

# “CONSUMING THE NEWS”: AN EXPLATORY STUDY ON CONSUMER NEWS LITERACY

Qualitative study, 1 student

The rise of online media has raised potentials for tremendous changes in the consumption of news and information. Consumers can easily access an abundance of information anywhere, at any time and from many different sources, yet potentially need to invest efforts to navigate through the reliability and credibility of these sources. Questions such as the following arise with the digital revolution: What skills does “news” consumption demand (news literacy as compared to health literacy, financial literacy for example)? What impact do new technologies have on news consumption and news literacy? What are market change processes in the news industry from the consumers’ perspective and how do consumers cope with them?

To approach and specify these general questions conceptually, this thesis reviews literatures on information society, media literacy, and news consumption. Empirically, this thesis derives exploratory insights into consumer literacy through tracing consumption habits, technology use, and brand use in specific age and target groups. Possible data sources for qualitative analysis are consumer interviews, observations, or group interviews on news consumption.

The thesis is part of an ongoing research project that studies marketplace evolutions in the information/news industry and builds on an existing study “The Newspapers is dead” — why is it still alive? Evolution in the News Field” (Master Thesis 2015: Verena Geißelmann).

## *Relevant Literatur:*

*Webster, Frank (2014), Theories of the information society, Routledge.*

*Ahlers, Douglas (2006), “News consumption and the new electronic media,” The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 11(1), 29-52.*

*Mitchelstein, Eugenia, and Pablo J. Boczkowski (2010), “Online news consumption research: An assessment of past work and an agenda for the future,” New Media & Society, XX(X), 1– 18.*

# CONSUMPTION SKILL ACQUISITION: INSIGHTS FROM SPORTS SERVICE SCAPES

Qualitative study, 2 students (studies are conducted separately)

Consumer researchers have repeatedly studied consumption phenomena in specific areas of physical activity, such as motor biking (Schouten and McAlexander 1995), or board-sports (Canniford 2011). Although researchers have acknowledged that learning procedures are vital for consumers, tribes, and businesses (Goulding et al. 2012), how individual consumers acquire their bodily skills to enact consumption in these contexts remains largely unnoticed. Skill, however, can be seen as a prerequisite to gain access, and to remain within specific consumption activities, or whole areas of consumption (e.g., services and holiday experiences in the case of skiing).

One thesis reviews theoretical insights on the concepts of skill and skill acquisition in sociology and consumer research literature. Empirically, the thesis focuses on learning experiences of consumers with the goal of deriving different types of learning practices and related challenges.

One thesis reviews theoretical insights on the concept of service interaction in consumer research literature and interaction ritual chains in sociology (Collins 2014). Empirically, the thesis focuses on interaction between service staff (skill teachers) and consumers (skill acquirer) with the goal of deriving dynamics (e.g. successful and failed rituals) of the skill acquisition service interaction.

Possible data sources for qualitative analysis are participatory observations and videos of learning situations, preferably in the context of skiing or biking (1 student).

The thesis is part of an ongoing research project that studies consumption skill acquisition in the skiing industry and builds on an existing study "The Co-Creation of the Service Experience – Insights from a ski school service scape" (Master Thesis 2015: Jan Grimm).

## *Relevant Literature:*

*Canniford, Robin (2011), "How to Manage Consumer Tribes," Journal of Strategic Marketing 19 (7), 591-606.*

*Collins, Randall (2014), Interaction ritual chains, Princeton University Press.*

*Schouten, John W., and James H. McAlexander (1995), "Subcultures of Consumption: An Ethnography of the New Bikers," Journal of Consumer Research, 22, 43-61.*

# ANALYZING BODY LANGUAGE: THE POTENTIALITIES AND CONSTRAINTS OF VIDEOGRAPHY IN CONSUMER RESEARCH

Conceptual study, 1 student,

Video is becoming an increasingly popular and sophisticated tool of data collection in consumer and marketing research. However, there are only few methodologies for the analysis of video (Knoblauch et al, 2009). For researchers and practitioner alike there is a need for comprehending the essentials of data analysis and potentialities and constraints of this methodology.

This thesis focuses on and studies body language as an important form of communication in consumption and service interactions. The thesis reviews literatures on body language in consumer and service research. This thesis applies the gained knowledge on video material studying body language in real-life service interaction contexts. The student should bring along a passion for videos and analytical thinking, and in turn will gain expert knowledge in a thriving field of research.

The thesis is part of an ongoing research project that studies consumption skill acquisition in the skiing industry and builds on an existing study "The Co-Creation of the Service Experience – Insights from a ski school service scape" (Master Thesis 2015: Jan Grimm).

## *Relevant Literature:*

*Knoblauch, Hubert, Schnettler, Bernt, Raab, Jürgen, Söffner Hans Georg, Video Analysis: Methodology and Methods. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009.*

*Merchant, Stephanie (2011), "The body and the senses: Visual methods, videography and the submarine sensorium," Body & Society, 17, 1, 53-72.*

# THE INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS OF THE FASTING MARKET

Recently, an institutional logics perspective has been applied to better understand the multiplicity of markets (Ertimur and Coskuner-Balli 2015). The evolving fasting market clearly represents such a market, in which multiple logics are present (see Thompson 2004). The focus of this thesis will be to map the current fasting market (with a focus on fasting institutions) and identify the different logics at play. In a second step, this thesis will investigate how brand management acts within this multiple logics market. How do these multiple logics affect branding? How can a logics perspective help us better understand market dynamics?

## *Relevant Literature:*

*Boch Waldorff, Susanne, Trish Reay, and Elizabeth Goodrick (2013), "A Tale of Two Countries: How Different Constellations of Logics Impact Action," In Institutional Logics in Action, Part A, 99-129.*

*Ertimur, Burcak and Gokcen Coskuner-Balli, (2015), "Navigating the Institutional Logics of Markets: Implications for Strategic Brand Management," Journal of Marketing, 79 (March), 40-61.*

*Martin, Diane M., and John W. Schouten (2014), "Consumption-Driven Market Emergence," Journal of Consumer Research, 40 (February), 855-70.*

*Reay, Trish and C. R. Hinings (2009), "Managing the Rivalry of Competing Institutional Logics," Organization Studies, 30, 629-52.*

*Scarboto, Dainane, and Eileen Fischer (2013), "Frustrated Fatshionistas: An Institutional Theory Perspective on Consumer Quests for Greater Choice in Mainstream Markets," Journal of Consumer Research, 39 (April), 1234-57.*

*Thompson, Craig J. (2004), "Marketplace Mythology and Discourses of Power," Journal of Consumer Research, 31(1), 162-80.*

# HOW DO CONTEXTUAL FACTORS SHAPE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR?

Consumer literature provides many examples how different contextual factors shape consumer behavior in situated ways. Contextual factors can be anything from haptic perceptions of a product to the lighting conditions in a store. Understanding how such contextual influences shape consumer behavior is critical for marketing because a) they tell a lot about the nature of human mind and b) they can be used as subconscious triggers to influence consumer behavior. Your thesis will investigate a specific topic of contextual influences. The topic depends on the supervisor's current research project and your preferences. Writing a thesis will also require to conduct a lab experiment and analyzing the data with SPSS. Your supervisor will guide you through those critical steps.

Please contact Dr. Streicher for a current list of topics and relevant literature.