



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI PADOVA

**DIPARTIMENTO DI TECNICA E GESTIONE DEI SISTEMI INDUSTRIALI
CORSO DI LAUREA MAGISTRALE IN INGEGNERIA GESTIONALE**

**THESIS TITLE:
A CONCEPTUAL MODEL TO PROTECT
BRAND REPUTATION FACING FAKE NEWS**

**SUPERVISOR:
PROF. ENRICO SCARSO**

**STUDENT
NIMA TARAGHI**

Academic year 2022-2023

CONTENTS	PAGE
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY	3
CHAPTER 2: HYPOTHESIS AND METHODOLOGY	11
CHAPTER 3: UNDERSTANDING FAKE NEWS	15
CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDIES AND STORIES	35
CHAPTER 5: CONCEPTUAL MODEL	39
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	75
REFERECES	81

TABLES

Table 1: A classification of Fake News categories	26
Table 2: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be created by consumers	51
Table 3: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be disseminated by consumers	56
Table 4: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be amplified by consumers	59
Table 5: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be created by third parties	62
Table 6: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be disseminated by third parties	66
Table 7: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be amplified by third parties	68
Table 8: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be amplified by brand itself	71
Table 9: Summary of case studies and main methodologies	72
Table 10: The importance of methodologies	73

FIGURES

Figure 1: Overlaps between misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation	7
Figure 2: A typology of Fake News definitions	25
Figure 3: A conceptual model about how Fake News affect customer behavior	32
Figure 4: A conceptual model about how players contribute in Fake News process	45
Figure 5: How Greggs responded to Fake News on twitter	47
Figure 6: An example of GE posting an infographic to their Twitter.	48
Figure 7: Example of sharing Fake News on ABC 10 News	53
Figure 8: CDC's tweet addressing the misinformation	57

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my family for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout this academic journey. Their constant belief in me and their efforts in preparing me mentally for the challenges that arise in life have been invaluable. Their love and guidance have been my pillars of strength, enabling me to navigate through difficult situations with resilience.

I take full responsibility for any flaws and mistakes present in this thesis. The shortcomings are solely my own, a result of my learning process. However, I am deeply thankful for the guidance and mentorship of Professor ENRICO SCARSO. His steadfast support, insightful feedback, and dedication to my growth have played a pivotal role in shaping this thesis. His expertise has been a guiding light that has enriched my understanding and approach to the subject matter.

ABSTRACT

The proliferation of Fake News in the digital age poses a significant challenge for brands, as misinformation spreads rapidly across social media platforms. This research aims to explore the impact of Fake News on brands and their customers, categorize different types of Fake News, and propose a conceptual model for brand reputation protection against Fake News. By reviewing existing literature on Fake News, brand management, and the consequences of Fake News on brands and consumers, this study identifies a research gap in the managerial approaches that brands can employ to mitigate the impact of Fake News. Existing techniques for Fake News detection and mitigation are examined, including content-based, network-based, and user-based approaches. The potential impact of Fake News on brand reputation and image is discussed, emphasizing the importance of brand management and building brand equity. The research concludes that further investigation is required to develop effective strategies for brands to detect and counter Fake News while enhancing resilience against Fake News attacks in the digital era. This study aims to contribute to the development of proactive methodologies for brand reputation protection in the context of Fake News dissemination.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Fake News has become a pervasive issue in today's digital age, and technology-based applications have played an optimal role in the rapid growth of it (Khan et al., 2022) with misinformation spreading rapidly across social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. This phenomenon has been facilitated by advances in technology, which have made it easier for Fake News to go viral and reach a wider audience.

While digital media provides numerous benefits, such as facilitating social connections and information sharing, it also poses significant challenges, particularly with respect to the spread of Fake News, furthermore social media platforms such as Facebook have a dramatically different structure than previous media technologies (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

The consequences of Fake News can be severe, particularly for brands that rely on their reputation to maintain customer trust and loyalty. False or misleading information can damage a brand's reputation (Cheng & Chiou, 2013), erode customer confidence, and ultimately lead to financial losses. Therefore, it is essential for companies to develop proactive methodologies to protect their brand reputation against the spread of Fake News.

The goal of this study is to explore the nature and impact of Fake News on brands (and their customers), identify the different categories of Fake News, and propose a conceptual model that can help companies protect their brand reputation facing Fake News. We will examine the common methodologies that companies can use to counter Fake News and safeguard their reputation, and propose a model that takes into account the various stakeholders involved in brand reputation management.

By providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of Fake News and proposing a proactive approach to brand reputation protection, this study aims to contribute to the development of effective strategies for companies to compete in this new era of digital media.

1.2 Articulation of the study

The present study endeavors to investigate the intricate phenomenon of Fake News. The research commences with a comprehensive review of pertinent literature to elucidate the essence of Fake News and its subsequent categorization. Furthermore, **Chapter 2** delineates the research hypotheses, questions, and methodologies underpinning this investigation.

In the subsequent chapter, **Chapter 3**, we expound upon the definitive concept of Fake News, explicate its various categorizations, and analyze its profound impact on both brands and consumer behavior. To bolster the analysis, illustrative case examples are proffered, substantiating the arguments presented. Moreover, this section delves into the mechanism through which Fake News proliferates, with a discerning focus on key actors involved in its dissemination.

Chapter 4 is dedicated to the meticulous examination of pertinent case studies, affording a deeper comprehension of the effects of Fake News on brands. These in-depth investigations serve to illuminate the intricate interplay between Fake News and its implications for brand reputation and consumer perceptions.

In **Chapter 5**, a comprehensive conceptual model is proposed, encompassing best practices that brands can adopt to effectively combat the spread of Fake News. Additionally, a fundamental model is constructed based on the pivotal actors involved in the Fake News dissemination process.

The conclusive segment of this thesis summarizes the key findings and derives implications for both academia and industry. Proactive strategies are recommended as a means for brands to diligently confront the challenges posed by Fake News, safeguarding their reputations and maintaining consumer trust. By shedding light on this critical issue, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on media, communication, and consumer behavior.

1.3 Preliminary Literature Review

In the rapidly evolving digital era, the proliferation of Fake News has emerged as a substantial and consequential issue, posing considerable risks to both individuals and organizations alike. To comprehend and address this multifaceted problem, numerous scholarly investigations have been conducted, focusing on the

comprehensive delineation of Fake News, its various categorizations, and endeavors to distinguish it from authentic news sources. Additionally, considerable attention has been devoted to exploring news credibility and developing methodologies for detecting and combatting the dissemination of deceptive information. However, amidst this scholarly landscape, a noticeable paucity exists concerning managerial approaches that brands can adopt to effectively mitigate the impact of Fake News on their reputation and consumer perceptions. The imperative of this literature review is to undertake a thorough exploration of existing studies encompassing Fake News, brand management, and the intricate interplay between Fake News and its ramifications on brands and consumers. Moreover, this review seeks to identify the pertinent gaps in the literature, recognizing areas that necessitate further investigation and elucidation to devise proactive strategies for brands in their ongoing battle against the detrimental effects of Fake News. By amalgamating insights from these diverse research domains, this literature review endeavors to provide a comprehensive foundation for the subsequent chapters, offering a cogent and informed analysis of the subject matter at hand.

1.3.1 Defining Fake News and Categorization

The notion of Fake News has garnered considerable attention in recent research, prompting scholars to provide comprehensive definitions and categorizations to elucidate its complex nature. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) aptly described Fake News as "fabricated information that mimics news media content in form but not in organizational process or intent." Building on this foundational definition, Lazer et al. (2018) further categorized Fake News into three distinct types: MISINFORMATION, DISINFORMATION, and MALINFORMATION.

A) MISINFORMATION

Misinformation entails the inadvertent spread of incorrect information without any intention to deceive or cause harm. This category encompasses instances where users inadvertently disseminate false statements, often detached from any larger political or economic agenda. For instance, a user mistakenly posting that " $2 + 2 = 5$ " without

malicious intent exemplifies misinformation (Iona College Research Essentials, 2023).

B) DISINFORMATION

Disinformation, on the other hand, involves the deliberate dissemination of false information with the explicit purpose of deceiving and causing harm. The motivations driving the spread of disinformation may range from financial gains to political manipulation or even to sow chaos for its own sake. Historical instances of disinformation include rumors like the claim that Lee Harvey Oswald assassinated President Kennedy on behalf of the Soviets during the Cold War, which aimed to escalate tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union (Iona College Research Essentials, 2023).

Both misinformation and disinformation share the commonality of circulating false or debunked information; however, the distinguishing factor lies in the intent and purpose behind their propagation (Business Insider, June 15, 2023).

C) MALINFORMATION

In contrast, malinformation entails the dissemination of true information with the explicit intent to cause harm. The harm may be inflicted by presenting the true statement out of context or targeting vulnerable individuals at specific moments. For example, a post discussing the offshore investments revealed in the 2017 Paradise Papers to undermine and harm the British monarchy exemplifies malinformation. While the Paradise Papers indeed exposed tax-evasive offshore investments among some members of the British monarchy, the purpose of the post is to inflict damage rather than to inform people about tax malfeasance (Iona College Research Essentials, 2023).

This comprehensive categorization of Fake News provides a solid foundation for understanding the diverse manifestations of deceptive information dissemination in contemporary media landscapes. By discerning the nuances between misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation (Figure 1), researchers and practitioners can devise more targeted strategies to combat the deleterious effects of Fake News on individuals and organizations.

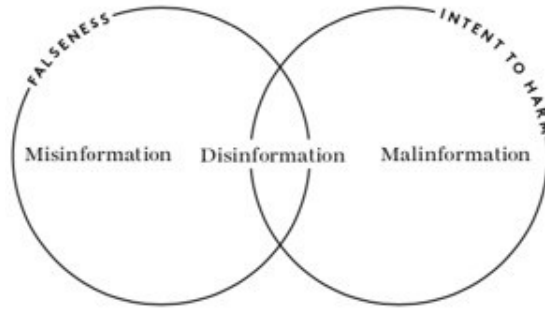


Figure 1: Overlaps between misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation (Iona College Research Essentials, 2023).

1.3.2 Detection and Mitigation Fake News impacts

Detecting and mitigating the pervasive spread of Fake News has been a focal point of research and has given rise to a multitude of proposed techniques. Jin and Liu (2017) conducted a comprehensive survey, elucidating various identification and mitigation methods, which can be categorized into content-based, network-based, and user-based approaches. Content-based approaches employ sophisticated analyses of textual features to discern patterns indicative of Fake News, while network-based approaches delve into the intricate propagation patterns of deceptive information to identify and track its dissemination. In parallel, user-based approaches leverage user features and behavioral traits to unearth instances of Fake News within digital media. Building upon these efforts, Ahmad Khan et al. (2022) introduced a comprehensive framework for the control of Fake News diffusion across digital platforms, encompassing four distinct stages: **prevention, detection, response, and evaluation**. This multifaceted framework aims to proactively thwart the dissemination of deceptive information, promptly identify its emergence, execute appropriate response measures, and continually evaluate the effectiveness of the mitigation strategies. These amalgamated insights contribute to the development of robust systems capable of effectively detecting and mitigating the harmful impact of Fake News, thereby fostering more informed and discerning media consumption behaviors.

1.3.3 Brand Management and Fake News

The repercussions of Fake News on brand reputation and image cannot be underestimated. Naher, An, & Kim (2019) conducted research revealing the influence of social media in propagating crises to a viral extent, thereby significantly impacting corporate and brand reputation. In a contrasting perspective, Fieseler and Fleck (2016) argued that social media could also serve as a platform for corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication, allowing companies to showcase their philanthropic endeavors and positive contributions to society. Nonetheless, it is essential to recognize that the power of social media can work both ways, as negative online reviews, as highlighted by Wang and Chen (2019), can exert an adverse effect on brand image, potentially eroding consumer trust and loyalty. To navigate these challenges, brand managers must draw on the insights provided by prominent scholars like Aaker (1996) and Keller (1998), who stress the paramount significance of building strong brands and effectively managing brand equity. By implementing robust brand management strategies and cultivating positive associations with consumers, organizations can shield their brands against the damaging effects of Fake News and other online influences, ultimately fostering lasting brand equity and resilience in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

1.3.4 Gap in Literature: Managerial Approaches to Mitigate Fake News Impact on Brands

The surge of Fake News in the digital era poses a significant challenge for brands, particularly with the amplifying effect of social media on the dissemination of false information. Although considerable research has been devoted to defining and detecting Fake News, there remains a noteworthy dearth of studies exploring the managerial approaches that brands can adopt to effectively mitigate its impact. Sharif, Awan, and Paracha (2021) emphasized the need for organizations to comprehend the influence of Fake News on consumer behavioral intentions towards brands. In a related vein, Diakopoulos (2019) advocated for algorithmic accountability as a measure to combat Fake News, and Tandoc et al. (2017) proposed

a conceptual framework delineating audiences' authentication practice in the face of Fake News proliferation. However, a more comprehensive investigation is warranted to identify and implement robust strategies for brands to proficiently detect and mitigate the adverse effects of Fake News while concurrently building resilience against potential attacks. As this literature review has illuminated, the existing research landscape underscores the urgency and importance of delving into unexplored avenues, shedding light on novel approaches to safeguarding brand reputation in the face of deceptive information dissemination. Thus, future research endeavors should endeavor to address these crucial gaps, paving the way for a more informed and resilient approach to countering the impact of Fake News on brands in the digital age.

CHAPTER 2: HYPOTHESIS AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the objectives, research questions, and methodologies employed in the study, aiming to explore the various approaches and techniques used by companies in crisis management to combat Fake News, as well as to propose a conceptual model and holistic approach as best practices for companies and brands to effectively address the challenges posed by Fake News.

2.1 Research Questions

The research in this study is guided by the following key questions:

Question 1: What are the common techniques and methodologies employed by companies and brands to address Fake News? In this study, we aim to identify and analyze the various strategies and practices that companies and brands commonly use to tackle the spread and impact of Fake News. By examining a diverse range of sources, we seek to gain a comprehensive understanding of the methods used in crisis management to combat the dissemination of false information.

Question 2: What constitutes a holistic proactive approach and best practices for companies and brands to effectively combat Fake News? Our research delves into the concept of a holistic proactive approach, aiming to identify the best practices that companies and brands can adopt to counter the influence of Fake News. By exploring successful case studies and drawing on expert insights, we aim to develop a comprehensive framework that can guide organizations in their efforts to address Fake News effectively.

2.2 Research Methodology

To address the research questions and achieve the study's objectives, we employed a two-fold research methodology, which includes a literature review and case studies.

2.2.1 Literature Review:

A literature review was conducted to establish a solid theoretical foundation for this study, this involved a rigorous and exhaustive examination of existing research and publications related to Fake News. By identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing findings from a wide range of scholarly articles, books, and reports, we aimed to gain comprehensive insights into the current techniques and methodologies used by companies and brands in their endeavors to combat Fake News.

The literature review not only provided an overview of the current state of research on Fake News but also facilitated the identification of gaps and emerging trends in crisis management strategies. By critically analyzing the available literature, we were better equipped to formulate effective recommendations and best practices for organizations dealing with Fake News.

2.2.2 Case Studies:

The data presented in this study were obtained through the utilization of secondary sources, specifically existing reports and detailed analyses of case studies. Barbour and Eley (2007) claim that turning to secondary sources can produce valuable outcomes, also these sources of secondary information might even provide more accurate data compared to what is acquired through primary research (Joselyn 1977, 15). To complement our theoretical findings with practical insights, we conducted in-depth case studies in addition to a literature review. These case studies provided invaluable exploration of real-world scenarios, offering detailed accounts of how companies and brands navigated the challenges posed by Fake News in diverse contexts.

