

The Effect of Perceived Deception on Consumer Repurchase Intention

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Graduate Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in Management (Marketing)

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St. Catharines, Ontario

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ABSTRACT

Online commerce changes the way products are displayed. Bounded by less chance to present information of the product, e-retailers always face misunderstandings on the consumer side, and consequently, unfavourable consumer behaviour. This makes online retailing prone to perceived deceptive practice. Past research has mainly integrated perceived deception into existing consumer behavior theories. In the same vein, this research further examines the factors moderating the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. Specifically, we tested how product type (hedonic versus utilitarian), consumer regulatory focus (promotion versus prevention), and their interaction can help mitigate perceived deception's negative effect on consumer repurchase intention. This research expands the literature on perceived deception. With the prior work establishing the negative effect of perceived deception on consumer purchase behaviour, this research further investigates the factors that may attenuate the unfavourable outcome. It also helps marketers increase repurchase rates by emphasizing the hedonic attribute and instigating promotion intention to help mitigate the negative effects of perceived deception.

Keywords: Perceived deception, Online shopping, Prevention/Promotion orientation, Product type, Repurchase intention, Consumer perception, Consumer loyalty, Advertising

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my gratitude for my supervisor's support and insightful comments, Dr. Abdul Rehman Ashraf, and my thesis committee members, Dr. Tek Thongpapanl and Dr. Kai-Yu Wang. Their comments and feedback helped me improve my work, and working with them has further increased my passion for research and academia. I would also like to thank Carrie Kelly, Luiza Guimaraes, and the staff at the Goodman School of Business at Brock University for their outstanding support throughout the program.

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INTRODUCTION

It is common for companies that advertise their products to use deceptive tactics. For example, fruity gummy snacks made almost entirely of processed sugar are often infused with vitamin C. The company stresses on vitamin C in the candy and utilizes FOP labeling to persuade consumers to view the candy as a healthy snack (Welches Company, 2018). Earlier research in retailing and personal selling has already identified this kind of exaggeration of the features and benefits of a product as a typical example of deceptive or manipulative tactics (Román & Ruiz, 2005). Consumers need transactional obligations to be fulfilled in a way they pictured. When they perceive the vendor practicing deceptive tactics, their belief in the marketer is impaired (Kim, Hendrick, & Hendrick, 2008). As a result, deception can weaken consumers' trust in the retailers and lead to unfavourable consumer behaviour (Campbell & Kirmani, 2000; Darke & Ritchie, 2007; Main, Dahl, & Darke, 2007).

The unfavourable effect is even more salient in this COVID-19 situation since the pandemic has boosted the stay-at-home economy and shifted consumer preferences toward e-commerce even more than before (Lee & Charles, 2021). Consumer attitudes and purchasing habits are changing drastically (Wright & Blackburn, 2020). The current pandemic can be perceived as an adverse setting that can make some people more vulnerable, affecting their purchase behavior (Kursan, 2021). Unlike in traditional retail settings, where consumers can make inferences about retailers based on various physical aspects, the low degree of the physical proximity of online retailers leads to psychological distance and insecurity (Grewal, Iyer, & Levy, 2004). Consumers might become highly vulnerable because they perceive some unethical retailers' practices (Glavas et al., 2020), which can affect their decision-making (e.g., repurchase), especially when it is coupled with fewer purchasing alternatives (Kursan, 2021). As shoppers are feeling threats

surrounding the act of online purchases (Jiang, Jones, & Javie, 2008), the issue of dealing with all kinds of deception has become a topic of great current importance.

To date, the adverse effects of objective deception have been widely researched, and retailers have been warned against using such tactics (e.g., Agag, 2019; Darke & Ritchie, 2007; Argo & Shiv, 2012). However, not much is known about perceived deception (Román, 2010; Boush, Madrigal, & Xie, 2015; Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf, 1998; Darke, Ashworth, & Ritchie, 2008), which is no less critical as it can also lead to unfavorable outcomes. Perceived deception is “consumer’s feeling that a marketer is responsible for trying to set false belief with any type of a marketing communication” (Held & Germelmann, 2018). What differentiates perceived deception from objective deception is the perspective from which to determine the existence of deception. In objective deception, **marketers deliberately create a gap between reality and product description**, resulting in consumers making erroneous judgments.

In contrast, in the context of perceived deception, the deception is only **perceived by consumers**, and there is a **discrepancy between reality and consumers’ expectations**. Consumers’ perception overrides the retailers’ intention in determining whether perceived deception happens. For example, consider an illustration from Román (2007, p. 137) where one participant argued that she had perceived an online retailer to be unfair and deceptive because “it shows photographs of a woman, before and after having taken a weight loss product for ten months, making her lose a total of 130 lb.” Even though the retailer had evidence to prove the authenticity of their claims, perceived deception arose since the participant perceived that “the images were manipulated” and that “the claim was an exaggeration.”

The gap between reality and consumers’ expectations which leads to perceived deception, can be referred to as a psychological contract violation. Psychological contract influences the

process of consumer decision-making. It is based on **perceived** promises of reciprocal exchange and occurs when one party believes another party is obligated to perform certain behaviors (Rousseau, 1995). Thus, even **perceived** unmet expectations could violate psychological contract (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998).

When psychological contracts are violated and yield unfavorable outcomes, the theory of self-serving bias suggests that individuals over-attribute causation to others and under-attribute it to themselves (Campbell & Sedikides, 1999; Miller & Ross, 1975). Thus, attributing the cause of psychological contract violation to the retailer, consumers lose good faith in the retailer (Rousseau & Parks, 1993) and are likely to refrain from future transactions with the retailer or of the product (Pavlo & Gefen, 2005). Even though perceived deception comes from only the perceived unmet expectations and sometimes the retailers are even beyond reproach, a previous survey on consumers reaction to appliance failure in South Africa (Donoghue & de Klerk, 2013) shows that respondents mostly attributed appliance failures to the ‘wrongdoing’ of manufacturers and were mostly very angry about it. Less than a quarter of the respondents chose to engage in complaint action, leaving the retailer in the dark about the problem and in no position to address the problem. This is in line with what Kincade, Giddings, and Chen-Yu (1998) found. This makes the investigation of perceived deception no less critical than that of objective deception. In this case, this research tries to identify different scenarios where the negative consequences of perceived deception can be attenuated. Two factors and their interaction are investigated: regulatory focus (prevention versus promotion) and product type (high hedonic/low utilitarian versus low hedonic/high utilitarian).

Regulatory focus affects consumers’ decision-making processes. Individuals with a promotion focus are primarily striving to fulfill their ideal self—their hopes and aspirations.

They focus on possibilities for growth and development, seeking to maximize positive outcomes. In contrast, individuals with a prevention focus are mainly concerned with fulfilling their "ought self"—their obligations and responsibilities. They strive for security and aim to minimize adverse outcomes (Higgins, 1997). While regulatory focus works on consumer decision, the type of product adjusts consumer expectations. The consumption of hedonic products is primarily characterized by an affective and sensory experience of aesthetic or sensual pleasure, fantasy, and fun.

In contrast, utilitarian goods' consumption is more cognitively driven, instrumental, and goal-oriented and accomplishes a functional or practical task (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Strahilevitz & Myers 1998). After perceived deception occurs, we propose that consumer repurchase intention is higher for hedonic products than utilitarian products. Besides, promotion-focused individuals would show a higher repurchase intention compared to prevention-focused individuals in a post-perceived-deception situation. Furthermore, promotion-focused individuals would be more likely to repurchase a hedonic product when they perceive deception, and prevention-focused individuals are less likely to repurchase a utilitarian product after perceived deception.

