BACHELOR THESIS

KEYWORDS

- False claims (greenwashing, rainbow-washing, fake news)
- Social media
- False advertising

TOPIC: PREVALENCE AND IMPACT OF FALSE CLAIMS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

False claims on social media have become a growing concern in recent years. With the rise of social media platforms and their widespread use as sources of information, false claims can spread quickly and have a significant impact on public opinion and behavior. These claims can take many forms, from misleading advertisements to fake news stories and conspiracy theories. Despite efforts by social media companies to combat false claims, they continue to proliferate on these platforms. This has led to calls for more research into the prevalence and impact of false claims on social media.

This thesis topic can take a few directions:

1. Exploit current events that affect the exposure or availability of false claims on social media platforms, and measure the impact on consumer behavior, such as website visits, purchases or brand attitude.
2. Analyze how false claims and health information on social media influence consumers' attitudes and decisions regarding health-related products or services, such as vaccines or supplements.
3. Develop and test interventions to reduce the spread and influence of false claims on social media, such as labeling, fact-checking, nudging or education.
4. Examine how consumers perceive and respond to different types of false claims on social media, such as satire, parody, propaganda or clickbait.
5. Explore how consumers' social networks and interactions affect their exposure to and sharing of fake news on social media platforms such as TikTok or Twitter.
6. Evaluate how fake news on social media affects consumers' trust and loyalty toward brands, products or services that are either targeted or endorsed by fake news sources.

All of these topics have to be based on empirical evidence and include at least a small quantitative analysis. That is why you should be comfortable with programming and quantitative methods (webscraping, using APIs, statistical analysis), or be willing to learn how to do that.

LITERATURE & LINKS

https://news.usc.edu/204782/usc-study-reveals-the-key-reason-why-fake-news-spreads-on-social-media/

Visentin, M., Pizzi, G., & Pichierri, M. (2019). Fake News, Real Problems for Brands: The Impact of Content Truthfulness and Source Credibility on consumers' Behavioral Intentions toward the Advertised Brands. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 45*(1), 99–112. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2018.09.001

Chang, C. (2011) Feeling Ambivalent About Going Green, *Journal of Advertising, 40*(4), 19-32. https://doi.org/10.2753/JOA0091-3367400402

Aaker, J., Fournier, S., & Brasel, A. (2004) When Good Brands Do Bad, *Journal of Consumer Research, 31*(1), 1–16, https://doi.org/10.1086/383419

Pittman, M., & Abell, A. (2021). More Trust in Fewer Followers: Diverging Effects of Popularity Metrics and Green Orientation Social Media Influencers. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, *56*(1), 70–82. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2021.05.002

Wu, Y., & Geylani, T. (2020) Regulating Deceptive Advertising: False Claims and Skeptical Consumers. *Marketing Science 39*(4):788-806. https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2020.1221

He, S., Hollenbeck, B. & Proserpio, D. (2022) The Market for Fake Reviews. *Marketing Science 41*(5):896-921. https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2022.1353

Chiou, L., & Tucker, c. (2018). "**Fake News and Advertising on Social Media: A Study of the Anti-Vaccination Movement**," NBER Working Papers 25223, National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc.

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HOW TO APPLY

You can apply for this topic by filling in the **application form** (available here) and sending it to Alicja Grzadziel (alicja.grzadziel@wu.ac.at).