

Current Topics for Master Theses at the Department of Sales & Services Marketing

Advisor: Ann-Kathrin Polenz, M. Sc.

Topic	Exploring Minority Experiences Online: An Eye Tracking Study
Abstract	This thesis investigates minorities and perceptions of minorities in user-generated content using eye tracking technology. By focusing on attention patterns, it aims to uncover the challenges and opportunities faced by minorities online. The study will be conducted at least partly in Mannheim.
Topic	The Impact of Review Platform Design Choices on Consumer Decision-Making
Abstract	Online reviews play a pivotal role in shaping consumer decisions. This study investigates how the design of online review systems influences consumer perceptions and subsequent consumer decision making. To do so, empirical research in form of online experiments is conducted.
Topic	User Profile Information in User-Generated Content
Abstract	The influence of user profile information, including elements such as name, profile photo, age, and other demographic details, plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of user-generated content. This master thesis explores the ways in which these elements impact the interpretation and reception of digital content by conducting an empirical study.
Topic	Corporate Sociopolitical Activism – State of the Art in Germany
Abstract	This thesis examines the emerging role of corporations in sociopolitical activism, focusing on their motivations, strategies, and impacts. It analyzes

	<p>how German corporations navigate the intersection of commerce and advocacy, weighing the benefits and risks of such involvement. This master thesis uses a qualitative approach to investigate current developments.</p>
	<p>Please contact Ann-Kathrin Polenz, M.Sc. (ann-kathrin.polenz@uni-mannheim.de) for further information.</p>

Advisor: Giuliana Francesca Manganaro, M.A.

Topic	Words of Power: Crafting a Dictionary of Dominance
Abstract	This Master's Thesis delves into the intricate language patterns that signify the power motive in organizational and interpersonal communication. By crafting a specialized dictionary that captures the nuanced vocabulary of dominance, control, and influence, this study aims to empirically analyze how power dynamics are linguistically constructed. The research will utilize state-of-the-art text analysis tools to explore the prevalence and impact of power-related language in various contexts, providing deep insights into the role of language in the manifestation of power within society.
Topic	The Language of Belonging: Unveiling the Lexicon of Affiliation
Abstract	This research focuses on the linguistic markers of the affiliation motive, aiming to uncover which words are used by people who have a strong sense of affiliation. The cornerstone of this study is the creation of a tailored dictionary to identify key terms associated with collaboration, harmony, and community. By applying text-mining techniques, the thesis investigates how affiliation is expressed across different social settings, contributing to a deeper understanding of language's role.
Topic	Words of Victory: A Linguistic Study on Achievement
Abstract	This Master's Thesis investigates the language of achievement, focusing on how words and phrases reflect the drive for success and accomplishment. By developing a comprehensive dictionary that highlights the vocabulary of goals, challenges, and performance, this study aims to analyze the linguistic expression of the achievement motive. Through rigorous empirical research, the thesis seeks to uncover patterns in how achievement-oriented language influences motivation and outcomes in various domains.

Topic	CEOs' Image Sells: Which Characteristics Drive the Perception of Organizational Purpose?
Abstract	Embark on a research journey investigating which characteristics of a CEO increase the perception of "Organizational Purpose." By identifying the most influential CEO characteristics through deep analysis and empirical exploration, this study provides critical insights for enhancing how organizational purpose is perceived. This opportunity is tailored for those dedicated to improving organizational dynamics through the personal image of the CEO. By addressing the impact of specific CEO characteristics on organizational purpose, this research offers the potential to shape the future of organizational strategy.
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Advisor: Vladislav Kucher, M. Sc.

Topic	Enhanced Market Analytics: Harnessing Network Analysis in Graph Theory
Abstract	Graph theory is a branch of mathematics examining the structures and modeling the relationships between objects. Within the scope of this study, graph analysis can be thought of as (1) a method of predictors extraction that relies on graph theory and (2) a powerful tool for discovering valuable information about relationships in complex data, which present significant business opportunities. This study will leverage the power of graph analysis to infer and optimize different strategies in the domain of marketing.
Topic	Driving Marketing Success: The Integral Role of Recommender Systems
Abstract	This thesis explores the comprehensive application of recommender system (RS) algorithms across various facets of marketing. The focus is on showcasing their potential to revolutionize marketing strategies and operations. By integrating RS algorithms into marketing practices, businesses can achieve goals such as personalized customer experiences, optimized product pricing, and efficient inventory management. The study highlights the role of RS in enhancing customer engagement, increasing sales, and improving operational efficiencies. It also examines the use of RS in market segmentation and predictive analytics, enabling marketers to anticipate customer needs and tailor their strategies accordingly. Overall, this study establishes the indispensable value of recommender systems as a tool for achieving marketing excellence and driving business growth in an increasingly competitive market environment.
Topic	Exploring Machine Learning Approaches to Enhance Business Performance Through Predictive Analytics
Abstract	Marketing analytics often employ a variety of machine learning models, each with distinct characteristics that make them optimal for specific applications. Fine-tuning these models is a key element in the data mining process. In data-driven marketing, the methodology involves applying multiple models to a particular case, adjusting their hyperparameters, and assessing their performance. This thesis will focus on a specific marketing use case, where we will conduct a data-driven analysis and compare the effectiveness of various machine learning models, while emphasizing on the technical aspects of each algorithm.

Topic	Inference, Explainability, Causality and Generalization in Machine Learning: Enhancing Algorithmic Understanding and Efficiency
Abstract	<p>The traditional CRISP-DM process starts with understanding the business context, followed by data collection, model development, and deployment. While causality can be part of this process, it is often overshadowed by the focus on improving predictive accuracy. However, recent advancements in both algorithmic techniques—particularly in causal inference—and the field of explainable AI (XAI) have equipped 21st-century marketing researchers with tools that not only predict outcomes but also explain the performance of complex machine learning models. In this study, we will develop and evaluate various machine learning models to address key marketing research questions, with an emphasis on interpreting model outputs, deriving and validating causal relationships, and ensuring robustness and generalizability.</p>
	<p>Please contact Vladislav Kucher, M.Sc. (vkucher@mail.uni-mannheim.de) for further information.</p>