

Can You Handle the Truth? A Study of the Antecedents and Post-Behavior Rationalization of Deceptive eWOM

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Abstract

Communication between people transpires with the assumption of truth, but this assumption may not always hold good, lying is an integral part of daily lives. The focus of the current research is to develop a theoretical framework that investigates the deviant consumer behavior of sharing deceptive brand-related information on the internet i.e. deceptive electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Computer-mediated communication is not only prone to easy deception but to identify deception is also challenging. Hence current study, based on extant literature of impression management and self-presentation goals, identifies, firstly, motivations that may lead to deceptive eWOM behavior and, secondly, identifies personality traits more susceptible to the deviant behavior. Further more people have an inherent need to uphold a positive self-concept, even when they indulge in deceptive behavior, hence post-behavior rationalization achieved by moral disengagement is also a vital theoretical question addressed in the current research. The article proposes several propositions that if tested can lend empirical support critical for theory building.

Keywords: eWOM; Lying behavior; Computer-mediated environment; Deviant consumer behavior

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