

Social Class Influences on Purchase Intention Following a Product-Harm Crisis: The Mediating Roles of Subjective Social Status and Attribution of Stability

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Abstract

Across four studies, this research investigates social class influences on attribution of stability and purchase intention following a product-harm crisis. Results showed that middle- (vs. working-) class participants (as objectively indicated by their educational attainment) perceived themselves as having a higher social status in the society (Studies 1A and 3), which in turn led to a stronger tendency to attribute stability to a product-harm crisis (Studies 1A, 1B, 2, and 3), believing to a greater extent that the problem was typical of the brand's products and the brand would likely run into similar problems in the future. Results also indicated that middle- (vs. working-) class participants were less likely to purchase products from the same brand following a product-harm crisis (Study 3). These results are consistent with current theorizing and empirical findings that middle-class contexts foster solipsism whereas working-class contexts foster contextualism.

Keywords: *social class; consumer attributions; product-harm*

Track: Consumer Behaviour