



Topics for Bachelor and Master Theses for the Summer Semester 2021

Application

- Your application (in English or German) should include the following contents: Topic requests with your individual prioritization/ranking of your interest (e.g., B3, B11, B17, B16, B15), overview of your previous academic performance, a short curriculum vitae, (and optionally an own topic suggestion that we will check if it fits to our research expertise and if it is feasible, without guarantee that we will supervise it). Please bundle everything into a **single PDF file** labeled with your last name only and submit it to: marketing@wifa.uni-leipzig.de
- The application deadlines are:
 - **December 31st for the summer semester** (we will inform you about your topic in January)
 - **June 31st for the winter semester** (we will inform you about your topic in July)
- After successful application, consultation with your supervisor, and confirmation of supervision, you must register the topic with the Admissions Office by the **end of February for the summer semester** and by the **end of August for the winter semester** at the latest so that you can complete your studies this semester.

Bachelor Topics

B1. Subscriptions – an indispensable business model?

The dishwasher and detergent startup "Smol" sells tabs in a subscription model. Smol is a very young company that uses subscriptions as its central business model, but established companies also see potential in it. Subscription sales models, which consumers know from digital products and services in particular, are making inroads into the world of fast moving consumer goods (FMCG), and this trend is expected to intensify in the coming years. The task of this bachelor thesis is to provide a comprehensive literature review of previous research on subscriptions to physical products as a business model to systematically identify success factors.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B2. Micropayments: models and application potentials

Digital goods and services play an increasingly important role for consumers. In addition to classic subscription models, micropayments are increasingly being used for the billing of payable services. By definition micropayments are payments of small amounts in e-commerce. Due to the small amounts involved, credit card payments are uneconomical for the underlying business due to the high transaction costs. Therefore, the payment process is carried out electronically. The bachelor thesis should explain how micropayments can be embedded in the revenue model of digital goods. In addition to theoretical basics, technical requirements should be demonstrated and the acceptance of



micropayments discussed. Finally, a view on future application possibilities in the marketing of digital and physical goods should be explored.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B3. Tesla - a Marketing Strategy Analysis

Extreme capital-intensive, high competition and strong lobbying - the hurdles for market entry into the automotive industry are strong. And yet Tesla still largely dispenses with classic advertising and social media channels. The Tesla-CEO, Elon Musk, reports news via his private Twitter-Account and presents new products (e.g. the Cybertruck) via keynotes. Compared to the biggest car brands in the world, this is rather unusual: BMW and Mercedes for example gained millions of follower on Instagram and use many resources to create strong content with wide reach. In the context of the bachelor thesis an overview of marketing/communication channels and measures should be given, which Tesla uses to generate visibility and reach. With the help of a literature research the marketing strategy should be classified and evaluated regarding chances and potentials.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B4. Crowd-Innovation – customer-oriented innovation or searching for ideas with amateurs?

Through the Internet, companies have the power to create value together with customers. But do consumers really know what they want? The bachelor thesis should identify best and worst cases based on a literature analysis of different ways of crowdsourcing. Subsequently, the effectiveness and boundary conditions of crowdsourcing should be discussed.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B5. Sustainability labels - overview and new developments

The demand for environmentally friendly and sustainable products is constantly increasing. However, they bring new challenges, as consumers have problems understanding these labels. The bachelor thesis classifies and examines the different types of sustainability labels on the market and reflects the different effects on consumer behavior. How are the labels perceived and what influence do they have on the decision-making?

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B6. Can innovation damage brand equity?

"The ability to innovate decides our fate" said Federal President Roman Herzog in his Berlin speech as early as 1997. Innovations are undoubtedly decisive for humanity and crucial for the survival of the economy. But very few people ask the questions: Is there a level of too much innovation? Can a company innovate too much? Are there disadvantages of innovation for the brand value? And can innovation lead to confusion, frustration or distrust among consumers? The task of the bachelor thesis is to discuss the downside of innovations.



Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B7. Social Media and Sales: how much potential does Instagram-Shopping have as a distribution channel?

