

*Marketing Seminar
Summer Term 2025*

Literature Research Seminar: Revisiting Influence

Frederik Ferié

Christina Okoutsidou (accompanying)

In the dynamic and ever-evolving domains of marketing and consumer behavior research, understanding the mechanisms of interpersonal influence remains a cornerstone of scholarly inquiry and practical application. Since Robert Cialdini's seminal work "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion" was published 40 years ago, researchers have continued to delve into the intricacies of how individuals affect one another's attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

To cope with their often overstimulating environment, consumers rely on mental shortcuts, stereotypes, or simple rules of thumb to respond automatically, almost mindlessly, in fixed-action patterns. Yet, many consumers remain unaware of these automatic behaviors, which makes them susceptible to influence – whether for their benefit or to their detriment – by companies or other third parties. Cialdini (1984, 2021) identified seven fundamental psychological principles that shape how individuals are influenced by practitioners: commitment and consistency, reciprocity, social proof, authority, liking, scarcity, and unity.

This exploration has become even more complex with the advent of digital communication, the rise of social media, and the growing importance of cultural nuances in a globalized world. Our seminar, "Revisiting Influence," seeks to bridge the past with the present by examining foundational principles outlined by Cialdini and investigating how research has expanded, challenged, and refined these concepts. Through this journey, we aim to uncover new patterns of influence, the role of emerging technologies, and the implications for marketers in crafting effective strategies in today's world.



From political consumption behavior to (virtual) influencer marketing and sales strategies, we will examine if and how these influence techniques continue to play a pivotal role and remain timeless in directing human behavior.

As a participant in this seminar, your task is to write and present a systematic literature review on one of the predetermined research topics. Your systematic literature review will be based on the extant, primarily empirical, research on your topic in all relevant disciplines. You will be equipped with fundamental theoretical knowledge of the research field as well as the predominant empirical research methods through several workshops at the start of the seminar. Based on this, you will conduct your own independent research.

While we will attempt to match your interests with the available research topics, we cannot guarantee that you will receive the topic of your choice as each topic is only available for one individual student. Hence, we ask for your understanding that your topic will be allocated to you in a clearly structured process that will consider your preferences.

As an integral part of the seminar, we will have a number of guest lectures by renowned researchers and practitioners from different facets of the field. Thorough preparation for and active participation in these guest lectures is essential and, therefore, mandatory.

The literature research seminar will end with a final presentation of each student's research results.

Learning Objectives

The main objective of this seminar is to improve your academic writing skills. Furthermore, you will get to know one research topic from the realm of a versatile and highly interdisciplinary research field very well. After participating in this seminar, you will be able to effectively summarize and categorize literature related to a specific topic, translate academic findings into practical implications, and derive future research opportunities. Moreover, you will train your communication and presentation skills.





Seminar Requirements

The seminar consists of two **mandatory** parts that each participant must complete individually:

1. Writing a seminar paper of 15 pages (66% of the final grade)
2. Presenting (20 minutes) the seminar paper (34% of the final grade)

Both parts must be passed separately to get the final grade. Every student's active participation and individual contribution during in-person events is required and will be documented. Students who pass this seminar will receive **12 credit points** (equivalent to about **360 working hours** of total workload) in the Marketing Major.

Organizational Matters

- Please follow the MCM application process for seminars on the MCM homepage.
- The final grade is entirely based on the individual work by students. This seminar does not contain any grading based on group work.
- The number of participants for this seminar is limited to a maximum of 20 students.
- Please note that submissions of papers and presentations after the respective submission deadline will not be accepted.
- In case of questions, please contact Christina Okoutsidou (c.okoutsidou@uni-muenster.de).



Preliminary timetable

What?	When?	Where?
Kick-off meeting (incl. presentation of topics)	late April	MCM
Selection of preferred topics	May	Learnweb
Workshop: Writing Literature Reviews + Assignment of topics	May	MCM
Workshop: Understanding Empirical Research Studies	May	MCM
Workshop: Understanding Empirical Research Studies	May	MCM
Guest Lectures	June/July	MCM
Mentoring sessions (not mandatory)	June/July	Zoom or MCM
Hand-in deadline for paper	late July	Learnweb
Hand-in deadline for presentation	July/August	Learnweb
Presentations	August	MCM



During the seminar, you may schedule mentoring sessions (individual meetings) with your supervisor on the predetermined dates of the mentoring sessions. Each seminar participant will receive a time budget (90 minutes) from which the actual duration of each mentoring session will be deducted. You will coordinate the meetings directly with your supervisor.

References

Cialdini, Robert B. (1984), *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion*. Melbourne: Business Library.

Cialdini, Robert B. (2021), *Influence, New and Expanded: The Psychology of Persuasion*. New York: Harper Business.