketing outcomes in sustainable packaging behaviours and purchasing intentions. This study advances the signalling and persuasion literature and provides recommendations on leveraging institutional framing in promoting sustainable packaging behaviours to alleviate packaging waste issues.

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Impulsive Consumer Digital Shift: Virtual Reality as a New Mode of Physical Experience

Varun Nayyar

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Chitkara University, Punjab, India

Summary Statement

Research predictions has aimed to find out the digital shift amongst modern consumers, checking the impact of extracted variables, i.e., technology, social media, online reviews, consumer engagement, and marketing ethics. The results clearly validates that customer engagement through customer reviews and social media has a priority influence on the digital shift of online consumers, backed up by the attributes of marketing ethics and technology.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Due to the regular increase in digital consumers, social media and technology have compelled modern thinkers to adopt the relevant skills and addresses in order to remain relevant (Cowley et al., 2021; Puntoni et al., 2021; Yap et al., 2021). As a result of the digital shift of consumers and the explosion of big data on various digital platforms, modern marketing has transformed, posing a challenge for businesses and requiring significant analytics skills (Cham et al., 2022; van Doren et al., 2022; Labrecque et al., 2021; Kurtzke and Setkute, 2021).

Literature Review and Hypothesis Building

The study theoretical framework has imbibed the ideology of TAM, which clearly hinted at consumer perceptual behavior and the attitude of adoption for new things, keeping into consideration the latest technological advancements (Davis, 1989). The study constructs social media, online reviews, consumer engagement, and marketing ethics, all of which play a significant role in shaping the mindset of modern-age consumers towards multiple digital platforms due to technology adoption.

Research Gap

The large body of research shows that many previous studies have focused on different factors or constructs that affect consumers' digital mindset. This study, on the other hand, tries to come up with an ideology about the digital shift of modern consumers. The model accomplishes this by utilizing 61 studies from top marketing journals, which defined their hierarchies based on the highest impact factor and H-index.

Research Methodology

To evaluate and assess the proposed model fitness (Chin et al., 2020), PLS-SEM, with its robust and reliable measuring standards, was incorporated owing to its ability to manage complex models with multiple variables and indicators (Hair et al., 2017). The effect size (f2) measure predicted by Kock (2014) and Cohen (1992) aided in measuring the variables' fitness for the study's dependent variable.

Data collection and Research Instrument

A well drafted questionnaire mirroring these variables was then mailed to the 1187 respondents. Before sending the questionnaire to the targeted respondents, we used the quota sampling technique to define the strata based on region, dividing India into four regions: north, south, east, and west. For data collection on LinkedIn, we further segmented the strata based on white-collar job designations, such as managers at all levels, business leaders, and the teaching fraternity.

Conclusion with Suggested Practitioner Outcomes for the Concluded Hypothesis

The foregoing data clearly demonstrated model robustness, with consumers' digital shift having a direct correlation with marketing ethics (0.344), technology (0.200) and consumer engagement (0.843) and attributes like social media (0.722), online reviews (0.284), having a direct impact on consumer engagement with R2 (0.601) along with a mediating influence on consumers' digital transition with overall explained variance R2 (0.868). From the detailed variance, it may also be deduced that customer engagement through customer reviews and social media has a priority influence on the digital shift of online consumers, backed up by the attributes of marketing ethics and technology.

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Values and Behaviours of Scottish Foodies: The Role and Limits of Social Media Influencers in Negotiating and Shaping Food Values and Behaviours

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This research explores the extent and limits of the influence of social media influencers on the food values, strategies and choices of Scottish-based Foodies. Consumer culture theory informed the critical analysis of a rich data set featuring kitchen-based interviews and food diaries. The findings demonstrate how Scottish-based foodies make use of influencer content, food 'philosophies' and recipes to learn about food and seek out creative inspiration which re-enforces their Foodie identities.

Competitive Short Paper

The Scottish Government is implementing a 'National Good Food Nation Plan' to transform the reportedly poor Scottish diet (Scottish Government, 2024). This requires redefining food values among Scottish consumers who associate processed, carbohydrate and sugar rich foods as 'feel good' (Food Standards Scotland, 2021). 'Foodie' is a socially constructed identity which signifies a distinct and sustained interest in food (De Solier, 2013). Foodies are early adapters of food trends, and as opinion leaders both online and offline they are involved in socially constructing the meaning of 'good' food (Johnston and Goodman, 2015; Goodman and Jaworska, 2020; Vila et al., 2021). This research explores how foodies use Social Media Influencers (SMIs) to develop their food-based identities, negotiate food values and make food choices. Consumer Culture Theory informed a critical approach to this research to explore the impact of contemporary culture and media on consumer experience and identity (Askegaard and Linnet, 2011). Rich data was gathered from 10 Foodies based in and around Edinburgh Scotland from interviews situated in the homes of foodies and subsequent food diaries. This provided rich insight into past food choices, current food negotiations, and the influences on food choices. A modified version of Furst et al.'s (1996) complex food choice model with additional food values identified in literature (Barr & Levy, 1984; Steptoe et al., 1995; Connors et al., 2001; Beverland et al., 2015; Mctavish, 2015; Phillipov 2016; Walsh and Baker, 2020) was employed to analyse how foodies use influencers to inform identity over time, negotiate food values and identify wider influences on food choice. The research found SMIs help foodies negotiate food values by declaring what constitutes 'good' food. The findings conclude that foodies engage with SMIs around food communications primarily to fulfil a desire to learn and to introduce variety into their diets. For foodies, a good diet features balancing health versus hedonism, and features variety and exploration. This research confirms previous research which identifies the internet as a domain in which healthy food choices are promoted as pleasurable (Mendini et al., 2019; Guèvremont, 2020: Smith, 2020). The research revealed that although SMIs are not effective brand advocates, they are having an impact on individual food choices, are impacting food values and are teaching foodies strategies, which have a long lasting impact on food choice. Governments, marketers and other stakeholders wishing to promote particular foods or incorporate more healthy or local foods into diets should consider SMIs as uniquely positioned to influence food choice. This is supported by other authors who identify macro and micro influencers as particularly impactful (Kay et al., 2020; Park et al., 2021). Influencers who wish to attract foodies should introduce new recipes for popular and/or niche dishes or new dishes which use popular or common ingredients. This research contributes to a better understanding of how foodie-ism is growing via SMIs and sheds light on the limits and impact of SMI influence.

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From Brand Activism to Consumer Activism: An Empowerment Perspective

Track: 13. Political Marketing

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Summary Statement

Consumer activism empowerment (CAE) theoretically bridges the gap between brand activism and consumer activism by exploring how brands can inspire societal change. Brand activism, defined as corporate engagement with partisan socio-political issues. This empowerment arises from two intersecting dimensions: consumer empowerment, reflecting consumers' capability within the marketplace, and activism empowerment, encompassing their control effecting societal change. These dimensions converge to form CAE, where consumers trust the brand and believe in their capacity as an activist.

Competitive Short Paper

This theoretical paper introduces, Consumer activism empowerment (CAE) which bridges the gap between brand activism and consumer activism by exploring how brands can inspire consumers to engage in societal issues. Brand activism, defined as corporate engagement with partisan sociopolitical issues through marketing and prosocial practices, can empower or alienate consumers depending on its execution (Hydock et al., 2020; Moorman, 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020). This empowerment arises from two intersecting dimensions: consumer empowerment, which reflects consumers' perceived knowledge and decision-making capability within the marketplace, and activism empowerment, which encompasses their sense of competence and control to effect societal change (Han & Broniarczyk, 2022; Ma et al., 2021; Nam, 2021; Zimmerman, 2000). These dimensions converge to form CAE, a state where consumers trust the brand and believe in their capacity to act on its advocacy.

We propose four factors that affect the likelihood of brand activism translating into consumer- and activism-empowerment: authenticity, brand trust, task-oriented self-efficacy, and brand-issue fit (Balqiah et al., 2023; Lim & Young, 2021; Sohaib & Han, 2023; Tagkaloglou & Kasser, 2018). Authenticity refers to the perceived alignment of the brand's actions with its stated advocacy, while brand trust represents consumer confidence in the brand's reliability (Carroll & Kovács, 2021; Khan & Fatma, 2021; Sohaib & Han, 2023). Task-oriented self-efficacy reflects consumers' belief in their ability to engage meaningfully with the activism (Hamann & Reese, 2020). Brand-issue fit involves the congruence between the brand's identity and the advocated cause, ensuring the campaign resonates with consumer values (Lim & Young, 2021). These factors potentially determine the effectiveness of brand activism in fostering sustained consumer engagement.

The outcomes of CAE are categorized into four types, forming a matrix based on varying levels of consumer and activism empowerment. Sustained consumer activism occurs when high levels of both empowerments drive proactive, long-term engagement with social causes (Rawlett, 2014). Conversely, low levels result in activism apathy, where consumers disengage entirely (Boyd et al., 2016). Slacktivism arises from high consumer empowerment but low activism empowerment, leading to superficial support, such as social media activity (Leonel et al., 2023). In contrast, anti-brand activism occurs when consumers possess high activism empowerment but lack trust in the brand, resulting in opposition or resistance to its campaigns (Pöyry & Laaksonen, 2022).

This exploration highlights both the potential and risks of brand activism. While authentic and well-aligned campaigns can drive meaningful societal change, missteps risk alienating consumers or inciting backlash. The study offers practical insights for brands to build credibility and foster meaningful engagement, emphasizing the importance of authenticity and strategic alignment in advocacy efforts. The research also extends the academic discourse by introducing the CAE model, shifting focus from brand-centric outcomes to consumer empowerment and societal impact.

Future research should examine the long-term effects of CAE and the influence of consumer ideologies. This study demonstrates the critical role of empowerment in translating brand activism into consumer activism, offering a framework for understanding how to potentially address social and political issues effectively.

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Brand Activism for Peace and Consumer Emotions

Track: 5. Brands & Branding

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Summary Statement

Guided by the attribution-emotion-action framework, this work explores how different types of peace brand activism (PBA), defined as corporate engagement with socio-political conflicts to promote peace and end violence, shape

consumer emotions, mediated by the motivations consumers attribute to PBA, and links these emotions to brand advocacy and purchase intentions. Using an experimental approach, the study enhances understanding of the emotional and behavioural impact of PBA and offers practical guidance for managers developing PBA strategies.

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Should family businesses disclose their nature to customers?

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

Family firms are the dominant type of business worldwide, yet most choose not to disclose their family nature to stakeholders. This decision raises critical questions about the implications of communicating a family identity within these firms. A between-subjects experiment was conducted, grounded in signaling theory and the theory of reasoned action. The results indicated that customers associate family firms with higher perceived quality, which in turn leads to increased purchase intention and willingness to pay.

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'Agri-Influencers': Exploring the Dynamics of Marketer-Influencer Collaborations in the Irish Agricultural Sector

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

This study explores the relationship between marketing managers and social media influencers in the Irish agricultural sector. The evolving role of influencers - or 'agri-influencers' - in marketing strategies is examined, while this study also highlights the potential effectiveness of influencer partnerships in promoting agricultural products through social media platforms.

Competitive Short Paper

Utilising influencers as a marketing tool or strategy has grown in popularity for companies looking to reach new customers and advertise their goods and services (Dwivedi et al. 2021). Influencer marketing is the use of influential opinion leaders who have a large social media following, whether celebrities or not, to promote positive attitudes and behaviours regarding the brand's interests using posts shared on their social media platforms (Martínez-López, et al. 2020). Similarly, influencer marketing within the agriculture sector refers to the use of individuals with a strong online presence, and a large number of followers, to promote products or services related to farming and other forms of agriculture (Conti, et al. 2022).

In the modern era of digital marketing, the agricultural industry in Ireland is facing new opportunities and challenges to reach and engage with its target audience (McStay, 2017). With the increasing popularity of social media (Aggarwal, et al. 2022), businesses across various sectors have turned to influencers to amplify their marketing efforts. Despite the growing recognition of the importance of social media influencers (Dwivedi et al. 2021), there is a noticeable gap in literature concerning their role within agricultural. Notwithstanding the dearth of research around influencer marketing within the agricultural sector, other industries – namely beauty, music, and lifestyle (McDonald, 2022) – have shown that collaborating with influencers can boost a brand's sales quickly (Doshi et al. 2022). This suggests that there may be potential benefits for agricultural companies who utilise influencers or, 'agri-influencers'.

A qualitative approach was utilised for this study. Nine in-depth interviews were employed across two cohorts of respondents. Six marketing managers who work within the agricultural sector and, who have previously worked with 'agri-influencers', were interviewed. Furthermore, three 'agri-influencers' were also interviewed. All respondents are Irish based.

This study provides valuable insights into marketer-influencer collaborations within the Irish agricultural sector. Findings highlight the significance of authenticity within 'agri-influencer' marketing campaigns, where consumer trust and brand reputation can be enhanced through credible and genuine partnerships. Additionally, study findings indicate the importance of aligning influencer content with the core values and brand messages of agricultural brands. This emphasises the role of 'agri-influencers' as brand advocates who can effectively communicate key messages to target audiences. Furthermore, challenges between marketer and influencer became evident within this study, specifically in terms of contracts and control. Accordingly, the findings of this study provide recommendations within the nascent area of 'agri-influencers' in Ireland. While further research in this area is recommended, this small-scale study provides initial insights and recommendations relating to marketer and 'agri-influencer' collaborations which may potentially aid businesses within the Irish agricultural sector leverage the power of social media influencers.

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The cross-level process of transformative market legitimation

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

Market system dynamics have been analysed on multiple levels but there is limited understanding of cross-level interactions between these levels of analysis. Within this research, the historical process of market legitimation has received some interest, but only through conflicts, not without significant resistance (see Humphreys, 2010a,b). The institutional logics perspective is used to answer the question of how the historical process of market legitimation happens without significant resistance through the interaction of multiple actors.

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How Can Retailers Make Their Mobile Marketing More Age-Inclusive?

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores whether, how and why older people use certain mobile technologies in their shopping journey and how retailers can make their mobile marketing more age inclusive.

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Acceptance of social media among elders in rural Taiwan - taking Facebook as an example

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

This study attempts to understand the acceptance of Facebook among rural elders in Taiwan. It is based on the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) proposed by Venlatesh and refers to the questionnaire of Ye Youwen (2024). In this way, we can understand the social media usage status of the elderly, and obtain more detailed views and needs through in-depth interviews.

Competitive Short Paper

At present, almost everyone in Taiwan has a smartphone. According to media reports, when it was pointed out that "Facebook is used by "old people"" (Pan,2022; Liu,2018).

I can't help but want to conduct a survey based on what I have actually seen, and see how the elderly in remote areas accept Facebook. According to social media analysis (2023), the number of Facebook users in Taiwan has continued to decline for many years, while middle-aged and elderly users have not changed significantly. Taitung County also ranks last in terms of user population in various places (2024). The age structure of Facebook users representing Taiwan shows an aging trend

Moreover, there is a lot of room for improvement in Taitung's acceptance

This research uses questionnaires and interviews, hoping to understand the elderly's acceptance of Facebook. Furthermore, through interviews, we can further understand what are the obstacles to not using it?

Taiwan's health care and social welfare for the elderly are quite good. If the original living and physical social space can be expanded through social media to a platform that is safe and designed to meet the needs of the elderly, it will enrich the sense of dependence in the elderly's life.

The research quantitative survey strategy uses Venkatesh, Morris, Davis et al. (2003) to reorganize past models related to information technology acceptance, including TRA, TAM, MM, TPB, C-TAM-TPB, MPUC, ITD, SCT, etc. After a comprehensive discussion, The proposed unified theory of acceptance and use of technology, UTAUT (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

The interview part is mainly conducted using a semi-structured interview outline, and the reasons for non-use and problems encountered in use are used as the basis for the outline.

The research results showed that there were 237 valid samples, of which 78% were women and 21.7% were men, 46.7% were over 75 years old, and the average online time was about 1-2 hours. Among the four aspects, the recognition of performance expectations for using Facebook was the highest. Women are also taller than men in terms of gender;In each aspect of technology acceptance (performance expectations, effort expectations, acceptance, social impact), there is a moderate or above correlation.

The reasons why it is not currently used in the interview section are: 1. Many families are afraid of being deceived and refuse to use fraudulent information. 2. Some of my homes in rural areas do not have Internet access and I can use mobile phones. 3. I currently use mobile phones that only have call functions.

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Navigating Engagement With AI-Generated Sustainability Communication: A Comparative Analysis Of Socio-Economic And Digital Literacy Dynamics In The UK And Romania

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores how generative AI impacts engagement with sustainability communication in the UK and Romania, focusing on socio-economic and digital literacy factors. Using an online experiment, it examines audience perceptions of AI-generated versus human-crafted messages and their influence on sustainability behaviors. The research highlights the role of digital literacy, socio-economic disparities, and cultural context in shaping credibility and engagement, aiming to inform inclusive, effective strategies for AI-driven environmental advocacy.

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Re-Personalising Food Systems: The Persistence of Direct Marketing in Farmers' Markets from the Producer Perspective

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

Amidst an ever-evolving landscape of technological advancement, rationalisation and productivity, this study examines the persistence of traditional face-to-face direct marketing at farmers' markets. Drawing on research with artisan food producers in southwest Ireland, the findings demonstrate that this direct marketing fosters community engagement, resilience and healthy food environments. However, for it to persist, policymakers, academics and practitioners must contextualise marketing frameworks and prioritise long-term well-being over economic metrics, such as sales volume.

Competitive Short Paper

The mechanisms of globalisation, industrialisation and mass production have led to a consolidated and globalised food system that poses pressing and unavoidable environmental and societal challenges (Stewart, 2023). In this context, the ever-evolving landscape of technological advancements, rationalisation and productivity threatens the livelihoods of small food producers embedded in place (Schoolman et al., 2021; Tregear, 2005). Local food systems working to redress this balance rely on direct marketing (DM) as a core feature, exemplified by farmers' markets (FMs) (Rosol & Barbosa, 2021). FMs have gained prominence over the past two decades as consumers increasingly prioritise sustainability, food provenance and authenticity, demonstrating not only the significance of the place and processes of food production but also the arena of exchange (Kirwan, 2006). Advocates propose that this face-to-face exchange (DM) creates 'positive food environments' that are key contributors to sustainable food systems (O'Brien et al., 2023). In the digital era, where marketing increasingly relies on online platforms and virtual exchanges, traditional forms of DM, such as those in FMs, stand in sharp contrast. While digital DM emphasises convenience, scalability, and data-driven personalisation (Scovotti & Spiller, 2006), FMs offer a unique, face-to-face exchange that fosters personal connections and trust between producers and consumers (Schoolman et al., 2021; Kirwan, 2006). Yet, the persistence of this traditional form is under threat due to the physical labour involved in setting up a weekly stall, low-margin and short-shelf-life products, price sensitivities, and more direct competition with supermarket products. This study aims to explain why artisan food producers remain engaged in DM at FMs rather than pursuing market opportunities at the supermarket. The study situates FMs as grassroots, direct marketing that re-spatialises and re-personalises food provisioning by decreasing the physical distance and the number of actors in the supply chain.

A regional critical realist study was undertaken of artisan food producers operating at FMs in Munster, southwest Ireland. Multiple primary data sources were collected over two years, from December 2020 to December 2022, including eighty-eight face-to-face surveys, informal conversations and observations, ten key field informant interviews and eight purposively selected case studies. It was found that FMs in Ireland underpinned by DM represent resilient spaces vital to redressing the balance in the food system by contributing to non-economic industry needs. DM at FMs integrates the producers within a community, developing context-specific social capital. This informs a mutually reinforcing cycle of product quality, community engagement and resourcefulness. These values emerged from the interaction between the producers and face-to-face selling (DM) at FMs, forming a fundamentally different business from those that choose other paths to market, such as supermarkets. This research highlights the importance of understanding marketing in context and integrating community engagement, resilience and product quality into marketing frameworks. Policymakers, academics, and practitioners are invited to move beyond measuring the success of DM by sales volumes but to recognise face-to-face DM as prioritising the long-term well-being of communities, producers and place-based ecosystems which contribute to more sustainable food systems. This support is essential for the persistence of face-to-face DM.

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Digital Marketing Strategies For Promoting Sustainable And Healthy Diets: Exploring The Impact On Generation Z

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

Digital marketing strategies show great potential in shaping food choices, empowering food businesses to reach wider audiences with more precise targeting. Generation Z is a digitally oriented, key consumer segment of the future with their increasing population, growing spending power, and unique values. This study explored the role of digital marketing strategies in shifting the current eating behaviours of Generation Z into more sustainable and healthy practices, using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions.

Competitive Short Paper

Digital technologies have become an integral part of many people's lives. Marketers have responded by utilising digital marketing to reach wider audiences with more precise targeting. Digital marketing plays a pivotal role in shaping food choices, providing substantial benefits to the food industry (Kraak, Zhou and Patiño, 2020). Transforming food choices is a priority on the sustainability agenda, calling for adopting Sustainable and Healthy Diets – healthy, balanced, less animal-based diets with low environmental impact (Garnett, 2014; FAO, 2020). The demand to feed 10 billion people by 2050 makes this shift more vital to combat resource depletion, climate change, obesity and other chronic diseases (Poor and Nemecek, 2018; Willet *et al.,* 2019). Digital tools can successfully convey nutritional messages and support behaviour change strategies (Seid, Fufa, and Bitew, 2024). Also, Artificial Intelligence (AI) shows great potential for enhancing dietary behaviours through personalised approaches (Hannon et al., 2024). This research explored the role of digital marketing strategies in encouraging Sustainable and Healthy Eating (S&HE) behaviours among Generation Z (Gen Z). Born between 1997 and 2012, Gen Z is a digitally involved generation, comprising a quarter of the world's population and contributing 17% to global spending (Nielsen IQ, 2024). This study contributes to limited research on the intersection of digital marketing, sustainability and food consumption (Bublitz and Peracchio, 2015; Diez-Martin *et al.,* 2019; Vermeir *et al.,* 2020). It also addresses the dearth of literature on AI and eating patterns (Oh *et al.,* 2021).

This study combined insights from online semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The questions explored Gen Z's perception of S&HE, the factors influencing their S&HE behaviours, and their experiences with digital media related to S&HE. A convenience sampling was used to recruit participants who were aged 18-26, used the Internet, made personal food choices and lived in Istanbul, Türkiye. Participants were recruited through announcements at district municipalities, university clubs, and non-governmental organisations. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data via NVivoTM.

The results revealed a lack of Gen Z's fundamental knowledge about sustainable eating. Price, taste, subjective norms, health, time, availability and digital media were identified as key factors shaping S&HE choices. Most participants admitted they were rarely exposed to sustainable and healthy food promotions on digital media. The AI-driven new digital platform received significant interest, with the most favoured features being the calorie and nutrient calculator, the AI-powered recipe generator and the AI-powered nutrition coach.

These findings highlight an opportunity to enhance Gen Z's awareness and improve their food literacy related to S&HE. Outcomes revealed the possible contribution of mobile apps utilising AI to enhance Gen Z's health and well-being through the lens of sustainability. At a policy level, findings inform communication strategies to support SDG3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG12 (Responsible Consumption and Production). Insights are valuable for businesses in designing marketing strategies for Gen Z to gain a competitive advantage in this key consumer segment. Future research might consider a mixed-methods approach with larger, representative samples across multiple generations.

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What's Marketing Got To Do With It? The Limited Use Of Marketing In Clinical Trials That Really Need It

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

A substantial number of publicly-funded clinical trials fail to recruit and retain enough participants to provide robust medical evidence of the effectiveness of an intervention. Though trialists themselves have called for greater application of marketing theory to improve the value and experience of a trial, we report the findings of a scoping review that suggest adoption is limited and refers predominantly to advertising. We offer practical implications for this context and consider potential theoretical contributions.

Competitive Short Paper

A substantial number of publicly-funded clinical trials fail to recruit and retain a sufficient number of participants to provide robust medical evidence of the effectiveness of an intervention (Walters et al 2017). This is a familiar methodological issue – the sample size is too small or unrepresentative – but the scale of such methodological weaknesses within published medical research has been called a scandal (Altman 1994, Van Calster et al 2021). Failing to recruit and retain participants leads to under-powered results, inefficient use of resources, and research waste; problems made more acute when budgets are tight.

We report the findings of a scoping review of published literature examining how marketing is used for participant recruitment and retention in non-commercial clinical trials. We find its explicit use is limited, referring almost exclusively to advertising. We also found few instances where marketing concepts were leveraged to enhance retention. Though many trials consider recruitment and retention strategies, this is not routinely through a marketing lens nor done systematically.

Marketing does not enjoy a positive reputation among many healthcare professionals, especially those working in public healthcare contexts such as the UK's National Health Service (NHS). Marketing's long-standing association with unethical and deceptive practices is joined by contemporary anger at the prioritisation of marketing over R&D by biopharmaceutical companies (e.g. Angelis et al 2023) and the deep moral aversion to market values that appear antithetical to those of fairness, security, commonality and solidarity, of which the NHS is symbolic (Cribb 2008). Perhaps this partially explains why trialists' own calls for more formal use of marketing (e.g. Francis et al 2007, McDonald et al 2011) have so far had little impact on practice (Mitchell et al 2022).

There is a rich body of extant marketing and consumer research related to health: from marketing science perspectives on healthcare markets (e.g. Zhu et al 2022), to work seeking to engender social good within Transformative Consumer Research, Public Policy and Marketing (e.g. Newman et al 2021) and Social Marketing communities (e.g. Gordon 2011), as well as critiques of marketisation (e.g. Cribb 2008). Indeed, the ethics of clinical trials as a form of human experimentation have not escaped criticism, including on the grounds that the individual rights of the patient have been disregarded in the pursuit of scientific evidence (Palter 1996).

For practical contributions, we conceptualise a trial as a voluntary, non-profit service. A wide range of marketing theory is thus applicable, for example, audience motivations and messaging in the non-profit sector (e.g. Leroux 2010) and service delivery concepts such as customer journeys and touchpoints (e.g. Sudbury-Riley et al 2024). At the theoretical level, clinical trials as a consumer experience are puzzling; they are often inconvenient, sometimes labour-intensive and potentially painful experiences for participants, and may not result in any direct personal or financial benefit. While consumer research has investigated why some people pay to participate in extremely painful leisure pursuits (Scott et al 2017), how far do such insights help us understand participation in clinical trials?

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Diabetes and Dietary Acculturation in British South Asian Households

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

The higher levels of diabetes amongst British South Asians is a generational issue linked to a complex set of root causes that include genetics and dietary practices. This study aims to understand the intricate nature of diabetes development by exploring the relationship between food, diabetes, and families with a focus on intergenerational dietary acculturation. The research contributes insight into the positive impact intergenerational dietary acculturation is having on increasing healthy habits of this population.

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The Role Of Internal Marketing In Disseminating Green Knowledge In A Hotel Setting.

Track: AM Funded Research

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Summary Statement

Global tourism faces a sustainability challenge, with current research neglecting climate change mitigation in tourism. This is particularly true within the hotel industry, where employee environmental knowledge remains underexplored. This project examines how internal marketing practices can enhance green knowledge creation, dissemination, and application in hotels. Using a case study and interviews, it bridges the gap in research and practice, offering actionable insights for advancing mitigation and sustainability practices in tourism.

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Beyond Institutional Pressures: The Interactivity Of Multilevel Network Pressures And Network Isomorphism.

Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

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Summary Statement

This theoretical article answers the question "how an organisation within a business network response to interactive multilevel pressures within and outside their network which have been largely overlooked in business, organisation and management theories? The article proposes network pressure framework for analysing the source of pressures, their interaction and predict how organisations response to interactive pressures leading to network isomorphism.

Competitive Short Paper

It is a known fact that no business exists in isolation (Håkansson and Snehota (1989). Organisations operate within complex networks in which multilevel pressures, micro, meso, and macro, interact constantly, sometimes in isolation, sometimes contradicting or reinforcing each other. Organisations do not respond to each stakeholder's pressures individually but must simultaneously respond to these multilevel pressures of multiple stakeholders (Rowley, 1997). This leads to a critical question. Is there any robust theory or theoretical framework that aids our understanding of how internal and external multilevel pressures interact and how organisations within a web of networks respond to interactive multilevel pressures? Several theoretical studies and theories, such as institutional theory, stakeholder theory, network theory, resource dependency theory and other organisational theories, have valuable insights into pressures and specific aspects of organisational responses to pressures. However, these theories often treat pressures in isolation or focus on single-level dynamics, especially external pressures, neglecting their interactive and dynamic nature across multilevel contexts of an organisation.

This theoretical article addresses the limitations of previous theories by proposing a **Network Pressure Framework**. The framework integrates stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan 1977, and Scott 1995), and resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) into network theory to serve multiple purposes, such as understanding the source of multilevel pressures, analysing the interactivity of these multilevel pressures, predicting organisational response and enhancing the theoretical comprehensiveness of network theory. This article adopted network analysis to construct a **network map** to visualise nodes (individuals, actors, entities, organisations) and their ties (pressures).

The network analysis revealed micro, meso, and macro network pressures as three types of network pressures, and network pressures in isolation, reinforcement network pressures, and contradictory network pressures are three mechanisms where pressures interact. We then predict how organisations in a network respond to complex, contradictory, reinforcing, and isolated pressures of multiple stakeholders, leading to network isomorphism.

This theoretical framework primarily contributes to network theory, moving beyond inter-organisational connectivity and relationships to developing a robust network pressure framework that explains the dynamics of pressures within and outside an organisation's networks. Additionally, it extends institutional and organisational theories by providing insight into how external or institutional pressures can contradict or reinforce each other. This integrated approach is essential to addressing the complexity of reinforcing, contradictory, and isolated pressures, offering organisations a comprehensive framework for effectively navigating multilevel dynamics.

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Social practice theory: an application to commercially available and unavailable meat alternatives

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This paper employs social practice theory to examine how the introduction of meat alternatives into the common practice of "mealing" can transform that practice. Two meat alternatives have been chosen to explore this concept, plant-based meat alternatives which are freely available to purchase in Ireland and cell-cultured meats which are not. The inclusion of a product that cannot be purchased allows for deeper exploration of the application of social practice theory to hypothetical products.

Competitive Short Paper

Meals rarely start at the kitchen table. Shopping, cooking, socialising and even sourcing recipes can be an integral element of creating and eating a meal. Consequently, the act of "mealing", the everyday activity of eating a meal (Daly 2020), is an involved network of overlapping and intersecting practices (White et al. 2022). These practices can become more complex with the addition of new products or processes, changing the competencies, meanings and materials needed to enact this network of practices. Consequently, social practice theory offers a lens through which a complex network of practices such as "mealing" can be examined.

In social practice theory, the focus is placed on the performance of a practice rather than an individual's actions, decisions or preferences (Shove et al. 2012) with a recognition that practices exist in a shared socio-cultural space (Reckwitz 2002). As "mealing" can be said to be in flux, evolving with cultural movements and the introduction of new materials, social practice theory can provide insight into how changes in the elements of a practice effect the performance of the practice. As the current literature has documented (e.g. White et al. 2022; Ford et al. 2023; Venkatraman et al. 2023), the social movement towards more sustainable production and consumption and the introduction of meat alternatives has had an impact on "mealing". However, to date, the literature dealing with meat alternatives has not applied social practice theory to products that are not currently commercially available. This study, currently in its conceptualisation phase, aims to address this gap.

Using 30 semi-structured interviews situated in the respondent's kitchen, this study will explore the network of practices that constitute "mealing". Two meat alternatives will then be conceptually introduced to each of the practices identified, one familiar and commercially available and the other novel and not currently commercially available in Ireland where data collection will take place. Respondents will then discuss how the introduction these products would affect the materials, meanings and competencies within each of the practices of "mealing".

The goals, then, for this study are twofold. Firstly, to explore how the introduction of meat alternatives into one's diet affects the network of practices that is "mealing". Secondly, through comparison between a familiar and unfamiliar meat alternative, determine the ability to apply social practice theory to a hypothetical product. The former goal aims, ultimately, to understand what conditions are needed in order to assist in a willing consumer's transition to include more meat alternatives within their diet on a recurring basis rather than as a single trial experience. The latter goal is more theoretically based. It aims to understand how well a hypothetical product can be introduced into a theory that is, by construction, grounded in lived experiences. The study as a whole hopes, then, to add both practically and conceptually.

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Exploring the Key Factors that Influence Consumer Acceptance of Location-Based Marketing: A UK and Republic of Ireland Study.

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This study explores the factors influencing consumer acceptance of Location-Based Marketing (LBM) in the UK and ROI, addressing significant gaps in existing research. By using factor analysis, it identifies perceived benefits, trust, and privacy concerns as key determinants of acceptance. Despite the rapid growth of LBM and the UK's dominant market share, consumer perceptions remain under explored, making this research a crucial contribution to understanding and optimising LBM strategies in the region.

Competitive Short Paper

Advancements in positioning technology combined with high smartphone penetration rates have created a lucrative channel for marketers to engage with consumers in real time and at a point where marketing communications are most effective: when they are in close proximity to the business (Feng et al., 2016; Kini et al., 2024). The delivery of timely, personalised and highly contextualised marketing messages are persuasive, appealing, and personally relevant for consumers and more effective for businesses: driving footfall and increasing sales (Lee et al., 2015; Kini and Suomi, 2018; Molitor et al., 2020; Kurtz et al., 2021). By capitalising on the immersive nature of smartphone devices in everyday life and leveraging geolocation data, consumer needs can be addressed dynamically offering a new level of smart advertising (Shieh et al., 2024). However, consumer skepticism and concerns over privacy, tracking their movements and the intrusiveness of such technology threatens to disparage adoption, making it a double-edged sword (Kini and Suomi, 2018; Schade et al., 2018; Kurtz et al., 2021). Location-Based Marketing (LBM) is a cutting edge advertising tool (Hooda et al., 2024) with a global market value of $128.12 billion in 2024 (Grand View Research, 2024), yet research has illustrated that the key factors that influence the acceptance of LBM from a consumer perspective have not been fully examined (Gutierrez et al., 2019) and "usage of location data is one of the most misunderstood areas in marketing... with marketers still struggling to harness it effectively" (Bernritter et al., 2021, p. 677).

Despite the UK commanding the largest share of revenue in the European LBM market (Grand View Research, 2024), research into this technology within the region remains limited. Giwa et al. (2015) gathered 98 responses from East Midlands, Siah (2015) collected 100 from Edinburgh, and Gutierrez et al. (2019) retrieved 252 responses, with approximately 84 from the UK. The critical issue is that, while marketers are already deploying these strategies, there is a glaring lack of understanding about how UK and Irish consumers perceive and react to LBM. Kini and Suomi (2018) identify utility and privacy concerns as key factors influencing acceptance of LBM, with differences between US and Finnish consumers suggesting attitudes are not universal. Aggarwal et al. (2024) stress the need for more diverse, larger studies to explore consumer acceptance of this marcom technology.

This study utilised a questionnaire to address clear gaps in understanding the factors affecting consumer acceptance of LBM. A sample of 921 respondents was achieved, representing one of the first and largest studies in this region. As such, it is poised to be a leading contribution to this field. Using factor analysis, this study finds that perceived benefits, trust beliefs and personal privacy risk are the main factors that impact on consumers acceptance of LBM. Theoretically, through the use of the incentive theory of motivation, the research provides novel interdisciplinary contributions into consumer behaviour, bridging the fields of marketing, psychology, and technology. Valuable insights for practitioners are offered enabling the development of responsible, ethical and effective LBM strategies.

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Portfolio Perspectives: Enhancing Assessment Through Academic-Industry Collaboration in Creative Marketing Portfolios

Track: AM Funded Research

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Summary Statement

This AM-funded pedagogic project, a collaboration between Goldsmiths and Manchester Metropolitan University, explores creative portfolios as holistic marketing assessments to enhance graduate employability. By integrating industry and academic insights, it aligns assessments with real-world demands. Using qualitative methods, it develops a framework for portfolio integration, emphasising creativity, critical thinking, and industry relevance in marketing education. Findings, including the initial framework, will be presented at AM2025 to seek feedback on its applicability, challenges, and potential refinements.

Competitive Short Paper

This AM-funded project, a collaboration between Goldsmiths and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), addresses the under-researched role of creativity in marketing education (Baer, 2016). The UK-focused project uses creative portfolios to showcase students' creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

The project acknowledges challenges in integrating portfolio assessments into non-design disciplines (Vincent-Lancrin et al., 2019) and aims to bridge the gap between academic outcomes and industry expectations. By involving academic and industry stakeholders, it ensures assessments align with academic standards and professional demands, enhancing graduates' employability (Karunarathne and Calma, 2024).

Traditional assessment methods often fall short in preparing students for modern industry demands (Srinivasa et al., 2023). This research suggests creative marketing portfolios as a holistic evaluation method, highlighting creativity, critical thinking, and practical skills that align with marketing roles' diverse needs.

Employability in higher education has been extensively studied, with pedagogic approaches central to many studies (Tomlinson, 2017). This project integrates industry insights into marketing assessments to equip students with relevant, in-demand skills. By engaging stakeholders in developing these assessments, it strengthens links between higher education institutions (HEIs) and the marketing profession, ensuring relevance and practicality.

A qualitative approach underpinned by interpretivism was employed (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). The research draws on a conceptual framework combining Newmann and Archbald's (1992) Authentic Assessment Theory, which emphasizes real-world tasks; Kaufman and Beghetto's (2009) Four C Model of Creativity; Bennett et al.'s (2016) graduate employability strategies; and WonkHE's emphasis on practical skills (McVitty and Andrews, 2021). Creative portfolios within this framework serve as authentic assessments, aligning with professional expectations and showcasing students' creativity and problem-solving skills.

Aim: To develop a framework, including guidelines, for integrating creative marketing portfolios into academic assessments to enhance students' employability and industry relevance.

Research Objectives:

• RO1 – Develop a framework for incorporating creative marketing portfolios into academic assessments, ensuring alignment with academic standards and industry needs.

• RO2 – Engage academic and industry stakeholders to identify essential skills, competencies, and practical challenges, ensuring portfolios reflect real-world marketing demands.

• RO3 – Assess the effectiveness of creative marketing portfolios as authentic assessment tools for enhancing students' creativity, critical thinking, and industry readiness.

Data collection is currently underway in London and Manchester, using semi-structured interviews and focus groups emphasizing open-ended questions (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Recruited participants include academics from UK HEIs and marketing professionals from in-house and agency roles, ensuring comprehensive representation. Thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2013) will inform the framework based on collected data.

Findings, including the initial framework, will be presented at AM2025 to seek feedback on its applicability, challenges, and potential refinements. After AM2025, the framework will be refined and piloted in modules at Goldsmiths and MMU to enhance marketing pedagogy and employability. In phase two, an online portfolio platform will be developed for students to showcase their work to employers and industry stakeholders. A platform mock-up will also be shared at AM2025. Finally, the project aims to publish a pedagogic research paper based these findings, contributing to scholarly discourse in curriculum design and assessment methods in marketing education.

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Consequences of Low-income consumers clothing choices: Stigma or Inclusion

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Sohail Kamran[1], Outi Uusitalo[2], Saleem Ur Rahman[3]

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Summary Statement

This study explores the consequences of low-income consumers clothing choices in a developing country context. The participants encountered both stigma and inclusion due to their clothing choices. Both stigma and inclusion occurred at institutional, family, social network and societal levels and sourced them mixed consequences. The study aims to offer several implications for economical and sustainable clothing options for low-income consumers of developing countries.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction: Clothing choices are commonly used by consumers as a means of self-expression (Piacentini & Mailer, 2004; Roos et al., 2017) but patterns of clothes acquisition and consumption could differ among low-income consumers owing to their restricted income. Their inability to respond to marketplace temptations often source them exclusion and stigmatization (Hamilton, 2012; Power, 2005). However, in some cases they can enhance their circumstances and develop self-esteem by initiating different innovative coping strategies (Hamilton, 2009; Hamilton and Catterall, 2006). There is limited research on consumers clothing choices in marketing (Norum and Norton, 2017; Ekström & Salomonson, 2014). Nevertheless, low-income consumers clothing choices could cause them stigma and exclusion (Hamilton, 2012). Low-income consumers' clothing choices and their consequences could vary in different cultures. This study explores the consequences of low-income consumers clothing choices in a developing country context where researching their marketplace issues are warranted (Reynoso et al., 2015).

Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 low-income consumers in Pakistan where over three quarters of total population are categorised as low-income (Haider, 2021). The data is analysed using thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Findings: The participants' clothing choices for themselves and for their families mostly consisted of buying second-hand clothes, borrowing, exchanging and acquiring used clothes from their social networks. In some cases, they purchased new clothes for themselves or their family members (e.g. children). They encountered both stigma and inclusion due to their clothing choices. Both stigma and inclusion occurred at institutional, family, social network and societal levels and sourced them mixed consequences.

Stigma: First, institutional level stigma included denial and exclusion from services due to old and or dirty clothes of participants in different institutional settings. They faced stigma at family level especially from their children who denied using second-hand clothes. The participants were also sometimes stigmatised (e.g. jokes, taunts and insults) when their peers knew that they were wearing second-hand clothes. Lastly, in some cases participants encountered stigma from members of society e.g. from customers and people present in the second-hand market who passed negative comments due to their clothing choices. Stigma due to clothing choices sourced negative consequences e.g. powerlessness, discontent, anger, shame and sense of deprivation.

Inclusion: Second, the participants' clothing choices also resulted in inclusion in some cases. A few participants reported to be dealt respectfully when wearing nice quality second-hand or new clothes by some basic services providers. The participants were positively received within their social networks when wearing nice dresses. Also, the participants' family members (particularly children) approved and welcomed new clothes consumption. Lastly, in some cases participants reported positive treatment in society and in front of strangers as their attire gave an impression of affluence. Experiencing inclusion due to better clothing mostly resulted in positive consequences for participants e.g. accomplishment, contentment and thankfulness to God.

Conclusions: The study is a work in progress, and it will offer several implications for economical and sustainable clothing options for low-income consumers of developing countries.

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How low-income consumers cope with their health issues: Evidence from Pakistan

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

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Summary Statement

This research explores the strategies utilized by low-income consumers to cure their diseases and consequences of their strategies are unearthed too. The participants used public or private hospitals in case of major health issues. Due to resource constraints, they used different alternative medications methods, spiritual healing and home remedies to

cure minor health issues. The participants encountered mixed consequences of their choices. The study aims to offer suggestions for low-income consumers inclusion to health services.

Competitive Short Paper

The UN SDGs3 is about ensuring health and well-being for everyone in the world (UNDP, 2023) but the World Health Organization figures show that half of the world population lacks access to essential health services (Taylor, 2023). This depicts that health inequalities are prevalent everywhere and among different consumer groups within different countries. However, developing countries low-income consumers have highly restricted access to basic health services (Peters et al., 2008; Jacobs et al., 2012) which leads them to have higher levels of diseases and shorter lives (Guimarães,2019). There have been several calls for researching developing countries' low-income consumers marketplace issues as those are rarely addressed by marketing researchers (Fisk et al., 2016; Reynoso et al., 2015). Understanding low-income consumers' experiences and options they use to cure their diseases can facilitate better policymaking for serving them with dignity, fairness and respect (Fisk et al., 2020; Hammedi et al., 2024). Drawing on health services, Transformative service research and consumer coping literature, this paper unearths what behavioural coping strategies are used by low-income people to cure their diseases and what are the outcomes of their choices?

Methodology: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 low-income consumers in Pakistan where over three quarters of total population are categorised as low-income (Haider, 2021). The data is analysed using thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Findings: First, in case of major health issue the low-income participants used public or private hospitals but both options often sourced different negative outcomes to them. They preferred visiting public hospitals for treatment due to lower costs, but they commonly reported to experience poor service, procedural and interactional unfairness. Some participants preferred visiting private hospitals for better services but in many cases, these were unaffordable and increased their financial stress. Second, in case of minor illness, the participants used various alternative medicine systems including Hakeems or herbal and homeopathic medicines. They considered these alternative medications without side effects owing to their perceptions that these use natural materials. They also reported to take medical prescriptions from unqualified pharmacy shopkeepers or quacks to cure their minor diseases. Above curing options were affordable but were risky and lacked authenticity and efficacy. Third, some participants showed a strong faith in spiritual healing and visited Peers or religious figures for spiritual treatments who suggested spiritual acts to perform and offered them amulets or "charm. Despite participants' strong belief in spiritual healing, no objective outcomes of using spiritual healing methods were evident from participant stories. Finally, they also utilized their personal resources (e.g. knowledge and cognitive resources) to cure their minor diseases which included home remedies, praying to God for healing and deciding not to cure oneself due to affordability issues. The home remedies often resulted in positive consequences in case of minor diseases, but other options had no objective outcomes for the participants.

Conclusions: Based on the study findings, we aim to offer policy implications for low-income consumers wellbeing and inclusion to health services.

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Quick Commerce in India: A Conceptual Framework for Hyperlocal Innovation and Global Relevance

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the rapid growth of quick commerce (q-commerce) in India, examining its evolution through the lenses of consumer expectations, technological innovation, and societal impact. Developing a conceptual framework situates India's q-commerce experience as a model for emerging and developed markets, addressing global challenges such as sustainability and labour equity. The study contributes to advancing theories of consumer convenience and offers actionable insights for businesses and policymakers navigating the digital retail ecosystem.

Competitive Short Paper

The rapid rise of quick commerce (q-commerce) has reshaped consumer behaviour and retail dynamics worldwide, with India emerging as a critical testbed for this transformative phenomenon. Characterized by delivering small quantities of goods within 10–30 minutes, q-commerce represents the intersection of hyper-convenience, technological innovation, and societal change. This paper conceptualises India's q-commerce industry, contextualizing its evolution within the country's unique socio-economic and cultural landscape while offering insights with global relevance.

India's q-commerce growth, spearheaded by platforms such as Zepto, Blinkit, and Dunzo, is driven by increasing urban density, the adoption of digital payment systems, and a preference for immediacy among younger, tech-savvy consumers. These platforms have leveraged hyperlocal delivery networks and gig economy models to redefine consumer expectations, making ultra-fast delivery the norm. However, this rapid expansion has challenges, including concerns about environmental sustainability, labour exploitation, and regulatory gaps. India's diverse demographics and economic stratification further add complexity, requiring q-commerce businesses to adopt localized strategies to meet the varying needs of urban and semi-urban populations.

Drawing from interdisciplinary literature in marketing, innovation diffusion, and sustainability, this paper develops a conceptual framework to understand q-commerce as an evolving ecosystem. The framework identifies three critical dimensions: (1) Consumer Expectations, which explores how immediacy, trust, and reliability drive adoption in digital ecosystems; (2) Technological Enablement, highlighting the role of AI, predictive logistics, and hyperlocal fulfilment in achieving operational efficiency; and (3) Societal and Environmental Impacts, examining issues such as gig worker conditions, income inequalities, and the environmental trade-offs associated with fast delivery services.

While rooted in India's context, this paper positions the q-commerce phenomenon as globally relevant. Emerging economies can learn from India's q-commerce evolution, particularly in balancing innovation with socio-economic constraints. At the same time, developed markets can draw insights into the operational efficiencies and consumer-centric innovations that drive success in densely populated, resource-constrained environments. By examining the interplay between consumer demand, technological advancements, and socio-environmental considerations, this paper extends the theoretical understanding of q-commerce and its implications for business and policy.

The paper contributes to the literature by advancing theories of consumer convenience, emphasizing immediacy as a critical factor in digital ecosystems. It also highlights the importance of localized business models in addressing the needs of multicultural and economically stratified markets. Finally, it proposes pathways for achieving sustainability and inclusivity in q-commerce, offering actionable insights for managers and policymakers globally.

India's q-commerce story underscores the dual challenge of meeting consumer demands for hyper-convenience while addressing the broader implications of rapid growth. As the q-commerce model gains traction globally, this paper invites a rethinking of how businesses, governments, and consumers can collaboratively foster value creation while mitigating its negative externalities. By situating India's experience within a global context, the paper seeks to inspire future research and dialogue on the transformative potential of q-commerce in building sustainable and equitable digital ecosystems.

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Digital Peers and Consumer Socialisation: Exploring the Impact of Child YouTubers on Young Audiences

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the role of child YouTubers as digital peers in shaping consumer socialisation among young audiences. It examines how these influencers impact children's consumption behaviours, social norms, and skills through engaging and relatable content. The study also addresses ethical concerns, transparency in advertising, and the regulatory challenges surrounding child influencers, offering insights into promoting responsible consumption and fostering positive engagement in the digital age.

Competitive Short Paper

The emergence of child YouTubers has transformed the landscape of consumer socialisation, offering young viewers a unique digital environment to learn consumption-related behaviours and preferences (Castonguay and Messina, 2022). These young influencers attract millions of followers by sharing relatable content, such as unboxing toys, participating in challenges and showcasing their everyday lives (De Veirman et al., 2019; Fernández-Gòmez et al., 2022). For child viewers, this content often simulates peer interactions, resulting in a significant influence on their socialisation process (Rotimi et al., 2024).

