ANNOUNCEMENT

Bachelor Thesis

KEYWORDS

- Social media
- Influencer marketing
- Advertising
- Human Brands
- Empirical analysis

TOPIC: PERFORMANCE OF INFLUENCER POSTINGS – OPINIONS, CORRECT LABELED AND CAMOUFLAGED ADVERTISEMENTS

The growth of social media (e.g., Instagram and Facebook) allows its users to market themselves as influencers (e.g., Kim Kardashian). Nowadays, professional influencers have millions of followers and thus they reach even more consumers than local radio stations. Hence, influencers are an interesting marketing instrument for companies, which allows for effective advertising, risk spreading, and direct consumer responses through backchannels (Bakshy 2011).

In the past, it was not always obvious if a social media post was paid or not. Nowadays, the situation changed and at least most federal state laws (e.g., Telemediengesetz in Germany) or authorities (e.g., federal trade commission in the US) force influencers to correctly label posts with commercial intent. From a company's point of view, 'hidden but paid for' advertising or 'advertising in camouflage' (e.g., guerrilla or buzz marketing) is known for its high effectiveness (Hutter 2011). Furthermore, practitioners already report that effectiveness of influencer marketing rapidly decreases if they label ads correctly (Müller 2017). But there are also threats from an influencer's perspective. For example, user response metrics (i.e., number of likes and sentiment of comments) are sensitive: A mistake (e.g., spelling errors in a tweet), the disclosure of unpopular political views (e.g., PewDiePie's antisemitism accusation) or unnaturally presented products (e.g., Coral's social media campaign) may lead to a social media crisis and hurt the influencer's reputation even in the long-term. Thus, influencers may avoid labelling their posts as sponsored which likely gets negatively perceived and deter their followers. So, there are incentives for both companies and influencers to use camouflaged ads.

In this thesis, the student should compare the (user response) effectiveness of different types of influencer postings: As a first stage, the student will have to categorize given posts into the groups 1) correctly labelled ad 2) wrongly labelled ad 3) camouflaged ad and 4) no ad. In a second step, the student will analyze the effectiveness of each post in terms of consumer response.

Deep math and data analysis skills are required to write this thesis. Thus, math understanding and/or python/R-programming skills are highly recommended.

LITERATURE:

- **Müller F. (2017):** "Die Kennzeichnung werblicher Inhalte wirkt sich schnell negativ auf die Reichweite aus", http://www.horizont.net/marketing/nachrichten/Instagram-Star-Nois7-im-Interview-Die-Kennzeichnung-werblicher-Inhalte-wirkt-sich-schnell-negativ-auf-die-Reichweite-aus-162575
- **Hutter, K., & Hoffmann, S. (2011):** Guerrilla marketing: The nature of the concept and propositions for further research. Asian Journal of Marketing, 5(2), 39-54.
- **Bakshy, E., Hofman, J. M., Mason, W. A., & Watts, D. J. (2011):** Everyone's an influencer: quantifying influence on twitter. In Proceedings of the fourth ACM international conference on Web search and data mining (pp. 65-74). ACM.

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APPLICATION

Applications with CV and transcript of records should be sent to Christian Hotz-Behofsits (christian.hotz-behofsits@wu.ac.at).