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Introduction

The proliferation of native advertisements (ads) across the internet can be considered as one of the most definitive trends of the digital advertising industry in the past decade. This is reflected in an estimated global native advertising (NA) spending at \$85.83 billion in 2020, expected to increase to \$402 billion by 2025 (Adyoulike, 2019). The NA phenomenon extends beyond national boundaries and has been gaining momentum all over the world, with increasing spending especially in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, China and Japan (Adyoulike 2015). As a general definition, NA is “any paid advertising that takes the specific form and appearance of editorial content from the publisher itself” (Wojdyski & Evans, 2016). In other words, it is a form of covert advertising, in the same league as product placement, branded entertainment, astroturfing, influencer marketing and advergames (Evans et al., 2013; Lee et al., 2009; Skiba et al., 2019; Wojdyski & Evans, 2019). NA appears in a wide variety of online platforms, including social media, search engines and even news platforms (Boerman et al., 2017; Evans et al. 2017; Evans & Park 2016; Kruikemeier et al., 2016; Wojdyski, 2016).

In spite of contrasting viewpoints regarding the use of NA, findings from several studies can be drawn in order to elucidate reasons for the spike of NA, with a focus on the situation in the news media. For news publishers, the boom of NA provides a promising stream of revenue which serves to ease the increasing financial pressure as a result of readers’ reluctance to pay for news (Fletcher & Nielsen, 2016; George 2015). Moreover, by publishing NA content on their platforms, media publishers could be better able to retain their readers due to increased engagement and more positive attitudes toward the native ad, and this is especially pertinent in an era of media abundance where readers are provided with plenty of other media choices (Carlson 2014; Egan 2016). As for the advertisers, the immense popularity of NA as a marketing tool can be attributed to its ability

to generate higher click-through rates, by overcoming the advertisement blindness phenomenon and bypassing ad-blocks (Aribarg & Schwartz, 2019; Evans et al., 2018; Law, 2020). Additionally, it has been found that consumers pay more attention to NA, remember them more clearly, trust them more than conventional advertising and tend to evaluate them more positively as they are less intrusive and hence less disruptive to their online experience as compared to normal ads (Cameron, 1994; Cole & Greer, 2013; Gillespie & Joireman, 2016; Kim, 2015; Kim et al., 2001; Ponkivar, 2015; Tutaj & Reijmersdal, 2012).

Due to the stark increase in popularity of NA, more studies in the recent years have attempted to determine the impact of NA on key outcomes, in particular recipients' attitudes toward the content and source (Evans et al., 2018; Hwang & Jeong, 2016; Johnson et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2017; Krouwer et al., 2019b; Lee et al., 2019; van Reijmersdal et al., 2016; Wojdyski, 2016b; Wu et al., 2016) as well as their perceived credibility of the media publisher (Amazeen and Muddiman, 2017; Iversen & Knudsen, 2017; Wu et al., 2016). A strong focal point among these studies is the extent of disclosure transparency, defined as the degree to which the sponsor is disclosed in the advertisement and the extent to which the consumer is made aware of the paid nature of the sponsored content (Wojdyski et al., 2018). These studies manipulated variables that could affect the level of sponsorship disclosure and resulting ad recognition in a controlled experimental setting and concluded that a lack of disclosure transparency could result in the erosion of the credibility of advertisers and news platforms due to perceived manipulateness and deceptiveness of the advertisement (An et al., 2019; Carlson, 2014; Li, 2019; Newman et al., 2015). Other studies manipulated the publishing outlet of the native ads (Amazeen and Muddiman, 2017), the presence of priming of advertising (Wu et al., 2016) as well as the inclusion of NA vs display advertising (Aribarg & Schwartz, 2019).

While these research have covered many important facets in the literature on NA, a core research gap lies in the lack of studies exploring how the content of the NA affects key outcomes. To date, only one study has focused on the content of the native ad in the context of the news media (Pasandaran & Mutmainnah, 2020). In the study, the researchers manipulated the publishing platform of the NA according to its perceived credibility (high and low) as well as the NA theme (politics vs social vs commercial). However, their experimental design was limited as the topics used for the different thematic articles were fundamentally different, and therefore does not allow for a fair comparison in measuring the sole impact of the various NA themes. Moreover, their sample consisted of only journalism students from a particular university of Indonesia, and the findings are hence unfortunately not generalisable. The present study therefore aims to address the research gap pertaining to the lack of causal empirical studies focusing on the content of the native ad, while taking into considerations the limitations of the aforementioned research study.

Specifically, the present study aims to contribute to the cumulative knowledge of NA in the context of the news media, by exploring how varied NA content affects readers' attitude towards the NA and their trust in the media publisher. Two types (commercial vs non-commercial) and styles (informational vs narrative) of NA will be considered in particular, due to their ubiquity in both advertising and journalistic content. Additionally, NA recognition will serve as a mediator due to its apparent influence on readers' attitudes towards the advertisement and publisher (e.g. Amazeen & Muddiman, 2017). Lastly, prior trust in the media will be employed as a moderator in the study as it provides a baseline when considering readers' subsequent trust in the media after exposure to NA in news outlets. To achieve these aims, an online experiment will be conducted, addressing the following research questions:

RQ1: *To what extent do the type (commercial vs non-commercial) and style of NA (narrative vs informational) affect readers' attitude towards the NA and trust in the media outlet?*

Sub-question: *To what extent does NA recognition mediate this relationship?*

RQ2: *To what extent does prior trust in the media moderate the relationship between NA recognition and readers' trust in the media outlet?*

By answering these research questions, further implications can be drawn for a variety of stakeholders, such as advertisers from profit and non-profit organisations, marketing and public relations firms, journalists as well as news organisations. On one hand, the findings will provide profit and non-profit organisations with the fundamental groundwork to guide their use of informational and narrative NA. Should results reveal that consumers are more accepting towards narratives used in non-commercial NA as compared to commercial NA, advertisers and marketers can then develop and implement their advertising material accordingly in order to enhance attitudes toward the NA positively. On the other hand, the findings can provide news media organisations with insights regarding the possible backlash on the perception of their media outlet that could arise from the publication of certain types and styles of NA, which they could use to weigh the pros and cons when deciding whether to publish it. Lastly, this research is also relevant to society as it could provide clarification and understanding pertaining to NA in the news media in general, as it is a relatively new phenomenon and is easily overlooked when seamlessly added in different media platforms.

Theoretical framework

Native advertising in the news media

In the context of the news media, NA can be defined as “a form of paid content marketing, where the commercial content is delivered adopting the form and function of editorial content with the attempt to recreate the user experience of reading news instead of advertising content” (Conill, 2016). In other words, when NA appears in the news media, they adopt the same format, font and tone as a traditional piece of journalism, and are likely to look nearly identical to the content created by the platform publisher (Conill 2016; Einstein 2015). As a result of this similarity in format, the advertiser is able to borrow the credibility of the content publisher (Wojdyski & Golan, 2016). Nonetheless, the usage of NA has raised concerns and sparked criticisms among academics and industry players in the journalism field, due to its non-adherence to journalistic ideology and professional norms and standards (Iversen & Knudsen, 2017).