Consumer socialisation refers to how individuals acquire the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to function as consumers (Ward, 1974). Child YouTubers play a distinctive role in this process by acting as digital peers (Freeman and Dardis, 2022). Their content blends entertainment with brand collaborations, presenting product endorsements in authentic and trustworthy ways. This dynamic is further strengthened by parasocial relationships—one-sided emotional bonds that viewers develop with influencers—which enhance the perceived credibility of these YouTubers (Kim & Song, 2016).

The influence of child YouTubers is particularly evident in how they shape purchasing behaviours. Young viewers frequently mimic the consumption patterns displayed in videos, from specific product preferences to broader lifestyle aspirations (Martínez and Olsson, 2019; Jorge et al., 2022). Balleys et al. (2020) highlight how digital platforms foster a sense of belonging, embedding values and norms conveyed by influencers into the identities of young audiences. Furthermore, YouTube's interactive features—such as commenting, liking, and requesting content—encourage participatory consumer culture (Livingstone & Sefton-Green, 2016).

While concerns have been raised about the commercialisation of childhood content (Craig & Cunningham, 2017), this phenomenon also creates opportunities for positive engagement (Shomai et al., 2024). Child YouTubers have the potential to promote creativity, educational tools and collaborative activities that inspire their audiences to develop new skills and interests (Blessa and Cardoso, 2022). Brands can also contribute positively by working with influencers to advocate for sustainable and ethical consumption practices that resonate with families and young viewers (Shomai et al., 2024).

However, transparency remains a critical issue. The seamless integration of advertising and entertainment often blurs the line between organic recommendations and paid endorsements. Children may struggle to differentiate between genuine opinions and sponsored content, raising ethical concerns (Livingstone, 2019). Regulatory frameworks, such as the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) and advertising standards, are essential in order to ensure clear disclosures and protect young audiences from exploitative practices (FTC, 2020).

This study contributes to understanding the implications of child YouTubers on consumer behaviour and socialisation by using a child-centred research approach. Twenty-nine families in Oxfordshire were interviewed using the Mosaic Approach (Clark & Moss, 2001), which placed children's perspectives at the centre of the study. Parental insights were equally valuable, emphasising the need for guidance to help children navigate online content responsibly. Child YouTubers act as powerful agents of socialisation, shaping the behaviours and attitudes of their audiences through engaging and relatable content. By addressing transparency and ethical concerns, stakeholders can harness this phenomenon to promote responsible and positive consumption behaviours among young audiences.

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Renting a 'home' and 'home-exchange' in tourism accommodation? A segmentation of short-term commercial and non-commercial accommodation platform (STAP)users

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

Beyond research on Airbnb, empirical studies are far more limited when it comes to other types of STAP which do not involve payment and are based on home exchange. This study includes different profiles of STAP users, both commercial and non-commercial, and analyses their motivations, perceptions and attitudes in relation to the use of STAP. Data were collected through an online survey and a cluster analysis was conducted on a sample of 216 users.

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From Followers to Fillers: Exploring Transformative Service Research and Ethical Social Media Marketing in the UK Non-Surgical Cosmetic Market

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Paige Jamison, Lisa Harkness

Ulster University, United Kingdom

Summary Statement

The UK's non-surgical cosmetic procedures market is booming with year-on-year growth. While social media marketing (SMM) fuels demand, it also raises concerns about consumer safety and wellbeing, in addition to exposure of unregulated practitioners. Limited research has explored ethical marketing from the practitioners' perspective. This study aims to address this gap, examining SMM techniques and the impact on consumer wellbeing through the lens of transformative service research, providing insights for safer, more informed SMM practices.

Competitive Short Paper

The UK non-surgical cosmetic procedures market has experienced significant growth with its current value estimated at £3.6 billion (Chummun et al., 2024) and further growth is projected at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15% over the next five years (Grand View Research, 2024). In 2023, more than 9.2 million aesthetic treatments were performed in the UK (British College of Aesthetic Medicine, 2024), with botulinum toxin (Botox) and hyaluronic acid treatments being the most widely sought after (International Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, 2024). These treatments have become an integral part of modern beauty culture, with 43% of adults in the UK considering these as the 'norm' in their beauty regime (Mintel, 2024).

One of the driving forces behind the explosive growth of non-surgical cosmetic procedures is the pervasive influence of social media (SM) platforms (Walker et al., 2021; UK Government, 2023). From Instagram to TikTok, SM has become a powerful marketing tool for both licensed professionals and unregulated high-street practitioners. Lack of regulation in the UK has contributed to the rise of 'wild west operators' offering unqualified services in unsafe environments, using unregulated products, and promoting hazardous training courses (ITV News, 2024), further exacerbating the issue of consumer safety, and wellbeing in this context. Recently, calls for stricter regulation have intensified following the death of a young woman who received an injectable Brazilian Butt Lift (BBL) (British Beauty Council, 2024; Women's Health, 2024).

Studies in this field mainly focus on the role of SMM and consumer intentions to undergo plastic surgery, rather than non-invasive 'tweakments'. The impact of SMM on consumer decision-making in this field has been documented (see Mironica et al., 2024); however, fewer studies have focused on practitioner views. In the UK, research indicates there is a lack of adherence to new ASA-CAP guidelines on Instagram in the promotion of aesthetic procedures (Donnell et al., 2021). Rodner et al. (2022) underscore the heightened risks posed by influencers in promoting these services and endorsing local clinics on Instagram, emphasising how relatable personas contribute to the normalisation of procedures while dismissing risks and pain. Hermans (2023) conducted a comparative study between the UK and the

Netherlands, finding that SM posts from cosmetic clinics often feature aspirational imagery, emojis, and inspirational quotes, with minimal mention of risks and little adherence to advertising guidelines. They stress the importance of understanding why clinics fail to comply with these guidelines in future studies, which our research aims to address.

Our study will be grounded in Transformative Service Research (TSR) to explore the SMM techniques used in this industry, alongside practitioner views of consumer wellbeing and safety. This lens guides our research by focusing on the interplay between service delivery and SMM from a practitioner perspective. We plan to conduct 5-10 scoping interviews to present at the Academy of Marketing conference which will inform survey development. This approach seeks to provide guidance for practitioners on best practices to safeguard consumer safety, wellbeing, and aid informed decision-making around SMM in the non-surgical cosmetics market.

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'Ethical' Humanitarian Visualisation in Not-For-Profit Marketing Materials

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

Aimee Smith, Cassandra Chapman, Matthew Hornsey, Jessica Spence, Roland Bleiker, Emma Hutchison

University of Queensland, Australia

Summary Statement

We conduct a large-scale exploratory experiment to understand which image characteristics are associated with ethical humanitarian visualisation to aid not-for-profits build ethical guidelines for photography submissions and marketing materials.

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Development of a Unified Theory of How Behavioral Intention Toward Virtual Influencers (UBIVI) are Formed: Evidence from the Tourism Industry

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

Virtual influencers (VIs) have gained traction in the tourism industry to market destinations (Meng et al., 2025; Ameen et al., 2024). However, evidence of how consumers react to VI marketing in the tourism context remains scarce (Xie-Carson et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024). Adopting the theory unification method introduced by Venkatesh et al. (2003), this study proposes a unified theory to understand social media users' visit intention towards VI-promoted destinations.

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Examining Consumption-Stage Experiences of Football Fans: A Replication + Extension

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

A replication + extension was conducted of Rahman et al.'s (2024) study of the consumption-stage experiences of football (soccer) fans. We evaluate if their model generalises to the Australian context. We extend their model using a range of personal (e.g. involvement, age) and social-oriented moderators (e.g. community, social connection). Findings provide support for the model for the Australian context. We also find that the personal and social-oriented moderators affect elements of the model.

Competitive Short Paper

1. Introduction. The customer experience is central to firm competitiveness (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020). However, understanding how fan experience can foster football (soccer) fan loyalty is limited. Recent fan-experience research by Rahman et al. (2024) offers initial insights; however, it has yet to be replicated elsewhere.

Scientific findings rest upon replication (Evanschitzky & Armstrong, 2013), yet the social sciences feature low replication rates (Diwanji, 2022). Replication studies are critical for building research knowledge by advancing understanding of the specific results they revisit (Bettis et al., 2016). Replication is vital for establishing external validity through enabling the generalisation of findings to other populations (Uncles & Kwok, 2013). Replications help to establish boundary conditions for theories where the generalisation will fail to hold (Hart & Rosenberger, 2004).

Given that situational and socio-cultural contingencies shape the sports-consumption experience (Becker & Jaakkola, 2020), cultural factors can influence the customer experience (Grewal & Roggeveen, 2020). Thus, fan-experience models should be evaluated on their generalisability to other national contexts.

Therefore, we address this need by replicating and extending Rahman et al.'s (2024) consumption-stage, football-fan experiences work in a new national context – Australia. Australia differs meaningfully on Hofstede's (2025) cultural dimensions. Also, football in Australia competes with three other football codes – Australian Rules (AFL), Rugby League (NRL) and Rugby Union (SuperRugby), plus running in a non-traditional seasonality.

2. Literature. Using an S-O-R-based model, Rahman et al. (2024) explored how a football club operationalises its services-consumption environment to deliver a superior customer experience for fans. Stimuli factors: game socialisation, team interest, football interest and transaction satisfaction. Organism factors: fanship (FS) and cumulative satisfaction (CS). Response factors: attitudinal loyalty (AL) and behavioural loyalty (BL). We extend their model using personal (involvement, fan identification, gender, age) and social-oriented (community, team connection, social connection) moderators for the FS → AL, FS → BL, CS → AL and CS → BL relationships.

3. Methodology & Results. Data is part of a larger study. We used an online, self-completed survey featuring a convenience sample of one team's 434 Australian A-League Men fans. Measures were matched to Rahman et al. (2024) plus moderators (De Vries & Carlson, 2014; O'Cass, 2000; Simon & Tossan, 2018; Vivek et al., 2014; Yun et al., 2021). Our study is a differentiated (Uncles & Kwok, 2013) replication given its different contextual population and moderators.

PLS-SEM analysis used SmartPLS v4 (Ringle et al., 2024) with 5,000 bootstraps. The model satisfied loadings, reliability (alpha & CR > .70, AVE > .50), discriminant-validity (Fornell-Larcker, HTMT) and collinearity (VIF) criteria. The model's relationships are largely supported for Australian fans. Individual moderator analysis (interaction appraoch) identified numerous personal and social-oriented moderator effects. OS → AL was affected by five moderators and OS → BL by one (although the path often dropped to non-significance).

4. Conclusion. Our findings support generalising Rahman et al.'s (2024) consumption-stage, football-fan experience model to the Australian context. We also identify personal and social-oriented moderators that affect elements of their model.

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Theorizing proactive marketing analytics for innovation and competitive advantage in big data context: A conceptual contribution

Track: 9. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

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Summary Statement

The explosive growth of data availability has prompted a discussion on how to leverage big data analytics for innovation and competitive advantage. Despite growing interest, current research remains in the early stage of development. Drawing upon dynamic capability view, proactive market orientation, multiple streams of literature, a framework of proactive marketing analytics in big data context is suggested. This study contributes to theory and practice by presenting a set of propositions guiding future research.

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Determinants of Gratitude Towards Humanoid Robots in Healthcare Services: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

We examine how humanoid service robots' functional and relational attributes influence patients' gratitude in UK and Australian contexts. Findings (n = 1101) reveal that perceived competence, warmth and empathy all enhance trust in service robots, which fosters gratitude and Word-of-Mouth. Perceived intelligence predicts trust in the UK and combined contexts but not in Australia. Perceived creepiness moderates the trust-gratitude relationship in all contexts and the empathy-trust relationship in the Australian and combined contexts.

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Craving Value: Factors Shaping Perceived Advertising Value and Attitudes Towards Fast-Food Native Advertisements.

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

Native advertisements, a relatively new form of advertising, have gained significant interest from organisations and marketing practitioners due to their ability to seamlessly blend with the non-paid content of media platforms, potentially reducing interference and disruption. Motivated by this rapid growth, this paper explores the factors

influencing the perceived advertising value of fast-food native advertisements and examines how advertising value impacts customers' attitudes.

Competitive Short Paper

In today's fast-paced digital marketing landscape, organisations are leveraging different types of advertising to increase their chances of attracting consumers' attention and delivering higher-value advertisements than their competitors. One of the advertising types that gained significant popularity among organisations and marketing experts is native advertising due to its ability to blend with the media it is published in (Wojdynski, 2016), potentially reducing interference, disruption, and intrusiveness (Campbell & Marks, 2015; Krouwer et al., 2019).

This study sought to identify the factors influencing customers' perceived value of fast-food native advertisements and to examine the relationship between advertising value and customer attitudes toward these advertisements. Drawing on an extensive literature review and a systematic study by De Battista et al. (2021), this study identified six key influencing factors: informativeness, entertainment, irritation, credibility, personalisation, and interactivity.

Drawing on Ducoffe's (1996) Advertising Value Model, a widely recognised framework for understanding customers' perceived value and attitudes towards advertisements, this study formulated a conceptual model to analyse the influence of these factors on advertising value and its impact on customer attitudes.

Primary data was collected through a self-administered questionnaire distributed on various social networking sites (SNSs), targeting SNS users residing in Malta aged between 18 and 54. The data collected from 487 participants underwent cleaning, reliability and validity assessment and was analysed using SPSS. SmartPLS was utilised to investigate causal relationships within path models containing latent variables.

The findings revealed that all six factors were predictors of advertising value, with informativeness, entertainment, credibility, personalisation, and interactivity having a positive relationship with advertising value, while irritation negatively impacted it. Furthermore, this study uncovered a significant positive relationship between advertising value and customer attitude.

Such findings imply that fast-food native advertisements that are informative, entertaining, credible, personalised, interactive, and non-irritating create higher value for the customers encountering them, fostering a more positive attitude towards them. However, this study's participants perceived existing fast-food native advertisements on SNSs as irritating and lacking in information, personalisation, interactivity, credibility, and entertainment.

This study is among the first to collectively examine these six factors in the context of fast-food native advertisements in Malta, addressing the limited research on factors influencing customers' perceived native advertising value. While it contributes to the current literature on native advertisements, it also lays a foundation for future research to explore additional determinants or test whether these six factors have the same influence across different demographics, products, and industries.

Additionally, future research could narrow the focus to specific SNS platforms, such as Facebook, or other channels where native advertisements have gained prominence, such as online news sites. A qualitative methodology could also yield more detailed insights into how these factors influence customers' perceived advertising value and, in turn, their attitudes towards these advertisements.

In conclusion, while native advertisements remain a powerful advertising tool, their usage appears to fall short of maximising their full potential, as highlighted by this study's participants. This research offers significant insights for marketers striving to capture consumers' attention while minimising intrusiveness.

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Integrating Real-Time Industry Insights into Marketing Curricula: An AI Approach

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

This paper explores an AI-driven approach using Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) to integrate real-time marketing data into course design. By aligning updated content and generative models with threshold concepts, the approach aims to enhance curriculum relevance, foster deeper student engagement, and better prepare graduates for evolving professional roles in marketing analytics and strategy.

Competitive Short Paper

Marketing programmes in higher education face persistent tension between academic rigour and market responsiveness. With rapid advances in marketing technologies, such as AI-driven analytics and automation, courses that rely on static case studies or outdated pedagogical materials may fail to equip students with the skills demanded by employers. To address this issue, this paper presents a framework for integrating real-time industry data into marketing curricula using Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG), specifically leveraging an "Agentic RAG" system that dynamically retrieves job listings, market analyses, and practitioner insights.

The proposed framework builds upon constructive alignment principles by mapping teaching objectives, activities, and assessments to emergent industry trends. Educators initially curate a foundational corpus of scholarly articles, textbooks, and existing module guides. An Agentic RAG component then scans contemporary job postings (e.g., LinkedIn) for in-demand marketing skills, such as content marketing analytics, search engine optimisation, or influencer campaign management, and synthesises these data into actionable recommendations for curriculum updates. In this manner, modules can be continuously adjusted to emphasise threshold concepts most relevant to today's marketing landscape.

We tested this approach with 5 marketing lecturers across two institutions, focusing on modules in digital marketing, international marketing, and consumer behaviour. Qualitative feedback gathered through semi-structured interviews suggested that the RAG-driven redesign process significantly reduced the time required to maintain course currency. Lecturers reported heightened confidence in teaching advanced, data-centric topics, aided by the system's ability to provide current, domain-specific examples. Meanwhile, survey responses from students (n=30) indicated an increased perception of course relevance, with 72% stating that the new content directly addressed skills frequently mentioned in marketing job postings.

Central to our findings is the notion of "dynamic authenticity." By embedding real-world marketing intelligence into module activities, students engage with scenarios that mirror professional contexts—an approach that fosters deeper learning and higher levels of motivation. Additionally, the paper discusses practical considerations regarding academic integrity and ethical AI usage. For instance, while AI-generated guidance can enhance interactivity, we stress the importance of critical evaluation and ensuring proper attributions.

This paper presents three key contributions to the marketing pedagogy literature:

A demonstrable process for continuously aligning course materials with emergent industry requirements;

Empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of AI-driven platforms in enhancing perceived curriculum relevance and student engagement;

Recommendations for scalable and ethically-informed implementation, addressing potential barriers like data privacy and institutional resource constraints.

By adopting a Retrieval-Augmented Generation framework, marketing educators can move beyond static curricula and provide learning experiences that are both theoretically grounded and aligned with professional practice. The broader implications extend to curriculum designers, administrators, and researchers seeking effective strategies to future-proof marketing education in an era of rapid technological change.

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An exploration of psychological phenomena underpinning the characteristics of cognitive dissonance in the context of environmental food behaviours

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This interpretivist qualitative study used cognitive dissonance theory to conduct vignette-based in-depth online interviews with 24 'environmentally conscious' consumers. The aim was to gather rich verbal accounts of their lived experience in the context of food and sustainability. Findings suggest that environmental learning, personal responsibility, and perceived consumer effectiveness shaped the salience of environmental goals. These factors ultimately impact whether and how individuals translate cognitive dissonance into pro-environmental actions.

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Media Framing As A Catalyst For Farm Diversification And Its Subsequent Impact On Farmer Identity

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

Against increased consumer demand for sustainable food, diversification of Irish farms can support more sustainable food systems and which support marketing efforts concerning sustainable food offerings. Farmer identity acts as a keystone in understanding farmers willingness to adopt various farm diversification practices. This study aims to understand how media framing impacts farmer identity in the context of farm diversification through the lens of Goffman's framing theory and social identity theory, employing a convergent design approach.

Competitive Short Paper

While consumers are empowered to make sustainable food choices, there are concerns regarding the credibility of sustainability claims, including at primary production. Ireland's farms are typically small-scale and multi-generational, leading many towards farm diversification for survival. Diversification through agro-tourism, agro-farming, renewable energy and value-added products offering potential new market opportunities support sustainable production, while addressing consumer demand for products stemming from sustainable food systems. However, given a lack of consumer insight into food markets, the credibility of agri-food sustainability claims is coming under increased consumer scrutiny at both a product and food system level. Marketing efforts that support farm diversification may alter farmer identity, supporting farmers to handle the effects of climate change. This study seeks to understand media's role in shaping farmers' identity, exploring how it influences farmer identity in the Irish context. When farmers are transparent about how they resonate with their socially constructed identity, it acts as a keystone in the agri-food's chain and consumer interrelationship.

The study aims to employ two theoretical frameworks: Goffman's framing theory and social identity theory. The research examines how media framing influences farmers' perceptions of farm diversification through the lens of Goffman's framing theory. Framing theories are widely used to explore farmer-related phenomena, such as responsible farming (Riley and Robertson, 2022) and farm decision-making (Graversgaard et al, 2023). Farmer identity is crucial as it impacts perceived value in the diversification of farms. However, media may influence farmer willingness to diversify e.g. through portrayal of consumer response to farm diversification and farming practices more broadly. Thus, understanding the role of media in influencing farmer's identity and perceptions of diversification is important.

The study utilizes a convergent design approach, where the integration of media and interview data will aid in gaining a holistic understanding of research problem by merging both qualitative and quantitative findings. For understanding media portrayal, online observation followed by summative content analysis will be utilised. The qualitative findings exploring media content and frames will be quantified. An analysis of the patterns leads to an interpretation of the contextual meaning of specific terms or content. The findings derived from the content analysis will contribute to devising interview guide for the semi-structured interviews with farmers.

Interviews with farmers will provide an opportunity to explore questions around insights on farmers' perceptions of media portrayals of diversification that cannot be addressed by media analysis alone. Employing a purposive sampling approach, supported with criteria including practices and experiences of farmers approximately 20-30 interviews will be undertaken until data saturation is achieved (Strauss, 1987). For data analysis, semi-structured interviews will be transcribed, constructing codes, identifying themes by memo-ing/journaling, pattern recognition and synthesising and interpretation of the findings (Malhotra, 2020). This will contribute to understanding the future of farming in Ireland by producing insights that will inform policy development, understanding of the consumer-farmer gap and hence marketing strategies to bridge this gap.

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The Power of Emotion: A Meta-Analysis of Emotional Appeals in Charitable Giving

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

We conduct an meta-analytical review of existing experimental research to determine (1) when emotional charitable giving appeals are effective, (2) for what type of emotions (i.e., negative vs. positive). Through this quantitative synthesis of 186 published and unpublished effect sizes, we find distinct effects for the different types of emotions to inform not-for-profit marketers when to use emotional appeals and how to design them.

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Creating a scale for measuring dynamic capabilities

Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

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Summary Statement

The purpose of this research was to create a set of 'dynamic capabilities' scale items for usage in future research. Dynamic capabilities theory addresses limitations in market orientation and other frameworks. After scale pretesting, we conducted a survey of senior managers at firms. The results indicate that organisation-wide sensing, seising, and reconfiguring capabilities appear to be correlated but separate elements (vs. a single dynamic capabilities factor, restricted uncorrelated factors, or two-factor model).

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The Impact of Storytelling on Innovation and Performance

Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

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Summary Statement

It is proposed in this research paper that a firm storytelling culture can help a firm become more innovative, in general, and possess a focus on more radical innovation, in particular. It is also proposed that a storytelling culture can help a firm mitigate the negative effect of resource lock-in (arising from specialization) on both idiosyncratic and systematic financial risks associated with stock volatility. Analysis of surveys of hundreds of managers examines the hypotheses.

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Empowering Rural Youth Entrepreneurs: The Role of Human Capital, Business Mentoring and Financial Literacy,

Track: 9. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

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Summary Statement

This study explores the interaction of human capital, financial literacy, and business mentoring in rural youth entrepreneurship. Anchored in Resource-Based View (RBV) and Ecological System Theory (EST), it highlights financial literacy as a bridge between skills and decision-making, with mentorship enhancing these effects. By addressing systemic challenges, the study offers strategies to empower rural youth entrepreneurs, improve resource utilisation, and foster resilience, informing policies to strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Competitive Short Paper

Youth entrepreneurship is a powerful driver of economic growth and social resilience, especially in rural areas where systemic challenges and resource constraints prevail (Gyimah & Lussier, 2021). Rural youth often lack critical financial literacy, which limits their ability to navigate obstacles and avoid unsustainable practices (Ying, 2020). The absence of targeted financial education programmes worsens these challenges and access to quality financial training remains limited in many rural communities. This poses pressing questions on how to make financial literacy accessible in underserved areas (NEFE, 2021).

This study examines the interaction between human capital, financial literacy, the moderating role of business mentoring by applying the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Ecological System Theory (EST) to explore these relationships.

Human capital enhances entrepreneurial adaptability and innovation (Bruderl et al., 1992). General human capital, such as formal education, fosters foundational problem-solving abilities, while specific human capital, like industry knowledge, helps entrepreneurs identify niche opportunities (Anwar et al., 2020). According to RBV, human capital serves as an intangible resource that contributes to competitive advantage by driving capabilities and innovation (Barney, 1991). However, its effectiveness often depends on financial literacy, which translates theoretical knowledge into practical application (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2013). Investments in education alone are insufficient; broader strategies must focus on human capital development tailored to the needs of resource-limited settings.

Financial literacy is critical for managing resources and making informed decisions, yet many rural youth lack access to quality financial education programmes (Skica et al., 2022). Without targeted interventions, disparities in financial knowledge persist, hindering entrepreneurial progress (Paul & Ong, 2020). Addressing these gaps requires innovative approaches to deliver financial education tailored to rural challenges.

Business mentoring enhances the impact of human capital and financial literacy by providing personalized guidance and expanding entrepreneurial networks (Nate et al., 2022). As described in Bronfenbrenner's EST, mentoring operates at the microsystem level, where direct mentor-mentee interactions foster personal development and decision making. Proximal processes such as sustained, meaningful interactions are central to shaping entrepreneurs' beliefs, behaviours and skills (Lux et al., 2020). Mentoring programmes that leverage these processes can create tailored guidance to address the unique challenges of rural entrepreneurs. However, cultural and logistical barriers often limit the availability of experienced mentors in rural areas. In Malaysia for example, programmes such as '1 million Entrepreneurs Club Mentoring Programme' (KPLB, 2022) is promising, but their scalability and adaptability across diverse contexts require further examination.

Integrating human capital, financial literacy, and business mentoring into cohesive interventions maximizes their collective impact. Mentorship programmes that include financial literacy training equip entrepreneurs with practical skills and strategic guidance, while financial education tailored to rural challenges prepares entrepreneurs for dynamic market demands. Exploring these interconnected elements across cultural and regional contexts can inform the development of inclusive entrepreneurial support systems (Brixiová et al., 2020).

By implementing integrated strategies that are context-sensitive and address unique local challenges, this study highlights the potential to promote entrepreneurial resilience and inclusivity. Effective action will reduce structural inequities and support sustained economic progress in underserved areas.

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Resilience as a Core Competency for Marketing Professionals: A Transformative Force for Performance and Success

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

This research explores resilience among marketing professionals as a dynamic competency shaped by micro-level traits (emotional intelligence, adaptability) and macro-level supports (training, mentorship, psychological safety). Grounded in Coleman's Bath Tub theory, it examines how these factors interact to influence organisational outcomes in volatile environments. Highlighting resilience's dual role, reactive recovery, and proactive innovation, it redefines resilience as a strategic enabler of adaptability and long-term competitive advantage in the face of technological, consumer, and external disruptions.

Competitive Short Paper

The dynamic and volatile nature of global business environments underscores resilience as a critical competency for marketing professionals. Resilience, defined as the capacity to adapt, recover, and thrive under adverse conditions (Ledesma, 2014), is shaped by an interplay of psychological, organisational, and contextual factors, (Hartmann et al., 2020). While resilience at the organisational level has been widely studied (Duchek, 2020; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011), limited research explores how individual resilience contributes to professional performance and interacts with macro-level organisational support (Hartmann et al., 2020). Addressing this gap, this paper investigates micro and macro foundations of resilience through Coleman's Bath Tub theory, which links individual behaviours to organisational outcomes (Distel, 2019).

Marketing professionals play a pivotal role in organisational responses to crises, navigating rapid technological advances, shifting consumer expectations, and external disruptions (Lim, 2023). Their resilience significantly affects key marketing outcomes, including campaign success, customer retention, and brand loyalty (Santoro et al., 2021; Sharma et al., 2020). Resilient marketing professionals demonstrate emotional intelligence, adaptability, and strategic foresight, enabling them to manage stress, sustain client relationships, and develop agile strategies for addressing dynamic market conditions (Fisher et al., 2016; Bondeli & Havenvid, 2022, Hoeskstra & Leeflang, 2023). These individual traits interact synergistically with organisational supports such as structured training programmes, mentorship initiatives, and cultures of psychological safety. Together, these elements build adaptive capacity, mitigate burnout, and foster sustained high performance in demanding roles (Distel, 2019; Hosein, 2012).

Resilience is multifaceted, encompassing both reactive and proactive dimensions. Early conceptualisations focused on resilience as the ability to recover from disruptions (Duchek, 2018). However, contemporary perspectives emphasise anticipatory and strategic capabilities, positioning resilience as essential for managing risks and capitalising on opportunities before they fully emerge (Mosteanu, 2024). Marketing professionals exemplify this dynamic capacity by adopting and integrating technologies such as artificial intelligence and data-driven analytics, which require ongoing innovation and adaptation (Kumar et al., 2024). As such, resilience functions not only as a mechanism for survival but also as a driver of competitive advantage and organisational agility in rapidly changing environments.

Research Question

What are the micro and macro-level factors that constitute resilience among marketing professionals, and how do their interactions enhance the theoretical understanding of resilience in dynamic organisational contexts?

Contribution to Knowledge

This research makes significant contributions by advancing the theoretical understanding of resilience as a dynamic competency bridging individual and organisational domains. It identifies psychological traits and professional skills that underpin individual resilience while connecting these to broader organisational structures and supports. By positioning resilience as both reactive and proactive, this study redefines its strategic role in fostering innovation and adaptability in marketing.

Additionally, the study extends resilience theory by applying Coleman's Bath Tub framework to demonstrate how micro-level attributes aggregate to influence macro-level outcomes. It addresses a critical gap in resilience research within marketing, where technological disruptions, evolving consumer demands, and external crises demand a robust, multifaceted understanding of this capability. By exploring its dual-level nature, this research highlights resilience as a vital enabler of long-term success in volatile and competitive markets.

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Evaluating the Purchase Behaviour of Senior Chinese Consumers in Cultural Tourism: The Influence of Social Media from a Scenes Theory Perspective

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

Understanding the tourism purchase behaviour of senior Chinese consumers (SCCs) is crucial due to global ageing and social media's (SM) rapid evolution. Based on in-depth interviews, this study offers an integrated framework that highlights SM's transformative role. It acts as a virtual scene, influencing SCCs' cultural tourism decisions by bridging daily life with travel aspirations, sparking interest in new cultural experiences, fostering emotional connections, and enhancing real-time engagement. This study provides insights for tourism marketers.

Competitive Short Paper

Understanding consumer purchase behaviour is becoming increasingly important for tourism marketers, especially given the combined forces of global aging and the rapid evolution of social media (Sigala et al., 2021). There is need to understand the tourism purchase behaviour of senior Chinese consumers (SCCs) as an emerging critical market segment (Tuo et al., 2022). Social media has become an integral part of daily life for senior consumers, serving as both an essential information source and an interactive tool in their tourism decision-making process (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Bastrygina et al., 2024). Understanding how social media influences the cultural tourism purchase behaviour of this demographic group can provide tourism marketers crucial insights towards more strategic engagement with this customer group and maintaining competitive advantage. Despite the growing importance of this demographic, research on the purchase behaviour of SCCs remains limited, particularly from the point of social media influence. To address this gap, this study adopts Clark's theory of scenes (Silver et al., 2010; Liu et al., 2024) as its theoretical foundation, positioning social media as a virtual scene that influences SCCs' cultural tourism behaviour.

Using a qualitative approach, 14 semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with SCCs to understand how social media functions as a virtual scene in shaping their cultural tourism consumption decisions. Thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Braun et al., 2022) to capture the meanings in the interview data. Four key insights were found. Firstly, social media serves as a bridge between the life scenarios and tourism scenarios of SCCs. The online environment allows seniors to connect their daily lives with potential travel experiences, effectively integrating their life and travel aspirations. Secondly, the content shared on social media, such as information about destination-specific food, culture, and natural scenery, ignites seniors' interest in new lifestyles or cultural experiences. This, in turn, motivates them to engage in tourism as a form of cultural consumption, where travel serves as an avenue for experiencing new cultural scenes and fulfilling their social and cultural interaction needs abroad. Thirdly, social media, as a unique social scenario, enables senior tourists to interact with others through features like likes and comments. These social interactions foster emotional resonance, reinforcing seniors' emotional identification with particular cultural destinations. Fourthly, the real-time nature of social media allows for continuous information exchange, which enhances the travel experience for seniors by keeping them engaged with the destination throughout the travel process. These four insights collectively form an integrated framework, offering novel insights into the purchase behaviour of SCCs. The study contributes to both marketing theory and practice by demonstrating how social media, functioning as a virtual scene, plays a transformative role in shaping tourism consumption patterns. This research extends theoretical assessments of social media's influence in cultural tourism and provides actionable implications for marketing scholars and practitioners aiming to target the growing senior market segment. Furthermore, this study acknowledges its limitations and flags directions for future research.

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Click, Buy, Pay Later: Unraveling Consumer Behavior and Payment Choices in Montenegrin E-Commerce

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the dominance of cash on delivery (COD) in Montenegrin e-commerce, analyzing macro-level (institutional trust), meso-level (seller and delivery trust), and micro-level (consumer demographics) factors influencing payment preferences. Using a mixed-methods approach, it investigates generational differences and systemic barriers, offering insights for policymakers, businesses, and marketers to transition towards transparent digital payment systems. The findings contribute to understanding e-commerce adoption in developing markets, with transferable implications for similar economies in the Western Balkans.

Competitive Short Paper

The adoption of e-commerce in developing markets is characterized by unique consumer behaviors and systemic challenges. In Montenegro, cash on delivery (COD) remains the dominant payment method, with reports indicating that only 39% of consumers pay for online shopping with a card (Ceper, 2024). By introducing a new conceptual model of COD reliance, this study investigates the macro-, meso-, and micro-level factors influencing payment method preferences. By exploring institutional trust—trust in banks, payment gateways, and regulatory frameworks—meso-level trust in sellers and delivery systems, and how these factors interact with micro-level considerations, such as financial literacy, age, or technological familiarity, it extends existing marketing theories on e-commerce payment behaviors and addresses a critical gap in the literature.

Montenegro presents a compelling case study as a developing market. Despite being a European Union (EU) candidate country, it exhibits characteristics of emerging economies. Internet usage in Montenegro reached 84.5% in 2024 (Monstat, 2024), but its e-commerce market remains the least developed in the Western Balkans, with only 32.13% of internet users making online purchases, compared to the EU average of 75.35% (Macedonian E-Commerce Association, 2024). Furthermore, less than 40% of the population owns a credit or debit card, and fewer than 10% pay bills online (DataReportal, 2024).

Previous studies highlight various factors driving COD adoption, such as perceived security, control over the buying process, and ease of use (Anjum & Chai, 2020). Research in Italy (Pencarelli et al., 2018) and Nigeria (Chiejina & Olamide, 2014) links COD to trust-related concerns, while in China (Wu et al., 2020), order size and value also influence payment choices. Contrasting findings in Egypt, however, show that younger, tech-savvy consumers challenge this assumption of COD preference in emerging markets (Hamed & El-Deeb, 2020). These findings emphasize the importance of generational differences, a key focus in understanding Montenegro's COD practices.

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining an exploratory online self-administered survey (n=300) and focus group discussions. The survey will identify key factors influencing payment preferences, including security and convenience, as theoretical constructs consolidated by Özkan et al. (2016), while also analyzing demographic variables, such as trust perception and risk aversion. Focus groups will explore generational divides to further clarify consumer insights. These discussions will shed light on cultural factors - collectivist norms and limited digital financial literacy, that shape trust and behaviors.

Many Montenegrin e-commerce shops exclusively offer COD to accommodate consumer preferences, avoid high banking fees, and address limited digital infrastructure. For marketing practitioners, employing trust-building tactics, such as influencer marketing and third-party verification, can foster confidence in digital transactions and reduce COD reliance. These practices highlight the need for policy interventions and innovative financial solutions to diversify payment options. Transparent and reliable digital payment systems are essential for fostering trust and accelerating e-commerce growth.

This research aims to equip policymakers, businesses and marketing practitioners with insights to drive the shift from COD to sustainable payment systems, enabling targeted strategies for different consumer groups and transferable lessons for similar markets.

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Bridging ESG, Financial Performance And Social Media Influence: Unpacking Parent-Subsidiary Firms Dynamics For Sustainable Development

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This paper aims to investigate the interplay between ESG performance, financial performance, and institutional distance between home and host countries, examining how these factors influence brand sentiments on social media and contribute to enhancing brand reputation. The study addresses a gap in existing literature by exploring the unique connection between companies' social media coverage of their ESG activities and the resulting positive consumer perceptions, offering fresh insights into their role in sustainable development.

Competitive Short Paper

ESG (environmental, social, and governance) performance is considered a critical aspect of corporate investment behaviour, carries a multiplier effect on a firm's performance and creates a positive social impact (Ye et al., 2024). Neethu and Arun (2024) emphasised that companies with strong and positive ESG practices enjoy better brand reputation, and they further identified that environmentally and socially conscious consumers prefer brands that prioritise ESG. Companies posting their ESG-related actions on social media can enhance consumer relationships, leading to improved revenue and brand value (Eisenbeiss et al., 2022), while Chkir et al. (2023) discussed that consumer perception can be positively influenced by sharing a brand's contributions to ESG initiatives on social media.

This study aims

To examine the causal relationship between the ESG performance of a multinational enterprise's (MNE's) parent firms and financial performance (FP) of subsidiary firms, their brand-related efforts on social media, represented by social media coverage (SMC), and brand reputation.

To explore how closely the ESG performance, the financial performance, and institutional distance between home and host countries (IDHH) are tied to brand sentiments (BS) on social media and to what extent they enhance brand reputation.

The relationship between parent firms, subsidiary firms, and social media efforts provides a unique framework for exploring the connections between ESG, FP, SMC, and BS within the multidimensional context of MNEs.

Methodology

This study combines theoretical frameworks and empirical analysis using data from 70 listed MNE subsidiaries in India (2018–2022). It employs OLS regression and qualitative Netnography analysis to explore the relationships between ESG, FP, SMC, and BS. Data sources include Refinitiv, Osiris, and company annual reports. Financial performance is assessed using both accounting-based (ROE) and market-based (Tobin's Q) measures. Social media data sources include firms' official handles. Institutional distance (IDHH) is a moderating variable, and firm-level control variables, such as age, size, and leverage, are used to control for omitted variable bias.

Models:

The regression model of the study analyses the relationship between the selected variables.

$ESG_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 SMC_{it} + \beta_2 BS_{it} + \beta_3 SIZE_{it} + \beta_4 AGE_{it} + \beta_5 LEV_{it} + \sum_{i=1}^{n} \beta_i CONTROLS_{it} + \text{year dummies} + \epsilon_{it}$

$BS_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 ESG_{it-1} + \beta_2 SM_{it} + \beta_3 SIZE_{it} + \beta_4 AGE_{it} + \beta_5 LEV_{it} + \sum_{i=1}^{n} \beta_i CONTROLS_{it} + \text{year dummies} + \epsilon_{it}$

$ROE_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 ESG_{it-1} + \beta_2 SMC_{it} + \beta_3 BS_{it} + \beta_4 IDHH_{it} + \beta_5 SIZE_{it} + \beta_6 AGE_{it} + \beta_7 LEV_{it} + \sum_{i=1}^{n} \beta_i CONTROLS_{it} + \text{year dummies} + \epsilon_{it}$

$\text{Tobin's } Q_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 ESG_{it-1} + \beta_2 SMC_{it} + \beta_3 BS_{it} + \beta_4 IDHH_{it} + \beta_5 SIZE_{it} + \beta_6 AGE_{it} + \beta_7 LEV_{it} + \sum_{i=1}^{n} \beta_i CONTROLS_{it} + \text{year dummies} + \epsilon_{it}$

The empirical findings reveal a connection between parent firms' ESG performance, subsidiary financial performance, social media coverage, and brand sentiment. The study reveals a correlation between ESG performance, social media sentiment, and brand reputation. It also emphasises the role of ESG practices in shaping brand perception and enhancing corporate reputation.

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The Effects of Self-Disclosing with AI Writing Assistants (Vs. Without) on Well-Being

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

The current research tested the effects of self-disclosing in writing with AI (vs. without) on well-being. Surprisingly, we found that using AI, regardless of the type of AI usage, maintained consumers' baseline positive affect levels. However, the control group showed a decrease in positive affect compared to their baseline levels. Interaction group participants who chatted with the AI not only maintained their positive affect but also decreased their negative affect compared to their baseline.

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From Decontextualization in Advertising to Deterritorialization: The Cultural Implications of a Technique of Creative Communication

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

In this paper we take a technique of communication we call decontextualization, following Neil Postman (1986), we attempt to apply it to advertising, and we then attempt to theorise its effect using Deleuze and Guattari's (1972) concept of deterritorialization.

Competitive Short Paper

In his famous work *Amusing Ourselves to Death,* Postman (1986) posited decontextualisation as an artifice of the epistemology of television by which context was stripped out of communication to provide more seductive and digestible material for audience consumption. The effect, he felt, would ultimately be to infantilise audiences and degrade the public's capacity for critical and analytical thought. The sense of, and need for, context in understanding, would eventually be lost, and audiences would be adrift in a world of disconnected meanings without the information or intellectual skills needed to anchor them to reality.

According to Postman (1986) it was not only the content of communication that created a sense of decontextulisation, but also its mode of presentation. News and current affairs stories are presented as a continuous stream of disconnected paratexts (Hackley and Hackley, 2019). There might be a story about mass starvation in Africa, on to one of a domestic murder, then on to how a cute kid won the local spelling bee. The 'peek-a-boo world' (Postman, 1986, p.

89) of television with its truncated items of decontextualized and fragmented content is superficially, but intensely, entertaining, but also deeply incoherent. It is easy to see how the kinetic character of mediated content is vastly accelerated and intensified today through digital media, for example when we scroll through social media newsfeeds. Postman (1986) was particularly critical of advertising, commenting that "The fundamental metaphor for political discourse is the television commercial" (p. 146).

In this paper we offer examples of how the technique plays out in advertising. But advertising tropes have moved from the margins and designated commercial spaces of discourse into the forefront. Public and political communication has become an extended fors of advertising discourse. A deeper analogy for the profound cultural change this relatively simple creative technique produces may be Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's (1972) idea of deterritorialization as an effect of language that fundamentally disorientates and re-situates meaning. The concept of deterritorialization has been applied to a case of political advertising by Bradshaw and Haynes (2023) in the context of assemblage theory when they contrast advertising language that territorializes the meaning of political discourse with language that deterritorializes its meaning for different audiences. In this paper we attempt to examine the cumulative effect of decontextualization/deterritorialization on and in public communication

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The Posthuman Consumer: Reconceptualising Consumer Experience in Immersive Virtual Environments

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

This conceptual paper introduces the CEIVE sensitising framework, which reconceptualises and extends the understanding of Consumer Experience (CX) within Immersive Virtual Environments (IVEs) through a posthumanist lens. By challenging the traditional anthropocentric paradigm of CX, this study advocates for a more inclusive and holistic perspective that acknowledges the complex interrelations between human and non-human entities in IVEs.

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The Changing Influence of Consumers' CSR Expectations on Attribution Formation: A Longitudinal Study

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explored, via longitudinal qualitative research, the changing influence of consumers' expectations of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on the formation of CSR attributions. The study employs the Expectancy Confirmation/Disconfirmation (ECD) paradigm as a framework. We build upon existing conceptual insights and generate empirical longitudinal evidence about the changing nature of consumer expectations towards CSR and the subsequent consequences that organisations can expect when they exceed, meet, or fail to meet consumers' CSR expectations.

Competitive Short Paper

Recent years have seen consumers become increasingly aware of organisations' corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Clinton & Chatrath, 2022). Consumers' perceptions of organisations' motivation for engaging in such initiatives plays a vital role in their effectiveness (Min, Kim & Yang, 2023). To understand how consumers respond to CSR, prior research views the concept through the lens of attribution theory, which describes how individuals make causal inferences about an organisation's behaviour (Folkes, 1984). It explains how people attribute causes to events and how this cognitive perception affects subsequent attitudes and behaviour (Kelley & Michela, 1980). Ellen, Webb, and Mohr (2006) identified that consumers attribute multiple motives to CSR engagement. These include values-driven, stakeholder-driven, strategic-driven, and egoistic-driven attributions. Such attributions are important because they have been found to influence important consumer responses such as trust (Vlachos et al., 2009), scepticism (Dunn & Harness, 2018; Skarmeas & Leonidou, 2013), loyalty and satisfaction (Saldivar & Zolfagharian, 2021). Yet far less is known about how and why such attributions form and how this is changing over time. The current study therefore adopts the Expectancy Confirmation/Disconfirmation (ECD) paradigm to examine how and why consumers' changing expectations influence their CSR attributions.

Whilst extant research offers conceptual (e.g. Poolthong and Mandhachitara, 2009) and anecdotal (e.g. Pomering & Dolnicar, 2009) insights about the effects of CSR expectations, limited empirical evidence exists that examines the role of CSR expectations on subsequent evaluations and intentions. Empirical research that does exist (e.g. Soppe et al., 2011) focusses on the relationship between expectations and perceptions, without examining the effects on attributions, or it is quantitative in nature, offering only a snapshot in time (Saldivar & Zolfagharian, 2021).

To advance understanding of the changing effects of consumers' expectations of CSR, we interviewed the same sample in two studies conducted 10 years apart. The foundational study, conducted in 2013, identified consumers' expectations of CSR and how this influenced their subsequent CSR attributions. Since Study 1, the environment in which CSR operates has dramatically changed. Sustainability and CSR have risen up the agenda, with greater awareness of climate change and activist efforts.

We therefore revisited our sample in Study 2, to examine the changes in expectations towards CSR, and the subsequent effect on CSR attributions, over time. We followed a qualitative approach, relevant for exploring and developing in-depth understanding of consumer beliefs, values and perceptions (Öberseder et al., 2011). By revisiting the sample, we were able to effectively identify and analyse the nature of change in individuals' lives and the dynamic processes that have affected such change (McLeod and Thompson, 2009).

Whilst the research is currently a work-in-progress, the study builds on existing conceptual insights and generates empirical longitudinal evidence about the changing nature of consumer expectations towards CSR and the subsequent consequences that organisations can expect when they exceed, meet, or fail to meet consumers' CSR expectations. The study contributes to the literature by generating empirical evidence to identify the role of ECD in shaping CSR attributions, and how this has evolved over time.

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Does Brand Warmth Matter in Ethical Failures?

Track: 5. Brands & Branding

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Summary Statement

The concept of brand warmth and competence has been of great interest to academicians and researchers in recent years. Consumers usually judge a brand on the basis of two dimensions i.e brand warmth and brand competence (Kervyn et al., 2012; Kervyn et al., 2021).There is limited knowledge on the impact of brand warmth during ethical failures. The proposed study seeks to investigate if brand warmth really matters in reporting product-harm incidents in ethical failures.

Competitive Short Paper

Rationale of Study

The concept of brand warmth and competence has been of great interest to academicians and researchers in recent years. Consumers usually judge a brand on the basis of two dimensions i.e brand warmth and brand competence (Kervyn et al., 2012; Kervyn et al., 2021). "Warmth suggests a motivation to be focused and behave in line with moral codes ,whereas competence refers to effective capacity to bring about this intent" These two dimensions help to determine consumer -brand relationship (Aaker et al., 2010;Kervyn et al., 2021;Kolbl et al., 2020).Prior studies have investigated that brand warmth indicates the potential harm and consumers find it more self-relevant than competence .Hence, consumers give more importance to brand warmth than competence (Cuddy et al., 2008). However, studies reveal when reporting an incident, the consumers are reminded of brand warmth perception which creates a dilemma whether the incident should be reported or as it is termed as retaliatory complaining (Grégoire & Fisher, 2007).This dilemma also extends to ethical failures as well. (Astvansh et al., 2024)

With increasing incidents of ethical failures in the corporate world, severely impacting corporate brand image and damaging brand value, corporates are exploring mechanisms that can curtail consumer negative feelings and reduce dilemma that are generated during incidents of ethical failures. Brand warmth is a possible mechanism through which the negative impact of ethical failures can be controlled (Astvansh et al., 2024).However, there is limited knowledge on the impact of brand warmth during ethical failures. For instance, it is still not clear how strong is the influence of brand warmth on consumer behaviour in the case of reporting an ethical failure. Since some of the ethical failures result or emanate from incidents of product harm, the role of perceived brand warmth during instance of product harm is also not very clear. Hence, the proposed study seeks to investigate if brand warmth really matters in reporting product-harm incidents in ethical failures. Against this backdrop, our study seeks to find answers to the following research questions.

RQ1 : Does Brand Warmth exist in ethical failures in product harm crisis?

RQ2 : How does this impact consumer-brand relationships?

In doing so we address the vast gap in the literature and offer solutions to managers.

Methodology: The study will rely on experimental methods for data collection and analysis. Three experiments will be conducted to investigate the impact of brand warmth on ethical behaviors like brand transgression .

Contributions : Theoretically, the study addresses the vast gap in literature being the first of its kind. It makes an important contribution to the field of brand warmth perception and consumer brand relationship (Kervyn et al., 2012; Kervyn et al., 2021; Khamitov et al., 2019). Since warmth is related to benevolence, the proposed study also contributes to the field of social psychology. Practically, the study may help managers develop a brand personality for a brand which can stand in the event of ethical failures.

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The mobilisation of visual art at COP26

Track 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

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Summary Statement

Exploring the intersection of marketing and art at COP26 in Glasgow, this study examines how visual art was mobilised to create public engagement around the UN Climate Conference. The findings demonstrate that art served a pivotal role in fostering a shared cultural identity and advancing climate awareness. This co-created identity underscores the transformative potential of integrating art into marketing strategies, offering key lessons for future campaigns.

