

Research on the Impact of Negative Online Word-of-Mouth Types on Purchase Intention in Virtual Brand Communities

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Abstract

With the popularization of the internet and the rise of virtual brand communities, online word-of-mouth has become an important source of information for consumers' pre-purchase information search, among which negative online word-of-mouth has a particularly significant impact on purchase decisions. Existing studies have mostly focused on the overall effect of negative word-of-mouth, while paying insufficient attention to the differential effects of different content types of negative word-of-mouth on consumers' purchase intentions through internal psychological mechanisms. Based on the communication persuasion theory and the SOR theory, this study constructs a moderated mediation model to explore the impact of negative online word-of-mouth types (objective description vs. subjective evaluation) on consumers' purchase intentions, introducing perceived risk as a mediator and source credibility as a moderator. The experimental products were determined through a pre-experiment and the validity of the experimental materials was tested. A scenario experiment method was adopted for the formal experiment, and a total of 240 valid questionnaires were collected. The results show that: (1) Compared with subjective evaluation negative online word-of-mouth, objective description negative online word-of-mouth has a stronger negative impact on consumers' purchase intention; (2) Perceived risk mediates the relationship between negative online word-of-mouth types and purchase intention, that is, objective description negative word-of-mouth inhibits purchase intention by triggering stronger perceived risk; (3) Source credibility moderates the above mediating effect. When source credibility is high, the positive effect of objective description negative online word-of-mouth on perceived risk and its negative effect on purchase intention are both strengthened. This study deepens the theoretical framework of negative online word-of-mouth typology research, extends the application of communication persuasion theory and SOR theory to the context of virtual brand communities, and provides practical implications for enterprises to optimize their negative word-of-mouth response strategies and improve community operation efficiency.

Keywords

Virtual Brand Community, Negative Online Word-of-Mouth, Purchase Intention, Perceived Risk, Source Credibility