Themen für die Master-Thesis – Wintersemester 22/23

Allgemeines

- Im Folgenden finden Sie eine Themen-Übersicht, aus der Sie die von Ihnen präferierten Themen für Ihre Masters-Thesis auswählen können.
- Bitte wählen Sie mindestens vier Themen aus und priorisieren Sie diese in FLIP (→ Angabe von Themennummer und Titel) in Ihrem Lebenslauf zusammen mit den üblichen Angaben.
- Wir bemühen uns, Ihre Priorisierungen soweit wie möglich zu berücksichtigen.
- Studierende, die unsere Forschungsgruppe als Priorität 1 angegeben haben, werden bei der Themenvergabe bevorzugt berücksichtigt.
- Eine konkrete Ausgestaltung des Themas wird in den Einzelgesprächen mit Ihrer Betreuerin/Ihrem Betreuer besprochen.
- Die Arbeiten können auf Deutsch oder Englisch verfasst werden – unabhängig von der unten genannten Sprache der Themenausschreibung.

Themen für die Master-Thesis

a) Thesis type: Literature review

(1) The cooperation between Marketing and Sales – A state-of-the-art Review

The Marketing and Sales departments are crucial for organizing effective market activities. Despite following similar goals in terms of satisfying customers and generating revenues for their firms, the cooperation between the two departments is often difficult and not optimal. The Marketing and Sales literature already provides ideas and approaches on how the cooperation between these two departments may be improved. However, since results differ across contexts, it remains unclear which approaches may be most effective. This master thesis thoroughly explores the respective literature on the Marketing-Sales interface and carefully analyses the state-of-the-art research findings on this important topic. New areas and suggestions for further research are presented as well. The thesis may also make use of expert interviews if appropriate.

(2) Data Processing and Data Management in Companies

The collection and use of data is becoming increasingly important - both in science and in practice. The process of how the data is collected, stored and processed plays a central role. The goal of this thesis is to analyze different approaches to this process and to develop a framework that helps companies to obtain a guideline for the area of data management. The guideline should map all relevant steps from collection to use of the data and provide important recommendations for each step.
b) Thesis type: Empirical study

(3) Empirical Analysis of Sales and Marketing Departments in German Enterprises

“Marketing is different” – “Sales is different, too!” – These are typical phrases which Marketing or Sales employees use to describe their counterparts in the respective departments. Despite many similarities in terms of making customers happy or attracting them to a firm’s products, the nature of Marketing and Sales people is (apparently) quite different. This empirical master thesis explores these differences, such as with regard to departmental cultures, behaviors, expectations and requirements between Marketing and Sales employees and analyses how these factors may affect company efficiency and effectiveness with regard to market activities. The thesis comprises an own survey among Sales and Marketing representatives in close cooperation with the “Bundesverband der Vertriebsmanager e.V.”, who will help to collect the necessary data.

(4) Technology Acceptance of Task oriented vs. humanized Chatbots

Technology acceptance research is a well-established area of research in which statements are made about why people use or do not use a technology. The acceptance of a specific technology or a general acceptance of technologies can be investigated. Chatbots (text- or voice-based) are increasingly used by companies, either for first level customer support or for marketing purposes. The acceptance of the technology by the user plays a decisive role and can have consequences for the image of the company. In this thesis, technology acceptance research will be applied to the context of the use of AI-based chatbots. In particular, the difference in acceptance of primarily task-oriented chatbots compared to "humanized" chatbots (i.e. chatbots that are very human in their communication) should be worked out. To answer this question, an empirical study is to be conducted and analyzed.

(5) Types of Chatbots – An empirical Study

A chatbot is an application that uses artificial intelligence to converse with humans in natural language. Users can ask questions, to which the system responds in natural language. It can support text input, audio input, or both. Chatbots are now frequently used by companies in practice and are intended to offer customers direct added value. The most common use scenario is in the area of customer support. However, numerous different approaches and types of chatbots exist. For example, chatbots can be primarily task-oriented or take a more human approach in their combination. The goal of this master thesis is to identify different types of chatbots and evaluate their potential in a specific use case with the help of an empirical study.

(6) The Big Waste - Analysis of the Possibilities and Customer Reactions to Sustainable Packaging

In Germany, around 20 million tons of packaging waste are generated every year - not least due to the steadily increasing number of products that are purchased online and have to be packed in shipping cartons. If mail-order companies would pack more space-efficiently, not only could the number of shipments be reduced, but the amount of waste could also be cut. According to expert estimates, packages shipped by online retailers are only about half full on average. The problem: In purchasing, cartons in a few standard sizes and the largest possible quantities are cheaper than a
large number of different sizes in smaller quantities. In addition, more sustainable materials could be used, but these are also more expensive than conventional packaging. For more sustainable consumption, customers would have to be willing to spend more money on packaging and shipping. The aim of this work is to find out how high the willingness to pay for sustainable packaging is and how consumers can best be convinced of this better alternative with the help of marketing tools. An empirical study will be designed and conducted for this purpose.

