

The Influence of Political Messaging on Human Brand Consumption

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Abstract

Human brands, such as music artists, increasingly comment on political issues, yet there is little empirical evidence about how this messaging affects their brand performance. This paper examines these effects across two studies. First, we analyze Taylor Swift's endorsement of the Democratic candidate in the 2024 U.S. election. Because she is similarly popular across politically diverse regions, her endorsement could have sparked both boycotts and buycotts. We find no evidence of boycotts, but streams increased by roughly 5% in strongly Democratic areas, suggesting limited reputational risk and a potential promotional benefit for audiences that align politically. Second, to generalize these insights, we study the social media posts of more than 7,000 artists. Using a stacked difference-in-differences design, we estimate how U.S. streams respond to political, personal and promotional postings, providing broader evidence on how online engagement shapes human brand consumption.

Track: Digital Marketing & Social Media