Three experiments provided support for our predictions, with our three hypotheses (referring to the moderating role of product type, regulatory focus, and the interaction between product type and regulatory focus) tested, respectively. The findings contribute to relevant literature and practice in four ways. First and foremost, it expands the literature on perceived deception, providing further and more precise assessments of the impact of perceived deception on consumers. Prior research has mainly focused on objective deceptive practices (e.g., Agag, 2019; Darke & Ritchie, 2007; Argo & Shiv, 2012). Only a few are on perceived deception (Román,

2010; Boush, Madrigal, & Xie, 2015; Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf, 1998; Darke, Ashworth, & Ritchie, 2008). The negative effect of perceived deception on consumer behavior has been established among the prior work on perceived deception. This study further focuses on the moderator that may help to attenuate the unfavorable outcomes.

Second, this research examined the factors that may mitigate the negative effect of perceived deception on repurchase intention. The results verify that different product types, diverse regulatory focuses, and varying combinations of these two factors can help to attenuate the adverse effect of perceived deception on repurchase intention to different extents. Even though past research has explored the interaction of product type and regulatory focus (e.g., Micu & Chowdhury, 2010; Ryu et al., 2014; Ashraf & Thongpapanl, 2015), the interact relationship between the product type and regulatory focus in the context of perceive deception needs further exploration. This research can help to develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between these constructs. From a practical standpoint, this research can help to improve the repurchase rate of products offered in online settings. Lacking an all-round display of the product and detailed product information assured by timely and responsive responses from the salespeople, online retailers may suffer from a risky situation where consumers only count on a limited amount of product presentation and information to make a decision. Less valid information raises the risk of the disparity between reality and consumers' expectations and, therefore, contributes to perceived deception. Investigating the interaction between product type and consumer regulatory focus could provide clues about effective manipulations of perceived deception and help retailers' device marketing strategies to attract and deal with consumers. By pointing out that even marketers who honestly offer product information would potentially be vulnerable to perceived deception, the current research suggests marketers wisely practice

product positioning and marketing strategy, which may help turn around the adverse situation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perceived deception

Objective deception and perceived deception

Deception is a general phenomenon that can occur in virtually any form of communication under the conflict of interest (Román, 2010). Deception comes in a wide array of forms other than the outright lie. The features that differentiate them are the amount and sufficiency of information, degree of truthfulness, clarity, relevance, and intent. Whatever the type of deception, it can negatively impact consumers' responses toward the advertised brand or product (Barone & Miniard 1999; Darke, Laurence, & Ritchie, 2008; Russo, Metcalf, & Stephens, 1981). Once consumers realize the advertisement is deceptive, the attitude toward the retailer becomes less favorable (Andrews, Burton, & Netemeyer, 2000; Craig et al., 2012; Shanahan & Hopkins, 2007). The consequences are vital, ranging from financial cost to psychological distress and social distrust (Darke and Ritchie, 2007). That explains why deception has received considerable attention in the literature. The literature on deceptive practice mainly focused on identifying the specific types of claims that lead to consumers' erroneous judgments and their consequences on consumers' beliefs, affect, and behavioural intentions (e.g., Gardner, 1975; Burke et al., 1988; Compeau et al., 2004; Darke & Ritchie, 2007; Román, 2007; Román & Cuestas, 2008; Román, 2010; Darke, Ashworth, & Main, 2010). Deception in online settings has also been touched on in prior literature (e.g., Grazioli & Jarvenpaa, 2001; Grazioli, 2004; Román, 2010).

Deception is a cognitive interaction between two parties under a **conflict of interest**, where the deceiver manipulates the environment of the other party, the target (Grazioli & Jarvenpaa, 2001). To demonstrate that an advertisement is objectively deceptive, Jacoby and Small (1975) note that it needs to be shown that the false belief is due only to the advertisement and not to any other factors. That is, the deceiver aims to intentionally foster an incorrect cognitive representation of the target's situation and instigate the desired action, which would not exist without manipulation (Grazioli & Jarvenpaa, 2001).

Aside from the clear and well-researched definitions of objective deception, there is limited understanding or reference of consumers' subjective perception of deception in marketing literature to date. Table 1 summarizes the findings regarding prior marketing literature adopt the perspective of consumers' perception of deception, and Table 2 provides an overview of existing definitions of perceived deception in recent years.

Table 1. Review of the marketing literature on perceived deception

	Study	Theory	Methodology	Independent variables	Dependent variables	Mediator	Moderator	Main findings
1	Germelmann & Johanna (2014)	-	Experiment	Perceived deception	Dissatisfaction	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deceived consumers do not experience a higher level of dissatisfaction than their non-deceived counterparts. - Dissatisfaction does not depend on the fact of being deceived but solely on the subjective experience of being deceived.
2	Wilkins, Beckenuyte, & Butt (2016)	Theory of Cognitive Dissonance	Experiment	Expectations of products	Post-purchase behaviors	Post-purchase cognitive dissonance	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumer expectations of products were positively related to consumers' post-purchase dissonance, and higher dissonance was negatively related to repurchase intentions and positively related to both intended visible and non-visible negative post-purchase behaviors. - Consumers with low product involvement were less likely to repurchase the brand and were more willing to engage in visible and non-visible negative behaviors.
3	Román (2010)	Expectancy disconfirmation paradigm, equity theory	Survey	Perceived deception	Loyalty intentions to the online retailer	Satisfaction	Product type (goods versus services), consumer's attitude toward the Internet, and consumer's demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Satisfaction totally mediated the negative influence of deception on loyalty. - The negative influence of perceived deception on satisfaction is stronger among individuals who had purchased a physical product (instead of a service), have a more positive attitude toward the Internet, are older, more educated and females
4	Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf (1998)	-	Experiment	Perceived deception	Trust in the advertised	-	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The perception of deception was enough to create negative

					brand, attitudes toward the advertisement, attitudes toward the advertised brand, purchase intention			feelings toward the ad, whether the ad was objectively misleading or not. - Higher levels of perceived deception were associated with lower levels of trust in the advertised brand, less favorable attitudes toward the ad, less favorable attitudes toward the advertised brand, and decreased purchase intentions toward the product in the advertisement.
5	Balaji, Roy, & Quazi (2017)	Social exchange theory, justice theory, and emotion regulation theory	Survey	Perceived injustice	Repurchase intentions	Emotion and customer satisfaction	Suppression and reappraisal emotion regulation	Both positive and negative emotions mediate the relationship between perceived injustice and customer satisfaction. The emotion regulation of customers through suppression and reappraisal influences the effects of satisfaction on both negative words of mouth and repurchase intentions.
6	Jain & Sharma (2019)	Attribution theory	Survey and experiment	brand attachment	Passive brand hate and eWOM on social media	Brand attribution, perceived betrayal	Narcissistic entitlement personality	Having a strong positive relationship with the brand can generate stronger feelings of perceived betrayal and brand hate after the brand transgresses the consumer's expectations. Resentful customers can resort to eWOM after feeling betrayed, even though the prior relationship with the brand was strong.
7	Wiggin & Yalch (2015)	Theory on the self-serving bias, theory about relational self-view, and attribution theory	Experiment	Relational self - view strength and closeness of the counterfactual alternative outcome	Self-serving attributions	Feelings of betrayal and perceptions of unfairness	-	Self-serving bias is resisted among consumers holding a strong relational self-view unless the outcome represents a near-miss situation in which a more favorable counterfactual alternative outcome was highly possible.

