

# Examining the Correlation Between Consumer Experiences with Deceptive Advertising and Perceived Platform Credibility and Purchase Intention in Online Shopping: The Case of the Philippines

<sup>1</sup>Liane Vina G. Ocampo, <sup>2</sup>Rachelle Santos, <sup>3</sup>Reynold C. Campo, <sup>4</sup>Lexver G. Ocampo,

<sup>5</sup>Nora B. Capistrano

<sup>1</sup>lianeocampo@cvsu.edu.ph

Cavite State University, Philippines

0000-0003-1456-3616

<sup>2</sup>rmsantos@featiu.edu.ph

Far Eastern Air Transport Incorporated University

Asian Institute of Maritime Studies

0000-0002-9499-1436

<sup>3</sup>racampo@featiu.edu.ph

Far Eastern Air Transport Incorporated University

Philippine Christian University

0000-0002-9176-0827

<sup>4</sup>lexverocampo@cvsu.edu.ph

Cavite State University, Philippines

0009-0000-7738-4581

<sup>5</sup>Cavite State University, Philippines

nbcapistrano@cvsu.edu.ph

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## ABSTRACT

In today's digital era, consumers also depend on digital information and applications in their purchasing decisions. In the Philippines, various e-commerce platforms are widely used to purchase goods. However, due to the prevalence of AI technologies, a lot of misleading promotional content can also be found in the e-commerce hub. With this, this research investigates the deceptive advertisement that Filipino consumers usually encounter and how they influences the platform's credibility as well as the consumer's purchasing intention in online shopping sites. It aims to examine how consumer digital literacy and awareness affect their response to deceptive marketing. The result of this study is deemed beneficial for digital marketers in improving their marketing websites and competitively competing for trust in a skeptical digital market. The study investigates the relationship between deceptive practices and the purchasing intention of online consumers. The study applies non-parametric statistical analysis to determine the correlation between the factors using a descriptive correlational approach. Although the result reveals that there are few direct correlations between various deceptive advertising approaches and the purchasing intention of the consumer, platform credibility was observed to play a crucial role in consumers' purchasing decisions. Among the four dimensions

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considered in the study, transparency was found to have the highest correlation with consumer purchasing intention. These reveal that consumer attitudes are leaning towards a growing preference for authentic and transparent brands. Moreover, it emphasizes that ethical behavior is not only a sustainable means to gain consumer expectations, but the credibility of the platforms that implement stricter regulations on advertisers can serve as an advantageous approach in gaining consumer trust.

**Keywords:** E-commerce, deceptive advertisement, consumer behavior, business ethics

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### INTRODUCTION

Advertising is one of the important elements in business that attracts consumers, and in today's era, digital marketing is specifically a notable factor that must be considered. It is becoming very crucial because of the rapid and cheap means of promoting the products available over the internet. One of its downsides, however, has been the astounding increase in misleading advertising that falsely describes features of goods and services, amplifies being advertised, and conceals even the most necessary information (Wang & Lang, 2019). This is generally known as deceptive advertising. Deceptive advertising refers to certain practices involving misleading representation, false content, exaggeration, or subjective claims.

There are laws and policies established in various countries to protect consumers against these practices. The Federal Trade Commission (n.d.) in the United States, since it was established in 1914, is responsible for protecting consumers by investigating fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices and enforcing laws against false advertising. While in the Philippines, the Republic Act No. 7394 or the Consumer Act of the Philippines was enacted in 1992 to protect the interests and welfare of consumers by establishing standards of conduct for business and industry (Republic of the Philippines, 1992). But not all deceptive advertising is considered illegal. Puffery statements and some exaggeration or subjective claims that are not meant to be taken literally in the advertisement or promotions are legally acceptable. These are considered opinions rather than factual claims that are generally legal. However, when such statements include specific, measurable claims without substantiation or objectively false information that mislead and harm a reasonable consumer, it is considered illegal.

