|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **THE DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING AND RETAIL MANAGEMENT’S**  **RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS** | | |
| **Department** | | **Department of Marketing and Retail Management (DMRM)** |
| **Discipline** | | Marketing and Retail Management |
| **Broad Research Focus Area (RFA) 1**  **CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR** | | In business the **consumer** is central to the success of any business. With this view in mind, the Department encourages research into various aspects of the consumer’s behaviour. The approach can be from testing existing consumer behaviour models to investigating the influence of any of the individual or group factors, as well as the actions that take place during the decision-making process by consumers. The emphasis will be on Africa and African consumers, with interest in emerging and township consumers, and marketing to bottom-of-the-pyramid consumers in African contexts. Neuro-decision making, and resultant behaviour are possible topics. |
| **Broad Research Focus Area (RFA) 2**  **DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGY MARKETING** | | The focus is on identifying the criteria for success in adopting **digital marketing or 4IR technologies** in a business. Within this area of research, students could focus on specific issues or undertake the research from a specific perspective. For example, the student could focus on identifying the success criteria or barriers to adoption of various digital marketing tools/channels (eg websites, e-commerce sites, e-marketplaces, banner ads, Google ads, Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, YouTube, e-mail, and SMS). In addition, the student could undertake the study from an industry, customer, business or even country perspective. We have a special interest in mobile marketing. The other special interest in this field is using online and open education resources in the teaching of marketing-and we would be willing to consider students in this specialised area. We also consider those interested in researching the potential for technology trends and their influence on marketing, such as AI, neuroscience, VR, AR, etc. |
| **Broad Research Focus Area (RFA) 3**  **MARKETING STRATEGY** | | The focus area of **marketing strategy** provides prospective students scope to do research in very topical and contemporary areas in marketing, such as the decision making, content marketing, value creation, innovation, neuro-marketing, international/export marketing, behavioural marketing, marketing analytics, as well as the role of ODeL in marketing education. The role of Africanisation and its impact on marketing, is another topic of interest. In addition, topics such as the operationalising of a brand, the link between brand and customer loyalty, and the rationale for specific choices in terms of a marketing communication strategy are examples of possible areas for specific work within the focus area. The evolving field of consumer behaviour in a dynamic environment such as in South Africa provides opportunities to take a perspective in terms of a specific industry or even an age cohort, such as Millennial consumers, in a specific research project. This is a wide area and gives scope to a marketing student to find a specific topic area in the greater marketing field. One of our supervisors is interest in pet marketing and so, we have included that here as well. We will look favourably at topics related to South Africa and Africa but discourage proposals that are too generic in nature. |
| **Broad Research Focus Area (RFA) 4**  **RETAIL MARKETING** | | The Department is not just a marketing department, but also a department with a retail focus. Thus, the Department is also interested in promoting research in the field of **retailing**, including e-tailing, store layout, merchandising, store atmospherics, visual merchandising, and the retail customer. |
| **Broad Research Focus Area (RFA) 5**  **SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING** | | The importance of small businesses cannot be underestimated. While small business may not generate as much economic income for our country as larger companies, they are the main employers of our nation’s work force. For this reason, the Department encourages research into topics that will enable **small businesses** to succeed. The research could vary from the selection criteria used to segment markets, through the positioning strategies used by SMEs and the role of entrepreneurship and innovation adoption amongst SMEs in the marketing activities, to the use of specific marketing strategies. The researcher could also concentrate on different phases of the marketing management sphere, such as marketing environmental analysis for a small business, marketing planning implementation issues, choice of new markets, and evaluation and control of marketing strategies in a small business. There is also potential to examine these aspects mentioned in specific areas and in specific industries, as long as the focus is within the context of small businesses. |