News organisations undertake the crucial role of disseminating information and have a strong influence on public opinion regarding important policy matters (Page et al., 1987). The presence of NA in the news media challenges certain roles of the news media; for example, in the case of political NA, it contradicts the role of the media as a government watchdog when political parties are able to pay for and possibly influence the content of the native ad. Evidently, the very existence of NA within the news media indicates a lack of financial independence and the existence of pressure from special interests, signalling the possibility that the selection and coverage of a particular topic might be skewed in the interest of the advertisers (Levi, 2015; Siebert et al., 1963). This influence from external parties violates the most sacred boundary in journalism; the wall between editorial and advertising (Schudson, 2015). Moreover, when content can be manipulated and becomes out of control for the news organisation, the publication of native ads in the news

media could threaten principles of journalism proposed by the Ethical Journalism Network (2018), namely truth and accuracy, independence, fairness and impartiality, humanity, and accountability.

Consequently, negative attitudes toward the publishers could be formed when readers perceive their encounter with NA within the news media negatively and blame the media outlet for publishing such content. This could result in spillover effects in terms of lower circulation figures and profitability when readers seek alternative news sources (Tsfati & Ariely, 2013; Kalsnes & Krumsvik, 2019). More pressingly, citizens who do not trust the media will be less open to being informed by them, thereby threatening the democratic role of the media (Levi, 2015, Miller & Krosnick, 2000; Tsfati, 2003). The idea that trust in the media is a major factor contributing to citizens' trust in democracy is further expounded on by Tsfati and Cohen (2005), who affirmed that citizens can only trust democracy when they perceive that they are well and fairly informed of the issues at hand. The current polarised political system in America exemplifies one of the consequences that has arisen from an increasingly distrustful audience towards the news media over the past decades (Ladd, 2005). Here it can be seen that the consequences of increasing distrust towards the news media extends beyond affecting any single party but possess undesirable ramifications towards society as a whole. Recognising the paramount importance of society having trust in the media, trust in the media outlet will be studied as an outcome variable in the present study.

Trust in the media outlet

Readers' trust in the media outlet remains one of the deciding factors for news consumption and sense-making upon consumption of content from a particular news outlet (Brants, 2013; Newman et al., 2017). Despite being a well-researched concept due to recognition of its

significance, a multitude of definitions of trust in the media context exists and it is sometimes still used synonymously with other related terms such as media credibility and media trustworthiness (Engelke et al., 2019; Kioussis, 2001; Kohring & Matthes, 2007; Otto & Köhler, 2018; Tsfaty & Cappella, 2003). Regardless, the overarching idea behind media trust is the evaluation of the degree to which the media is perceived to be fair, unbiased and accurate (Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Meyer, 1988; West, 1994). For the sake of clarity, trust in the media outlet in the present study will be operationalised according to the four dimensions identified in Kohring and Matthes' (2007) study, namely trust in the selectivity of topics, trust in the selectivity of facts, trust in the accuracy of depictions, and trust in journalistic assessment.

Attitude towards the native ad

As ad attitude remains as one of the key deciding factors in shaping our reality and driving key behavioural outcomes such as brand attitudes, purchase frequency and purchase intention in advertising (e.g. Ajzen & Fishbein, 2014; Gardner, 1985; MacKenzie et al., 1986; MacKenzie, & Lutz, 1989), attitude towards native ad will be studied as the second outcome variable in the present study. A reasonable definition of the construct can be adopted from Ajzen (2001), who suggests that attitude represents “a summary evaluation of a psychological object captured in such attribute dimensions as good–bad, harmful–beneficial, pleasant–unpleasant, and likeable–dislikeable.” In the context of attitudes in the advertising realm, antecedents of attitude formation could consist of audiences' perception of the ad and its credibility, as well as their attitude towards the advertiser (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). As NA exists in the context of the news media in the present study, it is important to consider how the presence of NA particularly in the news media could affect expectations of readers and in turn the attitudes of the readers.

Informational vs narrative NA

Currently, studies in the advertising literature posit that informational advertising conveys to the audience information about product features directly by presenting relevant arguments while narrative advertising revolves around the experiences or consequences of product consumption (Chang, 2009; Wells, 1989). However, NA distinguishes itself from this form of definition due to the fact that it adopts journalistic styles of writing when published in the news media, in order to ensure harmony when viewed together with other news articles. Simply put, NA in the news media should also report on real-world events with news value, rather than just solely focusing on the message of the advertiser, be it to encourage purchase of a product or service or raise awareness about an organisation or cause. For this reason, the present study will draw on existing research literature on informational and narrative journalistic writing styles to conceptualise corresponding NA styles.

Traditionally, journalistic news are engines for information dissemination and follow the structure of an inverted pyramid, where information in the article is ranked in the order of decreasing relevance (Rabe, 2008). Other journalism researchers have also supported the idea that news should address the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, and ‘when’ questions in a neutral way with reference to official sources (Uko, 2008). Nonetheless, researchers have argued that there has been declining interest in this form of articles, resulting in its inability to compete with the plethora of new media (Shim, 2014; van Krieken & Sanders, 2016). Therefore, in order to compete with new forms of media, publishers are rethinking and redefining their presentation of information, and a notable shift in the past decades is the usage of narrative storytelling techniques (Johnston & Graham, 2012). Narratives have been increasingly found to work particularly well in attracting

and maintaining readers, as it reflects the dominant mode of communication in social life (e.g. Boyd, 2009; Frank, 2014; Taylor & Niles, 2002).

Based on Aare's (2016) theoretical framework, narrative journalism utilizes the voice and point of view of the protagonist in the story. This is in line with narrative journalism writing techniques identified by other researchers, who mentioned the usage of anecdotal leads, point-of-view writing, and emotional appeals (Berning, 2011; Krieken et al., 2016; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2013). These emotional appeals are said to be capable of surprising, moving, shocking, or outraging the audience as it 'reveals the essence of the human condition', hence resulting in readers becoming personally involved in the story and thereby evoking an intense and affective response from them (Menninghaus et al., 2015; van Krieken & Sanders, 2016). In line with these, Elías Zambrano (2018) states that the main goal of using narratives in the context of advertising is to connect with consumers by eliciting feelings of empathy.

Additionally, the narrative transportation theory appears to be a recurring theme explored in studies within the relevant research literature. This theory states that narratives are able to "transport" readers and immerse them into the text, thus focusing all their mental systems and capacities on events occurring in the story (Green & Brock, 2000). This idea is further explored by Edson Escalas et al. (2004), who employed the term "hooked" to propose that readers are able to experience what the protagonist feels and thereby become immersed into the narrative world. The extent of this phenomenon could be defined as the degree of experiential involvement readers experience upon exposure to narrative content. This idea is further elaborated upon by Peelo (2006) and van Krieken and Sanders (2016), who suggested that the transportation allows readers to virtually experience otherwise distant events and hence be able to provide meaningful context to news events and situations.

The intense emotions elicited along with increased involvement with the narratives have been found to enhance positive and favourable attitudes toward the NA (Edson Escalas et al., 2004, Green & Brock, 2000). Furthermore, studies within the advertising literature have also found positive impacts of the usage of narratives on marketing outcomes such as attitudes toward the ad and product as well as increased purchase intentions (Chang, 2009; Gilliam & Zablah, 2013; Hamby et al., 2015; Lien & Chen, 2013; McFerran et al., 2010; Nielsen & Escalas, 2010; Wang & Calder, 2009). Other studies have also found that narrative advertising is able to captivate consumers, capture attention and enhance persuasion (Adaval & Wyer, 1998; Escalas, 1998; Woodside, 2010). Another study by Chang (2009) has found narrative advertising to increase brand attitudes and generate greater degrees of affective involvement. Therefore, it can be argued that the usage of narrative NA has positive effects on attitudes towards the native ad as well as the antecedents leading to that attitude formation.