Competitive Short Paper

This study explores the intersection of marketing and art at COP26. The findings demonstrate the pivotal role of visual art in fostering shared cultural identity and engagement with the UN Climate Conference. The 2021 COP26 summit in Glasgow marked a significant moment in global climate advocacy. By successfully bridging the gap between institutional messaging and grassroots movements COP26 achieved a level of public engagement unprecedented among prior UN climate conferences. This co-created identity affirms the transformative potential of integrating art into branding strategies, offering insights for future campaigns (Hagtvedt and Patrick 2008; Schroeder 2010).

The COP26 brand engagement was an active performance (Singh and Sonnenburg 2012), this underscores the roles of various stakeholder groups in shaping brand narratives (Aimé 2023), and highlights the changing role of brands by working with social movements to co-create culture (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004).

The analysis is underpinned by cultural branding theory (Holt 2003), which positions brands as cultural icons that derive significance from shared narratives and symbols. An ethnographic approach is employed, incorporating participant observation, contemporaneous conversations, and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. Data sources included event observations, public forums, and art exhibits, enabling a nuanced understanding of the cultural dynamics at play (Geertz 1973).

The findings show that the organisers and the social movement utilised three pillars to support the culture: the brand, the event, and visual art. Within the art pillar, three interlocking actions emerged: inviting artists to participate, including the wider community, and inciting discussion. Visual art was a powerful tool for engagement, capturing public attention and then facilitating conversations about collective action on climate.

The analysis reveals four categories of visual art associated with COP26: Promotional Campaigns, Protest Campaigns, Sanctioned Art, and Unsanctioned Art. Promotional Campaigns, were designed with the intended purpose of advocating to delegates and/or the general public. Protest Campaigns, were designed to incite public engagement. These were activist-driven works, while artistic, art was not the focus. Sanctioned Art consisted of approved art exhibits, artistry was the focus but there was an implicit parallel purpose of climate advocacy. Unsanctioned Art, included installations not officially recognised and illegal art, such as climate-themed graffiti.

The diversity in art experiences enhanced public engagement and strengthened the cultural significance of the event, making it more impactful and memorable. However, the level of engagement with the different categories was demonstrably different. While official, brand-aligned art played a role in engaging the public, it was the culturally-driven, Unsanctioned Art that resonated most deeply with the public. Its inclusion challenged conventional brand boundaries, underscoring the importance of allowing space for diverse forms of expression within an event. By facilitating both sanctioned and unsanctioned art, the organisers created a richer, more dynamic environment that appeals to a broader range of participants. COP26 succeeded in positioning itself as an inclusive and relatable platform for public engagement. It demonstrated that cultural elements are essential for building a brand that not only represents an event but also fosters a lasting cultural impact.

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The Effect of Recipient's Gender and Donor's Culture on Donation Choices

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This study examines how recipients' gender influences donors' preferences across cultures. In Western cultures (U.S.), donors preferred to help girls, while in Eastern cultures (China), boys were favored, reflecting cultural gender stereotypes. Offering a choice between a boy and a girl increased donations compared to same-gender choices. Interestingly, donors in both cultures preferred donating to organizations over individuals, highlighting perceived donation efficacy. These findings provide insights into prosocial behavior, cultural biases, and consumer decision-making.

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Women-Led Innovation in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta: Advancing Circular Economy Through Closed-Loop Systems in the Agri-Food Sector

Track: 9. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

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Summary Statement

This paper investigates how women entrepreneurs in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta (VMD) are driving innovation through closed-loop systems, transforming agricultural waste into valuable resources, and creating new economic opportunities. The research, drawing on case studies, highlights how these entrepreneurs leverage frugal innovation, demonstrating the transformative potential of women's entrepreneurship in building a circular and resilient agri-food economy, offering a model for sustainable development.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship and Innovation; Women-Led Enterprises; Circular Economy.

Competitive Short Paper

The Vietnamese Mekong Delta (VMD), a globally significant agricultural hub, is increasingly vulnerable to climate change impacts, including salinization, rising sea levels, and extreme weather events (Smajgl et al., 2015). These challenges necessitate a transformation of the agri-food sector, shifting from linear "take-make-dispose" models to circular economy (CE) principles (Geissdoerfer et al., 2017). Central to this transition is the adoption of closed-loop systems, which enhance resource efficiency, minimize waste, and create sustainable value streams (MacArthur, 2013). While women entrepreneurs play a critical role in driving sustainable innovation in the VMD, their contributions have often been overlooked in the literature. This study addresses this gap by examining how women-led enterprises are designing, implementing, and scaling innovative closed-loop systems in agricultural production, contributing to both academic understanding and practical insights on fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in the region.

This research employs a qualitative case study approach, focusing on three pioneering women-led enterprises in the VMD. These enterprises were selected for their innovative approaches to closed-loop systems within the agri-food sector. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews with the entrepreneurs (n=3), and relevant stakeholders (n=5), participant observation, and document analysis. Insights were supplemented with input from Hau Giang's Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and Ben Tre's Department of Planning and Investment (DOPI). Data analysis was guided by thematic analysis principles and informed by concepts of closed-loop system practices and the CE (Hossain, 2018; Gupta et al., 2019).

The findings highlight how women entrepreneurs in the VMD are driving innovation through resourceful closed-loop systems. By creatively repurposing agricultural waste—transforming unripe jackfruits into plant-based foods and Persian lemon byproducts into organic fertilizers—these entrepreneurs are reducing waste, creating new markets, and promoting sustainability. One enterprise further maximized resource use by integrating a closed-loop coconut value chain with eco-tourism, generating diversified revenue streams. These women exhibited remarkable entrepreneurial agency, overcoming resource constraints by adopting new technologies, investing in research, and leveraging community engagement to build social capital. The enterprises also benefited from supportive structures, such as DOST and DOPI initiatives, which provided access to training, technology, and market information. This interplay between individual agency and structural support underscores the importance of an enabling environment in fostering women-led innovation and achieving sustainable development outcomes.

Women-led enterprises in the VMD exemplify the potential of frugal innovation and entrepreneurial agency to address climate change and resource limitations. By embracing CE principles and implementing closed-loop practices, these businesses contribute to economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social well-being. This study demonstrates that the success of sustainable innovation hinges on the dynamic interaction between individual agency and a supportive ecosystem that enhances access to funding, technology, training, and markets (Wurth et al., 2022). Scaling these efforts requires a concerted effort from policymakers and stakeholders to foster such an ecosystem. Future research should explore the scalability of these innovative models, their long-term impacts on the VMD's agri-food sector, and the role of digital technologies in sustaining closed-loop systems, providing further insights into fostering disruptive innovation in resource-constrained environments.

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Productive Unsettling Through Arts-Based Pedagogy

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

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Summary Statement

This paper draws on our use of dancing pedagogies. We ask 'how can working with an art form that often leaves students feeling 'inadequate or less than' generate a productive learning experience offering insights into structural inequalities and vulnerabilities of the marketplace?'. We theorise the productive unsettlement that results from this learning as a more relational approach to learning allowing for collective interrogation of the visceral affective responses that emerge when we interrogate difficult knowledge.

Competitive Short Paper

This paper draws on our use of dancing pedagogies and a collaboration with the Birmingham Royal Ballet to theorise learning as productive unsettlement. In designing a consumer behaviour module, we set out to critically evaluate the limits of rational choice theory. We did so through exploration of the consumption of an art form – ballet – riddled with inequalities: financially, culturally and bodily inaccessible to many. This enabled learners to acknowledge their own vulnerabilities in the face of marketplace inequalities while analysing consumption from socio-cultural perspectives.

Our theorisation of productive unsettlement draws on our ethnographic work as designers and facilitators of the learning experience. The module encouraged student engagement with ballet through numerous practice-based activities: watching professional performances, guest lectures from the Ballet's management team, voice coaching, and a dance workshop with the Ballet's dancers. This was complemented by marketing theory related to the formation of taste and the pursuit of status as well as critical theory on race, class, gender and disability in the marketplace. The ethnographic data covers reflections on our experience in the form of fieldnotes as well as reflexive essays and diaries written during the academic term by 107 postgraduate students who opted to participate in the study.

Within this module, we asked students to consider discomfort and suffering, taking an "uncomfortable reflexive" approach (Pillow, 2023; Caterall, Maclaran and Stevens, 2002; Tadajewski, 2022) to their experiences with ballet. Connelly and Joseph-Salisbury (2019) highlight the importance of attending to student emotions, particularly discomforting emotions, in politicising learners for social change. We argue that an inclusive 'dancing for learning approach,' can allow for difficult conversations whereby learners can acknowledge their emotions and discomfort concerning inequalities and the exclusionary effects that result. Our approach is grounded in pedagogies of discomfort (Boler, 1999) and hope (Freire, 1994; hooks, 2003), finding ways through our collaboration with the Ballet to recognise and embrace discomfort and to utilise this productively.

An embodied experience (Ross and Rocha Beardall, 2022) was central to this approach, unsettling students' understandings, and enabling learning. As Fields et al. (2021) evidence, attention to the specificity of bodily experience can highlight social categories of difference (race, gender, size, age, ability, etc.). In our case, students found ballet often atypical, unappealing or uncomfortable. Our data shows how students worked with their discomfort, becoming more conscious of inequalities in practice and of how social hierarchies, stigma and exclusion can shape and constrain experiences of consumption. Yet, discomfort can also generate hope in bringing forth new ideas and actions.

In this paper, we answer the question, 'how can working with an art form that often leaves students feeling 'inadequate or less than' generate a productive learning experience offering insights into structural inequalities and vulnerabilities of the marketplace?' We argue that the dancing for learning embodied approach enabled students to reorient from a position of disempowerment to learning by gaining insights from the self and connections with others, accessing a more relational ontology to find collective ways of sensing and responding, theoretically and practically.

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Psychodynamics Underlying Sustainable Communications: The Case of Impossible Foods

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores how Impossible Foods leverages sustainable communications to resonate with consumers. Applying Terror Management Theory, the research reveals that communications around life threats, sustainability practices, and techno-optimism promote sustainable consumption and foster a symbolic immortality boost. The findings extend Freund and Jacobi's brand mystification model by uncovering the psychodynamics behind sustainable brand images and furthermore contribute to the literature on death-related influences in the marketing communications area.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Growing concerns over the consequences of consumerist lifestyles have intensified the demand for sustainable consumption (Kim & Yoon, 2021). Furthermore, recognising the surge in the plant-based meat market since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, when consumers faced unavoidable life threats, it becomes evident that there is both a necessity and a substantial opportunity to explore plant-based meat from a psychological perspective. Impossible Foods has capitalised on this shift by promoting its plant-based products as sustainable alternatives to animal-based meat. This study examines how Impossible Foods engages with consumers regarding sustainability through the lens of Terror Management Theory (TMT).

Theoretical Framework

By leveraging sustainability concerns, Impossible Foods positions itself as a cultural innovator, offering consumers a way to reconcile the tension between consumption and sustainability. Holt and Cameron (2010) suggest that consumers turn to iconic brands to cope with cultural tensions but do not explain why. Freund and Jacobi (2016) illustrate how TMT provides a psychological framework for understanding why consumers rely on iconic brands to manage real-world threats and anxieties. Building on Freund and Jacobi's (2016) brand mystification model, this study applies TMT to deepen the understanding of sustainable communications.

Methodology

This study adopts a case study approach, combining archival research and netnography to analyse Impossible Foods' sustainable communications. Archival data were collected from the company's official website, sustainability reports (2017–2022), marketing campaigns, press releases, and podcasts featuring the founder and CEO, Pat Brown.

Additionally, netnography was conducted on Impossible Foods' social media platforms, analysing online activities from 2017 to 2022 on Facebook, Twitter/X, and YouTube. Consumer comments were also collected to gain deeper insights into how Impossible Foods' sustainability communications resonated with its audiences.

Findings

Three core themes emerged from the analysis of Impossible Foods' sustainable communications:

Connoting Life Threats: Impossible Foods highlights the health and environmental risks of animal-based meat consumption, leveraging mortality salience to encourage shifts toward plant-based diets.

Highlighting Sustainability Practices: Impossible Foods promotes its sustainability initiatives, motivating consumers to view their purchases as meaningful contributions to sustainability.

Advocating Techno-Optimism: Impossible Foods fosters consumer trust in food technology as a solution to environmental challenges, positioning plant-based meat as an innovative, sustainable alternative.

Collectively, these strategies offer consumers a symbolic sense of immortality, enabling them to see themselves as contributors to larger entities (e.g., humanity and nature) and easing death anxiety.

Conclusion

This study highlights the crucial role of psychological mechanisms in sustainable communications. Theoretically, it extends Freund and Jacobi's (2016) brand mystification model by introducing a psychodynamic framework that explains how sustainable brands manage the paradox of promoting consumption while advancing sustainability. It also broadens the application of TMT in the marketing communications area by demonstrating how indirect death-related messaging shapes consumer engagement with non-death-related products.

Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for marketers in the sustainability sectors. By leveraging death anxiety in sustainable communications, brands can more effectively position their products as meaningful solutions to global environmental challenges.

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Sustainability Influencers: Driving Engagement Through Language Arousal

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores how communication appeals and language arousal in YouTube video titles affect audience engagement with sustainability influencers. The research highlights the importance of aligning post titles with communication appeals to enhance audience engagement, offering valuable insights for sustainability influencers' communication strategies.

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Exploring Audience Engagement Drivers with Sustainability Influencers: Insights from Topic Modeling

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This research examines a vast number of comments on sustainability influencers' YouTube videos through topic modeling. It uncovers key factors driving engagement, such as the influencers' expertise, attractiveness, and authenticity. Additionally, it highlights audience motivations, including information seeking, social interaction, and community identification. The study offers valuable insights for content strategies across various influencer categories.

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When Instagram Shapes Plates: The Influence of Insta-parents on Parenting Roles and Eating Habits

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

This research explores the impact of interactions between "insta-parents" on Instagram and their followers on food-related parenting. Using a netnographic approach and interviews with mothers, the study highlights three key dimensions (reinforcement, co-construction, negotiation) and identifies five profiles of influenced mothers. The results underline the role of motivation and trust in the adoption of food practices, offering pointers for public and private players.

Competitive Short Paper

In a context where the food environment is often described as "obesogenic" (Skouteris et al., 2013), parents play a crucial role in shaping family eating habits (Moura and Aschemann-Witzel, 2020). Faced with these challenges, this study examines the influence of "insta-parents" - parental influencers on Instagram - on food-related parenting and mothers' motivations for following these actors. These influencers, through their visual and interactive content, shape the dietary perceptions and behaviors of thousands of subscribers, positioning themselves as central players in the transmission of dietary norms. The interest of this topic lies in the rise of social networks as central spaces for the exchange and dissemination of social norms, particularly around parenthood and food (Zarnowiecki et al., 2020; Enke and Borchers, 2019). With over 23.7 million monthly active users in France, Instagram is establishing itself as a key platform for influencing eating behavior (Statista, 2023).

Drawing on the concept of social roles (Linton, 1936), which emphasizes that roles are shaped by societal norms and expectations, as well as social influence theory (Kelman, 2014), which identifies conformity, identification and internalization as key processes through which attitudes and behaviors are influenced, this research analyzes how digital interactions with "insta-parents" impact dietary parenting. These interactions influence not only external behaviors, but also deep identity constructions.

The methodology adopted is based on two stages. Firstly, a netnographic analysis of 25 "insta-parent" accounts provided information on the types of interactions and content shared, focusing on their themes, subscriber engagement and communication strategies. This analysis followed the recommendations of Kozinets (2019), including content immersion and systematic coding. Next, 21 semi-structured interviews were conducted with mothers aged 22 to 40, active on Instagram. The sample, diversified by social background, number of children and level of engagement, explored participants' motivations, perceptions and experiences of integrating influencers' advice into their parenting practices.

The results show that interactions on Instagram shape food parenting around three main dimensions: reinforcement, where positive feedback validates parents' food choices and boosts their confidence; co-construction, where collaborative exchanges between influencers and subscribers create a collective identity around food practices; and negotiation, where critical debates and interactions prompt reflection and adjustments to habits.

The study also identifies five distinct profiles of mothers following "insta-parents": the "information and inspiration seeker", the "supportive community member", the "trend adopter", the "food critic" and the "thoughtful moderator". These profiles illustrate the diversity of motivations and confidence levels influencing engagement with food-related content. The quality of motivation and the level of confidence play a decisive role in shaping parental attitudes and behaviours, in line with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

The implications of this study are significant. Public health actors can leverage the power of credible influencers to disseminate reliable nutritional messages, thereby promoting healthier eating habits within families. Companies, for their part, can collaborate with nutritionists or dieticians to co-create educational and authentic content, meeting parents' expectations while reinforcing their credibility. By prioritizing reliable and relevant information, these stakeholders can combat misinformation and adapt their strategies to the varied needs of families.

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Exploring the servicescape as a value creation tool within a digital and post Covid-19 society

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

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Summary Statement

This paper explores consumers' value creation(adopting a Service Logic perspective) within retail service stores by focalizing their interactions with the various dimensions of the servicescape (physical, social, socially symbolic an digital). It sheds light on existing conceptual linkages between the servicescape and value creation narratives and argues for a repositioning of the servicescape framework away from it's organisational behavioural roots towards a more consumer centric viewpoint, focusing on consumers' creation of value-in-use.

Competitive Short Paper

The rapid growth in the presence and usage of digital and online service platforms, exacerbated by the pandemic, calls for a re-examination of the relevance and role of physical service spaces from consumers' perspectives. This echoes service marketing's recent call for deeper investigations into the existential role of place within our everyday activities and practices. This paper explores how consumers create value-in-use by focusing on their interactions with servicescapes in an increasingly digital and post Covid-19 service environment. It contends that beyond the dominant behavioural positionings of the servicescape within extant literature (e.g., length of stay and revisit intentions), servicescapes may serve as a place for consumers' creation of social, emotional, existential and functional value grounded in the Service Logic stream of value creation discourse. The study considers consumers' holistic experiences and interactions with servicescapes before, during and after their service encounters. Extending beyond the physical dimension, the study focalises the social, socially symbolic, and digital dimensions of the servicescape unearthing how these additional dimensions contribute to consumers creation of value-in-use.

This study adopts a qualitative exploratory design, combining participant driven photo elicitation (PE) with semi structured interviews in order to empower participants to communicate the subjective nature of value based on their lifestyle, activities and circumstances using their own photographs. A total of 29 PE interviews (13 from food services, 9 from financial services, 7 from personal care services) within the United Kingdom were conducted and analysed using thematic analysis.

The study theoretically contributes to both value creation and servicescape discourses. Firstly, the findings elucidate conceptual linkages between servicescape and value creation narratives within extant literature to show exactly how consumers create value-in-use via their servicescape interactions including: functional (usage of space), emotional (restoration and escape), social (relational and solitary social immersion), or existential (reinforcement of personal values and beliefs). Secondly, the study highlights how the increased digitalization of servicescape interactions have reshaped and extended existing consumer value creation processes, arguing that consumers' creation of value-in-use from their servicescape interactions is much broader and integrated than previously contended due to the interactive affordances of digital technology. The increased interactive touch points before and after in-store service encounters, facilitated through digital technology (e.g., mobile applications), extends the value co-creation process, highlighting extended roles for both the customer and provider outside those previously acknowledged in extant literature. Thirdly, the findings argue that the implications of the recent Covid-19 pandemic (e.g., national lockdowns and social distancing) also serve as a counterfactual explanation for consumers' newfound awareness and appreciation of these roles within everyday activities.

Ultimately, the study contends that notwithstanding the servicescape framework's initial dominant behavioural positioning, it also functions as a value creation tool within a digital and post Covid-19 society and calls for a repositioning of the servicescape away from this organisational viewpoint towards a more consumer centric perspective. Managerially, it informs marketing practice on maintaining a relevant physical presence within an increasingly digital service landscape.

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The Art of Storytelling in Fashion Advertising: A Comparative Narratological Analysis

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

This narratological study examines storytelling strategies in 60 fashion brand advertisements across luxury, premium, and mass-market sectors. Using narratological analysis, it explores how elements like characters, plots, and emotions communicate brand identity. Luxury brands focus on fantasy and escapism, premium brands emphasise ambition, and mass-market brands highlight social themes. Engagement metrics reveal the effectiveness of tailored narratives. The research offers insights into how storytelling can strengthen brand messaging and build meaningful connections with diverse audiences.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

In today's fast-paced digital world, fashion brands face fierce competition to capture and hold consumer attention. Storytelling has emerged as a powerful tool for cutting through the noise and creating meaningful connections with audiences. This study explores the storytelling strategies used by fashion brands across the luxury, premium, and mass-market sectors, analysing 60 brand advertisements to understand how narratives help communicate brand identity and engage audiences.

Exploring Narrative Strategies

The research draws on narratological analysis to examine how brands creatively use key narrative elements such as characters, plots, and transformation arcs in their advertisements. It also explores how visual and auditory tools—like music, voiceovers, and celebrity endorsements—enhance storytelling. Twenty-two millennial customers of wide range of fashion brands from London, representing diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds were voluntarily recruited and divided into three groups to examine one market sector each. They chose 20 advertisements per sector based on criteria such as art of storytelling using characters, plots, hero's journey, genre, use of emotion, ability to cause narrative transformation and artistic communication brand identity, meaning and message.

Distinct Storytelling Styles

The findings reveal distinct patterns in storytelling across market segments. Luxury brands focus on fantasy and adventure, creating immersive and aspirational worlds that offer audiences a temporary escape. Premium brands combine fiction with themes of ambition and self-improvement, striking a balance between relatability and aspiration. Mass-market brands adopt socially driven narratives, highlighting themes like happiness, hope, and community. These stories are designed to resonate with the everyday lives of consumers.

Narrative techniques such as the use of celebrities, relatable relationships, and genre-specific settings were found to be key in drawing audiences into the stories. Emotional resonance was further enhanced through carefully crafted music, visuals, and voiceovers, helping brands communicate their identity and values effectively.

Linking Stories to Audience Engagement

To complement the narratological analysis, the study examined digital engagement metrics, including views, likes, and comments, to assess the impact of storytelling strategies. Luxury brands saw higher engagement through their use of imaginative and transformative narratives, while mass-market brands benefited from relatable and socially relevant stories. The findings highlight the importance of tailoring storytelling approaches to the preferences and expectations of different market segments.

Contributions to Theory and Practice

This research contributes to advertising theory by demonstrating how brands adapt narrative frameworks to the digital era, blending traditional storytelling with modern media techniques. It also offers practical insights for marketers, showing how emotional appeal, character-driven plots, and creative use of media elements can enhance audience engagement. By linking narrative strategies to measurable outcomes, the study provides a roadmap for brands looking to craft effective and impactful advertisements.

Conclusion

In an age where digital platforms are saturated with content, the ability to tell compelling stories is more crucial than ever. This study underscores the enduring power of storytelling in building connections between brands and consumers, offering valuable lessons for advertisers seeking to inspire, engage, and resonate with their audiences.

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Consumer Resistance Towards Capitalist Patriarchy: An Exploration Of Female Queers' Migration To Rural Communities In China

Track: AM Funded Research

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Summary Statement

Stemming from observing Chinese urban queer females' assemblage through online communities and digital platforms in pursuit of rural living and alternative social initiatives. This short paper follows the tradition of Consumer Culture Theory and draws on intersectionality theory to explore consumer resistance toward capitalist patriarchy.

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Innovation in the Retail Value Proposition: Novel Practices and Pathways

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

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Summary Statement

Innovation plays a key role in retailing. Nevertheless, within a growing volume of retail literature, the topic of how retailers manage innovation remains under-researched and understood. This paper aims to bridge this knowledge gap by exploring the innovation pathways of two leading retail organizations. It enhances our understanding of retail-centred innovation pathways and demonstrates how retailers can balance structured (linear) with organic (non-linear) innovation to accelerate or increase innovation intensity while effectively managing capital expenditure.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction and Literature

Innovation plays a key role in retailing, and a growing volume of academic literature has been devoted to studying retail innovation. Hristov and Reynolds (2015) define it as a value co-creation activity centred on the retail offering, supporting technologies, and management organization. The management of innovation in retailing, however, remains under-researched and understood (Paredes et al., 2023, 2024). This paper explores the innovation pathways of two leading retailers, a luxury brand and a grocery retailer, and compares these with traditional innovation methodologies to highlight retail-centred innovation management (Goni & Looy, 2022; Andreini, 2022). We present our preliminary results within a conceptual framework that outlines flexible retail innovation pathways.

Methodology

Eighteen qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with executives from the two firms, including twelve senior executives (CEOs, departmental directors and managers). The interviews were supplemented with visits to the companies' head offices, flagship and 'lab' stores. The data analysis followed guidelines proposed by Yin (2018), and Elsahn et al. (2020). Rigorous research design, triangulation, and iterative comparison between case data were employed to moderate the limited generalizability of the results.

Results and Discussion

The results were summarized into two case studies with a similar structure. At Company 1 (luxury brand), the data highlights flexible innovation encompassing structured pathways alongside less structured, agile innovation methods. The development of new fashion collections involves multiple design 'funnels' at various phases of product development, with defined stages, managed by the Creative Department and involving external contributors. The innovation process uses agile techniques (creative sprints, rapid prototyping). Conversely, innovations in the retail proposition have less structured and formalized pathways, yet these are purposefully managed with defined key performance indicators. Such innovations include new flagship store concepts or diversification into 'soft luxury', home-ware or furniture. These less structured pathways involve a network of partners, including external suppliers, designers, and architects.

At Company 2 (grocery retailer), the data similarly reveals flexible pathways to innovation. These include structured capital expenditure (CAPEX)-driven strategic innovations that periodically redefine the business model and retail format. Semi-structured innovation into new product categories, such as organic and premium foods, in partnership with external suppliers. Additionally, experimental and more agile innovation pathways, characterized by rapid prototyping and data-driven testing of new retail concepts with minimal CAPEX, enable accelerated innovation with the ability to pivot to new marketing strategies.

Contributions and Conclusions

The case studies highlight the flexible nature of retail innovation, encompassing a blend of structured (linear), semi-structured, and experimental (non-linear) pathways. Retailers tend to manage 'innovation intensity' through structured pathways and achieve 'innovation acceleration' through agile and experimental pathways. Company 1 uses a structured design process for radical innovation in 'haute couture' with increased 'innovation intensity' measured by the frequency of new collections and product introductions. Company 2 employs a semi-structured approach to incremental innovations in its merchandising range and relies on experimental techniques and modest CAPEX to accelerate retail concept innovation.

This ongoing research enhances our understanding of retail-centred innovation pathways of balancing linear and non-linear approaches to innovation.

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Contesting Antifascism: Political Knowledge Creation and Enlightenment At FC St. Pauli

Track: 13. Political Marketing

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Summary Statement

In this work we explore boundary objects (BO) at the Hamburg-based football club FC St Pauli with both 'home' and 'way' fans. Utilizing Star and Griesemer's (1989) broad categorizations of 'material' and 'conceptual' boundary objects as well as Carlile's (2002) three tiers of boundary objects (syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic) we present identified boundary objects' that reflect fan understanding of FC St. Pauli as a bastion of anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-Semitic and anti-homophobic political policy in sport.

Competitive Short Paper

Politics and sport do mix and the social constructs that underpin both pervade in terraces at both a local and global level (Power et al., 2020). Problematically, racism and xenophobia in football have been long-standing phenomenon (Kassimeris et al., 2022) and football itself has legitimised racism (Kilvington et al., 2022; Bradley, 2024). German football has seen the rise of neo-Nazism since the fall of the Berlin wall reflecting an alignment with Germany's fascist past (Kassimeris, 2009) underpinned by a lack of resources to combat spectator driven incidents (Müller et al., 2024). One club has sought to combat this shift and transform the perception of football through continuous libertarian leftist campaigns and protests (Totten, 2014) to be more than just a football team (Viñas et al., 2020); Hamburg's FC St Pauli. Committed to civic opportunity, FC St Pauli (Gang et al., 2023) represent idealism in football (Griggs, 2012) and this work seeks to explore how that idealism is constructed through exploring the phenomena of boundary objects. BOs are objects that inhabit several social worlds but have different meaning within those social worlds but share a common structure (Star and Griesemer, 1989). Bergman et al., (2007, p. 55) state that "any artefact that is shared between two or more actors at the boundary of two social worlds can be regarded as a boundary object." A salient function of boundary objects is to enable "one group to speak to another" (Carlile, 2002) by the provision of shared language providing a shared language which is meaningful to all stakeholders. Consequently BOs are dynamic and can be used to facilitate; debate evaluate and illuminate interests, in this instance leftist policy, social idealism (Griggs, 2011, Totten, 2014) and a focus on remembrance of the victims of fascism (Tobar et al., 2024). Data was collected at the home of FC St Pauli, Millerntor-Stadion over nine home games with thirty-one fans from nine teams all in the German Bundesliga utilising a translator affiliated with FC St. Pauli for access. Data reveals that the district of St. Pauli itself along with graffiti and anti-fascist humour (*kien wein den faschisten*!- No wine for fascists!) represent syntactic boundary objects that delineates complex social narratives, Stickers, that cover virtually every inch of the exterior and interior of Millerntor-Stadion reflect semantic BOs while the lack of traditional commercial partners at St, Pauli forms the structural basis of pragmatic BOs. The identified BOs play a central role across fan bases and assist with the political negotiation and the addressing of political complexity within and outside football. The work provides new ways to understand the relationships between objects and different fan types. Data also provides new ways of understanding how meaningful social negotiation is enacted in football. This new insight can assist in helping other clubs understand the fundamentals of rigorous, socially constructed fan led political discourse that impacts educationally at both a micro and macro level.

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Exploring Online Sustainability Communities With The application Of Netnography And Unsupervised Machine Learning.

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

Online platforms offer vast data, providing insights into evolving consumer attitudes towards sustainability but its analysis is challenging due to its unstructured nature. This research uses netnography, NLP, and ML to study online sustainability communities, applying Self Determination Theory. Reddit data was analysed for sentiment and topics, providing insights into consumer behaviour. This pilot study aims to expand and refine the methodology for broader applications.

Competitive Short Paper

Although consumers' sustainability attitudes received much attention from academics and practice, their evolution has become difficult to monitor with traditional approaches. Indeed, the application of traditional methods is undoubtedly accurate but needs time-consuming structured data collection, with the risk of missing the identification of the fast-growing trends/topics and a large variety of opinions that can hardly be embraced with smaller samples (Quan-Haase & Sloan, 2022).

A fast and deeper understanding of consumers' discourse and factors that drive their orientation towards sustainability is important because it enables organisations' alignment with consumers' ethical/sustainable demands, which can drive their sustainability marketing initiatives (Dundua, 2024).

A significant portion of sustainability discussion is happening on online platforms, providing the opportunity to access a wealth of data. Consequently, digital marketing has become more relevant in corporations' dialogue with their stakeholders and as a source of information (Szabó et al, 2019). Nevertheless, the amount of data and the online communication style, combined with other factors like word choice, editing time limitation, limited involvement in an online discussion and supporting/shaming groups, make the analysis and interpretation of data challenging (Nelakurthi & He, 2020).

The evolving Big data "5 Vs" (Volume, Velocity, Variety, Veracity, and Value) offer an opportunity to increase the size of datasets collected and analyse data quicker to extract meaningful information (Tam & Halderen, 2020). Yet, this data contains interesting information in an unstructured form that includes text, images, videos and numbers, introducing a vulnerability in analysing them and drawing sensible information. Indeed, a relevant aspect of this data is related to accuracy as it may contain reactions to others and support for political/social movements with fake/provocative content (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018).

This research aims to analyse online sustainability communities, applying netnography, Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Machine Learning (ML) algorithms to understand consumers' behavioural models based on the Self Determination Theory (SDT).

A sample of 10,000 Reddit posts related to sustainability was collected, pre-processed and a topic modelled with Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) to extract 20 main topics associated with the SDT variables in terms of probabilities. Each mention has been classified in terms of sentiments with VANDER, a rule-based sentiment analysis lexicon tool (Hutto & Gilbert, 2014) and emotions with EmoLex/NRC (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Metadata was collected, for instance: Reddit Karma, Engagement, Subreddit, etc., to measure the level of involvement and success of each post/author.

This process has produced a dataset of probabilities/scores that has been analysed with various statistical tools and unsupervised ML algorithms, to test the possible relationships among the variables. This hybrid approach blends netnographic depth with the scalability of quantitative analysis to bridge the gap of understanding high-level patterns and specific online community insights to track broader trends in consumer behaviour (Kozinets, 2015; Kozinets, 2024).

This pilot study is intended to be presented as the first stage of a broader study that will expand the analysis to a larger, more extensive set of data to confirm the methodological approach and reinforce an extended model with additional factors.

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Becoming Friends With Aldi's Kevin The Carrot: The Influence Of The Hero Archetype On Consumer Preference.

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

This research paper explores the use of the hero archetype in marketing, focusing on Aldi's Kevin the Carrot within the UK grocery sector. It examines how archetypal storytelling fosters consumer engagement, emotional resonance, and brand loyalty. Using Netnography and interviews, the research highlights Kevin's heroism, combined with universal themes of family and nostalgia, as key to consumer connection. The provides the researcher insight on how brand craft emotional advertisement in order to influence consumer behaviour.

Competitive Short Paper

The hero archetype has long been used in marketing for its ability to inspire and emotionally engage audiences. Traditionally associated with brands in goal-oriented industries such as sports and apparel, the hero archetype conveys strength and altruism. Recently, however, brands across diverse sectors have begun leveraging the hero archetype in novel ways, tailoring it to resonate with their unique narratives and consumer bases (Hollenbeck & Patrick, 2016; Kelsey et al., 2022). An example of this trend is Aldi's Kevin the Carrot, a character embodying heroism through qualities such as kindness, selflessness, and community orientation.

Although the hero archetype has been extensively studied in the context of high-performance and lifestyle brands (Holt, 2003; Delgado-Ballester & Fernández-Sabiote, 2016), its application in non-traditional categories like grocery retail remains underexplored. Aldi's use of Kevin the Carrot exemplifies a shift in archetypal storytelling, positioning a family-oriented brand within the framework of heroism. However, the mechanisms by which this approach fosters consumer engagement, emotional resonance, and brand loyalty have not been adequately examined. This study explores the impact of archetypal storytelling on consumer preference, investigating how Kevin the Carrot, as a representation of the hero archetype, influences consumer preference and purchase intentions within the UK retail and grocery sector. The study seeks to answer the following:

To what extent does Kevin affect consumers' preferences and purchase intentions?

What are the key elements of effective archetypal narratives that resonate with diverse audiences?

Using netnography and consumer interviews, the findings advance existing literature on brand archetypes by elucidating the application of the hero archetype in retail branding, addressing a gap in knowledge identified by Holt and Escalas (2003). This study demonstrates that Aldi's character engages audiences by blending heroism with themes of family, hope, and unity. Consumers see Kevin's heroism as part of a larger story highlighting Aldi's dedication to community and togetherness, creating emotional resonance and boosting brand loyalty.

Additionally, the study highlights the significant role of secondary elements in storytelling. Participants reported that nostalgic imagery, such as family gatherings and festive scenes, elicited strong emotional responses and influenced their preference for the advertisements. These findings suggest that secondary storytelling elements can amplify the impact of archetypal characters by fostering a sense of familiarity and emotional connection.

From a practical perspective, this research provides actionable insights for UK grocery and retail brands seeking to craft emotionally resonant advertisements. By leveraging archetypal storytelling, brands can create campaigns that transcend traditional messaging, appealing to universal values and fostering deeper consumer connections. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of aligning hero archetypes with complementary themes, such as family and nostalgia, to maximise consumer engagement.

This study underscores the versatility of the hero archetype in marketing, demonstrating its applicability beyond traditional domains. Aldi's Kevin exemplifies how archetypal storytelling can be adapted to align with brand identity and consumer values, fostering emotional connections and enhancing consumer preference. Hence, the research contributes to a broader understanding of how archetypal narratives can be effectively utilised across industries.

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The Encrypted Streets: Ideological Lumitopia And Artistic Expressions Of Consumer Crisis

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

This global visual grounded theory research explores the global phenomenon of street sticker art. Drawing from visual culture research, it examines the consumers role as producer of societal critique – as artist-ideologist. The research found that artistic critiques appear on boundary objects that promote the social thickness of space, are created by consumer fauvists that represent motions of consumer crisis to inspire ideological lumitopia – an alternative socio-graphic artifice charged with the vitality of creating awareness.

Competitive Short Paper

Interpretive consumer research casts consumers in a variety of evocative roles. However, one portrayal of the consumer that warrants further exploration is the consumer as subversive cynic (Odou & de Pechpeyrou, 2010)– as producer of expressive societal critique – the consumer as ideologist. Undeniably, ideology is an elusive concept: intertwined with related constructs such as myth, belief systems, utopian vision, political theory, paradigm shifts, worldview, and value orientation. Not all consumers are ideologists, but through their exploration of public space, Visconti et al. (2010) provide guidance on where to locate them: They demonstrate how street art inspires interactive layers of agency and promotes a kaleidoscope of ideological representation.

This research explores the visual culture context of street sticker art, a global phenomenon seen in cities and towns, which is intensifying in frequency. Sticker art is a vehicle to publicly perform critique and contested as both art and vandalism. Drawing from McLuhan (1967) who claims, "the medium is the message" – that media are encrypted with mechanisms that shape human behaviour – this research explores the social construction of the visual and the visual construction of the social (Mitchell, 2002) and asks: What stylistic mechanisms are embedded in street sticker art? What is it's 'implicit message'? Who employs it? And where? How does it allow for the atmosphere of consumer culture to be experienced visually?

The six-year visual grounded theory approach (Konecki, 2011), utilised psycho-geographic walking (Jung, 2014) and photography (Pink, 2007) to investigate sticker art in Milan, Amsterdam, Marseille, Copenhagen, Rotterdam, Utrecht, Antwerp, Bruges, Malaga, Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Vienna, Prague, Lyon, Poznan, Berlin, Denver, Barcelona, Madrid, Venice, Brighton, Rome, and London.

The research found that street stickers are: (1) experienced along the edges of cultural transition: Located on boundary objects that emphasis the thickness of social spaces, grey areas, black spots, the lines between culture and consumerism, moments of transition, and cites with representational magnetism. (2) Created by consumer fauvists – 'the wild bests of the expressionist art world' (Smith, 2002). Artist-ideologists expressing emotions beyond convention, engaging in 'intellectual violence', and creating a ludic perceptual revolution by attempting to shock "a deluded humanity into awareness of its foolishness" (Odou & de Pechpeyrou, 2010). (3) Stickers represent motifs of consumerism – the loss of self, biodiversity collapse, global warming, pollution, technology, human rights, war, and death. (4) Inspire the process of ideological lumitopia – a new socio-graphic artifice, marked by the vitality of creating awareness (Shiravnee, 2006) – the visual echoes of crisis encouraging consumers to bring themselves closer to experience of others (Hannerz, 1990). Beck et al.'s (2003) theory of reflexive modernization suggests uncertainties inspire reflexive impulses which generate existential concern. Sticker art inspires a new form of visual humanism that vindicates the primacy of civic expression – a form of projective cosmopolitanism – a de-literalisation of social knowledge – showing how walls can become bridges and purports for future action.

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Strategic Framing in Polarized Platforms: News Consumption on Telegram In Russia

Track: 13. Political Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study examines the strategic communication practices of 79 Telegram news channels in Russia, analyzing 220,000 posts through surveys, topic modeling, and sentiment analysis. Findings reveal three channel types—government-aligned, neutral, opposition—employing distinct strategies to attract readership. Pro-government and neutral channels diversify content, enhancing engagement, while opposition channels risk reduced appeal due to thematic similarity. Unique content enhance differentiation during crisis. The study highlights Telegram's role in shaping media consumption in a polarized landscape.

Competitive Short Paper

News consumption is typically intentional (Graber, 1984), and the selective media environment intensifies this process, offering people platforms to deliberately digest news (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2018). This shift has expanded as news consumption leans toward online platforms (Bakshy et al., 2021), which now serve as key information sources (Gorodnichenko et al., 2021). These sources are oftentimes driven by their own agendas in shaping information and influencing audiences' media consumption (e.g., O'Shaughnessy, 2001; Atkinson et al., 2014).

In Russia, Telegram has emerged as a key player, with 28% of Russians now using it as a news source (Levada-Center, 2024) with a daily reach of 51% (Lukyanova, 2024). Its strong informational and political focus makes it significant for disseminating narratives, with interest in its channels surging during major news events (Mediascope, 2024). Audiences, however, tend to gravitate toward government-aligned channels, which dominate readership. This raises the question of how the communication strategies of news-generating media channels on Telegram frame audience media consumption?

Using abductive logic, this study employed surveys and topic modelling (Grootendorst, 2022) alongside sentiment analysis (Gunter et al., 2014). From 361 unique Telegram news channels identified, 79 channels were selected for deeper analysis, generating 220,000 scraped posts for the period of September – November 2024, grouped into thematic events. Sentiment analysis measured positivity as the difference between positive and negative sentiment.

Findings reveal three primary Telegram channel types—government-aligned, neutral, and opposition—each employing distinct strategies to attract readership, reflecting broader trends in online news consumption (Stempel et al., 2000; Gorodnichenko et al., 2021).

In general, a focus on war does not prevent Telegram channels from being popular. Seemingly, the most popular pro-government channels contain no less content about war than opposition channels. Channels reliance on positive tonality correlates with popularity, driving engagement (Berger & Milkman, 2012). Addressing diverse topics like health, economy, and diplomacy, aligns with the channels' broad appeal (e.g., Mohr & Nevin, 1990; Huckfeldt et al., 2004).

Alongside a great dose of political content, neutral channels also attract audiences with a wide range of non-political topics, seeking to foster engagement among those seeking balanced perspectives.

While neutral and pro-government channels offer diversified content, opposition channels are skewed toward higher levels of similarity, potentially risking a reduction in broader appeal (Meire, 2022). In general, content diversity may play an important role in driving engagement across different channel types. Government-aligned and neutral channels excel by addressing everyday concerns, enhancing relevance.

While emotional content is often linked to engagement, findings reveal general emotionality does not universally predict popularity. Strategic use of unique content, such as curated photos, music, and inspiring stories, enhances differentiation during crises (Yuskiv et al., 2022). This study underscores the strategic use of content and communication in shaping media consumption on Telegram, offering insights for political marketing strategies in polarized media landscapes.

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Leveraging On Promotions To Drive Successful Circular Economy Transition

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

Promotions, either marketing or trade, are essential in circular activities to achieve a sustainability vision. Promotion educates, creates awareness, enables behavioural change, increases sales or demand, differentiates products, provides a competitive advantage, encourages sustainable practices, fosters economic growth, and builds relationships.). However, the role of promotion in enhancing circular economy practices has been largely overlooked and this study explore how promotions complement circular economy transition.

Competitive Short Paper

The global challenge of plastic waste is at the forefront of our collective consciousness, with plastic waste management posing growing threats. Amid these fast-growing environmental sustainability threats, circular economy-based reverse logistics and promotions offer a promising solution. Within this circular economy-based reverse logistics approach is the shift from the traditional linear take-make-dispose model to a regenerative approach. However, most of the attention on circular economy has been directed towards reverse logistics' operational and technological aspects, including waste management, recycling, reuse and product recovery (Kirchherr et al., 2018; Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2019). Specifically, there is limited research that explores how promotion either marketing or trade can effectively drive the implementation and success of circular economy practices, especially in supply chain engagement and behaviour change (Lieder & Rashid, 2016). This gap in the literature is crucial since the success of the circular economy transition depends not only on operational effectiveness but also on firms' and stakeholders' active participation, which well-planned promotional campaigns may greatly impact.

This study will employ realist ontology and relational epistemology, a multiple embedded case approach as a research method, guided by the integration of institutional theory and network theory as a theoretical lens to answer the research question. By examining the role of promotion in complementing circular economy practices in the context of FMCG plastic waste management, the study seeks to address the gap in the literature on the circular economy.

Key findings from this study are expected to shed light on how the integration of promotional techniques in circular economy practices can assist companies in matching market demands with their sustainability objectives, which will ultimately result in a more resilient and sustainable business model (Zhu, Sarkis, & Lai, 2008). The findings on the integration of promotion with a circular economy can also help close the gap between sustainable practices and consumer behaviour and business practices, increasing the viability and efficiency of the transition to a circular economy. The findings will offer practical implications for policymakers, businesses, and other stakeholders seeking to enhance the effectiveness of circular economy practices and promotions in addressing plastic waste challenges.

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From Fear to Confidence: Engaging Students in Marketing Analytics Through Co-Creation and Problem-Based Learning in Block Teaching

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

This study explores the implementation of Problem-Based Learning and co-creation in marketing data analysis module, tackling students' common challenges of low interest, confidence, and motivation in quantitative subjects. Employing an action research approach and a six-step problem-solving framework grounded in seven pedagogical pillars, the module blended theoretical foundations with practical applications. The findings revealed significant improvements in student confidence, engagement, and academic performance, highlighting the transformative potential of innovative teaching methods in data-driven marketing education.

Competitive Short Paper

This study employs action research to evaluate the integration of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and co-creation in a Level 6 marketing data analysis module, aiming to foster critical thinking, engagement, and real-world problem-solving skills (Huang and Liao, 2024; Harris and Kloubec, 2014). The study follows the action research framework of diagnosing, action planning, action taking, evaluating, and specifying learning (Susman and Evered, 1978) to refine teaching strategies, leading to improved student involvement and learning outcomes (Wegener and Leimeister, 2012).

1. Diagnosing

Students often perceive statistics courses as highly challenging and lacking practical relevance (Gougeon, 2004). This presents unique challenges for educators in business schools, as students frequently exhibit low interest and motivation, hindering their performance (Cronin and Carroll, 2015; Rochelle and Dotterweich, 2007). Discussions with programme leaders, prior instructors, and students confirmed this challenge. One student remarked, "When I saw the title of the module, I thought oh great, a boring module to start the year with," reflecting these sentiments.

2. Action Planning

The teaching approach was designed to foster a "Friendship" with data analysis by employing seven pillars grounded in established pedagogical theories (Figure 1): simplicity (Sweller, 1991), practical application (Vygotsky, 1978), structured progression (Wood et al., 1976), alignment with assessments (Biggs, 1996), role-playing (Biddle, 1986), co-creation (Rogers and Freiberg, 1970), and connectedness to bridge theory and practice (Kolb, 2014). Positioned as marketing managers, students addressed their business challenges through a structured problem-solving framework.

3. Action Taking

The module was delivered using a fictitious dataset that encompassed various strategic and operational marketing decisions, including customer segmentation, product portfolio analysis, competitive positioning, and more. A structured six-step algorithm (Figure 2) guided the learning process, with the first step introduced in lectures and subsequent steps explored during workshops. This integration of theoretical concepts, business problem definition, data-driven analysis, and decision-making fostered critical thinking, enhanced engagement, confidence and performance.

4. **Evaluation**

The approach resulted in substantial benefits:

Student Confidence: Students expressed increased confidence with data analysis, with one stating, *"… surprising myself with my own excel knowledge and abilities…"*

Academic Performance: The average grade was 75.48, with a mode of 90 and a broad performance range (46–100), demonstrating overall success (Figure 3).

Engagement: Average attendance was 80%, with highly positive feedback on teaching style and learning relevance.

Student Feedback: Students praised the module's engaging and practical approach, with some considering marketing analyst roles due to their newfound confidence.

"I thought it would be a boring module, but I couldn't have been more wrong. … made the module interesting and engaging, and I learnt so much."

"I learnt so much, from using data analysis technique and how to apply them to strategic direction to …"

"Your passion for the module has inspired me to consider marketing analyst roles in the future. I really enjoyed the module."

5. **Specifying Learning**

By simplifying data analysis, encouraging co-creation, and contextualising professional roles, the module effectively transformed student perceptions, enhancing learning and career readiness. Future iterations will integrate advanced tools and real-world datasets to further elevate its relevance.

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The Impact of Propensity Score Matching and Weighting on Sample Selection Bias Between Multiple Cross-Sectional Surveys

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

This article explores the use of propensity scores and weighting when analyzing cross-sectional surveys. Data from the National Association of Home Builders surveys is used to evaluate the value of propensity score matching. Propensity score matching is shown to improve between-group analysis by decreasing sample selection bias. These results are compared to regression weighting techniques.

Competitive Short Paper

This article explores the use of propensity scores and weighting when analyzing cross-sectional surveys. Data from the National Association of Home Builders surveys is used to evaluate the value of propensity score matching. Propensity score matching is shown to improve between-group analysis by decreasing sample selection bias. These results are compared to regression weighting techniques.

