

Word of Mouth and Status Consumption

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Abstract

Consumers often share word of mouth (WOM) about their prized possessions. This research suggests that such WOM sharing might reduce the perception of status by others. The authors propose that WOM sharing lowers the sharer's perceived cultural capital, and therefore leads to lower status inferences. The authors rule out bragging and annoyance as alternative explanations, and examine boundary conditions including product type (status vs. non-status), status product exclusivity (exclusive vs. non-exclusive), and perspective (observer vs. actor). Furthermore, the authors establish that one single instance of WOM sharing produces the proposed effect. Several downstream variables are also examined.

Keywords: *word of mouth; status consumption; social perception*

Track: Consumer Behaviour