| **Broad Research Focus Area (RFA) 6**  **GREEN & SUSTAINABLE MARKETING** | | **Sustainability**, climate change, and eco-friendliness have become important topics in recent years. Exploring ways in which eco-friendly marketing can occur is the focus of this topic. It covers issues such as promoting green products, understanding, and measuring customer perceptions of eco-consciousness, behavioural insights in green consumerism, the circular economy, green messaging, greenwashing and more. |
| **Total Department capacity across all RFAs** | | Approximately 20 master’s students as part of the Department’s master’s cohort programme, and up to 10 doctoral students |
| **Contact** | | For further queries regarding your M&D studies, please contact the M&D coordinator, Dr Claudette Rabie at vniekc@unisa.ac.za |
| **THE DMRM’s MASTER’S COHORT PROGRAMME** | | |
| The DMRM has initiated a two-year cohort master’s programme, which was launched in 2022 and is growing in strength The intention is to continue with this programme into 2025. The programme is linked to the research needs of various sectors in South Africa and aims to draw on academic-based research to address research challenges in the marketing field. The students work together as a cohort of peers receiving just-in-time training to help them through their research proposal module and dissertation. Selected students will be invited to participate in this cohort research programme. By helping industries address the problems they face, students are provided with high-level research skills to address real-world problems. This should make them very marketable once they graduate. The topics proposed by students should (a) fit into the broad research focus areas of the Department, (b) should address cutting-edge challenges in the economy or in Africa, (c) and should ideally fit with the research areas of interest of the Department’s supervisory staff – **please visit our website to learn more about the areas of interest and expertise of our research and supervisory staff**. The aim of this cohort programme is to (a) improve the completion rate of students given the intensive and regular interactions with our students, (b) to encourage and enable students to complete their degree in under two years, and (c) to involve our students in addressing real-world and cutting-edge research problems thereby gaining valuable practical skills. This will be a competitive programme in which students will be evaluated on their writing, argumentation and logic skills underpinning the *research outline* they submit, as well as on their undergraduate performance and other Unisa-criteria. Masters’ students accepted into the cohort programme still need to identify the specific research problem they are interested in. The proposed topics will typically fall within one or more broad research focus areas as specified by the DMRM. In 2024, 24 students have been invited to register and we hope to take in about 20 students for 2025.  Interested master’s students first **should apply for registration**, when applications open in September 2024 (or whenever the applications are announced) – remember, Unisa follows an apply-before-you-register approach. Please submit the required documents, including a **research outline**. Although the topic you select will not necessarily be the topic you are assigned for your master’s, we will evaluate you and select a shortlisting of students based on this research outline. If you put little effort into your research outline, you should not be surprised if you do not make the shortlisting. | | |
| **THE DMRM’s DOCTORAL COHORT PROGRAMME** | | |
| The DMRM is interested in taking on self-directed, research-orientated individuals with a relevant level nine (master’s) qualification in the field of marketing, who want to explore new contributions to the science of marketing. This is not about doing just a little more than a master’s. It is about creating new, cutting-edge knowledge in the field of marketing science. Doctoral candidates will need to write and submit two articles for publishing in addition to the doctoral thesis, and they will need to pass a *viva voce* (a critical interview about their studies and research by a panel of senior academics). The University does have a thesis by publication option and interested students can enquire about this option. | | |
| **SUPERVISORS WITH CAPACITY FOR 2025** | | |
| **Supervision Team details:** | **Academic Profile** | |
| **Prof N Dilotsotlhe**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0002-9065-976X  Institutional repository link:  <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/37> | Dr Dilotsotlhe is the Department’s Chair of Department (CoD) and oversees the fair and efficient allocation of supervisory capacity within the Department, while also taking on supervision of her own. She is particularly interested in sustainability, green marketing, and marketing in social contexts. | |