While academic researchers frequently collect their own data surveys for analysis, there is a large base of consumer datasets and surveys collected governments and industry associations that have the potential to provide insight into consumer behavior. This data collection, however, is usually collected though cross-sectional surveys. Often it is available in cross-sectional surveys over multiple years. This study explores the handling of multiple cross-sectional data sets as a proxy for a longitudinal study with a focus on sample selection bias. The data structure, though not ideal, may have the ability to provide valuable insight (Caliendo and Kopeinig 2008).

Multiple cross section samples, however, introduce the potential for sample selection bias. This can be caused by coverage error or non-response error (Guo and Fraser 2010). In essence, the core issue is that a measured change in a variable between multiple time periods may be due to the sample construction rather than an actual behavioral change.

Propensity score matching is a method that can be used to decrease the impact of sample selection error (Caliendo and Kopeinig 2008). Consider two identical surveys that were conducted one apart. One may over sample one variable and under sample a second. Propensity score matching of rebalancing the datasets through resampling and then matching data between the two data sets (Guo and Fraser 2010). Once the samples have been adjusted though that matching process, further statistical analysis can be performed with the now unbiased sampling (Guo and Fraser 2010).

In regression analysis, weighting is used to better match the sample to the population. Little research has been undertaken on regression weights in analyzing multiple cross-sectional surveys.

CONTEXT

The data being used in this research focuses on consumer interest in green amenities in the purchase of a home. These amenities include items like superior windows, enhanced insulation, efficient heating/cooling systems, environmentally friendly flooring, etc.

This is an interesting area of analysis because it is research that began in the commercial property environment, but has grown on the residential property market (Ahn and Pearce, 2017; Aroul and Rodriguez, 2017; Gibler and Tyvimaa, 2014). There is a growing body of research that acknowledges growing consumer interest in ecologically friendly purchases. This has resulted in many increased attempts to understand green consumers.

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Mind the 'Green' Gap: Understanding Marketing's Role in Promoting Sustainability Learning in SMEs

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Cristina Fona, Alina Khakimova, Paul Baines

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Summary Statement

By exploring SMEs' sustainability learning and barriers to accessing sustainability support initiatives, this study identifies marketing strategies that contribute to solving the 'green gap' amongst small firms. Drawing on an analysis of 66 support initiatives, interviews and focus groups with SMEs owners, sustainability managers and providers of sustainability services, we unveil SMEs' learning journey and four essential barriers to sustainability learning. Marketing strategies should focus on sector-specific solutions, user-friendly resources, and platforms fostering collaboration.

Competitive Short Paper

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represent 99% of all businesses in the UK (FSB, 2024), accounting for 50% of all business-driven CO2 emissions (British Business Bank, 2024). SMEs owners increasingly recognise the importance of integrating sustainability practices to meet evolving market demands and regulatory pressures, but attitudes remain divided (Bakos et al. 2020; British Business Bank, 2024). Despite the growing rise of sustainability support initiatives aimed at helping SMEs in the net zero transition including training, grants and accelerator programs (Fona, Jackson and Baines, 2024), reports show that only 1% of SMEs in the UK have accessed these services (Mole and Belt, 2023). Academic literature thus far has investigated some of these initiatives (e.g., Condon, 2004; Conway, 2015; Ullah et al., 2023; Barakat et al., 2023) but does not explain how government and associated providers can use marketing to reduce the green gap.

Our study explores SMEs' sustainability learning journeys and barriers to accessing sustainability support initiatives highlighting the most notable implications for marketing strategies. The research relies on an analysis of 66 sustainability support initiatives (54 in the UK and 12 in selected European countries) coupled with 45 depth interviews and 2 focus groups with SMEs owners, sustainability managers and providers of sustainability support services. Data were collected between March and November 2024 and analysed using thematic analysis in NVivo 15 software.

Findings indicate that SMEs sustainability learning journeys leverage both formal and informal channels. Formal channels (structured training programs, certification platforms, and sustainability assessment tools) play a significant role in building sustainability awareness but their effectiveness in meeting SMEs' needs is mixed. Informal learning avenues include networking events, peer-to-peer learning, supplier engagement and customer interactions. These are equally, if not more, impactful than formal channels as they allow SMEs to exchange best practices and gain practical insights from industry peers, foster eco-friendly practices through collaboration and help to shape sustainability strategies by highlighting market expectations.

When investigating the barriers, despite the wealth of free services offered by both UK public and private institutions, SMEs informants report lack of knowledge about available support from local authorities, confusion about where to find reliable information, information overload due to challenges in understanding sustainability jargon and increasing emergence of new frameworks and regulations and perceived complexity of sustainability initiatives. These challenges are accompanied by the perceived high costs to access sustainability support and the lack of sufficient financial support from the government (Bakos et al. 2020). Other constraints observed include cultural and attitudinal barriers (Conway, 2015) and lack of time and resources (Jarmillo et al., 2018).

Results highlight several actionable marketing implications for promoting sustainability support initiatives among SMEs. Governments and associated providers should focus on customised communication that focuses on sector-specific solutions and success stories, positioning sustainability as a driver of competitive advantage that addresses specific business challenges. Marketers should ensure that sustainability tools and resources are presented as user-friendly and actionable and should create platforms that facilitate peer learning and supplier and customer collaboration.

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Breaking the Silence: A Call for the Accessibility and Inclusivity of the D/deaf and Hard of Hearing Community in Advertising

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

In study we explore the different facets of D/deaf and HOH (Hard of Hearing) community's reaction towards lack of access and visibility television ads. Using in-depth interviews with members from the D/deaf HOH community and two focus groups discussion with the general public, the study uncovers interesting insights from the D/deaf HOH community in terms of how they view their depiction in television ads and how they adjust to it.

Competitive Short Paper

D/deaf and Hard of Hearing (HOH) people around the world experience an alarming level of exclusion, resulting in decreased social interaction and greater risk of isolation (World Health Organization, 2019), due to their specific communication needs and linguistic particularities (British Deaf Association, 2023). Building on the premise that advertising needs to be reconceptualised as a fair representational system of today's society (Schroeder and Borgerson, 2005), this paper aims to release the voices of the marginalised to identify the factors that could make a marketing campaign more accessible and inclusive towards the D/deaf and HOH community. Our research primarily focuses on how TV advertisement considers the needs of D/deaf and HOH community through subtitles and attempts to acknowledge the existence of this community through greater representation. Using in-depth interviews with members from the D/deaf HOH community and two focus groups discussion with the general public, the study uncovers interesting insights from the D/deaf HOH community in terms of how they view their depiction in television ads and how they adjust to it.

The paper produced some important insights that contributes to existing theory related to social inclusion and socially responsible behaviour of advertisers and large corporations. Through the two studies, it was possible to get a more well-rounded perspective of commercial TV ads and the treatment of D/deaf HOH community. It was clear that the D/deaf HOH community felt lack of access and lack of visibility in the ads were another example of discrimination which led to frustration and feelings of hopelessness. D/deaf interviewees observe that the main responsibility of the current situation lies on marketers and advertisers. They admit that, through their social demands and consumers' behaviour, they can partially affect societal change but, at the same time, developing a more holistic intervention is crucial. To a certain extent, actions from macro-social agents such as policymakers would be beneficial but, at the same time, to obtain the full length of the managerial outcomes proposed in this research, consumers need to feel that the corporate social commitment to this cause is genuine. Otherwise, it would be perceived as paternalistic and/or opportunistic.

The almost inexistent depiction of D/deaf and HOH characters hinders considerably the visibility of this segment, perpetuating its damaging social exclusion. Conversely, both hearing and D/deaf participants recognise, not only the detrimental effects of this situation but also their willingness to support advertising content that brings insight and awareness of the reality of this large population group.

The focus group interviews produced some interesting insights. It was generally positive towards the depiction of D/deaf and HOH community in the ads as well as the use of subtitles. There was no opposition to these practices and the variety of the opinions showed a general acceptability of these practices. It was felt that large corporations, since they had the means and resources to reach a large audience, had the responsibility for ensuring better inclusion and building awareness.

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The Labor of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Marketing: The Costs of Relying on Marketers

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Amelie Burgess, Harriet Gray

University of Adelaide, Australia

Summary Statement

This study explores the lived experiences of marketers navigating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion marketing through Identity Work Theory. Semi-structured interviews reveal four key findings: identity intersection, emotional labour, identity negotiation, and systemic barriers. Marketers leverage lived experiences to enhance authenticity but face inequities, role strain, and burnout. Theoretically, this research advances identity-based boundary work, while practically advocating equitable DEI practices, inclusive cultures, and robust support systems. Future research should examine cross-industry and cultural contexts.

Competitive Short Paper

Brands are increasingly adopting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) marketing practices fuelled by changing consumer demographics, attitudes and demands (Kipnis et al., 2021). Marketing researchers' interest in DEI has intensified in recent years (Eisend et al., 2023). However, many of these studies focus on external marketing actions and resulting consumer responses (Kipnis et al., 2021; Campbell et al., 2023). Little is known about the implications this has on the marketers who are expected to carry out these efforts (Gurrieri, 2012; Coleman et al., 2020). Such insight is critical, given other literature streams note that DEI work often depends on marginalised communities (Melaku, 2024), creating complex concerns about the impact this has on such actors (Plotnikof et al., 2021). Using Identity Work Theory (IWT) this paper explores the experiences of marketers as they navigate the complex interplay between their identities and marketing professions.

IWT examines how individuals construct, negotiate, and maintain their identities within professional and social contexts (Drenten et al., 2023). While IWT is leveraged heavily in consumer research (e.g., Drenten et al., 2023) and organisational literature (e.g., Atewologun et al., 2016), it is less explored from the perspective of marketers. For marketers, this involves navigating the dual expectations of their identity and organisational ideals (Gurrieri, 2012). Through boundary work, marketers locate themselves in relation to colleagues, clients, and competitors, establishing or challenging notions of sameness and difference (Gurrieri, 2012). This illustrates how they construct relationships shaping the organisational and market environment while securing their position within it (Ybema et al., 2009; Atewologun et al., 2016).

Using semi-structured interviews, this study explores the experiences of 18 marketing professionals navigating DEI across sectors in Australia. Participants were purposively sampled to ensure experience in DEI marketing, with all except one belonging to a marginalised group. Interviews averaged 76 minutes and explored how participants' identities influenced their work and the challenges they face. Data were analysed thematically using NVivo, following a three-stage coding process to identify key themes (Gioia et al., 2013). Grounded in IWT, this methodology provides a nuanced understanding of how marketers navigate their identity, professional role and DEI systems.

Our findings are fourfold, increasing in complexity and intensity when marketers were from marginalised backgrounds: (1) *Identity intersection*, marketers balance their roles as professionals and community representatives, leveraging lived experiences to enhance authenticity. (2) *Emotional labour*, marketers face disproportionate expectations to educate, advocate, and navigate resistance, leading to role strain and burnout. (3) *Identity negotiation*, marketers adopt strategies like selective identity disclosure to align with organisational demands. (4) *Systemic barriers*, businesses often fail to provide adequate support, perpetuating inequities and undervaluing DEI work.

This study theoretically extends the literature on identity-based boundary work and DEI marketing by applying IWT to the experience of marketers, underscoring the inequitable burdens they bear. Practically, the findings call for brands to address these inequities by distributing DEI responsibilities equitably and fostering supportive inclusive cultures. Future research could explore cross-cultural or industry comparisons, alternatively examining interventions to create sustainable, equitable environments and to better support marketers.

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De-Influencing and Over-Consumption: Managing Ethical Contradictions in the Influencer Economy

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Amelie Burgess, Kate Sansome, Alison Joubert, David Matthews, Harriet Gray

The University of Adelaide, Australia

Summary Statement

This study explores how social media influencers navigate ethical tensions in promoting consumption while discouraging overconsumption. Using a conceptual lens and paradox theory, it identifies three paradoxes: the dual identity paradox, the de-influencing paradox, and the social media hauls paradox. A typology of four influencer archetypes highlights how influencers balance commercial and ethical motivations and mindful and mindless consumption, revealing challenges that arise as influencers (mis)align their content with these values.

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Understanding Barriers to Sustainability Transitions: A Service Ecosystem Perspective

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Kate Sansome, Taylor Willmott, Jonathan Baker, Jodie Conduit

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Summary Statement

This study examines the systemic challenges of transitioning to sustainability within the context of hospital and aged care food waste. By analysing micro, meso, and macro factors, it highlights barriers and enablers of sustainable transitions. An integrated ecosystem approach is essential to effectively reduce food waste while supporting environmental and human wellbeing. This research contributes to the literature on sustainable service systems, emphasising the need for collective action to address complex societal challenges.

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The Impact Of Increased Supermarket Concentration On The Network

Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

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Summary Statement

A convergence of supermarket concentration is being seen in developed markets. The effect this retailer behavior has on upstream suppliers, is not extensively covered in the literature. Upstream suppliers are often muted due to the heavy reliance on these high-power retailers, retaliatory concerns, and the potential loss of their core business. Our findings suggest the concentration of supermarket power has impacts beyond asymmetric power and supplier viability and is shaping and influencing the wider marketplace.

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From Check-In to Comeback: The Impact of SST Engagement on Customer Loyalty in Hospitality

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the role of Self-Service Technology (SST) engagement in fostering customer loyalty within hospitality firms. Using the ABC model (affective, behavioural, cognitive), it highlights how SST creates meaningful connections that enhance satisfaction, advocacy and repeat visits. The paper emphasizes the importance of designing SST to meet customer engagement needs and adopting hybrid models for inclusivity, aligning with ethical marketing practices to address societal challenges and support a sustainable, customer-centric hospitality industry.

Competitive Short Paper

The adoption of Self-Service Technologies (SST) in hospitality firms has transformed customer experiences by automating tasks that were traditionally human-driven. Technologies such as self-check-in kiosks, robotic room service, and automated ordering systems have enhanced operational efficiency while redefining service delivery (Shiwen et al., 2022). However, there is limited focus on the emerging role of SST engagement in fostering customer loyalty to the premises where these technologies are implemented (Robertson et al., 2016).

Customer loyalty is a cornerstone of success in the hospitality sector, driving repeat visits, advocacy and profitability. Research indicates that loyalty is often shaped by the emotional and cognitive bonds customers develop with a service provider (Chai et al., 2015). In the context of SST, these bonds are forged through engagement, which encompasses emotional satisfaction, behavioural interactions and cognitive involvement (Behnam et al., 2021). This paper emphasizes SST engagement as a key antecedent of loyalty, extending the discussion to how firms can strategically design SST experiences to achieve this outcome.

Engagement with SST can be analysed using the ABC model, which examines affective, behavioural and cognitive dimensions (Hollebeek et al., 2019; Rasool et al., 2020). Affective engagement refers to the emotional satisfaction derived from SST convenience and efficiency, such as the ease of self-check-in. Behavioural engagement reflects the frequency and depth of interactions, such as regular use of automated ordering systems. Cognitive engagement involves the mental effort required to navigate SST interfaces, fostering a sense of accomplishment and involvement. Together, these dimensions create meaningful customer connections that influence loyalty behaviours, including repeat visits and advocacy (Xu & Wang, 2020).

The implications for the hospitality industry are significant. Firms must be sensitive to the engagement dimensions of their customers and ensure that SSTs are designed to meet these needs. Affective elements, such as intuitive interfaces, behavioural reinforcements like consistent reliability, and cognitive stimulation through innovative features, must be strategically integrated. This approach ensures that SST not only serve functional purposes but also create experiences that deepen customer loyalty to the firm (Claffey & Brady, 2019). While SST offers numerous advantages, addressing resistance from less tech-savvy customers and concerns over the loss of the 'human touch' through hybrid models ensures inclusivity, broader adoption and sustained engagement (Liu & Hung, 2021). This approach reflects marketers' ethical and responsible practices in catering to societal needs and promoting fairness.

In conclusion, SST engagement plays a pivotal role in encouraging customer loyalty to hospitality firms. By fostering emotional, behavioural and cognitive connections, SST transcends mere functionality, contributing to the long-term success of service-oriented businesses. With consumer demands today emphasizing responsible and ethical business practices, it is crucial for marketers to act as 'saints' within the industry, addressing societal needs beyond the sole pursuit of profits. At the same time, scholars must continue to delve into meaningful research, navigating the complex challenges posed by these evolving issues. This alignment with the theme of 'Saints and Scholars' underscores the dual responsibility of practitioners and researchers in shaping a responsible and sustainable future for the industry.

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Self-Service Technology (SST) in Hospitality: Bridging Cultural Divides

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the adoption of Self-Service Technology (SST) in hospitality, focusing on cultural divides in its acceptance. While individualist cultures value efficiency and innovation, collectivist societies prioritise human-centric service. Grounded in frameworks like UTAUT and the Experience Economy, it highlights the need for a hybrid approach integrating SST with human interaction. Hospitality providers must balance tradition and innovation while addressing diverse guest expectations to ensure satisfaction and the sustainable adoption of SST globally.

Competitive Short Paper

The adoption of Self-Service Technology (SST) in hospitality has transformed guest interactions and service delivery over the past two decades. First introduced in the early 2000s through innovations like self-check-in kiosks and digital concierges, SST addressed growing demands for efficiency and cost reduction (Shiwen et al., 2022). While enhancing operations and guest convenience, its global reception reflects a complex interplay of cultural expectations and technological acceptance.

The hospitality industry traditionally thrives on personalized service, where human interaction is a cornerstone of guest satisfaction (Tai et al., 2021). SST challenges this paradigm by prioritizing convenience over human touch. In regions such as North America and Europe, where individualism and efficiency are valued, guests widely embraced SST in their hotel experiences and as a symbol of innovation (Buhalis & Sinarta, 2019; Kattara & El-Said, 2013). For instance, mobile check-in systems were reported to enhance guest satisfaction in tech-savvy urban populations (Aday et al., 2017).

Conversely, in collectivist cultures predominant in Asia and the Middle East, the reception of SST has been more reserved. Hospitality in these regions is deeply rooted in cultural norms that emphasize attentiveness and personal engagement (Lam et al., 2021). For example, research in Southeast Asia found that a significant portion of hotel guests view SST as counterintuitive to the essence of hospitality (Liu & Hung, 2022). The absence of human interaction in these contexts is interpreted as a reduction in service quality, undermining the emotional connection that guests expect from their hospitality experiences (Park et al., 2022).

The cultural divide in SST acceptance is explained by frameworks like the Technology Acceptance Model and UTAUT, which show that factors such as perceived usefulness and social norms shape technology adoption (Venkatesh et al., 2003). For example, efficiency-focused regions may value SST, while collectivist societies prefer human-centric service (Kaasa & Vadi, 2010). Besides this, theories focused on guest needs such as Pine and Gilmore's Experience Economy (2011), emphasize the importance of creating memorable experience through emotional and human engagement. Personalized service makes guests feel treated like VIP, an experience that SST struggles to replicate (Blut et al., 2016).

To bridge this cultural divide, hospitality providers may adopt a hybrid approach that integrates SST with human interaction. Strategies such as offering optional human assistance alongside digital solutions and designing culturally adaptive interfaces can enhance guest satisfaction across diverse markets (Dabholkar & Spaid, 2012). Training staff to complement SST by providing personalized engagement can further balance technological efficiency with the emotional depth of human service.

In conclusion, while SST has revolutionized hospitality, its global reception highlights the need for cultural sensitivity in technology implementation. In this context, hospitality providers must embody the role of saints, harmonizing tradition with innovation to meet diverse guest expectations, and scholars, remaining at the forefront of research to navigate the evolving needs of a culturally diverse industry. By addressing these nuanced expectations, the industry can ensure both guest satisfaction and the sustainable adoption of SST in a culturally diverse world.

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From Social Media Activism to Wellbeing: A Sequential Mediation Model Leveraging Social Purpose Branding

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

Harriet Gray, Amelie Burgess, Dean Wilkie, Rebecca Dolan

The University of Adelaide, Australia

Summary Statement

This study examines how social purpose branding supports consumers' social media activism to enhance hedonic wellbeing, as underpinned by social identity theory. PLS-SEM analysis uncovers a sequential mediating effect, highlighting the critical role of brand-facilitated factors (i.e., perceived ability to create social impact, and then sense of social purpose) to enhanced consumer wellbeing. This research elevates wellbeing as a priority for marketers. We note the individual, brand and societal level benefits associated with improved wellbeing.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction Brands are increasingly adopting social purpose branding (SPB) to engage consumers and contribute to societal change. SPB aligns a brand's identity with social or environmental causes, resonating with values-driven consumers and encouraging collective participation in movements (Gray et al., 2024). This study explores the intersection of SPB and social media activism, focusing on how brands can improve consumers' hedonic wellbeing. Social media activism, defined as using social platforms to engage in social movements, has become a key avenue for individuals to express identity, share information, and push for change. Despite its rapid growth, research on its implications for consumer wellbeing remains limited, particularly in the context of brand-facilitated efforts (Clark, 2016).

Research Objectives This study examines the mechanisms underpinning the relationship between social media activism and hedonic wellbeing and explores the role of brands in supporting this process through SPB.

Theoretical Framework Guided by social identity theory (SIT), the research proposes a sequential mediation model linking social media activism to hedonic wellbeing. SIT posits that group membership shapes self-identity, suggesting that identification with social movements or socially driven brands can encourage a sense of purpose and empowerment (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The model highlights that social media activism enhances the perceived ability to create social impact, which subsequently builds a sense of purpose, ultimately leading to improved hedonic wellbeing. Connectedness moderates this pathway, amplifying the effect of perceived social impact and purpose (Burgess et al., 2021).

Methodology Using a quantitative approach, the study surveyed 312 Australian participants who engaged with SPB initiatives. PLS-SEM tested the proposed model. Constructs included brand-facilitated social media activism, perceived ability to create social impact, sense of purpose, connectedness, and hedonic wellbeing. Rigorous measures reduced bias, and validity was confirmed through multiple statistical tests (Hair et al., 2016).

Findings The results support a full two-step sequential mediation, whereby social media activism increases perceived social impact. This builds a sense of purpose, ultimately enhancing hedonic wellbeing. Connectedness strengthens the pathway from perceived social impact to purpose, emphasising the importance of creating a sense of belonging. SPB initiatives are shown to play a critical role in supporting consumers' activism journeys; reinforcing beliefs in their ability to create change and encouraging an activist purpose (Caprara et al., 2009; Foster, 2019).

Theoretical Contributions This research advances SPB literature by uncovering the mechanisms linking social media activism to wellbeing, emphasising the role of perceived social impact and purpose as mediators, and demonstrating the moderating effect of connectedness.

Practical Implications Brands can leverage SPB to enhance consumer wellbeing by ensuring SPB efforts are authentic and impactful, demonstrating tangible social outcomes through transparent communication, supporting activist identities through co-creation opportunities and community-building initiatives, and promoting connectedness via dedicated platforms for interaction. These strategies enhance consumer-brand relationships while delivering societal and individual benefits (Hajdas & Kłeczek, 2021; Ogilvy, 2024).

Conclusion This study highlights the potential of SPB to align consumer activism with enhanced wellbeing. By understanding and supporting the journey from social media activism to hedonic wellbeing, brands can generate meaningful societal and consumer-level impacts.

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Segmenting Blood Donors by Positive Word of Mouth Engagement

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

Encouraging blood donors to talk positively about blood donation is a key recruitment strategy. Understanding engagement ensures appropriate support is provided. Broadening the scope of current advocacy models, the study identifies four segments of blood donors based on the agency and goal tenacity of past word of mouth. While Advocates are the most explicit and proactive in their advocacy efforts, a large portion of the panel are seemingly ready to be mobilised with additional support.

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Shared Living Space – A Conceptual Framework

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

The present contribution introduces a consumer-centric framework for shared living spaces that integrates antecedents for behavior, interactions inside the space, and potential positive and negative consequences. We expand on this view by differentiating mechanisms and intervention approaches as a way to buffer negative consequences that arise in share living spaces.

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Consuming Individual Living Space

Track: 7. Consumer Research

Monika Koller, Eva Marckhgott

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Summary Statement

This paper introduces a framework on the consumption of individual living space. Based on conceptual underpinnings derived from multidisciplinary literature, our framework shows that consuming individual living space is much more than just inhabiting a specific type of space. Consumption of living space entails a summary of a multitude of single purchase decisions. Consumers immerse themselves in a living space, the connect with the space and feel a sense of belonging.

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Exploring the Impact of Immersive Virtual Reality on Student Engagement: A Comparative Study of Immersive and Non-Immersive Virtual Reality Learning Environments

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

This competitive short paper explores the comparative impact of immersive virtual reality and non-immersive virtual reality learning environments on students' engagement in marketing education. Data is collected using a qualitatively driven, mixed-methods, quasi-experimental design. It focuses on understanding how affordances of immersive learning environments may impact behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement dimensions. This study contributes to pedagogical insights by demonstrating how immersive learning tools can enhance marketing educational strategies offering valuable implications for marketing pedagogy.

Competitive Short Paper

Education 4.0 emphasises integrating immersive technologies like Virtual Reality (VR) to promote engaging learning environments that enhance student engagement and support effective learning (Moraes et al., 2022; Li and Xue, 2023). Student engagement is essential for deep learning (Chiu, 2023) but remains a challenges as universities often rely on traditional methods, leading to low engagement (Freidhoff, 2024; Martin and Borup, 2022). To address this issue, this research compares immersive VR and non-immersive VR's impact on engagement in marketing education activities, exploring behavioural, cognitive, and emotional dimensions. The findings aim to advance Education 4.0 strategies, addressing engagement challenges through immersive teaching.

Student engagement refers to the effort which students invest in learning activities, consisting of behavioural, cognitive, and emotional dimensions (Bedenlier et al., 2020; Kuh, 2003). Immersive VR has significant potential to enhance student engagement through realistic simulations leveraged by its affordances such as immersion and presence (Li and Xue, 2023; Kardes, 2020).

This research adopts a situational perspective to capture the dynamic, context-specific nature of students' behavioural, cognitive, and emotional engagement in immersive VR and non-immersive VR environments (van Braak et al., 2021). Supported by constructivism, which emphasises learners' active role in constructing knowledge through interaction, and flow theory which highlights optimal immersion in learning (Piaget, 2013; Csikszentmihalyi, 2018), this approach explores how VR affordances impact engagement in-situ (Fromm et al., 2021; Archambault et al., 2022).

Despite the growing educational use of immersive technologies, research exploring their specific impact on situational engagement across behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement dimensions is limited (Pöysä et al., 2020). This gap is particularly prominent in marketing education, where comparative studies examining immersive VR and non-immersive VR learning environments are scarce (Pettersen et al., 2020; Kazu and Kuvvetli, 2023). Addressing this gap is crucial as marketing education increasingly prioritises experiential learning tools to prepare learners for a technology-driven industry (Ferrell and Ferrell, 2020). This research provides insights into designing more contextually relevant learning experiences with immersive technology in marketing education.

This research uses a quasi-experimental design, qualitatively led mixed-methods approach to compare engagement in immersive VR and non-immersive VR learning environments. Thirty second-year marketing students will participate, and data will be collected via pre- and post-tests, self-reports, focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis, while quantitative data will be analysed with descriptive statistics. This triangulated approach explores behavioural, cognitive, and emotional engagement, yielding a comprehensive understanding of how immersive VR impact engagement in educational contexts.

This research compares student engagement in immersive VR and non-immersive VR learning environment in marketing education. Using a mixed methods approach, it examines how affordances like immersion and presence impact engagement. Adopting a situational perspective, it explores how these conditions shape experiences, addressing literature gaps regarding immersive technologies in marketing education. The findings provide insights for educators on enhancing learning engagement through immersive technologies, supporting applied and innovative educational practices in marketing.

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Developing soft skills for tertiary graduates through a marketing strategy simulation activity

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

Recent reports suggest that tertiary graduates display gaps in key areas of soft skills which affects their potential employability in the workforce. This study explores how simulations activity in a marketing strategy course enabled participants to develop a range of both cognitive and non-cognitive soft skills. Our study provides guidance for the adoption of simulations learning to support development of soft skills to improve the employability potential of graduates.

Competitive Short Paper

Recent reports (CMI, 2021; QS, 2023) suggest that tertiary graduates show gaps in key areas of soft skills which affects their potential employability in the workforce. These soft skills gaps occur in similar patterns across North America, Europe and Asia (QS, 2023). This study presents an evaluation to show how the adoption of business simulations offers one pathway to bridge the soft skills gap for business management graduates entering the workforce. The aim of our study was to assess whether simulation learning activities supported soft skills development. In short, we aimed to evaluate if participation in simulations triggered development of soft skills. Soft skills have been categorised into cognitive and non-cognitive skills categories (Deming, 2017; Lee, 2018). Some specific examples of cognitive skills are problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, while emotional intelligence, adaptability, teamwork fall into the non-cognitive category. While soft skills are deemed important for success in an organisational context, there is commentary that soft skills are just as important as life skills in contemporary society (Lee, 2018; Meeks, 2017). To support learner capability development, HEIs (higher education institutions) have developed strategies for developing cognitive capabilities of graduates, however development of non-cognitive soft skills is less well reported.

Our study draws on qualitative data from a debrief of a small group of 30 participants who participated in an online marketing strategy simulations activity over 10 weeks in an MBA programme in a well-known University in the Sultanate of Oman. The findings of the data analysis shows participation in the simulation activities triggered development of a range of both cognitive and non-cognitive soft skills (Vos & Brennan, 2010). The results also showed that simulations activities when set-up well added an element of fun and competitiveness which generated an engaging and involving context for learning (Jagger et al., 2016). This learning context enabled participants to becoming better at self-directed learning (van Hout-Wolters et al., 2000) which in-turn contributed to triggering the development of soft skills. The simulations activities also showed that participants displayed evidence of becoming independent learners, a capability considered important for success in both an academic and workplace setting (Lee, 2018). Our study provides guidance for the adoption of simulations learning to support development of both cognitive and non-cognitive capabilities to improve the employability potential of graduates (CMI, 2021; Jagger et al., 2016). While the results in this study are encouraging, we suggest cautious optimism with these results as the findings of this study is an exploratory study based on small sample of participants.

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Embedding SDGs in Marketing Curricula: A Practical Pedagogical Approach

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

Our research presents a framework to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into undergraduate marketing curricula using transformative learning, systems thinking, and the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME). It outlines a practical pedagogical approach implemented in a public university in Portugal, leveraging challenge-based learning and reflective practices. The study aims to assess the framework's impact on students' critical thinking, problem-solving and ethical awareness, providing information to educators promoting sustainability in marketing education.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Given the urgent crisis of sustainability we must change how marketing is practised and taught. This study proposes a framework combining transformative learning, systems thinking and the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into undergraduate marketing curricula.

Theoretical Foundation

Transformative learning transforms problematic mindsets, habits of mind and perspectives to be more inclusive, open and reflective (Mezirow, 2008). This grows awareness of how these frames of reference shape our thinking, feelings and actions (Mezirow, 2008), fostering critical reflection and behavioural change (Mezirow, 1997). It has been employed to tackle sustainability challenges and societal issues (O'Grady, 2023; Viera Trevisan et al., 2024). Systems thinking, on the other hand, affords appreciation of the constituent parts of a complex system and also of their interrelationships and interdependencies (Spain, 2019), thus stimulating a holistic analysis of marketing dimensions as they affect and are affected by a range of sustainability matters. Finally, the PRME signify a commitment of Business Schools to foster prosocial behaviours and ethical values and to train future business leaders with the skills and knowledge required to balance economic and sustainability goals (Russo et al., 2023). This combination of approaches, we suggest, should provide students with the mindsets, knowledge and abilities to become thoughtful practitioners, who use the tools of marketing to advance rather than hinder sustainability while serving business needs.

Research Objectives and Methodology

This study details how the proposed framework can be materialised in concrete teaching and assessment practices (practical pedagogy). Towards this, it reports on an implementation in an undergraduate class at a public university in Portugal. We also explore its effectiveness and potential to improve students' critical thinking (Dahl et al., 2018), problem-solving skills (Malarski & Berte, 2023), and ethical awareness of and attitudes towards sustainability (Kemper et al., 2020). Using a mixed-methods approach (Tomasella et al., 2022), student surveys will be carried out at the start and end of the semester and at one point in between, focusing on cognitive and perspective evolution. In the case of the most transformative developments, individual interviews will be conducted to obtain additional qualitative data.

Practical Pedagogy

Students will participate in practical, challenge-based learning (Martínez-Bravo et al., 2024) informed by the proposed framework. They will work on case studies developed with SDG-focussed companies. These will require creative solutions to sustainability and business concerns. Both students and the teacher will journal their experiences to encourage reflexivity. Creative and reflective practices support innovative marketing pedagogies and foster transformative learning (Heath & Tynan, 2023).

Expected Contributions, Preliminary Observations and Conclusion

We expect to provide a meaningful account of the effect of the proposed intervention upon students' engagement in the class and their attitudes towards marketing and sustainability. This will allow us to validate and revise the model upon which we based the intervention. Finally, we expect to be able to provide recommendations for other teachers seeking to replicate any benefits that we discover.

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Analogue Consumer Research Approaches

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

In our conceptual paper, we argue that in an increasingly digital world, it is crucial to focus on the human aspect in consumer research. The human being as a living, physical entity, equipped with sensory modalities to experience the world. We discuss distinct approaches for conducting empirical research to study consumer behaviour within an analogue research-framework. We suggest that incorporating these considerations into study planning can foster creative thinking and generate new ideas.

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Understanding Rejection And Postponement Of Digital-Only Banks

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

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Summary Statement

The study attempted to identify antecedents of the two main types of innovation resistance behaviours - outright rejection and postponement - of digital-only banks by traditional-bank customers. The analysis of the collected data showed that the lack of relative advantage perceptions and lack of compatibility perceptions more strongly influenced rejection intention than postponement intention. Moreover, age and gender, respectively, moderated the influence of the lack of relative advantage perceptions and the lack of compatibility perceptions.

Competitive Short Paper

In recent years, digital-only (virtual or internet-only) banks have emerged as a more advanced application of banking services (Windasari, Kusumawati, Larasati, & Amelia, 2022). Yuen (2023) reported that digital-only account openings in the US are anticipated to remain stagnant at a mere 200,000 annually between 2024 and 2027. According to Yuen

(2023), this trend will continue as consumers gravitate towards established megabanks amidst economic uncertainty. To assist digital-only banks in attracting traditional-bank customers, this study attempted to identify antecedents of the two main types of innovation resistance behaviours – the outright rejection of digital-only banks and the postponement of adopting digital-only banks.

Innovation diffusion theory (Rogers, 2003) is a well-known theory explaining the adoption of an innovation. According to diffusion theory, adopting an innovation is determined by five factors. Of these five factors, relative advantage perceptions, perceived complexity and compatibility are crucial bank customer perceptions influencing the intention to use online banking (Montazemi & Qahri-Saremi, 2015). Given traditional-bank customers' widespread adoption of digital banking services, we focused on relative advantage and compatibility perceptions as key antecedents. To align with Ram and Sheth (1989) who asserted that negative perceptions lead to innovation resistance, we redefined the constructs of relative advantage and compatibility perceptions to emphasize the lack of perceived relative advantage and compatibility. The conceptual model comprised nine hypotheses, including four moderation hypotheses testing age and gender as moderators of the influence of the lack of relative advantage perceptions and lack of compatibility perceptions on the two resistance behaviours.

Data were collected from a sample of 613 traditional-bank customers in South Africa using an online survey. The conceptual model was tested using SmartPLS version 4.

A lack of relative advantage and compatibility perceptions explained 52.4% of the variance in rejection intention and 22.4% in postponing intention. The lack of compatibility perceptions more strongly influenced rejection and postponement intentions, than the lack of relative advantage perceptions. The lack of compatibility perceptions also positively influenced the lack of relative advantage perceptions. The age of the respondents negatively moderated the influence of lack of relative advantage perceptions on rejection intention. As age increases, the positive influence of the perceived lack of relative advantage on rejection intention decreases. Gender moderated the influence of the perceived lack of compatibility on rejection intention. The influence of the lack of compatibility perceptions on rejection intention was stronger for males than females. Furthermore, the indirect effect of the lack of compatibility perceptions on rejection intention, through the lack of perceived relative advantage, was also moderated by age. The indirect effect decreased as age increased.

In summary, the main theoretical contribution of the study is expanding the limited research on digital-only bank adoption. The significant moderation effects are novel as they present more insights into the influence of lack of relative advantage and compatibility perceptions on rejection intention. The study's findings lead to useful insights for digital-only banks to attract traditional-bank customers, for example, the importance of enhancing service offerings to decrease the lack of compatibility perceptions of traditional-bank customers.

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Personalised Pricing, CSR, and Ethics: Effects on Customer Loyalty in Ride-Sharing Platforms

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

E-commerce platforms use personalised pricing strategies to enhance loyalty in competitive markets. This study examines the impact of personalised pricing on loyalty through perceived social responsibility and customer ethical perception. An analysis of 110 survey responses reveals that personalised pricing negatively affects both variables, reducing customer loyalty. The findings extend customer ethical perception theory in pricing and provide insights for ride-sharing platform managers on balancing pricing strategies with maintaining customer trust.

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The interrelationship between destination attributes and tourist motivations in a period of crisis.

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

This research explores how tourists' motivation dimensions can change during a crisis, and how they can influence tourists' wellbeing. The study employed a qualitative pre-study, two pilot surveys, and two main studies (online surveys); Study 1 (before) and Study 2 (during) examining tourism motivations in a crisis period. Findings elicit the causal features that influence affective outcomes which motivate tourists. Results extend attention restoration and motivation theories illustrating the importance of tranquillity as motivation dimension.

301

Heroes first, villains later? Insights from a computer-aided exploration of pedagogical case studies

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

Pedagogical case studies are widely used by marketing educators. Yet, are case studies really just materials for discussion, without any endorsement of managerial practices? To answer this question, our empirical paper undertakes a computer-aided exploration of publicly available metadata of case studies about corporate actors eventually affected by scandals. Preliminary results from a sentiment analysis reveal a change in tone before and after the scandal, with a shift towards more negative sentiments after the scandal.

Competitive Short Paper

Widely used in many disciplines taught in business schools, case studies about corporate actors often come with a disclaimer "for discussion only", claiming not to be an "illustration of either effective or ineffective handling of a managerial situation"1 discussed therein. Widely used within marketing, pedagogical case studies are subject to both praise and criticism (Collinson and Tourish, 2015; McDonald, 2017; Moolenaar and Beverland, 2021). As illustrated by news about the likes of Enron or Theranos, corporate actors are at the height of public consideration and acclaimed as success stories in the news one day, while the next day, they hit rock bottom due to scandals or wrongdoings (Harris, 2003; Salter, 2008; Wall Street Journal, 2021). Thus, a marketing instructor might wonder whether pedagogical case studies really portray corporate actors just as material for discussion.

To answer this question, we undertake an exploratory analysis of pedagogical case studies about corporate actors affected by scandals. Our sample was drawn from scholarly publications on the topic (Yallapragada, Roe, and Toma, 2012; Soltani, 2014) and investigative journalism pieces (Clark and Louch 2021; Wall Street Journal 2021). This combined strategy led to a shortlist of eight corporate actors: Enron, Worldcom, Healthsouth, Madoff, Lehman Brothers, Parmalat, Theranos and Abraaj. In line with previous studies (Symons and Ibarra, 2014), we focused on the Case Centre website as the leading repository of pedagogical case studies. Using the advanced search function of the Case Centre website, we searched for case studies published up to December 2024, resulting in a total of 286 entries. It should be noted that as part of our search, we came across several instances of case studies about these companies that are not available anymore to the public.

We use a data-driven approach to analyze the publicly available metadata, such as title, abstract, topic and keywords. Our analytical approach involves running "before/after" computer-aided data visualizations, featuring sentiment analysis and word clouds (Ertug et al., 2018), as well as co-occurrences on the whole dataset and on individual corporate actors. At the time of writing, a sentiment analysis run with the R package "SentimentR" reveals that before the fall, the titles convey a relatively balanced sentiment. After the fall, however, the titles convey a more negative average sentiment. Moving to the abstracts, before the fall, abstracts tend to convey a generally positive sentiment, only to shift towards both positive and negative sentiment after the fall. Taken together, these results indicate a change in the words used to present corporate actors before and after their fall, with a markedly negative tone after the fall. These preliminary results seem in line with the stigmatization of corporate ir-responsible behaviour (Aranda et al., 2022), indicating a change in attitude towards the corporate actors. Before such behaviours emerge publicly, there seems to be a pro-company bias (Dyck and Zingales, 2003). These preliminary findings cast a shadow on the supposed neutral portrait of companies in case studies to be used only for discussion by marketing instructors.

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Anthropomorphism and Voice-Controlled Smart Assistants: Insights on User Interaction and Behaviour

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

Voice-Controlled Smart Assistants (VCSAs) are evolving from functional tools to quasi-social companions as a result of anthropomorphism. This 8-week qualitative study with Amazon Alexa users revealed that the perception of human-like features fosters trust, emotional attachment, and engagement, influencing long-term usage. While further research is essential to understanding the complex dynamics between anthropomorphism and VCSA user behaviour, marketers can use these findings to emphasize relational benefits, enhance customer experience, and promote VCSA adoption.

Competitive Short Paper

The prevalence of Voice-Controlled Smart Assistants (VCSAs) such as Amazon Alexa and Apple Siri has significantly transformed how individuals interact with technology (McNair, 2019; Statista, 2020). Initially seen as functional tools, these devices are now increasingly being perceived as quasi-social entities, with users commonly forming emotional and behavioural connections through anthropomorphism—the attribution of human-like characteristics to machines (Novak & Hoffman, 2019; Schweitzer et al., 2019). This study explored how anthropomorphism influenced users of VCSA devices, focusing on trust, emotional attachment, and engagement, alongside implications for sustained usage and consumer marketing.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative interpretive approach, including diary studies and interviews with 14 participants using Amazon Alexa over an eight-week period. Throughout the study, participants documented their experiences, highlighting initial challenges, evolving usage, and emotional responses to the device's performance. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns in user interactions and behavioural changes over time.

Findings

The findings revealed that anthropomorphism significantly impacted user behaviour and satisfaction with VCSAs, with features such as conversational abilities, relatable tones, and personalized responses elevating the device from a functional tool into a perceived companion (Schweitzer et al., 2019).

Initially, participants were cautious, encountering frustrations due to device limitations or misunderstandings. However, over time, as users adapted and perceived responses as human-like, they reported increased levels of trust, emotional engagement, and integration of the VCSA into daily routines. Additionally, users frequently began described their devices as "partners" or "companions," emphasizing the development of relationships due to the devices ability to streamline tasks and offer personalized support (Schweitzer et al., 2019). However, when devices failed to understand commands or provided inaccurate responses, users experienced frustration, highlighting the emotional stakes of these interactions (Jain et al., 2023). These relational dynamics suggested that anthropomorphism was not just a design element but a key driver of long-term usage and value perception (Novak & Hoffman, 2019; Singh, 2021).

Implications and Limitations

The anthropomorphic qualities of VCSAs present significant opportunities for influencing consumer behaviour. Marketers can emphasize the relational and emotional benefits of VCSAs, positioning them as trusted companions that simplify life and enhance user experience (Schweitzer et al., 2019; Pitardi & Marriott, 2021). Additionally, addressing common frustrations through improved device functionality and targeted messaging, can help strengthen trust and retention (Jain et al., 2023).

The limitations of this study included a small sample size and sole focus on the Amazon Alexa device. Additionally, as the study was conducted during the COVID-19 period, with users more confined to their homes, the findings may reflect unique contextual factors. Future research should explore diverse devices and user demographics to generalize findings and delve deeper into cultural and psychological factors shaping anthropomorphism and VCSA usage.

Conclusion

Anthropomorphism plays a key role in how users perceive and engage with VCSAs, driving emotional attachment, trust, and sustained usage. Marketers can leverage these insights to enhance consumer experiences and optimize strategies for promoting VCSA adoption. However, as these technologies evolve, further research is necessary to fully understand the complex dynamics between anthropomorphism and user behaviour.

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Studying Food Insecurity: Theoretical and Methodological Reflections

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

Theoretical and methodological reflections on three studies of food insecurity. This paper considers complementary insights offered by different approaches and how they expand understanding of the issues facing individuals, households, organisations, and communities within the food insecurity landscape. We propose that novel multi-modal approaches are required for such grand challenges and consider how multi-team reflective work may become a greater part of our cannon as we seek to create real-world impact with our research

Competitive Short Paper

This paper proposes a theoretical and methodological reflection on our own experiences of studying food insecurity. It considers how different approaches offer complementary insights which can expand our understanding of the issues facing individuals, households, organisations, and communities within the food insecurity landscape.

Food insecurity encompasses a lack of "regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active healthy life" (FAO, 2022). It continues to gain increasing attention because of the significant concern it presents to the health, of all those who reside within it (O'Connor, Farag and Baines, 2016). Some households are more at risk of food insecurity and some communities more impacted, particularly those with high levels of poverty and associated vulnerabilities (Loopstra et al., 2019).

Our first study adopts an ethics of care theoretical approach and arts-based participatory method (theatrical performance) to understand food insecurity among food bank users, volunteers, and managers The arts-based aspect of the research involved creating a theatrical performance, written and performed by service users and volunteers.

Ethics of Care enables exploration of how organisations frame their caring values and consequent cultures, practices, and subjectivities. It found different forms of value co-creation and varying potential for transformative value (Parsons et al., 2021).

The second study uses institutional theory to explore third sector organizations tackling food poverty. Based on a 'quasi-ethnographic' approach with 16 community food providers, it evidences a multiplicity of organizational structures drawing on a broad range of institutional logics within the food insecurity community. It demonstrates the heterogeny of organizations attracted to, and with capacity to address aspects of food insecurity. Further, it demonstrates that multiple logics that can coexist relatively harmoniously in third sector organizations (Gordon et al., 2023).

Our final study employs assemblage theory to understand the complex social issues that influence food-insecurity. Focused on one community, using ethnographic immersion, it highlights tangible and intangible boundaries. It shows how these can deterritorialize the food-insecurity assemblage by impeding consumption in deprived spaces and consequently increase individual and household food-related vulnerability. Further it shows how such boundaries make it less likely for people to access supplementary food provision which aim to tackle food-insecurity (Scott et al., 2021).

In our reflection we will discuss how bringing together these different approaches have given us a more encompassing perspective on food insecurity and why novel multi-modal approaches are required for such grand challenges. We argue that such multi-study, multi-team research discussions have few avenues for dissemination and consider how reflections such as this may become a greater part of our cannon as we seek to create real-world impact with our research.

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When Expectations Fail: Distrust in Virtual Influencers for Tourism

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores the impact of expectancy violations by virtual influencers (VIs) on consumer distrust, leading to disengagement and negative engagement in the tourism industry. It examines identity fusion as a moderator and cultural tightness-looseness as a contextual factor. This research advances tourism marketing by exploring consumer distrust, identity fusion, cultural differences, and interdisciplinary applications of expectancy violation theory. Practical recommendations are provided for improving consumer engagement and managing VIs effectively across diverse travel markets.

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Can Smartphone Apps Support Bathing Water Decision-Making? An Exploratory Study on the Use of the Safer Seas and Rivers Service (SSRS) App by Surfers and Swimmers in the UK

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

This study explores how smartphone apps influence users' decisions about entering UK bathing waters, focusing on the Safer Seas and Rivers Service (SSRS) app, which provides real-time water quality information. The research examines digital tools and information users rely on by analysing interview transcripts and app usage data. By using social marketing and the transtheoretical model to analyse the data, a clearer picture of the factors influencing behaviour can be considered for future app changes.

Competitive Short Paper

The physical, mental health, and economic benefits of good quality bathing water are undisputed. However, there can be health risks associated with exposure to poor quality bathing waters (Farrell et al 2022). Communicating these risks to the general public can be challenging and can manifest in many forms from bathing water advisories to smartphone app alerts. Little research has been conducted on the impact these risk advisories have on behaviour, particularly how ubiquitous technologies such as smartphone apps can influence users. This qualitative study investigates the decision-making processes of how smartphone apps can influence users, focusing on the digital tools, information, and data they utilise. The research, part of the Horizon Europe funded BlueAdapt project, specifically examines the use of the Safer Seas and Rivers Service (SSRS) mobile application, developed by the UK-based Non-Governmental Organisation Surfers Against Sewage (SAS). SSRS provides real-time information on water quality for UK rivers and ocean spaces including a pollution forecast map for over 200 locations compiled from various government and water company sources. The app also contains information on surf, wind, tide, and beach conditions.

The research addresses the question: What information and technology do people use to make informed decisions about safely entering UK bathing waters? Between February and June 2024, twenty-three semi-structured qualitative virtual interviews with participants who self-identified as bathing water users were conducted. Participants were recruited through SAS social media channels. Adopting a social constructivist approach (Silverman, 2024), the research explores how participants collectively create their social reality through interactions with the interviewer. Participants' experiences and meanings are described without being judged as true or false, but rather as perspectives (Silverman, 2024). Complimenting the qualitative findings, the study also analysed Google Analytics data from the SSRS app, examining user engagement metrics such as time spent on the app, popular pages, and frequently accessed information.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019; 2021) was employed to analyse interview transcripts, identifying recurring patterns of meaning. Four themes emerged from the initial coding: 1) participants' perceptions of risk, 2) safety measures taken before entering bathing waters, 3) sources of information used to inform decisions, and 4) the role of technology in the decision-making process.