Given the scarcity of real-time data on crisis management strategies employed by companies and brands to combat Fake News, we integrated the reuse of qualitative data from previous research projects. Carefully reanalyzing and reinterpreting the qualitative data from this prior study in the context of our research enabled a deeper exploration of the subject matter.

To ensure a comprehensive representation of various industries, organizational sizes, and geographical locations, we meticulously selected a diverse set of case studies. Examining the experiences of different companies and brands grappling

with Fake News challenges allowed us to gain a nuanced understanding of their crisis management efforts, strategies, processes, and outcomes.

The combination of the literature review and case studies facilitated a thorough and multi-faceted exploration of the current techniques and methodologies adopted by companies and brands to address Fake News. The insights derived from both sources collectively served as a robust foundation for the development of a conceptual model and holistic approach, presenting valuable best practices to guide organizations in their endeavor to effectively combat Fake News.

With this rigorous research methodology in place, our study aims to make a significant contribution to the understanding of crisis management in the context of Fake News. The actionable insights offered by this research hold the potential to aid organizations in safeguarding their reputation and upholding their integrity in an era dominated by an ever-expanding proliferation of information.

CHAPTER 3: UNDERSTANDING FAKE NEWS

In this chapter, we're going to take a close look at **Fake News** and how it can affect brands. We'll start by understanding what Fake News really means. Then, we'll see how it can cause problems for brands. This will help us see how spreading false information can impact the way people see and trust different brands.

3.1 What is Fake News?

Fake News refers to news articles that are intentionally and verifiably false, aiming to mislead readers (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). In today's digital age, the ease of creating and disseminating information has contributed to the proliferation of Fake News. Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) argue that Fake News arises due to several factors, including its lower cost compared to providing accurate information, the inability of consumers to easily determine accuracy, and the potential preference for partisan news.

3.2 Impact on Brands

Fake News can have far-reaching impacts on brands, affecting various aspects such as reputation, competitiveness, and profit (Sharif, Awan, & Paracha, 2021). In this section, we delve into the specific implications of Fake News on brands and their operations.

A) Reputational Losses

One of the most significant consequences of Fake News for brands is reputational losses. The rapid spread of false or misleading information can tarnish a brand's image and credibility, eroding the trust and confidence that customers previously had in the brand. Such reputational damage can be challenging to rectify, as restoring trust and loyalty often demands significant efforts and time.

Reputational losses can further escalate, leading to strained relationships with stakeholders, including investors, business partners, and even employees. Negative perceptions about the brand may also extend to its products or services, impacting

customer loyalty and willingness to engage with the company. As a result, the overall value and competitiveness of the brand may decline, hindering its growth and profitability.

B) Share Prices and Sales

The impact of Fake News on brands extends to their financial performance, with share prices and sales often bearing the brunt of misinformation. False or malicious narratives circulating about a brand can create uncertainty among investors, leading to a loss of confidence in the company's future prospects. Consequently, the company's stock prices may plummet, adversely affecting shareholder value.

Beyond the financial markets, Fake News can significantly influence consumer behavior. Misleading information can sway consumer perceptions, leading them to make purchase decisions based on inaccurate or biased data. As a result, consumers might boycott the brand or refrain from buying its products, directly impacting sales revenue and market share.

The consequences of Fake News on brands extend beyond their immediate financial and reputational impacts. Fake News can contribute to broader societal issues (Morais da Silva et al., 2023), including the erosion of public trust in media and information sources. As misinformation spreads unchecked, individuals may become increasingly skeptical about the reliability of news and the credibility of information providers.

Moreover, Fake News can exacerbate social polarization by creating misinformation-driven narratives that divide communities and perpetuate conflicts (Mwangi, 2023). In an age where information spreads rapidly through social media and online platforms, the unchecked proliferation of Fake News can intensify societal tensions and widen ideological divides.

The impact of Fake News on brands is multi-faceted, encompassing reputational damage, financial implications, and broader societal consequences. It underscores the critical importance for companies and organizations to proactively address Fake News and implement robust crisis management strategies. By actively combating misinformation and promoting transparency and accuracy, brands can protect their reputation, maintain customer trust, and uphold their competitiveness in an ever-evolving information landscape. Additionally, a collective effort from media

platforms, governments, and the public is necessary to curb the spread of Fake News and foster a more informed and responsible society.

The following example demonstrates how Fake News affects Tesla's reputation: A video surfaced in January 2019 purportedly showing a Tesla “self-driving vehicle” slam into a robot prototype at CES, a consumer electronics show heavily attended by tech reporters from across the globe. It wasn’t long before the video went viral, with a number of outlets running headlines claiming “Self-driving Tesla car kills robot.”

The only problem was that the video was completely **fake**. Tesla does not currently have a self-driving model, and the robot that was “killed” was in fact part of an elaborate publicity stunt conjured up by the Russian firm that developed it. Some experts in the disinformation field suspect the caper was not any kind of bot promotion but rather a deliberate attack on the American stock market by "foreign actors" trying to undermine consumer acceptance and trust in self-driving cars and drive down stock prices in companies that develop them.

As automakers and billion-dollar startups such as Lyft, Uber and Tesla stake their future on a consumer shift to autonomous driving, public confidence in self-driving is a crucial factor in that success.

With three out of four Americans saying they are afraid of self-driving cars, a robot getting “killed” by Tesla likely did little to allay that negative perception.

More recently, footage started to circulate online Sunday that showed a Tesla Model “S car” “burst into flames in a Shanghai parking garage. Tesla announced it would investigate the video, which had been shared from the Twitter handle **@Shanghaijayin**. While there is no indication that the video was faked or intended to damage Tesla, it comes from an account that frequently posts footage of electric vehicle fires.

The incident drew international attention, and by Monday morning Tesla shares had slipped. The company's chief executive, Elon Musk, questioned the media interest, tweeting on Tuesday: "Over a million-combustion engine (it’s right there in the name!) car fires per year & thousands of deaths, but one Tesla car fire with no injuries gets biggest headlines. Why the double standard? This is a real question." (NBC News, May 2, 2023)

The example presented highlights how Fake News can significantly impact the reputation of companies like Tesla. In one instance, a fabricated video showed a Tesla "self-driving vehicle" colliding with a robot prototype at a tech show, creating misleading headlines that tarnished Tesla's image. The video went viral, raising doubts about the safety of self-driving cars and undermining public confidence in Tesla's technology.

Similarly, a separate incident involving a Tesla Model "S car" catching fire in a Shanghai parking garage garnered international attention, leading to a drop in Tesla's stock value. While there is no evidence that the video was fake, such incidents can contribute to negative perceptions and concerns among the public.

As companies like Tesla heavily rely on consumer trust and confidence, Fake News can be a potent tool to manipulate public opinion and impact stock prices. The deliberate dissemination of misinformation may aim to undermine public acceptance of self-driving technology, affecting the success of automakers and startups investing in autonomous driving.

These examples emphasize the importance of combatting Fake News and promoting transparency to safeguard a company's reputation in an era where misinformation can spread rapidly through social media and online platforms. Maintaining public trust is vital for companies as they navigate the challenges of emerging technologies and seek to build a sustainable future.

3.3 Fake News categories

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of **Fake News**, it is necessary to examine the various types of Fake News that exist. We can further categorize Fake News based on the intentions of its creators. This approach provides insights into the reasons behind spreading Fake News, its effects on people and society, and potential countermeasures against it. It is important to note that Fake News can take many different forms, ranging from fabricated stories to misleading headlines, and can be spread through various mediums including social media, traditional news outlets, and private messaging platforms. Therefore, a thorough exploration of the different types of Fake News is necessary to grasp the complexity of this issue. Tandoc Jr. et al. (2018) indicates that there are six primary categories of Fake News, as follows:

1-News satire

News Satire refers to mock news programs, like *The Daily Show*, that use humor and exaggeration to present satirical news updates. While resembling traditional news broadcasts, these programs prioritize entertainment and self-identify as comedians or entertainers. They inject humor to engage a younger audience through wry, sarcastic graphics, and comments. Despite their satirical nature, research shows that viewers of news satire are as knowledgeable about current affairs as consumers of other news media. News satire plays a significant role in shaping public discourse, opinions, and political trust. It provides critiques of political, economic, or social affairs while situating daily news within a broader context, highlighting inconsistencies or contradictions. Despite being labeled as Fake News, these satirical programs are based on actual events (Tandoc Jr. et al., 2018).

One prominent example of news satire is "*The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*," a popular satirical news program that aired on Comedy Central from 1999 to 2015. The show, hosted by comedian Jon Stewart, became known for its witty and humorous take on current events and politics.

During its run, "*The Daily Show*" garnered a large following and gained considerable influence in shaping public discourse and political opinions. The program used a mix of comedic sketches, monologues, and interviews with political figures to comment on various political, economic, and social issues.

One of the show's notable moments came in 2004 when Jon Stewart interviewed former CNN host Tucker Carlson on the show. The interview quickly became infamous for its humorous yet insightful critique of the media's coverage of political events. Stewart challenged Carlson's reporting and pointed out inconsistencies in media narratives, demonstrating the power of satire to shed light on media biases and political theatrics (Musumeci, 2023).

"*The Daily Show*" gained praise for its ability to engage a younger audience in political discussions through its satirical approach. It managed to combine humor with sharp analysis, presenting current affairs in a way that resonated with younger viewers and encouraged them to stay informed about important issues.

2-News made as parody

News Parody is a form of Fake News characterized by its use of non-factual information presented in a format that mimics mainstream news media. Unlike

satire, which offers humorous commentary on current affairs, parody relies on the fabrication of entirely fictitious news stories to highlight the absurdity of certain issues. The Onion, a well-known parody website, exemplifies this genre by producing content that often blurs the line between reality and fiction, occasionally leading readers to mistake it for genuine news. In successful news parody, authors strike a delicate balance between plausibility and absurdity, creating a shared joke between themselves and the audience. Berkowitz and Schwartz (2016) argue that news parodies, along with satire and non-mainstream media sources, form part of the "Fifth Estate" that serves as a watchdog, critiquing both those in power and the mainstream news media. These forms of parody and satire contribute to maintaining professional journalistic conduct and enhancing the credibility of news media. However, there are instances when the parody is too subtle, resulting in its mistaken uptake by mainstream news outlets or deceived readers who share the content without recognizing its satirical nature. In such cases, the intentions of the parody's author and the gullibility of the reader become misaligned, leading to unintended dissemination of misinformation (Tandoc Jr. et al., 2018).

In 2014, The Daily Curreant, a satirical news website known for its news parody content, published an article titled "Sarah Palin: 'Thanksgiving is for Real Americans, not Indians.'" The article presented a fabricated story in which former U.S. vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin allegedly made derogatory remarks about Native Americans and Thanksgiving.

While The Daily Curreant clearly labels itself as a satire website, the article's headline and content led some readers to believe it was a legitimate news report. As a result, the article went viral on social media, and mainstream news outlets picked up the story without verifying its authenticity. Several news organizations reported on Palin's supposed comments, leading to widespread outrage and criticism against her.

The incident highlighted the potential pitfalls of news parody when it is too subtle or convincing. Despite the website's clear indication that it produces satire, the content's plausibility and the sensitive nature of the subject matter resulted in its mistaken uptake by mainstream media and deceived readers. The unintended dissemination of the fabricated information fueled public debates and discussions based on false premises (Mikkelson, 2022).

3-Advertising-based news

Advertising-based news refers to the use of advertising materials presented as genuine news reports or press releases. It includes video news releases (VNRs) produced by public relations firms, which aim to insert marketing messages into news media. Native advertising is another form, where news content serves advertising goals while appearing as legitimate news features. Clickbait headlines attract readers by leveraging news values but redirect them to commercial websites instead of providing actual news (**Clickbait** refers to a deceptive online advertising technique used to attract readers' attention by employing sensational or intriguing headlines that leverage news values). These practices exploit the credibility and format of news to promote products or ideas, potentially misleading audiences for financial gain (Farsetta & Price, 2006; Nelson & Park, 2015; Deziel, 2014; Chen, Conroy, & Rubin, 2015).

One real case example of advertising-based news and clickbait involves the infamous "Plandemic" video that gained significant attention during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. The video featured an interview with a discredited scientist who made numerous false claims about the origins of the virus and the effectiveness of potential treatments.

Despite the video's lack of credibility and scientific evidence, it spread rapidly across social media platforms and online news outlets. Many individuals were drawn to click on the video due to sensational headlines promising "shocking revelations" about the pandemic. However, upon watching the video, they were directed to a website that promoted various conspiracy theories and alternative health products. This case exemplifies the combination of advertising-based news and clickbait techniques. The video, presented as a genuine news report, aimed to insert marketing messages for certain products and ideas, while leveraging sensational headlines to attract viewers' attention. By exploiting the credibility and format of news media, the creators of the "Plandemic" video sought to mislead audiences for financial gain (Frenkel, Decker & Alba, 2020)

4-News made for propaganda

Propaganda is the deliberate creation and dissemination of news stories by political entities with the explicit aim of influencing public perceptions. These stories are

strategically crafted to benefit a public figure, organization, or government, often blurring the line between news and biased commentary. Channel One, a Russian news channel, serves as an example, using strategic narratives as a tool to shape perceptions and actions both domestically and internationally. Research indicates that Channel One has published factually untrue news stories to manipulate public opinion and further their political agenda. Additionally, the gray zone between advertising and propaganda is recognized, as both may involve overlapping motives. Paid posters on social media platforms have been employed to promote positive news about specific products and spread negative news about competitors. While propaganda may incorporate factual information, it is tainted by bias, aiming to persuade rather than inform the audience (Khaldarova & Pantti, 2016; Chen et al., 2013).

During the 2016 United States presidential election, the phenomenon of Fake News emerged as a significant concern, with certain media outlets accused of spreading propaganda to influence public opinion and sway the election outcome.

One notable example involved the dissemination of false news stories targeting a specific political candidate. Several online platforms and social media channels were flooded with sensational headlines and fabricated stories aimed at discrediting the candidate's character and policies.

One widely circulated Fake News story claimed that the candidate was involved in a criminal investigation and was facing imminent arrest. The story was entirely false and lacked any factual basis. However, it gained traction on social media, where users shared and reposted it without verifying its authenticity.

It was later revealed that some of these Fake News stories originated from foreign actors seeking to influence the election. These actors strategically crafted and disseminated propaganda-like content with the explicit aim of swaying public perceptions and undermining the credibility of the candidate.

The deliberate spread of Fake News in this case exemplifies how propaganda can be used to manipulate public opinion and influence political events. By leveraging sensational and false narratives, the perpetrators aimed to shape public perceptions and advance their political agenda (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

5-News meant for manipulation

Fake News encompasses various forms, including the manipulation of real images or videos to create false narratives. With digital advancements and powerful image manipulation software, image manipulation has become increasingly prevalent. From simple adjustments like color saturation to more invasive changes such as adding or removing people, these manipulations can deceive viewers. The rise of citizen journalism and social media exacerbates the challenge of verifying shared information and images. A notable example is the circulation of a composite image on Twitter during Hurricane Sandy, falsely presenting it as a live broadcast (Zubiaga & Ji, 2014). While legacy news media adhere to ethical standards, social media lacks similar guidelines, allowing the misappropriation of genuine photos to support fabricated narratives. This misappropriation of news content contributes to the dissemination of misleading information. To combat this, it is crucial to establish ethical standards and verification practices to ensure the authenticity and accuracy of news. The term "news meant for manipulation" refers to news articles or visual content intentionally altered or misappropriated to create false narratives or mislead the audience (Tandoc Jr. et al., 2018). Such manipulations lack factual basis and can be spread through social media platforms, necessitating proactive measures to combat misinformation.

During the 2019 Hong Kong protests, a significant amount of misinformation and manipulated content circulated on social media platforms. One notable example involved the manipulation of images to create false narratives and mislead the public about the events taking place during the protests.

