

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**

PhD Course Syllabus

Course Code/Title: [MKTG6005] Research Methods for Consumer Behavior Research

Course Description: This PhD-level course aims to familiarize students with a wide range of methodological approaches used to understand consumer behavior. The course content is not limited to consumer behavior research only, as the various techniques taught can be applied to research on other fields such as social psychology, educational psychology, organizational behavior, and hotel management & tourism.

During each class session, I will begin by delivering lectures on various research methods and data analysis techniques using published papers as examples. Following the lecture, we will have the opportunity to practice the learned data analysis methods together using datasets from other published papers. Additionally, the course will expose students to academic journal papers on psychology and marketing. This approach will help students understand the relationship between theory building and theory testing with the use of empirical data. The students are expected to read the assigned materials before each class and participate in active discussions and data analyses during the class.

Two assignments will require students to generate original ideas. Three assignments are related to data analyses. In the final proposal, students are required to elaborate on one idea and propose testable hypotheses, research designs suitable for 3-4 studies, and data analysis methods for each study.

Course Objectives: This course is specifically designed for Ph.D. students in their first and second years of study. The course will provide an extensive range of methodological approaches for understanding experimental designs used in consumer behavior research. However, the course is not limited to consumer behavior research. Ph.D. students in other fields, such as Management (micro organizational behavior), Social Psychology, and Hotel and Tourism Management, who also use experimental designs are welcome to enroll in the course. This course is also open to marketing Ph.D. students from other universities.

Throughout the course, students will learn various research methods and data analyses for online, laboratory, and field experiments, and apply them to real data and practical research questions.

Pre-requisite: None

Assessment: 100% coursework; 0% examination

Remarks: All PhD courses are non-credit-bearing and will be assessed on a letter grade basis.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) On completion of this course, students should be able to:	Aligned PLOs*				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Understand the relationships between real-world business practices and research designs/methods for consumer behavior research	v	v			
2. Learn the processes involved in formulating and conducting research using experimental designs		v		v	
3. Be able to use the language of consumer behavior research as utilized by business practitioners and researchers		v		v	
4. Comprehend the range of data analysis methods used in consumer behavior research through hands-on experiences using SPSS, including survey construction, data collection methods, various types of data analyses, and data reporting	v		v	v	v
5. Apply the learned data analysis techniques to one's own research proposal by generating original ideas, designing studies to test the proposed hypotheses, and suggesting suitable data analysis methods for those studies	v		v		v

***Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for Research Postgraduate Programme:**

1. Demonstrate critical understanding, at an advanced level, of up-to-date knowledge and research methodology of a particular field
2. Implement effective academic and personal strategies for carrying out research projects independently and ethically
3. Contribute original knowledge in response to issues in their specialist area
4. Communicate research findings at a diverse range of levels and through a variety of media
5. Evaluate one's own research in relation to important and latest issues in the field

COURSE DETAILS (*subject to change at instructor's discretion*)

Year/Semester: 2026-2027, First Semester (Fall semester)

Time/Venue: Thursday, 1:00pm-3:50pm, Venue: TBA

Sep 3, 10, 17;

Oct 8, 22, 29;

Nov 5, 12, 19, 26;

Dec 3

Instructor: **Prof. KIM Sara**

Email: sarakim@hku.hk

Office: KK703 (office hours: by appointment)

I. Teaching and Learning Activities

In-class and Out-of-class Activities (e.g. lectures, class discussion, papers reading, proposal writing)	Expected hour	% of student study effort
1. Lectures	36	24%
2. Reading assigned materials	34	22.7%
3. Practicing data analyses	30	20%
4. Proposal writing	50	33.3%
Total	150	100%

II. Assessment

Assessment Components (e.g. assignments, proposal, presentation, examination)	Weight	CLOs to be assessed				
		1	2	3	4	5
1. In-class participation	30%	v	v	v	v	
2. Five individual assignments (2 for ideas and 3 for data analyses)	30%	v	v		v	v
3. Final proposal	40%	v	v	v	v	v
Total	100%					

Students will be assessed based on the following performance standards:

Course Grade	Performance Standard
A+, A, A-	Outstanding performance; demonstrates comprehensive understanding, critical thinking, and originality.
B+, B, B-	Good performance; shows solid understanding and application of key concepts, with some minor errors or omissions.
C+, C, C-	Satisfactory performance; basic understanding is evident, but with notable gaps or inconsistencies.
D+, D	Marginal performance; minimal understanding, with significant errors or misunderstandings.
F	Failing performance; little or no understanding of key concepts.