Preliminary findings indicate that bathing water users rely on a combination of smartphone app data, personal judgment, and environmental conditions to make informed decisions. Trust in and usage of these apps vary based on individual experiences, perceived reliability, and specific app features. Decision making is complex, by applying a social marketing approach (Andreasen, 2005), the research seeks to understand the influence and impact of the SSRS app and to explore why these elements are important to interviewees. The transtheoretical model was applied to understand the characteristics of App users at different stages of change (Prochaska 2008). The insights from qualitative interviews, combined with Google Analytics data, provide a clearer picture of the factors influencing behaviour and their potential reasons. This insight will be used to enhance the SSRS features in the future to impact behaviour using a social marketing approach.

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The Appeal Of Emotions And Identity: Impact Of Message Framing And Gender Portrayal On Charity Donations For Anti-Domestic Violence Campaigns

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

This study investigates the impact of emotional message framing (hope vs. disgust) and gender portrayal on donation behaviors for anti-domestic violence campaigns. Grounded in prospect and social role theories, the findings highlight how framing and societal perceptions influence charitable giving. High-disgust messages featuring male victims and high-hope messages portraying female survivors were most effective. The research offers actionable insights for charities to optimize their communication strategies and advance theoretical understanding of emotional appeals in marketing.

Competitive Short Paper

Purpose: The charitable sector is increasingly competitive globally, particularly for causes like domestic violence (Charities Aid Foundation, 2022; Immordino et al., 2020, Sung et al., 2023). While charity giving increased in developed countries, a decline was noted in developing nations such as Mauritius being among the biggest fallers from 2017 to 2021 (CAF World Giving Index, 2022). This situation highlights the critical need for effective marketing strategies to address societal challenges ethically and sustainably. Building on prospect theory (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979), which examines decision-making under risk, and social role theory (Eagly and Crowley, 1986) which explores gendered helping behaviours, the study investigates the impact of positive (i.e., hope) versus negative (i.e., disgust) message framing on donation behaviors, focusing on the moderating role of victim gender.

Methodology: A quantitative approach was used to investigate the efficacy of emotional message framing on donation behaviors through a between-subject online experiment. Recognizing the potential for defensive reactions to negative framing (Shanahan et al., 2012), emotion appeals were analyzed at varying levels. A 2 (disgust: low/high) x 2 (hope: low/high) x 2 (gender of victim: male/female) experimental design was employed. Participants in the experimental group were exposed to one of eight advertisements, each varying in emotional framing and victim portrayal, and indicated their donation via click counts. Then, they completed a survey, assessing their donation behaviours. A control group completed the survey without seeing any advertisement, enhancing the study's internal validity. A total of 388 participants completed the survey, randomly assigned to control (n=123) and experimental (n=265) groups, ensuring internal validity.

Findings: From the website database, 51.2% (n=213) of participants chose to donate, while 48.8% (n=203) did not. Among donors, 54.5% (n=116) responded to disgust-framed messages compared to 45.5% (n=97) hope-framed messages. This finding highlights the stronger impact of loss/negative framing, compared to gain-framing, as supported by literature (Chung and Lee, 2019; Yousef et al., 2022). Survey results, further, emphasised the importance of message framing and gender portrayal. Of 140 donors, high-disgust advert featuring male victim (n=26) and high-hope advert portraying female survivor (n=25) were most effective. Conversely, among the 124 non-donors, low-hope advert featuring female survivor (n=21) and high-hope advert with male survivor (n=20) were the most disengaging.

Discussion: This study enhances literature by integrating prospect theory and social role theory in the context of emotional message framing and charitable giving. Findings suggest that charities can enhance donation campaigns by aligning message framing with societal perceptions of vulnerability. Emotional perception of audiences was observed to be subjective, as some participants interpreted low-framed adverts as high-intensity, indicating an interplay between individual differences and message perception. Future research could further explore contrasting message framing across varying levels of intensity, on larger samples, to better understand donation behaviours and enhance generalisability.

Contributions: This study contributes to marketing communication theory by applying prospect theory and social role theory to emotional message framing, gender portrayal and donation behaviour. Practically, the findings provide guidance for charities to optimise their communication strategies to attract more donors.

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Does the University-inside Effect Work in B2B? Preliminary Insights from an Academy-funded Project on University Spin-outs

Track: AM Funded Research

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Summary Statement

The paper reports on the qualitative findings from a research project funded by the Academy. The project explores whether spin-outs active in the B2B space benefit from the “university-inside” effect found in B2C. In collaboration with a UK spin-out, interviews and focus groups with industrial buyers offer insights into the challenges and opportunities of marketing and selling highly innovative products solely developed by academic entrepreneurs and targeting B2B customers.

Competitive Short Paper

According to the most recent independent review published for DSIT and HM Treasury (Tracey &Williamson, 2023), “spin-out companies (“spin-outs”) are start-up companies that are created based on intellectual property (IP) generated through a university’s research” (p. 4). Successful spin-outs yield significant economic benefits to regions but are also high-risk ventures operating in a complex ecosystem. A major hurdle for many spin-outs is commercialization, which therefore features among the critical issues in the DSIT Areas of Research Interest (ARI) 2024.

Scholars have explored spin-outs from a variety of angles, from policy to innovation management and entrepreneurship (e.g., Lockett & Wright, 2005; Mathisen &Rasmussen, 2019; Correia et al. 2024). A more recent stream of literature emerged within the marketing discipline, acknowledging the signalling value of university-generated IP at the point of sale (Maier et al., 2024). This pioneering empirical research by Maier and colleagues (2024) has looked at university IP embedded in products developed in collaboration with industry players, identifying a positive effect on consumers’ perception under specific conditions. Building on this emerging stream of literature, our paper aims to expand on it by testing whether the “university knowledge inside” effect identified for new consumer products (Business-to-consumer, B2C) co-developed by universities and industry (Maier et al., 2024) is also applicable to new products developed solely by spin-outs and targeted to a business market (Business-to-business, B2B) instead.

Our main research question is: “Do university spin-outs benefit from the ‘university knowledge inside’ effect when selling to B2B customers”?

The rationale for undertaking this empirical research is twofold: first, policymakers around the world are investing in spin-outs to fuel growth; second, securing customers represents a key metric for success of spin-outs. As a result, this research will contribute to theory by complementing current studies focusing on B2C consumers and to practice by improving commercialization practices for spin-outs.

A mixed-method approach is being implemented to tackle this important research question. To begin, in light of the differences between B2C and B2B purchasing contexts (Homburg and Tischer, 2023), interviews and two focus groups with B2B buyers are being conducted to generate insights into potential context-specific dynamics to be reflected in the moderators. After this exploratory stage, causality will be tested via two experimental studies, using stimuli developed in collaboration with a real spin-out company based in South-East England. Participants will be recruited via a panel research company. The goal of the experiments is to test the effect of disclosing the company being a university spin-out (vs baseline) and the moderator(s) –identified in the focus group- on product liking, recommendation intent, and product choice. These constructs are the same as in the first three studies in Maier et al. (2024), allowing for a replication with extension of their “university knowledge inside” effect.

Thus, our expected findings (to be reported during the conference) are expected to contribute to the literature by shedding light on the commercialization-related dynamics for spin-outs in the B2B context and offer actionable recommendations to managers and policymakers.

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Contingent Effects of Challenge Stressors and Hindrance Stressors on Multinational Corporations' Subsidiary Performance

Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

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Summary Statement

This paper examines the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between challenge and hindrance stressors and subsidiary performance, using JD–R theory. Surveying 222 Chinese subsidiaries of MNCs, the study finds that work engagement positively mediates challenge stressors and negatively mediates hindrance stressors. It also reveals that financial slack enhances the relationship between challenge stressors and engagement, offering insights into managing subsidiary performance through resource allocation and engagement strategies.

Competitive Short Paper

International management studies have primarily focused on expatriation (e.g., Bader, Berg, and Holtbrügge, 2015; Shaffer, Singh, and Chen, 2013) and international joint venture (IJV) management issues (e.g., Gong, Shenkar, Luo, and Nyaw, 2001; Mohr and Puck, 2007). A review of these studies highlights inconsistencies in the findings, both across different stressors and for the same stressor. For example, while some studies find a positive relationship between expatriates' role novelty and their adjustment performance (Kawai and Mohr, 2015), others report a negative (Kraimer and Wayne, 2004) or non-significant association (Shaffer et al., 2013).

Using the job demands-resources (JD–R) theory, our study explores the mediating role of work engagement in the relationships between challenge and hindrance stressors and subsidiary performance (i.e., operating revenue and local responsiveness). It also examines how financial slack resources moderate the relationships between these stressors and work engagement.

A survey of 222 Chinese subsidiaries of multinational companies (MNCs) confirmed that work engagement positively mediates the relationship between challenge stressors and subsidiary performance and negatively mediates the relationship between hindrance stressors and performance. Moreover, financial slack strengthens the relationship between challenge stressors and work engagement. The implications for theoretical development and managerial practice are discussed.

The study contributes to existing knowledge in management in three ways. First, it enriches the literature on headquarters–subsidiary relations (Ambos and Birkinshaw, 2010; Najafi-Tavani et al., 2018) by revealing how challenge and hindrance stressors impact subsidiary performance differently. Existing research has focused on a single type of stressor without linking it to subsidiary performance (Lee et al., 2019). In contrast, our study shows that challenge stressors positively affect performance, while hindrance stressors have a negative impact.

Second, the study theorises and tests the mediating role of work engagement in the relationship between work stressors and subsidiary performance (cf. Bakker and Demerouti, 2017). We provide evidence of indirect-only mediation effects between challenge-hindrance stressors and subsidiary operating revenue, and complementary mediation effects between these stressors and local responsiveness. This insight not only extends the application of JD–R theory but also clarifies the complex relationship between work stressors and subsidiary performance, highlighting the positive state of engagement among the subsidiary's top management teams (TMTs).

Third, we examine the moderating effect of subsidiary financial slack resources, defined as financial assets that exceed the minimum required for current operations (Kuusela, Keil, and Maula, 2017). By aligning our investigation with JD–R theory (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007), we demonstrate that financial slack enhances the relationship between challenge stressors and work engagement. This finding is practically significant as it underscores the importance of specific resource factors in leveraging the effects of subsidiary work stressors for MNCs (Ren et al., 2013).

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Old Fashioned Values: Nostalgic Tendency and Emotional Attachment as moderators of Fashion Brand Value

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

Nostalgic tendency and emotional attachment are found to be positively associated with fashion brand values, alongside generational and contextual effects, offering marketers the opportunity to explore tailored routes to effective brand value communication.

Competitive Short Paper

By its nature, fashion depends upon change. This implicit drive underpins a sector that relies upon redefinition and innovation yet, simultaneously calls to the minds of consumers the memories of times and fashions gone by (Leitch, 2023). This evocation of the past, favoured by designers and marketers of fashion clothing and communications, is often accompanied by powerful emotional responses in consumers, wrapped in nostalgic afterglow. It has become a popular device within brand strategy (Gilal et al, 2020; Hartmann and Brunk, 2019), embedding expected heritage within classic brands but, also, used by new entrants to infer shared ownership of a perceived cool, that they played no part in creating.

Understanding the relationship between nostalgic and emotional tendencies would seem, therefore, to be a useful route to leveraging these ideas for enhanced brand value (Heinberg et al, 2020; Grisaffe and Nguyen, 2011). This research adds to extant knowledge by exploring the relationships between nostalgic tendencies, emotional attachment, and perceptions of fashion brand value, seeking to connect the insights to contextual elements of personal and social experience.

A multi-phase, mixed method design enabled collection of quantitative and qualitative data. First, an independent samples design, utilised a survey questionnaire to collect quantitative responses across various dimensions, including Nostalgic Tendency, Emotional Attachment (to Brands) and perceived Fashion Brand Value. Socio-demographic information was also collected. A representative, stratified random sample of fashion consumers returned 160 valid respondents. Second, a small sample was selected from the initial sample, based upon responses to the Nostalgic and Emotional dimensions, to provide illustrative, developed narratives of their personal experience of fashion brands.

Findings reveal positive associations between nostalgic tendency, emotional attachment to brands, and perceptions of fashion brand value, with these effects subject to some variation across cultural and generational contexts. Additionally, the research identifies a dual appeal of nostalgia in fashion, resonating with both older consumers who recall past experiences and younger consumers who idealize earlier eras. The research notes the importance of managing nostalgic and emotional connections to effect brand loyalty and brand advocacy in fashion consumers.

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Yarning Circles As a Participatory Action Research Method: Understanding Women of Colour Entrepreneurs' Experiences in Greater Western Sydney

Track: 9. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

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Summary Statement

This research introduces the yarning circle, an Indigenous communication methodology, in exploring the business sentiment and marketing needs of Women of Colour Entrepreneurs in Greater Western Sydney. The study demonstrates how this participatory action research approach addresses the limitations of traditional methodologies in capturing intersectional challenges faced by culturally diverse entrepreneurs. The findings reveal that yarning circles facilitate comprehensive data collection and catalyse organic community-building outcomes, contributing to methodological innovation and practical entrepreneurial support mechanisms.

Competitive Short Paper

According to the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (2023), one-third of Australia's small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are owned by individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Despite their economic contributions (Sweeney, 2018), disparities exist in the Australian business landscape, particularly affecting women of colour (WOC) SME entrepreneurs. For instance, while venture capital is the primary funding source for approximately 63% of female entrepreneurs in Australia, only 0.03% of the $10 billion venture capital funding in 2020 was directed towards WOC founders (The Creative Co-operative, 2022). Current research indicates that WOC entrepreneurs' challenges are often incorrectly compartmentalised, with gender and race viewed in isolation (Ukonu, 2024), leading to support systems that fail to address the complex interplay of cultural, linguistic, and gender-based challenges. Our study aims to understand the business sentiment of WOC SME entrepreneurs in Greater Western Sydney (GWS) and evaluate the effectiveness of support mechanisms they use to mitigate business and marketing challenges. The findings will inform the development of an integrated business and digital marketing toolkit for WOC SME entrepreneurs in GWS.

For the study's first phase, where we aimed to explore WOC SME entrepreneurs' business and marketing experiences, we introduced the yarning circle, a traditional First Nations communication practice, as a participatory action research (PAR) method. PAR was selected because WOC entrepreneurs, as ethnic minority groups, may not trust traditional research processes or find it inhibiting, particularly when researchers do not share similar lived experiences (McDougall & Henderson-Brooks, 2021). The yarning circle methodology emphasises a bottom-up approach where participants actively contribute to knowledge construction through a collaborative process (Merriam et al., 2001; Clark, 2012). Participants are invited to sit in a circle, creating a safe, and non-judgmental space for sharing stories and engaging in open dialogue. Twenty WOC SME entrepreneurs gathered for the yarning circle at Western Sydney University School of Business. The authors co-led the circle with the Women of Colour Australia Founder, as it is often recommended that a trusted community member be present in a yarning circle (The Social Deck, 2024). This approach facilitated trust-building and reciprocity between researchers and participants (Liamputtong, 2008).

The yarning circle methodology yielded outcomes that surpassed the initial research objectives. While the primary aim was to collect data about business challenges and marketing support needs, the methodology produced unexpected positive outcomes. Initially planned for an hour, the session was extended to two hours due to rich participant engagement. The yarning circle's culturally sensitive approach facilitated data collection and encouraged community building among participants and the establishment of the WOC Entrepreneur Collective. Furthermore, the organic development of monthly workshops emerged directly from the collective dialogue during the session, indicating how this methodological approach can generate immediate, participant-driven solutions. These unanticipated outcomes suggest that as a PAR method, yarning circles can generate rich research insights while simultaneously creating tangible support structures for WOC entrepreneurs. This research thus contributes to methodological innovation by demonstrating how culturally appropriate research methods can directly contribute to community capacity building and entrepreneurial support.

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Take Me to Hire Love: Emotional Connection to Fashion, Responsible Consumption and perceptions of Fashion Clothing Rental

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

Emotional connection to fashion and responsible consumption are explored as moderators of perceptions of fashion clothing rental, offering marketers the opportunity to explore tailored routes to more effective dissemination of the value of rental to fashion consumers

Competitive Short Paper

As the fashion sector continues to embrace responsible and sustainable marketing practices (Bläse et al., 2024; Ritch & Siddiqui, 2023), the notion of fashion clothing rental continues to attract attention (Kang et al., 2024), at least as a logical solution to fast fashion burnout, through extended product lifespans (Ritch & Siddiqui, 2023). However, responsible fashion exists in a paradox. Responsibility may be achieved by reducing the quantity, impact and cycles of consumption within the sector (Kang et al., 2023). Yet fashion is founded on the implicit drive to change and innovate (Elf et al., 2022) and, bound with this is the need to engage consumers in an emotionally charged and connected manner (Bläse et al., 2024; Hageman et al., 2024). By facilitating an emotional connection with fashion, such that positive emotions are bound with the fortunes of novel fashions and change (e.g. fast fashion), there is a risk that the uptake of responsible consumption may be challenged by consumers inability to set aside or re-calibrate that emotional connection in order to embrace pre-loved rented clothing, especially in the less glamorous, non-celebrity, everyday wear sector.

Understanding the relationship between consumers' emotional connection to fashion and the propensity to consume responsibly would seem, therefore, to be a useful route to understanding their engagement with fashion clothing rental opportunities (Kang et al., 2023; Ritch & Siddiqui, 2023). This research adds to extant knowledge by exploring the relationships between emotional connection to fashion and responsible consumption and, additionally contextualises this inverse relationship within the fashion clothing rental context.

A multi-phase, mixed method design enabled collection of quantitative and qualitative data from a representative, stratified random sample. First, an independent samples design, utilised a survey questionnaire to collect quantitative responses across various dimensions, including emotional connection to fashion, propensity to consume responsibly, and perceptions of fashion clothing rental. Socio-demographic information was also collected. Second, a smaller sample was selected from the initial sample, based upon responses to the responsible and emotional dimensions, to provide illustrative, developed narratives of their personal experience of fashion clothing rental.

Findings explore relationships between emotional connection to fashion and responsible consumption. Additionally, the research identifies enablers and disablers of consumer engagement with fashion rental. The research notes opportunities for marketing to support a realignment of fashion rental with expected fashion- and responsibility-related values of fashion consumers.

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Harnessing Storytelling as a Transformative Pedagogy in Marketing Education

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

Storytelling Unboxed at Queen Mary University of London integrates students, graduates, industry professionals, community members into a collaborative learning ecosystem. Rooted in values of Voice, Therapy, and Recovery, it empowers participants to craft personal narratives, fostering creativity, inclusivity, and resilience. The initiative bridges academic theory and practice, nurtures diverse perspectives, and supports identity formation. By transforming

classrooms into spaces of discovery, *Storytelling Unboxed* offers a compelling model for innovative, values-driven education in marketing.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

As education intersects with industry and community, the demand for creative, collaborative pedagogies becomes more pressing. Traditional passive learning models fail to prepare students for a rapidly evolving world. Emerging approaches such as project-based learning and industry collaborations transform classrooms into spaces of discovery (Barnett, 2018; Aoun, 2017). Barnett envisions education empowering learners as co-creators, while Aoun advocates for “robot-proof” education blending creativity and systems thinking. Inspired by *Rethinking MBA* (Datar et al., 2010), this study explores how storytelling, as applied in *Storytelling Unboxed* at Queen Mary University of London, fosters transformative learning in marketing education.

Core Literature

Storytelling, a timeless means of connection and creativity, serves as a pedagogical tool to empower students to find their voices and navigate challenges. Vygotsky’s (1978) social learning theory and Freire’s (1970) dialogic education philosophy underline the power of shared narratives. Lave and Wenger’s (1991) *Communities of Practice* further highlight the collective potential of collaborative learning. Storytelling not only enhances identity formation but also aligns with post-COVID recovery efforts and decolonial praxis, fostering inclusivity and dismantling dominant narratives.

Methods

The *Storytelling Unboxed* initiative integrates students, graduates, industry professionals, and community members into a shared learning ecosystem. Rooted in three core values—Voice, Therapy, and Recovery—the programme emphasises crafting personal ‘signature stories’ that explore survival, vulnerability, and empowerment. Qualitative data was collected through participant reflections, workshops, and virtual collaborations, highlighting the initiative’s transformative impact on academic and professional growth.

Findings

The initiative demonstrated profound outcomes:

Students reported increased confidence, a stronger sense of identity, and appreciation for diverse perspectives. They also developed critical communication skills and social capital by sharing their stories.

Graduates acted as mentors, bridging academic and professional contexts, while refining their leadership skills.

Industry professionals gained fresh perspectives and inspiration from student creativity.

Community impact emerged through collective healing and solidarity, blurring lines between classrooms and real-world experiences.

The virtual nature of the programme expanded its global reach, enabling cross-cultural exchange and collaboration.

Contribution

Storytelling Unboxed offers a blueprint for integrating storytelling into marketing education. It demonstrates how storytelling fosters creativity, bridges academic theory and practice, and nurtures inclusive learning environments. The initiative serves as a decolonial practice, challenging traditional curricula and empowering marginalised voices. It also showcases the potential of storytelling to restore community and belonging in post-pandemic contexts.

Conclusion

The success of *Storytelling Unboxed* underscores the transformative power of storytelling in education. By weaving personal narratives into pedagogy, this initiative fosters creativity, inclusivity, and resilience. It bridges academia, industry, and community, offering a model for reimagining education that prepares students not just for jobs, but for meaningful, compassionate lives. This study calls for further exploration of storytelling as a dynamic tool to shape the future of education.

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Free Education Policy in a Developing economy: A Critical Social Marketing

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

This paper unearths the basically overlooked negative impacts of “Free education Policies” on educational development in developing economies. It relied on semi-inductive approach, judgmental sampling in selecting appropriate stakeholders from different Schools / Colleges in Ghana. It offers realistic evidence on how to link research and action meaningfully to handle quality education programs - thereby contributing to the literature on the critical application of social marketing while attaining the sustainability of free educational policies in developing economies.

Competitive Short Paper

Education has become part of the basic needs of humans in dreams and aspirations as a universal activity. In view of that, governments are making considerable investment in profile-raising activities to achieve the desired behavior in societies (Truong, 2017), with the sole aim of increasing the literacy rates in some forgotten corners in developing countries – considering the gap, between the literate and the illiterate rate. The government of Ghana in 2017 implemented a Free Senior High School policy (FSHS) on a free access to secondary education for all. The intention of the policy was to offer even-handedness to any Ghanaian living everywhere in Ghana, the opportunity to access second cycle Education - regardless of one's family's financial status (Mensah, 2020). The policy led to an increase in the number of college students in schools in an unprecedented manner. Conversely, just like many other policies, sometimes these crusades fail to bring the desired change in behavior, especially when the profile-raising messages tend to be against the values and beliefs of the target sector (Corner & Randall, 2011). Social marketing as a concept has become useful in addressing a lot of social apprehensions – ranging from health-related behaviour change to the level of policy shifts and alterations. The concept has become a significant driver of integrating the sustainability tenets into the mind and behaviour of people (Truong, 2014, pp. 27; Carvalho & Mazzon, 2015, p. 180). According to Tadajewski and Brownlie (2008), the critical dimension of social marketing remains ignored by most normally used definitions of social marketing. Gordon, Moodie, Eadie & Hastings (2010) also observed that the critical contribution of social marketing should not be dismissed, since it embraces substantial potential for improving marketing and also to protect societies from some of the negative effects of commercial marketing. Cateriano-Arevalo et al. (2022) also observed that, social marketing lacked non-Western voices and deliberations in its critical address (Cateriano-Arevalo et al., 2022). The likelihood that the triumph conditions employed in the Western setting may not work in the non-Western biosphere (Akbar, Amoncar, Cateriano-Arévalo & Lawson, 2024). The current paper sought to employ a critical social marketing concept in exploring into Ghana's FSHS, a novice social intervention by looking at its downstream effects.

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Movies That Changed My Life: Narrative Transformation Theory

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the transformational terrain of being narratively transported into cinematic story worlds. We theorise that narrative worlds can provide various transformations from narrative foreclosure to narrative rejuvenation. We posit that 'transformation' is better understood as embodied, affective, paradoxical, and disruptive than previous cognitive and individual conceptualisations suggest.

Competitive Short Paper

*"Someone (the traveller) is transported… the traveller goes some distance from his or her world of origin… the traveller returns to the world of origin***, somewhat changed by the journey***."* (Gerrig, 1993: 10/11)

The central tenant of narrative transportation theory (Gerrig, 1993) is that consumers actively seek to be taken away from their everyday life to experience a different narrative world. Immersion into a narrative world enables consumers to experience the feeling of being "lost in a story" (Green, 2021: 87). Once individuals return from the narrative world to their everyday reality, transportation can bring about changes and transformations in some way, providing the narrative world is not too distant from one's own reality (Green and Brock, 2000; Green et al., 2004; Phillips and McQuarrie, 2010). However, the transformational outcomes of narrative transportation theory, specifically the return journey and feeling changed, have been somewhat neglected. The focus has been weighted towards what consumers experience when they immerse themselves 'into' a narrative text (Feiereisen et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2018; Van Laer et al., 2014) and we are interested in what changes for consumers when they return from being narratively transported?

Transformation and the possibility of brands to help consumers overcome deep crises and lead meaningful lives has been recently explored (Fuschillo et al., 2022). We focus on the possibility of narrative worlds to help transform aspects of consumers' lives. In Wohlfeil's (Wohlfeil and Whelan, 2012) introspective interpretation of his devotion to the actor, Jena Malone, he explains how watching the film, *Dead Poets Society* (1989), had a transformative effect on his life. He states, "when I finally graduated from school… I had lost nearly all my childhood hopes and dreams and started working in sports retailing instead, living aimlessly… Only when I watched *Dead Poets Society* years later, I felt inspired again to go to university, study marketing and become a lecturer; and I succeeded" (p.514).

Implicit in accounts of consumer transformation is the presence of individual effort and conviction for change, driven by a neoliberal persuasion that self-determination and perseverance can sanction "fresh start" possibilities (Giesler and Veresiu, 2014; Lindberg and Osteggard, 2015; Price et al., 2018). Consumers orchestrate resources, and utilise skills to prepare for, and enact a transformational experience (Lindberg and Osteggard, 2015; Price et al., 2018). Orazi and Van Laer (2022) reiterate that transformation relies on the potential of the consumer to change after an extraordinary experience ends, and consumers struggle, upon a return to their ordinary, everyday lives. Drawing on interviews with over 30 participants, we explore circumstances where consumers encounter precariousness and uncertainty (Hewer, 2022), events in their lives do not feel under their control (Lambert, 2019), they may exhibit discontent with modern life (Scott et al., 2017), and even a dissatisfaction with themselves (Cova, 2021). Consumers may intentionally, or serendipitously discover narrative worlds that operate as sites for transformation to occur. We seek to better understand the processes of narrative transportation to facilitate transformations when one returns to their lived reality.

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Performative political consumption: reorienting theory on consumer political ideology to understand environmentally-controversial consumption choices

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

Consumer researchers have long researched the influence of political ideology on consumption (Schmitt et al, 2022). However, the complexity and fragmentation of political positions and unclear causal links between political ideology and consumption suggest a new approach is required (Crockett and Pendarvis, 2017). This paper develops a CCT framework for theorising political ideology and consumption using a performative theory approach to understand the environmentally-controversial trend of domestic woodburner installation for home heating in the UK.

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Exploring the Role of Big Analytics Capabilities in SMEs' Marketing Performance: The Impact of AI and Open Innovation

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

This study explores how big data analytics capabilities (BDAC) influence SMEs' marketing performance, with a focus on the mediating role of AI and the moderating effects of open innovation (OI). Grounded in Dynamic Capability Theory, the research provides actionable insights for enhancing resilience, marketing outcomes, and competitive advantage. Using a quantitative design, the study examines data from UK SMEs to offer practical recommendations for leveraging BDAC, AI, and OI in dynamic and uncertain markets.

Competitive Short Paper

Background

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in economic development, particularly during times of uncertainty. However, growing global uncertainty, shifting customer expectations, rapidly advancing technologies, and significant global events such as COVID-19 have impacted SMEs' competitiveness and survival (Thrassou et al., 2020). SMEs are known for agility and entrepreneurial orientation (EO) capabilities such as innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk-taking (Miller et al., 2021). However, nearly 50% of global SMEs fail to translate these into innovation, affecting competitiveness (Genc et al., 2019). To address this, SMEs are reassessing their strategies, and the development of big data analytics capabilities (BDAC) has emerged as a promising solution to unlock their entrepreneurial and innovation potential (Cadden et al., 2023; Miller et al., 2021).

Artificial intelligence (AI) and BDAC have emerged as critical enablers, allowing SMEs to leverage data-driven insights for strategic decision-making (Cadden et al., 2023; Miller et al., 2021). While BDAC shows significant potential for enhancing competitive advantage, the academic literature on data-driven innovation capabilities in SMEs remains limited and underexplored (Cadden et al.,2023; Wei and Pardo, 2022; Ciampi et al., 2021; Genc et al., 2019; Miller et al., 2021). Limited research exists on how BDAC, combined with AI and open innovation (OI)- emphasizing collaboration and external knowledge sourcing (Lu et al.,2024), influences SMEs' innovation performance (IP) and how OI practices moderate these relationships.

Grounded in Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT), this study explores the impact of BDAC on SMEs' marketing performance, emphasizing the mediating role of AI and the moderating effect of OI. DCT, defined as the ability to adapt and reconfigure resources to navigate changing environments (Teece, 2012), provides a framework to understand key processes—sensing, seizing, and transforming—essential for SMEs, known for their agility and innovation in a data-driven landscape (Heider et al., 2020). By exploring these relationships, the research provides actionable insights for SMEs to enhance marketing performance, resilience, and competitive advantage in volatile market conditions.

The study explores how SMEs can utilize BDAC, AI, and OI to strengthen resilience, improve marketing performance, and gain a competitive edge in dynamic and uncertain market environments. Specifically, the study seeks to address the following questions: What is the impact of BDAC on SMEs' marketing performance? How does AI mediate the relationship between BDAC and marketing performance? How do inbound and outbound OI moderate the relationship between BDAC and SMEs' marketing performance?

A quantitative research design will be employed to test the proposed relationships. Data will be collected via an online survey targeting marketing managers, data analysts, or senior-level decision-makers in SMEs across diverse industries in the UK.

This study contributes to the literature by addressing the role of BDAC in enhancing SMEs' marketing performance. The findings will offer practical recommendations for SMEs to integrate advanced analytics and innovation practices, leading to improved marketing outcomes and strengthened competitive advantage.

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Customer Value Proposition Design Characteristics and Firm Performance

Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

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Summary Statement

Creating and communicating customer value is vital for business, with firms looking to differentiate themselves and their market offerings. Customer Value Propositions (CVP) are a strategic tool firm's use to communicate value, but further work is required to fully conceptualise, operationalise and empirically test CVP design characteristics. This paper develops and tests 12 hypotheses using SEM based on 276 Bangladeshi firm survey responses. It advances CVP knowledge on design characteristics, firm performance and boundary conditions.

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Building Crisis Resilience Among Salespersons: Role of Goal Orientations

Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

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Summary Statement

Explores the role of goal orientation to build crisis resilience among salespersons. The study shows that while learning orientation and performance-approach orientation influences crisis resilience and though it performance, performance-avoidance goal orientation has a direct negative impact on performance but no impact on crisis resilience.

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Selecting Cases in B2B Case Study Research: A Saintly & Scholarly Perspective

Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

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Summary Statement

This study argues that case selection in case study research is not well understood leading to weakened research contributions. By adopting a clear epistemological approach, researchers will be able to develop a stronger rationale for case selection. We discuss three epistemological approaches but extend research by considering how epistemic epistemology can inform case selection.

Competitive Short Paper

Case study research (CSR) is extensively conducted in business to business (B2B) marketing (Choudrie and Zamani, 2023) as it permits a deep understanding of the dynamics or complexity of a phenomenon in situ (Creswell, 2007; Easton, 2010; Gerring, 2006). With the emphasis on a single or small number of cases, researchers need to provide a strong rationale for their choice of case or cases with the aim of building theory (Woodside and Wilson, 2003), developing new theory (Dubois and Gadde, 2002) or the testing of theory (Voss et al. 2002). Whilst there is abundant advice on selecting cases, there is some ambiguity in the CSR literature and indeed in practice. A particularly contentious aspect of case selection is the number of cases, that is, a single case or multiple cases. There are two broad camps within the literature (Dubé and Paré, 2003). One camp adopts a non-linear, non-positivist style (see, for example, Flyvbjerg, 2006; Stake 2008) which argues for a single case. The other camp adheres to a linear, positivist approach (Eisenhardt, 1989, 2021; Yin, 2014, 2018) favouring multiple cases. Disentangling case selection guidance from epistemological perspective is thus long overdue and fuels this investigation, noting that researchers who select methods without due attention to their implicit assumptions and conformity with theoretical aims run the risk of incoherent conclusions (Dubois and Araujo, 2007). To establish a degree of coherence, researchers can adopt a set of assumptions grounded within an epistemological framework.

Epistemology has been conventionally summarised as a set of assumptions about the best ways of enquiring into the nature of the world (Easterby-Smith et al. 2018) and the nature and justification of human knowledge (Hofer and Pintrich, 1997). Researchers' epistemological assumptions will vary fundamentally, thereby exerting a substantial impact on how research quality and rigour are understood (Becker and Niehaves, 2007). With reference to CSR, which includes a variety of methodological approaches, it is doubly important that epistemological approaches support relevance and rigour (Aram and Salipenti, 2003). This study aims to contribute to research methods in B2B marketing by offering an epistemologically framed argument for case study selection that responds to calls for transparency in in that process (Gerring and Cojocaru, 2016; Farquhar et al. 2020).

For the purposes of this preliminary investigation, three existing epistemological approaches are considered as follows: critical realism (Easton, 2010), constructivism (Järvensivu and Törnroos, 2010) and positivism (qualitative) as described by Yin (2014) and Eisenhardt (2021). This study also draws in epistemic reflexivity, which describes the extent to which the phenomena of research are shaped and framed by the disciplinary presuppositions and methodological prescriptions that are brought to bear (Whitaker and Atkinson, 2021). Whilst reflexivity is already acknowledged in CSR (Rittenhofer 2015), epistemic reflexivity moves towards the conditions of knowledge production contained in the researcher's subjective role as well as intellectual bias and positioning (Guttormsen and Moore, 2023). We contend that such an approach recognises some of the key characteristics of CSR thereby enabling a deep but critical understanding of the researcher/phenomenon dynamic.

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Making Values Count: Invisible Labour of Balancing Mission and Markets in Data-Driven Practices

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

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Summary Statement

This paper examines the complexities of data-driven culture in the arts, culture, and heritage sector (ACHS), where organisations navigate tensions between data-driven market pressures and mission-driven societal values. Using hybrid forums as a tool for addressing market controversies, the study draws on a series of scenario-based workshops with arts professionals. Findings reveal the invisible labour required to balance economic and societal goals, emphasising the role of market devices, actors, and infrastructures in sustaining ACHS practices.

Competitive Short Paper

The rapid advancement and acceleration of digital technologies within the arts, culture and heritage sector (ACHS) mean that cultural organisations (COs) are operating in increasingly digitalised markets (Mellet and Beauvisage, 2020) and adapting practices to align with data-driven market norms (Terras and Jones, 2024). Alongside greater access to an increasing number of digital tools and systems within the ACHS (Bopp et al., 2017), these organisations are being pressured to inform their long-term strategies through the use of data insights. External funders and stakeholders, in particular, require organisations to evaluate and report on outcomes as part of grant conditions. However, this relationship with data is complex as COs are mission-driven, and a large part of their models of operation look at non-market activities (societal values such as community development and outreach), which inform strategies (Perry, 2019; Carnegie and Drencheva, 2019). This paper positions data-driven culture in the ACHS as contested and complex and further explores the market controversies that arise from the entanglement of data and market valuation (Arsel, 2015).

This paper draws on hybrid forums (HFs) (Callon et al., 2011) for exploring and resolving market controversies as a new tool for arts management and cultural policy. HFs are purposefully designed as tools for addressing specific controversies, with the aim of developing new insights or learnings. HFs are conceptualised as a knowledge-creation process which is stimulated through dialogue, awareness, and collective learning. Therefore, HFs are not only a democratic model of discovery and learning but can also contribute to bridging research and academia (Callon, 1999). The recent work of Amilien et al. (2019) further develops the literature surrounding HFs and positions them as a methodology. HFs are intentionally designed to foster active engagement, encouraging conversations that not only examine the present but also explore potential futures and how things could evolve.

This paper traces the initiative of The Arts and Culture Collective, a series of think tanks with participants across Ireland and the UK. These scenario-based workshops were designed to facilitate the convening of cohorts of Arts Professionals (APs) and explore controversies around the datafication of the ACHS. The assembling of a series of different cohorts of APs provided a mode for participants to contribute to discussions and the opportunity to learn by actively doing and learning from other peers.

Taking an ANT approach, findings reveal the assembling of invisible labour around market valuation, where APs actively balance hybrid practices to meet both economic objectives and societal goals. Tracing this labour through bundles of entangled practices involves navigating the tensions between data-driven pressures and the mission-driven values central to the ACHS. APs engage in complex, behind-the-scenes efforts to align data practices with community-focused outcomes, reflecting the intricate work required to sustain the dual demands of market accountability and societal impact. These insights highlight the need to recognise and value the hidden arrangements of market devices (Cochoy, et al., 2017), actors (Andersson et al., 2008) and infrastructures (Araujo and Mason, 2021) inherent in data-driven culture within the sector.

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Paradoxical Escapism: Replicating The Mundane In Escapist Pursuits

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This paper explores consumers motives for an escape from the mundane and humdrum of everyday life. Paradoxically, when reality itself feels upended, consumers seek an escape to the familiar, known, and importantly mundane activities. We draw on Jean Baudrillard's (1994) theory of *Simulacra* and *Simulation* to explore how simulation and hyperreality was realised – during the Covid-19 pandemic. We explore how consumers turned to playing Animal Crossing and reality was replaced with imitations and simulations.

Competitive Short Paper

Animal Crossing New Horizons (*ACNH* hereafter) became an online phenomenon during the COVID-19 pandemic. The game was framed as a pleasurable escape and a haven for players to manage the anxiety of imposed isolation (Seller, 2021). Kuo et al. (2016) suggest an escape relies heavily on the degree to which an individual experiences mental absorption and an active form of escape is where individuals are interactive participants - videogame playing. Kuo and colleagues (2016) suggest in escapism, consumers seek a break from the present reality. Refuge is sought in alternatives environments (Cohen and Taylor, 2003; Sharzer, 2023) and this explains why individuals so keenly seek out an escape (Jones et al., 2020). Cova et al. (2018) states that "escapism is akin to breaking away from the mundane reality" (p.447). In this paper, rather than escaping from the mundane, we are interested in escapists pursuits (playing *ACNH*) that replicate the mundanity of everyday life. Escaping to the mundane raises important questions about the motives of escapism and the market that consumers seek an escape from is drawn upon to facilitate an escape.

Despite *ACNH*'s village-community feel, *ACHN* has strong capitalist and consumerist underpinnings characterised through its internal economy (Agarwal, 2023; Seller, 2021). This includes monetised transactions, work demands, a litany of tasks and the island's fascination with the acquisition of material possessions and increasing one's status. Mundane chores, including, cooking, decorating, and gardening are dominant tropes in *ACNH*. This paper draws on Jean Baudrillard's (1994) theory of *Simulacra* and *Simulation*. Baudrillard claimed that life is now lived in a state of perpetual simulation; he called life in this simulacrum a state of hyperreality. Baudrillard suggests that it is "no question of imitation, nor duplication… it is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real" (p.2). Baudrillard uses the term, '*Simulacra*' to denote representations of things that do not necessarily exist, and what remains is a "game of appearances, intensified simulations of reality that have become more real than anything real beneath them" (Hietanen et al., 2019: 31). In *ACNH* we see Baudrillard's concepts of simulation and hyperreality realised – a world in which the COVID-19 was suspended, and reality was replaced with imitations and simulations. Island dwelling took the place of what was initially imitated – it became "more real than real," and life in *ACNH* is based around recieving instructions - guiding players to what *they* should be doing (work, consume, contact), and was arguably absent, or limited in lockdown conditions.

Using diary entries from *March 2020 – April 2021* of *ACNH* players from across the globe, who played and documented their *ACNH* gameplay experiences during COVID-19 and submitted their accounts to the *Animal Crossing Diaries* at the *National Videogame Museum* (UK) we propose four themes; 'feeling in-control', 'making episodic progress', 'creating routines', and 'reproducing anxiety'. Our research raises questions about the type of escape that is desired when life is precarious (Askegaard and Linnett, 2021). *ACNH* is a celebration of the mundane – to be escaped to, rather than from it.

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African Fashion Brand Expansion to Western Markets: The Role of Brand Experience and Cultural Identity Theories

Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

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Summary Statement

International marketing field continues to expand its research frontiers but the literature on international branding is under-developed. Most studies in this terrain are significantly dominated by advanced economies expansions to emerging economies. To address this gap, our study integrates two theoretical lenses: multi-level branding experience and cultural identity theory to elucidate the nuances of African-to-Western brand expansion and determine the requisite level of standardisation/adaptation strategic model in the UK fashion market.

Competitive Short Paper

International marketing is not a new topic of discussion in academic, business and policy forums. The saturation of home markets, the liberalisation of economic borders and the interdependence of nations have evidently stimulated the need for international marketing activities (Oliveira, *et al*., 2023). Although the international marketing field continues to expand its research frontiers, the literature on international branding (a subset of international marketing) is under-developed (Ramos, 2024). Most studies in this terrain are significantly dominated by advanced economies expansions to emerging economies (Ramos, 2024). A recent comprehensive literature by Ramos (2024) indicates that 93% of international branding literature focus on North America, Europe and Asia, whereas African and South American contexts are widely underexplored (Ramos, 2024).

It is evident that the existing literature on international brand expansion appears to be predominantly Western-centric and unilateral in its approach (Ramos, 2024). While the Western-dominant literature enriches our understanding of international brand extension, there is a paucity of research regarding developing economies' brand expansion to other emerging and advanced economies.. Further corroborated with evidence that the majority of African research on international marketing appears to focus on Western products/brand expansion into African markets (see Yeboah-Banin and Quaye, 2021). The West-to-African study context continues to enrich the literature on Western brand dominance and knowledge of viable standardisation/localisation strategy from a Western perspective. There remains a noticeable shortage of scholarly studies on standardisation and adaptation strategies from an African-to-Western context.

To address the contextual and conceptual limitations in the literature, this study integrates two theoretical lenses: multi-level branding experience (Davey, Sung and Butcher, 2024) and cultural identity theory on self-concept and situational factors (Sussman, 2002; Jensen, 2003). This integration aims to elucidate the nuances of African-to-Western brand expansion and determine the requisite level of standardisation/adaptation strategy to enhance the intention to purchase African fashions in the UK.

The study addresses two main research questions:

What are the mitigating cultural and brand experience factors influencing the intention to purchase African fashion brands in the UK?

How can African fashion apparel be modelled in the UK fashion market?

The brand experience literature is diverse and multidimensional (Kang et al., 2017; Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt, 1999). In this study, we will follow the seminal conceptualisation of brand experience literature developed by Schmitt (1999) and Brakus et al. (2009), which is underpinned by cognitive, affective, sensory, and behavioural dimensions (Brakus et al. 2009). Utilising these brand experience dimensions; the paper will investigate how UK citizens experience the African fashion and its impact on their intention to purchase African brands. In addition, our study will also explore the role of cultural identity and personal situational influence on brand intention to purchase African brands. Both brand experience and cultural identity theories form the context determinants of stand-adapt strategies (Vrontis, 2003; Vrontis, Thrassou and Lamprianou, 2009).

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The Anti-Mythical Myths of TikTok's #Underconsumptioncore: The Market Capture of Gendered Sustainability

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

This Žižek-Fisherian analysis of TikTok's '#underconsumptioncore', a trend that aestheticises conscientious individual consumption, illuminates how consumer counter-mythologies underscore the contestations of resisting capitalist realism within its cultural and digital ecosystems. Despite providing a performative forum for questioning several myths inherent to marketplace ideologies, #underconsumptioncore deflects systemic critique by reifying the social phenomenology of consumer culture it purportedly resists. Underconsumption's post-political attachments to feminised personal responsibility and "ethical elitism" risk entrenching individualistic-narcissistic subjectivities and socio-economic hierarchies.

Competitive Short Paper

Taking anti-consumption movements as "partial, flawed, or contradictory critiques of consumerism…from within" (Wood, 2020:2756), this conceptual paper critically analyses the socio-environmental affordances of online anti-consumption movements against the backdrop of post-political market fundamentalism. While critical consumer research underscores the power differentials underpinning individuals' and groups' resistance to market omnipotence, less is known about how resistance efforts can themselves feed market capture and rejuvenation (Hoang et al., 2023; Jones and Hietanen, 2023). Grounded in TikTok's #underconsumptioncore: a gendered social media 'trend' showcasing minimalist lifestyles, thrifted, reused and recycled items, and other modes of domestic (non)consumption, we use critical feminist insights to analyse how #underconsumptioncore visualises and valorises often obscured routines of feminised care and social reproduction (Chatzidakis and Maclaran, 2022). Nonetheless, in absence of a shared political locus and clear adversary, we argue that digital anti-consumption movements, while offering alternative fantasies to those propagated throughout capitalist culture, paradoxically reproduce the consumption-driven conditions they purportedly work against.

We suggest #underconsumptioncore offers an entry for questioning several hegemonic myths of capitalist realism (Fisher, 2009), including fantasies of 'infinite growth', 'accumulation as self-edification', and 'neophilia', thus providing opportunities to overturn the fatalistic belief that there is no realistic alternative to market fundamentalism. We therefore consider #underconsumptioncore as a form of “feminist care”: offering a progressive politics of gender, sustainability, and inter-species living that foregrounds the transformative potential of quotidian routine (Wide and Parry, 2022). Nevertheless, by critically rethinking Kristensen et al.’s (2011) concept of ‘consumer counter-mythologies’, we identify how underconsumption–when aestheticised, moralised, and tribalised–deflects systemic critique by reifying the social phenomenology of consumer culture.

Using critical insights from Mark Fisher and Slavoj Žižek, we argue that ‘#underconsumptioncore’, as a network of feminised-domestic consumer counter-mythologies, fetishises individual action while obscuring the necessity of collective structural change. Following Fisher’s (2009:13) assertion that ‘capitalism…relies on [a] structure of disavowal’, #underconsumptioncore can be understood as an “anti-mythical myth”, whereby the rejection of conspicuous over-consumption operates as a strawman for lack of a viable political-economic alternative to the capitalist status-quo. Though it supplants proximal mythic structures of consumer culture with its own ostensibly subversive counter-myths, including reifying socially reproductive ecologies usually obscured from mainstream market systems (Chatzidakis and Maclaran, 2022:159), #underconsumptioncore nevertheless ossifies the single most destructive arch-fantasy of capitalist realism: that individual consumer choices are enough to mitigate the excesses of the market. Recognising Žižek’s concept of jouissance (enjoyment), we also suggest #underconsumption’s co-optation of thrift as a marker of cultural capital and moral virtuosity risks entrenching systemic inequalities and perpetuating socio-economic hierarchies and gendered divisions of labour.

This paper contributes to literatures on market capture by identifying the inherent misdirection–or “obscene underside” (Žižek, 2002) –of consumer counter-mythologies: while counter-myths may offer alternatives to established marketplace ideologies, they nevertheless function in support of, rather than against, capitalism’s overall administration of life and subjectivity. We conclude that #underconsumptioncore obscenely supplements capitalist realism, and that the true fetish in consumer counter-mythologies lies not in the counter-myths themselves, but in the social relations and ideologies they mask.

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Treasured Trash<

Track: AM Funded Research

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Summary Statement

This ethnographic study examines disposition, the final stage in the consumption process, exploring how consumers manage items that straddle the boundary between trash and treasure. Building on disposition literature we investigate the retention of obsolete or broken items within twelve households. Through interviews and photographs, thematic analysis revealed three key cultural values shaping retention: cleanliness, where non-offensive items are kept; frugality, driven by future utility; and altruism, where items are retained for others’ potential use.

Competitive Short Paper

Research around disposition, the final stage in the consumption process, is experiencing something of a moment 1–3. This may be explained by Research bodies keen interest in all things sustainable or perhaps by the public’s (sometimes macabre) interest in disposition and its discontents evidenced by the popularity of television shows like *Hoarders,* Marie Condo, and the plethora of “Decluttering” books and podcasts dedicated to the process of disposition or its failure 4,5. This project contributes to an emergent body of research that moves beyond extraordinary items, those special things capable of capturing memories or extending the self and instead explores those things that occupy a space between trash and treasure 2. As homes become smaller and commodities cheaper, the significance of questions around *how, why,* and *when* people shed redundant debris intensifies 6. Disposition matters, whether it is a distressing process during which the disposer experiences the demise of some piece of themselves, the joyous moulting of an unwanted self or a ritualised decluttering 7–9.

