
MARKETING THEORY

Conceptual and Causal Modeling in Marketing

Period: a.y. 2025/2026 - I Sem

Instructor:

Class times:

Tue 10.15 - 13.30

Fri 14.45 - 18.00

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Room 4C1-03

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Course description

The course provides the conceptual foundations of causal modeling and introduces students to the different type of research contributions in the marketing discipline. It has three specific goals:

- Introducing the epistemology of causal modeling
- Understanding the different approaches to research in marketing
- Stimulating the conceptual development of research proposals

The first two sessions provide the general logic underlying conceptual models and, especially, discusses the theoretical assumptions of causality. Sessions 3 and 4 introduce the students to the conceptual domains of the marketing discipline. Sessions 5 and 6 discuss the typical contribution in the sub-field of marketing strategy. Sessions 7 and 8 discuss the typical contribution in the sub-field consumer behavior. Sessions 9 and 10 discuss the typical contribution in the sub-field of empirical modeling. Sessions 11 and 12 discuss the possibility to contribute across the sub-fields, and exchange early ideas for the development of a research proposal. The article-mix for each session aims to reflect the inclusion of both old milestone papers and more recent pieces.

Course Material

The content of the sessions, the slides and the readings are the material for the course. The slides and the readings will be made available on Blackboard. Please note that the list of readings is preliminary: papers might be added/changed in due course.

Syllabus and List of Topics

SESSIONS 1/2 – CONCEPTUAL MODELING AND CAUSAL ORDER – Sep 9th, 10.15-13.30

To be discussed in class by all students

- Salganik et al., 2006. Experimental Study of Inequality and Unpredictability in an Artificial Cultural Market. *Science*, 311, 854-856.

NOT to be discussed in class

- Davis J. 1985. *The Logic of Causal Order*. Sage.
- Bagozzi R.P., 1984. A Prospectus for Theory Construction in Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 48, 11-29.
- Slides

SESSIONS 3/4 – RESEARCH TYPES AND ORIENTATIONS IN MARKETING– Sep 12th, 14.45-18.00

To be discussed in class by all students

- Tucker C., Zhang J., 2011. How Does Popularity Information Affect Choices? A Field Experiment. *Management Science*, 57(5), 828-842.

To be discussed in class, one per student:

- Hunt S., 1983. General Theories and Fundamental Explananda of Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 47, 9-17.
- Srivastava R., Shervani T., Fahey L., 1999. Marketing, Business Processes, and Shareholder Value: An Organizational Embedded View of Marketing Activities and the Discipline of Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 63, 168-179.
- Calder B., Tybout A., 1987. What Consumer Research Is *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14, 136-140.
- Brinberg D., Hirschmann E., 1986. Multiple Orientations for the Conduct of Marketing Research: An Analysis of the Academic/Practitioner Distinction. *Journal of Marketing*, 50(4), 1-19.
- Slides

SESSIONS 5/6 – HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO MARKETING STRATEGY FIELD – Sep 16th, 10.15-13.30

To be discussed in class by all students

- Jindal N. 2020. The Impact of Advertising and R&D on Bankruptcy Survival: A Double-Edged Sword. *Journal of Marketing*, 84(5), 22-40.

To be discussed in class, one per student:

- Garnefeld I., Eggert A., Helm S., Tax S., 2013. Growing Existing Customers' Revenue Streams Through Customer Referral Programs. *Journal of Marketing*, 77, 17-32.
- Ulaga W., Reinartz W., 2011. Hybrid Offerings: How Manufacturing Firms Combine Goods and Services Successfully. *Journal of Marketing*, 75, 5-23.
- Tirunillai S., Tellis G., 2014. Mining Marketing Meaning from Online Chatter: Strategic Brand Analysis of Big Data Using Latent Dirichlet Allocation. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 51, 463-479.
- Kirca A., Jayachandran S., Bearden W.O., 2005. Market Orientation: A Meta-Analytic Review and Assessment of Its Antecedents and Impact on Performance. *Journal of Marketing*, 69, 24-41.
- Slides

SESSIONS 7/8 – HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO CONSUMER BEHAVIOR FIELD - Sep 19th, 14.45-18.00

To be discussed in class by all students

- Finkelstein S., Fishbach A. 2011. Tell Me What I Did Wrong: Experts Seek and Respond to Negative Feedback. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(1), 22-38.