Assessment Component 1. In-class participation

Score	Performance Standard
30%	Active in-class participation regarding assigned readings and in-class data analyses

Assessment Component 2. Five individual assignments (research idea generation)

Score	Performance Standard
30%	For 2 assignments, you need to submit original ideas. For each idea, you are required to submit a one-page Word document (Times New Roman, 12 font size, single-spaced) containing an original research idea. Based on previous research in the field, identify theoretically interesting and externally valid research questions, and propose testable hypotheses (study designs are not required at this stage). I will provide you with feedback on each idea and select one idea for you to develop into a final proposal. Three assignments are related to data analyses.

Assessment Component 3. Final proposal

Score	Performance Standard
40%	For the selected research idea from your assignments, you will be required to conduct a brief literature review to highlight the novelty of your idea. A literature review table can be a helpful tool for this. Additionally, you will need to propose testable hypotheses (make sure you provide detailed logic for each hypothesis, don't forget to cite prior work when explaining your logic for each hypothesis), suitable research designs for 3-4 studies, and suggest data analysis methods (such as ANCOVA, regression, logistic regression, moderated mediation) for each study. It is not necessary to collect data at this stage. The final proposal should adhere to the following formatting guidelines: Times New Roman font, 12 font size, and a maximum of 3 single-spaced pages excluding figures and references.

III. Course Content and Tentative Schedule

Week 1. Introduction to Research Design

Week 2. Data Analysis and Making Comparisons

Week 3. Repeated Measures ANOVA, Correlation, Linear Regression, Logit Regression

Week 4. Moderated Mediation 1

Week 5. Moderated Mediation 2

Week 6. Floodlight Analysis, Factor Analysis, and Discriminant Validity, Interrater Reliability

Week 7. Dependent Proportions, Count Variables, Rare Events, Inverted U Shape

Week 8. Pre-registration, Cloud Research, Robot Detection, Outliers, Summary Tables

Week 9. Facebook Study, Eye tracking, Power Analysis, Effect sizes, and P-curve

Week 10. Field Experiments, Real Behaviors (Incentive Compatible Studies), and Secondary Data Analyses

IV. Recommended Readings [tentative]

Note: The following papers are recommended as supplementary materials (optional reading materials). As this course is focused on research methods, we will mainly concentrate on conducting data analyses together in class. **One or two specific papers per week** might be identified as reading materials.

The American Psychological Association publication manual sixth edition.

Sternberg, Robert J., ed. *Guide to Publishing in Psychology Journals*. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Carden, Stephen W., Nicholas S. Holtzman, and Michael J. Strube (2017), “CAHOST: An excel workbook for facilitating the Johnson-Neyman technique for two-way interactions in multiple regression,” *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 1293.

Pham, Michel Tuan (2015), “Is It Ok to Dichotomize? A Research Dialogue,” *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 25(4), 650-651.

Simonsohn, Uri, Leif D. Nelson, and Joseph P. Simmons (2014), “P-curve: a key to the file-drawer,” *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 143(2), 534-547.

King, Gary, and Langche Zeng (2001), “Logistic Regression in Rare Events Data,” *Political Analysis*, 9(2), 137-163.

Ophir, Yaakov, Itay Sisso, Christa SC Asterhan, Refael Tikochinski, and Roi Reichart (2020), “The Turker Blues: Hidden Factors Behind Increased Depression Rates Among Amazon’s Mechanical Turkers,” *Clinical Psychological Science*, 8(1), 65-83.