In contrast to the general consensus that narratives affect attitudes positively, an opposite effect could occur towards the publisher of NA, namely the media outlet. Drawing on early journalism research, it is apparent that factual and objective news have been celebrated while ‘emotional’ news is often treated dismissively, conflated with tabloid practices, sensationalism, bias and commercialization (Peters, 2011). Furthermore, other scholars have claimed that the adoption of a narrative format in the journalistic context creates tension between ethics and aesthetics, fact and fiction, objectivity and subjectivity (van Krieken & Sanders, 2019). Moreover, the subjective nature of narratives opens up the possibility for readers to interpret the content and assess the relation between reality and narrative depictions of that reality, and this could result in the media outlet losing their authority as a vessel for providing objective facts and information (Sanders & van Krieken, 2018). Consequently, readers could lose their faith and trust in the media

outlet when they feel that they are not provided with hard facts and information that they expect from the news. Based on the above, the following hypotheses are proposed;

H1: *Participants will develop more positive attitudes towards the NA when exposed to a narrative NA than when exposed to an informational NA.*

H2: *Participants will experience lower levels of trust in the media outlet when exposed to a narrative NA than when exposed to an informational NA.*

Commercial vs non-commercial NA

Across various forms of media from television, to print and especially to the internet, commercial advertising is prevalent, as companies compete to increase awareness about the existence of their products and services to drive sales and increase revenue (Ikechukwu et al., 2017). It is a form of persuasive communication, as it endeavours to induce specific behaviours by encouraging positive attitudes toward the product or service mentioned in the advertisement (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). A less widespread but equally or more important form of advertising are non-commercial ads, which are usually communicated by non-profit organisations in an attempt to raise awareness of societal issues and encourage certain behavioural changes in order to benefit the community (ICAS, 2019; Stride, 2006). To quote Bulanda and Vavrecka (2019), non-commercial advertising is “a convincing process meant to influence the behaviour of people, which does not relate to material values, even though the same methods are used in advertising products and services.” This is done by evoking a sense of co-responsibility for disadvantaged groups in society, to motivate recipients of the advertising message to provide help and participate in solving societal problems (Světlik, 2016). By eliminating the indifference or apathy of society and by bringing attention to social problems, positive change in the world can be promoted while

capitalising on recipients' emotions, perceptions and consciousness (Bulanda & Vavrecka, 2019; Hubinková, 2008).

Another key element of non-commercial advertising is that they are published almost only by non-profit organisations, which fundamental purpose of existence is to “encourage the benevolent donation of money, property, and time and effort to eliminate or prevent the causes of social problems and injustices and to otherwise improve the quality of life all around us” (Ott & Dicke, 2021). That said, it is generally agreed upon that non-profit organizations improve living conditions, especially for marginalized groups and to those who have been overlooked by society (Hansmann, 2003; Herman, 1992; Rose-Ackerman, 1986). Consequently, non-profit organisations are viewed as principled actors that work selflessly for the common good and lack the incentive to exploit consumers, and are therefore more able to gain the public's trust (Polletta et al., 1999; Williams et al., 2017). As a result, readers exposed to non-commercial NA would consider that it has altruistic intentions without attempts to benefit the advertiser, and hence they can be expected to form more positive attitudes towards the advertisement.

Following, the potential detrimental impact of commercial NA on trust in the media outlet has been garnering growing attention, and the topic has even made it to the popular television programme *Last Week Tonight* recently. In his segment on sponsored content, Oliver (2021) threw harsh criticisms at the local news organisations, which accepted advertising of bogus medical products without any fact-checking at a low cost on their channel. Stating his unfiltered opinion regarding this matter, he states that, "The integrity of local news is crucially important and there is real harm for everyone if that integrity is damaged." Despite the rise of alternative news sources such as the internet, blogs and social media, mainstream media remains as the main source of information for most (Eurobarometer, 2009). Readers trust their news providers to pose critical

and challenging questions when approaching important topics, instead of simply accepting presented facts blindly (Esser et al., 2000). Therefore, as readers trust the news to portray only facts that benefit the public, the presence of commercial NA in the news media could be deemed as an exploitation of readers' trust in order to achieve commercial gains for the advertisers. When readers perceive that the interests of commercial advertisers are placed above theirs, they would begin to doubt and lose trust in the media outlet. Hence, the present study argues that non-commercial NA would be more well-received than commercial NA, due to perception of its lack of exploitative intentions to benefit the advertiser. Thus, the following hypotheses are proposed;

H3: *Participants will develop more positive attitudes towards the NA when exposed to a non-commercial NA than when exposed to a commercial NA.*

H4: *Participants will experience lower levels of trust in the media outlet when exposed to a commercial NA than when exposed to a non-commercial NA.*

Narrative commercial vs Informational non-commercial NA

When commercial advertising utilises a narrative style of writing, the presence of storytelling elements can stimulate emotional changes in the audiences and ultimately influence their attitudes, intentions, and behaviours (Baldwin & Ching, 2016; DeVries, 2018; Escalas, 2004). However, as noted by Strick (2018), the discrepancy “between the values ingrained in the emotional state of being moved from the narratives and the profitable goals of commercial companies” could be perceived as exploitative and thereby evoke a sense of betrayal in the audience. He further notes that there could be a perceived disconnect between the commercial companies and the moral values associated with the advertised emotions, inducing the audience to believe that emotions are used for the purpose of financial gains. Consequently, this could lead

readers to form a more negative attitude towards the NA as they could perceive that the commercial organisations are intentionally exploiting their emotions in order to influence their feelings and behaviours for their own self-interest or benefit (Austin et al., 2007; Escalas, 1998; Tsfati & Ariely, 2013). Additionally, the perception of the media as the endorser of the native ad could indirectly reduce readers' level of trust in the media (Wu et al., 2016).

On the contrary, studies have argued that non-commercial advertising should be entitled to use emotions due to their altruistic intentions to encourage positive behavioural changes, improve social environments and share key information (Blery et al., 2010; Skorupa, 2014). This is further supported by Sciulli and Bebkco (2006), who claimed that it is imperative for non-commercial advertisements to “enforce emotional narratives in their advertising to guarantee their social message is clear and to distinguish their attempts from the product-focused advertising of commercial companies”. Hence, it can be expected that audiences would be more receptive to non-commercial NA using narratives to elucidate real-world events and encourage positive change as opposed to commercial NA doing so. Hence, the following two hypotheses are proposed;

H5: *Participants will develop more negative attitudes towards the NA when exposed to a commercial narrative NA than when exposed to a non-commercial informational NA.*

H6: *Participants will experience lower levels of trust in the media when exposed to a commercial narrative NA than when exposed to a non-commercial informational NA.*

Native advertising recognition

Owing to the clear guidelines and recommendations for clear and prominent disclosures whereby “a reasonable consumer should be able to distinguish between what is paid advertising vs. what is publisher editorial content” by the Federal Trade Commission and the Interactive

Advertising Bureau, transparency in disclosing the sponsor of the content is essential for advertisers and publishers (FTC, 2015; IAB, 2013). With adequate disclosure of sponsorship, a certain degree of NA recognition can be expected when NA is present in the news media as publishers adhere to guidelines and ensure appropriate disclosure of sponsorships. Nonetheless, there have been contrasting results regarding the impact of NA recognition on attitudes (Sweetser et al., 2016). A recurring claim among studies found that NA recognition results in the activation of protective mechanisms when consumers conclude that they are being persuaded (Evans & Park 2015; Friestad & Wright, 1994; Nelson et al., 2009; Shrum et al. 2012). This in turn results in increased skepticism and critical processing which influences attitudes towards the advertiser and publisher, as well as the advertising content in a negative manner (Amazeen & Muddiman, 2017, Aribarg & Schwartz, 2019; Boerman et al., 2014).