A widely shared image showed a group of protestors allegedly vandalizing a subway station during the demonstrations. The image was later found to be manipulated, as the original photo depicted protestors cleaning up the station rather than causing damage. The altered image aimed to portray the protestors in a negative light and discredit their peaceful intentions.

In another instance, a video was shared on social media platforms, purportedly showing police officers brutally dispersing a peaceful protest. However, further investigation revealed that the video was from a different unrelated event and was being used out of context to exaggerate the severity of the situation in Hong Kong.

These manipulations of real images and videos during the Hong Kong protests exemplify how misinformation and visual content meant for manipulation can

deceive viewers and distort public understanding of events. The rise of citizen journalism and the rapid sharing of information on social media platforms exacerbate the challenge of verifying the authenticity of such content (Lee, 2020).

6-Fabrication

News Fabrication refers to the creation and dissemination of news articles without factual basis, presented as legitimate news to deceive readers. Fabricated news mimics real news in appearance and aims to misinform. It can be published on websites, blogs, or social media platforms, making it difficult to distinguish from genuine sources (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Fabricated items exploit pre-existing biases and narratives, often with political motivations, and are shared widely on social media (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Financial motives and the use of news bots further complicate the issue (Subramanian, 2017; Albright, 2016). Fabricated news thrives in environments of social tension and poses a challenge to verification and critical thinking (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017).

In 1980, Janet Cooke, a young journalist working for The Washington Post, wrote a powerful and emotive news story titled "Jimmy's World." The article focused on an eight-year-old boy named Jimmy who was a heroin addict living on the streets of Washington, D.C. The story tugged at readers' heartstrings, evoking a strong emotional response and shedding light on the devastating impact of drug addiction on young children.

Cooke's story was so compelling and well-written that it won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing in 1981, elevating her to national acclaim and recognition. However, a few days after receiving the Pulitzer, a colleague raised doubts about the authenticity of the story.

Under scrutiny, it was revealed that Janet Cooke had fabricated the entire story. There was no evidence of a boy named Jimmy living as a heroin addict, and the characters and events depicted in the article were entirely fictional. Cooke admitted that she had invented the story to create a powerful narrative that would captivate readers and draw attention to the issue of drug addiction.

The revelation of the fabrication led to public outrage and embarrassment for The Washington Post, which had published the Pulitzer Prize-winning story without adequate fact-checking. The newspaper returned the Pulitzer Prize, and Janet Cooke resigned in disgrace (Anderson, 2004).

These definitions highlight a common aspect of Fake News, which is its ability to mimic the visual and textual elements of legitimate news sources. Fake News often replicates the appearance of genuine news websites, adopts similar writing styles in its articles, and may even include false attributions in accompanying photographs (Tandoc Jr. et al., 2018).

Here, two dimensions help in better understanding of Fake News and their classification, which include facticity and intention. **Facticity** is the first dimension which deals with the extent to which Fake News is based on facts and reality. The other dimension named as **Intention to deceive** is about the extent to which the creator, author or initiator of the Fake News wants to mislead the readers (Tandoc et al., 2017). (Figure 2)

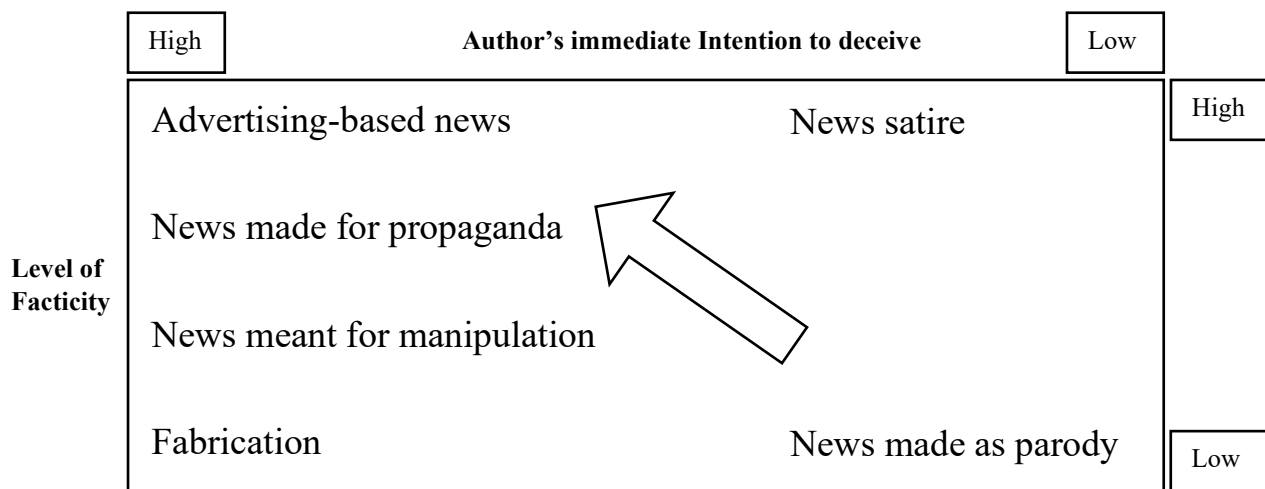


Figure 2: A typology of Fake News definitions (Tandoc Jr. et al., 2018)

According to Figure 2 and the provided case examples, we can formulate a two-dimensional matrix that encapsulates two pivotal factors: "**Believability**" which signifies the ease of content acceptance as true, and "**Level of danger**" indicating the potential risks to brands' reputation. Within this matrix, categories are organized based on their levels of believability and their impact on brand reputation. The spectrum of "Believability" extends from Low to High, representing content less likely to be perceived as factual (Low) and content more prone to being mistaken for authentic news (High). Similarly, the scale of "Level of Danger for Brands"

Reputation" spans from Low to High, indicating content with minimal impact on brand reputation (Low) to content with the potential to severely damage brand reputation (High). It's important to note that the conclusion is derived from the authors' interpretation of the findings.

To provide a clearer explanation, in Advertising-based news, there is a high level of facticity and a high level of the author's immediate intention to deceive. Consequently, the potential risk level for brands could be considered high, while the believability remains moderate due to the advertisement concept. On the other hand, in News presented as parody, both the level of facticity and the author's immediate intention to deceive are low. This results in a low level of danger for brands, and the believability is also low.

The remaining categorizations are presented in the form of a matrix in Table 1.

Categories	Believability	Level of Danger for Brands' Reputation
News Satire	Low	Low
News made as parody	Low	Low
Advertising-based news	Medium	High
News made for propaganda	Medium	High
News meant for manipulation	Medium	High
Fabrication	Low	High

Table 1: A classification of Fake News categories

This matrix is constructed based on the author's interpretation of the information from Figure 2 and the provided definitions.

3.4 Who produce Fake News?

The production of Fake News is a complex phenomenon involving a wide range of actors, from individuals to organizations and even governments (Tandoc Jr. et al., 2018). The motivations and intentions behind the creation of Fake News can vary significantly, leading to a diverse array of sources responsible for its dissemination. One significant group of producers behind Fake News is individuals seeking to spread misinformation for personal gain or to advance specific agendas. These individuals may exploit the power of social media and online platforms to reach a broader audience quickly. By leveraging sensational or provocative content, they aim to attract attention and generate clicks, often without regard for the accuracy or authenticity of the information being shared (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). The absence of investment in accurate reporting and a lack of concern for long-term reputation building allows these individuals to focus solely on short-term gains, such as driving web traffic and engagement.

In addition to individual actors, organized groups or organizations may also play a significant role in the production of Fake News. These groups may have specific political, social, or ideological agendas and use Fake News as a tool to manipulate public opinion, shape narratives, or advance their interests (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017). Such organizations often deploy sophisticated strategies to disseminate their fabricated content widely, with the aim of influencing public discourse and perception. Their motivations may range from sowing discord and confusion to supporting a particular candidate or ideology.

Furthermore, there have been instances where even governments have been implicated in the production and dissemination of Fake News. State-sponsored disinformation campaigns, often referred to as "information warfare" or "cyber propaganda," have emerged as a significant concern in the digital age. These campaigns can be highly sophisticated and may target not only domestic populations but also international audiences to shape public opinion and influence geopolitical dynamics (Tandoc Jr. et al., 2018).

Producers of Fake News are characterized by two distinguishing features as identified by Allcott and Gentzkow (2017). Firstly, they make little to no investment in accurate reporting, resulting in content with signals that are uncorrelated with the true state of affairs. This lack of commitment to factual accuracy enables them to generate sensationalized and misleading narratives that are more likely to attract

attention and clicks. Secondly, these producers prioritize short-term gains over building a long-term reputation for quality journalism. This profit-driven approach encourages them to focus on immediate web traffic and engagement, often at the expense of truthfulness and ethical reporting standards.

3.5 The process of Fake News

To comprehensively investigate the impact of Fake News on consumer behavior and develop a conceptual model, it is crucial to have a thorough understanding of the underlying mechanisms involved in the creation and dissemination of Fake News. The Fake News process entails the following stages with the potential for involvement by multiple actors (Jin & Liu, 2017).

1. Creation

Fake News can be intentionally or unintentionally produced by individuals or organizations with a specific agenda or purpose in mind.

2. Dissemination

Individuals or organizations may disseminate and publish Fake News either intentionally or unintentionally, without first verifying its accuracy or investigating its veracity.

3. Amplification

Individuals or organizations have the potential to amplify Fake News by incorporating their own ideas or opinions into the narrative without conducting a thorough investigation into the veracity and credibility of the original source.

3.6 Key players in Fake News process

According to a comprehensive analysis of the process of Fake News and examination of several case studies, three main actors emerge as key players in Creation, Dissemination and Amplification of Fake News:

1-Consumers

Consumers can inadvertently contribute to the creation and dissemination of false information due to a lack of understanding or misunderstanding of the facts. Several cases highlight how consumers play a role in the spread of Fake News. For instance, in 2016, various websites specializing in Fake News, such as TopRatedViral, ILYke, and breaking13news, published articles falsely claiming that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) was investigating "cases of parasitic roundworm disease linked to the McDonald's restaurant chain" (Business Inside, 2016). However, this information was entirely fabricated and denied by the CDC.

The dissemination of this misinformation can be partly attributed to some individuals who were misled or confused by previous events, such as Chipotle's e. Coli outbreak that the CDC genuinely investigated, and a story of a four-year-old in England who found something resembling a worm when biting into a chicken nugget. Although McDonald's was indeed researching the alleged worm, it had not been linked to any "parasitic roundworm disease" outbreak (Business Inside, 2016). This case demonstrates how consumers, in their attempt to share information or raise awareness, can inadvertently contribute to the spread of Fake News. The lack of discernment or misunderstanding of the facts can lead well-meaning individuals to amplify false narratives, unknowingly perpetuating misinformation.

In conclusion, consumers can play a significant role in both the creation and amplification of Fake News when they unintentionally share false information due to a lack of understanding or misunderstanding of the facts. This factor contributes to the potential for misinformation to rapidly spread across various online platforms, emphasizing the need for media literacy and critical thinking skills to combat the proliferation of Fake News.

2- Third parties

Third parties play a crucial role in the creation and dissemination of Fake News, occupying a position between the brand (firm) and the consumers. These entities can be competitors operating within the same market or digital platforms, such as news portals or websites, that exploit a brand's reputation to attract visitors and generate traffic.

In 2016, during the United States presidential election, a Fake News story gained significant traction and exemplified how third parties can contribute to the spread of

misinformation. The false article claimed that the Pope had endorsed Donald Trump for President, a story that was completely fabricated (Ritchie, 2016). This Fake News story was published on a website that imitated the appearance of a legitimate news outlet, tricking readers into believing it was a credible source. The article quickly went viral on social media platforms, with many users sharing it without verifying its authenticity. The Pope himself later debunked the Fake News, stating that he had not made any endorsements for any political candidate. However, the damage was already done, as the false story had spread widely and had the potential to influence public perceptions of the election.

This example demonstrates how third parties can exploit the power of social media and digital platforms to disseminate Fake News, leveraging the reputation and credibility of established news outlets. The rapid spread of the false story highlights the need for media literacy and critical thinking among consumers to discern reliable information from misinformation (BBC News). It also emphasizes the responsibility of digital platforms and news outlets to take measures to curb the spread of Fake News and misinformation on their platforms.

3-The Brand itself

Companies/brands must be aware that any response can give the misinformation more ‘airtime’ or more legitimacy than it deserves. Sometimes the best response is to not respond at all, but rather to amplify the rate at which the company talks, publishes, and posts about everything else that it stands for. This creates a mass of truthful, accurate information that, when done correctly, pushes the misinformation off of the top page of Google and down to where very few people will ever see it,” Rich Matta, CEO of Reputation Defender(Forbes, 2020), hence, it can be posited that the inadvertent intensification of the impact of Fake News may be attributable to the involvement of well-established brand names, which may inadvertently contribute to the dissemination and proliferation of such misinformation.

It's important to note that in this context, the term "Brand" encompasses a wide range of entities, including companies, individuals, and organizations.

3.7 How Fake News impact consumer's behavior

Research indicates that consumers who rely on online sources for information tend to attribute credibility to these sources, particularly in terms of the perceived credibility of the news they provide. The concept of news credibility can be defined as an individual's assessment of the accuracy, authenticity, and believability of communicated content (Appelman & Sundar, 2016). This inclination among consumers to share opinions and reviews on digital platforms, coupled with their active engagement in disseminating news related to brands on social media, underscores the significance of news shared through these channels in shaping consumer decisions regarding purchases and brand preferences. Consequently, the credibility of news circulated on social media exerts a noteworthy influence on consumer behavioral intentions. When considering factors that impact consumer decisions, including product value, consumer reviews, and news shared on social media platforms, it becomes evident that credible news wields considerable influence over consumers' purchasing intentions. The perception of news as credible or reliable has the potential to sway consumers' attitudes towards brands and their likelihood to make a purchase. Moreover, credible negative news can significantly deter potential customers from making purchases or visiting a particular establishment (Sharif, Awan, & Paracha, 2021).

Recognizing the pivotal role of Fake News in shaping consumer behavior, it becomes essential to develop and implement effective strategies to counter its effects. Understanding how Fake News influences consumer behavior empowers us to devise appropriate countermeasures and strategies to mitigate its negative impact. There is a conceptual model by Sharif, Awan, & Paracha (2021), with these propositions to better understanding how Fake News affect consumers behavior:

- P1. News credibility has a significant impact on consumer behavioral intentions.
- P2. News truthfulness has a significant impact on consumer behavioral intentions
- P3. Source credibility has a significant impact on consumer behavioral intentions.
- P4. Personal involvement has a significant moderating role between source credibility and behavioral intentions.
- P5. Brand experience has a significant moderating role between news credibility and behavioral intentions.

- P6. Brand credibility has a significant mediating role between news credibility and behavioral intentions.
- P7. Brand credibility has a significant mediating role between source credibility and behavioral intentions.
- P8. Brand credibility has a significant mediating role between news truthfulness and behavioral intentions.
- P9. Brand trust has a significant mediating role between news credibility and behavioral intentions.
- P10. Brand trust has a significant mediating role between source credibility and behavioral intentions.
- P11. Brand trust has a significant mediating role between news truthfulness and behavioral intentions.

The above propositions are combined to form the following conceptual framework (Figure 3).