In the digital market, these deceptive practices become more prevalent, and the recent findings show that exposure to false content harms consumer purchase intentions (Ayar, 2024). While many studies have highlighted the concept of general consumer mistrust, much work remains on the direct link between consumer encounters with Deceptive advertising and purchase intention, and how perceived platform credibility integrates in this. Thus, this investigation tries to fill those gaps by assessing consumer experiences with deceptive advertising relative to purchase intention and the purchasing behavior of consumers in online settings in relation to platform credibility. Moreover, the platform algorithms and curated online experience can enhance the effectiveness of deceptive advertising by selectively presenting consumers with favorable messages and filtering out dissenting opinions and reviews. This also introduces a new factor about how consumers assess the credibility and trustworthiness of the platform, and not only based on its technical security features. Despite its importance, there are few studies focusing on the critical analysis of the products that highlight the gaps in consumers' awareness of the aspects to identify deception ((Eze, 2025) And the role of algorithmic trust and platform bias remains neglected (Pasquale, 2015). Finally, while much of the literature concentrates on Western markets, consumer responses to Deceptive advertising in Southeast Asia, such as in the Philippines, are poorly documented. Cultural values such as *pakikisama* (smooth interpersonal relations), *hiya* (shame), and collectivism may uniquely shape business

ethics and brand loyalty (Tablan, 2021). This context-sensitive perspective is critical for developing locally relevant frameworks and interventions that address deceptive advertising in emerging markets.

Therefore, this study addresses multiple gaps: (1) identify the deceptive advertising practices encountered by the participants (2) evaluate the consumer perceived credibility on online platforms, (3) provides regional insights into Filipino consumer behavior in purchasing online, and (4) it tests the interplay between deceptive advertising, platform credibility and purchase intention. By undertaking this research, the researchers aimed to enrich the scholarly understanding of digital marketing ethics and consumer psychology and to provide actionable insights for businesses, regulators, and digital marketers striving to cultivate trust and authenticity in online marketplaces.

## **METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design.** This research employs a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between the consumer experiences with deceptive advertising and their purchasing intentions, considering their perceived credibility of the digital platforms. A descriptive-correlational approach was taken to quantify consumer perceptions and behaviors while allowing the statistical inference of relationships between variables. This design is suitable for assessing attitudes, behaviors, and perceived influences using Numerical indicators systematically derived from structured survey instruments (Creswell, 2009).

**Sampling Technique.** The study utilized the purposive sampling technique, a non-probability sampling method in which the researchers intentionally select participants who meet particular criteria based on the study's scope. Specifically, the participants were Filipino online consumers in Luzon, Philippines. Luzon was selected due to its dominant share in national e-commerce activity, with higher internet penetration among digital consumers, particularly in urban areas such as Metro Manila and CALABARZON (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022). Respondents were selected based on inclusion criteria such as exposure to online advertisements and having made purchases in the top digital shopping platform in the country (Amazon, Lazada, Shopee, TikTok). A total of 210 respondents were surveyed. This sample size is regarded as sufficient for a correlational analysis and just within the recommended thresholds for behavioral research studies (Hair et al., 2021).

**Research Instruments.** The study used primary data collection using a structured survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire is composed of three parts. Part I focused on the respondents' profiles. Part II consisted of five constructs assessing the deceptive advertising practices encountered by the participants. Part III includes four dimensions of perceived credibility. Part IV assessed the participants' purchase intentions in buying on online platforms. In order to guarantee the quality of the instrument, it has undergone content validation with three experts in marketing and consumer research who reviewed the items for clarity and relevance. A pilot test was conducted with 20 respondents, and the analysis revealed that the instrument was reliable with acceptable internal consistency ( $\alpha \geq 0.70$ ).

**Statistical Treatment of Data.** Descriptive analysis, such as frequency and percentage, was employed to summarize the demographics of the respondents, while weighted mean and standard deviation were used to evaluate their level of agreement for each Likert-scale item. These metrics provide insights into the general trend and variability of consumers' experiences and behavior toward online advertisements and shopping platforms. Lastly, the study employed Spearman's rank correlation to assess the strength and direction of the relationships between the deceptive advertising dimension and perceived platform credibility on their purchase intention.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

A total of 210 participants residing in Luzon have participated in the study. More than half were female (67.62%), 27. Sixty-two were male, while the remaining 4.76 percent classified themselves as non-binary in terms of online shopping expenditures, 56. Nineteen percent have an estimated monthly spending of 500 and below; 26.67 percent have 501 to 1000 pesos, and 17.14 percent indicated that they are spending more than 1000 pesos a month in online shops. All of the participants have experience in using the top 3 e-commerce sites in the Philippines.

### **Deceptive Advertising Experience**

The study assessed the frequency of encounters with deceptive advertising in terms of deceptive claims, deceptive pricing, fake testimonials, hidden fees, and bait and switch. Each of the identified classifications of deceptive advertising is composed of 10 items, Likert scale questions. The result garnered an overall mean of 3.15, which shows that respondents sometimes encountered these advertising practices. This is also aligned with the increasing concerns in the global market regarding the digital manipulation in advertising, highlighting the need for an enhanced AI-supported detection system and platform accountability (Wang & Lang, 2019).