8	Jehn & Scott (2008)	Attribution theory	Survey	Social Closeness of Perceiver to Recipient, Type of Lie, Beneficiary	Customer Perception of the Company	-	Harm to Recipient	Depending upon an individual's perception of deceit and the characteristics surrounding the deceit, it may actually be categorized negatively, positively, or somewhere in between in relation to customer perception of the corporation (i.e., customer satisfaction, intentions of repeat business)
9	Darke & Ritchie (2007)	Dual Process Framework	Experiment	Deception	Perceived deal value	Negative stereotypes, trust in the advertiser, product evaluation	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ad deception leads to more negative evaluations of products offered in subsequent advertisements, even if the advertisement comes from a different advertiser. - Because of differences in the level of threat, active counter-arguing mediates the effects of ad deception when the second advertisement comes from the same advertiser but not when the second advertisement comes from a different advertiser - Negative stereotypes and trust in the second advertiser mediate the effects of prior deception on evaluations
10	Agag & El-Masry (2016)	Hofstede's quadruple typology of Cultural orientation and expectancy disconfirmation theory	Survey	Perceived deception	Satisfaction	Expectancy disconfirmation	Egoism versus Idealism	Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and religiosity are important in forming idealistic attitudes, while both individualism and masculinity lead to an egoistic attitude. Idealism was observed to have a positive association with consumer perceived deception, while egoism was found to negatively affect consumer perceived deception
11	Bozkurt & Gligor	Expectancy	Experiment	Unfavorable	Attitude	Perceived	Price	- Regardless of customers' price

	(2019)	disconfirmation theory, equity theory, and attribution theory		pricing errors	toward the store, repurchase intentions, and negative word of mouth	deception and dissatisfaction	consciousness	consciousness level, customers display negative reactions when encountering unfavorable pricing errors. - High-frequency and high-magnitude unfavorable pricing errors lead to increased perceived deception and dissatisfaction, resulting in a higher negative attitude toward the grocery store, decreased repurchase intentions, and increased negative word of mouth.
12	Riquelme, Román, & Iacobucci (2016)	Cognitive–affective–conative loyalty framework	Survey	Perceived deception	Consumer positive WOM for retailer	Consumer satisfaction with the product and the retailer	-	Perceived deception will negatively influence product satisfaction (stronger when consumers shop online than when shopping at traditional stores). Perceived deception will negatively influence retailer satisfaction (stronger for consumers shopping at traditional stores than when shopping online). Product satisfaction will positively influence retailer satisfaction (stronger when consumers shop at traditional stores than when shopping online). Retailer satisfaction will positively influence WOM (stronger when consumers shop online than in traditional stores). - The purchase channel will moderate the negative indirect effect of perceived deception on retailer satisfaction through product satisfaction. This mediation effect will be more pronounced (stronger negative indirect effects) in the online channel than in the

								<p>traditional one.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The purchase channel will moderate the negative indirect effect of perceived deception on WOM communication through retailer satisfaction, such that this mediation effect will be more pronounced (stronger negative indirect effects) in the traditional channel than in the online one.
13	Amar et al. (2018)	-	Experiment	Perceived counterfeiting	Product efficacy	Moral disgust	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceived counterfeiting can evoke moral disgust - Perceived counterfeiting can hurt product efficacy - Moral disgust evoked by perceived counterfeiting mediates the degraded product efficacy.
14	Riquelme & Román (2021)	Social comparison theory and appraisal theory	Survey	Machiavellianism, Consumer cynicism, and Exaggerated deservingness	Consumers' perceptions of online deceptive pricing	Casual attribution and negative emotions	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negative emotions play a mediating role in perceived deceptive pricing in price inequality situations - The mediating role of attributions: when the individual is disadvantaged in price, the external attribution of this situation to the website policies increases perceived deceptive pricing in both direct and indirect ways through negative emotions. However, when the individual is advantaged in price, attributing this positive result to the website policies does not help reduce perceived deceptive pricing directly, but only indirectly through its negative influence on the experience of negative emotions.
15	Cheung & To (2020)	Social exchange theory	Interview	Consumer perceptions of the ethics of retailers	Consumer purchase behavior and WOM	-	Ethical beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CPER positively predicted consumer purchase behavior and word-of-mouth communication. - Ethical beliefs moderates the

								positive relationship between CPER and the word-of-mouth communication of consumers with strong ethical beliefs but did not moderate the relationship between CPER and purchase behavior.
16	Loebnitz & Grunert (2021)	Selective accessibility model	Experiment	Perceived brand authenticity and advertising image	Purchase intention	Similarity	Brand evaluation and role overload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase intentions are higher when an authentic (inauthentic) food brand is paired with an authentic (ideal) family image - Perceived similarity with the advertised family dinner situation mediates the effect of perceived food brand authenticity, family dinner images, and brand evaluation on purchase intentions. - Consumers who experience high (low) role overload have stronger purchase intentions toward authentic (inauthentic) and liked food brands paired with authentic (idealized) family images because of higher similarity between participants' own situation and depicted the situation in the advertising image.

The literature review table is compiled regarding prior marketing literature (in 20 journals from 2005 to 2021) that focuses on consumers' perception of deception and the associated consequences, regardless of the term used in the studies. The terms used in the original literature involved "deception," "deceptive," "betrayal," "dishonest/dishonesty," "untrustworthy/trustworthiness," "perceived injustice," "fraudulent," "authenticity," and "perceptions of unfairness."

Table 2. Existing definitions of perceived deception

Author	Definition
Newell, Goldsmith, and Banzhaf (1998, p.54)	“Perceived deception is based on whether the consumer can identify an ad that contains a claim that has been classified as misleading, deceptive, or distorted...”
Jehn and Scott (2008, p.328)	“We define perceived deceit as occurring when a customer believes that an employee has intentionally tried to make them believe something that is untrue...”
Riquelme and Román (2014, p. 406)	Perceived deception would take place when “consumers believe that the retailer has manipulated product information content and/or presentation to induce desired behavioral changes in their decision-making” (e.g., purchasing an item based on misleading representations of its characteristics).
This paper’s definition (adapted from Held & Germelmann, 2018, p.123)	“Perceived deception is defined as the consumer’s feeling that a marketer is responsible for trying to set false belief with any type of a marketing communication.”

This study focuses on the effect of perceived deception rather than that of objective deception to better understand perceived deception. Among the existing definitions of perceived deception, we landed on the one raised in the study of Held and Germelmann (2018).

This definition puts stress on consumers’ beliefs rather than the marketer’s intention. In the

following part, we will go through each element of this definition by examining how certain aspects would contradict or align with the existing definitions in Table 2.

Initially, perceived deception is about consumers' own beliefs. In contrast to the definition of Newell, Goldsmith, and Banzhaf (1998) that revolves around the consumer's ability to detect an objective deception, this definition draws on the consumer's feeling of being deceived. That is to say; a consumer can feel deceived even though the product's advertisement claims were accurate. The consumer's deception statement can be due to a **mere discrepancy between reality and their expectations**. If the consumer unjustifiably holds the marketer accountable for their disappointment, they will feel deceived. Thus, not every perceived deception must be based on detecting an objective deception, as the definition of Newell, Goldsmith, and Banzhaf (1998) suggests.

More importantly, perceived deception has nothing to do with retail's intention. The aforementioned "**conflict of interest**" in the definition of deception, which triggered the perception of deceived practice, is not necessarily caused intentionally by the sender. In some cases, it can also be initiated by the receiver's perceptions, which the retailer does not essentially influence. In this sense, deception should be distinguished from lying; a lie is a deliberately false statement communicated to the target. Thus, it is closely linked to intention (Bok, 1978). However, deception need not involve false or inaccurate information (Carson, 2010). According to Burke et al. (1988), even when advertisers or marketers do not intentionally try to deceive consumers, their messages and tactics are likely to be ambiguous or misleading in some way. Deception can also occur when telling the truth (Hopper & Bell, 1984). It can be initiated unintentionally, for example, when misperception of something true leads to a deceptive notion of the message receiver (Lewicki 1983). In a similar vein, scholars have long debated whether advertisements that might result in

inaccurate perceptions should be regarded as deceptive or simply misleading. Jacoby & Small (1975) and Russo, Metcalf, & Stephens (1981) prefer the term “misleading” because this includes not only the effects initiated by the sender but also the perceptions of the receiver, which the sender does not necessarily influence.