When Instagram added the "Shop" button to the main menu bar instead of the "Create" button in late 2020, many users were disappointed. It seems that creative users in particular have little interest in further commercializing the platform. From Instagram's perspective, this step makes sense: 80% of users visit a corporate account every day. But how willing are social media users to buy products in a social media environment? A survey should examine the acceptance of Instagram as a purchasing platform from the users' perspective, including a literature review.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B8. Innovation in the food industry

The food industry is one of the most important branches of the economy in Germany and the European Union with high relevance for employment and economic performance. But in innovation research, the food industry is traditionally regarded as a sector with low research intensity. In this bachelor thesis, this area of conflict is to be analyzed with the involvement of a literature research on innovation models in the industry. Subsequently, explanations and reasons for the conservative attitude of companies towards innovation should be derived and presented. In a concluding discussion, possible consequences of this strategy should be deduced.

Supervisor: Tobias Mayerhofer

B9. Qualitative research in strategic marketing — evolution and impact in academic journals for strategic marketing

Qualitative methods are increasingly rare in the marketing literature, despite their importance in the development of concepts. There have been explicit calls to not neglect this relevance. As an explorative approach, qualitative research is particularly crucial for the generation of theory which can later be statistically tested using quantitative methods. The goal of this bachelor thesis is to shed a light on previous publications on qualitative research in academic journals for strategic marketing (Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science and International Journal of Research in Marketing). The student should provide a comprehensive overview on the qualitative literature and analyze and evaluate its respective and the overall impact within the marketing literature.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B10. Qualitative research in consumer behavior — evolution and impact in academic journals for consumer behavior

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Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B11. Motives for electronic word-of-mouth about sustainable consumption

The issue of sustainability and environmentally friendly consumption has moved into the center of society. Parallel to the growing demand by consumers, companies increasingly pay attention to sustainability and offer more and more sustainable products. Academic research suggests that underlying drivers are others-concerned like altruism but also self-concerned satisfying status goals by signaling to have the necessary resources to be altruistic. With regard to the prevention of the ongoing contamination of the environment a more sustainable consumption is not only in the interest of sustainably operating companies but in the interest of society as a whole. Considering the credible nature of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) as well as the considerable number of peers consumers can reach via social media, motives and drivers of eWOM regarding sustainable products are of major concern in order to be specifically targeted to induce a widespread adoption. The goal of this bachelor thesis is to propose a comprehensive framework of these motives and drivers.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B12. Do consumers want to pay more for sustainable products?

The issue of sustainability and environmentally friendly consumption has moved into the center of society. Parallel to the growing demand by consumers, companies increasingly pay attention to sustainability and offer more and more sustainable products. Regarding the prevention of the ongoing contamination of the environment a more sustainable consumption is not only in the interest of sustainably operating companies but in the interest of society as a whole. Academic research suggests that underlying drivers are others-concerned like altruism but also self-concerned satisfying status goals by signaling to have the necessary resources to be altruistic. Regarding the strived status the question arises, whether charging a higher price crucial for the success of sustainable products. In this bachelor thesis the student should investigate whether consumers prefer to pay more for sustainable products than for conventional ones and customer's expectations of a credible price.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B13. Sustainable consumption signaling

The issue of sustainability and environmentally friendly consumption has moved into the center of society. Parallel to the growing demand by consumers, companies increasingly pay attention to sustainability and offer more and more sustainable products. Academic research suggests that underlying drivers are others-concerned like altruism but also self-concerned satisfying status goals by signaling to have the necessary resources to be altruistic. With regard to the prevention of the ongoing



contamination of the environment a more sustainable consumption is not only in the interest of sustainably operating companies but in the interest of society as a whole. To assess whether the intended signaling of altruism is actually successful, this bachelor thesis should examine whether consumers that buy sustainable products are perceived to be altruistic and therefore honorable by others. Possible moderators such as the perception of humbleness or boasting should be taken into consideration.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B14. Brand activism — can it be successful to take a stand on socio-political issues?