**Deceptive claims.** The study shows that consumers usually encounter claims about false benefits of the products in online advertisements, with the highest mean score of 3.40. This means that the respondents usually experience exaggerations in online products. In connection, studies show that deceptive messaging can badly affect consumer loyalty and may influence impulse buying (Okazaki et al., 2020). On the other hand, they don't usually encounter product advertisements that claim certifications they do not possess, with a weighted score of 2.92. The overall mean score is 3.22, which indicates that, in general, they sometimes experience deceptive messaging in online shopping sites, emphasizing the need to strengthen the implementation of consumer digital protection and thorough reviews to ensure businesses' digital marketing compliance.

**Deceptive Price.** The respondents indicate that they frequently encountered identical products that are being offered at widely differing prices, with a weighted score of 3.60. This kind of practice has been criticized for lacking fairness, as it becomes uncertain of the true cost and can be considered a form of digital price discrimination (Milne et al., 2021). The lowest aspect in terms of deceptive pricing was observed in terms of hidden charges, with a weighted score of 3.27, indicating that they sometimes experience it. This result highlights the importance of transparency in terms of pricing as one of the important determinants of consumers' demand and requires consideration in dealing with consumer protection and ethical marketing (Kumar et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020).

**Fake Testimonials.** The result shows that respondents frequently encountered fake testimonials by highlighting only favorable testimonials and ignoring criticism on the platforms, with a weighted mean of 3.44, and there are frequent cases where testimonials use stock photos or fake personas, with a weighted score of 3.45. On the contrary, they don't usually encounter customer reviews that seem fabricated with a weighted score of 3.11. The overall mean of 3.29 shows that fake testimonial is sometimes experienced by online shoppers, which highlights the important role of verified purchase indicators and reviewer or consumer feedback transparency to maintain the consumers' trust (Luca & Zervas, 2020; Mariani et al., 2019).

**Hidden Fees.** In terms of disclosing extra cost, the platform sometimes does not disclose the shipping costs until checkout, with the highest mean of 3.22. On the contrary, it is rare to experience membership fees and subscriptions automatically added without the consumer's consent (2.44). The overall

rating on this aspect is 2.94, which is below the midpoint, showing that these are deceptive practices that are rarely encountered when shopping online. Transparency in total cost is very important to prevent post-purchase dissatisfaction, which may affect the repurchase intention of consumers as well as the business brand image (Wirtz & Lwin, 2009).

**Bait and Switch.** According to the participants, they sometimes encountered difficulty in getting refunds for switched products, with a weighted score of 3.23, while the lowest rating was observed in terms of substitutions of products or items without informing the buyer, with a weighted score of 2.83. The overall mean is 3.02, showing that consumers sometimes encountered unconsented substitutions, which highlights the need for return policies that allow online buyers to easily claim refunds or the corrected items (Kuo et al., 2011).

Table 1. Summary of Deceptive advertisements encountered by Filipino online shoppers

INDICATORS	WEIGHTED MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
Deceptive Claims	3.22	0.635	sometimes
Deceptive Price	3.27	0.777	sometimes
Fake testimonials	3.29	0.743	sometimes
Hidden fees	2.94	0.839	sometimes
Bait and Switch	3.02	0.723	sometimes
<b>DECEPTIVE ADVERTISEMENT</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.611</b>	<b>sometimes</b>

**Perceived Credibility of the online shopping platforms**

Four important dimensions were considered in the study to assess the perceived credibility of the online platforms. Each indicator was assessed using 10 structured questions for each dimension: trustworthiness, transparency, security, and reputation. The overall assessment shows that they have agreed that they perceived the online shopping platforms that they are using as credible (3.00), with the highest rating in terms of reputation (3.10) and the lowest rating in terms of trustworthiness of the platform (2.90).

**Trustworthiness.** The result shows that the participants agreed that the online shopping platforms consistently deliver products as advertised, and the platform’s communication about their purchases is timely and reliable, both earning a weighted mean of 2.99. This result reflects that consumers have moderate confidence in the shopping platform in terms of delivering the quality of products and services as promised. Moreover, the lowest rating was observed regarding the discrepancy between the promised and delivered product, but there is still a verbal interpretation of the agreement (2.77). The overall weighted mean is 2.90, which implies that the user generally agreed that the platform is trustworthy. Sustaining platform credibility also involved alignment between promotional claims and delivery outcomes (McKnight et al., 2002).