In contrast, deceptive practices are limited only to the intended manipulations by the sender. That is, perceived deception can involve both aspects: actual perception (retailers’ intended manipulation) and perceived deception (consumers’ perception of deception). This study will mainly focus on perceived deception rather than on actual ones. This set our definition apart from Jehn and Scott’s and Riquelme and Román’s, where consumers assume intentionality by the deceiver. Furthermore, this definition implies that perceived deception can be achieved unintentionally. The mere fact of holding someone else (in this case, the marketer) responsible for the deceit (independently of the other party’s intention) (Weiner, 1986) is sufficient to evoke the feeling of perceived deception. These types of causal inferences about why something happened and who can be held responsible can be explained by **attribution theory** (Kelley, 1973).

Next, we will elaborate on the two aforementioned parts that define perceived deception as “discrepancy between reality and own expectation” and “attribution theory.”

Psychological Contract Violation

Customers often perceive their purchase decision as highly dependent on the information provided by the marketer (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). However, the fact is that the consumer–retailer relationship in the online marketplace is characterized by a psychological contract driven by consumers' implicit understanding of seller's obligations rather than by the

explicit legal contracts (Malhotra et al., 2017; Anderson & Schalk, 1998; Rousseau, 1995). The psychological contract is perceptual and idiosyncratic and represents the perception about their own and the other parties' relational obligations (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). A psychological contract is as much of a contract as a legal contract. Contracts of both types have long been viewed as essential in consumer-seller relationships, facilitating consumer-seller transactions (Pavlou, 2002). Given the large body of literature that establishes the role of psychological contract violation and its destructive impact on organizational relationships and consumer-seller relationship (e.g., Robinson, 1996; Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Rousseau, 1989; Pate & Malone, 2000; Niehoff & Paul, 2001; Pugh, Skarlicki, & Passell, 2003; Pavlou & Gefen, 2005), it has been established that psychological contract violation is a key determinant of consumer–retailer relationship failure and diminishes consumers' intentions to transact.

A psychological contract is defined as “an individual's belief in mutual obligations between that person and another party” (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998, p.679). Encompassing perceptual, unwritten, and implicit terms, psychological contracts are congenitally broader than legal ones. The implicit understanding of transaction in the psychological contract matters no less than the explicit rules in the actual legal contact (Anderson & Schalk, 1998; Guest, 1998; Blancero, DelCampo, & Marron, 2007). Since all contracts are inherently incomplete (Macneil, 1980), the psychological component is an inevitable aspect of virtually all contracts (Rousseau & Parks, 1993), and consumers always have an implicit apprehension of the retailer's transactional obligations (Weick, 1979; Argyris, 1960). Therefore, if the disparity between what is delivered by the retailer and consumers' own psychological contract is overt enough, consumers may perceive that their expectations have not been adequately met and that the psychological contract has been violated.

Further, psychological contracts are especially prevailing in the online marketplace (Pavlou & Gefen, 2005; Theotokis, Pramataris, & Tsiros, 2012). E-retailers are naturally bound by fewer chances to present information about the product, especially those experiences consumers can have before the purchase, like letting consumers touch the bed sheet to feel the texture or offering a sample of new-released snacks. As a result, consumers have to make decisions without enough information on hand (Childers et al., 2000). Explicit objective contract terms are lacking, and an implicit understanding of the transaction comes into place. Consumers end up assigning a greater weight to the psychological contract. Thus, the likelihood of psychological contract violation increases, together with the possibility of perceived deception, making retailers even more vulnerable to perceived deception.

Attribution theory and self-serving bias

Negative events that individuals experience are likely to generate attributional responses. Attribution theory deals with aspects of causal inferences—why events have occurred (Lee & Ko, 2021). Prior research shows a tendency for individuals to over-attribute causation to others and under-attribute it to themselves when outcomes are unfavorable, which is referred to as the Self-Serving Bias (Campbell & Sedikides, 1999; Miller & Ross, 1975). A review of prior research found strong evidence that individuals tend to make self-serving attributions. They make more internal attributions when their expectancies are confirmed and more external attributions when their expectations are violated (Sedikides et al., 1998). For example, Wolosin, Sherman, and Till (1973) found that when failure outcomes were based on a collaborative effort between two parties, individuals were more likely to deflect responsibility onto another party

rather than to themselves or situational factors. Moon (2003) noted a similar result even when the relationship was hypothetical. Her research showed that consumers who used a computer to help with their purchase decision attributed more responsibility to the computer (external attribution) when they were dissatisfied with their ultimate product selection than when they were satisfied, even though the computer was not at fault.

However, this does not mean that self-serving bias is inevitable. Adverse outcomes are not always attributed to the other party as sometimes no bias or even a reversal of the self-serving bias may be observed. For example, it has been shown that even when the failure is based on a collaborative effort and thus amenable to an external attribution, members in some interpersonal relationships cite themselves as the cause (Campbell & Kirmani, 2000; Sedikides et al., 1998) or share responsibility (Curren, Folkes, & Steckel, 1992). The tendency of attributing unfavorable consequences to the other party can be remedied by close relationships between the two parties (Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder, & Elliot, 1998). In the experiment of Moon (2003), the tendency to blame a computer was mitigated when consumers shared personal information with the computer before making the purchase decision. Campbell et al. (2000) also found that biased partner attributions among distant dyads were not replicated when members were in a close dyadic relationship. Specifically, the latter did not take more credit than their partners for dyadic success, nor did they blame their partners in the event of task failure. Consumers' attributions for unfavorable results in a consumer-brand relationship may not always be self-serving. In fact, Weiner (2000) provides a categorization scheme that classifies causes by three dimensions: locus of causality, stability, and controllability. First, the locus of causality addresses whether an event is due to the self or other external factors. The locus of causality gives some important implications to differentiate perceived deception from objective deception. Since objective

deception is caused by a retailer's action referring to external causes, objective deception tends to have the unidirectionality of influence from retailers to consumers. In comparison, perceived deception is likely to come from not only external causes but also internal causes.

Second, controllability refers to the degree to which a cause was perceived to be under the firm's volitional control (Weiner, 2000). Since consumers perceive brands as having intentions and abilities and view their brand relationships with these perceptions in mind (Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2012), they are more likely to attribute the unfavorable outcomes to the retailer. Thus, when perceiving deception, consumers naturally seek the causes of a given crisis and attribute fault to or blame the other parties (Weiner, 1986).

Lastly, the stability dimension assesses the degree to which a cause is seen as relatively permanent (Weiner, 2018). Given the existing trust of the consumer in the retailer, perceived deception can be viewed as unstable attribution rather than stable attribution. Consumers may attribute the psychological contract violation to a circumstantial cause or bad luck and consider it a distinct occurrence, neglecting to ask themselves why it happens. However, when consumers experience repeated similar problems, they perceive such problems to be stable and thus are likely to ask the retailer for compensation.

This is especially true for the online transaction. The lack of interpersonal interactions and the inability for consumers to pre-inspect products and services makes the issue of trust central to the success or failure of online transactions. The study of Sun (2011) shows that users were significantly more confident in e-commerce than non-users because of initial trust in the online retailer. Mutz (2005) also indicates that a high level of trust would encourage favorable consumer behavior. This is also in line with past findings on brand trust that a high level of trust in a brand would lead to repurchase, brand satisfaction, brand loyalty, and brand commitment

(Lau & Lee, 1999; Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2000; Delgado-Ballester et al., 2003).

It is important to note that the mere fact that consumers trust the retailer is enough to intercept self-serving bias (Campbell, Sedikides, Reeder, & Elliot, 2000). It will further attenuate the consequent adverse effect on repurchase intention. The level of trust or other friendly relationship they have, and the reason behind the good relationship (e.g., the number of purchases consumers have made from this retailer before, or the extent to which the former purchases are regarded as satisfying) is beyond the scope of this study and will be left for future discussion.

In general, the gap between psychological contract and reality would be attributed to retailers to a large extent and plants perceived deception in consumers. However, those retailers who enjoy a good relationship with consumers could avoid taking the fall for psychological contract violation. It is worthwhile to investigate the perceived deception scenarios that can be avoided to mitigate the negative outcome.

Summarizing what has been discussed above, table 3 states the differences between objective deception and perceived deception for a clear illustration and understanding.

