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## **L'utilisation et la réception de la pseudoscience dans la communication de marque**

### **The Use and the Reception of Pseudoscience in Brand Communication**

**Abstract:** Being in the situation to choose between brands that lack observable features or that incorporate an epistemic opaque technology, the consumers are guided by certain surrogate indicators to evaluate and select between alternatives. Used in brand communication, assertions and scientific terms function as surrogate indicators of brand quality. By agreeing to promote technologically questionable or simply fake or misleading brands, advertisers, relying on the epistemic myopia of the buyers and the lack of reaction of the control authorities, frequently use pseudoscientific terms and assertions in brand communication. The reason is simple: for many consumers, pseudoscience is confused with science and science has maximum epistemic prestige in the contemporary imaginary: what is scientifically guaranteed has a superior perceived quality and the promised effects are a certainty. In this study I will pursue several goals: first, I will show that commercial pseudoscientific claims mimic scientific assertions in order to steal something of the prestige and authority of science. Secondly, I will highlight the deep sources of pseudoscience and identify which categories of brands are prone to pseudoscientific communication. Thirdly, I will identify the main forms of pseudoscience present in commercial communication, taking examples from the way several brands communicate. We found that the most common forms of pseudoscience that infest brand communication are: misused scientific terminology, fanciful ontological assumptions, construction of scientific narratives, assertion of false causal correlations, construction of false scientific models, false explanations, false predictions, accreditation of phantasmagoric technologies. Fourthly, I will analyze the process of receiving and evaluating the degree of truthfulness of commercial

assertions that contain pseudoscience. My conclusion is that as long as the cognitive lightness of pseudoscience is intuitively preferred by some consumers to scientific complexity, pseudoscience is and will be a constant presence in brand communication.

**Keywords:** authority of science, pseudoscience, brand communication, surrogate indicators, false causal correlations, degree of truthfulness, fluence bias, phantasmagoric technologies