Sushma Kambagowni

Ph.D. Candidate, Marketing

Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business ● University of Pittsburgh

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EDUCATION

University of Pittsburgh *2020–2025 (Expected)*
Ph.D. in Marketing
Dissertation: "Essays on Driving User Engagement and Outcomes Through Immersive Technologies"
Committee: Vanitha Swaminathan (Chair), Alok Saboo, Mina Ameri, Sebastian Hohenberg, Yue Wu

Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta *2015–2017*
Post Graduate Diploma in Management

Pondicherry University *2011–2015*
Bachelor of Technology in Computer Science and Engineering (with Distinction)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Substantive: Digital Platforms, New Technologies(AR/VR), Online Communities, User Engagement
Methodology: Econometrics, Machine Learning, Natural Language Processing, Experiments

RESEARCH

Job Market Paper

Sushma Kambagowni, Vanitha Swaminathan, Mina Ameri, Alok Saboo. "Platforms as Innovation Enablers: How do Platform Support and Innovation Strategy Enhance App Performance?"
   - *Under Review at Journal of Marketing Research*
   - *Dissertation Essay 1*

Working Papers/ Work in Progress

Sushma Kambagowni and Vanitha Swaminathan. "The Reality Divide: Factors Impacting Advertisement Engagement in Virtual Reality vs. Non-Virtual Reality Games"
   - *Dissertation Essay 2*
   - *2024 AMA Marketing Strategy SIG Doctoral Student Research Award*

Mina Ameri, Vanitha Swaminathan, **Sushma Kambagowni**. "Healthcare Apps, Customer Engagement and the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis."
   -*Reject and Resubmit at Journal of Marketing*

Meheli Basu, **Sushma Kambagowni**, Vanitha Swaminathan. " Building Bonds, Boosting Sales: Engagement in Online Brand Communities for Lateral Exchange Markets"

HONORS, AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

2024 AMA Marketing Strategy SIG Doctoral Student Research Award	2024
AMA-Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium Fellow, BI Norwegian Business School	2023
Marketing Strategy Doctoral Consortium Fellow, University of Georgia	2023
Sheth PhD Fellow Award, University of Pittsburgh	2023

ISMS Doctoral Consortium Fellow, University of Chicago (Virtual)	2022
Roger S. Albrandt Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh	2020-2025
Dean Assad Excellence in Marketing Research and Education Award, University of Pittsburgh	2021
Sheth Scholar Fellowship, University of Pittsburgh	2020
Student Exchange via Merit List - Jönköping International Business School, Sweden	2016
Undergrad Merit Scholarship - Government of Puducherry	2015

TEACHING

Instructor, University of Pittsburgh

Introduction to Marketing (Rating: 4.62/5)	Fall 2023
- Nominated as "Most Valuable Professor" by Pitt Athletics - Men's Soccer Team	
Introduction to Marketing (Rating: 4.66/5)	Fall 2022

Teaching Assistant, University of Pittsburgh

Digital and Social Media Marketing, for Dr.Yue Wu	Spring 2024
Introduction to Marketing, for Dr.Kiersten Maryott	Fall 2021

CONFERENCES

Presentations

"Platforms as Innovation Enablers: How does Platform Support and Innovation Strategy Enhance App Performance?"

American Marketing Association, Winter Academic Conference	Feb 2024

"Healthcare Apps, Customer Engagement and the COVID-19 Pandemic Crisis"

American Marketing Association, Winter Academic Conference	Feb 2024
ISMS Marketing Science Conference, University of Miami	June 2023

Participation

ISMS Marketing Science Conference, University of Chicago (Virtual)	June 2022
ISMS Marketing Science Conference, University of Rochester (Virtual)	June 2021
AMA Winter Academic Conference, (Virtual)	Feb 2021
ISMS Marketing Science Conference, Duke University (Virtual)	June 2020

SERVICE

Co-author, Journal of Marketing Research Scholarly Insights Blog	May 2024
Production Manager, JM Buzz Podcast, Journal of Marketing	Fall 2022, 2023-2024
Doctoral Student Representative, Planning and Budget Committee, Pitt Business	2023-2024
Adhoc Reviewer, Academy of Marketing Science Annual Conference	2023

DOCTORAL COURSEWORK

Doctoral Seminars in Marketing

Marketing Strategy, *Vanitha Swaminathan*
Marketing Models, *Venkatesh R*
Research Methods, *Jeff Inman*
Consumer Behavior, *Peggy Liu*
Analytical and Structural Marketing Models, *Kannan Srinivasan (CMU)*

Economics and Statistics

PhD Econometrics-1, *Edson Severnini (CMU)*
Econometric Theory and Methods, *Akshaya Jha (CMU)*
Applied Regression Analysis, *Xu Qin*
Hierarchical Linear Modelling, *Xu Qin*
Measurement in Social Science, *Max Goplerud*
Experimental Economics, *Alistair Wilson*
Experiment Design, *Philip Grosse*

Machine Learning and NLP

Machine Learning, *Joseph Yurko*
Text as Data, *Michael Colaresi*
Causality and Machine Learning, *Kun Zhang (CMU)*

PRE-DOCTORAL EXPERIENCE

Accenture Strategy   **Bengaluru, India**
Business Strategy Consultant   *May 2017 — May 2020*

   Developed strategy plans, driving growth, digital transformation, and branding in Technology, Retail, and Consumer Goods sectors.

