UNIVERSITÄT TRIER

Chair of Marketing and Innovation

Master's Research Project
Winter Semester 2026/27

Nudging Sustainable Consumption

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Topic

This Master's research project focuses on the empirical investigation of interventions aimed at promoting sustainable consumption behavior. In light of global challenges such as climate change, resource scarcity, and environmental degradation, increasing attention is being paid to how individuals can be motivated and supported in making more sustainable consumption decisions. The project examines how behavioral interventions ("nudges") can be used to promote sustainable consumption without restricting consumers' freedom of choice. Particular attention is given to the design of choice architectures, default options, sustainability labels, and other behavioral interventions.

The research project builds on current research in the fields of Consumer Judgment and Decision Making and Sustainable Consumption. Through the design and implementation of empirical studies, students contribute to the advancement of scientific knowledge. The objective is to develop a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying sustainable consumption decisions and to derive theoretically and empirically grounded implications for businesses, policymakers, and society.

Research Process

The project follows the classical process of theory-driven empirical research. Students begin by examining the current state of research on sustainable consumption behavior. Based on a systematic literature review, they identify relevant theoretical perspectives, uncover research gaps, and establish the relevance of their investigation. Building on this foundation, students develop theory-driven hypotheses and design appropriate empirical studies to test them, with a primary focus on experimental research designs. Students independently conduct the planned studies, analyze the collected data using appropriate quantitative methods, and interpret the resulting findings. Particular emphasis is placed on relating empirical findings to existing theoretical frameworks and critically reflecting on the results. Finally, the theoretical and practical implications of the research are discussed, limitations of the studies are identified, and directions for future research are outlined.

Learning Outcomes

- Advanced understanding of current research on Consumer Judgment and Decision Making and Sustainable Consumption
- Advanced skills in the systematic search, selection, and critical analysis of academic literature, as well as in identifying research gaps and developing theory-driven hypotheses
- Advanced methodological and analytical skills through the independent design, conduct, and analysis of empirical studies, as well as the interpretation of empirical findings and the derivation of theoretical and practical implications
- Development of teamwork, communication, presentation, and project management skills through collaboration in small research teams
- Excellent preparation for independent academic research and the completion of an empirical Master's thesis

Prerequisites

- Interest in current topics in consumer behavior, decision-making, and sustainability research
- Interest in academic research and the design and conduct of empirical research projects
- Prior knowledge from the modules „Consumer Judgment and Decision Making & Consumer Research" and „Digital Marketing & Services Marketing," or related courses, is helpful but not required
- Commitment, motivation, and willingness to actively participate in the research process

Introductory Literature

- Will be provided after participants have been assigned to the project.

Organization

- The kick-off meeting will take place on **October 14, 2026**. During this session, the organizational framework of the research project will be presented (including plenary sessions, project milestones, and office hours), along with an introduction to the research field of Nudging Sustainable Consumption.
- Throughout the research project, students will prepare several milestone presentations and receive regular feedback on their research progress. In addition, students will prepare a research paper as part of a group project.