Brand activism represents an emerging marketing strategy that has become incrementally popular in practice. Companies take a public and unequivocal stand on polarizing socio-political issues in order to appeal to a specific group of consumers. These companies acknowledge the importance of a company not only to generate profit, but also to substantially contribute to society. Well-known examples are Nike, standing up against racism (Colin Kaepernick), Patagonia, advocating pro-environmental actions, and Procter & Gamble, who stand up for feminism (Always) and against toxic masculinity (Gillette). They launched advertisements that convey a clear message by taking a side on a specific socio-political issue. The practice of brand activism has been assumed to be effective if consumers perceive it to be authentic. Only recently, in the wake of the BLM protests, many companies published statements against racism to publicly participate in the political debate. In the scope of this bachelor thesis the student should examine, using examples from practice, how companies managed to successfully apply brand activism as well as potential pitfalls and how they overcame those. The student should evaluate whether brand activism can be a useful strategy and possibly yield a competitive advantage over neutral firms, that stay out of the political debate.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B15. Top 10 of the Journal of Marketing — Factors for the success of research articles in strategic marketing

Academic journals are ranked according to their impact on research. The same applies to researchers, whose impact is measured by the frequency their articles are cited. Evidently, researchers strive to contribute significantly and therefore advance the state of research. Thus, the question arises which characteristics make research articles successful. What makes them that important in academic research? What issues do they address? What type of articles are they? The goal of this bachelor thesis is to provide an comprehensive overview of the characteristics of the most successful articles in the Journal on Marketing to give an answer to the questions posed.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B16. Top 10 of the Journal of Consumer Research — Factors for the success of research articles in consumer behavior

Depending on the impact an academic journal has on research, they get ranked to determine their relevance. The same applies to researchers, whose impact is measured by the frequency their articles



are cited. Evidently, researchers strive to contribute significantly and therefore advance the state of research. Thus, the question arises which characteristics make research articles successful. What makes them that important in academic research? What issues do they address? What type of articles are they? The goal of this bachelor thesis is to provide an comprehensive overview of the characteristics of the most successful articles in the Journal on Marketing to give an answer to the questions posed.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

B17. Rhymes in advertisements

“Haribo macht Kinder froh und Erwachsene ebenso” — a slogan that is well-known to Germans across all ages. The popular jingle may even start playing in our head hearing the phrase. Rhymes are a commonly used linguistic device in advertisements, then as now. The question is, how several studies report its effect on advertisement and brand recall as well as brand attitude. This bachelor thesis should provide an overview on the different effects of rhymes in advertisements.

Supervisor: Theresa Dünschede

Master

M1. Does movie runtime influence their commercial success?

The ‘infinite variety’ property of entertainment products, as proposed by Caves in 2006, is even more evident to consumers today thanks to the endless shelf space available to video streaming platforms. For cinema success, research has established a chain of success factors that partly translate towards home entertainment. When browsing through the different options, customers can skim through various titles, learn about their content, consult reviewer rating, but also consider their runtime. If movies come at no additional cost and preferences between a set of titles are similar, movie runtime might also nudge customers’ final decision. What movies do customers of shorter content prefer? Does movie runtime affect other success factors? The task of this master thesis is to establish a secondary movie data set and quantitatively test the impact of movie runtimes on movie sales.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

M2. Analyzing digital entertainment purchase decisions

Digitalization entails an unprecedented diversity purchase and consumption options for entertainment customers. However, research still has only gained limited insight into the decisions that determine entertainment purchase decisions. Why do some prefer action movies on Blu-ray discs, and others watch everything they can find on a subscription streaming platform? The objective of this master thesis is conducting an experiment to investigate different consumer groups and find explanations to their purchase decisions.



Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

M3. Do cross media brand extensions always fail?