Table 3. Characteristics of objective versus perceived deception

	Objective deception (Marketer -oriented side)	Perceived deception (Consumer -oriented side)
Brief definition	A marketer setting false beliefs by any type of communication	A consumer's feeling that a marketer is responsible for trying to set false beliefs
How psychological	Marketer sets expectations that	Consumer's expectation (not only

contract is violated and why marketer is held responsible	are not fulfilled by the product	marketer-induced) not being met is attributed to the marketer
Perception by the consumer	Detecting deceptive tactics from marketers	Every situation where consumers feel deceived (involving where an objective deception is detected)

Perceived deception and repurchase intention

The psychology literature has repeatedly and broadly demonstrated the power of negative events (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001; Rozin & Royzman, 2001). Negative events influence emotions, cognitions, and behaviour more than positive events (Rozin & Royzman, 2001). People process negative information more thoroughly than positive information (Dreben, Fiske, & Hastie, 1979), remember negative behaviors more accurately and vividly than positive behaviors (Fiske, 1980), and overemphasize negative data in impression formation (Falk & Fischbacher, 2006; Peeters & Czapinski, 1990). In line with the psychology literature, existing marketing literature has proven that perceived deception has a negative effect on purchase intention (Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf, 1998), consumers' trust (Darke & Ritchie, 2007), attitude toward the advertisement (Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf, 1998), consumer satisfaction (Agag & El-Masry, 2016; Germelmann & Johanna, 2014; Román, 2010; Bozkurt & Gligor, 2019) and repurchase intention (Román, 2010; Wilkins, Beckenuyte, & Butt, 2016; Balaji, Roy, & Quazi, 2017)

Table 4. Most-explored relationship between perceived deception and other factors

Relationship between perceived deception and...	Relevant literature
Attitudes toward the advertisement	Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf (1998)
Trust in the advertiser	Darke & Ritchie (2007) Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf (1998)
Believability in other claims	Darke & Ritchie (2007)
Attitudes toward the advertised brand	Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf (1998) Bozkurt & Gligor (2019) Jehn & Scott (2008) Jain & Sharma (2019)
Word of mouth	Bozkurt & Gligor (2019) Jain & Sharma (2019)
Product evaluation	Darke & Ritchie (2007)
Purchase intention	Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf (1998)
The severity of harm	Jehn & Scott (2008) Boush, Madrigal & Xie (2015)
Affective state	Germelmann & Johanna (2014) Román (2010) Agag & El-Masry (2016) Bozkurt & Gligor (2019) Darke & Ritchie (2007)
Repurchase intention	Román (2010)

Wilkins, Beckenuyte, & Butt (2016)

Balaji, Roy, & Quazi (2017)

Bozkurt & Gligor (2019)

Aside from the objective contract, consumers have their own belief in the mutual obligations of one transaction at heart, which constitutes a psychological contract (Rousseau & Tijoriwala, 1998). Self-serving bias is triggered when consumers' psychological contract is violated, leading to negative outcomes (Weiner, 1986). The self-serving bias indicates a general tendency in individuals to make internal (self) attributions for successful outcomes and external (person or situation) attributions for failure outcomes (Miller & Ross, 1975). Thus, consumers would likely attribute unfavorable consequences to retailers. They would see the disparity between reality and expectations as intentionally created by retailers to induce desired purchase behavior. By definition, the divergence between reality and consumers' expectations implies perceived deception (Riquelme & Román, 2014). Thus, the occurrence of psychological contract violation leads to perceived deception in consumers' minds. In brief, consumers expect their psychological contract to be conducted. When the expectations are unmet, the psychological contract is violated. Hence, consumers perceive themselves as being deceived.

The severity of the gap between reality and expectation directly affects customers' perception (Hess, Ganesan, & Klein, 2003). As a response, customers are likely to display higher perceived deception when encountering high-magnitude psychological contract violation, leading them to show certain negative behaviors toward the retailer, according to equity theory (Adams, 1963). Equity theory suggests that if one party perceives another party benefiting unfairly, the disadvantaged party views the situation as inequitable and attempts to regain balance (Huppertz,

Arenson, & Evans, 1978). Actions may consist of negative word of mouth to friends and family, complaints to the company or third-party organizations, or no future purchases (Ingram, Skinner, & Taylor, 2005). This is also in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), where unfavorable past experiences negatively influence behavioral intentions and belongingness hypothesis (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) where social contact is fundamental to well-being and avoidance can serve as an indirect but potent form of punishment and future-oriented self-protection.

Repurchase intention refers to the consumer's favorable action while making future purchases (Limayem, Khalifa, & Frini, 2000). In general, experiencing an unpleasant event, like perceived deception in this context, would negatively affect consumers' psychological states, lower their satisfaction, and therefore affect their behavioral intention (Bagozzi, 1992; Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf, 1998; Shanahan & Hopkins 2007). Thus, when perceived deception happens and is left unremedied, consumer repurchase intention would be consequently lower.

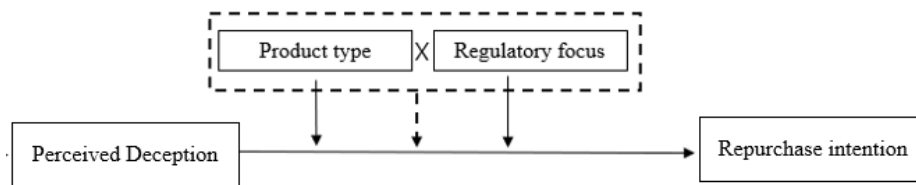
According to equity theory (Adams, 1963), if one party (the customer) perceives another party (the retailer) to be benefiting unfairly or unequally, the disadvantaged party (the customer) construes the situation as inequitable and tries to regain balance or re-establish equilibrium. When consumers perceive such inequality, their actions may consist of increased negative word of mouth, decreased repurchase intention, and a worse attitude toward the retailer (Ingram, Skinner, & Taylor, 2005).

Thus, when perceived deception happens, and consumers interpret the undesirable consequences as the retailers' fault, they may consider exiting the relationship and/or creating negative word of mouth (W. T. Coombs, 2007). From a retailer's perspective, it is reasonable to seek ways to evaluate the consequences of consumers attributing the cause of psychological

contract violation to retailers, to avoid or minimize its negative outcomes, preserving or restoring consumer repurchase intention, and rebuilding any broken relationships with its customers.

HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Figure 1. Conceptual Model



Product type

Literature has long established the distinction in the types of products (or types of product attributes) that would be involved in consumers' purchase decisions. Thus, while evaluating the likelihood of consumers making a repurchase, it is important to consider the attribute of products since consumers' expectations always vary by their purchase reasons (Kuo, Zhang, & Cranage, 2015). Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) propose that products are utilitarian and/or hedonic in nature. Utilitarian versus hedonic nature is one of the fundamental bases for consumer purchase and consumption. Batra and Ahotla (1991) stated that consumers would perform consumption behaviors for two reasons: (1) consummatory affective (hedonic) gratification (from sensory attributes) and (2) instrumental (utilitarian) reasons.

The classification of a product as hedonic or utilitarian is, in effect, a function of the relative

salience of its hedonic and utilitarian attributes (Chernev, 2004). According to Dhar and Wertenbroch (2000), the utilitarian category is defined as a category dominant on features such as functionality, practicality, cognition, and instrumental orientation. Computing equipment, consumer electronics, office supplies, home appliances, and garden equipment are examples of utilitarian categories. Meanwhile, a hedonic category is defined as a category dominant on attributes such as experiential benefits, affect, enjoyment, enduring involvement, intrinsic motivation, and aesthetics. Examples of hedonic categories include CDs, DVDs, antiques, and apparel. However, this classification is not absolute, and assessing a product's hedonic and utilitarian dimensions is often relative (Voss et al., 2003). The same product may have different properties under different conditions or may have both properties simultaneously (Crowley, Spangenberg, & Hughes, 1992). For example, a smartphone is usually defined as a utilitarian product when talking on the phone and is considered a hedonic product when playing a game. In this case, the distinction between hedonic and utilitarian products is based on the strength of a consumer's perceptions of a product's attributes. In other words, when the consumer thinks that a product's hedonic attributes are stronger than its practical attributes, it is classified as a hedonic product. Likewise, when the consumer thinks that the product's practical attributes are stronger than its hedonic attributes, it is classified as a utilitarian product (Batra & Ahtola, 1991).

