

Cherie Moman: Research Statement

My interest in the impact of technology on the consumer-brand relationship began in 2008 while working with my husband on our real estate magazine and marketing company. I recognized that public access to the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) online had disrupted the relationship between Realtors and clients. Previously Realtors were the gatekeepers to the property information but were now finding themselves shut out from the early stages of the consumer home buying journey as the clients turned to the MLS and self-sufficiency. We began looking for ways for Realtors to engage with potential clients in the digital environment and started implementing and tracking the results of tools like augmented reality and Google keyword trends.

I completed my first master's during this time, specializing in interactive technology. This course of study focused on computer-mediated communications and began developing my philosophy and understanding of the use of technology in human interactions. I wrote a literature review titled "Technology and the Disintermediation of the Real Estate Agent: A Historical Review of the Literature" as part of my capstone project for this degree. I then continued my inquiry into how to build online relationships efficiently and effectively with clients during completion of my second master's in marketing, specializing in digital and social media. My capstone project was focused on generating more Google reviews for a local property management company as well as leveraging a mass texting platform to improve communication with current residents.

Currently in The University of Alabama C&IS Ph.D. program, I have expanded my research interest beyond the real estate industry. I believe my intended research is important because the study of intrapersonal communication through the lens of information and communication technology is an emerging branch of computer-mediated communication study, so there is a need for new knowledge in this area. One social networking platform I am particularly interested in – LinkedIn – has not been studied much to date. In the future, there will continually be a need for study in this field as technology is evolving at an accelerated rate, bringing change in communication with it. Additionally, technological advances in human-computer interaction will yield new questions surrounding intrapersonal communication with regard to media forms like chatbots, artificial intelligence, voice agents, and augmented/virtual reality.

My philosophical position is ontological, with a social constructivism lens. I believe that knowledge is constructed through interactions between people and the world. Therefore, an individual's perception of the truth is a product of social processes and interactions that the individual engages in, as opposed to objective observation. My research perspective is postpositivist, as I intend to pursue objective answers while recognizing my own biases and experiences influences my conclusions. That said, my research will be mixed method using both quantitative and qualitative studies. I believe my questions can best be answered by looking at quantitative survey data and trends and then using qualitative means to analyze individuals to gain knowledge. I will utilize inductive reasoning, as I will make general conclusions from

specific observations as I uncover pattern in the digital realm i.e. why will people create first-degree connections on LinkedIn when they do not actually know the person?

I plan to participate in both proprietary and scholarly research. While much of my work will be funded through consulting, I also plan to contribute to the larger public conversation in this area. I will look to private industry for funding. For example, Facebook's "2020 Foundational Integrity Research" project which offered \$2 million in unrestricted gifts to support independent research in social communication technology to combat misinformation. Collaboration between myself and industry players or other academics in the field will be welcomed.