Disposition literature can be broadly grouped into three: the disposition process 8, meanings and self-reference 10,11 and buyer-seller relationships 12. In one of the earliest papers on disposition, Jacoby, Berning and Dietvorst (1977) identified three common approaches to disposal – retention, permanent disposal, and temporary disposal. Some consumers decline to discard; for example, hoarders, collectors and acutely frugal consumers retain commodities beyond their expected life cycle 13–16. Additionally, certain categories of goods are kept indefinitely either due to their emotional or financial value 13,17. Epp and Price 18 explore the banishment of some valued items to storage while others remain in active use. Things that are no longer useful may also be kept, living indefinitely in nooks and crannies around the home. These items are particularly interesting for consumer researchers because their retention reveals that assumptions regarding disposition processes need to be re-examined.

Building on extant literature, this ethnographic research explored the nooks, crannies and back bedrooms of twelve homes. Recorded interviews are supplemented by photographs; the unstructured interviews addressed broad topics and lasted between 30 and 120 minutes. Researchers conducted thematic analysis revealing the subjective (emic) consumer experience of waste disposition (or retention) and the cultural (etic) meaning of that experience. This process revealed three prominent cultural values. The first is that some obsolete or broken objects are *clean* and therefore do not offend order (*cleanliness*). Second, participants will keep things that may be useful in the future; this is a form of waste aversion described by Lastovicka et al. (1999) as *frugality*. Finally, individuals retained items that may be useful to members of their social network; this we termed *altruism*.

These findings challenge assumptions about disposal and highlight the nuanced interplay between personal and cultural factors in consumer behaviour, enriching our understanding of what *waste* means and why we can't seem to quite let go!

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Resource Integration and Motivation in the Subsistence Marketplace: The Social Constructivist Perspective

Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

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Summary Statement

This paper proposes that a constructivist view of motivation rooted in the consummatory and instrumental aspects of social capital provides a more comprehensive framework to understand the direction, intensity, and persistence of resource integration. Through an interpretivist analysis of cases of supplier-buyer relationships in Ghanaian farming communities, we demonstrate that in subsistence marketplaces, motivation emerges from the complex interplay between consummatory and instrumental aspects of resource integrators' social capital.

Competitive Short Paper

Resource integration through service-dominant (S-D) logic has emerged as a central framework in marketing theory (Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2012; Vargo & Lusch, 2014; 2016; Koskela-Huotari et al., 2016; Sklyar et al., 2019). The conceptualisation of motivation in resource integration processes remains crucial yet understudied, particularly in contexts where social capital significantly shapes the exchange behaviours of resource integrators (Kleinaltenkamp et al., 2012; Peters et al., 2014; Findsrud, Tronvoll & Edvardsson, 2018; Akareem, Ferdous & Todd, 2021). While existing research (eg. Pera, Occhiocupo & Clarke, 2016; Findsrud, Tronvoll & Edvardsson, 2018) acknowledges motivation's role in shaping resource integration in service exchanges, it predominantly adopts an essentialist view that treats motivation as an individual psychological driver. Interestingly, Findsrud, Tronvoll & Edvardsson (2018) suggest that the social aspects of resource integration are insufficient to explain actor's resource integration activities and thus may need psychological factors to understand the intensity and persistence of resource integration. However, in subsistence marketplaces (Viswanathan et al., 2012; 2021), which are characterised by extreme resource scarcity yet rich social relationships, this paper argues that a constructivist view of motivation—rooted in the consummatory and instrumental aspects of social capital (Portes, 1998)—provides a more comprehensive framework to understand the direction, intensity, and persistence of resource integration. Laud et al. (2015) provide a perspective on resource integration from social capital and service-dominant logic, highlighting sociocultural aspects of motivation. However, they do not thoroughly explore how the source of social capital shapes resource integration and motivation.

Through an interpretivist analysis of cases of supplier-buyer relationships in Ghanaian farming communities, we demonstrate that in subsistence marketplaces, motivation emerges from the complex interplay between consummatory and instrumental aspects of resource integrators' social capital. In subsistence marketplaces, motivations for resource integration emerge primarily through social ties and underlying exchange culture rather than individual psychological mechanisms. This is evidenced by how smallholder farmers (suppliers) in this study leveraged social capital sources such as internalised values, situational reactive sentiments, and reciprocal norms to overcome resource constraints and co-create value.

Our findings reveal three distinct mechanisms: (1) collective cultural meanings and social structures fundamentally shape resource integration motives, (2) the direction and intensity of integration efforts emerge from dynamic interactions between consummatory and instrumental sources, and (3) the persistence of resource integration is sustained through reciprocal obligations that transform actors' interactions into enduring lock-in personal effects. Theoretically, we expand the service-dominant logic perspective on resource integration by reconceptualising the motivation of resource integrators as a socially constructed phenomenon. This framework illustrates how sociocultural mechanisms of motivation facilitate resource integration for value co-creation in subsistence contexts, emphasising that the intensity and persistence of resource integrators cannot be solely attributed to individual psychological factors. The findings indicate that agrifood buying companies and traders use three strategic approaches to foster meaningful collaborations with suppliers in the subsistence marketplace: (a) embedding supply practices within existing social structures rather than imposing standardised buying protocols, (b) designing supplier development programs that balance consummatory values with instrumental principles and (c) implementing long-term engagement strategies that recognise and reinforce reciprocal norms.

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Predicting Service Satisfaction in the Sharing Economy: A Bigdata Driven Explainable AI Approach

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study proposes the Service Satisfaction Ensemble Model (SSEM), combining multiple machine learning algorithms to predict customer satisfaction in short-term rentals on Airbnb. Analysing bigdata from six global urban markets, the model uses Google BERT and Meta Llama large language models to process guest reviews, along with listing details and neighbourhood patterns. Our novel approach demonstrates how explainable AI (XAI) can be used for predicting service satisfaction in service dominant industry.

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The Backrooms & Beyond: Online Legend-Tripping & the Spectralisation of Dark Tourism

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

This empirical working paper examines the touristic appeal of online legend-tripping in the Reddit community 'r/backrooms', drawing on Žižek's ideas about the Real. Online legends offer an alternative to commodified global tourism, rejecting fixed spaces and narratives in favour of liminal cybernetic environments. This shift challenges traditional notions of geography and authenticity, reflecting broader societal concerns about the merging of the real and the fictional, leading to a 'spectralization' of dark tourism.

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Exploring Liminal Pivot Points in Brand Sponsor and Content Creator Partnerships

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

An acknowledged research gap is how brand sponsorship impacts social media content creation. This paper explores content creation practices in the gaming sector. It reports on 6 in-depth interviews with professional gaming content creators with agency representation. Interviews cover motivations to accept sponsorship and content strategy choices. Thematic analysis reveals four themes (monetization freedom, algorithmic performativity, sophisticated integration, upload distortion). Liminality Theory enables pivot point identification that contributes to theory and brand sponsorship practice.

Competitive Short Paper

Social media influencer (SMI) marketing involves partnering with social media personalities to reach their followers with branded content (Lee et al 2022). SMI marketing delivers strong connections with audiences due to high credibility (Chu & Kamal, 2008). Academic research has examined the SMI marketing phenomenon, but an acknowledged gap is how brand sponsorship impacts the development and circulation of content (van Driel and Dumitrica 2021, Tanwar et al 2024). This study addresses this gap.

This paper focuses on content creators rather than influencers to account for a distinction that is overlooked within the broader SMI marketing landscape (c.f. the literature review by Tanwar et al 2024 which makes no distinction). Frequently these two terms are applied interchangeably (Kozinets et al 2023) leading to a lack of clarity on the precise dynamics present in social media practice and theory. Content creators are individuals who "produce professional content that is recognized for its quality, uniqueness, aesthetics, or style." (Kozinets et al 2023:15). In contrast, influencers are individuals with "personal brands that build relationships with an engaged audience through a regular flow of consistent, authentic and distinctive content posted on at least one social media platform" (Kozinets et al 2023:10). In essence, content creators have followers because of *what they do* and influencers have followers because of *who they are*. These boundaries overlap and are "fuzzy" (Kozinets et al 2023: 11). For example, a content creator might have the scope to build a personal brand, but the core distinction is that the content creator exhibits a professional level of skill in both the performance of and creation of content related to their focal activity (Kozinets et al 2023). Understanding changes in content creation practices in response to brand involvement is important given the substantive focus on a core professional skill both to the sponsoring brand and the sponsored creator.

We situate our work in the gaming sector due to a call for greater variety in industry specific studies (Tanwar et al 2024). Gaming content comprises live-streaming gameplay, informative tutorials and entertaining videos. Gaming content creation is sizable i.e. content creators PewDiePie has 110 million followers; Ninja has 16 million followers. We conducted a thematic analysis of 6 in-depth interviews with professional gaming content creators with agency representation. Creators shared their motivations to accept sponsorship and their content strategy choices including video length, integration of messages and upload frequency. This data captures the experiences of content creators with established sponsorship activity and provides insight into creator awareness of how their content production processes change.

We apply Liminality Theory (LT) to visualize the connections between four emergent themes (monetization freedom, algorithmic performativity, sophisticated integration, upload distortion). LT accounts for individual movement across boundaries leading to changes in self-identity (Turner 1994). Using LT helps us clarify the pivot points at which sponsorship exerts influence. We contextualize the derived figure within the wider literature and discuss its scope to inform content creator strategy and brand sponsorship decision making. We conclude by acknowledging limitations and recommending further research.

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Embedding UN Sustainable Development Goals in Teaching Integrated Contemporary Communications for Sustainable Marketing

Track: 18. Teaching Cases

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Summary Statement

This teaching case explores the design and delivery of an interdisciplinary training program, *Integrated Contemporary Communications for Sustainable Marketing*, to empower female scholars in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Aligned with the UN SDGs, the program integrates natural and social sciences to address climate change and promote sustainable business practices. It highlights innovative curriculum design, interactive learning, and practical collaboration with green businesses, offering a replicable model for embedding SDGs in education and sustainable marketing.

Competitive Short Paper

This teaching case explores the design and implementation of *Integrated Contemporary Communications for Sustainable Marketing*, an interdisciplinary training program aimed at empowering female scholars in Ho Chi Minh City (HCM), Vietnam. Funded by the British Council, the initiative addresses the need for greater integration of natural and social sciences to tackle climate change and promote sustainable business practices. The curriculum is designed and delivered by a collaborative team of academics from UK and Vietnam HEIs. The program aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 13 (Climate Action), and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Although Vietnam has made policy advancements to narrow gender gaps in education, women remain underrepresented in leadership roles and higher education institutions (HEIs) (British Council, 2024). This underrepresentation constrains their potential to drive climate action and sustainable development. Research highlights that gender diversity enhances decision-making and innovation (Clavero & Galligan, 2021), particularly when addressing multifaceted challenges like climate change (Chankseliani & McCowan, 2021). Moreover, interdisciplinary approaches are critical for developing solutions and fostering knowledge exchange (McGrath, 2002).

The program employs a three-phase approach to integrate the SDGs into teaching and build participants' capacity for sustainable marketing and climate action:

Phase One: Curriculum Design

This phase involves designing an 8-week training program that integrates key principles of climate change, sustainable business development, marketing communications, and qualitative research. The curriculum is developed through a literature review, secondary data analysis, and input from female scholars in HCM via an online survey.

Phase Two: Course Delivery

The course adopts an interactive learning approach, combining workshops, discussions, and live projects. Participants engage in a live brief throughout the whole program where they address marketing communications challenges faced by local green businesses. This activity fosters collaboration and encourages the application of acquired knowledge to real-world sustainability issues. The training emphasises skills in conducting qualitative research, developing marketing strategies for green businesses, and effectively communicating complex, interdisciplinary knowledge to diverse audiences. The program concludes with a public exhibition showcasing participants' outputs (e.g., marketing strategies for green businesses and communication materials) to promote broader awareness, foster partnerships, and amplify the program's impact.

Phase Three: Evaluation and Dissemination

The final phase assesses the program's impact on participants' research, teaching practices and their engagement with sustainable projects. Evaluation methods include surveys, interviews, and reflective journals to capture changes in participants' behaviour and professional approaches.

The program delivers three primary outcomes: 1) enhanced research capacity among female academics in HCM, Vietnam; 2) improved communication skills for conveying complex knowledge to diverse audiences; and 3) increased engagement in sustainable projects through practical, interdisciplinary collaboration with green businesses. This teaching case contributes to the discourse on embedding SDGs in education and sustainable marketing. It demonstrates how interdisciplinary, gender-focused training can drive climate action, advance gender equality in HEIs, and promote sustainable business development, offering a replicable model for other emerging economies.

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Strategic Marketing for Sustainable Transport Innovations: Driving Green Mobility and Community Impact

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the role of strategic marketing in promoting sustainable and inclusive transport innovations. It highlights how marketing strategies can drive the adoption of low-emission transit systems, active travel options, and community-focused solutions. Drawing on insights into consumer behavior and adoption barriers, the research offers actionable frameworks for aligning transport services with societal values, addressing accessibility challenges, and fostering green mobility, contributing to responsible and sustainable marketing practices.

Competitive Short Paper

Transportation systems are pivotal in enabling economic activity, fostering social inclusion, and addressing environmental challenges. With the growing urgency of climate change and urban sustainability, innovative approaches are required to align transport services with sustainable development goals. This research explores the intersection of marketing and transportation, emphasizing how strategic marketing can accelerate the adoption of sustainable, inclusive, and community-focused transport innovations.

The study examines the potential of sustainable transport solutions, such as low-emission public transit systems, active travel options, and shared mobility services, to mitigate urban mobility challenges and reduce environmental impacts. These innovations offer opportunities to create efficient, accessible, and climate-resilient transport networks catering to diverse populations. By analyzing consumer behaviour, adoption barriers, and the role of stakeholder collaboration, the research identifies strategic marketing approaches that drive engagement and promote the uptake of these solutions.

In addition to technological and service-based innovations, the research highlights the significance of data-driven policymaking in improving public transport. Informal and unregulated transport systems, particularly in developing countries, often fail to meet the needs of vulnerable populations, such as people with disabilities. Ethnographic insights and participatory research methods have been used to capture the experiences of these groups, providing actionable data for marketing campaigns and policy interventions. These findings are relevant to the UK, where inclusivity and accessibility are critical considerations in transport planning, particularly in diverse urban areas.

Strategic marketing is a vital tool for overcoming adoption challenges, shaping consumer perceptions, and encouraging behavioural change. Marketing campaigns can foster community engagement and align transport services with broader societal values by addressing barriers such as affordability, trust, and awareness. For instance, campaigns promoting inclusive transport or active travel options must connect with users' aspirations while demonstrating their personal and environmental benefits.

This presentation will detail the theoretical and practical implications of the research, providing actionable insights for marketing professionals, policymakers, and academic researchers. Key themes include strategies for fostering market adoption of sustainable transport options, leveraging digital tools to enhance user engagement, and designing community-driven campaigns that inspire long-term change.

The research aligns with the UK's goals for green mobility and sustainable urban development, advocating for a collaborative, ecosystem-based approach that integrates marketing into transport planning and delivery. Addressing the interplay between consumer behaviour, policy, and innovation underscores how strategic marketing can act as a catalyst for transformative change in the transport sector.

Attendees will gain insights into how these strategies can be applied to advance green mobility, promote inclusivity, and ensure that transport solutions meet the needs of diverse communities. This research offers a comprehensive framework for driving societal progress and environmental resilience through the power of strategic marketing in sustainable transportation.

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Two Sides of Digital Marketing: How AI and Human Influencers Shape Consumer Perception

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study examines the comparative impacts of AI-powered and human influencers on consumer perceptions in digital marketing through experimental design and structural equation modeling. Key findings reveal that AI influencers excel in perceived usefulness, ease of use, and purchase intention, while human influencers demonstrate strengths in trust-building and reduced perceived risks. The research offers actionable insights for integrating AI and human influencers in hybrid campaigns to optimize digital marketing strategies and address diverse consumer needs.

Competitive Short Paper

This study investigates the comparative effects of ai-powered and human influencers on consumer perceptions within digital marketing. Through an experimental design involving 333 participants, the research evaluates key variables, including perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, trust, perceived risk, and purchase intention. Participants were exposed to simulated social media environments featuring product promotions by either ai-powered or human influencers, enabling the analysis of distinct consumer responses to these two types of influencers. Findings reveal that ai-powered influencers outperform human influencers in perceived usefulness, ease of use, and purchase intention. ai influencers leverage data-driven personalization to provide tailored recommendations, enhancing consumer experiences. However, perceived risks associated with ai influencers, such as data privacy concerns and ethical challenges, emerged as significant barriers to adoption. Conversely, human influencers were perceived as less risky but scored lower in ease of use and technological adaptability. These results highlight the complementary strengths and weaknesses of ai and human influencers, suggesting the potential for hybrid strategies that combine both approaches. The research contributes to the literature by addressing the evolving dynamics of influencer marketing in the age of artificial intelligence. It underscores the importance of transparency, trust-building strategies, and ethical considerations for effective ai influencer adoption. Additionally, it emphasizes the need for marketers to develop user-centric approaches that mitigate perceived risks and foster consumer trust. The study's experimental design involved a control group exposed to human influencers and an experimental group interacting with ai-powered influencers. The use of structural equation modeling allowed for a comprehensive analysis of relationships between variables and the testing of inter-group differences. Results indicate significant differences in perceived usefulness, ease of use, and purchase intention between the two groups, while trust and perceived risk showed no notable inter-group differences. These findings suggest that while ai influencers excel in technological aspects, their adoption requires strategies to address consumer apprehensions about data security and ethical concerns. This research offers practical implications for digital marketing strategies. First, it highlights the importance of educating consumers about the functioning of ai influencers, emphasizing transparency in data usage and algorithmic processes. Second, it recommends integrating human-like attributes into ai influencers to foster emotional connections and enhance consumer trust. Third, hybrid campaigns combining ai and human influencers are suggested as a way to address diverse consumer needs while leveraging the strengths of both approaches. Finally, regular consumer feedback and iterative improvements are advocated to optimize the performance of ai influencers in marketing campaigns. While the study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The experimental design relied on simulated social media environments, which may not fully replicate real-world interactions. Additionally, the sample was limited to individuals with prior online shopping experience, potentially restricting the generalizability of findings. Future research could explore the impact of ai and human influencers across different industries and product categories to provide more nuanced insights. Further studies could also examine additional variables, such as emotional engagement and cultural influences, to enrich the understanding of consumer behavior in influencer marketing.

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Bodysnatching: Illicit Entrepreneurship in the Long Eighteenth Century

Track: 9. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

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Summary Statement

Using historical data, this study offers important context and insight into the pursuit of opportunity in illicit entrepreneurship in the eighteenth century. Drawing on contemporary sources about bodysnatching, that is, the disinterment of cadavers for scholarly medical research, the study responds to call for an increased focus on historical perspectives to strengthen strategic entrepreneurship research.

Competitive Short Paper

From 1540 until 1832, the only legitimate cadavers for medical research and education were sourced from the gallows but by the late seventeenth century, this supply was unable to keep pace with ever-increasing demand. Although the use of cadavers met with strong public and religious antipathy, the institutional and legal spheres of society were more willing to tolerate the practice in the 'interests of science' and scholarship. Legally, a cadaver did not constitute property and could not be stolen, so that the disinterment of a body only amounted to a misdemeanour. Bodysnatchers were emboldened and medical practitioners effectively insulated from punishment. Although contemporary sources referred to 'corporations' and the 'business' of bodysnatching (Richardson, 2001; Hartle, 2023), they also suggest that bodysnatching could be entrepreneurial with entrepreneurs seizing unsaintly opportunities presented by the shortfall of cadavers.

Opportunity is central to entrepreneurship (Eckhardt and Shane, 2003; Short et al. 2010) where individuals identify and pursue them for business and enrichment (Shane, 2003). Entrepreneurial opportunities may be categorized according to the source of the opportunities, through for example exogenous shocks (Alvarez and Barney, 2007), and the initiator of the change (Eckhardt and Shane, 2003), that is individuals who identify and pursue those opportunities (Shane 2003). Individual agency in the context of opportunity spotting is therefore an underpinning assumption of entrepreneurship (Wilson and Martin, 2015).

Positive aspects of entrepreneurship dominate the literature (Baron et al. 2012) leaving its darker side somewhat overlooked (Smith, 2009), that is, criminal, illicit or illegal entrepreneurship (Gottschalk, 2010; Smith, 2015). Opportunities for entrepreneurship can occur equally in asocial or anti-social spaces where societal norms and values are flouted (Dobson et al. 2015). Opportunities are identified, resources assembled and leveraged (McElwee and Smith 2015) in the imaginative pursuit of profit without regard to the means used (Baumol, 1990). Illegal entrepreneurs are characterized by a willingness to take risks, a specialized knowledge and/or a readiness to exploit institutional weaknesses (Adobor, 2025).

Taking an historical perspective offers the prospect of fresh theorizing (Maclean et al. 2016), creating space for strategic entrepreneurship research to develop a deeper historical sensibility (Wadhwani et al. 2020). A historical context can address topics of concern to entrepreneurship scholars, particularly the opportunity identification process (Wadhwani, 2016). The environment that made British entrepreneurship so effective during the eighteenth century consisted of institutions that created the right incentives and the complementarities through synthesising human capital, natural resources and a more effective polity (Mokyr 2007). At the same time, formal law enforcement left a great deal to be desired leaving economic agents or entrepreneurs free to engage in opportunistic and unsaintly behaviours (Mokyr 2007).

Using historical data, this study will provide important context and insight into the pursuit of opportunity in illicit entrepreneurship and thus contribute to the literature.

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Integrating Sustainability and the SDGs into Marketing Education: Preparing Future Leaders for a Sustainable Future: Examples from Current Practice in Bath Business School

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

Bath Spa University (BSU), a PRME UK and Ireland Chapter signatory, recognizes the critical role of educators in preparing students to tackle contemporary environmental and social challenges (Sengupta, 2020; PRME, 2024). With limited examples of integrating SDGs into Marketing curricula, BSU demonstrates its commitment to embedding sustainability by prioritizing curriculum renewal and the development of innovative programmes. This proactive approach reflects the university's dedication to equipping graduates with knowledge and skills to address global complexities.

Competitive Short Paper

Addressing future planetary challenges necessitates a transformation in the marketing sector, requiring a fundamental realignment of its purpose and a reconsideration of marketing practices. The growing demand from employers for graduates capable of designing sustainable marketing strategies is evident (CIM, 2023), underscoring that sustainability can no longer remain peripheral within marketing curricula. Consequently, there is an urgent imperative to disrupt and innovate traditional marketing education, ensuring that students are adequately prepared to tackle these complex global challenges in their future careers (Sengupta, 2020; PRME, 2024).

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015) offer a comprehensive framework for addressing global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation. Singh and Murad (2021) highlight the importance of marketing educators rethinking curriculum design through the lens of the SDGs, advocating for course content aligned with their objectives and guiding principles to enable a holistic approach to integration. Incorporating the SDGs into marketing education provides a transformative platform for teaching students about social responsibility, ethics, and sustainability. Similarly, Schaltegger and Burritt (2018) argue that embedding the SDGs into business education fosters a paradigm shift, producing graduates who are not only skilled marketers but also responsible global citizens.

Currently, there are limited examples of embedding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the Marketing curriculum within higher education. As a signatory of the PRME UK and Ireland Chapter, Bath Spa University acknowledges the crucial role of educators in preparing future generations to navigate the complexities of contemporary environmental and social challenges (Sengupta, 2020; PRME, 2024). The university demonstrates its commitment to sustainability by proactively integrating it into curriculum design, encompassing both the renewal of existing programmes and the development of new courses.

This paper presents findings from a longitudinal study of a newly developed course at BSU, evaluating the curriculum delivered in an undergraduate Marketing programme. The study applies the principles of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970) and emphasizes the integration of the three interconnected dimensions of learning—Cognitive, Social and Emotional, and Behavioural—as outlined by UNESCO as essential for effective sustainability education (UNESCO, 2023).

Whilst this paper explores and argues for what may be an appropriate definition of sustainability in this context that may be used to underpin such course design (Upadhyaya et al:CISL), the paper's key contribution is in detailing the methodology and frameworks of reference used to embed the SDGs in the Marketing curricula, and frameworks used to anticipate and navigate challenges (Albareda et al.,2020: Parry &Metzeger,2023), to arrive at a programme where students are engaged with the SDGs, sustainability thinking and frameworks from year one Rushinko,(2010), moving along a transformative continuum from awareness to critical consciousness and empowerment with sustainability education firmly embedded throughout the learning experience (Botman,2010 & Dlouha & Burandt,2015).

The ultimate goal of this case study is to inspire other academics to embrace the challenge of empowering their Marketing students by providing opportunities to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to become the 'Marketers for Good' of the future.

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From Social Hubs to Silent Shops: The Impact of Unmanned Stores on Rural Community Life

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

This study explores how the emergence of unmanned stores impacts the sense of community in rural areas. It is set against the backdrop of increased urbanization, which threatens the survival of smaller rural communities. We study this through ethnographic inquiry into the emergence of unmanned stores. These have been introduced to counteract the depopulation of rural areas. We identify four ways in which these stores impact the social life of the villages.

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The Bright And Dark Impacts Of Digital Marketing In Consumer Well-Being: A Systematic Literature Review And Future Research Agenda

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study examines the positive and negative impacts of digital marketing on consumer well-being through a systematic review using the TCM-ADO framework. By analyzing 58 papers via PRISMA, it clarifies key theories, contexts, and methodologies. And it also introduces a framework to explore the antecedents and outcomes of these effects and provides strategies for organizations, marketers, and consumers. The findings offer valuable insights for future research and practical applications in the digital era.

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Banking Behind Closed Doors: Accessibility Challenges for Financial Services in Nigeria

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

In Nigeria, over 25 million individuals with disabilities face significant barriers to accessing traditional banking services due to architectural and socio-economic factors. Despite global digitalization trends, physical branches remain vital for financial inclusion, yet accessibility issues persist. This qualitative research explores these challenges to provide actionable recommendations. It emphasizes the need for inclusive banking policies and practices, balancing traditional and digital channels to enhance financial inclusion for people with disabilities.

Competitive Short Paper

In Nigeria, traditional banking services predominantly rely on physical branches despite the global trend towards digital banking solutions. However, individuals with disabilities encounter significant obstacles in accessing these services due to architectural barriers and limited fintech adoption. With over 25 million Nigerians living with disabilities, understanding their experiences in accessing banking facilities is crucial. Despite the global push towards digitalization, physical branches remain essential for many individuals, providing vital support for their financial needs.

While acknowledging the challenges faced by people with disabilities, there's a dearth of comprehensive understanding regarding the specific barriers encountered within Nigerian banking halls. Furthermore, the impact of these accessibility issues on the financial inclusion of individuals with disabilities remains largely unexplored. Additionally, insights into the perspectives of policymakers and banking managers concerning the importance of addressing these accessibility issues and integrating transformative financial services are lacking.

To bridge these gaps, further research should delve into the architectural and socio-economic factors contributing to the inaccessibility of banking halls for people with disabilities in Nigeria. Additionally, qualitative interviews with individuals with disabilities can provide invaluable insights into their challenges and needs. Understanding the attitudes and strategies of banking managers and policymakers towards enhancing accessibility and inclusivity in banking services is crucial for driving meaningful change.

This research aims to conduct an exploratory qualitative study anchored on the transformative services research agenda and marketplace accessibilities strand of research. By observing banking hall layouts, walking with commuters, and conducting qualitative interviews with people with disabilities, this study seeks to uncover specific challenges they face in accessing banking services in Nigeria. The research will offer actionable recommendations to inform transformative financial services agendas and provide practical implications for managers and policymakers. Ultimately, it aims to improve the accessibility and inclusivity of banking services for all individuals, particularly those with disabilities.

The findings of this research will illuminate pervasive accessibility issues within Nigerian banking halls and underscore the importance of addressing these challenges to promote financial inclusion. By providing insights into the experiences and needs of individuals with disabilities, this research will inform the development of targeted interventions and policy initiatives aimed at improving accessibility and inclusivity in banking services. Moreover, it will emphasize the continued relevance of traditional banking channels alongside digital innovations, offering practical implications for stakeholders in the banking industry and policymakers seeking to enhance financial inclusion and accessibility for all members of society.

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Selling Motherhood: A Critical Visual Analysis of Maternal Marketing and Platform Capitalism from Betty Crocker to Mumfluencers

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

This research examines how platform capitalism reimagines historical maternal marketing practices, analysing the evolution from Betty Crocker advertisements to contemporary mumfluencers. Through critical visual analysis, the study investigates how digital platforms transform traditional maternal performances into commodified content while preserving patriarchal ideologies. The findings reveal how mumfluencers operate as both subjects and agents of maternal hegemony, producing "authentic" content that upholds ideals of good motherhood while navigating post-feminist dynamics within today's $2.4 trillion influencer industry.

Competitive Short Paper

This research examines how historical legacies of maternal marketing are reimagined through platform capitalism, analysing the evolution from Betty Crocker advertisements to contemporary mumfluencers. Within today's $2.4 trillion influencer industry (Carter, 2017). Mumfluencers represent what Hund and McGuigan (2019) term the "shoppable life" – where social media platforms encode marketplace logic into everyday social interactions. This digital transformation marks a significant departure from Friedan's (1963) conceptualization of the "sexual sell," described as "targeting housewives for profit, promising identity and fulfilment in exchange for product purchase" (p. 91).

Central to this analysis is Kozinets et al.'s (2016) concept of "networks of desire," and how platform capitalism creates "complex open systems of machines, consumers, energy, and objects interacting as an interconnected desiring-machine that produces consumption interest" (p. 678). Through these networks, traditional maternal performances become consumption objects within digital spaces. Platform capitalism intensifies what Cappellini et al. (2019) term "cruel optimism" (p. 469), where mothers demonstrate "good mothering and respectability" (p. 474) through consumption practices. This aligns with Casey and Littler's (2022) "spectacular housewifization" (p. 491), where platform capitalism transforms domestic labour into monetizable content while preserving traditional hegemonies. This enables what Cappellini et al. (2019) identify as "self-discipline" and "self-surveillance" (p. 473) through "technologies of the self" (p. 474). This digital transformation leaves "the existing patriarchal regime relatively untouched" (McRobbie, 2015, p. 17), while creating new forms of maternal identity work where authenticity becomes a carefully curated performance.

These findings extend our understanding of how digital platforms reshape maternal performance through technological, economic, and socio-cultural mechanisms that challenge and reinforce traditional gender ideologies.

Methodologically, this research employs Schroeder and Borgerson's (2015) critical visual analysis framework, examining how advertising imagery constructs gender performances across traditional and digital platforms. The analysis draws from two datasets: three 1950s Betty Crocker advertisements exemplifying early authenticity marketing strategies and contemporary Instagram content from three globally influential mumfluencers focusing on cooking, cleaning, and fashion. The historical analysis examines how Betty Crocker operated as a proto-influencer, "peddling the appearance of authenticity" (Petersen, 2023, p. 50), while the contemporary dataset analyses how mumfluencers leverage self-expression, sensory language, and aspirational visual markers to convey authenticity and engage audiences (Cascio Rizzo et al., 2023; Chung et al., 2023). Which Casey and Littler (2022) call "the neoliberal refashioning of housework" (p. 491). Yet their posts remain confined to "highly gendered content and practices" (Clawson, 2023, p. 93).

This research contributes to marketing and consumer culture theory by illuminating how platform capitalism transforms traditional maternal marketing hegemonies while preserving and reimagining these practices. It demonstrates how mumfluencers operate as both subjects and neoliberal agents of maternal hegemony, producing content that upholds patriarchal, racial, and economic ideals of "good white motherhood" while navigating what McRobbie (2015) terms the "post-feminist masquerade." The findings reveal that platform capitalism creates new forms of maternal identity work that commodify care, emotional, and domestic labour through authenticity, producing consumption desires while also raising vulnerabilities and anxieties for mothers at large (The Voice Group, 2010), all while sustaining existing ideologies.

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Sustainable Fashion in the Age of AI: Exploring Beyond Human and Virtual Influencers

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This research highlights the effectiveness of virtual influencer (VI) with human companion in promoting sustainable fashion. Harnessing synergy of both, the VI and human influencer, study reflects how human traits (say authenticity & trust) with virtual abilities (like consistency & scalability) boost fashion consumer's pro-environmental behavior, especially with negatively framed sustainability posts on Instagram. Also, mediated by anthropomorphism and wishful identification, our findings offer strategic implications for sustainability campaigns adding knowledge to influencer marketing research.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Earlier studies have explored how virtual Instagram influencers (VIs) like Lil Miquela, promote sustainable fashion (Shrivastava et al., 2021; Hoai Lan et al., 2024). However, the impact of 'VIs accompanied with humans' on sustainable practices remains largely unexplored (Lee et al., 2024; Cascio Rizzo et al., 2023). With the emerging trend of VIs appearing alongside humans on Instagram (Cascio Rizzo et al., 2023), this study investigates how hybrid influencers' (VI with human) sustainability post drive fashion consumers pro-environmental behavior. Mixed views on VIs, including authenticity and skepticism (Franke et al., 2023; Kim et al., 2024), further augment the need for this work.

Here, we begin with qualitative inquiry followed by experiments relying on theory of anthropomorphism (Epley et al., 2007), social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), and social presence theory (Short et al., 1976). We also explore wishful identification and anthropomorphism as underlying mechanisms mediating the impact of sustainable fashion posts. Lastly, we crosscheck if textual and visual content interact to enhance the effectiveness of VIs on Instagram.

Literature Background

Virtual influencers are digital entities imitating human (Byun & Ahn, 2023; Arsenyan & Mirowska, 2021) and good at scalability and consistency (Leung et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2023; Byun & Ahn, 2023). The fashion industry aggressively employs them to promote sustainability (Shin & Lee, 2023; Gerrath et al., 2024; Jiang, et al., 2024). However, human influencer also drives sustainable practices by infusing trust and relatability among users (Henninger et al., 2016).

Building on this, we assume what if firm harness the traits of both (human & virtual) influencers while promoting sustainable fashion. Thus, we aim to cross-check how hybrid influencer (VI accompanied by human) sustainable message boost fashion consumer's sustainable engagement which is still under researched.

Method and Findings

The study uses a mixed-method approach, starting with in-depth interviews of twenty fashion consumers on social media thereby elucidating three key themes i.e., *Awareness of Sustainability*, *Eco-friendly fashion Practices, and Environmental Citizenship*. Also, the study observes three themes representing the impact of sustainability posts by virtual, human, and hybrid influencers. Hybrid influencers (VIs with humans) reflect a synergy effect, showing more empathy than humans and higher consistency than VIs.

Based on interview findings, we propose the model which is tested via experiments. The results shows that Instagram posts featuring hybrid influencer (VI with a human) significantly enhance sustainable behavioral intentions (F (1, 198)

= 12.34, $p < .001$) and this effect reinforces when the message is negatively framed ($F(1, 198) = 10.56$, $p = .002$). Also, the mediation analysis confirmed that wishful identification ($\beta = .45$, $p < .001$) and anthropomorphism ($\beta = .38$, $p = .003$) significantly mediate the effects.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The study enhances our understanding about hybrid influencers, how they drive sustainability by combining the novelty of the virtual influencer with human authenticity thereby pushing the boundaries of influencer marketing research. It has strong implications for firms hiring influencers, policy makers and fashion consumers interested in practicing sustainability.

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Escape rooms, DIY and babysitting: utilising creative qualitative projective techniques in one-to-one interviews to capture political brand image research

Track: 13. Political Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores the brand image of the conservative and labour party prior the last general election from young voter's perspective, using projective techniques (PT). PT are a series of data collection exercises used to enable participants to reveal / project their deep-seated thoughts, perceptions through associations, activities and illustrations. This study challenges the use of PT within an interview setting, which is a under researched area, and proposes a new projective technique category called scenarios

Competitive Short Paper

This paper will explore the brand image of the conservative and labour party prior the election on 4 July 2024 from a young voter's perspective, using projective techniques. Projective techniques (PT) are a series of data collection exercises used to enable participants or subjects to reveal and project their deep-seated thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes through associations, activities and illustrations (Khan et al, 2024; Boddy 2004; Spry & Pich, 2021). The principal benefit of projective techniques "is their ability to uncover participants' subconscious hidden and repressed feelings" (Khan et al, 2024:116) which respondents wouldn't otherwise discuss. This leads to this method being used alongside traditional interviews/focus group discussions. Whilst several studies have used projective techniques there is still a call for further research on where projective techniques are most useful (Spry & Pich, 2021). Projective techniques can be divided into five different categories, such as *association, completion, construction, express and choice order.* There is sparsity in research on brand image using projective techniques (Khan et al 2024) but existing research has revealed its benefits in focus group discussion (Jain et al, 2018; Pich and Dean, 2015), however the benefits of embedding PTs within one-to-one interviews remains under-researched. Further, the use of projective techniques has shown to break down barriers and strengthen rapport and expressive capabilities with voters. Therefore, using PTs within one-to-one interviews could elicit similar responses, empower young voters and reveal deep insight into often complex and sensitive area of study. In addition, there is often overlap with some of the PT categories for example 'construction' and 'completion'. Hence, this research will address the benefits of using PTs in one-one interviews with young voters and propose a revised PT category.

Twenty interviews were conducted with young voters, each interview lasting around an hour. Young voters are a group that historically has described as cynical, and distrusting of the political process are young voters (Dermody at al 2010). This group votes less than other voter groups but still wants to be heard according to the BBC (2024). Understanding brand image and what beliefs, attitudes, ideas, young people hold about these parties, their leaders and policies (Panda et al, 2019; Andreasen et al, 2008; Pich and Armannsdottir, 2025) is important as they are likely starting their voter journey.

The findings from this study will offer political parties and practitioners the opportunity to understand how voters develop their attitudes and assess the associations to better establish a positive relationship with them. It also offers people who are new to projective techniques a more creative and fun way of conducting interviews. Finally, we propose a new projective technique category in between *completion* and *construction* called *scenarios.* Not only did these scenarios break up the interview, but they also offered insight into how young voters felt about the two politicians and provided information which hadn't been previously discussed in the interview.

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Enhancing Sustainability Knowledge and Critical Thinking: A Qualitative Experiment with a Targeted Business Simulation Game

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

Sustainability is increasingly prioritised in UK higher education; however, significant gaps persist in embedding it within curricula to enhance students' professional development. This research integrates sustainability into a Business Management module through ESEQuest, a bespoke Targeted Business Simulation Game (TBSG). Employing a qualitative experimental design with 30 participants, the study utilised pre- and post-tests to evaluate the simulation's impact. Findings reveal ESEQuest's effectiveness in fostering critical thinking and enhancing both understanding and knowledge of sustainability.

Competitive Short Paper

Sustainability is increasingly being integrated into the values of higher education institutions in the Uk and all around the world through activities aimed at promoting Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) (Zhou, 2024; Ruiz-Mallén and Heras, 2020; Vargas et al., 2019;). Universities now recognise sustainability as a strategic priority, particularly in management education (Ndubuka and Rey-Marmonier, 2019; Figueiró and Raufflet, 2015). Riess et al. (2022) highlight that sustainability should be embedded across all university activities to support ESD. This approach enables students to critically evaluate the world as it is, envision a sustainable future, and develop the skills to bring that vision to life.

Despite this growing emphasis, a gap remains in pedagogical strategies for incorporating sustainability into teaching programmes to enhance learning and professional development (Marouli, 2021; Lozano et al., 2017). Business simulation games (BSGs) are a promising approach to achieve this (Velez et al., 2023; Gatti et al., 2019). De Montfort University (DMU) developed ESEQuest, a hybrid business simulation combining software and paper-based formats. This approach was designed to enhance students' engagement and capabilities by immersing them in decision-making scenarios related to sustainable projects, delivered through dynamic rounds.

The simulation was initially designed for a banking context but can be adapted to various industries. Unlike generic BSGs, ESEQuest is a Targeted BSG (TBSG), focusing specifically on sustainability to ensure engagement and relevance (Ahuja, 2024). It positioned students as the CEO of a bank, enabling them to demonstrate their understanding through active engagement and measurable outcomes.

To evaluate the effectiveness of BSG-based learning, a qualitative pre-test and post-test quasi-experiment was conducted. In the pre-test, students answered open-ended questions indirectly assessing their consideration of sustainability and directly evaluating their understanding of UNSDGs. Responses revealed a primary focus on financial growth and customer trust, with some attention to environmental concerns. Proposed initiatives included employee wellbeing programmes, reducing carbon footprints, and supporting charities addressing poverty and education.

Following the pre-test, teaching was delivered through two complementary methods: (1) a card-based activity to explore initiatives addressing UNSDGs in a banking context and (2) a simulation conducted in five rounds using Excel, introducing progressively complex decision-making scenarios:

Round 1: Selecting sustainability initiatives without budget constraints.

Round 2: Considering the bank's business model, purpose, vision, and strategic pillars.

Round 3: Allocating a limited budget while considering the bank's previous sustainability initiatives.

Round 4: Integrating government subsidies targeting carbon reduction and financial inclusion.

Round 5: Addressing external challenges such as a cybersecurity breach and a new FinTech competitor.

In the post-test, conducted one week after the teaching day, students answered the same questions again. They exhibited a more refined understanding of balancing financial outcomes, UNSDGs, and organisational strategies. Teams adapted their decision-making to address earlier oversights and acknowledged the simulation's usefulness. They recognised its value in connecting theoretical knowledge with practical application, providing new perspectives on sustainability in business contexts.

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Exploring the aesthetics of luxury branding: Insights from luxury packaging design.

Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

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Summary Statement

The luxury market has steadily grown in importance within the global economy. However, the important role of brand aesthetics, particularly in packaging, has received limited attention. This study investigates consumer perceptions of luxury fragrance packaging through photo-elicitation in focus groups. Our findings contribute to the scholarly

discussion on luxury brand identity management and provide luxury brand managers with a comprehensive framework of characteristics to guide their decisions on packaging suitability.

Competitive Short Paper

The luxury industry is a significant part of the global economy. A recent report by Bain & Company (2024) estimated global luxury spending to reach €1.5 trillion, with the core of the market being personal luxury goods. The luxury market is driven by high-net-worth individuals and an emerging middle class of aspirational consumers who seek personal luxury goods as symbols of status and achievement (Kim, 2023). The success of the sector has attracted a consistent stream of scholarly attention that has focused on the strategies of luxury brands, particularly in relation exclusivity and scarcity (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012), the influence of pricing on the perception of luxury (Parguel et al., 2016), and consumer motivations for purchasing luxury brands, specifically as mechanisms for signaling identity and values (Kapferer & Bastien, 2017; Atwal & Williams, 2017). However, given the importance of aesthetics in conveying the extrinsic cues of prestige (Mugge, et. al., 2014), heritage and exclusivity (Godey, et. al., 2009), there has been surprisingly few studies that have looked at the influence of packaging design in luxury brands.

One study explored the impact of cultural sensitivity in luxury packaging (Chinda & Moorapun, 2015) and found there were cultural and geographical differences in how consumers interpreted the visual cues of packaging. Aguirre's study (2020) investigated the sustainability of materials used in luxury packaging but solely focused on the materials of the packaging and not the entirety of the visual and sensory cues. Meanwhile a related study of chocolate and water packaging (Mugge, et. al., 2014) proposed that there were four visual cues for signaling 'premium', these being: Extraordinary differentiation, high quality of packaging materials, minimalistic design, and authenticity. While these aforementioned 'guidelines' provided a set of abstract characteristics, there is a need to explicate the aesthetics of design that extend to luxury packaging, particularly in light of its role in influencing expectations and conveying associations compatible with luxury brands (Patrick & Peracchio, 2010; Townsend & Sood, 2012; Kapferer & Bastien, 2012).

By using photo-elicitation within a series of focus groups with luxury consumers, this research examined consumer perceptions of branded packaging from within the luxury fragrance segment. A sample of six, globally available fragrances were selected based on ensuring that the packaging's defining features contained maximum visual variation. This enabled the capturing the consumer perceptions across a greater range of visual features. The analysis sought to discover the common associations and interpretations of colour, negative space, typography, graphical imagery, and composition, within the context of luxury packaging. The findings revealed that luxury brand packaging has recognisable characteristics that serve as graphic associations of exclusivity, conveying desirability through the use of aesthetic proportionality, and incorporated an extravagant use of negative space, leading consumers to perceive notions of opulence.

This study expands the discussion on the design techniques of luxury packaging, and contributes to the scholarly debate on luxury brand identity management. Furthermore, this study offers a clear set of design characteristics to inform the development and assessment of packaging strategies for luxury brand management.

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#Clothbummums: Unpacking Consumers' Green Engagement with Cloth Nappies

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This research investigates consumers' green engagement with cloth nappies amid the challenges of early parenthood. This qualitative study utilised visual diaries and online focus groups with 27 users within the Instagram community #clothbummums. Findings reveal the laborious tasks associated with engagement paradoxically empower parents by providing a sense of control in an often chaotic lifecycle stage. Unlike other forms of green engagement, successful cloth nappy engagement necessitates the engagement of an entire support network.

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In it together – tapping the internal market for environmental and organisational performance

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

In this theoretical paper we consider the deleterious effect of organisational climate action on employees. Using a social identity lens, we consider how poor signalling to employees can reduce their level of identification with the organisation and explore the effects on the organisation. We propose a set of measures to identify employees as an internal market and develop strategies from this position. These include an internal marketing strategy and co-creation of solutions.

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Sustainable Toy Marketing in the Digital Age: The Influence of Kidfluencers and Parental Awareness

Track: 8. Digital Marketing

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the impact of digital marketing, kidfluencers, and sustainability on children's toy preferences. It examines how toy manufacturers leverage user-generated content and influencer marketing to shape children's purchasing behaviors. Through qualitative interviews with parents, the study investigates their awareness of digital marketing practices and attitudes toward sustainable toys. The findings contribute to understanding the ethical implications of marketing to children and offer insights for manufacturers seeking to integrate sustainability into their marketing strategies.

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Out of This World or Other-worldly? Charting a Research Agenda for Virtual Influencer Marketing

Track: 1. Advertising and Marketing Communications

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Summary Statement

Virtual influencers (VIs) represent an emerging phenomenon in the field of influencer marketing. The purpose of this paper is to critically examine the academic literature in the area, and to present a subsequent research agenda that will broaden our understanding of the contexts in which VIs can be effectively used to disseminate brand messaging to audiences, as well as the contexts in which their relative (in)authenticity and sense of 'other-worldliness' may be less effective.

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Transitioning Into Parenthood: Exploring Opportunities For Everyday Sustainable Consumption

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study aims to understand the opportunities for and nature of sustainable consumption during and post transition into parenthood. As values, identities and behaviours are likely to shift during and beyond the transition, this period offers a rare window in people's lives during which they may be more likely to move towards more sustainable consumption. In-depth qualitative research, in the form of semi-structured interviews, is being undertaken to better understand this personal lived experience.

Competitive Short Paper

While sustainable consumption and consumption related to parenthood have separately been the subject of significant academic attention, there has been limited focus on how the two might intersect (Burningham & Venn, 2025; Shrum et al., 2023). Research that has explored the relationship between becoming a parent and moving towards more sustainable consumption has generally been inconclusive regarding the possible interconnections and interrelationships (Shrum et al., 2023; Thomas et al., 2018). Additionally, there have been specific calls for a deeper understanding of consumption decisions within the context of the family and the household, where the understanding of intergenerational influence is limited (Essiz & Mandrik, 2022; Ritch & Brownlie, 2016). In response to this research, this study aims to understand the opportunities for and nature of sustainable consumption during and post transition into parenthood.

Major life transitions such as becoming a parent, retiring or relocating are often referred to in literature as a "life-course transition" (Burningham & Venn, 2020; Schäfer et al., 2012). These transitions can often lead to greater changes in everyday life; "such discontinuities may force people to renegotiate ways of doing things, create a need for information to make the new choices, and a mind-set of being 'in the mood for change'" (Verplanken & Roy, 2016, p.128). The transition into parenthood can be extremely disruptive to everyday life with experiences ranging from urgent considerations of time constraints to gradually evolving considerations of identity in this new role (Carrigan & Szmigin, 2004). In addition, consumption decisions during and post transition may be seen by society as an indication of the type of parent one might be (Banister et al., 2016; Davies et al., 2010). As behaviours are also likely to shift during and beyond the transition due to demands such as time and practicality, this period offers a rare window in peoples' lives during which they may be more likely to reconsider aspects of their everyday lives and experience opportunities to engage in more sustainable paths (Verplanken & Roy, 2016). Therefore, an exploration of the complex decision-making of parents during and post transition as they adapt to this life change (Burningham & Venn, 2020) is particularly important.

