

# Misinformation and mistrust mindsets: the spillover effects of misinformation

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## **Abstract**

The spreading of misinformation has become an integral part of our lives. The phenomenon has attracted growing academic interest towards an understanding of the consequences of misinformation exposure. In this research, we adopt a comprehensive perspective on the phenomenon, trying to establish that misinformation can have spillover effects for consumers that will manifest in subsequent, unrelated, situations. We find evidence of a causal relationship between the salience of misinformation (i.e. exposure to discourse about misinformation) and the activation of mistrust mindsets. In particular, preliminary findings from a pilot study and three experiments confirm the activation of a mistrust mindset that, when activated, produce negative effects on trust towards brands and brand- or product-related information (i.e. reviews and product recommendations).

**Subject Areas:** *Cognition, Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making*

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