   Expertise includes competitive benchmarking, digital valuation, merger and acquisition analysis, roadmap creation and research reports.

Unilever   **Durban, South Africa**
Summer Leadership Intern - Sales and Marketing   *Apr. 2016 — May 2016*

   Formulated growth model and pricing/promotion strategies for Unilever Tea in Central Africa, and conducted feasibility analysis for localized Lipton artwork to enhance market relevance.

Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata   **Kolkata, India**
Summer Research Intern   *May 2014 — July 2014*

   Researched Anonymous Named Data Networking Application (ANDaNA) focusing on content-centric networking. Diagnosed three major security issues and developed a new scheme to resolve them.

REFERENCES

Vanitha Swaminathan
Thomas Marshall Professor of Marketing
Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business
University of Pittsburgh
Email: `vanitha@katz.pitt.edu`

Mina Ameri
Assistant Professor of Business Administration
Joseph M. Katz Graduate School of Business
University of Pittsburgh
Email: `mina.ameri@pitt.edu`

Alok Saboo
Taylor E. Little Jr. Professor of Marketing &
Associate Professor
J. Mack Robinson College of Business
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ABSTRACTS

Platforms as Innovation Enablers: How do Platform Support and Innovation Strategy Enhance App Performance? *(Job Market Paper)*

Digital platform businesses, such as mobile application markets, rely heavily on the success of platform complementors, such as app developers, for their growth. Innovation plays a crucial role in enabling complementors to thrive in hypercompetitive marketplaces. Existing research has identified various complementor strategies for achieving innovation success. However, studies focusing on understanding the role of platform support in facilitating innovation and how the interaction of such support with innovation strategies such as timing and benefit influences innovation outcomes are scarce. Drawing from research on platform ecosystems and the assemblage approach of digital platforms, we propose a platform support metric comprising complementor-related "technical guidance" and "developer community" factors. Using the adoption of augmented reality in mobile apps as an example context for innovation, we show that innovation timing and benefit have distinct impacts on app performance. We also find that greater platform support affects these innovation strategies differently. These findings offer novel insights into the value of platforms as facilitators of innovation and the underlying mechanisms for maximizing innovation outcomes.

The Reality Divide: Factors Impacting Advertisement Engagement in Virtual Reality vs. Non-Virtual Reality Games

Videogames have become an important digital media marketing channel for brands due to factors like market size, growth potential, and access to a focused audience. While existing research has looked at factors impacting advertisement engagement in video games, virtual reality (VR) games, which are played with a headset, present a unique context for investigation due to their heightened level of immersion compared to other video games. Leveraging data on VR game advertisements from an ad-network provider (1060 ads placed across 44 VR games), combined with lab and field experiments, we focus on understanding how advertising in virtual reality video games differs from advertising in non-virtual reality video games in terms of engagement and brand attitude metrics. From preliminary evidence, we find that simply exposing users to an ad results in higher engagement in VR games compared to placing the ad at the beginning, which is considered the most effective strategy in non-VR contexts. We also find that there is a non-linear (inverted U) relationship in terms of ad-game fit in a VR context compared to the linear relationship in non-VR contexts. Our findings contribute to the literature on advertising in video games and help brands understand the best ways to leverage in-game advertisements in Virtual Reality games.

Healthcare Apps, Customer Engagement and the COVID-19 Crisis Pandemic

Many healthcare apps saw a surge in downloads during the COVID-19 pandemic, but only a small proportion of healthcare apps attract repeat usage. We examine how four healthcare app characteristics (social interaction, security, premium and healthcare features) impact users' engagement with healthcare apps and how COVID-19 pandemic changed the importance of these features. Our research examines four outcome metrics reflective of pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages: search, downloads, revenue, and ratings. We test our model using weekly data on 493 healthcare apps over a four-year period from 2017 to 2020 in four countries (the United States, France, Germany, and Italy). We find that the COVID-19 pandemic lead to a dramatic decrease in app engagement after addition of premium features, while it increased the importance of security and privacy features. We also find that although users showed more interest in apps offering social interaction and healthcare features during pandemic, the increased interest did not lead to further engagement. We discuss implications of these findings for theory, practice, and policy.

Building Bonds, Boosting Sales: Engagement in Online Brand Communities for Lateral Exchange Markets

Rise in conscious consumerism, desire for easy access, and shifting attitudes towards ownership, led to the high growth of online peer-to-peer marketplaces or "Lateral Exchange Markets" like Poshmark, Etsy, etc. By considering marketplaces as an assemblage of different blocks, we suggest that social engagement in online communities, i.e, the "community" block has a positive spillover effect on sales on the platform, i.e, the "transaction" block. Using two studies leveraging five LEM platforms, we first provide evidence for the spillover effect of social engagement in online brand communities on sales (leveraging 257 posts from 232 individuals), and then focus on understanding the communication characteristics that drive such engagement (leveraging 159,161 posts from 51,754 individuals). These findings enhance our comprehension of how community influences sales, and shed light on the elements of effective communication, aiding managers in fostering user engagement with the platform.