Specifically, a study by Amazeen and Wojdyski (2018) found that NA recognition within the news media resulted in the decline of the publisher's credibility. These results are in line with a survey conducted by Contently, which revealed that more than half of their participants perceived news sites with sponsored content as less credible (Lazauskas, 2014). Experiments conducted by other researchers such as Evans et al. (2017) and Wojdyski (2016) have also found that NA recognition resulted in lower perceived quality of the article as well as more negative attitudes towards the advertiser. Another study by Iversen & Knudsen (2017) reported reduced trust in political news. White (2013) proposes another line of argument which suggests that NA recognition could elicit readers' preconceived ideas of advertising content, such as the presence of exaggerated and dishonest claims, thereby resulting in more negative attitudes. Acknowledging the influence of NA recognition on attitudes, the following hypothesis is proposed;

H7: *NA recognition functions as a mediator for the effect of different types and styles of NA on attitudes towards NA and trust in the media outlet.*

Prior trust in the news media

Currently, there exists a myriad of definitions and conceptualizations, and hence different measures of media trust in the research literature. William (2012) draws the distinction of three items media trust can be directed to, namely trust in news content, trust in those delivering the news as well as trust in media ownership. Other researchers, on the other hand, investigated the concept of media trust by measuring attributes considered to be indicative of media trust, such as perceptions of accuracy, fairness, bias and trustworthiness (Meyer, 1988). In any case, media trust has been declining at an exponential rate to the point of being called a “sinking ship” (Gladstone, 2015). This can be seen in a recent study conducted by Gallup (2021), which revealed that 60% of Americans have “not very much” trust or “none at all” in the mainstream media. This phenomenon is not just present in America, but is mirrored in other countries as well, such as the United Kingdom and France (EFJ, 2019, Waterson, 2020).

In the present study, the expectancy violation theory (EVT) by Burgoon (1995) will be employed to argue how the current level of trust in the news media serves as a moderator affecting readers’ subsequent levels of trust in the media outlet. To address the key term in the theory, “expectancy” can be defined as social norms shared among members of a society (Burgoon & Hale, 1988). As a result of direct and indirect interactions, readers in this case, develop expectations about how news organisations should behave (Fediuk et al., 2010; Kim, 2014). The second key term in this theory relates to the notion of “violations”, which occurs when expectations are not met and behaviours deviate from what is expected. As posited in the theoretical framework,

when this deviation is perceived as negative, readers' evaluation of the organisation will be even harsher (Park et al., 2019). Thus, it can be argued that the more readers trust the media to deliver objective and fair news without the influence from special interest groups, the higher their levels of disappointment will be when they realise that the news content is sponsored. Therefore, the present study posits that prior trust in the media will moderate the relationship between NA recognition and trust in the media outlet such that;

H8: *Participants with higher levels of trust in the news media will experience lower levels of trust in the media outlet than participants with lower levels of trust in the news media.*

To further outline the relationships among variables, the following conceptual models are proposed:

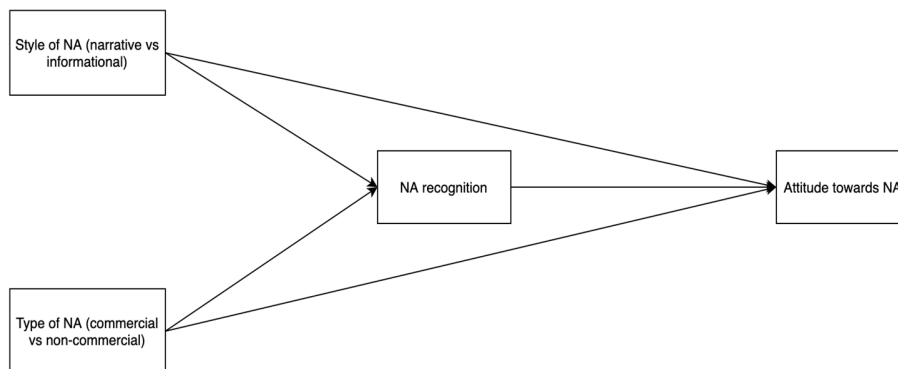


Figure 1. Mediation model with attitude towards NA as dependent variable

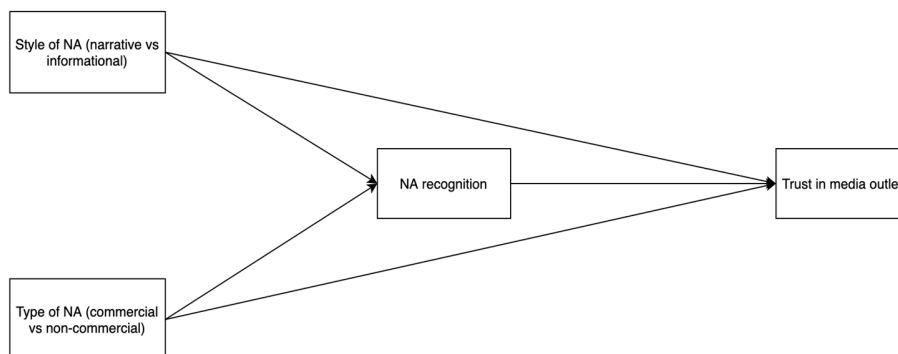


Figure 2. Mediation model with trust in media outlet as dependent variable

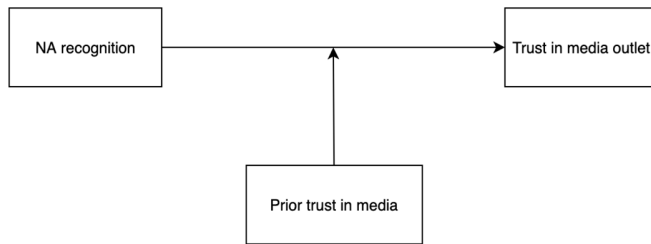


Figure 3. Moderation model with trust in media outlet as dependent variable

Method

Research design

To address the proposed research questions, the study was carried out as an online experiment as the primary aim is to explore the causal relationship between the variables of interest. The decision to employ a between-subject design stemmed from the need to compare the different groups of individuals after exposure to the varying stimuli. Moreover, a study conducted as a within-subject design could result in potential order effects that would reduce the internal validity of the experiment.