| **Prof J. Wiid**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0002-2195-532X  Institutional repository link:  <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/37> | Prof Wiid has published widely and has research interests in marketing practice, marketing research, and marketing strategy. | |
| **Prof M Cant**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0002-6925-8822  Institutional repository link:  http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/37 | Prof Cant has research interests in the areas of small business, customer service and customer experience management, retail strategy and marketing. He has published widely, supervised many postgraduate students, and has experience in research studies of both a qualitative and quantitative nature. | |
| **Prof K. Makhitha**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0001-5040-3826  Institutional repository link:  <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/37> | Prof Makhitha has published widely in the areas of small business marketing, marketing strategy, retail, and consumer behaviour areas of retail strategy and marketing. She has special expertise in the field of 4IR research. | |
| **Prof E van Tonder**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0002-6285-7582 | Prof Van Tonder’s research focuses on customer citizenship behaviour. She is particularly interested in advancing understanding of the social support and help customers provide to other customers in the retail environment and has initiated and managed several collaborative research projects with international colleagues in this regard. Prof Van Tonder is an NRF rated researcher. | |
| **Dr C. Bothma**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0003-2256-5056  Institutional repository link:  <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/37> | Dr Bothma’s research focus areas lie in the fields of international marketing, trade, exporting, neuromarketing and the role of the product in marketing strategy. Value creation, creativity, innovation, and human factors and usability in creating value, are related interests. He has published on these topics and his doctoral thesis was on developing a framework for a national export portal in South Africa. He is also interested in trade analytics and quantitative measurement of trade performance. | |
| **Dr S Kallier-Tar**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000- 0002-3414-8236 | Dr Tar completed her doctorate at Unisa, focussing on the hyperconnected consumer. Her interests are in the field digital marketing and technology. | |
| **Dr N. Shezi**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0003-3070-8969 | Dr Shezi completed his PhD at UJ. His fields of interests are sport marketing, branding, strategic marketing, and consumer behaviour. | |
| **Dr K. Ngobeni**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0003-4519-0947 | Dr Ngobeni’s interests are digital marketing and political marketing, and she has published on clothing shopping intentions of township consumers, student satisfaction and loyalty, and risk and demographic factors in online shopping. Her doctoral thesis was on South African consumers adoption and purchase intention of high involvement products on augmented online shopping platforms. | |
| **Dr S. Mosupyoe**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0002-3182-1237 | Dr Mosupyoe does research into quantitative and qualitative social research and communication and media. She has investigated generational differences in South African consumers' brand equity perceptions | |
| **Dr Z. Mposi**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0002-2292-9430 | Dr Mposi’s interests are in advertising and digital marketing. | |
| **Dr C. Smith**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0003-4634-3503 | Dr Smith’s interests lie in electronic communication such as e-newsletters for informational transfer, and service quality, particularly amongst SMEs | |
| **Dr C. Wessels**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0001-9646-9011  Institutional repository link:  <http://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/37> | Dr Wessels is a senior lecturer in the DMRM. She completed her PhD at Unisa and has published articles based on her studies for the degree. Her fields of interest include retailing, merchandising, visual merchandising, and marketing research. | |
| **Dr L. Fourie**  ORCID: https://orcid.org/ 0000-0003-2187-3073 | Dr Fourie is a senior lecturer in the DMRM, interested in marketing related to animals and the role of animals in the home and has written on SMEs, and social media use by students. Her fields of interest include consumer behaviour, consumer experience, digital media, online distance education, and pet marketing. | |