In-depth qualitative research in the form of semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of soon-to-be, new and more experienced parents, at key points in the transition into parenthood, have unveiled rich preliminary findings. Specifically, the parents' sustainable values and behaviours are reinforced as they begin to shape their children's values and behaviours. Being a role model for their children appears to strengthen and even reignite the parents' own efforts as they feel a responsibility to the next generation who observe and learn from them. Analysis of the interviews thus far has shown that parents' decision-making is significantly altered during this transition. Participants also noted how their identities evolved during this transition as their perspective on life shifted since becoming responsible for another person. This study highlights the importance of understanding opportunities and challenges for incorporating sustainable behaviours into the future.

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Brand in the Boardroom: Marketers Must Step Up, But Directors Must Learn

Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

Mark Smith, Maher Daboul, Richard Howarth

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Summary Statement

This qualitative study explores the undervaluation of marketing at board level, identifying why many Directors perceive it as a tactical function rather than a strategic driver. Based on interviews with Directors, the paper reveals friction caused by misaligned metrics and knowledge gaps. It proposes two solutions: marketers presenting as businesspeople and the education of non-marketing Directors on strategic marketing principles. Bridging this divide could enhance cross-functional collaboration, elevate marketing's boardroom role and unlock long-term value.

Competitive Short Paper

"If marketing wants to increase its power in firms, it should seek to get the board 'on board'" Ebbes et al (2025).

Many CEOs do not trust their senior marketers, believing they fall short of expectations (Whitler 2022). Despite its strategic potential, marketing remains underutilised and misunderstood at the board level in many organisations.

A qualitative study of Directors in England was undertaken, identifying two key solutions to this gap: firstly, senior marketers must present as businesspeople rather than activators and secondly, non-marketing Directors would benefit from training in strategic marketing principles. Directors with marketing knowledge can bridge the gap between marketing functions and strategic business outcomes.

The study uncovered a lack of clarity around marketing's role among Directors. Marketing is often seen as a "dark art" or a support function focused on aesthetics and short-term tactics, rather than a strategic driver. Many Directors equate marketing with execution, overlooking its potential to build brand equity and drive long-term value. One participant noted, "Marketing was…talking about…brand recognition and none of the customers would be even interested in talking to [Sales] if there wasn't brand recognition" (Director S, COO, Consumer Products). However, this strategic contribution is often undervalued due to misaligned metrics and limited understanding of marketing's broader impact.

These misunderstandings create friction with other departments, particularly finance and sales. Directors cited conflicts between marketing's focus on long-term brand building and sales' short-term revenue goals. For instance, marketing was described as "the fluffy area" compared to finance or operations (Director Q, HR Director, Education). Without cross-functional education, Directors struggle to integrate marketing into broader strategic decisions.

The research also emphasised the strategic importance of sustainability, where marketing could align sustainability goals with brand strategies to create competitive advantages. Yet marketing's role in sustainability is often overlooked due to a lack of board-level ownership and the perception of sustainability as an operational concern. One Director remarked, "done properly, marketing is strategic and should lead the business" (Director P, Marketing Director, Brewing).

Participants identified a need for greater marketing knowledge at the board level to enable cross-functional collaboration. While marketers must understand financial metrics and operational pressures, non-marketing Directors need to recognise the strategic value of marketing. "When marketing and finance understand each other, the board is much stronger," observed one participant (Director G, Retail Director, Retail).

A recurring theme was the importance of robust, tangible metrics to build marketing's credibility. Participants highlighted the need for data linking marketing activities to financial outcomes. For example, customer loyalty indices could align marketing efforts with boardroom expectations and foster trust.

The research highlights the undervaluation of marketing in the boardroom, driven by misunderstandings and misaligned priorities. Equipping Directors with marketing training can unlock marketing's potential as a strategic driver. This requires a cultural shift to integrate marketing with core business functions and establish a shared language of value and metrics across departments. Ultimately, better marketing education for Directors will enable organisations to tackle challenges such as sustainability and position themselves for long-term success.

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The Effects Of Perceived Discretion And FLE-Customer Similarity On Customer Perceptions Of Discrimination In Service Rule Enforcement

Track: 14. Retail & Services Marketing

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Summary Statement

While service literature has devoted attention to discrimination in areas such as service delivery and recovery, rule enforcement despite its very sensitive nature has not received sufficient attention. We obtained both qualitative and quantitative data from 287 UK customers to examine the effect of service rule enforcement on discrimination and betrayal attributions and in turn, NWOM. The study highlights managerial and theoretical implications of FLE-customer similarity/dissimilarity for managing service rule enforcement.

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Knowledge that Transforms: Enabling and Sustaining Co-Production Partnerships in Healthcare Systems

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

Our participatory action research explores how healthcare organizations can develop and strengthen consumer capacities to co-produce transformative outcomes in partnership with healthcare organizations. We highlight three consumer co-production capacity development processes that enable the authentic sharing of experiential knowledge, mitigate consumer experiences of vulnerability and epistemic injustice. We emphasize a strengths-based framing of consumer experiential knowledge that leverages their experiences. We conclude with a discussion of our theoretical contributions and implications for research and practice.

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Brand in the Boardroom: The Feminist Counterbalance to Masculine Capitalism

Track: 5. Brands & Branding

Mark Smith, Richard Howarth, Maher Daboul

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Summary Statement

This paper investigates the intersection of brand management, boardroom dynamics and feminist literature, proposing a novel approach to improve brand decision-making. It identifies a correlation between masculine-coded boardroom traits and feminine-coded brand behaviours. By applying feminist methodologies, the study challenges traditional capitalism's association with masculine disorder, advocating for balanced decision-making processes. It highlights the potential for feminist influence to enhance brand impact, foster inclusion and improve profitability, offering actionable insights for Directors and practitioners.

Competitive Short Paper

Emergent from qualitative research was a potential correlation between boardrooms and masculine traits, and brand management and feminine traits. Exploring the literature to support this correlation opened up the possibility of a new way to improve brand and sustainability interactions in boardrooms. Taking a view of social justice through a feminist lens (Gergen 2017 p.289) developed the possibility to shift the boardroom environment to improve brand success.

Connections between capitalism and what is considered as masculinity are proposed in the literature, particularly with specific reference to the concept of masculine disorder rather than simply being male or female (Cremin 2021 pp.8-13, Arsel, Eräranta and Moisander 2015, Garlick 2020, Hirschman 1993). This raises questions in the boardroom of how to bring in feminism without simply assuming this will come from females having boardroom roles in a way to influence brand behaviour.

In predominantly white English-speaking countries (such as the UK, USA and Australia), thought and reason are identified with the masculine, while emotions and bodies are associated to the feminine (Ahmed 2014 p.162, Garlick 2023). There is suggestion in the literature that some capitalism, such as neoliberalism, aspires to reduce the well-being of society (Cremin 2021 p.142). The resulting factors support comparisons with a feminist perspective.

Just as many argue feminism is not necessarily about removing men or bringing women in, instead about removing the existing malestream and ensuring the inclusion of female standpoints (Stanley 2013 p.39); applying feminist methodology to a wider scope in the understanding of this group (Rodriguez, et al. 2011). A similar attitude was explored for brand marketing when making proposals into boardrooms. The viewpoint would not be to remove capitalism (the masculine), but to also ensure inclusion of the good that brands can do in the world (the feminine) (Cremin 2021 pp.1-5,106-7, Freeman 2001).

At the heart of this work is commercial rationale to make the outputs relevant to practitioners wanting to improve their brand's impact. Feminist influence in boardrooms is frequently reported as favourably impacting profit levels and increasing approval of investors (Anon. 2017, Bjørkhaug and Øyslebø Sørensen 2012). This is a critical balance between boardroom, brand and consumer to avoid negative impacts on the brand (Cova and Paranque 2012).

The work explores and gives consideration to the different decision making processes undertaken by masculine dominated boardrooms versus those with feminist influence (Khemakhem, Maalej and Fontaine 2022). Further comparisons are drawn from perceptions of feminism that may prevent its progression – such as a negative perception of the impact of emotions affecting judgement (Ahmed 2014 p.162) which when investigated is shown to be inaccurate (Haslam, et al. 2010).

There is opportunity to develop boardroom environments by Directors deploying a balanced approach to brand decisions. More questions are raised in the work to explore how to develop this in a way that is accepted by all involved in boardroom decision making – particularly those without an existing standpoint that is or has parallels to feminist values.

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Cross-Functional Bridging for Strategic Congruity: Accounting-Marketing Interface Evidence

Track: 12. Marketing Strategy & Global Marketing

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Summary Statement

Analysing 19 in-depth interviews with relevant managers, this study explains how UK Financial Services Organisations use the CFB strategy (Opute, 2009; Opute, 2014) to address Accounting-Marketing interface conflict and drive strategic marketing effectiveness and organisational performance. To achieve these targets, as well as the long-term plan towards minimising conflict in the accounting-marketing interface, this study suggests the use of CFB that aims for strategic congruity.

Competitive Short Paper

Competing effectively in the modern-day marketing landscape is becoming increasingly challenging. A central tenet in the discourse on workgroup and performance link is interfunctional relationships. Legitimised on mutual gains notion, scholars portend that if organisations ensure effective integration between marketing and other functional areas, they will achieve enhanced organisational performance (e.g., Le Meunier-FitzHugh & Massey, 2019; Kotler et al., 2006; Opute & Madichie, 2017; Opute, 2014). Notably, critics point to a disconnect in interfunctional relationships between marketing and sales (e.g., Kotler et al., 2006; Le Meunier-FitzHugh & Massey, 2019) and accounting (e.g. Opute, 2014; Opute & Madichie, 2017; Kraus et al., 2015). In a keynote discussion ('Ending the war between Sales and Marketing'), Kotler et al. (2006) underlines Sales-Marketing interface conflict. Theoretical reinforcement is provided by research (Opute, 2009; Opute & Madichie, 2017) that flags conflict drivers and disharmonious effects in the Accounting –Marketing interface.

Although a plethora of studies reinforce its existence (e.g. Kotler et al., 2006; Opute, 2014; Opute & Madichie, 2017; Kraus et al., 2015), interfunctional relationship conflict has received relatively little research attention. Responding to conflict resolution research advocacy (e.g. Kraus et al., 2015; Kotler et al., 2006; Opute & Madichie, 2017), this study aims to enhance the understanding of interfunctional relationship conflicts management, and performance association, in the Accounting-Marketing interface.

Analysing 19 in-depth interviews with relevant managers, this study explains how UK Financial Services Organisations use the CFB strategy (Opute, 2009; Opute, 2014) to address Accounting-Marketing interface conflict and drive strategic marketing effectiveness and organisational performance. To achieve these targets, as well as the long-term plan towards minimising conflict in the accounting-marketing interface, this study suggests the use of CFB that aims for strategic congruity. Maximising the strategic congruity gains hinges however on the extent to which organisations leverage dyadic conflict analysis input driven strategic human resource management to galvanise team harmonisation, team performance, and organisational performance in general. The theoretical and managerial implications of these findings, as well as future research directions are also pinpointed.

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From Disengaged to Systemic:Exploring Gen Z's Rationalisation for (Un)sustainable Purchases

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

Gen Z, a promising market, displays favourable environmental psychological pre-dispositions. However, these pre-dispositions do not always translate into actions. This paper extends neutralisation theory to examine mechanisms

through which Gen Z reconcile discrepancies. Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, our research identifies a consumer typology with three distinct groups, who justify their (un)sustainable behaviours differently. Our typology could be valuable for marketers and policymakers in designing strategies to increase sustainable behaviours among Gen Z

Competitive Short Paper

The worsening effects of ecological degradation brought sustainable consumption to the fore (UN, 2015). Attention shifted to Gen Z, a burgeoning consumer group, with projected collective income expected to surpass Millennials by 2031 (Bank of America, 2020). Gen Z consumers can be more environmentally conscious, due to heightened information access and exposure to environmental issues. Increased environmental awareness, however, does not always translate into sustainable purchases (e.g. Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018).

Considering the size of the Gen Z market, their high receptivity towards sustainability, ability to influence older and younger generations, we apply and extend neutralisation theory (Sykes & Matza, 1957; Chatzidakis et al. 2007) to examine the mechanisms Gen Z applies to reconcile discrepancies between environmental attitudes and behaviours. Neutralisation theory enables understanding of how individuals justify behaviours. Despite its wide application, there is to our knowledge, no research which investigates how Gen Z rationalise (un)sustainable purchases. A qualitative approach was used to reveal perspectives, behaviours, enabling the emergence of new insights. Through in-depth interviews with 25 Gen Z participants aged between 18-26 and subsequent thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), a deep-seated scepticism towards consumerism as a meaningful paradigm for environmental action emerged.

Participants draw on six neutralisation techniques including: denial of responsibility, condemning the condemners, denial of efficacy, appeal to higher loyalties, denial of proximity and metaphor of the ledger to rationalise (un) sustainable purchases. These techniques were applied to various degrees, reinforced each other, creating complex psychological frameworks through which participants rationalise consumption. In overlapping the high/low variations of the six neutralisation techniques, three distinct consumer groups were identified: *Disengaged*, *Green Moderates* and *Systemic Thinkers*.

The *Disengaged* assigned primary responsibility for environmental action to corporations and governments. This group expressed significant psychological distance from environmental issues to justify (un)sustainable purchases. They rationalised inaction by distancing from immediate consequences of environmental degradation, prioritising personal, rather than environmental concerns. *Green Moderates* maintained some faith in the efficacy of individual purchases, recognising this as sufficient in the absence of larger-scale institutional change. *Green Moderates* selectively applied neutralisation techniques to justify occasional (un)sustainable behaviours. *Systemic Thinkers* displayed thorough critical knowledge and engagement with environmental issues, alongside a well-articulated critique of consumerism as meaningful paradigm for addressing environmental degradation. *Systemic Thinkers* employed neutralisation to redirect attention from unsustainable behaviours to meaningful forms of environmental action, like political engagement and community organisation.

Our study contributions to the literature are threefold. First, we apply and extend neutralisation techniques to the unexplored contexts of green consumption and Gen Z. Second, instead of portraying Gen Z as a homogenous group with positive environmental psychological predispositions (e.g. Djafarova & Foots, 2022), our research shows that Gen Z consumers rationalised their (un)sustainable behaviours by applying neutralisation techniques at different levels. Third, we develop a novel consumer typology, allowing for deeper exploration of complex and interconnected perspectives that define each group in terms of neutralisation techniques, At the practical level, findings offer actionable strategies, encouraging sustainable purchasing behaviours, across Gen Z consumers.

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“I Visited So You Don’t Have To”: The Impact of Negative Influencer Content on Tourism Behaviour

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores the impact of negative influencer content, such as “I visited so you don’t have to,” on tourism behaviour. It investigates whether such content deters or intrigues potential visitors, how audiences interpret negative narratives, and how destinations manage reputational challenges. Grounded in framing theory and destination image research, this paper contributes to understanding the evolving role of influencers in shaping perceptions and strategies within the tourism industry.

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Factors Shaping University Choice and Brand Perceptions: A Multidimensional Analysis

Track: 5. Brands & Branding

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Summary Statement

This paper explores how students choose between Universities of Technology (UoTs) in South Africa and their perceptions of these institutions. The study highlights how UoTs facing ongoing challenges with negative brand perceptions due to their historical association with the black majority during the apartheid era can leverage informed branding strategies to appeal to their primary stakeholder - potential and existing students.

Competitive Short Paper

While literature often portrays marketing as a business function tied to the corporate world, there has been a growing body of research focusing on the marketing practices of higher education institutions (HEIs). This trend can be attributed to the increasing competition among HEIs, both nationally and globally, for students, talented staff, and third-party funding. In South Africa, this phenomenon is intensified by the structural classification of public universities into traditional universities, comprehensive universities, and universities of technology (UoTs). Unfortunately, this categorisation still reflects the legacies of the apartheid system in terms of brand equity and funding disparities. UoTs, historically linked to the marginalised black population during apartheid, continue to struggle with the negative brand perception associated with their origins.

This study aimed to explore the brand attributes that influence student choice between two UoTs and to assess their brand perceptions. A quantitative approach was employed, collecting and analysing data from a sample of 500 respondents from these two institutions using multidimensional analysis. Initially, principal component analysis was conducted to identify the key factors influencing university choice and student perceptions. Three choice determinants and six latent perception variables were retained. Subsequently, a non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine if there were any differences in university choice determinants and brand perceptions between students from the two institutions. The results indicated no significant differences, suggesting a uniform image of universities of technology within the South African higher education sector.

These findings contribute to the ongoing discourse surrounding university marketing and are expected to encourage South African UoTs to implement informed branding strategies aimed at dispelling negative brand perceptions and also to differentiate institutions within the UoT subsector.

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Brand in the Boardroom: The Perils of Short-Termism in a Long-Term World

Track: 5. Brands & Branding

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Summary Statement

This paper examines whether marketing's focus on short-term metrics undermines brand managers' influence in boardrooms. Despite marketing's strategic potential to drive long-term value, its favour for metrics like return-on-investment and digital engagement diminishes its relevance in strategic discussions. CEOs often view this short-termism as detrimental. The study advocates recalibrating towards long-term metrics such as brand equity and customer lifetime value to secure marketing's strategic role and reinforce its impact on sustainable competitive advantage.

Competitive Short Paper

Marketing as a discipline is grounded in creating sustainable competitive advantage through value creation across the firm's operations (West, Ford and Ibrahim 2015 p.48). However, despite its long-term orientation, marketing has increasingly prioritised short-term metrics such as clicks, conversions and digital engagement, often to its detriment (Mcdonald 2006, Klaus et al. 2014, Marketing Week 2019, Emmer and Merchant 2020). This investigation explored whether this prioritisation jeopardises brand managers' representation in boardrooms.

Both the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) and the American Marketing Association (AMA) stress the broader societal and shareholder value marketing should create (Charles 2007, AMA 2017). Yet, this vision is undermined by marketers' fixation on intermediate metrics, potentially driven by their desire to validate their effectiveness and secure their roles. This short-term focus risks not only misrepresenting marketing's true potential but also diminishing its relevance in strategic boardroom discussions (Klaus et al. 2014, Marketing Week 2019).

The investigation found that warning signs for brand management practitioners are evident. Binet and Field's work (2009, 2017) demonstrated that long-term strategies yield significantly higher profit growth than short-term tactics, which deliver diminishing returns. The reliance on short-term metrics such as return on investment (ROI) may seem logical but sacrifices sustainable competitive growth. Simplified accounting approaches often fail to reflect marketing's strategic value, even as customer metrics offer valuable insights for boardroom discussions (Strandvik, Holmlund and Grönroos 2014).

A key exposé of the investigation was the sentiment among CEOs. This group, crucial to marketing's success, often views short-term digital metrics as harmful, advocating instead for a focus on long-term brand performance (Whitler, Krause and Lehmann 2018). In boardrooms dominated by finance-oriented directors prioritising immediate results, marketing's external-facing perspective is frequently sidelined. This disconnect hinders alignment with corporate objectives, creating friction between financial and marketing priorities. Moreover, marketers' inability to demonstrate the impact of long-term brand performance erodes their strategic influence.

Nonetheless, the decline of brand marketing is not inevitable. Recalibrating towards long-term metrics such as brand equity and customer lifetime value can secure marketing's strategic role. Even social media marketing, often seen as tactical and short-term, can support an integrated strategic framework (Pütter 2017). Brands that balance short-term success with long-term goals and focus on customer experience are better positioned for sustainable growth (Guenther and Guenther 2018).

To achieve this, marketing must develop models that align marketing plans with brand values and long-term competitive advantage. These models should integrate robust measures of sustainable success into boardroom discussions, enhancing marketing's credibility as a strategic function. Quantifying customer-centric metrics, rather than campaign-based ones, can bridge the gap between marketing activities and financial performance.

Ultimately, the findings will demonstrate that while short-term metrics have a role, they must be balanced with strategic imperatives (Binet and Field 2013). Marketing's true potential lies in building enduring brand value and fostering positive behavioural change, benefiting businesses, communities and society at large. Without this shift, marketing risks diminishing its relevance in a competitive, value-driven world and brand managers risk losing the confidence of their boards.

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Unlocking the Growth Potential of Padel: Emphasizing Social Inclusion and Community Engagement in the UK

Track: 10. Marketing in Context

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Summary Statement

This study explores the rapid growth of padel in the UK, research undertaken by Oxygen Consulting which highlights unique findings on player demographics, participation patterns, and motivational factors. Data from 277 UK players reveal the sport's inclusivity and strong social appeal, with high levels of weekly participation. Key motivators include enjoyment, competency, and community interaction, providing actionable insights for marketing strategies to enhance Padel's growth and accessibility across diverse regions.

Competitive Short Paper

Research Problem

Padel has approximately 30m amateur players and 63,000 courts worldwide (Statista, 2024), and the sport is experiencing rapid growth. The global padel market, valued at €1.2bn in 2022, is forecasted to exceed €4bn by 2026 (Statista, 2023). Unlike other racquet sports, Padel offers a highly social and engaging experience (Cayetano et al., 2020). However, limited understanding of the motivations driving participation, along with geographic and demographic trends, hinders the development of targeted promotional strategies and exercise programs for market professionals and policymakers aiming to expand its reach (Cayetano et al., 2020; Ibáñez, Martínez, Benítez, & Echegaray, 2017).

Academic Literature

Padel's growth aligns with broader trends in emerging sports driven by accessibility, social interaction, and novelty. These trends highlight the importance of community and inclusivity as key drivers for engagement (Bramham & Spink, 2020). While broader sports marketing studies emphasize enjoyment, social connection, and perceived competency as critical motivators (Trail & James, 2001), UK-specific research on padel remains limited along with research on motivational factors influencing the sport's growth (UK Padel Report, 2024; LTA Padel, 2024).

Research Gap

Although there is significant research on mainstream racquet sports like tennis and badminton, padel-specific studies are scarce (LTA Padel, 2024; UK Padel Report, 2024). The role of social, and motivational factors in shaping Padel's growth remains underexplored. This research undertaken by Oxygen Consulting bridges the gap by examining motivations and participation patterns among UK padel players, offering valuable insights to inform targeted marketing strategies and foster the sport's expansion (Cayetano et al., 2020; Ibáñez et al., 2017).

Data Analysis

This study utilised data from 277 UK padel players collected through an online survey. The survey captured demographic details, geographic distribution, participation frequency, and motivational factors. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses identified key trends and relationships within the data (Jones, 2022). Motivational factors were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, focusing on enjoyment, competency, social interaction, fitness, and physical appearance (De Pero et al., 2009).

Key Findings

Inclusivity and Gender Balance: A near-equal gender split (50.54% female, 49.46% male) mirrors trends in other inclusive sports like running (Baxter, 2021).

Strong Participation Rates: The majority of participants (76.53%) play at least once a week, indicating a high level of commitment.

Motivational Insights: Enjoyment emerged as the primary motivator (mean score: 6.46), followed by competency (5.95), social interaction (5.39), and fitness (5.36).

Findings and Discussion

This study builds on previous research by Cayetano et al. (2020) and Ibáñez et al. (2017), placing its findings within the UK's unique context. Results underscore Padel's inclusive and social nature, which appeals to diverse demographics. High female participation rates and motivations centred around enjoyment and social interaction offer significant marketing opportunities to position padel as a community-driven activity.

Due to the reliance on specialist courts within tennis clubs (82.31%), expanding access to padel facilities in local community centers and public spaces is essential to foster inclusivity and encourage participation. Marketing initiatives should emphasize padel's social appeal, leverage regional hubs, and address barriers such as limited accessibility.

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Evoking Nationalism Through Virtual Influencer Nationality

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

Nationalistic appeals aim to evoke or stimulate nationalist sentiment. Social networking platforms, as channels for these appeals, have been accused of strengthening nationalist sentiments. Virtual influencers on these platforms can be strategically designed to harness the concept of 'we-ness', by utalising the aesthetics and values of specific demographic groups. This study seeks to explore the extent to which nationalistic appeals are being used in the communications of virtual influencers who explicitly identify their nationality.

Competitive Short Paper

Nationalism is the belief in national superiority and dominance and has recently resurfaced as a major topic in public. Nationalistic appeals seek to evoke or stimulate nationalist sentiment in three key areas: political communication (e.g. to influence voter behavior), advertising, and ethics (e.g. local consumption) (Bartikowski et al., 2021). As channels for these messages, digital media and in particular social networking platforms have been accused of strengthening nationalist sentiments (Mihelj & Jiménez-Martínez, 2021). Compounded by these global platforms supporting digital national boundaries through the redirection of users to nation-specific versions of their platforms and the use of nationality in digital segmentation (Lobato, 2019).

Operating within the social networking platform ecosystem are virtual influencers - digitally created artificial humans that produce social media content just like human influencers. These virtual influencers can be shaped by brands however they desire (Koles et al., 2024), and can be designed to utalise the phenomena of we-ness (Beverland et al., 2021), utalising the aesthetics and values of specific demographic groups (Mouritzen et al., 2024). Subsequently, many virtual influencers hold a national affiliation and are globally marketed brands effectively holding a "made in" label (Miyake, 2023).

Thus, brands may use virtual influencers with defined nationalities to harness consumer ethnocentrism. This approach attempts to appeal to consumers through patriotism or a perceived moral obligation to choose domestic brands (Bartikowski et al., 2021). Virtual influencers may also create a unique point of difference if their identity resonates with the consumer's self-image, potentially evoking patriotic notions in those affiliated with the nation. From an international perspective this strategy could help brands tie themselves to positive associations tied to the national brand through meaning transfer (Keller et al., 2013; McCracken, 1989).

Whilst some virtual influencers are branded to associate with nation brands, such as Imma (@imma.gram), who as Miyake (2023) observes "...does not state directly that she is Japanese, only that she likes to consume Japanese-ness" (pg.210), many others are branded to a nation explicitly. For example, Kyra is clearly described in her Instagram bio as being "India's first AI Influencer" (kyraonig, [accessed 17/01/2025]), Rozy announces herself in her Instagram bio as being "Korea's first virtual influencer" (rozy.gram, [accessed 17/01/2025]).

Recent scholarly discussions have explored the relationship between virtual influencers and race (e.g. Miyake, 2023). However, the role of virtual influencer nationality used for nationalistic appeal remains underexplored. As virtual influencer prevalence and popularity continues to rise a deeper understanding of their impact on nationalistic sentiment is vital, given the far-reaching consequences in relation to politics, consumption and consumer behaviour. This study aims to examine the extent to which nationalistic appeals are being used in the communications of virtual influencers who explicitly identify their nationality. This will be achieved through a combined semiotic and thematic analysis of their Instagram posts. The findings will contribute to the existing literature by exploring the role of nationalistic appeals in shaping these virtual influencer's branding and narratives. These narratives are strategically curated to promote consumption and cultural values, hence intertwining nationality/nationalism with consumer behaviour.

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Mainstreaming Circular ICT Through Collaboration and Value Co-Creation

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores the mainstreaming of circular ICT products. The research investigates how market transformation through value co-creation can support the mainstream adoption of circular ICT products. Focusing on an Irish ICT firm as a case study, the research highlights important barriers and opportunities for market acceptance. These include symbolic barriers, practical barriers, and co-creation for improved user experience.

Competitive Short Paper

The circular economy describes the operation of an economic system which prioritises maintaining resources at their highest level of utility for the longest possible time. With global e-waste levels surpassing 60 million tonnes annually (WHO), the ICT sector plays a pivotal role in transitioning to a circular economy. This study focuses on addressing these challenges by examining how market transformation through value co-creation can support the mainstream adoption of circular ICT products.

The success of circular business models is predicated on market acceptance and growth. However, the majority of existing business models are linear in orientation, acquire and use critical raw materials, termed operand resources (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), assume that value is embedded in products and services and focus on market development and growth as a source of profitability. Market actors have been socialised into associating value with newness in many business categories to the extent that customers expect and accept increasingly truncated product lifecycles in most product categories from fashion to phones, laptops to TVs. Essentially, businesses need to reframe how value is understood, experienced, and co-created by market actors in order to pursue new sources of profit and growth. Contemporary research highlights the importance of 'service' in new business models. This is reflected in trends like servitisation (Smith et al., 2014), collaboration, and value co-creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Here, service is understood as the application of critical skills and competences (operant resources) to co-create value with customers and other partners, where value is agreed by the beneficiaries and can include conventional measures, such as meeting business goals (revenue, access to resources, monetising existing skills), but also captures measures for circular economy, including environmental impact and sustainability metrics, as well as more idiosyncratic measures as emerge in the context of a specific collaboration. This is reflected in the use of outcomes rather than inputs as criteria for evaluation (see Ng et al., 2009; Zolkiewski et al, 2017). A shift towards service and value co-creation may be central for the mainstreaming of circularity as it opens up opportunities for collaboration, foregrounds the centrality of developing operant resources in re-using, re-imagining and re-valuing operand resources.

Focusing on the case study of an Irish circular ICT firm and its network of market actors as a demonstration project, the study examined consumer and organisational customer attitudes towards refurbished and remanufactured products to determine market readiness for these products. Fieldwork consisted with in-depth interviews with key market actors, including individual and organisational consumers. The first phase examined the general attitudes towards circular ICTs. The second phase investigated the experiences of circular ICT users.

The study identified significant barriers to the market acceptance of circular ICT. Symbolic barriers, such as negative perceptions of refurbished products, and practical barriers, including rigid procurement processes, were prevalent. However, these challenges could be addressed through value creation strategies, such as offering quality assurance, sustainability certification, and fostering positive user experiences through collaboration.

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Exploration of Factors Influencing Telemedicine Acceptance Among Breast Cancer Patients in Follow – up Care: Mixed Method Approach

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This paper aims to explore and identify the factors that influence telemedicine acceptance among breast cancer patients in follow-up care. There is a need to improve acceptance with digital health technologies such as telemedicine to provide fast healthcare service to patients. Telemedicine benefits have been widely experienced by the patients and healthcare organisations during COVID-19 pandemic. The acceptance study will improve its implementation globally and will benefit healthcare system.

Competitive Short Paper

Healthcare sector is experiencing digital transformation with emerging healthcare technologies which is helping in patient management (Stoumpos et al., 2023). Telemedicine is one of the digital health technologies and traditionally it has been used to provide healthcare services to patients remotely (Waller & Stotler, 2018). Earlier the usage of telemedicine was limited but COVID-19 pandemic has acted as a catalyst for significant rise in utilisation for patient management in chronic diseases (OECD, 2023). Several published studies reported patients are satisfied with telemedicine services. However, surprisingly post COVID-19 pandemic usage of telemedicine reduced, and patients preferred in-person visits (Singh et al., 2022). This has raised questions over acceptance and associated underlying reasons for this patient behaviour.

In the light of increased chronic disease incidences, it is becoming difficult for healthcare organisations to manage an increased patient pool (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). Breast cancer is one of the chronic conditions which has raised global concern over the rise in incidences (Wilkinson & Gathani, 2022). Telemedicine is an effective solution to address this challenge and patients at the follow-up stage can be managed effectively (National Health Service, 2019). This implementation of telemedicine further reduces the burden of waiting time from the healthcare system and provides early access for detection to patients. Hence, there is a need to study telemedicine acceptance in the context of breast cancer and bridge the knowledge gap (Pang et al., 2022).

To date, literature have been published on the aspect of patient satisfaction with telemedicine among breast cancer, however the acceptance of telemedicine is not studied and the underlying reasons for acceptance has not been identified. Although there has been research carried out on technology acceptance in other areas to study acceptance. Theories such as Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and UTAUT2 (consumer context) have been established (Taherdoost, 2018). But no theories have been developed in the context of healthcare and variables associated with health remain unexplored.

To answer the research questions and fill the knowledge gap, exploratory sequential mixed method design is used. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted to identify the unknown variables of acceptance. Breast cancer patients who have used telemedicine in follow-up care in the UK had been chosen for an interview. Further interview data was analysed by thematic analysis and NVivo software was used. This paper will focus on the qualitative phase findings and will discuss the newly identified variables.

Interestingly, qualitative study provided insight in the new emerging themes which were not included in the technology acceptance theories. Study identified five variables, namely hospital anxiety, anxiety, trust, physical examination, non-verbal communication. Another six variables originate from an existing theory that is UTAUT2 – consumer context. The developed conceptual framework in this context will be further investigated through quantitative study.

This research contributes to theoretical and practice-based knowledge. It will provide an extended UTAUT2 theoretical framework in healthcare context. The factors of acceptance will help policy makers to transform healthcare infrastructure to improve implementation.

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Create. Post. Delete? Repeat: Exploring Young People's Content Creation Anxiety

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

Social media is ubiquitous in young people's lives, yet, relatively little is known about their content creation and sharing practices. Adopting a participatory approach, the study uncovers strategies employed by young people when posting content. The findings reveal how peer approval of content, through liking and/or commenting on their posts, was central to the participants feeling good about themselves, with participants basing their self-worth on others positively interacting with their content.

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A Netnography Of Online Community Involvement

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

The purpose of this study is to explore entities that stimulate consumer involvement in digital space. Analysis of netnographic data from two OBCs led to the development of a typology of online community involvement. The research addresses the limited investigation of the components that denote involvement, especially in online settings, and also contributes to the advancement of marketing practice by developing tools and strategies that help community managers to stimulate and sustain online community involvement.

Competitive Short Paper

Online Brand Communities (OBCs) provide an electronic environment where consumers interested in particular brands can connect with likeminded others (Kamboj and Rahman, 2017). OBCs continue to be popular among consumers (Ben, 2023) while also creating commercial value such as cultivating brand relationships (Iskoujina *et al.* 2017). Involvement in an online community setting is often a determinant of the level of participation as it relates to the extent a member perceives the online community as personally relevant to them (Xu, Jones and Shao, 2009). A challenge for marketers is to maintain consumer involvement with the OBC as high attrition rates occur particularly following first participation by members (Kumar and Shankar, 2023). This may be connected to the modus operandi of OBC's whose administration is dependent on volunteers and the ease with which members can stop participating or simply lurk while still benefiting from the "public goods" nature of content (Guan *et al*. 2018, p. 138). Given the consumer and commercial importance of OBCs, and building on extant research, this study conceptualises OBCs as an object of involvement in a digital space where consumer involvement can be understood as online community involvement i.e. the personal relevance of the OBC to the member. The purpose of this study is to provide rich and novel insights into emerging entities that stimulate consumer involvement in digital space, focusing specifically on the nature of online community involvement.

Netnography is employed as an appropriate form of qualitative research to understand online communities, internet cultures and computer-mediated social interactions (Hair, Akdevelioglu, Clark, 2023). As an empirical context for this research, a sample of two consumer-initiated OBCs were selected dedicated to luxury handbags and technology products respectively. Longitudinal data, comprising posts from the archives of the two sites and interactions between members garnered during site visits between 2014 and 2024. In-depth analysis led to the development of a typology of online community involvement model consisting of (1) *utilitarian community involvement*: functional value derived by members from the practical advice and help the community provides with product and purchase queries, (2) *social community involvement:* value gained from social and psychological benefits of being part of a community where members exhibit deep product and brand involvement such as connecting with product collectors or seeking support with cognitive dissonance, (3) *ego-related community involvement:* self-expressive value garnered from participation with projected identities such as the customiser and expert linked to the member's product and brand involvement, and (4) *affective community involvement:* hedonic and entertainment value derived from participating in customs and rituals that use techniques like the gamification of product involvement through playful product-related challenges. This research provides novel insight into the composition of online consumer involvement in OBC settings. It also builds on extant conceptual and empirical work and addresses the limited investigation of the components that denote involvement, especially in online settings. The research contributes to the advancement of managerial practice, in particular, in developing tools and strategies that help managers to stimulate and sustain online community involvement across diverse settings.

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What causes Partnership Tension in Social Marketing

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

This work explores the causes of tensions in social marketing partnerships. Social marketing interventions are based on the collaboration of diverse entities, including organisations and individuals, and often give rise to conflicts due to divergent objectives, power dynamics, and perspectives. Such tensions, if not adeptly managed, can undermine the efficacy of these partnerships. Notably, this aspect has received limited scholarly attention, requiring an in-depth investigation.

Competitive Short Paper

Causes of partnership tensions in the social marketing literature

Diverse causes of partnership tensions have been recorded in social marketing literature, such as conflicting interests (Hoek & Jones, 2011; Borys et al., 2012; Austin & Gaither, 2016; French et al., 2017), conflicting practices (Deshpande, 2016; Jones et al., 2016), limited resources (Domegan et al., 2016), imbalanced power, conflicting perceptions and misunderstanding between partners (Dibb, 2014). Different interests can bring partners into conflict, particularly when social and commercial outcomes need to be balanced. Conflicting interests could result in losing social marketing's integrity and independence because of partnering with the private sector (Bentz et al., 2005; Borys et al., 2012). For instance, the interest of the alcohol industry in protecting itself from restrictive policies and declining sales (Hastings & Angus, 2011; Gordon & Chapman, 2014; Hastings, 2016; Jones et al., 2016) through its partnership in the social marketing activities for responsible drinking (Jones et al., 2016). The inconsistency of the partner's practices is also considered a cause of tension, particularly regarding the contradiction between its practice in the social marketing programme and its general practices. Although the literature presents many causes of partnership tensions, no clear conceptualisation is available, highlighting a vital research agenda. This study aims to address this agenda using a qualitative study (20 semi-structured interviews).

Such conceptualisation is essential, considering social marketing is expanding its application to tackle wicked social issues and broader individual and social impact (Shaw et al., 2024; Ducan & Domegan, 2021).

The use of the paradoxical perspective lens

Involving multiple partners in social marketing partnerships constitutes a fertile ground for tensions. These tensions frequently appear as paradoxes in social marketing, with an enduring contradictory yet interrelated nature. This enduring nature requires ongoing navigation. Therefore, they can be understood as paradoxes that are *"logical in isolation but become irrational, inconsistent, and absurd when juxtaposed"* (Smith & Lewis, 2011, p. 387). Given this nature of tensions, the paradoxical perspective provides *"an alternative approach to tensions, exploring how organisations can attend to competing demands simultaneously"* (Smith & Lewis, 2011, p. 381). This perspective acknowledges the coexistence of opposing forces (Lewis, 2000) and asserts that multiple "truths" must be accepted and respected (Westenholz, 1993; Smith & Lewis, 2011). This is why many scholars have suggested the paradoxical perspective as a potential perspective from which partnership tensions should be viewed (van Hille et al., 2019). This is consistent with the recent calls from some social marketers (e.g. McHugh et al., 2018; Domegan & McHugh, 2019), advocating for adopting a paradoxical perspective as a lens through which to view partnership tensions.

We used paradox theory to establish the foundation of this qualitative study, and this will be the main focus of our presentations.

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The Re/De-Agenced Marketer: Tracing the Emergence and Role of AI Technologies and Marketer Behaviour in the Performation of Marketing

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

This paper examines how AI technologies reconfigure the agency of digital marketers in platform-governed environments, drawing on 100 interviews conducted between 2020 and 2024. Using Callon and Cochoy's concept of agencing, it explores how AI tools simultaneously augment and constrain marketer behaviour. The findings highlight tensions between creativity, control, and algorithmic dependency, offering insights into how AI reshapes marketing practices, redefines professional expertise, and transforms the performativity of marketing in the digital age.

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A qualitative study on the consumer decision-making style on halal cosmetic products in the UK

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

The literature on Islamic marketing is expanding, but research on Muslim consumers in the UK regarding halal cosmetics is limited. Most studies focus on halal food and finance, with little attention to cosmetics in Muslim minority countries. This paper presents preliminary findings on UK consumer perceptions of halal cosmetics. The research uses semi-structured interviews to explore awareness and perceptions among Muslim consumers in the UK.

Competitive Short Paper

The beauty industry has seized the opportunity to develop and market a wide range of cosmetics aimed at enhancing appearance. Many manufacturers target specific market segments regardless of age and religion (Suki, 2014; Ramli, 2015; Yeo, Mohamed, & Muda, 2016; Annabi & Ibidapo-Obe, 2017; Benyahia, 2018). The industry is rapidly evolving due to market demands, political influences, and health awareness, necessitating continuous product development. This study uses an exploratory research design to gain insights into halal cosmetics in the UK.

Previous consumerism research often assumed Muslim consumers differ significantly from other groups due to unique characteristics (Sandikci, 2011). Consequently, they were largely overlooked. However, this trend is changing as businesses recognize their economic potential (Sandikci, 2011). The growing number of Muslim consumers demand products that align with their beliefs and religious practices (Wilson, 2011). Despite this demand, there is a scarcity of such products, leading Muslims to seek mainstream brands, prompting companies to introduce halal options (Wilkins et al., 2021). Wilson and Liu (2010) highlighted the need for further research on consumer perspectives within the halal framework, especially in non-Muslim majority countries like the UK.

The ongoing research aims to explore the factors influencing decision-making styles for halal cosmetics using an exploratory research design. Previous studies on this topic have been insufficient, especially in the context of halal cosmetics in the UK (Elseidi, 2018). Given the limited understanding of this subject, qualitative research methodologies are deemed appropriate for gaining deeper insights. The qualitative approach is employed in the early phase of the research to better understand consumer perspectives on halal brands and to clearly define the research problem.

Data collection involves one-on-one semi-structured interviews, guided by open-ended questions from the literature review and the author's experience. Each interview covers respondents' understanding of halal, awareness and perceptions of halal products, and the importance of consuming them. The interviews also explore thoughts on halal certification organizations (HCOs) in the UK.

Preliminary findings reveal that respondents understand halal as pure and free from forbidden ingredients, adhering to Islamic law. Halal products are seen as part of daily life and identity, symbolizing purity, hygiene, and health. Awareness of halal cosmetics varies; some respondents are knowledgeable, while others do not consider halal status when purchasing cosmetics. Increased awareness influences decision-making and consumption. Religiosity is a key factor driving the purchase of halal cosmetics, with respondents seeking to align their choices with Islamic guidelines. This includes concerns about ingredient permissibility, ethical sourcing, and the impact on religious practices like wudu. Halal certification is also important, providing assurance of product safety and adherence to Islamic principles.

The research highlights the importance of standardizing the halal logo and ensuring consistent supervision by marketers to gain wider acceptance among Muslim consumers. Multinational companies should prioritize understanding Muslim consumer perceptions and ensuring Shariah compliance in their products and marketing strategies. These findings underscore the growing significance of halal products and the need for businesses to cater to the specific needs of Muslim consumers.

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From co-creation to cor(r)espondence: A meta-ethnographic reframing of Consumer-Brand relationship from affinity to kinship

Track: 5. Brands & Branding

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Summary Statement

This paper conducts a meta-ethnographic enquiry into a pool of published ethnographic accounts of brand communities/sub-cultures, translating them into one another to re-interpretate them in a novel synthesis that offers a new theoretical insight into the value-formation process in consumer-brand relations. For a more sensible and responsible management of consumer-brand relationship, the paper proposes a shift from the dominate *affinity-oriented* process of 'co-creation' to *a kinship-oriented* process of 'cor(r)espondence'.

Competitive Short Paper

The customer-brand relationship lies at the nexus of strategic brand management and consumer behavior. The former body of literature focuses on maximizing the strategic value of the brand based on the latter's guidance on managing strong, affinity-based relationship with consumers (Veloutsou, 2023). The extant consumer behavior literature explores the consumer-brand affinity on two levels: the individual and the collective. At the individual level, cognitive conceptualizations of customer-brand relationship have moved from the attitudinal strategic tendencies of loyalty and commitment to more relational notions of affinity, such as brand love and personality (Alvarez and Fournier, 2016). However, such notions project idealized images of brands that needed deeper understanding of consumers' active 'work' that builds and maintains affinity with brands in phenomenologically dynamic and complex relationships (Alvarez et al, 2021).

Such affinity work, nonetheless, does not operate in a vacuum. Rather, interpretive consumer behavior studies affinity with brands contextualized within the consumers' dynamic, holistic, and interactive heterogeneous cultural models (eg. myth, race, gender, etc.), whereby they – as social actors – collectively co-create these models through brands in brand-communities, subcultures of consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Fournier and Alvarez, 2019), and consumer tribes (Cova & Shankar, 2012). Yet, these brand/market-mediated cultural affinities are enacted in hyperreal (ideal/fantasy) heterogeneous experiences/contexts (Fournier and Alvarez, 2019), which seamlessly conflate consumption and production in service of creating market value and, consequently, entrapping consumers into a ceaseless process of '*Pro-sumption'* in which they cannot escape the market to create their own ('real') value in life (Zwick et al. 2008; Ellis et al, 2010). Therefore, discovering what resonates with consumers' own value-formation from their engagement in heterogenous brand communities/groups (Fournier and Alvarez, 2019) prompted calls for a macro-marketing perspective to examine the 'context of context' (Askegaard & Linnet, 2011), focusing on consumers' common/societal well-being rather than that of individuals in collective silos (Cova et al, 2013; Little & Helm, 2024).

Accordingly, this paper conducts a meta-ethnographic enquiry into a rich pool of published ethnographic accounts of brand communities/sub-cultures, translating them into one another - via analogous cross-fertilization of their findings - to re-interpretate them in a novel synthesis that offers a new theoretical insight/possibility for the commonweal (Noblit & Hare, 1988). The findings revealed that in consumer-brand relationships, consumer formation of value is not an *affinity to/through* brands, as conceptualised by the notion of co-creation, but a longing for kinship *with* brands as comrades, which is best conceptualized by Ingold's (2016 p.10, 22) perpetually dynamic concept of 'cor(r)espondence'; that is "*not [characterized by] solidarity, as though lives were fused and their movement locked down.. but by fluidly... wherein lives are rendered answerable to one another... abiding with and caring for one another and doing each other's bidding*" to carry on amidst the tension and friction of life. The paper concludes by discussing the potential of 'cor(r)espondence' as a key theoretical framework for managing consumer-brand relations in a sensible and responsible manner.

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Brand Love in Metaverse

Track: AM Funded Research

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Summary Statement

This study brings together two different streams of research to deliver insights into how Web3-enabled brands can engender Brand Love. Using mixed-methods research: interviews with practitioners and scenario-based experiments with consumers, the overarching objective of this study is to investigate antecedents and consequences of brand love in a web3 environment.

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Idiosyncratic Consumers: Co-creators or not?

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This article examines the theoretical argument that consumers co-create value. Customer loyalty programs are selected to validate the changing role of the customer – one from independence to interdependence with the firm and other customers. As a lens for inquiry, the framework of service dominant logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2008a) was adopted. The findings suggest that customers will accept and flourish in their role as a co-creator of value.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction and Background

In this study we draw on service dominant logic (S-D logic) to examine the roles the consumer assumes in the co-creation of value (Vargo and Lusch 2004). A S-D logic implies that value is defined by and co-created with the consumer rather than imbedded in output" (p.6). The setting for the study is the Canadian loyalty program market. Despite the large quantity of customer loyalty program research, little has examined the consumer in a loyalty program as a co-creator of value. Customer loyalty programs present an appropriate medium for examining the co-creation experience since they represent a value-sharing instrument between the customer and organization (Liu, 2007).

The co-creation of value can be summarized as the development of customer-supplier relationships through interaction and dialog (Payne et al, 2008). Earlier literature supports the notion that customers have a wealth of personal resources which they actively use in value creation (Johnston and Jones, 2003;). Rodie and Kleine (2003), classify these resources as mental, physical and emotional. For the organization the co-creation of value is an attractive aim as it allows for a customer's opinion to be expressed whilst improving product and service processes through identifying customer's needs and wants (Lusch and Vargo, 2006). Customer loyalty programs offer a value-sharing instrument between the customer and organization (Liu, 2007).

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

S-D logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004; 2008a; 2008b), extends relationship marketing thought, by viewing value as not something added to a product or service, but by placing an increased focus on involving the customer in creating and defining value in union with the organization. This approach to customer value is resource based, where the customer is an active participant in creating value and seen as a resource for the provider (Korkman, 2006).

Qualitative research methodology was employed as the goals of the research were to understand the meaning people have constructed from their experiences. The study consisted of 22 in-depth personal interviews, (17 face to face and 5 telephone interviews) of participants who were members of various, non-specified customer loyalty programs. The interview followed a thematic guide covering four key themes found in an earlier study.

Findings and Discussion

The research highlighted the changing role of today's customer. It identified examples of how consumers not only co-created value but also a view of how value can be negatively deconstructed. Today customers are informed, connected and to a certain degree empowered (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a). One outcome from this research confirms that customers can arrange social ties with others affecting both macro and micro level word of mouth and value co-creating processes.

Conclusion and Implications

The findings from the research confirm the need for a non-linear process-based framework to better understand how consumers co-create value. A conceptual framework when tested should permit discovery of the idiosyncratic consumer in terms of how they use, participate and co-create value in relationship building initiatives and programs. It's expected that a framework would also identify specific fail-points in the co-creation process.

