

## Topics for the Bachelor thesis – winter term 2024/2025

### General information

- Below you will find an **overview of topics** from which you can select your preferred topics for your Bachelor seminar.
- Please select at least four topics and prioritize them (→ indicate topic number and title) in your CV together with the usual information.
- We will do our best to consider your prioritizations as much as possible.
- Students who have indicated our chair as priority 1 will be given preference in the allocation of topics.
- **The specific design of the topic will be discussed in the individual meetings with your supervisor.**
- The papers should preferably be written in English – writing in German is also possible.

### Topics for the Bachelor thesis

#### 1. When sustainability initiatives backfire: Examining incongruence with influencers and celebrities

This thesis investigates the intricate relationship between sustainability initiatives and the involvement of influencers and celebrities in marketing campaigns. It examines instances where sustainability-focused messaging might clash or appear incongruent with the public image, behaviors, or endorsements of influencers and celebrities. Through a quantitative study and consumer behavior research, this thesis aims to identify the specific conditions and contexts in which such incongruencies lead to backlash or undermine the credibility of sustainability efforts. By shedding light on these critical factors, the thesis seeks to provide valuable insights for brands and marketers aiming to navigate the delicate balance between leveraging influencer endorsements and maintaining authentic, sustainable brand messaging.

#### 2. Do Certifications Help? The Influence of Ecolabels on the Choice of More Sustainable Shipping Options

This thesis investigates how ecolabels impact consumer decisions regarding sustainable shipping methods. This bachelor thesis aims to analyze whether certifications indicating environmentally friendly practices encourage customers to select greener shipping options. Through a quantitative survey, the study seeks to understand consumer perceptions of ecolabels and their effectiveness in promoting sustainable choices. The findings will provide insights into the role of ecolabels in enhancing the adoption of eco-friendly shipping practices in e-commerce.

### 3. Understanding the marketing expenditure of non-profit organizations: Impact on donors' willingness to give

This thesis delves into the perceptions surrounding marketing spending by non-profit organizations and its influence on the willingness of potential donors to contribute. Through an empirical research, the study aims to dissect how individuals perceive and respond to non-profits' marketing efforts. It explores the nuanced factors that affect donors' attitudes towards marketing expenditures within these organizations and the subsequent impact on their willingness to donate. By examining donor behavior, psychological triggers, and communication strategies employed by non-profits, the research seeks to unveil the relationships between perceptions of marketing spending and donation behavior. The findings aim to provide insights that can assist non-profit organizations in optimizing their marketing strategies to effectively communicate their mission while fostering greater donor support and engagement.

### 4. A paradigm shift – When influencers launch their own products

Social media influencers are increasingly launching their own products or even entire brands and companies. The aim of this study is to empirically examine the differences in consumer perception between influencer posts promoting their own products (or projects) and traditional influencer posts promoting products from other companies. Hereby, distinctions can be made between types of influencers (e.g., nano vs. micro-influencers), media formats, platforms, or product categories.

### 5. Social presence in E-Commerce and advertising

Products within online shops or advertisements can be displayed with or without the presence of a human (face). In practice, both approaches are widely used, even within the same webshops or product categories. The goal of this study is to empirically investigate the perks and pitfalls of these approaches, for example in terms of clicks and purchase intentions across various product types and media designs.

### 6. Attracting and sustaining attention on Social Media

Consumers can interact with content (e.g., on TikTok or Instagram) in many ways (e.g., liking, commenting, sharing, saving). However, users see far more posts daily than they can process and interact with. Moreover, only a small number of posts users encounter are viewed until the end. The aim of this study is to empirically investigate the post characteristics that increase or decrease attention and engagement on TikTok. Real data from the platform will be provided for the analysis.

### 7. Viral content on TikTok

Millions of people upload content to platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Twitch and TikTok on a daily basis. Some of these do not receive many reactions in terms of likes and comments while others go viral (i.e., reach engagement levels far beyond other posts of a specific account). Improving our understanding regarding why some of these posts on social media are (much) more successful than others is the topic of this study.