Different product attributes correspond to different consumer needs (Zhou, Zheng, & Li, 2021). From the perspective of consumer psychology, hedonism focuses on emotional pleasure, the stimulation of the senses, and the degree of imagination. By contrast, utilitarianism focuses on solutions to practical problems and functionality (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Therefore, in using hedonic products, consumers are more inclined to be process-oriented and pay more attention to sensory stimulation, imagination stimulation, and emotional

experiences provided by hedonic products and improve quality of life. This is typically the case with products such as personal care, cosmetics, and fashion.

In consuming utilitarian products, consumers are more inclined to be result-oriented, paying more attention to the functions of utilitarian products and their role in solving problems. Here, consumers focus on the functional results that the product delivers, such as U disc and razor (Pham, 1998; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Based on these psychological aspects and the nature of products, with utilitarian products, consumers are primarily interested in gathering objective information, processing cognitive information, and paying attention to product characteristics. Although consumers need a certain amount of information to choose hedonic products, it is sensory stimulation and emotion generated that ultimately affect consumers' decision-making rather than the cognitive process (To et al., 2007). Prior research further shows that the goal of consumption determines the relative importance of affective versus cognitive considerations in evaluative judgments (Pham, 1998), and those hedonic attributes are more difficult to evaluate relative to utilitarian attributes (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). The evaluation of hedonic products is based on one's imaginative powers and consumption emotions (Batra & Ahtola, 1991; Mano & Oliver, 1993). The reliance on affective factors in evaluations is more significant when the consumption goal is hedonic. This idea is supported by findings on the impact of subjective criteria such as feelings on post-purchase evaluations (Pham, 1998; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991). In this vein, Sen and Lerman (2007) found that readers of negative reviews are more likely to attribute negative opinions to the reviewer than to product quality for hedonic products.

Since there are no universally liked odors or tastes, one person may dislike what another person likes; the hedonic attribute may be more subjective and hence involves greater uncertainty in judging whether to make a repurchase. Perceived uncertainty about future preferences is likely

higher for hedonic products (Simonson, 1990). As a result, when pursuing the hedonic value of the product, consumers' judgment will be more fluctuant. The chances are that they do not even have a concrete, exclusive, and must-be-fulfilled expectation in mind. For example, when purchasing hedonic products like Dior Miss Dior Blooming Bouquet for the first time, consumers are not likely to have a specific scent in mind. For some consumers, any floral scent will suffice. The product may end up delivering something below expectation, but it may not evoke a considerable unfavorable response as long as it can be justified to meet the expectation.

In contrast, utilitarian products are evaluated based on utility (Drolet, Simonson, & Tversky, 2000; Sen & Lerman, 2007). Cognitive considerations outweigh affective considerations when the goals are functional. This makes intuitive sense since activation of a functional goal focuses attention on the product and its performance and encourages a rational, reasoned assessment of actual product attribute performance relative to expected expectations (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Product evaluations are thus a function of the extent to which the product's attributes and benefits meet these functional goals (e.g., Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999; Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003). Repurchase evaluation of utilitarian products typically involves reasoning, and such products are primarily assessed cognitively and rationally and are consumed for their functional benefits (Mencarelli & Lombart, 2017).

Similarly, consumers often strive to maximize practical criteria when searching for these products (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Consumers always have a specific goal in mind when purchasing utilitarian products. For example, when purchasing a facial cream for its moisturizing function, consumers can easily reach a judgment because one can explicitly tell how significant the gap between expectation and reality is. Applying that to the context of perceived deception, utilitarian products are more likely to induce a lower repurchase intention than hedonic products.

The consumption of utilitarian products is driven by practical purpose, and consumers can evaluate whether the product meets their expectations simply by comparing the actual utility of the product with how it is advertised. For example, the advertisement of the Dyson humidifier says it can report particle and gas levels. Thus, the potential reality of the product is either it can or cannot, which is a binary evaluation easy enough for consumers to make. There is no reason consumers would count on the second-time purchase changing the utilitarian value in the context of perceived deception. Thus, the evaluation of utilitarian products involves lower variance given the practical and stable nature of the product.

After the psychological contract violation happens, consumers are always disappointed by the gap between the psychological contract and reality. When a utilitarian product fails to fulfill a practical goal, it's considered to be a failure. For example, when a Bluetooth mouse cannot be connected to the laptop or when a mouse pad is less usable than expected. For hedonic products, the disappointment comes from the product failing to provide consumers with the sensory and affective experience they are looking after, like when the ice cream does not suit consumers' taste. The hedonic treadmill theory will take the distinction between hedonic products and utilitarian products a step forward. Brickman, Campbell, and Appleby (1971) proposed that people briefly react to good and bad events; however, their affective state returns to positivity, which is the norm for most people (Diener & Diener, 1996). The immediate reaction to the product is merely a short-lived reaction to changes in people's circumstances. Consumers would always experience sensory adaptation afterward (Raghunathan & Irwin, 2001; Novemsky & Ratner, 2003), just as their noses quickly adapt to many scents and smells after that disappear from awareness. Consumers may find themselves more adapted to the flavour of the ice cream or using the mouse pad after a while. That is to say, the sensory adaptation would drive them to reach an average positive point and get more

used to the product after using it for some time and thus help to increase their repurchase intention. However, the theory is less likely to work for utilitarian products than hedonic ones since consumers seldom take utilitarian products to meet affective needs, and consumers' attention is focused on the product and its attributes rather than self and feelings.

Consumers' affective state would return to an average positive point after perceived deception. Thus, the damage of perceived deception to product evaluation and subsequent consumer behavior may reduce to a minimum. However, the inherent natures of utilitarian products make the evaluation and repurchase intention of them less likely to recover than hedonic products in online shopping scenarios. The advantages of online shopping over traditional shopping are that it offers a great variety of products (Cheung & Lee, 2006; Menon & Kahn, 2002) saves time in making purchases (Featherman & Pavlou, 2003) and enables comparison among various sellers (Cheung & Lee, 2006; Hong & Cho, 2011; Rasty et al., 2021). Utilitarian purchases are often deliberate and planned, with well-defined dominant attributes that are easy to compare. Accordingly, this simplicity in comparison reduces brand differentiation. Noble et al. (2005) point out that because brand differentiation in utilitarian purchases is less extensive, consumers are more likely to browse product pages across multiple retailers to optimize their time, place, and possession needs. They may even adopt a "cross-channel free-riding" behavior where one retailer's channel is used to search the information and another retailer is used to complete the purchase eventually (Heitz-Spahn, 2013). The easily-compared nature of utilitarian products gives consumers various alternatives of one item and fewer reasons to attach to one particular retailer. Thus, it is easier for consumers to switch between other options.

On the other hand, consumers making hedonic purchases seek to surprise, adventure, fun, and variety during their shopping process (Arnold, Reynolds, & Kristy, 2003; Novak, Hoffman, &

Duhachek, 2003). In the same vein, Sherry (1990) point out that shopping for hedonic purpose is an adventure. This “adventure” reflects shopping’s potential entertainment and the enjoyment resulting from the fun and play arising from experience versus the achievement of a prespecified end goal (Hirschman & Holbrook 1982). This goal implies a unique set of perceived benefits that consumers may consider when seeking and attaining information about hedonic purchases. Thus, variety-seeking behavior is, in part, driven by factors such as product-specific differences (Trijp, Hoyer, & Inman, 1996). The abstract nature of hedonic products is less conducive to comparisons (Li et al., 2020).