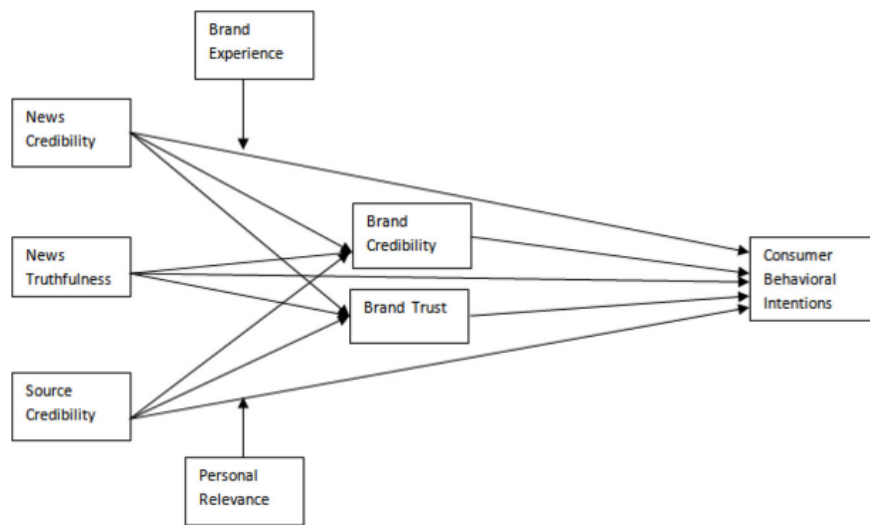


Figure 3: A conceptual model about how Fake News affect customer behavior (Sharif, Awan, & Paracha, 2021)

In conclusion, safeguarding a brand's reputation against Fake News requires a multi-faceted approach that takes into account the intricate interplay between news credibility, consumer behavioral intentions, and the brand's image. As research has shown, consumers who rely on online sources for information assign significant credibility to these sources, influencing their perceptions of news accuracy and authenticity. The credibility of news shared on social media has a substantial impact

on consumer decisions, ultimately shaping their purchasing intentions and brand preferences.

The conceptual model proposed by Sharif, Awan, & Paracha (2021) outlines several key propositions that shed light on how Fake News impacts consumer behavior. Among these propositions, the significance of news truthfulness, source credibility, personal involvement, brand experience, and brand credibility becomes evident. News truthfulness not only influences consumers' intentions but also plays a pivotal role in affecting their perceptions and attitudes toward brands. Additionally, the credibility of the source from which news originates significantly impacts consumer decisions, with credible sources fostering higher levels of brand trust and influencing purchase intentions.

Personal relevance emerges as a critical factor in moderating the relationship between news credibility and consumer behavioral intentions. Consumers with higher levels of personal relevance are more likely to scrutinize news and brand-related information, making informed decisions based on the perceived relevance and authenticity of the news. On the other hand, lower personal relevance tends to lead consumers to rely on cues such as source credibility and expertise when forming their opinions.

In navigating the complex landscape of Fake News and its impact on consumer behavior, brands must recognize the importance of disseminating truthful news, cultivating source credibility, and engaging consumers with meaningful brand experiences. By focusing on building trust and credibility, brands can not only protect their reputation but also influence consumers' purchasing decisions positively. In an era where news spreads rapidly through digital channels, brands must remain vigilant in countering Fake News and proactively addressing any negative impacts on consumer perceptions and intentions.

CHAPTER 4: CASE STUDIES AND STORIES

This chapter presents well-known instances of Fake News that have gained significant attention in recent years. These case studies serve as important examples, highlighting the impact and consequences of misinformation in our society.

To ensure accuracy and credibility, we draw from reputable secondary sources, including news outlets, academic journals, and expert analyses. This approach allows for a well-rounded exploration of each case, offering diverse viewpoints and reinforcing the need for critical thinking and media literacy.

Through these stories, readers will gain insights into the far-reaching implications of Fake News on individuals, organizations, and societal dynamics. These cautionary tales underscore the importance of discerning information consumers and inspire vigilance in navigating the digital landscape.

1- Samsung Galaxy Note 7 Battery Explosions

In 2016, Samsung faced a significant crisis when reports emerged of its flagship smartphone, the Samsung Galaxy Note 7, catching fire and exploding due to battery issues. The incidents led to widespread safety concerns and created a public relations nightmare for the company (Brian X. Chen & Choe Sang-Hun, 2016).

Initially, the reports of battery explosions were isolated, but as incidents continued to surface and gain media attention, the situation escalated rapidly. Social media played a crucial role in spreading news about the incidents, and soon, the Samsung Galaxy Note 7 battery explosions became a hot topic of discussion, even leading to viral videos of the phones catching fire.

In response to the growing crisis, Samsung attempted to address the issue through recalls and replacements of the affected devices. However, the problem persisted, and even the replacement devices faced similar battery-related issues. The credibility of the brand was severely impacted, and consumer trust in Samsung products waned considerably.

During the height of the crisis, Fake News and misinformation also surfaced, further exacerbating the situation. False stories and rumors about the extent of the problem and the potential dangers of using Samsung devices circulated on social media, leading to heightened panic and fear among consumers.

The Samsung Galaxy Note 7 battery explosions case demonstrates how Fake News and misinformation can exacerbate a crisis and severely damage a brand's reputation.

The rapid spread of false information through social media added another layer of complexity to the already challenging situation for Samsung.

2-Pope Francis Endorses Donald Trump for President

In 2016, a significant instance of Fake News emerged on social media, with a story claiming that Pope Francis had endorsed Donald Trump for President. This fabricated narrative quickly gained traction and was widely shared, causing considerable confusion among readers (Ritchie, 2016). However, it is essential to note that there was no factual basis to support this claim.

The spread of this Fake News story underscores the potency and influence of misinformation on social media platforms. The rapid dissemination of false information can lead to widespread confusion and misperceptions, particularly in sensitive contexts such as political elections. In this case, the fabricated endorsement by Pope Francis aimed to sway public opinion and create a false perception of support for a particular candidate.

The impact of such Fake News stories goes beyond mere misinformation. They can potentially shape public opinion, influence decision-making, and even impact electoral outcomes. This example highlights the importance of critical thinking and fact-checking when consuming information, especially on social media platforms where the potential for the rapid spread of falsehoods is significant.

3-Hillary Clinton Sold Weapons to ISIS

During the 2016 presidential election, a particularly noteworthy example of Fake News emerged with the claim that "Hillary Clinton Sold Weapons to ISIS." This false narrative alleged that while serving as Secretary of State, Clinton had facilitated the sale of weapons to the terrorist organization. Despite being entirely baseless, the story gained significant traction on social media platforms, raising concerns about its potential impact on public opinion and the election outcome (Ritchie, 2016).

The dissemination of such false information can have far-reaching consequences, as it shapes public perceptions and influences decision-making processes. In the case of the "Hillary Clinton Sold Weapons to ISIS" Fake News story, its widespread sharing on social media platforms may have contributed to the perpetuation of negative perceptions and misinformed beliefs about Clinton's actions and trustworthiness during the election campaign.

Credible and reliable sources play a crucial role in debunking Fake News, highlighting the importance of fact-checking and critical evaluation of information before accepting and sharing it. The episode involving the false claim about Clinton's involvement with ISIS weapons sales serves as a reminder of the need for media literacy and responsible consumption of news and information (Ritchie, 2016).

4-The Migrant Caravan Contains Terrorists and Criminals

In 2018, a Fake News story emerged, alleging that the migrant caravan traveling through Mexico to the United States was infiltrated by terrorists and criminals. This baseless claim gained significant traction on social media platforms and contributed to the amplification of anti-immigrant sentiment (Harwell et al., 2018).

The dissemination of this fabricated story highlights the power of social media in spreading false information and shaping public perception. Despite its widespread sharing, the claim lacked any supporting evidence to substantiate the assertion that the migrant caravan included terrorists or criminals (Harwell et al., 2018).

Such instances emphasize the importance of critically evaluating information before accepting it as factual and the need for responsible media consumption. The repercussions of this particular Fake News story not only perpetuated stereotypes and fueled prejudice but also potentially influenced public opinion and policy discussions surrounding immigration (Harwell, Romm, & Timberg, 2018).

5-The COVID-19 Vaccine Causes Infertility

In 2021, a false and misleading claim emerged as a Fake News story stating that the COVID-19 vaccine caused infertility in women. This story quickly spread across various social media platforms, leading to significant confusion and the dissemination of misinformation (Lu-Culligan & Iwasaki, 2021). However, it is important to note that there is no scientific evidence supporting this claim, and it has been debunked by experts in the field.

According to Marshall Van Alstyne, a professor of information systems at Boston University's Questrom School of Business, larger brands often become more common targets for Fake News due to their widespread recognition, which makes them enticing for clickbait purposes (Forbes, 2020). This highlights the importance of vigilance and proactive measures in combating the spread of disinformation.

Recognizing the need for a more comprehensive approach, Robert S. Kaplan advised against relying on reactive and piecemeal strategies. Instead, he emphasized the necessity for companies to have a well-developed plan in place, including the ability to detect and mitigate disinformation before it gains traction (Forbes, 2020).

CHAPTER 5: CONCEPTUAL MODEL

In the current era of social media, the pervasive presence of Fake News has emerged as a pressing concern deeply ingrained in the news ecosystem (Tandoc et al., 2017). The dissemination of false and misleading information can significantly impact a brand's reputation. To effectively address this issue, various methodologies and best practices can be implemented by brands. Some organizations have identified specific strategies and behaviors aimed at mitigating the intentional spread of misinformation, which can cause serious damage to digital platforms, resulting in declining sales, loss of market value, damaged image, reduced credibility, erosion of trust, and a decline in reputation (Castellani & Berton, 2017). By understanding the techniques employed in generating Fake News, firms, institutions, governments, and reliable media outlets can effectively neutralize its effects (Castellani & Berton, 2017).

Belin (2020) highlights essential considerations while designing and developing strategies to counter Fake News:

Firstly, it is of utmost importance for brands to establish a well-defined brand image and reputation, as maintaining a positive online reputation is considered the most effective means of safeguarding a brand (Belin, 2020). Consistently conveying this brand image across all communication channels is crucial.

Secondly, brands can implement fact-checking mechanisms to verify the accuracy of news before sharing it on their platforms. Fact-checking plays a pivotal role in combating misinformation and building trust with the audience (IFCN, Poynter, June 29, 2023).

Thirdly, brands should adopt a proactive approach in addressing Fake News (Belin, 2020). This involves regularly monitoring social media channels and promptly responding to any instances of misinformation or rumors.

Additionally, cultivating strong relationships with key influencers and stakeholders can prove to be an effective strategy in combating Fake News (Forbes Communications Council, 2020). This can be achieved through various means, including organizing events, engaging with influencers on social media, and supporting social responsibility projects.

Moreover, providing training to employees on how to identify and respond to Fake News can be a valuable tool in combating misinformation (Belin, 2020).

5.1 Main Strategies Categorization

The strategies for countering Fake News can be classified into distinct main groups according to their underlying concepts and primary activities. It is crucial to recognize that numerous methodologies may intersect and intertwine, making the effectiveness of combating Fake News dependent on employing a combination of approaches.

In each category, we will define the approach and offer considerations derived from real case examples. Additionally, we propose considerations for implementation in each part to address the challenges and provide important tips from a managerial point of view.

5.1.1 Monitoring and Detection

One of the initial steps that companies can take in combating Fake News is to actively monitor and detect its spread (Forbes Communications Council, 2020). This involves utilizing various methods, such as employing social media monitoring tools, availing media monitoring services, or conducting manual searches to identify instances of Fake News (Belin, 2020).

This group focuses on actively monitoring and detecting instances of Fake News through various methods such as data analysis, artificial intelligence algorithms, and social media monitoring tools. The goal is to identify and flag potential instances of misinformation.

Consideration for implementing

However, it's important to note that monitoring can be resource-intensive and time-consuming. To address this challenge, companies can collaborate with third-party organizations, such as media monitoring services, fact-checking organizations, or industry associations. These partnerships can assist in detecting and responding to Fake News effectively, leveraging tools and techniques like Online Reputation Management (ORM).

ORM, or Online Reputation Management, primarily focuses on managing and responding to negative customer comments and addressing unfavorable narratives about a company across online platforms, including social media and traditional

media channels. It involves actively engaging with the audience and taking actions to mitigate the impact of damaging content on a company's reputation.

For instance, a company may choose to release a public statement addressing the specific content of a story that portrays them negatively or publish a well-crafted social media post as a response. ORM helps companies maintain a positive online image and counteract the potential harm caused by Fake News or any other form of negative publicity (AdEspresso, May 10, 2023).

5.1.2 Rapid Response

Companies need to have a rapid response plan in place that can be activated as soon as Fake News is detected. This plan should include steps for quickly verifying the information and determining the best course of action (Belin, 2020).

Rapid response strategies involve promptly addressing instances of Fake News by providing accurate information, corrections, or clarifications. This group aims to counter the spread of misinformation in real-time, often through coordinated efforts across platforms.

Consideration for implementing

The responses should be aligned with business strategy, otherwise it works negatively. Sometimes not responding is the best option.

5.1.3 Communication Strategy

According to Thompson (2023) companies should develop a clear and effective communication strategy to counter Fake News (Belin, 2020). This could include a combination of media statements, social media posts, and other forms of communication that clearly and accurately convey the facts.

This group involves developing effective communication strategies to combat Fake News. It includes techniques like crafting clear and concise messages, engaging storytelling, using visual aids, and leveraging influential voices to effectively communicate accurate information and counteract false narratives.

Consideration for implementing

The first thing to take into account is to understand the contribution of players (as mentioned in section 3.6), then the second one is to recognition your key channels to communicate with customers, for example a company face Fake News made by consumers on Instagram but they decide to respond on twitter.

5.1.4 Engage with stakeholders

Companies should engage with their stakeholders, including employees, customers, and the general public, to ensure they are aware of the situation and understand the company's stance (Thompson, 2023). This can help build trust and mitigate any negative impacts on the brand.

Engaging with stakeholders is an important aspect of combating Fake News. This group focuses on building relationships with various stakeholders such as the media, civil society organizations, fact-checking agencies, and the general public. Collaboration and cooperation among these stakeholders can help amplify accurate information and combat the spread of Fake News.

Consideration for implementing

It is imperative that every individual within the company comprehends the strategy, even during instances when direct engagement with top management is absent, and when urgent decision-making is required (Kaplan & Norton, 2001).

5.1.5 Fact-checking and verification

According to the "Guide to Misinformation and Fact-Checking" from the Ohio University Online Master of Public Administration program, Fact-checking is important because misinformation can sway your opinion. Companies should make a concerted effort to fact-check and verify information before it is published or shared. This can help prevent the spread of false information and reduce the risk of reputational damage.

Fact-checking and verification methods involve conducting rigorous research and analysis to verify the accuracy of news and information. This group includes dedicated fact-checking organizations and initiatives that assess the validity of

claims, debunk false information, and provide reliable sources to counteract Fake News.

Consideration for implementing

Determining the credibility of information sources can be challenging for casual internet users. It is not always evident which websites and articles can be trusted, as perceptions of trustworthiness can vary among individuals. To assess the credibility of a website, you can employ six criteria outlined by the Ohio University Online Master of Public Administration (2023) as follow:

- **Authority**

A credible website should provide contact information, developer/owner details, and author credentials/qualifications.

- **Purpose**

The website's purpose should be clearly defined, and its articles should align with its stated objectives. Examining the domain's URL can offer insights; for instance, .gov sites indicate government sources, .edu sites signify educational institutions, while .com, .org, and .net domains can be purchased and may contain unreliable information.

- **Coverage**

A trustworthy website should include external links to reputable sources that support its factual claims. If a site only links to its own pages or occasionally refers to low-authority or questionable sources, its coverage may be incomplete and unreliable.

- **Timeliness**

Reliable websites should indicate when their content was written and published, as well as whether it has been updated. Links to information sources should be current and relevant.

- **Objectivity**

A credible website should transparently disclose its objectivity. By examining its "About" section or similar resources, users should be able to discern the site's motives and potential biases.

- **Accuracy**

Factual claims made on the website should be verifiable and hold up as true when cross-referenced with independent sources.