Entertainment companies produce movies and video games that revolve around the same characters and stories. From a marketing perspective, these multi-platform products can be considered as so-called brand extensions. Extant research provides evidence that for many products brand extensions entail a competitive advantage, for instance, due to already established consumer trust. However, for entertainment industry professionals, this finding is somewhat controversial. The task of this master thesis is to identify a valid data source, establish necessary target variables and analyze the created data to answer the previously posed research question.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

M4. The changing impact of audience ratings on movie success

As an intangible experience good, no customer can truly know whether they will like a movie prior to its consumption. Thus, many rely on publicly available reviews and ratings by professional or amateur critics to decrease their perceived purchase risk. Whereas such reviews used to be available only in print magazines or on personal recommendation, consumers today have immediate access to a multitude of different evaluations and ratings. So far, research limited its investigations on the impact of audience ratings on movie success to restricted continuous time frames. Thus, the task of this master thesis is to establish selective data samples from different time periods in order to investigate the changing impact auf audience ratings on movie success.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

M5. Too good to be true – Can professional reviews hurt entertainment product success?

If product quality cannot be judged by its customers prior to consumption, consumers usually must rely on professionals to offer them some guidance in their purchase decision. However, for movies and video games, research uncovered ambiguous results on the positive impact of professional critics' ratings. Some industry experts even argue that good reviews could hurt commercial success, if they are 'too good'. The task of this master thesis is to identify a valid data source, establish necessary target variables and analyze the created data to assess the impact of above average review ratings on entertainment product success.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

M6. The effect of YouTube user ratings on box office success

With on-going cord cutting, shrinking cinema revenues, as well as forced cinema shut-downs due to the worldwide pandemic, two major outlets for movie trailer marketing are disappearing. However, as television sets and phones have essentially become computers in disguise, marketing can rely on new platforms to promote their entertainment products. Might the volume of trailer views on a user



generated content (UGC) platform such as YouTube, or the ratio of thumbs-up vs. thumbs-down, offer marketers an indication towards their tentpole title's box office success potential? The task of this master thesis is to produce and test a movie data set for the impact of user-generated-content platform ratings on box office success.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

M7. That's ancient history! – Branding and its influence on movie success over time

Looking at the top ten of the highest grossing motion pictures of the last decade, no one can deny the dominance of recycled ideas, comic book adaptations or movie sequels. From a marketing perspective, the positive impact of familiarity providing, branded, products is not very controversial. However, research so far neglected whether the commercial power of intellectual property brands has increased during the last decades. The task of this master thesis is to quantitatively test the impact of branded content in a decade spanning comparative analysis. The candidate will create a dataset and determine a suitable method to quantitatively assess the supposedly changing movie success variables.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

M8. Analyzing the effect of user sentiment on video game success

The target group of YouTube users and video game customers shows a proven overlap. In addition to video game industry magazines, live streaming platforms or other, more traditional, marketing channels, the video platform is a primary source for interested consumers to get the latest updates on their favorite yet unpublished video game. When watching the newest trailers, YouTube users can share their attitude towards the displayed content via a simple thumbs-up or down rating system. Might the volume of trailer views or the ratio of thumbs-up offer marketers an indication towards their tentpole title's commercial potential? The task of this master thesis is to produce a video game data set and subsequently test the impact of YouTube user sentiments on video game success.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber

M9. A genre out of its time – How movie genres reflect different time periods

While some still reminisce about the golden era of the Western, others are happily experiencing the ongoing heyday of the superhero comic book adaptation in cinemas. As an established success factor, movie genres provide audiences with referential cues on what to expect from a certain movie. However, as movies are also experience goods with highly volatile demand, dependent on moods, tastes and cultural phenomena, their factor strengths are also prone to fluctuations dependent on an ongoing zeitgeist. Thus, this master thesis aims at analyzing changing impact strengths of genres for movie box office success. The candidate will create a dataset including individual years from several decades to assess how the effect of genres has changed over time.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber



M10. Box office success in Chinese markets

While most cinemas in the US, as well as in Europe remain closed due to the ongoing pandemic, the box office in China is ringing again. Although research provides a multitude of works on the successful marketing and distribution of motion pictures, market differences only receive occasional attention. However, the relevance of the Chinese market is undisputed and keeps continuously increasing for international film productions. The task of this master thesis is to assess established box office success factors for their role on the Chinese movie market. Thus, the candidate requires respective language skills and will strongly benefit from prior cultural experience.

Supervisor: Nicolas Weber