| **Other supervisors able to supervise at master’s level include:** | Ms M Du Bruyn, Mr M. Du Toit, Ms. M. Gopaul, Mrs. E. Mahlangu, Mr V. Makhubela, Mr T Mbedzi, Mrs. A Meyer, Mr N. Mkhize, Mr M Mmatli, Mr M. Moseki, Mrs M Ngcobo, Ms L. Saule | |
| **External and additional supervisors** | To bolster our supervision capacity, the Department may draw on experienced external supervisors to assist with supervision. In addition, we hope to have more staff complete their doctorates by 2025. | |
| **FOR ALL STUDENTS – MASTERS AND DOCTORATES** | | | |
| **Model of supervision** | Candidates will be allocated to supervisors but will be required to work independently within the requirements of higher degree studies. Additionally, the candidate will have to present their work to a colloquium or a blind peer review panel and, **for doctorates**, will be expected to defend their final thesis before a *viva voce*, as well as to submit two articles for publishing. | | |
| **Selection criteria: Master’s/Doctorate** | Refer to the qualification website for selection criteria. | | |
| **Selection Procedure** | Students’ applications will be reviewed in accordance with the Procedures for Master’s and Doctorate Degrees (sections 3.1 to 3.3). Note that the selection panel is not obliged to accept prospective master’s or doctoral students who meet the minimum criteria as there are other factors (see below) that will be considered:   * Meeting the minimum requirements as set out online * The candidate’s academic record * The candidate’s academic background * The candidate’s language competency as evidenced by the research outline presented by the candidate * The topic the candidate wishes to research.   **Doctorates** – the topic proposed by the candidate should ideally fall into one of the broad research focus areas identified by the DMRM, but the Department will consider topics in other marketing/retailing areas as well. It is important, however, that the selected topic be achievable and should **contribute to new knowledge** contributing to the science of marketing.  **Masters** – the topic proposed by the candidate should ideally fall into one of the broad research focus areas identified by the DMRM – presented earlier. The Department will consider topics in other marketing/retailing areas as well. In the case of doctorates, it is best to discuss your topic of interest with a possible supervisor beforehand. Please see the list of supervisors presented earlier.   * Doctoral capacity and expertise to supervise the student * Limitations imposed by enrolment planning   The selection panel will review the pool of applications per the research focus area against the criteria stipulated above. It must be stressed that the Department has limited capacity and therefore only the best doctoral/master’s applicants will be selected in accordance with available supervisory capacity. | | |
| **Reading:**  **Subject Field** | This is a selection of recent articles published by staff in the DMRM   * Van Tonder, E. 2023. Anti-consumption: Investigating the role of social-psychological factors in motivating customers to help other customers not to shop. South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences * Wiid, J. 2023. Customer relationship management and its perceived value from the perspective of SME owners/managers. The Retail and Marketing Review. * Theron, M., Cant, M., Wiid, J. 2023. Corporate social responsibility in the South African retail sector: Are employees aware of what their employees are going? Economic Review / Ekonomska Revija. * Cant, M. and Bothma, C. 2023. Fashion retail strategies in-store design and planning: The case of South Africa. Entrepreneurship and Sustainability Issues. * Wiid, J. and Cant, M. 2023. The perceived valued of brand build: Do small and medium enterprises in South Africa recognise its values? Eurasia: Economics & Business. * Makhitha, K. and Mbedzi, T. 2023. The influence of shopping motivations on clothing retail store loyalty in South Africa. Expert Journal of Business and Management * Shezi, N. 2023. Validating brand personality dimensions to South African professional sport teams: A study of sharks and lions. Expert Journal of Business and Management * Makhitha, K. 2023. Attributes influencing consumers' selection of a shopping centre: the demographic impact. Expert Journal of Business and Management * Shezi. N. 2023. Validating brand personality dimension to South African professional sport teams: A study of Orlando Pirates and Kaizer chiefs football clubs * Senooane, B. 2023. Do demographics matter in childhood attitudes on materialism? understanding South African tween consumers * Senooane, B. 2023. The commercialisation of childhood? materialism values of South African tweens * Cant, M. 2023. Dwindling enrolment: is social media the answer to Student recruitment * Wiid, J. and Cant, M. 2023. What makes a good leader: the context of the retail industry in South Africa. * Cant, M. 