5.1.6 Building brand trust

Building trust is key, companies can take steps to build brand trust, such as being transparent, honest, and responsive in their communications, and consistently delivering high-quality products and services (Forbes Communications Council, 2020).

Building brand trust involves establishing credibility and reliability of a brand or organization to combat Fake News. This group focuses on transparency, accountability, and consistent delivery of accurate information, which helps build trust among the audience. Trustworthy brands and organizations are less susceptible to being associated with or targeted by Fake News.

Consideration for implementing

According to Maslowska & Swiatkowska (2019), brand advocates and evangelists can play a significant role in neutralizing a considerable amount of Fake News on social media platforms. Moreover, they can assist brands in cost savings by providing free monitoring and responding to such misinformation.

In conclusion, adopting a combination of these methodologies can be highly beneficial and regarded as best practices for brands in their efforts to combat Fake News. Through this approach, brands can safeguard their reputation and simultaneously uphold a high level of credibility and trust among their audience.

5.2 BASIC MODEL: Contribution of each player on Fake News process

The basic model for understanding the contribution of each player in the Fake News process builds upon the definitions of Fake News, its producers, the process involved, and the key players (as outlined in sections 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, and 3.6, respectively). This model is based on the author's interpretation according to definitions and case examples:

- Consumers contribute to creating Fake News.
- Consumers contribute to disseminating Fake News.
- Consumers contribute to amplifying Fake News.
- Third parties contribute to creating Fake News.
- Third parties contribute to disseminating Fake News.
- Third parties contribute to amplifying Fake News.
- Brand(s) contribute to amplifying Fake News.

These assumptions are synthesized and depicted in the conceptual framework illustrated in (Figure 4). This model provides a holistic view of the various players involved in the Fake News process and their respective contributions.

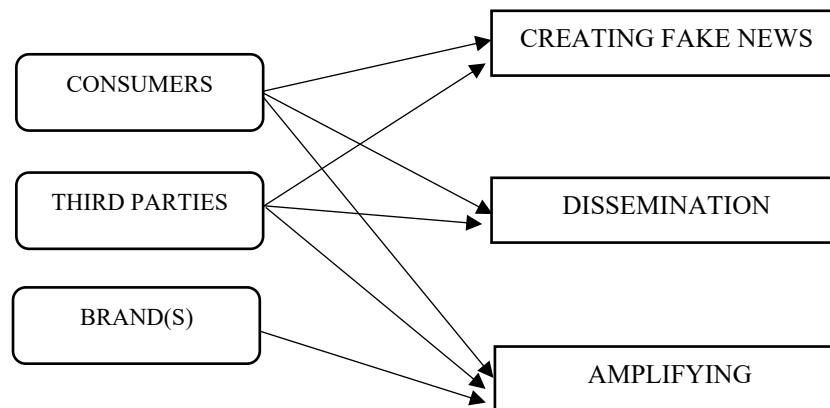


Figure 4: A conceptual model about how players contribute in Fake News process (the basic model)

The model has been employed to conduct an analysis of how brands can effectively navigate the challenges posed by Fake News. This model serves as a guiding tool to delve into the strategies and mechanisms that brands can employ when confronted with the dissemination of misinformation. By leveraging the insights provided by the model, brands can proactively develop approaches that not only counteract the potential negative impact of Fake News but also safeguard their reputation and credibility in an increasingly complex media landscape.

5.2.1 How to avoid Fake News to be created by consumers

Consumers play a significant role in the creation and dissemination of Fake News. Nowadays, many people follow the news on social media, where content and news can be easily shared without any checks or edits (Shyrokykh, 2018). Unfortunately, they often unknowingly contribute to the spread of misinformation by sharing misleading or fabricated information without fact-checking or verifying its authenticity. However, there are several strategies that can be employed to help consumers avoid creating and spreading Fake News.

CASE ANALYSIS

CASE 1-1: Camel's cigarettes (brand)

A 1946 advertisement for Camel cigarettes claimed that doctors preferred the brand in a supposedly independent survey, which was revealed to have been conducted by an ad agency using suspect methods. The **cigarette commercial** showed actors dressed as doctors puffing on cigarettes between house calls. Even at the time there was substantial evidence that cigarettes were deadly, and some view the use of doctors to imply their health a particularly despicable act of deceptive advertising (Tyko, 2020).

The analysis

In the case of Camel cigarettes, consumers were deceived by a misleading advertisement that falsely claimed doctors preferred the brand. This demonstrates how consumers can be influenced by deceptive marketing tactics. To avoid such situations, consumers can take the following steps:

- **Verify the source:** Before sharing any information, consumers should verify the credibility and reliability of the source. They should check if the information comes from a reputable and trustworthy organization or individual.
- **Fact-checking:** Consumers should take the responsibility of fact-checking information before sharing it. They can use fact-checking websites or cross-reference the information with multiple reliable sources to ensure its accuracy.

CASE 1-2: Greggs (brand)

An exemplary illustration of an effective Fake News management strategy can be seen in the case of Greggs. When a fake and offensive company logo surfaced on Google, Greggs displayed exceptional proficiency in engaging with their audience on social media platforms (Figure 5) (Newton, May,10 2023).



Figure 5: How Greggs responded to Fake News on twitter

The analysis

In the case of Greggs, the company effectively managed a fake and offensive company logo that appeared on Google. They responded promptly on social media,

showing an excellent example of handling Fake News. Consumers can learn from this example and:

- **Stay informed:** Consumers should follow official channels and social media accounts of the brands they are interested in. This way, they can receive accurate and verified information directly from the source and avoid falling victim to Fake News.
- **Question and analyze:** Consumers should critically evaluate the information they come across. They should question the motives behind the content and consider whether it aligns with the brand's values and reputation.

CASE 1-3: General Electric (brand)

General Electric creates engaging content tailored for each platform they're on with the vision of educating their customers and encouraging them to participate in their brand through video content, Pinterest boards, Instagram and Snapchat stories, and Facebook posts (Figure 6) (Scoop.it, 2021).



Figure 6: An example of GE posting an infographic to their Twitter.

The analysis

General Electric's approach to engaging consumers through tailored content on different platforms can help prevent the creation of Fake News. Consumers can take inspiration from this example and:

- **Conduct thorough research:** Consumers should conduct their own research and seek out multiple perspectives on a topic before forming an opinion or sharing information. They should rely on credible sources and expert opinions to ensure they are well-informed.
- **Promote responsible sharing:** Consumers should be cautious about what they share on social media platforms. They should avoid sharing unverified or sensationalized information that could contribute to the spread of Fake News.

Solutions for brands

In the following section, we will explore some common techniques employed by Brands in their endeavors to combat Fake News. These techniques have been derived from case examples, showcasing how Brands have effectively addressed the challenge of misinformation. By examining these strategies, we can gain valuable insights into the successful approaches adopted by companies to tackle Fake News in today's digital landscape:

1- Building brand trust/being transparent

Brands should prioritize building trust with their audience by adopting a transparent approach in their marketing communications. This involves providing accurate information about their products or services and avoiding making exaggerated or false claims. By being open and honest, brands can establish a strong foundation of trust with consumers. This trust acts as a protective shield against the creation and propagation of Fake News. When consumers have confidence in a brand's credibility, they are less likely to fall for or contribute to misinformation.

2-Monitor social media

Brands should actively monitor social media channels to stay aware of any instances of Fake News or misinformation being shared about their brand. It is

crucial to have a dedicated team or tools in place to track brand mentions, monitor discussions, and identify potentially misleading content. By closely monitoring social media platforms, brands can quickly detect false claims or negative reviews and take prompt action to address them. This can involve providing accurate information, clarifying misconceptions, or even collaborating with influencers or trusted sources to counteract Fake News.

3-Educate Consumers

Brands can also take an educational approach to help consumers identify and avoid Fake News. They can provide resources and information on how to spot Fake News and encourage consumers to fact-check information before sharing it.

According to the latest state of Customer Training Report, **96%** of organizations firmly believe that customer education is important (Thought Industries, 2020).

Customer education

Customer education as ‘the discipline of teaching customers how to use and find value from products.’ ("What is Customer Education," 2020)

It happens both before and after a sale. For example:

- **Before a sale:** Educating consumers about the brand, its products, and its services.
- **After a sale:** Educating consumers on how the product can be used/maximized, product aftercare, as well as when and how to repurchase a product or service (Sullivan, 2021).

In summary, we will now establish a connection between the solutions presented earlier and the primary categories outlined in Section 5.1 based on their concepts. This correlation will be illustrated in Table 2, which demonstrates how each solution aligns with its respective category. Despite potential overlaps, by organizing the solutions in this manner, we can better comprehend their applicability and effectiveness in addressing the challenges posed by Fake News.

Solutions from cases	Main categories
Building brand trust/being transparent	Building brand trust
Monitor social media	Monitoring and Detection
Educate Consumers	Communication Strategy

Table 2: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be created by consumers

5.2.2 How to avoid Fake News to be disseminated by consumers

Since posting, sharing and engaging with others on social media can become a habit therefore Consumers play a significant role in the publishing and spreading of Fake News (Madrid, 2023). To mitigate the dissemination of false information, it is important to address the following factors:

- A. **Verify before sharing:** One common behavior among consumers is sharing news articles and posts on social media without verifying the authenticity of the content. To avoid spreading Fake News, individuals should develop the habit of fact-checking information before sharing it. They can cross-reference the story with reputable sources, look for supporting evidence, and consult fact-checking organizations to ensure its accuracy.
- B. **Challenge bias confirmation:** People tend to believe and share news articles that confirm their existing beliefs, even if the information is false. Overcoming this bias is crucial to preventing the spread of Fake News. Consumers should consciously seek out diverse perspectives, question their own assumptions, and critically evaluate the information before accepting and sharing it.
- C. **Foster critical thinking:** Consumers may lack the necessary skills or knowledge to evaluate the credibility of news sources or the information presented in an article. Developing critical thinking skills is essential to combat the spread of false information. Individuals should learn to analyze

the source's reputation, evaluate the supporting evidence, and consider alternative viewpoints before accepting and sharing news.

D. Exercise caution with unreliable sources: Trusting unreliable sources, such as social media influencers or websites with no established credibility, can contribute to the dissemination of Fake News. Consumers should be cautious when consuming information from these sources and prioritize reputable and verified news outlets. By relying on reliable sources, individuals can minimize the risk of sharing false information.

E. Reject deliberate misinformation: In some cases, consumers may intentionally spread Fake News to manipulate or deceive others. It is essential to recognize and reject deliberate misinformation. Consumers should be vigilant in identifying red flags, such as suspicious sources, sensationalized headlines, and lack of supporting evidence. By refusing to participate in the spread of deliberate misinformation, individuals can help counteract its impact.

CASE ANALYSIS

CASE 2-1: The Pizzagate conspiracy theory (brand)

In 2016, a Fake News story claimed that a Washington D.C. pizzeria was a front for a child sex trafficking ring involving high-ranking Democratic Party officials, including Hillary Clinton. The story was spread widely on social media, with many consumers sharing and promoting the false narrative.

Despite being debunked by multiple news organizations, the Pizzagate conspiracy theory gained significant traction among some consumers who believed the story and continued to spread it online. This ultimately led to a man entering the pizzeria with an assault rifle, believing he was there to rescue children from the alleged sex trafficking ring.

The incident at the pizzeria underscores the potential danger of Fake News and the significant impact that consumers can have on its dissemination. The Pizzagate conspiracy theory highlights the need for consumers to critically evaluate the news they consume and to be vigilant in identifying and rejecting false information. (Dewey, 2016)

The analysis

The Pizzagate conspiracy theory, which falsely claimed that a Washington D.C. pizzeria was involved in a child sex trafficking ring, demonstrates the dangers of Fake News and the influence consumers have on its spread. Despite being debunked by news organizations, the false narrative gained traction on social media, leading some individuals to share it without verification. The incident took a dangerous turn when a person entered the pizzeria with an assault rifle, believing they were saving children. This case emphasizes the need for consumers to critically evaluate news, reject false information, and highlights the potential harm caused by the dissemination of Fake News. Promoting media literacy, fact-checking, and responsible information sharing is essential to combat the spread of false narratives.

CASE 2-2: Disney World was going to lower the drinking age to 18 (brand)

On August 20, 2022, a TikTok video was posted, claiming that Disney World was going to lower the drinking age to 18 ("Drinking Age at Disney World," May 20, 2023). It was stated that Disney World was battling the Florida government in court to get a resort exemption, which would allow anyone 18 and older to drink on property. The TikTok video acquired millions of views in just a couple days. This story was also posted on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Shortly after, the story made it on ABC 10 News (Central Washington University Libraries, May 20, 2023) (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Example of sharing Fake News on ABC 10 News

The analysis

The cases of the Pizzagate conspiracy theory and Disney World allegedly lowering the drinking age highlight the dangers of Fake News dissemination by consumers. The Pizzagate case demonstrates how sharing without verification, bias confirmation, and lack of critical thinking can lead to the spread of false narratives, resulting in real-world consequences. The Disney World case exemplifies the rapid dissemination of misinformation through social media, emphasizing the importance of media literacy and critical thinking. Consumers must be cautious, verify information, and rely on credible sources to combat the spread of Fake News. Media organizations and brands should invest in fact-checking, monitor social media, and provide training to address the issue effectively.

Solutions for brands

In the following section, we will explore some common techniques employed by Brands in their endeavors to combat Fake News. These techniques have been derived from case examples, showcasing how Brands have effectively addressed the challenge of misinformation. By examining these strategies, we can gain valuable insights into the successful approaches adopted by companies to tackle Fake News in today's digital landscape:

1-Invest in fact-checking

To combat the dissemination of Fake News, brands can invest in fact-checking services or establish their own team dedicated to verifying the accuracy of information before it is released. This proactive approach helps ensure that the information shared by the brand is credible and minimizes the risk of false information being disseminated.

2-Monitor social media

Brands should actively monitor social media platforms for any mentions of their brand or products. By keeping a vigilant eye on social media conversations, brands can swiftly identify and respond to any false information or rumors that are being shared. Timely addressing of misinformation helps prevent its further spread and minimizes its impact on the brand's reputation.

3-Train employees and influencers

To effectively combat Fake News, brands can provide comprehensive training and guidance to their employees and influencers. This training equips individuals associated with the brand with the necessary skills to identify and address false information. By empowering their team members to spot Fake News, brands can take prompt and appropriate action to counteract its effects.

4-Be transparent

Brands can build trust with their audience by being transparent about their sources of information and how they verify the accuracy of their content. Openly sharing the processes used to gather and validate information demonstrates the brand's commitment to providing reliable and credible content. This transparency helps reduce the likelihood of false information being spread and fosters a trustworthy relationship with the audience.

5-Partner with trusted sources

Collaborating with trusted news sources or industry experts is another effective strategy for combating Fake News. By partnering with reputable sources, brands can leverage their expertise to provide accurate and reliable information. This collaboration reinforces the credibility of the brand and reduces the risk of Fake News being disseminated.

Additionally, brands can adopt Michael Caulfield's Four Moves and a Habit framework for information literacy to navigate the challenges posed by Fake News (Information Literacy, May, 2023). The four moves include checking for previous work, going upstream to the source, reading laterally, and circling back. These moves encourage individuals to examine existing fact-checking efforts, evaluate the trustworthiness of information sources, consider multiple perspectives, and reevaluate their findings. By incorporating these moves into their information verification process, brands can make more informed decisions and contribute to combating Fake News effectively.

- I. **Check for previous work:** Look around to see if someone else has already fact-checked the claim or provided a synthesis of research.