Sample

To conduct the online experiment, convenience sampling was employed where a total number of 271 participants were recruited. The following were two prerequisites for the selection of participants; they should be at least 18 years old and need to have appropriate knowledge of the English language for the understanding of the survey questions and the stimulus material. After data cleaning, only results from 183 participants were used for the actual analysis. Participants who had unfinished answers or who had answered the manipulation check questions (*1. There are persons that appear in the article. 2. The article reads like a story. 3. The article was published by*

a commercial organisation. 4. The article was published by a non-profit organisation) incorrectly were excluded from the analysis. Overall, participants were relatively young (*between 25 – 34 years old: 45.4%*), well-educated (*Bachelor's degree: 52.5%, Master's degree: 19.7%*) and there was a roughly equal distribution of male and female participants (*Male: 54.6%, Female: 45.4%*).

Procedure

At the beginning of the study, all participants were asked to fill in the questionnaire which was developed and distributed online via Sosci Survey. They were first asked to read an informed consent, which briefly described the current study, its procedure, and the conditions. After reading the consent, participants were asked to state their agreement with the mentioned conditions. The next section consisted of questions used to measure the moderator. Then, they were presented with a randomly generated stimulus from one of the four treatment conditions (narrative/ commercial, narrative/non-commercial, informational/commercial, informational/ non-commercial NA). After they have completed reading the stimulus, they were given questions for the manipulation check as well as to measure the mediator and dependent variables. They were then asked to provide their demographic data at the end.

Stimulus material

As the stimulus material for the experiment (see Appendix 1.), fictitious native ads in the form of articles were developed. The topic was on climate change due to its current relevance in today's world and suitability for comparing between the commercial and non-commercial independent variables. The narrative native ad was written in the form of a story of a particular individual who has been personally affected by climate change. The informational native ad on the

other hand, simply provided general facts and information regarding the same consequences of climate change faced by a general group of individuals, rather than focusing on the experiences of one individual. The commercial native ad revealed a commercial sponsor and other information of the organisation at the end while the non-commercial ad for a non-profit organisation.

Due to the lack of studies on non-commercial NA, the present study will utilise previously proposed frameworks on non-commercial advertising. Importantly, previous studies have indicated that negative emotional appeals are more effective in delivering nonprofits' messages to the public (Shanahan et al., 2008). These studies also found that nonprofits benefit by using real victims as the public regard portrayal of a fictional protagonist as deceptive. This phenomenon can be explained by the Protection Motivation Theory, which states that a real victim generates greater empathy and this in turn encourages donations and offers of help (Hung & Wyer, 2009; Shanahan et al., 2008; Verhaert & Van den Poel, 2011). Therefore, a key consideration when designing the non-commercial NA in the present study was the employment of a real victim to elicit greater negative emotional appeals in the readers. In doing so, it can be expected that readers will form more positive attitudes toward the non-commercial NA through increased perception of social responsibility as well as genuineness in the article (Hopkins et al., 2014).

Measures

All items measuring the constructs in the present study employed a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Native advertising recognition. Several questions were developed to measure participants' recognition that the article was a sponsored ad and not a usual news article. A single item from

Campbell and Evans (2018) was also included. Examples of items are “*The article I read was an advertisement*”, “*The article was promotional*” and “*The attempts to raise awareness about a specific company or organisation*”, all other items are listed in Appendix 2. A total of five items were combined to create a scale for the mediator variable NA recognition ($M = 22.02$, $SD = 6.50$, $\alpha = .70$).

Prior trust in the media. Prior trust in the media was measured using five items adapted from the media trust scale by William (2012), where he draws the distinction of three parties media trust can be directed to, namely trust in news content, trust in those delivering the news as well as trust in media ownership. Items include “*I trust the information that I get from the news media*”, “*Journalists report news stories that can be trusted*” and “*Media corporations help solve social problems*”, all other items are listed in Appendix 2. The items were combined to create a scale for the moderator variable, prior trust in the media ($M = 22.27$, $SD = 6.52$, $\alpha = .88$).

Attitude towards the native advertisement. Attitude towards native ad was measured using a total of nine items combined and adapted from Bhat et al.’s (1998) believability and irritation scale, Meyer’s (1988) community affiliation scale as well as a single item by MacKenzie et al. (1986). Items include “*The article is boring*”, “*The article is emotional*” and “*The article is concerned mainly about the public interest*”, all other items are listed in Appendix 2. The items were combined to create a scale for the dependent variable, NA attitude ($M = 46.01$, $SD = 9.42$, $\alpha = .87$).

Trust in the media outlet. Trust in the media outlet was measured using three items adapted from Kohring and Matthes’ (2007) media trust scale. Items include “*I trust that Your World News*

publishes information that would be verifiable if examined”, “*I trust that Your World News reports information that is true*” and “*I trust that Your World News recounts the facts in their articles truthfully*”, the items are listed in Appendix 2. The items were combined to create a scale for the dependent variable, media outlet trust ($M = 14.00$, $SD = 3.83$, $\alpha = .93$).

Control variables. In order to ensure that the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is not confounding, several control variables were incorporated in the present study, namely demographic variables such as age ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.07$), gender ($M = 1.45$, $SD = 0.50$) and education ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 0.79$).

Results

To test the proposed hypotheses, a one-way ANOVA followed by a series of mediation and moderated mediation analyses were carried out. The one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences between the means of the four conditions: informational/ commercial ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.30$), informational/ non-commercial ($M = 5.23$, $SD = .95$), narrative/ commercial ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 1.05$), narrative/ non-commercial ($M = 5.25$, $SD = .87$) on participants’ attitudes toward the native ad, $F(3,179) = 1.02$, $p = .39$. This indicates that the four conditions did not differ in their impact on NA attitude, hence not supporting **H5** which states that participants will develop more negative attitudes towards the NA when exposed to a commercial narrative NA than when exposed to a non-commercial informational NA.

However, the results revealed that there were significant differences between the means of informational/ commercial ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.36$), informational/ non-commercial ($M = 5.56$, $SD = .96$), narrative/ commercial ($M = 3.88$, $SD = .87$), narrative/ non-commercial ($M = 5.30$, SD

= .97) on participants' trust in the media outlet, $F(3,179) = 31.79$, $p < .001$. This suggests that participants had higher level of trust in the media outlet when exposed to informational non-commercial NA and narrative non-commercial NA as compared to informational commercial NA and narrative commercial NA. Hence, **H6** is supported.

Following the one-way ANOVA, four mediation analyses were performed using PROCESS Model 4 by Hayes (2018). A bootstrapping based on 5,000 bootstrap samples was applied to assess the significance by including zero in 95% confidence intervals (95% CIs). For the first mediation analysis, the outcome variable for the analysis was NA attitude, the predictor variable was NA style and the mediator variable was NA recognition. The analysis revealed that there is no significant direct effect of NA style on NA attitude ($c' = -0.06$, 95% CIs = [-0.3704, 0.2411], $p = .68$). Additionally, the results also indicate that there is no significant indirect effect through NA recognition ($a_1b_1 = 0.002$, 95% CIs = [-0.0447, 0.0500]). This shows that participants exposed to narrative NA did not differ in their NA attitudes when comparing with those exposed to informational NA. Hence, **H1** is not supported. The results are shown in **Figure 4**.