Robinson, Jonathan, Cheskie Rosenzweig, Aaron J. Moss, and Leib Litman (2019), “Tapped Out or Barely Tapped? Recommendations for How to Harness the Vast and Largely Unused Potential of The Mechanical Turk Participant Pool,” *PloS One*, 14(12), e0226394.

Thomas, Kyle A., and Scott Clifford (2017), “Validity and Mechanical Turk: An Assessment of Exclusion Methods and Interactive Experiments,” *Computers in Human Behavior*, 77, 184-197.

Puzakova, Marina, and Pankaj Aggarwal (2018), “Brands as rivals: Consumer pursuit of distinctiveness and the role of brand anthropomorphism,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 45(4), 869-888.

Andrew F. Hayes website: <http://www.afhayes.com/>

Lynch Jr, John G., Joseph W. Alba, Aradhna Krishna, Vicki G. Morwitz, and Zeynep Gürhan-Canli (2012), “Knowledge Creation in Consumer Research: Multiple Routes, Multiple Criteria,” *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 22(4), 473-485.

Faul, Franz, Edgar Erdfelder, Axel Buchner, and Albert-Georg Lang (2009), “Statistical Power Analyses Using G* Power 3.1: Tests for Correlation and Regression Analyses,” *Behavior Research Methods*, 41(4), 1149-1160.

Meyvis, Tom, and Stijn MJ Van Osselaer (2018), “Increasing the Power of Your Study by Increasing the Effect Size,” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(5), 1157-1173.

Morales, Andrea C., On Amir, and Leonard Lee (2017), “Keeping It Real in Experimental Research—Understanding When, Where, And How to Enhance Realism and Measure Consumer Behavior” *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(2), 465-476.

Pham, Michel Tuan (2013), "The Seven Sins of Consumer Psychology," *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 23(4), 411-423.

Spiller, Stephen A., Gavan J. Fitzsimons, John G. Lynch Jr, and Gary H. McClelland (2013), "Spotlights, Floodlights, And the Magic Number Zero: Simple Effects Tests in Moderated Regression," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 50(2), 277-288.

Muller, Dominique, Charles M. Judd, and Vincent Y. Yzerbyt (2005), "When Moderation Is Mediated and Mediation Is Moderated," *Journal Of Personality And Social Psychology*, 89(6), 852-863.

Zhao, Xinshu, John G. Lynch Jr, and Qimei Chen (2010), "Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and Truths About Mediation Analysis," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37(2), 197-206.

Wedel, Michel, and Rik Pieters (2017), "A Review of Eye-Tracking Research in Marketing," *Review of Marketing Research*, 123-147.

V. Course Policy

The University Regulations on academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced! Academic dishonesty is behaviour in which a deliberately fraudulent misrepresentation is employed in an attempt to gain undeserved intellectual credit, either for oneself or for another. It includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the following types of cases:

- a. Plagiarism - The representation of someone else's ideas as if they are their own. Where the arguments, data, designs, etc., of someone else are being used in a paper, report, oral presentation, or similar academic project, this fact must be made explicitly clear by citing the appropriate references. The references must fully indicate the extent to which any parts of the project are not one's own work. Paraphrasing of someone else's ideas is still using someone else's ideas, and must be acknowledged. Please check the University Statement on plagiarism on the web: <http://www.hku.hk/plagiarism/>
- b. Unauthorized Collaboration on Out-of-Class Projects - The representation of work as solely one's own when in fact it is the result of a joint effort.
- c. Cheating on In-Class Exams - The covert gathering of information from other students, the use of unauthorized notes, unauthorized aids, etc.
- d. Unauthorized Advance Access to an Exam - The representation of materials prepared at leisure, as a result of unauthorized advance access (however obtained), as if it were prepared under the rigors of the exam setting. This misrepresentation is dishonest in itself even if there are not compounding factors, such as unauthorized uses of books or notes.

You are expected to do your own work whenever you are supposed to. Incident(s) of academic dishonesty will NOT be tolerated. Cheating or plagiarism of any kind would result in an automatic FAIL grade for the course plus strict enforcement of all Faculty and/or University regulations regarding such behaviour.