Besides, consumers of utilitarian products value efficiency in shopping. In the utilitarian view, consumers are concerned with purchasing products in an efficient and timely manner to achieve their goals with a minimum of irritation (Cobb & Hoyer, 1986; Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Childers et al., 2001; Park et al., 2018). This implies that the time, effort, and ease of purchasing a product are likely psychologically salient (Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2002). Consequently, when engaging in goal-oriented shopping behavior associated with utilitarian product categories, consumers will be unimpeded. They will willingly move to a better alternative to optimize purchasing decisions, given the large variety of other online search options and their tendency for efficiency. In contrast, in purchasing hedonic products, the investment of time carries with it the promise of recreation and diversion and, for some, constitutes a leisure activity in its own right (Bloch & Richins, 1983). Therefore, efficiency will not be a salient or particularly motivating source of value for consumers looking for hedonic products (Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2002).

Based on what we have discussed, three aspects—sensory adaption process, product evaluation criteria, and natures of these two product types—would contribute to different effects

of hedonic versus utilitarian products have on the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention:

- Consumers would experience sensory adaption after an emotion-changing event. Namely, consumers' mood can change to an average positive point shortly after perceived deception, leaving no negative influence on the future evaluation of the product (Brickman & Campbell, 1971; Raghunathan & Irwin, 2001; Novemsky & Ratner, 2003).
- A hedonic product focuses on consumers' sensory and affective needs; the judging criteria can be vague and subjective. Thus, the evaluation of a hedonic product is more fluctuant and susceptible to change (Pham, 1998; Westbrook & Oliver, 1991; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). In contrast, a utilitarian product is often purchased to fulfill practical goals, and therefore the evaluation can be binary and stable (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977; Bagozzi & Dholakia, 1999; Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003; Mencarelli & Lombart, 2017). That means the evaluation of hedonic products is more likely to change compared to utilitarian products.
- In the purchase of utilitarian products, consumers show less brand preference (Noble, Griffith, & Weinberger, 2005), enjoy various alternatives and the ease to switch between alternatives (Li, Abbasi, Cheema, & Abraham, 2020), and value efficiency more (Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon 2002). Thus, they would easily let go of the product before even adapting to it. In contrast, hedonic products are harder to compare and often induce a distinctive goal (Van Trijp, Hoyer, & Inman, 1996), making them harder to replace and thus be granted more time for adoption.

To sum up, sensory adaption enables a recovery shortly after perceived deception. As soon as sensory adaption set in, consumers return to a relatively stable emotional state and start to adapt to

the product. Utilitarian products are always stable in performance; once they are found inconsistent with consumers' expectations, they can be quickly replaced by a single online search of product parameters. However, hedonic products bring varying affective experiences in different scenarios, and the sensory needs of consumers are always hard to quantify in an online search. Hence, consumers would not hurry to abandon hedonic products since they may be worth a second try and are hard to substitute in a short time. Table 5 below summarizes the properties of hedonic and utilitarian products that could make a difference to the relationship between repurchase intention and perceived deception.

Table 5. The difference between hedonic and utilitarian products after perceived deception

Product type	Nature of product evaluation			Time entitled to get adapted to the product before let go of it
	Goal of consumption	Characteristics of Judging criteria	Evaluation of the product	
Hedonic category	Sensory and affective needs	Vague and subjective	Fluctuant and susceptible to change	Inducing a distinctive goal
Utilitarian category	Practical and instrumental goals	Dichotomous	Stable	Less brand preference easy to compare

Based on that, we propose:

H₁: After perceived deception occurs, consumer repurchase intention is higher for hedonic products than utilitarian products.

Regulatory focus

The deceptive practice perceived after the first purchase can harm consumer repurchase

intention to a great extent. Knowing more about the product after the first purchase, consumers would adjust their expectations for the repurchase to a level closer to reality and weigh it against the risk they have to take. The close relationship they have with the retailer would not wear off easily. Thus, the ability and willingness to offer great products of the retailer are often viewed as guaranteed. In this perspective, a second-time purchase could mean a potentially better experience.

On the other hand, what they already got falls short of their expectation, and odds are it can hardly fit the psychological contract. Risk a repurchase would possibly lead them to purchase the dissatisfying item again. Thus, how consumers weigh the renewed expectation of the product against the repurchase risk is critical to whether they would make a repurchase.

A sizeable body of research has already examined the factors affecting consumer information-processing and decision-making (Burton et al., 1992; Gill, 1996; Chan, 2009; Baek, Holton, Harp, & Yaschur, 2011). Regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997) is proved to be an important one, offering insight into motivational differences between individuals' information processing styles. Regulatory focus refers to the dominant process through which people approach pleasure and avoid pain, suggesting promotion focus and prevention focus as two different types of self-regulation systems that differ in their relevant goals (Higgins, 1997; Pham & Higgins, 2005).

According to regulatory focus theory, people can be classified into two types based on their regulatory orientation in pursuing a goal: prevention-focused and promotion-focused (Avnet & Higgins, 2006). As regulatory focus theory postulates, people make choices consistent with their regulatory orientation (promotion or prevention focus) in goal pursuit (Avnet & Higgins, 2006). When such decisions sustain their regulatory orientation, people experience a regulatory fit, leading them to continue their pursuits (Aaker & Lee, 2006). Thus, a customer is likely to engage repeatedly in their preferred purchase if it is consistent with their regulatory orientation (Avnet &

Higgins, 2006), which proves the influence of regulatory focus on consumer repurchase intention.

Outcomes are evaluated relative to an individual's corresponding goals: promotion-focused individuals consider gains and non-gains relative to maximal goals, whereas prevention-focused individuals consider losses and non-losses relative to minimal goals (Brendl & Higgins, 1996; Förster et al., 2001; Liberman et al., 1999). A relevant difference between these two goal types is that people are willing to compromise on maximal goals but are unwilling to compromise on minimal goals (Chitturi, Raghunathan, & Mahajan, 2007). Minimal goals are satisfied by the mere absence of adverse outcomes, whereas maximal goals are satisfied only by the presence of positive outcomes (Brendl & Higgins 1996; Förster et al., 2001). That is to say, prevention-oriented individuals focus on achieving protection from negative outcomes and avoiding the occurrence of such outcomes. They secure against losses even at the risk of missing opportunities and forgoing possible gains (Higgins, 1997; Molden et al., 2008). They prefer to play it safe and be overly exclusive when evaluating their options to not commit to something that compromises their security. This approach ensures they never fail over the already-known or highly possible loss, even though they have to risk missing out on potentially beneficial choices. Thus, prevention-focused individuals would shun already-known negative outcomes, which they do not want to repeat, to avoid losses. Prevention-focused individuals would narrow in on those alternatives which will surely satisfy their goal. That is, prevention-focused individuals would only take the most assuring options (Pyszczynski & Greenberg, 1987). When this narrowing process is applied to the context of whether to make a repurchase decision after perceived deception since the particular shopping experience is proved to be a failure to meet consumer's expectations, repurchasing will be ruled out as a choice. Consumers are more likely to settle on other options that are shown to be more promising.

In contrast, promotion-oriented individuals focus on achieving positive outcomes and ensuring against missed opportunities for such outcomes. They tend to pursue gains even at the risk of committing errors and are more willing to accept losses (Higgins, 1997; Molden et al., 2008). That is to say, promotion-focused people prefer to take chances and be overly inclusive when evaluating their options to avoid overlooking anything that could allow advancement. This approach prioritizes ensuring against errors of omission, which specifically represent missed opportunities for gains (Tanner & Swets, 1954). The tradeoff of such an approach is that taking chances and worrying about omission increases the risk that one will make choices that, despite the initial potential they appear to possess, may end up with a mistake that even be vaguely foreseen beforehand. Promotion-focused individuals would be more open to entertaining even less-likely alternatives. When this openness is combined with the already-purchased item, promotion-focused people seem to have a greater propensity to willingly give the retailer another chance and embrace the possibility of change the second-time purchase has to offer.