**Transparency.** In terms of transparency, users agreed that notifications regarding transactions are consistent and clear, which received a weighted mean of 3.10. This implies that the participants perceived a high level of communication clarity during online purchases. The business's transparent communication builds confidence and lowers the perceived risk of online shopping (D. Kim et al., 2008).

On the other hand, the lowest rated items were observed in terms of trust on consumers' ratings on online platforms, reflecting true user experiences with a weighted score of 2.84, but still refer to agree. The overall mean for this aspect is 2.98, which means that users generally find transparency and authenticity in the platform.

**Security.** The participants have agreed that the platform provides options for a secure payment method with a weighted score of 3.15. The existence of security features tends to induce psychological security and reduce any possible financial risks perceived by participants (Flavián & Guinalú, 2006). On the low end, "I feel that my transactions are protected from unauthorized access" received 2.96, indicating mild concerns about possible breaches despite the agreement. With an overall score of 3.03 on security, the highest among the four sub-indicators, respondents perceive the platform as secure. This correlates with earlier literature stating that the credibility of the platform is heightened by strong encryption, authentication, and fraud detection systems (Chong et al., 2010; Roman et al., 2013).

**Reputation.** Among the reputation-related indicators, the one with the highest mean of 3.19 is on the statement that the platform has a large customer base, which builds consumers' confidence. This shows that broad user adoption positively influences perceived platform credibility. This fits into the consumer behavior premise of social proof, where popularity takes the role of a trustworthiness proxy (Kuo et al., 2011). With a score of 3.03, the item with the lowest mean under reputation, yet still carrying a positive connotation, states that news or reports about this platform generally portray it positively. The decline suggests that while talking and reviewing about it through social media tends to be positive, the platform's reputation in traditional media does have some weight, but less than the previous two. The overall mean of 3.10 shows that the brand carries high credibility among the users. This signals the need to maintain ongoing brand engagement with adequate reputation management in order to sustain consumer confidence (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Hutter et al., 2013).

Table 2. Perceived Credibility of the Online Platforms by Filipino Online Shoppers

INDICATORS	WEIGHTED MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	VERBAL INTERPRETATION
Trustworthiness	2.90	0.519	agree
Transparency	2.98	0.533	agree
Security	3.03	0.481	agree
Reputation	3.10	0.511	agree
<b>Perceived Credibility of the Platform</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>0.453</b>	<b>agree</b>

ONLINE PURCHASE INTENTION

Four indicators—attitude towards the products, perceived value, trust in the platform, and behavioral intention—were used to analyze consumers' purchase intentions. The result shows an average score of 3.09.

**Attitude Toward the Product.** The proposition that the bargains and packages presented are attractive received the highest average score of 3.20. It is supported by the view that value-added schemes increase product desirability in cases of stiff competition found in online markets (Kotler & Keller, 2016). On the contrary, the lowest rating was observed in terms of their perception that the products on the platforms are of high quality, with a mean of 2.94. Users find the source interesting, yet still uncertain about its perceived quality. The overall mean for this indicator is 3.08. Positive attitude towards products that

could be formed by many stimulating factors: promotional visibility and consumer empowerment due to freely available information (Hutter et al., 2013; J. Kim et al., 2017). The result shows that presentation, bundling, and clear specifications on products would be very influential in the purchase behavior of the consumer.

**Perceived Value.** Free shipping policies add more value to the platform: it earned the highest rating of 3.25, which implies that logistic incentives significantly enhance the perceived value. A similar study also shows that free delivery can dramatically influence consumer satisfaction and conversion rates (Cheng et al., 2019). However, in terms of discounts provided on the platform, it is rated slightly lower at 3.11, meaning that while discounts are good, they are not as strong an incentive as the logistical or service incentives. The overall mean of 3.13 shows that users think the site offers good value against price-quality combinations. Hence, it means continuing to seek value optimization through bundling, transparency, and post-service will remain an important competitive advantage (Chiu et al., 2014).

