Reimagining Visual Rhetoric Theory for the AI Age: An Analysis of Fake Out of Home Advertising Related to Persuasion Outcomes

This study conceptualizes Fake Out-of-Home (FOOH) advertising as a form of visual rhetoric, where the *intentional* design of advertising stimuli blurs between reality and artificial construction. Using a dataset of 3,592 FOOH social media posts provided by an international advertising agency, we conduct a descriptive analysis of engagement outcomes associated with different creative effects and animation strategies. We identify recurring creative and animation types through which strategic visual rhetoric is constructed. We conceptualize how AI-enabled realism invites cognitive elaboration through curiosity, leading to AI-mediated persuasion. While most AI advertising research to date treats AI as binary (AI or not), we provide evidence that creative execution choices matter and have varying effects on engagement. The findings also suggest a boundary condition where AI-mediated creativity can avoid AI-bias and may be more engaging when reality is ambiguous.

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