## 8. High Price, High Expectations: Investigating the Link Between Luxury Pricing and Product Perception

The price of a product often serves as a signal to customers. Expensive products often induce an increased expectation of quality. Studies have also shown that high prices are associated with a higher expectation of the ethics of a product. Consequently, people may come to the misconception that expensive luxury products are generally (more) sustainable, which is not necessarily the case. This dilemma is the subject of this bachelor's thesis, which aims to analyze the relationship between the prices of luxury products and the resulting expectations of product characteristics by means of an experiment.

## 9. Packaging and Prestige: The Influence of Sustainable Packaging on Luxury Purchase Intentions

Luxury customers often have high expectations of the product, but also of its packaging. But will customers accept sustainable packaging for expensive products for the benefit of the environment? This bachelor's thesis aims to answer this question with the help of an experiment: How does the use of sustainable packaging influence the willingness to buy or perception of luxury goods compared to conventional packaging?

## 10. Sustainability communication via TikTok – A content analysis

TikTok is increasingly becoming an important communication channel for young people. As a result, companies are very interested in using the platform to gain the attention of this target group. Another special characteristic of the young target group is their interest in sustainability. This bachelor thesis will therefore take a closer look at the TikTok content of selected companies and analyze how it can be designed to be particularly effective.

## 11. Mood and Persuasion: Utilization of Mood in Online Marketing

This bachelor thesis aims to explore the role of mood in online marketing. The thesis will involve a partial literature review on how mood is utilized in marketing, methods to measure and induce mood, and its practical applications. An experiment will be conducted to test the effectiveness of different mood induction techniques and their potential impact on consumer behavior. Initial guidance on the implementation and analysis of the experiment will be provided by the research group.

## 12. Comparing E-Commerce Landingpages

The goal of this thesis is to compare the design elements used by popular webshops (e.g., Amazon, Otto, H&M, Mediamarkt, Zalando, Shein). The dataset will be provided to the student. Exemplary topics of interest include, for example, the usage of popups, media elements, amount of text and text characteristics, offers and “dark patterns” like manipulative cookie consent banners. Ultimately, the landing pages can then be evaluated using established website quality frameworks such as WebQual.

### **13. Are We Being Manipulated Daily? Dark Patterns and Social Influence in Marketing**

Why is it sometimes harder to log out than to log in? What is the idea behind the wording in cookie acceptance popups? Where does this additional item in my basket come from? Those are only some of the possible questions that relate to so called “dark patterns” found in websites, web shops and digital platforms. These patterns refer to specific designs that can indirectly affect the way we use a page and therefore influence our behavior as consumers. The goal of this thesis is to summarize research on this topic and to compare different websites regarding their usage of these patterns. Students interested in the psychological aspects of marketing are particularly well-suited for this topic.

### **14. Navigating Choice Overload in Online Shopping Environments**

This thesis explores the phenomenon of choice overload in online shopping environments. Choice overload refers to the difficulty consumers face when presented with a large number of options, leading to decision paralysis or dissatisfaction. Based on a comprehensive literature review and consumer behavior research, this paper examines various strategies and mechanisms, such as user interface design or personalized recommendations, that online shops can employ to help consumers navigate choice overload effectively. The findings aim to provide practical recommendations for online retailers to enhance user experience and satisfaction by managing choice overload.

### **15. Consumer Responses to Brand Apologies in Crisis Communication**

This thesis examines consumer responses to brand apologies during crises, focusing on specific aspects such as variations in length, delivery method, and sincerity. Based on a comprehensive literature review and consumer behavior research, this study investigates how these factors influence consumer perceptions about brand authenticity and contribute to rebuilding consumer trust. The thesis aims to provide insights into effective crisis communication strategies, offering practical recommendations for brands navigating challenging situations.

### **16. Exploring Consumer Preferences for Personalized Chatbot Interactions**

This thesis examines consumer preferences and perceptions regarding personalized interactions with chatbots. Based on a comprehensive literature review and consumer behavior research, this study will explore the effectiveness of personalized recommendations and tailored responses in chatbot interactions. The research aims to provide insights into how personalization can enhance user engagement and satisfaction with chatbot interactions.