**Trust in the Platform.** The respondent holding the opinion, “Platform responsiveness to concerns increases my trust,” stood out with a mean of 3.13, reflecting timely and responsive customer service, which contributes to the building of trust. According to research, real-time support with transparent issue resolution raises the customers’ perception of platform reliability (Urban et al., 2000). With the lowest score of 3.01 were the following items: “I feel confident purchasing from this platform without hesitation,” and “I trust the sellers associated with this platform,” which communicates a sense of positivity, indicating improvements for a more consistent policy on the sellers’ side. So, the overall mean of 3.08 suggests that there is trust, but enhanced trust may come from better policy development, seller monitoring, and platform-seller relationships. This shows trust goes beyond technological infrastructure; it is primarily about how the platform regulates, responds, and communicates (Gefen et al., 2003; McKnight et al., 2002).

**Behavioral Intention.** The item "I save items in my cart for potential purchases on this platform" received the highest score of 3.27, interpreted as "strongly agree." This indicates a strong intention for repeat engagement and shows that the platform has been integrated into the consumers' purchase planning routines. On the lower side, "I rarely hesitate to shop on this platform" has a score of 3.01, which is still viewed as positive; however, it indicates some residual caution. The overall mean of 3.17 was the highest of all sub-indicators, meaning that users tend to trust and value the platform and are also likely to act on that trust by returning for future purchases. This is consonant with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), wherein attitudes, perceived control, and the subjective norm influence behavior intentions, while the purchase likelihood is an essential outcome of trust and satisfaction (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2011).

Table 3. Purchasing intention in an Online shopping platform

	<b>WEIGHTED MEAN</b>	<b>STANDARD DEVIATION</b>	<b>VERBAL INTERPRETATION</b>
Attitude Toward the Product	3.08	0.421	agree
Perceived Value	3.13	0.427	agree
Trust in the Platform	3.08	0.416	agree
Behavioral Intention	3.17	0.410	agree
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>0.383</b>	<b>agree</b>

The inferential analysis using Spearman's rank correlation showed almost negligible and statistically non-significant relationships between deceptive advertising and both overall platform credibility ( $\rho = -0.101$ ,  $p = 0.145$ ) and purchase intention ( $\rho = -0.056$ ,  $p = 0.421$ ), therefore failing to reject the null hypotheses. This indicates that deceptive advertisements do not affect the Filipino online consumer trust or purchase decision-making significantly, perhaps due to consumer awareness of such tactics or ad skepticism developed over time. On the other hand, strong and statistically significant positive correlations existed between platform credibility and purchase intention ( $\rho = 0.859$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), showing consumers are more influenced by their perception of the platform's reliability, transparency, and security. This reinforces the previous arguments that trust towards the platform is an important criterion of online consumer behavior (Bart et al., 2005; Y. Kim & Peterson, 2017).

Table 4. Correlation Analysis between Deceptive Advertising, Platform Credibility, and Consumers' Purchasing Intention

	<b>CORRELATIO N COEFFICIENT</b>	<b>P- VALU E</b>	<b>VERBAL INTERPRETATIO N</b>	<b>DECISIO N</b>
Deceptive advertisement and Overall credibility of the Platform	-0.101	0.145	negligible correlation	Accept Ho
Deceptive Advertisement and Purchase Intention	-0.056	0.421	negligible correlation	Accept Ho
Overall credibility of the Platform and Purchase Intention	0.859**	0.000	High Positive correlation	Reject Ho

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

0.90 to 1.00 (-.90 to -1.00) - Very high positive (negative) correlation

0.70 to 90 (-.70 to -.90) - High positive (negative) correlation

0.50 to .70 (-.50 to -.70) - Moderate positive (negative) correlation

0.30 to .50 (-.30 to -.50) - Low positive (negative) correlation

0.00 to .30 (.00 to -.30) - negligible correlation

**Conclusion**

These findings show that deceptive advertising in the case of the research local of the study does not affect platform credibility or purchasing behavior, for consumers may have built up resistance to misleading advertising practices. However, strong and significant positive correlations between perceived platform credibility and purchase intention indicate the importance of trust-enhancing conditions, such as transparency, reliability, and safety, as determinants of consumer behavior. The results reconfirm that when credibility is present, consumers will ultimately engage, to whatever extent they consider credible

advertising, which is stated on an online platform seeking to persuade consumers. Digital marketers and platform developers ought to know the significance of investing in factors that build and maintain the integrity of a platform rather than focusing on just the persuasive or attention-grabbing aspects of its advertising. Besides, this presents more input into the evolving literature on e-commerce ethics and provides empirical evidence for targeting consumer trust mechanisms in digital marketing approaches.

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