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Travel Tales: Visual Narratives of Travel Consumption and Status Among Young Adults on Social Media

Track: 6. CCT

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Summary Statement

Exploration of online identity construction by middle-class young adults through visual representation of travel-related consumption images on social media reveals key creative practices. Through analysis of 650 Instagram posts and interviews with 14 young professionals, we identify key practices aimed at showing two things: the possession of sufficient stocks of cultural, social, and economic capitals, and the ability and willingness to increase these resources in a self-reflexive manner - "showcasing current capital" and "showcasing growing capital".

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A Systematic Review of Measures of Compulsive Buying

Track: 7. Consumer Research

Matthew Kearney, Mark Shevlin, Marcin Owczarek

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Summary Statement

Exploring the findings of a systematic review that aims to uncover the themes utilised in the measures and screeners for compulsive buying; identifying those specific behaviours and issues that are reported as indicative of compulsive buying.

In addition, the paper explores the dimensionality and latent structure(s) of compulsive buying.

Competitive Short Paper

Shopping has traditionally been viewed as a rational process involving a number of stages including searching for product information, evaluating alternative options, the actual purchasing stage, and post-purchase evaluation (Engel et al., 1968). Contemporary consumer research however has viewed the consumer as a much more emotionally driven participant in the shopping process (Belk, 1988).

Compulsive shopping is characterized by a pattern of thoughts and behaviours whereby individuals experience an uncontrollable desire to shop, and devote excessive amounts of time and resources to shopping, to the extent that other aspects of their lives are impaired (Andreassen, 2014). As with other compulsive behaviours, compulsive shopping is accompanied by a deeply involving emotional cycle, and is often escalatory in nature. It is a highly damaging behaviour in that it has a significant negative impact on the participant's general quality of life, their finances, and their relationships (in particular, their relationships with their spouses and family members) (Mellan, 1995).

Often those who exhibit compulsive buying behaviour are well aware of their actions, and the associated harm that those actions are causing, and yet find themselves unable or unwilling to stop (Boundy, 1993). In spite of relatively recent developments in the area of assistance for those people who experience compulsive buying, it is still a largely overlooked issue, and receives particularly little attention when compared to similar compulsive or addictive behaviours.

In the course of completing prior research on the topic, the authors identified the significant impediment to compulsive buying research, interventions and treatment, of a lack of agreed measure/ actionable screener (Kearney & Stevens, 2012; Kearney et al, 2016).

Following similar attempts by researchers studying analogous conditions, wherein the extant literature is analysed to develop new clear definitions and measures of the conditions that better align with industry-standard handbooks and classification systems (such as DSM-5 and ICD 11), the authors set about conducting a systematic review of existing measures of compulsive buying behaviour.

In addition to the broad aims outlined above, the systematic review seeks to provide insights in 3 key areas:

1) What self-report measures of compulsive buying have been developed and are available for researchers?

2) What are the psychometric properties of the compulsive buying measures (reliability, validity, and dimensionality)?

3) What are the main demographic and psychological correlates of compulsive buying measures?

This paper will present the early findings from the research, including the potential ramifications for future research, and will also serve as an opportunity for the authors to engage with like-minded researchers to explore potential ideas and additional avenues of research.

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The Significance of Social Identities and Norms in Youth Political Engagement: A PLS-SEM Approach

Track: 13. Political Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study contributes to the literature by developing a structural equation model integrating social identity theory (SIT) and value-belief-norm (VBN) theory to examine political engagement in young people in the UK. The model highlights how shared values, internal norms, and public norms predict political engagement, surprisingly challenging the conventional notion in SIT that group membership is central to influencing behaviour. The model emphasises how both individual and contextual factors shape youth political voting behaviour.

Competitive Short Paper

Political engagement is vital for democracy, since participation shapes the functioning and legitimacy of democratic governance (Norris, 2002). Engagement is itself shaped by socio-demographic factors, psychological variables, and contextual influences. Socio-demographic markers including education, income, and age predict engagement (Verba & Nie, 1972), while intrinsic motivation (see Calidini & Trost, 1998), political efficacy, and interest influence engagement.

Political engagement, or its lack, poses a challenge, considering the relatively low levels of youth involvement (Kimberlee, 2002; Dermody, Hanmer-Lloyd & Scullion, 2020). With demographic changes, this trend necessarily concerns political parties like the UK Conservative Party which rely heavily on aging voters (Burton-Cartledge, 2024). We theorise that youth political engagement is influenced by social identity and social norms (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Huddy, 2001). We address how social identity theory may be used to relate the role of young people's collective identity, perception of group and motivation to political engagement, and how internal and public norms, as key components of the Value Norms Behaviour theory (Kitkawsin & Han, 2017; Jahari et al, 2022; Ru et al, 2019), influence political engagement decisions. This knowledge is important in fostering a politically engaged, informed, and active young population.

The study uses a stratified, representative quantitative sample survey with English-speaking participants aged 18- to 30 residing in Great Britain. Data were collected through YouthSight, a market research agency. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), including moderation and multigroup analyses were used to test the hypotheses (Hair et al, 2018). The analysis revealed that shared values, internal norms, and public norms positively affected political engagement. Group status did not have a direct impact on political engagement. Whilst there were no moderating effects of age, there was moderation due to gender, where shared values moderated political engagement for males.

This research introduces a structural equation model integrating social identity theory (SIT) and value-belief-norm (VBN) theory to explain political engagement. The model highlights the importance of shared values, internal norms, and public norms as statistically significant predictors of political engagement, challenging the conventional notion in SIT that group membership is central in influencing behaviour. With an R2 of 0.31, the model shows strong associations between shared values and political engagement. Additionally, the positive associations between internal norms, public norms, and political engagement validate the application of VBN theory, emphasising our position that individual and contextual factors shape political behaviour.

Political parties/organisations should tailor their campaigns to resonate with the shared values and internal norms young people, whilst creating an environment where political engagement is normative and socially accepted. Efforts to engage young voters should focus less on group identity and more on individual empowerment with emphasis on the personal impact each voter can have, independent of their group identity or perception. Strategies to increase political engagement should be universally applicable across genders (and other individual differences) whilst addressing the barriers faced by those with different characteristics, ensuring political platforms and parties are perceived as welcoming and inclusive.

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The AI Mimicking Effect: Emotional Reflection and Enhanced Engagement in Conversational AI

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

We propose a novel personalization tactic, the "AI Mimicking Effect," showing that consumers exhibit stronger engagement when AI reflects their emotions, particularly among those with a high exchange relationship orientation. Perceived rapport between humans and AI mediates this effect, illuminating key psychological mechanisms. These insights guide marketers in crafting emotionally responsive AI solutions, fostering deeper customer–AI bonds and enhancing engagement in marketing and customer relationship management.

Competitive Short Paper

This research proposes AI Mimicking as a novel personalization tactic in conversational AI, aimed at enhancing customer–AI relationships by reflecting users' emotions in real time. Extant work on AI personalization has largely centered on delivering content or recommendations tailored to user preferences (Liu-Thompkins et al., 2022; Pentina et al., 2023). By contrast, the AI Mimicking Effect introduced here focuses specifically on emotional mirroring, positing that consumers experience more positive interactions and exhibit greater usage engagement when an AI system reciprocates their emotional state. Such an approach goes beyond anthropomorphism alone, offering a subtler yet highly impactful strategy that directly addresses users' emotional experiences (Hatfield et al., 1993).

Grounding this research in expectancy disconfirmation theory (Oliver, 1980), the authors argue that even though individuals might not consciously expect an AI to show emotional resonance, they nevertheless experience higher satisfaction when it does so. In four studies (one pretest and three main experiments), participants were exposed to chatbot interactions that either mimicked or did not mimic their expressed emotions. In Study 1, actual usage behavior was measured through response length and words per sentence; AI that mirrored participant emotions elicited longer and more detailed responses, indicating stronger engagement. Study 2 replicated this main effect on self-reported usage intentions and further demonstrated that perceived rapport—defined as harmony and a sense of connection (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000)—fully mediates the relationship between emotional mimicry and intention to use the AI.

To deepen understanding of when this new personalization tactic exerts its strongest influence, Study 3 introduced exchange relationship orientation (Clark & Mills, 1979; Mende & Bolton, 2011) as a critical moderator. Results revealed that consumers with a high exchange orientation—who strongly value reciprocity—displayed significantly greater rapport and higher usage intentions under the mimicry condition. Conversely, those low in exchange orientation showed no difference between mimicking and non-mimicking AI. These findings emphasize the importance of segmenting users based on relational orientations and tailoring emotional mimicry features accordingly.

The practical implications of this novel personalization tactic are substantial. Firms integrating AI-driven customer service, marketing platforms, or chatbots can adopt emotional mimicry to foster deeper engagement and more enduring relationships with users (Huang & Rust, 2021). By detecting and reflecting users' emotions, AI can create a sense of individualized interaction, thus elevating user satisfaction and guiding customers toward increased usage. Moreover, segmenting consumers by their exchange orientation or reciprocity preferences offers actionable insights for optimizing emotional mimicry strategies. This fine-grained personalization approach can enhance rapport-building while minimizing potential inefficiencies or user discomfort (Pentina et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the AI Mimicking Effect emerges as a compelling, novel personalization tactic: reflecting consumers' emotional states not only improves immediate engagement but also builds a deeper sense of rapport, ultimately driving repeated interaction. By incorporating emotional mimicry into design and deployment, practitioners can cultivate rich, personalized experiences that resonate on an affective level, strengthening consumer trust and commitment to AI interfaces in marketing and customer relationship management.

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Employing User Research Methods in Virtual Reality Tourism: Concurrent and Retrospective Think-Aloud Protocols

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

The intersection of marketing and user research methods offers an effective approach to studying Virtual Reality tours and their application in Scottish tourism. This paper identifies a methodological gap, proposing that qualitative methods, such as concurrent and retrospective think-aloud protocols combined with semi-structured interviews, can deepen our understanding of consumer and practitioner beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours surrounding current technology. It reflects on strengths, challenges, and best practices, aiming to inform future research on digital consumption.

Competitive Short Paper

The paper presents an attempt to explore the methodological intersection between marketing and user research methods in a study focused on Virtual Reality (VR) tours, and their potential application in Scottish tourism. VR, a subset of Extended Reality (XR), has seen significant growth in both research and practice across various fields, including marketing and tourism (Beck et al., 2019; Bogicevic et al., 2019). The rapid expansion, continuous improvement, immersive capabilities, relative affordability and increased mainstream adoption of VR have created new forms of digital consumption. Despite the growing research interest in the applications of VR in marketing and tourism, a gap remains, partly due to research design and methodological choices. On the one hand, some studies neither involve nor assume prior exposure of participants to VR (Petr & Cauda, 2024; Luangrath et al., 2022; Batat, 2024). On the other hand, where such exposure is present, the emphasis lies on quantitative and experimental methods (Raza et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2023). Although the latter contribute significantly, we argue that the research toolkit can be expanded to include qualitative methods which incorporate the use of VR applications. The purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours of consumers and practitioners at various stages of VR adoption, particularly in relation to social issues surrounding this technology, such as its social, economic or environmental implications.

The challenge lies in the fact that any conversation with consumers or professionals begins from an uncertain basis, as their experiences differ and the technology evolves. We propose that methods from the field of user research can be applied, involving direct exposure to the technology in question, bringing research participants to a similar level of familiarity and establishing a common point of reference. Specifically, the component of our ongoing multi-stage study analysed in this paper employs concurrent and retrospective think-aloud protocols (Alshammari et al., 2015; Fan et al., 2019; Fan et al., 2022) with thirteen Scottish consumers and six Scottish tourism providers, followed by semi-structured interviews to explore their understanding and priorities regarding responsible business practices. Participants are asked to wear a popular VR device for fifteen minutes, perform specific tasks in an app offering virtual tours of various international destinations, and share their thoughts, decision-making processes, and emotions during and immediately after the experience. The concurrent and retrospective verbalisations help capture their immediate interactions with the technology, while the subsequent semi-structured interview encourages them to think broadly about societal implications related to the technology.

The study, which is currently in the data collection stage, reflects on strengths and challenges, and recommends best practices in the application of think-aloud protocols combined with semi-structured interviews. It aims to inform future studies in which participants have varying levels of familiarity with the technology of interest, or in cases where the technology is evolving rapidly, therefore requiring exposure to its most current versions. We hope this will encourage more researchers to consider incorporating user research methods in future investigations of digital consumption and emerging social issues.

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Integrating AI Image Generators in Marketing Higher Education

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

This paper explores the practical incorporation of AI image generators in the creative marketing process and how best to implement real-world use cases of AI image generators in the classroom. It explores the role played by industry partners in the initial consultation stage to update pedagogy, curricula, and authentic assessment. Taking a constructivist approach to experiential learning enables students to build new knowledge based on prior understanding.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction and Research Aim

In academia, the impact of Generative AI is evident in areas such as academic integrity (Sullivan, Kelly, & McLaughlan, 2023), authentic assessment and the imperative to integrate generative AI (GenAI) into updated pedagogical approaches and experiential learning (Salinas-Navarro et al., 2024). Collaboration with industry partners is also critical to ensuring educational frameworks align with evolving marketing industry demands (Bower et. al, 2024).

Stakeholders advocate for integrating AI into marketing education to enhance graduate job readiness (Elhajjar et al., 2021; Guha et al., 2024). This paper explores the practical incorporation of AI image generators in the creative marketing process and how best to implement real-world use cases of AI image generators in the classroom (Crittenden & Peterson, 2019; Van Esch & Stewart Black, 2021).

Application of AI Image Generators in Marketing Education

This study examines the implementation of AI image generators, such as DALL-E and Midjourney, within a postgraduate marketing course on Product Innovation. By engaging with AI image generators, students could visualize and iterate on product ideas more efficiently, bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and practical execution. By using this ideation and concept development model, AI tools accelerate creative processes, generating visual concepts from textual prompts in a fraction of the traditional time (Adetayo, 2024).

Theoretical Framework

The study is underpinned by constructivist learning theories, drawing on the work of Piaget (1972) and Vygotsky & Cole (1978). Constructivism posits that learning is an active, experiential process where students build new knowledge based on prior understanding. The integration of AI tools aligns with this approach by offering hands-on learning experiences, enabling students to engage with real-world marketing scenarios (Richter et al., 2024). This research used the 4E (embrace, enable, experiment, exploit) model of curriculum development to incorporate AI in higher education (Shailendra et. al, 2024).

Research Process and Data Collection

This study is in the data collection phase. The first phase of the research was a qualitative exploratory study, through semi-structured in-depth interviews with the primary contact with the three (3) industry partners. The insights are drawn from research and industry consultations that inform curriculum changes, align pedagogy with industry practice. The second data collection phase gathered survey data and reflective journals from 76 students after the Product Innovation subject.

Contribution and Future Directions

This study aims to enhance experiential learning and industry engagement, through the validation or otherwise of the 4E model (Shailendra et, al, 2024) of curriculum development. The study also provides an examination of additional benefits to students of AI generation learning incorporated in incorporating GenAI offers an opportunity for broader discourse on societal and organizational issues. Topics such as biases inherent in AI models (Thiel, 2023), data privacy concerns, and global regulatory frameworks (Walsh, 2024) are critical areas for exploration. The potential of GenAI to contribute to sustainable marketing practices—encompassing environmental, social, and ethical dimensions—is a promising avenue for future research (McDonagh & Prothero, 2014).

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Filmed Entertainment Providers' Streaming Subscription Services as an "Iron Cage" With No Escape? A Weberian Perspective

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

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Summary Statement

Drawing on Weber's conflict theory, this research seeks to explore whether consumers may experience the digital filmed entertainment providers' streaming subscription services as an(other) 'iron cage' limiting their choice of consuming filmed entertainment. We found that filmed entertainment providers, as producers of popular movies/TV shows, are in the powerful position of using them as exclusive 'subscription bait'. Consumers increasingly fear to become trapped forever in the 'iron cage' of multiple streaming subscription services.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

Marketing scholars have championed the digitalizisedation of accessing recorded music, movies, TV shows and books for 25 years as a revolutionary technology that 'democratises' how consumers would now listen to recorded music, read books and watch filmed entertainment (Albrechtslund, 2020; Giesler, 2008; Hennig-Thurau & Houston, 2018). Hence, every new digital medium from DVD and BluRay to MP4 downloads and eventually streaming is hailed as *the* way consumers want to watch filmed entertainment nowadays (Evens et al., 2024; Walsh & Singh, 2021) while predicting the death of cinema and television (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2021).

This popular discourse, however, has been called into question by the recent resurgence of vinyl records (Fernandez & Beverland, 2019) and the persistent popularity of printed books, while consumers' preferences for watching filmed entertainment on TV, DVD/BluRay/4K or in the cinema remain steady. But since filmed entertainment providers are pushing consumers aggressively towards their streaming subscription services, is it possible that similar tensions to those within the recorded music industry (Wohlfeil, 2023) are emerging?

Drawing on Weber's (1922) conflict theory, this research explores whether consumers may experience film entertainment providers' streaming subscription services as an(other) 'iron cage' limiting their choices of accessing movies/TV productions.

Methodology

The data were collected via phenomenological interviews with 18 informants and the author's autoethnography. Using a hermeneutic analysis, underlying patterns in the data were identified and interpreted for deeper meanings by drawing on Weber's (1922) conflict theory.

Findings

The findings suggest that there are growing tensions between digital filmed entertainment providers and consumers who increasingly fear to become trapped forever in numerous streaming subscription services and deprived of choosing how they want to watch and collect filmed entertainment.

Initially, all informants embraced purchasing both DVDs/BluRays and, later, MP4 downloads on iTunes to watch their favourite movies/TV shows at home and on the go, while also building their personal movie collections. They also welcomed Netflix as a complementary online 'video rental' service. While they initially enjoyed streaming of their favourite filmed entertainment, especially snce Netflix, AmazonPrime and AppleTV produce their own movies/TV shows, most informants feel increasingly angry and frustrated since major film studios began to stream their movie/TV productions exclusively on their own subscription services.

Producing their own movies/TV shows puts film entertainment providers in the powerful position of dictating where and how consumers can access and watch them. As virtually all of them use their in-house productions nowadays as exclusive subscription bait (Schauerte et al., 2024). Disney+ and AmazonPrime announced that they stopped making their productions available on any other media, while Apple closed iTunes to force consumers onto AppleTV+. Our informants feel betrayed and forced to choose between being trapped forever in never-ending streaming subscriptions or not being able to watch any filmed entertainment anymore.

Conclusion

The research illuminates why the growing rationalisation of the digital society and digital services is locking consumers increasingly into an iron cage and depriving them of their free choice, leading to rising tensions and consumers turning towards physical alternatives.

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Securing Well-Being Through Trust: Socio-Political Institutions and Depression

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

Drawing on learned helplessness theory (Maier & Seligman, 1976, 2016) and locus of control (Rotter, 1966), this study explores how trust in socio-political institutions influences depression in post-pandemic England. Analyses of data from 13,500 respondents indicate that higher trust in government, courts, and police is associated with lower depression, while trust in social media news correlates with higher depression. These findings underscore the importance of institutional trust in supporting public mental health during post-COVID-19 recovery.

Competitive Short Paper

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced unparalleled uncertainty, heightening global stress levels and challenging individuals' sense of control. In such environments, learned helplessness theory (Maier & Seligman, 1976, 2016; Seligman, 1972) posits that repeated exposure to uncontrollable events erodes coping efficacy, fostering hopelessness and depression. Meanwhile, locus of control (Rotter, 1966) underscores how perceptions of control—whether internal or external—play a central role in mental health outcomes.

Against this backdrop, socio-political institutions function as potential external stabilizers (Earle & Cvetkovich, 1997; Siegrist, 2021). When viewed as competent and trustworthy, these institutions can mitigate perceptions of helplessness, thereby safeguarding psychological well-being. Conversely, ineffective or corrupt institutions may exacerbate global attributions of failure, reinforcing helplessness.

Our study investigates the impact of trust in socio-political institutions on depression, focusing on post-COVID-19 England. We draw upon 24 survey waves administered by YouGov between July 2022 and June 2024, amassing 14,128 responses (13,500 included in the final analysis). Depression was measured using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6), a brief, robust instrument frequently employed in mental health surveys (Strine et al., 2005). We asked participants to rate how often they felt nervous, hopeless, restless, depressed, effortful, or worthless in the past 30 days. Trust was gauged via multiple questions assessing confidence in national government, parliament, the prime minister, courts, police, and other entities.

Regression analyses reveal that political trust and institutional trust each correlate negatively with depression, while trust in social media news is positively related to depressive outcomes. Notably, trust in the National Health Service (NHS) was individually predictive of lower depression but became nonsignificant when all trust variables entered a combined model. Our findings underscore the protective function of socio-political trust, whereby individuals with higher trust in core institutions report fewer depressive symptoms.

These results align with learned helplessness theory (Alloy et al., 1984; Seligman et al., 1979), suggesting that trusting institutions buffers the perception of uncontrollable, global threats. Moreover, they extend locus of control research (Rotter, 1966) by indicating that reliance on effective external systems can alleviate feelings of personal powerlessness. This has far-reaching implications for public health strategies: bolstering trust in governmental and judicial structures may prove integral to mitigating mental distress and promoting resilience.

Given the high social and economic costs associated with depression, particularly for the UK's National Health Service (Mental Health Foundation, 2022), policy interventions aimed at enhancing institutional trust warrant attention. Tailored communication that emphasizes transparency, consistency, and accountability may help strengthen public confidence in socio-political entities, fostering a healthier psychosocial climate during post-pandemic recovery and beyond.

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Defining Sustainable Identity: A Framework for Drivers and Collective Impact

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study develops a comprehensive framework that defines the boundaries of the concept of sustainable identity. Sustainable identity reflects how individuals internalise sustainability as part of their self-concept, influenced by personal values, social norms, and contextual factors. It drives pro-environmental behaviours, enhances psychological well-being, and fosters organisational and societal sustainability efforts. By addressing overlooked aspects, such as the social dimension and feedback loops, the framework links individual and collective contributions to global sustainability challenges.

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Rethinking Sustainability Communications: Prioritising Immediate Benefits Over Sustainability Claims

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

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Summary Statement

Sustainability communications face challenges due to the complexities of sustainable consumer behaviour. White et al. (2019) identify barriers to encouraging sustainable behaviour. Building on their framework, this study advances the discourse on sustainability communication by advocating the prioritisation of immediate benefits, such as financial and social advantages, over sustainability benefits. Through an empirical comparison of consumer purchase intentions across these benefit framings, we offer evidence and actionable insights to inform academic discussions and marketing practices.

Competitive Short Paper

Sustainability communications face significant challenges due to the complexities of sustainable consumer behaviour. White et al. (2019) identify five key challenges in encouraging sustainable consumer behaviours: self-other trade-offs, long-term horizons, the need for controlled processes, abstractness, and the necessity for collective action. Building on White et al.'s (2019) work, this study extends the discourse on sustainability communication by proposing the prioritisation of immediate over sustainability benefits. Through an empirical comparison of consumer purchase intentions across these benefit framings, we provide evidence and actionable insights to inform academic discussions and marketing practices.

White et al. (2019) identify the long-term horizons of sustainable consumer behaviour as a barrier to effective communication, noting that "eco-friendly actions and outcomes can seem abstract, vague, and distant from the self" (p. 30). To address this, they advocate for strategies that "make sustainability issues more relevant and concrete for the self" (p. 31). However, how this can be effectively achieved remains an open question.

Consumer research suggests that sustainability-focused benefits may themselves act as barriers. For example, Mai et al. (2019) find that consumers often perceive sustainable products as less effective (e.g., reduced cleaning power), which can significantly hinder sustainable consumption. Similarly, Berke and Larson (2023) suggest that removing vegetarian and vegan labels could encourage US consumers to reduce animal product consumption. Sleboda et al. (2024) demonstrate that health-focused claims are more effective than sustainability-focused claims in persuading consumers to choose plant-based food products. Consequently, Gollnhofer and Pechmann (2024) advocate focusing on category benefits, treating sustainability benefits as a necessary but non-central element of the value proposition.

Building on these insights, this study explores alternative approaches to communicating sustainable benefits by testing the hypothesis: communications that emphasise immediate benefits (e.g., financial or social) lead to significantly higher purchase intentions compared to those highlighting only sustainability benefits.

The research design employed an online survey in which participants were presented with the same product framed under three benefit conditions: sustainable, social, and financial. Participants selected the product they were most inclined to purchase and answered additional questions exploring their preferences for benefits, perceptions of product performance, and views on sustainable consumption. This procedure was applied across six product categories: water, milk, face cream, roast beef, and chocolate.

This study confirms the primary hypothesis that communications emphasising immediate benefits, such as financial or social advantages, lead to significantly higher purchase intentions compared to those focusing solely on sustainability benefits. The findings reveal gender differences, with women showing greater purchase intent for products framed with financial benefits, while men exhibiting a stronger preference for social benefit framing. These results align with prior research on differences in sustainable behaviour between genders (e.g., Griskevicius et al., 2010; Zhao et al., 2021). The study also identifies income as a factor, with higher-income groups showing a preference for social benefits.

The research concludes that communications prioritising immediate benefits, particularly social benefits, significantly increase purchase intentions compared to sustainability-focused messaging, providing valuable insights for tailoring strategies to diverse audiences and advancing sustainable communication discourse.

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Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) and Long-Distance Trails: Exploring Brand Perception and Its Role in Trail Tourism

Track: 17. Tourism & Place Marketing

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Summary Statement

This study explores the application of Customer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) to long-distance trails, examining how branding impacts user experience, engagement, and decision-making. Using a mixed-methods approach, it investigates core CBBE dimensions in relation to trail tourism. Findings highlight the importance of strategic branding,

emphasising consistent messaging, community collaboration, and digital engagement. The study offers practical insights for enhancing trail appeal, supporting destination development, and aligning branding strategies with evolving tourist preferences.

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Entrepreneurship As A Last Resort - The Hidden Reality Of ADHD

Track: 9. Entrepreneurship & Innovation

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Summary Statement

Entrepreneurship is highlighted as a good career path for people with ADHD. Autonomy and lack of structure are key reasons attributed to this claim. However, this research argues that this suggestion is too simplistic and ignores the hidden realities of entrepreneurship for people with ADHD. This exploratory research proposes that entrepreneurship is often a last resort for people with ADHD, who have been viewed as 'difficult', 'challenging' or 'unemployable'.

Competitive Short Paper

Google search results portray entrepreneurship as one of the 'best careers for someone with ADHD'. Research suggests that ADHD has a positive relationship with entrepreneurial intentions (Verheul et al., 2015), orientation (Wismans et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021), and mindset (Moore et al., 2021). ADHD is positively related to business start-up activity (Wiklund et al., 2017) and pursuing self-employment (Verheul et al., 2016). However, this simplistic view fails to capture the lived experiences of many entrepreneurs with ADHD. This research challenges these assumptions, arguing that entrepreneurship frequently emerges as a last resort for individuals with ADHD, who have encountered significant barriers within the traditional employment landscape.

Methodology

This exploratory research employs a qualitative approach, utilising in-depth interviews with a small sample of entrepreneurs who self-identify as having ADHD (Kessler et al., 2007). The interviews explore participants' experiences with traditional employment, the factors that led them to pursue entrepreneurship, and the challenges and successes they encountered on their entrepreneurial journeys.

Findings

The initial findings suggest that many entrepreneurs with ADHD experienced significant difficulties within traditional employment settings. These difficulties included:

· Stigma and Discrimination: Participants reported experiencing stigma and discrimination due to their ADHD, including difficulties with focus, impulsivity, and executive functioning. These challenges often resulted in negative performance reviews, social isolation, and limited career advancement opportunities.

· Lack of Accommodation: Many participants reported a lack of understanding and accommodation for their neurodivergent needs within traditional workplaces. This lack of support created significant barriers to their success.

· Workplace Relationships: Participants described experiencing significant challenges navigating the social complexities of traditional work environments. These challenges often led to anxiety, social isolation, and difficulty maintaining employment.

Given these significant challenges, many participants reported that entrepreneurship emerged as a last resort career path. However, participants describe facing unique challenges within the entrepreneurial landscape, including:

· Difficulty with Structure and Routine: Many participants struggled to establish and maintain the necessary structure and routines for entrepreneurial success. This lack of inherent structure can exacerbate challenges with executive functioning and time management.

· Mental Health Challenges: The pressures and uncertainties of entrepreneurship can significantly impact the mental health of individuals with ADHD. This can manifest in increased anxiety and depression, hindering entrepreneurial success.

· Financial Insecurity and Lack of Support: Many participants faced significant financial insecurity.

Discussion and Conclusion

These findings challenge the simplistic narrative of entrepreneurship as a natural fit for individuals with ADHD. While autonomy and flexibility can offer certain advantages, the entrepreneurial journey for individuals with ADHD is often fraught with unique challenges. This exploratory research suggests that entrepreneurship frequently emerges as a last resort for individuals with ADHD who have been marginalised and excluded from traditional employment opportunities. This "last resort" perspective highlights the urgent need for a more nuanced and compassionate understanding of the entrepreneurial journey for individuals with ADHD. This research has significant implications for policymakers, educators, and support organisations, emphasising the need to create more inclusive and supportive environments for individuals with ADHD within entrepreneurial ecosystems.

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Developing Data-Driven Decision-Makers: Teaching Strategies for Data Visualization and Storytelling

Track: 11. Marketing Pedagogy

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Summary Statement

Demand for data visualization and storytelling skills is increasing across industries, as organizations navigate vast amounts of data to inform strategic decisions. Employers seek candidates who can transform complex information into actionable insights. Students need strong data analysis and communication skills to enhance their career readiness and help organizations harness the full potential of their data. This presentation highlights a series of data visualization and storytelling activities we have developed and facilitated in our courses.

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Is GenAI Transforming Marketing? GenAI Adoption and the Evolving Collaboration Between Human Ingenuity and GenAI

Track: 2. AI

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Summary Statement

This paper on Gen AI Adoption and Impact on Marketing Management Practices

Competitive Short Paper

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is profoundly transforming organizations, with marketing emerging as a critical area of change (Kumar, Ashraf, & Nadeem, 2024; Kshetri, 2023). Among AI technologies, Generative AI (GenAI) stands out as a revolutionary force reshaping content creation, customer engagement, and strategic optimization (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Peres et al., 2023). Despite its potential, GenAI faces challenges such as complexity and steep learning curves (Amankwah-Amoah et al., 2024). Currently, GenAI occupies the "peak of inflated expectations" on Gartner's 2023 Hype Cycle, with its trajectory suggesting a forthcoming period of disillusionment. This phase, often marked by waning excitement as early challenges surface, does not diminish GenAI's transformative potential. This paper based on the existing PhD study, examines GenAI's transformative role in marketing and its evolving interplay with human ingenuity.

Marketing management has evolved through distinct paradigms, from product-centric Marketing 1.0 to human-mimicking Marketing 5.0, aimed at societal betterment (Kumar & Kotler, 2024). The deployment of Marketing 5.0 leverages New Age Technologies not only to emulate the capabilities of human marketers but also to foster meaningful human connections, demonstrating that, when properly harnessed, technology can bridge gaps and bring people closer, despite its often-criticized isolating effects (Kumar & Kotler, 2024).

GenAI, as the latest addition, leverages models such as LLMs, GANs, and multimodal transformers for content creation, simulations, and data augmentation (Kumar & Kotler, 2024). Tools like ChatGPT, Midjourney, and DALL·E 2 exemplify GenAI's potential (Peres et al., 2023) to humanize AI through sensory perception and social and emotional reasoning (Kumar & Kotler, 2024). However, GenAI adoption entails benefits and risks. Its advantages include scalable data training, democratization of marketing, cost reduction, and operational efficiency (Cillo & Rubera, 2024; Peres, 2023; Rana et al., 2024; Reisenbichler et al., 2022; Noy & Zhang, 2023). Conversely, it raises concerns such as biases, hallucinations, plagiarism, and transparency issues, raising concerns about accuracy, ethical use, and misuse (Huang & Rust, 2023; Dwedi et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2024).

The interplay between AI and humanity reveals both complementarity (Kumar et al., 2024; Manis & Madhavaram, 2023) and tension (Mikalef et al., 2021; Volkmar et al., 2022). AI excels in repetitive and analytical tasks, complementing human strengths in empathy and intuition, making collaboration crucial (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020; Guha et al., 2021). Recent research emphasizes the variability of human-AI collaboration across different tasks, highlighting the pivotal role of marketing managers in optimizing this synergy (Revilla et al., 2023; Volkmar et al., 2022).

In this paper, insights from thirteen empirical studies on AI adoption in marketing (pre-GenAI) are categorized into three key areas. However, none of the empirical studies have explored the adoption of AI and the subsequent impact on the role of marketing managers and AI in performing the marketing particularly with a focus on the agency of AI and the related contextual factors

In conclusion, GenAI has the potential to revolutionize marketing. However, its adoption in organizations must prioritize human-centric approaches, addressing possible challenges. By leveraging socio-technical systems and embracing human ingenuity, organizations can unlock GenAI's potential while ensuring marketing practices remain adaptive and human-centered.

Customer Mobilised Engagement (CME) for Cocreating Value for People Experiencing Vulnerability

Track: 16. Social Marketing, Vulnerability & Wellbeing

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Summary Statement

This study explores customer mobilised engagement (CME) as a social marketing approach to address vulnerability. Using OzHarvest's Nourish Program, which equips vulnerable youth with hospitality skills, the research highlights how CME mobilises stakeholders to co-create value, fostering inclusivity and adaptability in marketing systems. CME reframes value propositions to meet diverse needs, enabling systemic change and multidimensional outcomes. Through qualitative analysis, CME's potential is demonstrated to address inequities, enhance well-being, and drive system-wide transformations for societal-challenges.

Competitive Short Paper

Social marketing is a useful framework for addressing vulnerability by engaging individuals, communities, and organisations to create systems that reduce inequities and enhance well-being (Bastos et al., 2022; Eshaghi, 2023). Vulnerability emerges in contexts where structural and systemic inequities limit access to resources and opportunities, leading to exclusion from value-creating systems (Domegan et al., 2020). The present study introduces customer mobilised engagement (CME) (Davey et al., 2022) as a concept to address these issues, emphasising how individual-level actions can contribute to system-wide changes.

CME reflects the active identification, engagement, and mobilisation of individuals and stakeholders within a service ecosystem, enabling value creation for people experiencing vulnerability. Using OzHarvest's (an Australian social enterprise focused on food security, employability, and waste reduction), OzHarvest's Nourish Program (designed to empower vulnerable youth with hospitality skills), this study demonstrates how CME enhances inclusivity and adaptability of marketing systems to address societal challenges (Ball et al., 2023).

The Nourish Program exemplifies how a high-level organisational mission, such as addressing food insecurity and employability, can be translated into actionable initiatives that address individual and community vulnerabilities. The program mobilises various stakeholders—students, employers, referrers, and facilitators—fostering co-created value outcomes that address multiple dimensions of vulnerability, including economic insecurity, skill deficits, and social exclusion (Ball et al., 2023). CME enables stakeholders to adapt value propositions to suit diverse needs, ensuring solutions are inclusive and responsive to context-specific challenges (Davey et al., 2022).

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative case study approach (Yin, 1981), involving 41 interviews with stakeholders engaged in the Nourish Program. Reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019) guided the identification and interpretation of key themes, while the Gioia methodology (Gioia et al., 2013) ensured rigor in organizing and interpreting data.

Results and Discussion

Three key contributions to social marketing and vulnerability:

The Nourish Program demonstrates how CME operationalizes the principles of social marketing to address vulnerabilities through tailored, inclusive interventions. By reframing the value proposition to meet individual needs—such as skill development and employment opportunities—OzHarvest empowers vulnerable individuals and enhances their capacity to participate in broader societal systems, thus improving their wellbeing.

Consistent with systems social marketing (Truong et al., 2018) CME encourages system-level adjustments to address inequities in resource distribution and market inclusion. For instance, participants who enter the program for food security find additional value in employability pathways, demonstrating how CME fosters multidimensional value outcomes.

Mobilising customers facilitates cross-level collaboration, enabling micro-level adaptations that drive meso- and macro-level outcomes. This process highlights the potential of social marketing to address wicked problems by fostering adaptive, networked solutions grounded in the lived experiences of vulnerable populations.

Conclusion

CME represents a useful approach for addressing vulnerability, improving well-being and fostering system-wide transformation. By enabling stakeholders to co-create value that addresses individual, community, and societal needs, CME extends the theoretical and practical scope of social marketing. This research highlights the importance of understanding vulnerability through the lens of systemic interdependencies, providing actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners to design interventions that achieve sustainable impact.

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Music streaming platforms: Are artists getting paid what they deserve?

Track: 3. Arts, Heritage & Nonprofit

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Summary Statement

The arrival of streaming platforms has significantly shaken up the recorded music industry with their subscription model. But while streaming services are said to offer independent artists the potential to reach a global audience, they are hardly able to make a living from the streaming of their music. This study critically examines musicians' experiences with the streaming platforms' present revenue distribution with a view of developing a fairer remuneration model that would benefit all stakeholders.

Competitive Short Paper

Introduction

The recorded music industry has undergone significant changes over the years due to technological advancements (Tschmuck, 2012; Sinclair & Green, 2016). The arrival of Spotify and AppleMusic has significantly shaken up the industry with their business model of streaming subscription services, which has shifted the consumption of recorded music from the sale of physical records/CDs and MP4 downloads towards streaming (Hennig-Thurau & Houston, 2018) to the apparent benefit of consumers (Datta et al., 2018). However, while streaming services are said to offer independent artists the potential to reach a global audience, they are hardly able to make a living from the streaming of their music (Hesmondhalgh, 2020; Barata & Coelho, 2021). Hence a fairer remuneration model for the financial compensation of artists is needed.

This study examines revenue distribution models, royalty rates, licensing agreements, and the impact of streaming on digital sales with a view of developing a fairer remuneration model that would benefit all stakeholders.

Methodology

The data were collected via phenomenological in-depth interviews with 10 emerging and established professional musicians, who have personal experiences as artists with streaming subscription services. Using a reflexive thematic data analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006), underlying patterns in the data were identified and interpreted for their deeper meaning. These themes serve as the basis for developing a fairer remuneration model for artists.

Findings

While the data interpretation is still in progress, we focus in this presentation on the trade-off musicians experience between the potential exposure to new audiences and making a living.

Our informants confirm the popular view that streaming platforms like Spotify, AppleMusic, or Deezer enable artists to showcase their work and connect with a global audience (Datta et al., 2018) who normally would not buy their music. But our informants made it clear that, due to the strong competition, the possibility for connecting to a wider audience rarely ever materialises unless you are a major artist backed up by a powerful record label that allows for a multi-channel exposure.

Our informants quickly emphasise that hardly any artist, including major stars, is able to make a living from the streaming of their music. Many of our informants complain that consumers and 'industry insiders' are often unaware of the financial investment required for the quality production of a proper album and how the "wholly inadequate" remuneration they receive from streaming is not just threatening the production of future albums but also the career as independent musicians. What upsets them in particular is that streaming platforms keep most of the generated revenues (Wlömert and Papies, 2016), which don't contribute a cent in the production of music.

Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of addressing the issue of fair compensation for musicians in the era of streaming by emphasising the challenges artists face with the current royalty remuneration system. The research thereby aims to offer suggestions for improving payment structures, such as implementing revenue-sharing models and establishing collective bargaining agreements.

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The Direct and Indirect Effects of Communication Content on Channel Performance Outcomes

Track: 4. B2B & Business Networks

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Summary Statement

This paper investigate the direct and indirect effects of content-based communication - instrumental and social - on performance outcomes in distribution channels along with uncovering the underlying mediating processes. This study finds that the positive effects of instrumental communication on performance outcomes are fully mediated by trust and information asymmetry, however they partially mediated the positive effects of social communication on channel outcomes. Also, social communication has direct and positive impact on relationship performance and governance costs.

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Fostering Sustainability: The Impact of Social, Structural and Infrastructural Interventions in a HEI

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Claire O'Neill, Aoife Hughes, Maria Kirrane, Niall Dunphy, Gerard Mullally, Edmond Byrne

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Summary Statement

Universities are increasingly becoming thought and action leaders in the drive for transformational sustainability. The aim of this paper is to understand how social, structural and infrastructural interventions in a HEI context influence sustainable behaviour. A survey of HEI staff and students in 2019 and 2025 helps inform sustained behaviour change in this context and how the lessons learned in pursuing sustainability within a HEI context could be applied more broadly in society.

Competitive Short Paper

Universities are increasingly becoming thought and action leaders in the drive for transformational sustainability (Purcell et al. 2019). They play a significant role in fostering sustainability knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours among staff and students. Indeed, studies have shown that university students display stronger sustainability behaviours, attitudes, and knowledge compared to the general public (Kirby & Zwickle, 2021). Research on sustainability in higher education institutions (HEIs) is expansive and covers a broad spectrum of areas, from curricular changes and pedagogical approaches to governance and leadership (Žalėnienė & Pereira, 2021; Bauer et al., 2021; Chankseliani & McCowan, 2021; Wang et al, 2022; Figuerio & Raufflet, 2015; Ramisio et al., 2019; Leal Filho et al., 2020; Findler et al., 2019). Importantly, HEIs play a significant role not only in promoting sustainability but in implementing the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These institutions may influence thought and action in terms of poverty eradication, gender equality, and climate change (Žalėnienė & Pereira, 2021; Chankseliani & McCowan, 2021).

The integration of sustainability into curricula and organizational culture is seen as essential for inducing a transformative mindset (Žalėnienė & Pereira, 2021; Chankseliani & McCowan, 2021) and thus HEIs have the capacity to impact attitudes and provide valuable experiential learning opportunities (Kirby & Zwickle, 2021). However, while many individuals, particularly younger generations, express an interest or positive attitude toward sustainability, barriers often hinder their actions toward sustainability (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; ElHaffar et al., 2020). Education for sustainable development (ESD) and social media are important in improving environmental literacy among young people (Piscitelli & D'Uggento, 2022). Young people's pro-environmental behaviour is driven by their values and norms, with bio-spheric values influencing behaviour through self-identity. Studies suggest that strengthening these eco-values in youth can promote sustainable actions, such as recycling (Balunde et al., 2020). Additionally, choices and actions are influenced by factors like environmental awareness, relationship status, and gender (Anh et al., 2020). Media and social networks also play crucial roles in shaping environmental practices (Pereira & Freire, 2021). Notwithstanding, challenges exist in converting sustainability knowledge to action – individuals may have good knowledge and positive attitudes toward sustainability but this does not always translate into sustainable behaviours (Salas-Zapata et al., 2018). There is a need for further research on understanding the motivating factors and barriers for sustainable behaviours and interventions that can bridge this gap (Kirby & Zwickle, 2021).

The aim of this paper is to understand how social, structural and infrastructural interventions in a HEI context influence sustainable behaviour. A survey was distributed via email to approximately 22,651 students and 4,638 staff via university mailing lists, with a response rate of ca. 2.4% (n=660) in 2019. This survey was redistributed via the same mailing lists in Spring 2025 (response rate pending) to measure any differences given changes both socially and institutionally. This research helps inform sustained behaviour change in this context and how the lessons learned in pursuing sustainability within a HEI context could be applied more broadly in society.

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Examining the adoption of screen time tracking in an emerging market

Track: 15. Responsible & Sustainable Marketing

Dr Mahesh Gadekar, Smita Priyadarshini

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Summary Statement

This study examines the adoption of screen time tracking in an emerging market and uses the PLS-SEM approach to analyse 1210 respondents through the Value-Belief-Norm Theory (VBN; Stern, 2000), examines the direct and indirect effects of habit, personal and social norms and the moderating role of response efficacy on individual intention to reduce screen time usage.

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Scaling Sustainability Through Circular Coopetition: A Regional and International Expansion Initiative

Track: 7. Consumer Research

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Summary Statement

This study addresses the increase in waste associated with disposable cups for takeaway beverages. With a coopetition approach, and partnering with local schemes, 35 cafes have adopted a cup reuse scheme. Data is collected on behaviours associated with the scheme, alongside perspectives from cafe owners. Provisional findings will show local successes, with plans to replicate the initiative across Welsh cities, England, and internationally. The project demonstrates how coopetition can drive sustainability, by impactful, community-based solutions.

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Preliminary Analysis of Findings from a Delphi Exploration of Future Sustainable Hydrogen Consumption

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DC- 4

The Effects Of Native Advertising Performed By Influencers On Consumer Well-being And Purchase Behaviour

Meng-Jie Guan

Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, Portugal

DC- 7

Effective Healthcare Marketing Strategies: Exploring The Importance Of The 7ps And Consumer Decision-Making, A Critical Review Of The Literature.

Tanya Wood

Wrexham University, United Kingdom

DC- 8

Brand Purpose: refining the concept and building a measuring scale

Michael Inpong

Université Paris Dauphine - PSL, France

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The Commercialisation Of Menopause And Menopausal Bodies

Simone Hawley

University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

DC- 11

Navigating Gendered Impacts of Corporate Surveillance in the Digital Advertising Ecosystem: Privacy and Consumer Behaviour

Qi (Marine) Yuan[1], Judith Fletcher-Brown[2], Karen Middleton[2], Gajendra Liyanaarachchi[2]

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Exploring Brand Activism Discourse In Online Communities' Post-campaign: 'The Only Rainbow That Matters'

Jamie Powell, Sarah Glozer, Andrew Crane

University of Bath, United Kingdom

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Exploring Consumer Behavior For Organic Beauty Products: Role Of Perceived Greenwashing

Azha Rubab

Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan

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A Literature Review of How Parasocial Relationships with Influencers Can Become Toxic for Generation Z

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Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands, Ireland

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Institutional Framing in Brand's Persuasion: Signalling Brand Sincerity and Manipulative Intent in Influencing Sustainable Packaging Behaviours and Marketing Outcomes

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The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China

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The Methodological Choices Involved In Investigating Cross-cultural Differences Amongst Gen Z Females' Ideals Of Beauty In The Age Of Selfies And Social Media.

Naila Khan

Birmingham City University, United Kingdom

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Manal Alshareef, Belinda Dewsnap, Cheryl Travers

Loughborough Business School, Loughborough University, United Kingdom

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Kamila Miller

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Zainab Tariq

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Brand in the Boardroom: A Brand Model of Positive Consumer Transformation by Directors

Mark Smith, Maher Daboul, Richard Howarth

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A Decolonial Approach To Understanding The Effects Of Americanisation On Identity Formation: An Analysis Of Caribbean Fashion Consumption.

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ACADEMY OF MARKETING CONFERENCE 2026

29 June - 1 July 2026

Etihad Stadium, Manchester

The University of Manchester is delighted to host the 2026 Academy of Marketing Conference at the iconic Etihad Stadium.

The University of Manchester

The University of Manchester is a member of the prestigious Russell Group and one of the UK's largest single-site universities. We have over 40,000 students, 12,000 staff and, with 500,000 former students from more than 190 countries, are home to the largest alumni community of any campus-based university in the UK.

We are ranked in the top ten of the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings globally; are the top UK University for graduate employability according to The Graduate Market in 2022 and no fewer than 25 Nobel laureates have either worked or studied here. Manchester was also named 5th place for research power - the quality and scale of research and impact - in the UK government's Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021.

AM2026

For decades, the Academy of Marketing has been a vital platform for international scholars to connect, collaborate, and share insights in the field of marketing. In 2026, we are proud to carry this tradition forward by offering a conference experience that blends academic excellence with cultural richness and vibrant social activities.

Set in the dynamic city of Manchester—renowned for its legendary music scene, industrial heritage, and thriving café culture—the conference promises more than just intellectual engagement. Whether you're looking to explore the nearby Peak and Lake Districts or take advantage of Manchester's excellent global connections, we invite you to extend your stay and experience all this remarkable city has to offer.

Conference Theme: Breaking Boundaries – Unlocking Potential

The theme "Breaking Boundaries – Unlocking Potential" reflects a timely and necessary call to embrace openness, inclusivity, and collaboration in addressing the complex challenges of today's marketing landscape. It signals a commitment to fostering interdisciplinary research and cross-sector dialogue, both of which are essential in navigating the dynamic and often disruptive nature of contemporary markets.

This theme aligns strongly with the ethos of the Academy of Marketing, which has long been at the forefront of advancing thought leadership and shaping the future of marketing practice and scholarship.

In recent decades, we have witnessed profound transformations across multiple dimensions—rising global emphasis on sustainability and the circular economy, shifting consumer behaviours, evolving retail environments, and the rapid integration of digital technologies. These developments underscore the urgency of re-examining and reimagining marketing theory and practice.

As the boundaries of our discipline continue to evolve, so too must our approaches. This year's conference seeks to inspire new ways of thinking and doing—encouraging participants to transcend traditional silos, challenge established assumptions, and pursue innovation across methodological, theoretical, and practical domains. In doing so, we aim to unlock the full potential of marketing research and its impact in a rapidly changing world.

We look forward to welcoming you to an inspiring and memorable event.

MANCHESTER 1824

The University of Manchester

Conference Chair: Dr Claudia E. Henninger
Co-Chairs: Dr Rosy Boardman, Dr Courtney Chrimes, Dr Jane Wood & Aurelie Le Normand

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