- II. **Go upstream to the source:** Go “upstream” to the source of the claim. Most web content is not original. Get to the original source to understand the trustworthiness of the information.
- III. **Read laterally:** Read laterally. Once you get to the source of a claim, read what other people say about the source (publication, author, etc.). The truth is in the network.
- IV. **Circle back:** If you get lost, or hit dead ends, or find yourself going down an increasingly confusing rabbit hole, back up and start over knowing what you know now. You’re likely to take a more informed path with different search terms and better decisions.

In summary, we will now establish a connection between the solutions presented earlier and the primary categories outlined in Section 5.1 based on their concepts. This correlation will be illustrated in Table 3, which demonstrates how each solution aligns with its respective category. Despite potential overlaps, by organizing the solutions in this manner, we can better comprehend their applicability and effectiveness in addressing the challenges posed by Fake News.

Solutions from cases	Main categories
Invest in fact-checking	Fact-checking and verification
Monitor social media	Monitoring and Detection
Train employees and influencers	Communication Strategy
Be transparent	Building brand trust
Partner with trusted sources	Engage with stakeholders

Table 3: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be disseminated by consumers

5.2.3 How to avoid Fake News to be amplified by consumers

When people lose faith in institutional sources, they end up relying only on themselves, close friends and family. ‘They trust their instincts, they trust what

resonates with them,' Prof Dimitrakopoulou said (European Commission, June, 2023). That means they will search the internet, social media and other sources until they find information that reinforces the beliefs they already hold.

For example, a story about a mother whose child fell sick after getting a Covid-19 vaccination would likely be more influential than a message containing scientific facts (European Commission, June, 2023). Therefore, every single Fake News could be amplified and shared unintentionally by consumers.

CASE ANALYSIS

CASE 3-1: COVID-19 (phenomena)

In October 2020, posts on social media and articles were published claiming that a new CDC study found the Majority of those infected with COVID-19 'always' wore Masks. This claim was further elevated on October 15, 2020, a town hall broadcast by NBC, interviewed U.S. President Donald Trump. During this interview Trump stated, " But just the other day, they came out with a statement that 85% of the people that wear masks catch it." Trump's source for this claim was the new study published by the CDC (Rev.com, May, 2023). This information was ultimately, misinterpreted (Central Washington University Libraries, May, 2023). (Figure 8)



Figure 8: CDC's tweet addressing the misinformation

The analysis

The COVID-19 misinformation case surrounding mask usage reveals the dangers of false information during a health crisis. In October 2020, a distorted claim about a CDC study suggested mask-wearing increased infection rates. Even U.S. President Donald Trump mentioned it, unaware of its misinterpretation. This highlights the impact of authority figures in spreading misinformation. The case emphasizes the need for accurate interpretation, critical evaluation, responsible sharing, and the role of media in combating misinformation. Overall, it demonstrates the consequences and challenges of false information during public health emergencies.

Solutions for brands

In the following section, we will explore some common techniques employed by Brands in their endeavors to combat Fake News. These techniques have been derived from case examples, showcasing how Brands have effectively addressed the challenge of misinformation. By examining these strategies, we can gain valuable insights into the successful approaches adopted by companies to tackle Fake News in today's digital landscape:

1-Stay vigilant

Brands must proactively monitor online platforms and social media channels to stay informed about any mentions or discussions related to their brand. By being vigilant, brands can quickly identify potentially harmful content or misinformation and take appropriate actions.

2-Respond quickly

When a Fake News story starts gaining traction, brands need to respond promptly and transparently. It is crucial to address the issue directly, acknowledge any mistakes made, and provide accurate information to correct the misinformation. By responding quickly, brands can effectively counter the spread of false information and maintain their reputation.

3-Build trust with consumers

Establishing a strong brand reputation based on transparency and honesty is vital to mitigating the impact of Fake News. Brands that have consistently demonstrated trustworthiness over time are more likely to be believed when they deny false claims

or provide accurate information. Building and maintaining trust with consumers is crucial for combating the influence of misinformation.

4-Use fact-checking and verification tools

Brands should utilize fact-checking and verification tools to assess the accuracy of information. These tools enable brands to quickly verify claims and debunk false information. By employing such tools, brands can ensure that they respond based on verified facts rather than relying on unfounded rumors or inaccuracies.

5-Educate consumers

Brands can play an active role in educating consumers about Fake News and how to identify and avoid it. By sharing resources and information on critical thinking, fact-checking, and reliable sources, brands empower consumers to be discerning and responsible in their consumption and sharing of information. Educating consumers helps create a more informed and vigilant society that is less susceptible to the spread of Fake News.

In summary, we will now establish a connection between the solutions presented earlier and the primary categories outlined in Section 5.1 based on their concepts. This correlation will be illustrated in Table 4, which demonstrates how each solution aligns with its respective category. Despite potential overlaps, by organizing the solutions in this manner, we can better comprehend their applicability and effectiveness in addressing the challenges posed by Fake News.

Solutions from cases	Main categories
Stay vigilant	Monitoring and Detection
Respond quickly	Rapid Response
Build trust with consumers	Building brand trust
Use fact-checking and verification tools	Fact-checking and verification
Educate consumers	Communication Strategy

Table 4: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be amplified by consumers

5.2.4 How to avoid Fake News to be created by third parties

A growing number of unscrupulous companies are using bots or fake accounts to run smear campaigns against their competitors on social media, it is claimed. For example, if a retailer has disappointing financial results in a certain three-month period, then an unscrupulous competitor can try to exaggerate their rival's financial woes.

while such attacks are being led by "foreign competitors" of Western brands, such as by Chinese firms, he doesn't rule out that some smaller Western businesses are also doing the same against larger rivals. (The chief executive of Logically, a high-tech monitoring firm that uses artificial intelligence (AI) software to trawl the likes of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok to find so called "Fake News") (BBC News, 2022)

CASE ANALYSIS

CASE 4-1: McDonald's vs. Burger King (brand)

In 1984, Burger King ran an ad campaign claiming that its burgers were superior to McDonald's burgers. McDonald's responded by creating its own ad campaign, which accused Burger King of using old, frozen meat in its burgers. The claim was false, but it hurt Burger King's reputation (CNN Money, 2015).

The analysis

The Burger King and McDonald's case highlights the damaging impact of false claims in advertising. In 1984, Burger King claimed superiority over McDonald's, leading to a retaliatory campaign by McDonald's accusing Burger King of using old, frozen meat. This false claim harmed Burger King's reputation, emphasizing the importance of honesty and transparency in maintaining brand trust. Businesses must prioritize ethical advertising practices, fact-check claims, and avoid misleading consumers or disparaging competitors to safeguard their reputation.

CASE 4-2: Pepsi vs. Coca-Cola (brand)

In the late 1990s, PepsiCo was accused of spreading rumors that Coca-Cola was using a toxic ingredient in its beverages. PepsiCo denied any involvement in the

rumor, but an investigation by the Federal Trade Commission found that the company had hired a third-party public relations firm to circulate negative information about Coca-Cola (FTC, 1999).

The analysis

The case of PepsiCo spreading rumors about Coca-Cola using a toxic ingredient highlights the negative impact of deceptive tactics on brand reputation. PepsiCo's involvement in hiring a third-party firm to circulate false information damaged its own reputation and undermined consumer trust. The investigation by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) exposed these deceptive practices, emphasizing the importance of ethical behavior in business competition. The case serves as a reminder of the consequences of engaging in deceptive strategies and the need for transparency and honesty in maintaining a positive brand image.

Solutions for brands

In the following section, we will explore some common techniques employed by Brands in their endeavors to combat Fake News. These techniques have been derived from case examples, showcasing how Brands have effectively addressed the challenge of misinformation. By examining these strategies, we can gain valuable insights into the successful approaches adopted by companies to tackle Fake News in today's digital landscape. Regardless of the type of third parties and the purpose for which Fake News is being generated, there are some generic methodologies that can be applied to prevent the creation of misinformation by third parties.

1-Be proactive with transparency

Brands should take a proactive approach to transparency by providing accurate and detailed information about their products and services. This can be done through various channels such as their website, press releases, and active engagement on social media. By being transparent, brands can establish trust with their audience and reduce the likelihood of false information being generated.

2-Monitor social media

It is crucial for brands to monitor social media platforms for any mentions of their products and services. By keeping an eye on online conversations, brands can identify any false or misleading information being spread by their rivals. This allows

them to respond promptly, correct inaccuracies, and provide accurate information to their audience.

3-Build brand loyalty

Brands that have a strong relationship with their customers are more resilient to Fake News generated by their rivals. By building a strong brand identity, engaging with customers on social media, and delivering excellent customer service, brands can foster loyalty and trust. This loyalty acts as a shield against false information, as customers are more likely to question and verify claims before believing them.

4-Work with influencers

Collaborating with influencers and trusted sources can be an effective strategy for brands to counter false information. By partnering with influencers who have credibility and a loyal following, brands can leverage their influence to spread accurate information and debunk any false claims made by rivals. Influencers can act as trusted voices, reinforcing the brand's credibility and combating Fake News.

In summary, we will now establish a connection between the solutions presented earlier and the primary categories outlined in Section 5.1 based on their concepts. This correlation will be illustrated in Table 5, which demonstrates how each solution aligns with its respective category. Despite potential overlaps, by organizing the solutions in this manner, we can better comprehend their applicability and effectiveness in addressing the challenges posed by Fake News.

Solutions from cases	Main categories
Be proactive with transparency	Building brand trust
Monitor social media	Monitoring and Detection
Build brand loyalty	Building brand trust
Work with influencers	Communication Strategy

Table 5: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be created by third parties

5.2.5 How to avoid Fake News to be disseminated by third parties

In the contemporary digital landscape, Fake News can be disseminated quickly and widely, which can significantly damage a brand's reputation and credibility (Di Domenico, Sit, Ishizaka, & Nunan, 2020). In this context, it is crucial for brands to take proactive measures to prevent the spread of Fake News by competitors. To do so, companies should establish and enforce clear guidelines and policies that promote transparency, fact-checking, and ethical communication. They should also invest in media literacy training for their employees to help them identify and counteract Fake News. Additionally, brands can collaborate with reputable media outlets and fact-checking organizations to promote accurate and reliable information. By taking proactive measures to prevent the spread of Fake News, brands can protect their reputation and credibility, maintain consumer trust, and contribute to a more informed and trustworthy media landscape.

CASE ANALYSIS

CASE 5-1: Coca-Cola (brand)

In 2018, a Fake News story was circulated on social media claiming that Coca-Cola was recalling Dasani water due to a parasite outbreak. The story included a fake press release and was designed to damage Coca-Cola's reputation and sales (Associated Press, 2021).

The analysis

The circulation of a Fake News story in 2018, falsely claiming Coca-Cola's Dasani water was being recalled due to a parasite outbreak, had the potential to harm Coca-Cola's reputation and sales. The story, accompanied by a fabricated press release, highlights the need for brands to be vigilant in monitoring and addressing false information circulating on social media to protect their reputation and maintain consumer trust.

CASE 5-2: Uber vs. Lyft Rideshare Battle (brand)

In the ongoing competition between rideshare giants Uber and Lyft, there have been instances of Fake News and misinformation being spread to gain a competitive

edge. Both companies have been known to engage in aggressive marketing tactics, including spreading false rumors about each other.

One such example dates back to 2014 when Lyft accused Uber employees of ordering and then canceling thousands of rides on the Lyft platform, creating the impression of high demand for Lyft rides and causing inconvenience to Lyft drivers. Lyft alleged that these actions were aimed at hurting their reputation and driver morale (Fink, 2014).

Uber, in turn, denied the allegations and claimed that Lyft was fabricating stories to gain sympathy and publicity.

The analysis

The ongoing competition between rideshare giants Uber and Lyft has revealed the use of Fake News and misinformation as tools in their marketing arsenal. Both companies have been involved in aggressive tactics that include spreading false rumors about each other. The 2014 incident, where Lyft accused Uber of ordering and canceling rides to manipulate demand, highlights the strategic use of Fake News to damage competitors' reputation and credibility. This case underscores the potential repercussions of such actions on brand perception, trust, and industry credibility. It serves as a reminder that while Fake News might yield short-term gains, the long-term damage to brand image and trust can be significant. Ethical conduct, transparent communication, and effective crisis management are crucial in maintaining a positive brand image in the digital age.

Solutions for brands

In the following section, we will explore some common techniques employed by Brands in their endeavors to combat Fake News. These techniques have been derived from case examples, showcasing how Brands have effectively addressed the challenge of misinformation. By examining these strategies, we can gain valuable insights into the successful approaches adopted by companies to tackle Fake News in today's digital landscape:

1-Monitor social media

Actively monitor social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to detect and address any instances of Fake News circulating about your brand.

2-Have a crisis communication plan

Develop a comprehensive crisis communication plan that outlines the steps and strategies to be implemented when confronted with a Fake News attack, ensuring a swift and effective response.

3-Build trust with your customers

Foster a strong relationship built on trust with your customers and stakeholders through consistent and transparent communication. This will help inoculate them against believing and spreading Fake News disseminated by your competitors.

4-Respond quickly

In the event that your brand is targeted with Fake News, respond promptly and directly to counter the false narrative with accurate information. Timely and proactive communication can help mitigate the impact and prevent the spread of misinformation.

5- Work with influencers and media outlets

Collaborate with reputable influencers and media outlets to amplify your brand's message and counteract any Fake News being circulated. Leveraging trusted sources can help validate your brand's credibility and reach a wider audience.

It is imperative to bear in mind that prevention is preferable to remedy. Employing preemptive strategies to establish a sense of reliability with your clientele and promptly addressing any instances of misinformation can effectively safeguard your brand's reputation and avert substantial repercussions on your enterprise.

In summary, we will now establish a connection between the solutions presented earlier and the primary categories outlined in Section 5.1 based on their concepts. This correlation will be illustrated in Table 6, which demonstrates how each solution aligns with its respective category. Despite potential overlaps, by organizing the solutions in this manner, we can better comprehend their applicability and effectiveness in addressing the challenges posed by Fake News.

Solutions from cases	Main categories
Monitor social media	Monitoring and Detection
Have a crisis communication plan	Rapid Response
	Communication Strategy
Build trust with your customers	Building brand trust
Respond quickly	Rapid Response
Work with influencers and media outlets	Engage with stakeholders
	Communication Strategy

Table 6: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be disseminated by third parties

5.2.6 How to avoid Fake News to be amplified by third parties

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, the pervasive threat of Fake News poses a substantial risk, spreading rapidly and causing considerable harm. Compounding this concern is the unsettling reality that our adversaries can exploit this tool of misinformation to magnify falsehoods directed at us. These adversaries engage in social media warfare, utilizing fake accounts to deceitfully disseminate and artificially amplify negative reviews, whether genuine or fabricated (BBC News, 2022). To protect ourselves from potential damage, it is imperative to delve into effective strategies that prevent the amplification of Fake News by external entities.

CASE ANALYSIS

Case 6-1: Plandemic (phenomena)

The "Plandemic" video: In 2020, a video called "Plandemic" was released that made false and misleading claims about the COVID-19 pandemic, including that the virus was created in a laboratory and that wearing masks could make you sick. Despite being widely debunked by medical experts, the video was shared widely on social media and other platforms, leading to confusion and misinformation about the pandemic (Fadel, 2020).

The analysis

In the case of the "Plandemic" video, false and misleading information about the COVID-19 pandemic spread rapidly through social media and other platforms, causing confusion and promoting misinformation. The video's claims, such as the origins of the virus and the supposed dangers of wearing masks, were debunked by medical experts. This case underscores the challenges of combating Fake News, as even after being disproven, false information can continue to circulate and influence public perception. It highlights the importance of proactive fact-checking, accurate information dissemination, and public awareness to combat the spread of misinformation during crises.

