

## How Fake News changes Behavior:

### A Study of the Influence of Information that is known to be false on the Effort to obtain a Product

#### Abstract

In line with some existing papers that analyze an unpredictable and unconsciously working variable that makes the difference between attitude and behavior, this work discusses the contrast using the topic of *Fake News*. In order to measure behavior, effort functions as an dependent variable. Instead of obtaining a product the participants can listen to a song.

#### Assumption and Hypothesis

Assumption: Individuals maintain a positive attitude towards news which are positive.

Hypothesis: Individuals confronted with positive false news cannot fully correct the bias due to mental contamination, which leads to the same preferences between true and false news when observing the effort to obtain a product.

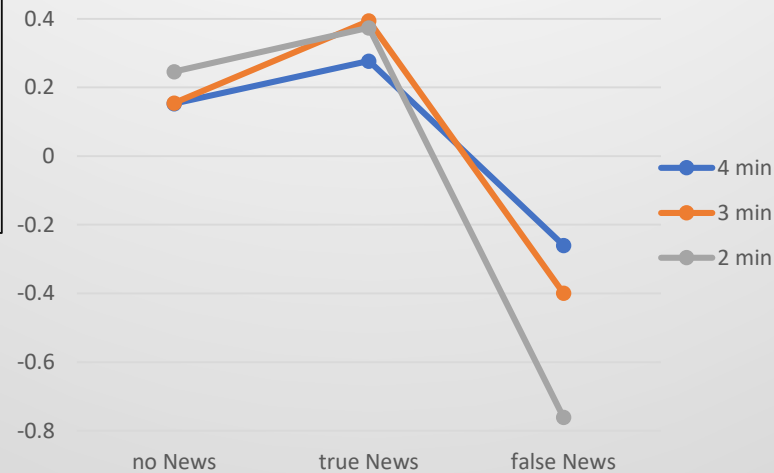
#### Method

**Experimental design:** 3x3x2 (Type of news: no vs. true vs. false; duration of songs: 2 minutes vs. 3 minutes. vs. 4 minutes; Evaluation type: effort vs enjoyment)

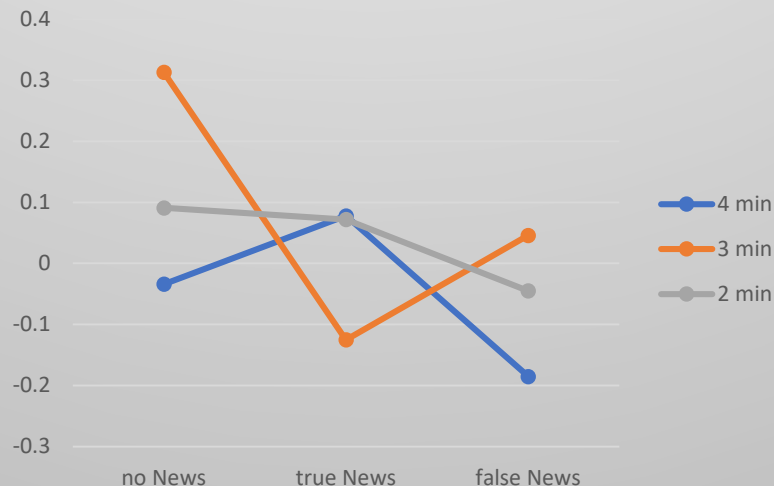
**Valence of news:** positive

**Procedure:** Participants rate their enjoyment towards a song based on the information they receive. Following they can choose to listen to the song selected for them or a boring song for a defined time period (2, 3 or 4 minutes). To increase the likelihood to listen to the song chosen for them they have to click the mouse as fast as they can to measure the effort.

#### Explicit Attitude: Enjoyment



#### Behavior: Effort to listen to a song



#### Results

Significant differences between the type of news are found when observing the indicated enjoyment of participants. It is irrelevant if the news is true, wrong or if no news is provided when measuring the effort. Reason for that could be that pleasant music is more important in behavior than news or that people cannot correct the bias, arising with behavior. The length of time a song takes to play does not matter for both dependent variables.

#### References

- Loewenstein, G., T. O'Donoghue and S. Bhatia (2015). "Modeling the interplay between affect and deliberation." *Decision* 2(2): 55.
- Mas-Herrero, E., R. J. Zatorre, A. Rodriguez-Fornells and J. Marco-Pallarés (2014). "Dissociation between musical and monetary reward responses in specific musical anhedonia." *Current Biology* 24(6): 699-704.
- Wilson, T. D. and N. Brekke (1994). "Mental contamination and mental correction: unwanted influences on judgments and evaluations." *Psychological Bulletin* 116(1): 117.

Submitted by:

Aileen Puchtler

Chair of Marketing:

Prof. Dr. C. Miguel Brendl

Supervisor:

Dr. Ozgun Atasoy