

The Use of Badges on Digital Platforms: An Empirical Analysis

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Type: Bachelor's Thesis, Master's Thesis

Language: German or English

Motivation:

Leading digital platforms, such as Airbnb and Amazon, increasingly rely on badges to guide consumer choice. Prior research has focused exclusively on endorsement badges (e.g., Airbnb's "Guest Favorite" badge), conceptualizing badges as positive quality signals intended to highlight platform-recommended products. However, platforms have recently introduced punishment badges (e.g., Airbnb's "Bottom 10 %" or Amazon's "Frequently returned item" badge) to highlight platform offerings that consumers should avoid.

Goal:

The objective of this thesis is to analyze data from a 2x2 survey experiment and report the findings using relevant statistical methods. The main research question is how punitive and/or endorsement badges influence consumers' choice of accommodation on Airbnb. The experiment also addresses the underlying mechanism. Students will also provide a theoretical background for the experiment and delve deeper into research on badges, positive and negative signals, and relevant theories. The exact details of the thesis will be discussed when the topic is assigned.

References and Related Literature:

Bairathi, M., Zhang, X., & Lambrecht, A. "The value of platform endorsement," *Marketing Science*, 44(1), 84–101.

Dewan, S., Kim, J., & Nian, T. "Economic impacts of platform-endorsed quality certification: Evidence from Airbnb." *MIS Quarterly*, 47(3), 1353–1368.

Lill, M., Stich, N. G. L., & Spann, M. (2025). Article 4: Product Badges and Consumer Choice on Digital Platforms¹. *Influence of Recommender Systems on Consumer Behavior*, 17, 111.

Rozin, P., & Royzman, E. "Negativity bias, negativity dominance, and contagion," *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 5(4), 296–320.