Solutions for brands

In the following section, we will explore some common techniques employed by Brands in their endeavors to combat Fake News. These techniques have been derived from case examples, showcasing how Brands have effectively addressed the challenge of misinformation. By examining these strategies, we can gain valuable insights into the successful approaches adopted by companies to tackle Fake News in today's digital landscape:

1-Monitor online channels

Regularly monitor social media, news outlets, and forums to stay informed about any Fake News circulating about your brand.

2-Have a crisis management plan

Develop a comprehensive plan to effectively respond to Fake News attacks, including steps for addressing the situation and communicating with stakeholders.

3-Create a rapid response team

Assemble a team of experts from various departments to quickly address and counter Fake News propagated by competitors.

4-Leverage social media

Utilize social media platforms to engage with your audience, share accurate information, and debunk false claims about your brand.

5-Work with trusted sources

Cultivate relationships with trusted media outlets, influencers, and partners who can help disseminate accurate information and counteract Fake News.

6-Be transparent

Foster transparency by providing open and honest communication with your customers and stakeholders, sharing accurate information, and addressing concerns promptly.

In summary, we will now establish a connection between the solutions presented earlier and the primary categories outlined in Section 5.1 based on their concepts. This correlation will be illustrated in Table 7, which demonstrates how each solution aligns with its respective category. Despite potential overlaps, by organizing the solutions in this manner, we can better comprehend their applicability and effectiveness in addressing the challenges posed by Fake News.

Solutions from cases	Main categories
Monitor online channels	Monitoring and Detection
Have a crisis management plan	Rapid Response
	Communication Strategy
Create a rapid response team	Rapid Response
Leverage social media	Communication Strategy
Work with trusted sources	Fact-checking and verification
Be transparent	Building brand trust

Table 7: Connect solutions to common methodologies for how to avoid Fake News to be amplified by third parties

5.2.7 How to avoid Fake News to be amplified by brand itself

Given the potential ramifications of unintentionally magnifying false information, it is crucial for brands to prioritize ethical communication practices. They should take active measures to avoid becoming unwitting facilitators in the dissemination of misinformation and instead cultivate an atmosphere characterized by trust,

accuracy, and credibility. Developing a crisis plan, which involves defining objectives and establishing a committee responsible for decision-making and communication strategy, can assist brands in minimizing the amplification of Fake News (Thompson, 2023).

CASE ANALYSIS

Case 7-1: McDonald's pink slime controversy (brand)

In 2012, a viral video circulated claiming that McDonald's was using a chemical called "pink slime" in its hamburgers. Although the video was misleading and the chemical was actually a safe and legal food additive, McDonald's initially responded defensively, leading to a public relations crisis. (Business Insider, 2014)

The analysis

The McDonald's pink slime controversy highlights the importance of effective crisis management in the face of viral misinformation. The initial defensive response by McDonald's exacerbated the situation, demonstrating the need for brands to respond promptly and transparently to address false claims. This case emphasizes the significance of proactive communication, accurate information dissemination, and swift actions to protect brand reputation in the era of viral content and social media.

Solutions for brands

In the following section, we will explore some common techniques employed by Brands in their endeavors to combat Fake News. These techniques have been derived from case examples, showcasing how Brands have effectively addressed the challenge of misinformation. By examining these strategies, we can gain valuable insights into the successful approaches adopted by companies to tackle Fake News in today's digital landscape:

1-Verify sources

Before sharing any news or information about your brand, make sure to verify the sources. Ensure that the information is accurate, reliable, and from a trustworthy source.

2-Fact-check

Always fact-check any information before sharing it with your audience. This will help to prevent the spread of false information.

3-Be transparent

Be open and transparent with your audience. If you make a mistake or share false information, admit it and correct it. This will help to build trust with your audience.

4-Have a social media policy

Establish a clear social media policy for your brand that outlines the dos and don'ts of sharing information online. Make sure all employees and representatives of your brand understand the policy and follow it.

5-Train employees

Train all employees on how to identify and avoid spreading Fake News. This will help to ensure that everyone in your organization is aware of the risks of sharing false information.

6-Engage with your audience

Engage with your audience on social media and other platforms to provide accurate information about your brand. This will help to counter any false information that may be circulating.

In summary, we will now establish a connection between the solutions presented earlier and the primary categories outlined in Section 5.1 based on their concepts. This correlation will be illustrated in Table 8, which demonstrates how each solution aligns with its respective category. Despite potential overlaps, by organizing the solutions in this manner, we can better comprehend their applicability and effectiveness in addressing the challenges posed by Fake News.

Solutions from cases	Main categories
Verify sources	Monitoring and Detection
Fact-check	Fact-checking and verification
Be transparent	Communication Strategy
Have a social media policy	Communication Strategy
Train employees	Communication Strategy
Engage with your audience	Engage with stakeholders

Table 8: Connect solutions to common methodologies
for how to avoid Fake News to be amplified by brand itself

The above methodologies and categories are combined to form the following table (Table 9).

Assumptions	Solutions from cases	Common methodologies
Consumers contribute to creating Fake News	Building brand trust/being transparent	Building brand trust
	Monitor social media	Monitoring and Detection
	Educate Consumers	Communication Strategy
Consumers contribute to disseminating Fake News	Invest in fact-checking	Fact-checking and verification
	Monitor social media	Monitoring and Detection
	Train employees and influencers	Communication Strategy
	Be transparent	Building brand trust
	Partner with trusted sources	Engage with stakeholders
Consumers contribute to amplifying Fake News	Stay vigilant	Monitoring and Detection
	Respond quickly	Rapid Response
	Build trust with consumers	Building brand trust
	Use fact-checking and verification tools	Fact-checking and verification
	Educate consumers	Communication Strategy
Third parties contribute to creating Fake News	Be proactive with transparency	Building brand trust
	Monitor social media	Monitoring and Detection
	Build brand loyalty	Building brand trust
	Work with influencers	Communication Strategy
Third parties contribute to disseminating Fake News	Monitor social media	Monitoring and Detection
	Have a crisis communication plan	Rapid Response
		Communication Strategy
	Build trust with your customers	Building brand trust
	Respond quickly	Rapid Response
	Work with influencers and media outlets	Engage with stakeholders
Communication Strategy		
Third parties contribute to amplifying Fake News	Monitor online channels	Monitoring and Detection
	Have a crisis management plan	Rapid Response
		Communication Strategy
	Create a rapid response team	Rapid Response
	Leverage social media	Communication Strategy
	Work with trusted sources	Fact-checking and verification
Be transparent	Building brand trust	
Brand(s) contribute to amplifying Fake News	Verify sources	Monitoring and Detection
	Fact-check	Fact-checking and verification
	Be transparent	Communication Strategy
	Have a social media policy	Communication Strategy
	Train employees	Communication Strategy
	Engage with your audience	Engage with stakeholders

Table 9: Summary of case studies and main methodologies

Main categories	Frequency in Table 9
Communication Strategy	11
Monitoring and Detection	7
Building brand trust	7
Rapid Response	5
Fact-checking and verification	4
Engage with stakeholders	3

Table 10: the importance of methodologies

Based on the given importance numbers which are frequencies in Table 10 assigned to each methodology, we can interpret the following regarding the conceptual model to protect brand reputation facing Fake News:

- **Communication Strategy (Frequency: 11):** This methodology holds the highest importance, suggesting that a well-defined and robust communication strategy is crucial for protecting brand reputation. Effective communication can help counteract the negative impact of Fake News by ensuring accurate information reaches the target audience promptly.
- **Monitoring and Detection (Frequency: 7):** The significance assigned to monitoring and detection indicates the importance of actively monitoring the media landscape and digital platforms for the identification of Fake News related to the brand. Early detection is vital to respond swiftly and prevent the dissemination of false information.
- **Building Brand Trust (Frequency: 7):** The importance placed on building brand trust implies that establishing a strong foundation of trust with consumers and stakeholders is essential. By consistently delivering quality products, transparent business practices, and maintaining open communication, brands can enhance their reputation and minimize the impact of Fake News.

- **Rapid Response (Frequency: 5):** The assigned importance to rapid response suggests that promptly addressing Fake News is crucial. Brands should develop a mechanism to swiftly respond to false information, clarify misconceptions, and mitigate any potential damage to their reputation.
- **Fact-checking and Verification (Frequency: 4):** The importance assigned to fact-checking and verification highlights the need for brands to invest in robust mechanisms to verify the accuracy of information before responding. By ensuring the authenticity of facts, brands can counter Fake News more effectively and protect their reputation.
- **Engage with Stakeholders (Frequency: 3):** The lower importance assigned to engaging with stakeholders suggests that while it is valuable, it may not be the most critical aspect. However, maintaining open lines of communication with stakeholders, such as customers, employees, and partners, can help address concerns and provide accurate information, contributing to reputation protection.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 SUMMARY

This study aims to propose a proactive strategy as a conceptual model for brands to effectively address the challenges posed by Fake News. By delving into the realm of Fake News, its categorization, and the gaps in brand management strategies, the study seeks to answer two core questions through literature reviews and case studies. The first question examines the techniques and methodologies that companies and brands commonly employ to combat Fake News. The research aims to thoroughly identify and analyze the strategies used in crisis management to counter the impact of Fake News. By synthesizing insights from diverse sources, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of methods used to counter the dissemination of false information.

The second question focuses on determining a holistic proactive approach and best practices for companies and brands to effectively tackle Fake News. Through an in-depth exploration of this approach, the study aims to identify optimal practices that brands can adopt to mitigate the influences of Fake News. Drawing on successful case studies and expert insights, the research constructs a comprehensive framework that offers guidance to organizations in their efforts to address Fake News in an effective manner. The study progresses by defining Fake News and its implications on brands, including reputational losses. Six main categories of Fake News are identified: News satire, parody, advertising-based news, propaganda, manipulation, and fabrication. The process of Fake News is discussed, highlighting key players: Consumers, third parties, and the brand itself. The impact of Fake News on consumer behavior is also explored.

Real case examples are discussed in Chapter 4, illustrating how Fake News impacts brands. Chapter 5 proposes a conceptual model, outlining key strategies that brands can employ to confront Fake News effectively. These strategies include monitoring and detection, rapid response, communication strategy, stakeholder engagement, fact-checking, verification, and building brand trust.

The assumptions underlying the main model highlight the contributions of consumers, third parties, and brands themselves in creating, disseminating, and amplifying Fake News. By investigating real case examples within these assumptions, the study derives best practices for brands to safeguard their reputation

and integrity when facing the challenge of Fake News. Overall, this thesis offers valuable insights and recommendations to guide brands in the evolving landscape of information dissemination.

6.2 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the conceptual model to protect brand reputation facing Fake News highlights the multifaceted approach required to combat the detrimental effects of misinformation. The high importance attributed to the communication strategy underscores its pivotal role as the foundation for brand reputation protection. A well-crafted communication strategy enables brands to effectively counter false narratives, ensuring accurate information reaches their target audience promptly.

Alongside the communication strategy, the model recognizes the significance of proactive monitoring and detection. By actively scanning the media landscape and digital platforms, brands can swiftly identify instances of Fake News, enabling timely responses and mitigating potential reputational damage.

Building brand trust emerges as another vital element in the conceptual model. Through consistent delivery of quality products, transparent business practices, and open communication, brands can establish a strong foundation of trust with consumers and stakeholders. This trust serves as a valuable asset in minimizing the impact of Fake News, as loyal customers are more likely to question false information and seek accurate details from reliable sources.

Rapid response mechanisms are also emphasized within the model. The ability to swiftly address and debunk false information is crucial in limiting its spread and potential harm. By promptly clarifying misconceptions and providing accurate information, brands can maintain control over their narrative and minimize the negative impact of Fake News.

The model further stresses the importance of fact-checking and verification processes. Brands should invest in robust mechanisms to verify the authenticity of information before formulating responses. This ensures that any counter-narratives are based on accurate facts, enhancing the effectiveness of their efforts to combat Fake News.

While assigning a lower importance, the model recognizes the value of engaging with stakeholders. Open lines of communication with customers, employees, and partners allow brands to address concerns, provide accurate information, and foster trust. Although not the central focus, stakeholder engagement remains a valuable component of reputation protection.

By implementing this comprehensive conceptual model, brands can effectively safeguard their reputation in the face of Fake News. Proactive measures such as a well-defined communication strategy, monitoring, and detection, building brand trust, rapid response mechanisms, fact-checking and verification processes, and stakeholder engagement collectively contribute to countering misinformation and preserving brand integrity in an increasingly complex and volatile media landscape.

6.3 LIMITATION

In the rapidly evolving digital world, characterized by the continuous influx of information and fast-paced data, this study encountered a significant constraint stemming from the scarcity of academic research and references specifically focusing on the managerial approach for brands facing the challenges posed by Fake News. The scarcity of comprehensive scholarly literature on this particular subject limited the depth and breadth of our investigation, necessitating the reliance on secondary data and case examples sourced from reputable websites and magazines. The dearth of primary academic research on the managerial aspects of handling Fake News within the context of brand management presented a challenge in developing a robust theoretical framework for our study. As a result, certain sections of the research, particularly the consideration and formulation of conclusions, were inevitably influenced by the authors' subjective perceptions and interpretations of "the impacts of Fake News on brands." This reliance on subjective perspectives may have introduced an element of bias, potentially affecting the accuracy and objectivity of the study's findings.

Additionally, relying on secondary data sources and case examples posed the risk of inherent limitations in terms of data quality and relevance. Although efforts were made to gather information from trustworthy and credible sources, the lack of primary data collection restricted our ability to delve deeper into the nuances of

specific brand management strategies or to explore the intricacies of real-time reactions to Fake News incidents.

Moreover, the evolving nature of the digital landscape means that new information and research may emerge even as this thesis reaches completion. The absence of up-to-date academic publications and scholarly articles addressing the rapidly changing dynamics of Fake News and its impact on brands further contributed to the limitation of the study.

Furthermore, as the research relied on information from external sources, the authenticity and accuracy of the data were not entirely within our control. We acknowledge that errors or inconsistencies might exist in the secondary data, potentially influencing the validity and reliability of the study.

Despite these constraints, we endeavored to maintain rigor and objectivity throughout the research process by critically evaluating the available data and selecting reputable sources. While recognizing the limitations and potential biases, this study lays the foundation for future research in this emerging field. By identifying the gaps in academic research on managerial approaches for brands dealing with Fake News, we aim to inspire scholars and practitioners to undertake further investigations and advance the understanding of effective strategies for safeguarding brand reputation in an ever-evolving digital landscape.

6.4 FURTHER RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As this study has delved into the critical issue of protecting brand reputation from the onslaught of Fake News, there are several promising avenues for further research and recommendations that can contribute to a deeper understanding and effective implementation of strategies. The following suggestions are based on the insights gained from the current study and are aligned with the identified gaps and opportunities in the research landscape.

Exploring Managerial Insights Through Case Studies and Interviews

To build upon the insights presented in this study, future research endeavors can adopt a qualitative approach by conducting more in-depth case studies enriched with interviews involving managers from diverse industries. This approach would enable researchers to uncover the decision-making processes, motivations, and ethical considerations that drive the utilization of Fake News as a competitive strategy. By

delving into the complexities of real-world scenarios, these studies can offer practical insights that can guide organizations in mitigating the impact of Fake News on brand reputation.

Niche Market Investigation

Focusing on specific markets or industries can yield valuable insights into the nuances of combating Fake News. Researchers can delve into how different sectors respond to Fake News and the effectiveness of tailored strategies. This approach will enable a more granular understanding of the challenges and opportunities unique to each market, facilitating the development of targeted approaches for brand protection.

The Role of AI in Mitigating Fake News Impacts

As technology continues to evolve, investigating the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in combating Fake News warrants attention. Future studies can explore how AI-powered tools can be harnessed to detect, analyze, and counteract the spread of misinformation. By examining the effectiveness of AI algorithms in real-time information verification and response, researchers can provide insights into innovative solutions that can safeguard brand reputation in an increasingly digital landscape.