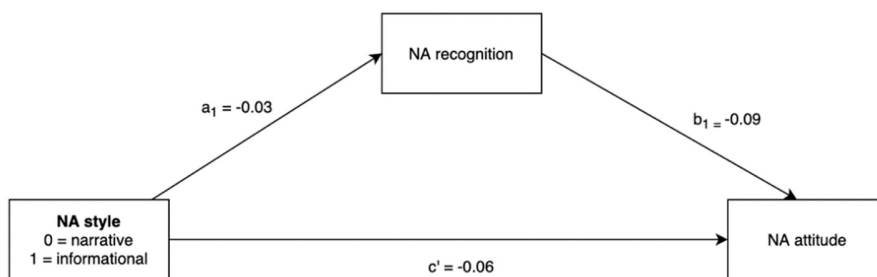


Figure 4. Mediation model with NA style as independent variable and NA attitude as dependent variable

For the second mediation analysis, the outcome variable for the analysis was NA attitude, the predictor variable was NA type and the mediator variable was NA recognition. The analysis revealed that there is no significant direct effect of NA type on NA attitude ($c' = -0.20$, 95% CIs

= $[-0.5103, 0.1071]$, $p = .20$). Additionally, the results also indicate that there is no significant indirect effect through NA recognition ($a_1b_1 = -0.03$, 95% CIs = $[-0.1341, 0.0332]$). This shows that participants exposed to commercial NA did not differ in their NA attitudes as compared to those exposed to non-commercial NA. Hence, **H3** is not supported. The results are shown in **Figure 5**.

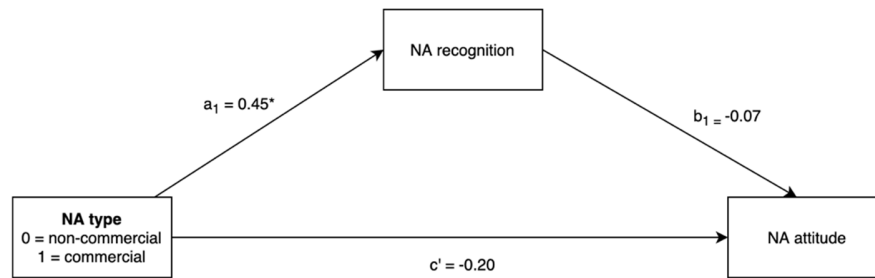


Figure 5. Mediation model with NA type as independent variable and NA attitude as dependent variable

For the third mediation analysis, the outcome variable for the analysis was trust in media outlet, the predictor variable was NA style and the mediator variable was NA recognition. The analysis revealed that there is no significant direct effect of NA style on media outlet trust ($c' = 0.24$, 95% CIs = $[-0.1253, 0.6118]$, $p = .19$). Additionally, the results also indicated that there is no significant indirect effect through NA recognition ($a_1b_1 = 0.01$, 95% CIs = $[-0.0931, 0.0903]$). However, the results showed a significant effect of NA recognition on media outlet trust ($b_1 = -0.22$, 95% CIs = $[-0.3592, -0.0710]$, $P = .004$). This shows that participants exposed to narrative NA did not differ in their trust in the media outlet as compared to those exposed to informational NA. Hence, **H2** is not supported. The results can be seen in **Figure 6**.

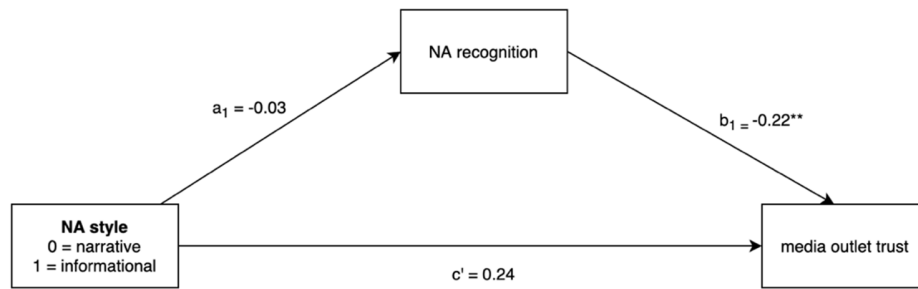


Figure 6. Mediation model with NA style as independent variable and media outlet trust as dependent variable

For the fourth mediation analysis, the outcome variable for the analysis was trust in media outlet, the predictor variable was NA type and the mediator variable was NA recognition. The analysis revealed that there was a significant direct effect of NA type on media outlet trust ($c' = -1.44$, 95% CIs = $[-1.7514, -1.1346]$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, the results also showed that there is a significant effect of NA type on NA recognition ($a_1b_1 = 0.45$, 95% CIs = $[0.0073, 0.8206]$, $p = .018$). However, the results indicate that there is no significant indirect effect through NA recognition ($a_1b_1 = -0.0523$, 95% CIs = $[-0.1556, 0.0094]$). These results show that participants in the commercial and non-commercial NA had a significant difference in their NA recognition as well as their trust in the media outlet. Hence, **H4** is supported. The results can be seen in **Figure 7**.

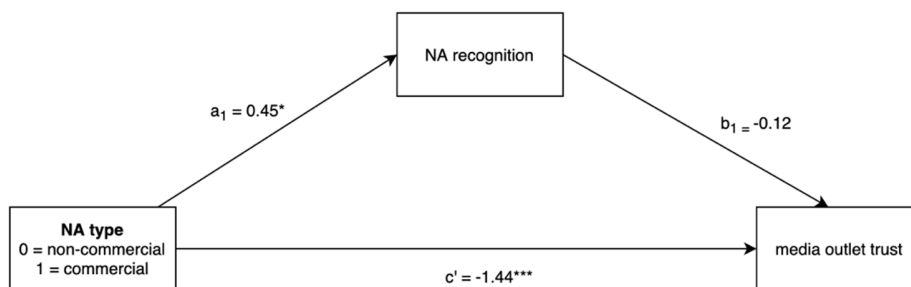


Figure 7. Mediation model with NA type as independent variable and media outlet trust as dependent variable

Due to the lack of evidence to indicate significant indirect effects through NA recognition as the mediator, **H7** is not supported.

Lastly, to investigate **RQ2**, two moderated mediation analyses using PROCESS model 14 was implemented. For the first moderated mediation analysis, the outcome variable for the analysis was trust in media outlet, the predictor variable was NA style, the mediator variable was NA recognition, and the moderator variable was prior trust in the media. Results indicated that the conditional effect of NA recognition and the general media trust moderator on trust in media outlet was not significant ($b = -0.0008$, 95% CIs = $[-0.0296, 0.0303]$). For the second moderated mediation analysis, the outcome variable for the analysis was trust in media outlet, the predictor variable was NA type, the mediator variable was NA recognition, and the moderator variable was prior trust in the media. Results indicated that the conditional effect of NA recognition and the general media trust moderator on trust in media outlet was not significant ($b = -0.0002$, 95% CIs = $[-0.0510, 0.0435]$). Hence, **H8** is not supported.

Discussion

The aim of the current study was to investigate the differences in attitudes toward native ads and trust in the media outlet when the NA content is varied according to their commerciality and narrativity. Although it has not been hypothesised, the results showed that participants' recognition of NA differed when exposed to a commercial vs. non-commercial NA. Based on the one-way ANOVA, participants exposed to the conditions where the NA is sponsored by a commercial organisation, namely informational/ commercial ($M = 4.56$, $SD = 1.45$) and narrative/ commercial ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 1.32$), are more likely to recognise that the article is an ad as compared to participants exposed to the conditions where the NA is sponsored by a nonprofit, i.e.

informational/ non-commercial ($M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.03$), narrative/ non-commercial ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 1.32$). Furthermore, the findings of this study also showed that participants exposed to the conditions where the NA is sponsored by a commercial organisation have lower levels of trust than participants exposed to the conditions where the NA is sponsored by a nonprofit. However, the results do not indicate an indirect effect of NA type on media outlet trust through NA recognition.