2023. Predictors of enrolment intention on social media: guidelines for Universities * Senooane, B. and Wiid, J. 2023. Bringing children into the sociology of consumption: A symbolic consumption perspective. * Yakobi, S. Wiid, J. and Cant, M. The relationship between store elements and in-store shopping experience for customer satisfaction at rural grocery stores. * Cant, M. and Wiid. J. 2023. Demographic variables do not affect the use of mobile devices for study and learning purpose. * Makhitha, K. and Ngobeni, K. 2023. Factors influencing the online clothing shopping intention of emerging Township consumers in South Africa: The mediation effect of attitude * Shezi, N. 2023. Sports footwear branding: its influence on consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Journal of Global Business and Technology * Phokwane L. and Makhitha, K. The effects of marketing communication strategies on the performance of small and medium enterprises(SMES) in Polokwane., Journal of Global Business and Technology   ‎Further reading over and above these articles is essential. | | |
| **Reading:**  **Research Methodology** | Your first port of call is the Unisa Library - https://libguides.unisa.ac.za/marketing-retail/method  In addition, here is a selection of books on methodology. Further reading over and above these is essential:   * Creswell, J.W. 2018. *Research Design: Qualitative Quantitative and Mixed Method Approaches*. 5th Ed. Sage Publications Inc. * Miles, M.B., Huberman, M.A., and Saldana, J. 2019. 4th Ed. *Qualitative Data Analysis: A methods sourcebook.* Sage Publications Inc. * Harkiolakis, N. 2017. *Quantitative Research Methods: From Theory to Publication.* CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform * Godwill, E.A. 2015. *Fundamentals of Research Methodology: A Holistic Guide for Research Completion, Management, Validation and Ethics*. New York: Nova science publishers. E-book. * Baker, B.A. 2021. *Crafting Qualitative Research Questions: A prequel to design.* Sage Publications Inc. * Zoogah, D.B. (ed). 2014. *Advancing research methodology in the African context: Techniques, methods, and designs.* Research methodology in strategy and management, Vol 10. Bingley, UK: Emerald group publishing limited.   E-Book   * Morse, J. M. & Niehaus, L. 2016. *Mixed Method Design: Principles and Procedures.* New York, USA: Routledge. * Adams, K.A. & McGuire, E.K. 2022. *Research Methods, Statistics and Applications*. 3rd Ed. Sage Publications Inc. * Bryman, A. & Bell, E. 2015. *Business research methods*. Oxford University Press, USA. * Brannen, J. ed., 2017. *Mixing methods: Qualitative and quantitative research*. Routledge. * Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. 2019. *Research methods for business students*. 7th Ed. Boston, MA: Pearson Education. * Taylor, S.J., Bogdan, R. & DeVault, M. 2015. *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource*. John Wiley & Sons. * Leedy, P.D. & Ormrod, J.E. 2019. *Practical Research: planning and design*. 12th Ed. Pearson. * Babbie, E. 2017. The basics of social research. 7th Ed. Cengage Learning. * Yin, R.K., 2014. Case Study Research: Design and Methods. 5th ed. Newbury Park, U.S.: Sage. | | |
| **Resources: Scholar community** | * Google scholar - https://scholar.google.co.za (academic search engine) * Unisa library - https://libguides.unisa.ac.za/marketing-retail | | |
| **Important information regarding the review of research outlines** | | | |
| In addition to the selection criteria set out previously, applicants should be aware that the selection panel will review each applicant’s research outline in accordance with the Higher Education Qualifications Standard Framework (HEQSF). In other words, determining whether the student will be able to conduct research at the required NQF level. **Students’ research outlines will therefore be reviewed in terms of:**   * How well the topic is defined (i.e. is there a sufficient **background**; are terms well defined)? * Whether there is a **research problem** based on credible resources? * The feasibility to conduct the research (i.e. is it possible to accomplish and/or within the prescribed time frame?). * A solid **review of the academic literature** pertaining to the topic in question. * **Contribution to new knowledge** in the case of doctoral studies. * The c**ontext of the study** [i.e. the case study and/or unit of analysis (i.e. who/what will be researched)]. * The scholarliness of the presented outline (i.e. academic writing skills – are all statements of fact **referenced**, referencing – in-text and in a list of references, **are sources less than 5 years old** unless grounded theory, has the Harvard referencing technique been used in a consistent manner, argumentative skills, golden thread of logic – do sections link for easy readability and academic resources consulted).   Consulting and referencing additional resources other than those presented in this document is **essential.** | | | |