To be discussed in class, one per student:

- Goldstein N.J., Cialdini R.B., Griskevicius V. 2008. A Room with a Viewpoint: Using Social Norms to Motivate Environmental Conservation in Hotels. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(3), 472-482
- Berger J., Milkman K. 2012. What Makes Online Content Viral? *Journal of Marketing Research*, 49 (May), 192-205
- Nan L.X., Park S.K., Yang Y. 2023. Rejections Are More Contagious than Choices: How Another's Decisions Shape Our Own. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 50 (August), 363-381.
- Giesler M. 2008. Conflict and Compromise: Drama in Marketplace Evolution. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (April), 739-753.
- Slides

SESSIONS 9/10 – HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO EMPIRICAL MODELING FIELD – Sep 23rd, 14.45-18.00

To be discussed in class by all students

- Proserpio D., Zervas G. (2017) Online Reputation Management: Estimating the Impact of Management Responses on Consumer Reviews. *Marketing Science*, 36(5):645-665.

To be discussed in class, one per student:

- Moorthy K., 1993. Theoretical Modeling in Marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 92-106.
- Elberse A., Eliashberg L., 2003. Demand and Supply Dynamics for Sequentially Released Products in International Markets: The Case of Motion Pictures, *Marketing Science*, 22(3), 329-354
- Tucker C., Zhang J., 2010. Growing Two-Sided Networks by Advertising the User Base: A Field Experiment. *Marketing Science*, 29(5), 805-814
- Zhang S., Metha N., Singh P.V., Srinivasan K. (2021) Can an Artificial Intelligence Algorithm Mitigate Racial Economic Inequality? An Analysis in the Context of Airbnb. *Marketing Science*, 40(5), 813-820
- Slides

SESSIONS 11/12 – HOW TO CONTRIBUTE ... ACROSS FIELDS ... - Sep 26th, 14.45-18.00

To be discussed in class by all students

- Sandberg J., Alvesson M. 2011. Ways of constructing research questions: gap-spotting or problematization? *Organization*, 18(1) 23-44.

To be discussed in class, one per student:

- Golder P. N., Dekimpe M.G., An J.T., van Heerde H.J., Kim D.S.U., Alba J. W. 2023. Learning from Data: An Empirics-First Approach to Relevant Knowledge Generation. *Journal of Marketing*, 87(3), 319-336
- Berger J., Humphreys A., Ludwig S., Moe W., Netzer O., Schweidel D.A., 2019. Uniting the Tribes: Using Text for Marketing Insight. *Journal of Marketing*, 57, 92-106.
- Boegershausen J., Datta H., Borah A., Stephen A.T. 2022. Fields of Gold: Scraping Web Data for Marketing Insights. *Journal of Marketing*, 86(5), 1-20.
- MSI Research Priority Report: <https://www.msi.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/2024-RP.pdf>
- Slides

Assessment Methods.

All classes format is the following. First, all students must be prepared to discuss the key article of each section and present the one specifically assigned to them. Any evidence that a student is not prepared for the readings will seriously detract from the grade.

Second, before each class, all students must write a brief synopsis for all the articles that will be discussed the next time (max. five lines, single-spaced for each article) and send it to the instructor. The synopses should provide the response to the following question: what is the main message each paper tries to deliver?

Third and final, at the end of the course, students are asked to develop a brief paper (max. 7 pages, single spaced) that includes a possible research path on a specific marketing topic. Specifically, students are asked to: i) surf across the issues of JM, JMR, JCR, MKSC in the last three to four years, and choose a topic they prefer; ii) develop a short paper, in which proposing a research path to extend knowledge on that selected topic.

Students will be evaluated as follows:

Class participation:	40 points
Final paper:	60 points

Faculty Bio.

Andrea Ordanini is BNP Paribas Professor of Marketing and Service Analytics, at Bocconi University, Milan, Italy. He has been a visiting researcher at the London School of Economics and the University of California at Irvine. His research interests focus on services marketing and consumption of cultural goods and covers both conceptual and empirical research endeavors. His research was published in the top journals of the discipline, such as Journal of Marketing, Journal of Consumer Research, and Marketing Science. He sits in the editorial board of the Journal of Marketing and In 2021, he got the AMA Hunt/Maynard award for providing the yearly best conceptual contribution in the marketing field.