Hence, it can be determined that when the native ad in the news media is sponsored by a commercial organisation, readers are likely to form more negative attitudes toward the publisher of the content, whether or not they recognise the article as an ad. These findings are likely to be a result of the perceived values of nonprofits and commercial companies, which are fundamentally opposing in nature. While nonprofits' fundamental goal is to make the world a better place, commercial companies are economic-driven and do not necessarily have the welfare of members of society in mind (Blery et al., 2010; Skorupa, 2014; Stride, 2006). Therefore, being viewed as the endorser of the article, it is of little surprise that participants evaluated the media outlet more negatively when they published sponsored content by a commercial organisation rather than by a nonprofit (Wu et al., 2016).

Another finding from the study is that when participants recognised the narrative and informational NA as advertising content, their trust in the media outlet was lower. There is, however, no significant indication that the level of trust in the media outlet differed between the two groups. This could be in part due to the content of the stimulus material for the two conditions, which would be discussed in greater detail in the limitations section below. Nonetheless, this finding is in line with previous studies which found NA recognition to affect attitudes toward the publisher negatively (e.g. Amazeen & Wojdyski, 2018; Iversen & Knudsen, 2017; Lazauskas, 2014).

Practical Implications

The findings of the current study are meaningful for media publishers in their consideration of the publication of NA content on their platforms. The findings suggest that readers' trust in the media outlet is more badly impacted by the publication of sponsored content by commercial organisations as opposed to sponsored content by nonprofits. Furthermore, the fact that readers are more able to recognise native ads as advertising when they are sponsored by a commercial organisation shows that the perceived contrast between commercial and news organisations are greater, as compared to nonprofits which to a certain extent serves the same purpose as news organisations which is to provide information and raise awareness of societal issues (Page et al., 1987; Stride, 2006). Therefore, it can be concluded that the divergence of non-commercial NA from journalistic news is smaller in extent as compared to commercial NA. Hence, the results could serve as a guideline for news organisations during their consideration of NA content to publish on their platforms, as the backlash on their reputation could exceed the benefits they obtain from the additional advertising revenue. More broadly, the current research also contributes to knowledge in different executional styles and types of NA, an area which has not been explored much despite the great deal of research on NA. The current research is a step in filling this knowledge gap.

Limitations and Future Research

As with any research effort, some caveats must be noted. By identifying the limitations of this study, recommendations for future research will be proposed. First of all, as the study was carried out as an online experiment, it could result in low external validity as participants were exposed to an experimental setting that could differ greatly from their real-life situations when

reading an article. Moreover, due to a lack of control over participants' environment while filling in the questionnaire, there could be potential distracts that might affect participants' attention during the experiment. Hence, a future lab experiment could offer higher internal validity. Second, participants were mostly recruited from Clickworker, and they may not be able to represent the whole general population. In order to obtain more generalisable results, future studies should consider drawing a larger sample and from a larger population. Third, there were only two organisations used to represent the commercial organisation and nonprofit, namely Unilever and Greenpeace. It is possible that participants have prior opinions of the organisations that could have influenced their attitudes when answering the questionnaire. To tackle this issue, future studies could instead develop fictitious organisations to be used in the study. Another possible limitation lies in the design of the narrative and informational stimulus material. As seen in the results, there were no significant findings regarding the difference of groups. This could be due to the lack of development of the story as well as emotionality. Hence, future studies could consider devoting more resources in developing a story that would elicit greater emotions from the readers. A final limitation of the study is the use of a single topic of climate change in the stimulus material. In future studies, researchers could try to use a variety of topics and content which could offer a more comprehensive understanding of varied content in NA.

Abstract

The growing ubiquity of native advertising in the news media is accompanied with the possibility of negative attitudes toward the advertisement and the publisher. This could mean less effective advertising efforts for the sponsors and even worse, it could shake the foundation of the news media as a trusted source of information for citizens. Recognising this, the current study conducted a 2 (native advertising type: commercial vs. non-commercial) x 2 (native advertising style: informational vs. narrative) factorial between-subjects experiment to determine the effects of varied native advertising content on attitudes toward the native advertisement and trust in the media outlet. Findings from a total of 183 participants suggested that native advertisements sponsored by a commercial organisation are more likely to be recognised as advertising and resulted in lower levels of trust in the media outlet as opposed to when sponsored by a non-profit organisation. These findings could serve as guidelines in news organisations' decision-making process when determining the publication of advertising content on their platforms. This study advances the knowledge of influence varied content of native advertisements on key outcome variables. Theoretical and practical implications are further discussed in the paper.

Keywords: native advertising, sponsored content, news media, media trust, native advertising attitude

Abstrakt

Die wachsende Verbreitung von Native Advertising in den Nachrichten birgt die Möglichkeit eine negative Einstellung gegenüber dem Werbenden und dem Herausgeber bei den Lesern hervorzurufen. Dieser Umstand könnte weniger effektive Werbemaßnahmen für die werbenden Sponsoren bedeuten und, was noch schlimmer ist, es könnte das Fundament der Nachrichten als vertrauenswürdige Informationsquelle für Bürger erschüttern. Deshalb wurde in der vorliegenden Arbeit ein faktorielles Experiment mit 2 (Native-Advertising-Typ: kommerziell vs. nicht-kommerziell) x 2 (Native-Advertising-Stil: informativ vs. narrativ) Variablen durchgeführt, um die Auswirkungen unterschiedlicher Native Advertising-Inhalte auf die Einstellung gegenüber des Native Advertising und dem Vertrauen in den Medienanbieter zu ermitteln. Die Ergebnisse von insgesamt 183 Teilnehmern deuten darauf hin, dass Native Advertising, die von einer kommerziellen Organisation gesponsert werden, eher als Werbung wahrgenommen werden und dies zu einem geringeren Vertrauen in die Medienanstalt führen, als wenn sie von einer gemeinnützigen Organisation gesponsert werden. Die Ergebnisse dieser Arbeit könnten Nachrichtenorganisationen als Entscheidungshilfe dienen, wenn es um die Veröffentlichung von Werbeinhalten auf ihren Plattformen geht. Diese Arbeit erweitert die Erkenntnisse über den Einfluss unterschiedlicher Inhalte von Native Advertising auf wichtige Ergebnisvariablen. Theoretische und praktische Implikationen werden in der folgenden Arbeit weiter diskutiert.

Schlagwörter: Native Advertising, Sponsored Content, Nachrichten, Nachrichtenmedien, Vertrauen in Nachrichten

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Appendix 1. Stimulus material

1.1. Informational – Commercial article

DAILY NEWS SINCE 1993

Your World News

SPONSORED CONTENT

Climate change affects livelihoods of the most vulnerable



PUBLISHED JUNE 17, 2021

One of the most affected regions by climate change is sub-Saharan Africa, home to half of the world's poorest people. Cases of cholera, an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by the ingestion of contaminated food or water, have been rapidly increasing in the region.