(7) **Green, Greener, Greenwashing? An analysis between corporate sustainability and misleading PR methods**

In recent decades, companies have had the opportunity to leverage consumers’ growing environmental concerns to differentiate and position their products to gain market share in emerging green markets. However, many consumers are skeptical of companies’ green marketing efforts - and not without reason. Many companies try to portray themselves to the public as more environmentally friendly than they are - this is called greenwashing. Greenwashing is a serious problem; it not only harms consumers, but also disadvantages companies that genuinely want to contribute to the transition to a more sustainable economy. The aim of this master thesis is to provide a structured analysis of the issue of greenwashing. It will be investigated how often greenwashing is recognized by consumers in the first place and what companies can do to avoid being falsely accused of greenwashing. Subsequently, the impact and effects of greenwashing could be investigated, also within the framework of a quantitative study.

(8) **E-WOM: The impact of Social Media on Viral Marketing**

The phenomenon of word of mouth (WOM) has already been taken up in research in the 1960s. Due to the ever-growing popularity of social networks, WOM has been revived and taken on new meaning. The proliferation of digital technologies has enabled consumers to share their consumption-related opinions, giving rise to electronic WOM (eWOM). Due to this, viral marketing, i.e., targeting word of mouth for the purpose of marketing companies and their services, is one of the trends for marketers to promote their products worldwide. Successful eWOM can become a game-changer for companies to succeed in the market. On the other hand, failed marketing campaigns, corporate mishaps or scandals can be rapidly distributed due to social media and cause great damage to businesses. The aim of this paper is to show the current state of research on the topic of E-WOM and viral marketing and to elicit their success factors in today’s social media environment. Following on from this, an empirical study (in particular an experiment) could be conducted.

(9) **Can fake be authentic? Analysing the potentials of artificial social media influencers**

Influencer Marketing is receiving an explosion of academic interest. Current research investigates the differences between nano, micro, macro and mega influencers operating on Youtube, Instagram, TikTok and other social media platforms. However, an important type of influencers, namely artificial influencers, has been underinvestigated so far. An example of this type of influencer is Lil Miquela with over 3 million followers on Instagram. We currently do not know if these artificial influencers are as effective as human influencers in promoting products and services. This is an interesting starting point for future research since these influencers increasingly
cooperate with firms, too. The goal of this thesis is to conduct an experiment to investigate the difference of artificial and real influencers.

(10) **Successful mobile applications – Why and when do we spend our money and time in apps?**

Due to limited time and memory space, consumers need to make choices about which mobile applications they want to install on their phones/tablets. Companies thus need to find a way to make their applications popular and to stimulate consumers’ engagement with them. The goal of this thesis is therefore to empirically investigate what makes mobile applications successful. This includes the entire customer journey starting at downloading/installing the application from a website or through the app store, reasons for installing and using the application (more or less frequently), spending money, leaving reviews, recommending the application to friends and ultimately uninstalling the application (possibly in exchange for another, newer application).

(11) **Improving websites through A/B tests and personalization**

Nowadays, websites can be personalized and improved through A/B tests. This is important since oftentimes it is impossible to know which design will lead to the best results without studying the data generated by website users. Potential questions in this regard could include: How to present the products? Which information should be shown more prominently? Which button will be clicked more often? Where to position the elements? How to adapt the menu for specific users groups? Should we include offers and gifts or rather use the concept of scarcity to increase sales/registrations? The goal of this thesis is to conduct an experiment to investigate which changes on a website can improve the perceptions and conversions of consumers, for example using screenshots/mockups/clickdummies/ a fake shop or a real shop. Prior experience in webdesign/web development is not mandatory.

(12) **Conducting an Influencer Marketing Experiment**

Influencer marketing is one of the most important marketing trends worldwide and is relevant across generations, industries and social media platforms. The goal of this study is to plan and conduct an influencer marketing experiment. Hereby, the student is free to choose his/her area of interest (e.g. gaming influencers, fashion influencers, fitness influencers etc.) and the platform(s) to be considered (e.g. TikTok, Twitch, Instagram etc.). Exemplary areas of interest include the relationships between influencers and their followers, the creation of successful influencer marketing content and gaining popularity and building a community as an influencer. No contacts to popular social media influencers are required before starting the thesis.

(13) **“Which content drives engagement the most? “ - A content analysis of social media posts**

Millions of posts get uploaded to social media networks on a daily basis. Companies can, for example, spread information or advertise products through their content. This results in companies being interested in maximizing the effectiveness of each image or video uploaded to the respective platform since marketing budgets are limited. Effectiveness can be measured in terms of engagement reached (e.g. likes or comments on a post. This thesis aims at discovering
characteristics of successful posts based on the analysis of a real-world dataset of social media posts. The dataset is provided to the student.

(14) Livestreams – Investigating consumer reactions and relationships to live streamers

Livestreams on platforms such as Twitch and TikTok are becoming increasingly popular and successful streamers can accumulate thousands, sometimes even tens of thousands of concurrent viewers. The goal of this thesis is to empirically investigate consumer reactions during such streams, for example with regards to messages sent, money spent, reactions to product placements or the emotions they feel. Furthermore, reasons for livestream consumption are investigated and the (parasocial) relationships developed by consumers towards livestreams are considered.