Consumer Perceptions and Impact of Believability

Gaining a deeper understanding of consumer perceptions and the factors influencing the believability of Fake News is essential. Researchers can leverage data collected through interviews with consumers to identify the psychological and emotional triggers that contribute to the acceptance or rejection of false information. These insights can inform the development of targeted educational campaigns aimed at enhancing media literacy and critical thinking among consumers.

REFERECES

- AdEspresso by Hootsuite. (Retrieved May 10, 2023). <https://adespresso.com>
- Allcott, H., & Gentzkow, M. (2017). Social media and fake news in the 2016 election. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(2), 211-236.
- Anderson, W. L. (2004). Facts, Fiction, and the Fourth Estate: The "Washington Post" and "Jimmy's World." *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 63(5), 965-986. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3488061>.
- Appelman, A., & Sundar, S. S. (2016). Measuring message credibility on Twitter: A meta-analysis. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 93(1), 59-79.
- Associated Press. (2021, April 13). US recommends 'pause' for J&J vaccine over clot reports. <https://apnews.com/article/ecfb398fa555456d99fe40e0a05dd1da>
- Barbour, S., & Eley, S. (2007). Refereed special section: reusing qualitative data. *Sociological Research Online*, 12(3).
- Belin, A. (2020, June 25). How to Protect and Defend your Brand from Fake News. Latana. Retrieved from <https://latana.com/post/fake-news-brands/>
- Benkler, Y., Faris, R., & Roberts, H. (2018). *Network Propaganda: Manipulation, Disinformation, and Radicalization in American Politics*. Oxford University Press.
- Berkowitz, D., & Schwartz, A. (2016). Miley, CNN and The Onion. *Journalism Practice*, 10(1), 1–17. doi:10.1080/17512786.2015.1006933.
- Brian X. Chen & Choe Sang-Hun. (2016, October 11). Why Samsung Abandoned Its Galaxy Note 7 Flagship Phone. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/12/business/international/samsung-galaxy-note7-terminated.html>
- Business Insider. Misinformation vs. Disinformation. Retrieved June 15, 2023, from <https://www.businessinsider.com/guides/tech/misinformation-vs-disinformation?r=US&IR=T>

- Business Insider. (2014, May 22). McDonald's finally speaks out about the 'pink slime' controversy. Retrieved May 1, 2023, from <https://www.businessinsider.com/mcdonalds-addresses-pink-slime-claims-2014-5?r=US&IR=T>
- Business Insider. (2016, January 19). Here's The Truth About That McDonald's Worm Meat Photo. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com/debunked-mcdonalds-uses-worm-filler-2016-1?r=US&IR=T>
- BBC News. (2022, July 6). Why inflation is rising and what you can do about it. Retrieved May 1, 2023, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-62161520>
- Castellani, P., & Berton, M. (2017). "Fake news and corporate reputation: What strategies do companies adopt against false information in the media?" In 20th Excellence in Services, International Conference (pp. [page numbers]). University of Verona. Retrieved from [https://sites.les.univr.it/eisic/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/20-EISIC-Castellani-Berton.pdf]
- Caleffi, P., Delfanti, A., & Mauri, M. (2020). Fighting Fake News with co-designed fact-checking platforms: A participatory action research approach. *Telematics and Informatics*, 54, 101459. doi: 10.1016/j.tele.2020.101459
- Central Washington University Libraries. Fake News. Retrieved April 20, 2023, from <https://libguides.lib.cwu.edu/fakenews>
- Central Washington University Libraries. How to cite sources: APA style. Retrieved May 20, 2023 from <https://libguides.lib.cwu.edu/c.php?g=625394&p=4391900>
- Central Washington University Libraries. Information Literacy. Retrieved April 20, 2023, from <https://libguides.lib.cwu.edu/c.php?g=625394&p=4391900#s-lg-box-30321291>
- Chen, Cheng, Kui Wu, Venkatesh Srinivasan, and Xudong Zhang. 2013. "Battling the Internet Water Army: Detection of Hidden Paid Posters." In Proceedings of the 2013 IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining, Niagara, Ontario, Canada: ACM.
- Chen, Yimin, Niall J. Conroy, and Victoria L. Rubin. 2015. "Misleading Online Content: Recognizing Clickbait as 'False News'." In Proceedings of the 2015 ACM on Workshop on Multimodal Deception Detection, Seattle, Washington, USA: ACM

- Cheng, J. M. S., & Chiou, J. S. (2013). The effect of misleading information on source credibility and product evaluation: The moderating role of knowledge and involvement. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 12(4), 304-314.
- CNNMoney. (2015, February 5). McDonald's, Burger King has a beef over McWhopper proposal. CNN. Retrieved from <https://money.cnn.com/2015/02/05/news/companies/mcdonalds-burger-king-ad-controversy/index.html>
- Di Domenico, G., Sit, J., Ishizaka, A., & Nunan, D. (2020). Fake news, social media and marketing: A systematic review. *Journal of Business Research*, 124(January), 329-341.
- Diakopoulos, N. (2019). Computational journalism: A call to arms to algorithmic accountability. *Digital Journalism*, 7(6), 686-702. doi: 10.1080/21670811.2019.1637914
- Deziel, Melanie. (2014). Women Inmates: Why the Male Model Doesn't Work. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://paidpost.nytimes.com/netflix/women-inmates-separate-but-not-equal.html>.
- Dewey, C. (2016, December 5). The disturbing new normal of the "Pizzagate" conspiracy theory. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-intersect/wp/2016/12/05/the-disturbing-new-normal-of-the-pizzagate-conspiracy-theory/>
- "Drinking Age at Disney World May Be Lowered to 18". *Mousetrap News*. Retrieved May 20, 2023 from <https://mousetrapnews.com/drinking-age-at-disney-world-may-be-lowered-to-18/>
- European Commission. (2023, July 28). Tone is important, but truth is key to counter vaccine fake news. *Horizon Magazine*. <https://ec.europa.eu/research-and-innovation/en/horizon-magazine/tone-important-truth-counter-vaccine-fake-news>
- Fadel, L. (2020, May 8). Seen 'Plandemic'? We Take A Close Look At The Viral Conspiracy Video's Claims. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2020/05/08/852451652/seen-plantemic-we-take-a-close-look-at-the-viral-conspiracy-video-s-claims>
- Fink, E. (2014, August 12). Uber admits hiring investigators to undermine Lyft. *CNN Money*. Retrieved August 10, 2023, from <https://money.cnn.com/2014/08/11/technology/uber-fake-ride-requests-lyft/index.html>
- Frenkel, S., Decker, B., & Alba, D. (2020, May 20). How the 'Plandemic' Movie and Its Falsehoods Spread Widely Online. *The New York Times*. Retrieved July 24, 2023, from

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/technology/plandemic-movie-youtube-facebook-coronavirus.html>

- Forbes Communications Council. (2020, August 25). 16 Business Strategies for Dealing with Fake News. Forbes. Retrieved June 15, 2023 from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescommunicationscouncil/2020/08/25/16-business-strategies-for-dealing-with-fake-news/?sh=2203fd0653e8>
- FTC. (1999, May 19). PepsiCo Agrees to Settle FTC Charges that It Spread False Rumors about Competitor. Federal Trade Commission. <https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/press-releases/1999/05/pepsico-agrees-settle-ftc-charges-it-spread-false-rumors-about>
- Farsetta, Diane, and Daniel Price. 2006. Fake TV news: Widespread and undisclosed. Center for Media and Democracy.
- Harwell, D., Romm, T., & Timberg, C. (2018, October 25). Why false narratives about the migrant caravan and mail bombs won't go away on social media. The Washington Post. Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/why-false-narratives-about-the-migrant-caravan-and-mail-bombs-wont-go-away-on-social-media/2018/10/25/f506cc5e-d889-11e8-a10f-b51546b10756_story.html
- Iona College Research Essentials. (2023, June 21). Misinformation, Disinformation, and Malinformation. Retrieved June 26, 2023, from <https://guides.iona.edu/researchessentials/disinformation>
- Jin, Y., & Liu, B. (2017). Combating fake news: A survey on identification and mitigation techniques. ACM SIGKDD Explorations Newsletter, 19(1), 22-36. doi: 10.1145/3137597.3137600.
- Joselyn, R. W. (1977) Designing the marketing research, Petrocellis/Charter, New York, p.15.
- Kaplan, R. S. and D. P. Norton. (2001). The Strategy-Focused Organization: How Balanced Scorecard Companies Thrive in the New Business Environment. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Khaldarova, Irina, and Mervi Pantti. 2016. "Fake News: The Narrative Battle Over the Ukrainian Conflict." Journalism Practice 10 (7): 891–901.

- Khan, S. A., Shahzad, K., Shabbir, O., & Iqbal, A. (2022). Developing a Framework for Fake News Diffusion Control (FNDC) on Digital Media (DM): A Systematic Review 2010-2022. *Sustainability*, 14(22), 15287. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142215287>
- Lee, F. L. F. (2020). Social media and the spread of fake news during a social movement: The 2019 Anti-ELAB protests in Hong Kong. *Communication and the Public*, 5(3-4), 122-125. DOI: 10.1177/2057047320969437.
- Lu-Culligan, A., & Iwasaki, A. (2021, January 26). The covid vaccine rumors need to stop. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/26/opinion/covid-vaccine-rumors.html>
- Madrid, P. (2023, January 17). USC study reveals the key reason why fake news spreads on social media. Retrieved from <https://news.usc.edu/204782/usc-study-reveals-the-key-reason-why-fake-news-spreads-on-social-media/>
- Mikkelson, D. (2022, November 14). Did Sarah Palin Say, 'Thanksgiving Is for Real Americans, Not Indians'? Snopes. Retrieved July 24, 2023, from <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/going-native/>
- Maslowska, E., & Swiatkowska, A. (2019). Can Brand Evangelists Help Counter Fake News on social media? *Journal of International Studies*, 12(2), 206-217.
- Morais da Silva, J., Rosário, A. T., Gestoso, C. G., & Romana, F. A. (2023). Fake News in Marketing. Preprints. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202305.1630.v1>
- Musumeci, Natalie. "Before Fox News, Tucker Carlson worked at CNN. The show he co-hosted was canceled after a tense on-air exchange where Jon Stewart called him a 'dick.'" *Business Insider*, Apr 26, 2023, <https://www.businessinsider.com/jon-stewart-tucker-carlson-fox-news-cnn-2023-4?r=US&IR=T>.
- Mwangi, E. (2023). Technology and fake news: Shaping social, political, and economic perspectives. Kabarak University.
- Naher, J.; An, T.; and Kim, J. 2019. Improving Users' Algorithmic Understandability and Trust in Content Moderation. In *The 22nd ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing*. Association for Computing Machinery.
- Nelson, Michelle R., and Jiwoo Park. 2015. "Publicity as Covert Marketing? The Role of Persuasion Knowledge and Ethical Perceptions on Beliefs and Credibility in a Video News

Release Story.” *Journal of Business Ethics*, 130(2), 327–341. doi:10.1007/s10551-014-2227-3.

- NBC News. (May 2, 2023). Fake news can cause 'irreversible damage' to companies, sink their stock. April 15, 2023, from <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/fake-news-can-cause-irreversible-damage-companies-sink-their-stock-n995436>
- Newton, K. (May 10, 2023). Marketing: Using crisis management to your advantage. Brandwatch. Retrieved from <https://www.brandwatch.com/blog/marketing-using-crisis-management-to-your-advantage/>
- Ohio University Online Master of Public Administration. (Accessed: June 30, 2023). Guide to Misinformation and Fact-Checking. URL: <https://onlinemasters.ohio.edu/masters-public-administration/guide-to-misinformation-and-fact-checking/>
- In, Y., & Liu, B. (2017). Combating Fake News: A survey on identification and mitigation techniques. *ACM SIGKDD Explorations Newsletter*, 19(1), 22-36. doi: 10.1145/3137597.3137600
- Information Literacy. (May, 2023). Retrieved May 1, 2023, from <https://pressbooks.pub/psufys/chapter/information-literacy/>
- Poynter. (Accessed June 29, 2023). International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN). Retrieved from <https://www.poynter.org/ifcn/>
- Rev. (2020, October 15). Donald Trump NBC Town Hall Transcript October 15. Retrieved from <https://www.rev.com/blog/transcripts/donald-trump-nbc-town-hall-transcript-october-15>
- Ritchie, H. (2016, December 30). Read all about it: The biggest fake news stories of 2016. CNBC. Retrieved from <https://www.cnbc.com/2016/12/30/read-all-about-it-the-biggest-fake-news-stories-of-2016.html>
- Scoop.it. (2021, January 5). How These 5 Brands Use Educational Content to Engage Customers. Retrieved from <https://blog.scoop.it/2021/01/05/how-these-5-brands-use-educational-content-to-engage-customers/>
- Segal, E. (2020, October 21). How Your Company Can Fight the Never-Ending War Against Misinformation. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/edwardsegal/2020/10/21/how-your-company-can-fight-the-never-ending-war-against-misinformation/?sh=17b04bbc48e5>

- Sharif, A., Awan, T. M., & Paracha, O. S. (2021). The fake news effect: What does it mean for consumer behavioral intentions towards brands? *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 58, 102312
- Shyrokykh, K. (2018, November 5). Fake news on social media: Whose responsibility, is it? Retrieved from <https://www.ericsson.com/en/blog/2018/11/fake-news-on-social-media-whose-responsibility-is-it>
- Stefanone, M. A., & Jang, C. (2017). False alarms, real challenges, and pseudo-solutions in the era of Fake News research. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 22(5), 251-259. doi: 10.1111/jcc4.12198
- Sullivan, C. (2022, November 7). Educate Your Customers About Your Product. Bookafy. <https://www.bookafy.com/educate-your-customers-about-your-product>
- Subramanian, Samanth. 2017. "Inside the Macedonian Fake-news Complex." *Wired* <https://www.wired.com/2017/02/veles-macedonia-fake-news/>.
- Tandoc Jr., E. C., Lim, Z. W., & Ling, R. (2018). Defining "Fake News". *Digital Journalism*, 6(2), 137-153.
- Tandoc, E., Ling, R., Westlund, O., & Duffy, A. (2017). Audiences' acts of authentication in the age of fake news: A conceptual framework. *New Media & Society*, 20(8), 2745-2763.
- Tandoc E, Lim ZW and Ling R (2017) Defining "fake news:" a typology of scholarly definitions. *Digital Journalism (Online First)*: 1-17.
- Thought Industries (2020), "Thought Industries Announces Results of 2020 State of Customer Training Report Survey." Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtindustries.com/blog/thought-industries-announces-results-of-2020-state-of-customer-training-report-survey/>
- Thompson, J. (2023, February 22). 6 Effective Strategies for Communication in a Crisis. *Business.com*. Retrieved from <https://www.business.com/articles/effective-crisis-communication-strategies/>

- Tyko, Kelly. "39 most outrageous product claims of all time." USA Today, 16 Dec. 2020, <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/12/16/39-most-outrageous-product-claims-of-all-time/115127274/>.
- "What is Customer Education and Why Does it Matter?" Customer Education, August 2020, <https://customer.education/2020/08/what-is-customer-education-and-why-does-it-matter/>
- Zubiaga, A., Liakata, M., Procter, R., & Wong Sak Hoi, G. (2018). Detection and resolution of rumours in social media: A survey. *ACM Computing Surveys*, 51(2), 1-36. doi: 10.1145/3136214
- Zubiaga, Arkaitz, and Heng Ji. 2014. "Tweet, But Verify: Epistemic Study of Information Verification on Twitter." *Social Network Analysis and Mining* 4 (1): 1–12.
- Zhao, X., & Tsang, S. J. (2021). Self-protection by fact-checking: How pandemic information seeking and verifying affect preventive behaviors. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-5973.12372>