Due to declining rainfall, water supply has been greatly reduced, resulting in a stark increase in the price of water over the past years. As a result, people who are unable to pay for water are forced to turn to unsafe water sources such as polluted streams and pipe water, thereby putting them at risk of deadly diseases such as cholera.

Furthermore, damage to critical infrastructures caused by recent wildfires has cut off electricity supply for many families. Without electricity, cases of accidents caused by the inability to see at night have drastically increased.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, over 300 million people lack access to clean drinking water and nearly 600 million people lack access to electricity. Climate change has exacerbated declining living conditions to a state of desolation.

Unilever, the consumer goods giant, has dedicated €1 billion to the Climate & Nature Fund, which will go towards helping the vulnerable communities affected by climate change. The company has also declared that they are transitioning to renewable energy, sourcing for new low-carbon ingredients as well as developing fossil-fuel-free cleaning and laundry products in an effort to tackle climate change.

To find out more about Unilever's green initiatives and products, visit them at <https://www.unilever.com/planet-and-society/>

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1.2. Informational – Non-commercial article

DAILY NEWS SINCE 1993

Your World News

SPONSORED CONTENT

Climate change affects livelihoods of the most vulnerable



PUBLISHED JUNE 17, 2021

One of the most affected regions by climate change is sub-Saharan Africa, home to half of the world's poorest people. Cases of cholera, an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by the ingestion of contaminated food or water, have been rapidly increasing in the region.

Due to declining rainfall, water supply has been greatly reduced, resulting in a stark increase in the price of water over the past years. As a result, people who are unable to pay for water are forced to turn to unsafe water sources such as polluted streams and pipe water, thereby putting them at risk of deadly diseases such as cholera.

Furthermore, damage to critical infrastructures caused by recent wildfires has cut off electricity supply for many

families. Without electricity, cases of accidents caused by the inability to see at night have drastically increased.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, over 300 million people lack access to clean drinking water and nearly 600 million people lack access to electricity. Climate change has exacerbated declining living conditions to a state of desolation.

Greenpeace, a non-profit environmental organisation, is currently campaigning for the African leaders to declare a climate emergency to preserve the livelihoods of the vulnerable communities. The organisation is also collecting donations that will go towards increasing the clean water supply and repairing critical infrastructures that will benefit the lives of the people living in sub-Saharan Africa.

To find out more about Greenpeace's initiatives and how you can play a part, visit <https://www.greenpeace.org/fightclimatechange>

This post is sponsored by Greenpeace. The news and editorial staffs of Your World News had no role in this post's creation.

1.3. Narrative – Commercial article

DAILY NEWS SINCE 1993

Your World News

SPONSORED CONTENT

Climate change affects livelihoods of the most vulnerable



PUBLISHED JUNE 17, 2021

A week ago, Ubah, 36, a mother of six in Angola, sub-Saharan Africa, lost the youngest of her six children to cholera, an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by the ingestion of contaminated food or water. “We couldn’t afford to buy water so my child drank water from the ground,” Ubah choked back tears as she explained how her son contracted the deadly disease.

According to Ubah, declining rainfall has greatly reduced the water supply, causing the price of water in the region to skyrocket over the past years. As a result, the family of seven has been forced to turn to unsafe water sources such as polluted streams and pipe water. In addition, recent wildfires has damaged critical infrastructures, cutting off their electricity supply.

“You can’t see anything at night. You fall on stones and sometimes even step on poisonous snakes and scorpions while walking outside. Life without electricity is really a challenge.”

Ubah’s story is reflected in millions of other people living in sub-Saharan Africa. Climate change has exacerbated their declining living conditions to a state of desolation.

Unilever, the consumer goods giant, has dedicated €1 billion to the Climate & Nature Fund, which will go towards helping the vulnerable communities affected by climate change. The company has also declared that they are transitioning to renewable energy, sourcing for new low-carbon ingredients as well as developing fossil-fuel-free cleaning and laundry products in an effort to tackle climate change.

To find out more about Unilever’s green initiatives and products, visit them at <https://www.unilever.com/planet-and-society/>

This post is sponsored by Unilever. The news and editorial staffs of Your World News had no role in this post’s creation.

1.4. Narrative – Non-Commercial article

DAILY NEWS SINCE 1993

Your World News

SPONSORED CONTENT

Climate change affects livelihoods of the most vulnerable



PUBLISHED JUNE 17, 2021

A week ago, Ubah, 36, a mother of six in Angola, sub-Saharan Africa, lost the youngest of her six children to cholera, an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by the ingestion of contaminated food or water. “We couldn’t afford to buy water so my child drank water from the ground,” Ubah choked back tears as she explained how her son contracted the deadly disease.

According to Ubah, declining rainfall has greatly reduced the water supply, causing the price of water in the region to skyrocket over the past years. As a result, the family of seven has been forced to turn to unsafe water sources such as polluted streams and pipe water. In addition, recent wildfires has damaged critical infrastructures, cutting off their electricity supply.

“You can’t see anything at night. You fall on stones and sometimes even step on poisonous snakes and scorpions while walking outside. Life without electricity is really a challenge.”

Ubah’s story is reflected in millions of other people living in sub-Saharan Africa. Climate change has exacerbated their declining living conditions to a state of desolation.

Greenpeace, a non-profit environmental organisation, is currently campaigning for the African leaders to declare a climate emergency to preserve the livelihoods of the vulnerable communities. The organisation is also collecting donations that will go towards increasing the clean water supply and repairing critical infrastructures that will benefit the lives of the people living in sub-Saharan Africa.

To find out more about Greenpeace’s initiatives and how you can play a part, visit <https://www.greenpeace.org/fightclimatechange>

This post is sponsored by Greenpeace. The news and editorial staffs of Your World News had no role in this post’s creation.

Appendix 2. Scales

2.1. General trust in the media

Question title: First, please indicate your level of trust in the media by rating how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1. I trust the information that I get from the news media
2. Journalists report news stories that are helpful to others
3. Journalists report news stories that can be trusted
4. Media corporations can be trusted
5. Media corporations help solve social problems

2.2. *Manipulation check

Question title: The following questions are about the nature of the article

Instruction: Please answer either “yes” or “no” or “don’t know” for each of the following statements:

1. There are persons that appear in the article
2. The article reads like a story
3. The article was published by a commercial organisation
4. The article was published by a nonprofit organisation

2.3. NA recognition

Question title: What do you think is the purpose of the article?

Instruction: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1. The article encourages readers to think favorably about a specific company or organization
2. The article attempts to raise awareness about a specific company or organization

Question title: In your opinion, what is the nature of the article?

Instruction: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

3. The article I read was an advertisement
4. The article was promotional
5. The article tried to persuade me to do something

2.4. Attitudes toward the native advertisement

Question title: What do you think of the article?

Instruction: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1. The article is boring
2. The article is credible
3. The article is good
4. The article is emotional
5. The article is interesting
6. I liked the article
7. The article is concerned about the community's well-being
8. The article is concerned mainly about the public interest
9. The article watches out after your interest

2.5. Trust in media outlet

Question title: What do you think about the media publisher?

Instruction: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

1. I trust that Your World News publishes information that would be verifiable if examined
2. I trust that Your World News reports information that is true
3. I trust that Your World News recounts the facts in their articles truthfully