Thus, we propose:

H₂: After perceived deception occurs, promotion-focused individuals show a higher repurchase intention compared to prevention-focused individuals.

Regulatory focus and product type

In addition to the respective moderating effect of regulatory focus and product type on the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention, this research also explores the interaction between regulatory focus and product type as a third moderator. Past research has

provided insights regarding the interactive effects of regulatory focus and product type on different consumer decisions in different settings (e.g., Micu & Chowdhury, 2010; Ryu et al., 2014; Ashraf & Thongpapanl, 2015). Further, research has shown that individuals tend to overweigh goal-consistent attributes. That is to say, promotion-focused individuals may overweigh performance-related, hedonic, and attractive product attributes. In contrast, prevention-focused individuals would be more likely to overweigh the reliability-related, utilitarian, and unattractive product attributes (Chernev, 2004). However, these intricate relationships have not been explored in the context of perceived deception, regarding how the interaction can help to restore weakened repurchase intention caused by perceived deception. For this purpose, this research would explore how different combinations of regulatory focus and product type can influence the repurchase intention to vary extents in the context of perceived deception.

Consumers' choice is determined by the value of the outcome expected from the purchase and the likelihood that the choice will deliver the desired outcome (Raghubir, 2006; Yeo & Park, 2006; Ryu et al., 2014). It is consistent with the decision-making process. Applying that to the context of repurchase behavior after perceived deception, two components will be considered: perceived outcome difference compared to the first-time purchase and how possible the difference would be delivered.

The perceived outcome difference compared to first-time purchases would be greater with hedonic products than with utilitarian products. After the first purchase, customers already know the quality and utilitarian value the product has to offer. The utilitarian value is constant for every single purchase; otherwise, that would be objective deception. Thus, the only thing they would re-experience and could potentially affect their repurchase intention is the fun and enjoyment they gain from the product. Repurchase would provide a possibility in which the consumers may enjoy

the deal better than they do in the first-time purchase and get what they expect from it. Based on what has been discussed above, the process of sensory adaption, which raises consumers' acceptance of the product to recover the weakened repurchase intention, would more possibly influence hedonic products than utilitarian products. Compared to utilitarian products, hedonic products are more difficult to compare (Li, Abbasi, Cheem, & Abraham, 2020), and to purchase them; consumers assign little importance to efficiency (Mathwick, Malhotra, & Rigdon, 2002). Thus, consumers are less likely to let go of it immediately, which creates room for sensory adaption to settle in.

Further, the evaluation of hedonic products is highly contingent on the consumer experience and the affective reactions from the experience (Dhar and Wertenbroch, 2000; Madzharov et al., 2016), and thus the judging criteria could be vague, subjective, and fluctuant (Yeung & Wyer, 2004). Meanwhile, the evaluations of utilitarian products tend to be based on functional cues like product information, whereby consumers utilize a more cognitive assessment process (Biswas et al., 2010), and the judging criteria for utilitarian products can be binary, objective, and stable (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998; Voss et al., 2003). After consumers are adapted to a hedonic product, its evaluation would be more likely to change for the better, compared to utilitarian products. On the other hand, a utilitarian product, as easily comparable and efficiency-related it is, is already a worse case for sensory adaption to take effect. The purpose-oriented judging criteria further leads to a stable evaluation. Utilitarian products never only fail to meet consumers' practical goals for one time, but for all time. When a utilitarian product is confirmed as unable to satisfy the needs after the first-time purchase, it may be seen as a lost cause. The evaluation of utilitarian products does not have much room for variation.

Figure 2 and Table 6 below show the possible range of position of product repurchase (hedonic

versus utilitarian) in the axis of perceived outcome difference and the possibility of achieving it in the repurchase.

Figure 2. The possible range of position of product repurchase (hedonic versus utilitarian) in the axis of perceived outcome difference

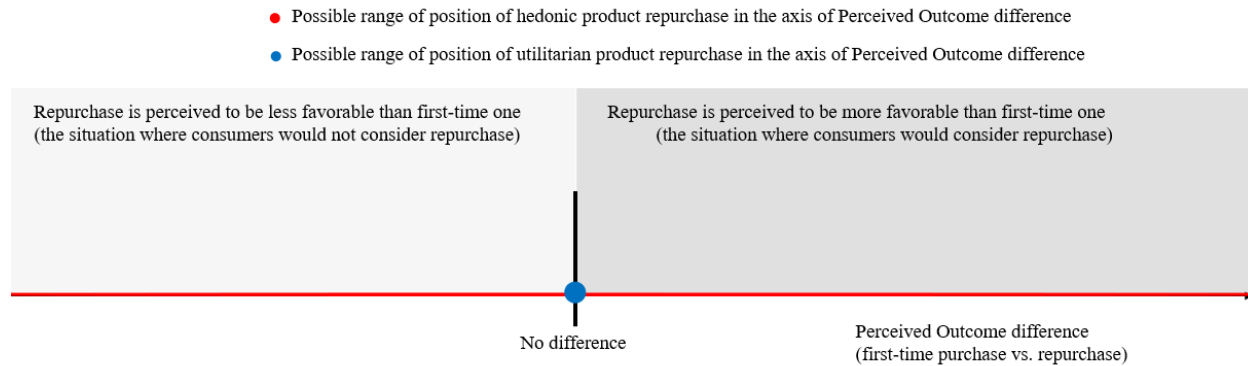


Table 6. Perceived outcome difference and the possibility of achieving it in repurchase

	perceived outcome difference (between first-time purchase and repurchase)	the likelihood that the choice will deliver the expected outcome difference
Hedonic product	High	Low
Utilitarian product	Low	High

As discussed above, utilitarian products are more likely to deliver stable evaluation than hedonic products. Although consumers are consequently more likely to get what they expected with utilitarian products, they would be less likely to risk the repurchase, knowing that the outcome of repurchase can hardly be better than that of the first-time purchase. In sum, compared to utilitarian products, hedonic products possess a greater chance of offering better performance in the repurchase. As a whole, hedonic products would induce higher repurchase intention in all consumers. In contrast, the stable nature of utilitarian products would hold back consumer

repurchase intention and become the less favorable one in all situations.

Based on the above discussion, hedonic products will have a better performance than utilitarian products in restoring consumer repurchase intention. Still, consumers with different regulatory focuses would respond differently to hedonic products (Chernev, 2004; Aaker & Lee, 2006). By definition, promotion-focused individuals aspire for maximal goals and tend to avoid misses even at a significant cost (Förster et al., 2001; Liberman et al., 1999). Thus, as long as there is a chance that repurchase would bring a better outcome than what they already got, they are likely to give it a try. The fulfillment of promotion goals when engaging with hedonic products significantly increases the probability of a repurchase. With the knowledge that the hedonic experience of the product potentially varies within a reasonable range, it is easier for consumers to justify the disparity between reality and the psychological contract. With the sensory adaption settling in, consumers would have a higher product evaluation, facilitating the repurchase. The promotion-focused individuals tend to avoid misses (Avnet & Higgins, 2006), which means that they may be more willing to give the product another chance. It is especially true with the knowledge that the hedonic value is likely to fluctuate and the fact that their evaluation of the product has been raised. Thus, the fit of promotion-focused consumers and hedonic products produces a relatively high repurchase intention.

On the other hand, individuals with a prevention focus would value whether the objective can be met over what may be achieved (Förster et al., 2001; Liberman et al., 1999). As a result, they would attach more importance to the likelihood that the choice will deliver the expected outcome difference compared to promotion-focused ones. Although a hedonic product may enjoy a more significant variation in evaluation, its risk is proportional to the potential gain. For prevention-focused individuals, the high risk of reaching their expectations for the hedonic product in

repurchase would reflect on their repurchase intention. To sum up, hedonic products better cater to the promotion-focused consumers, producing a relatively higher repurchase intention than prevention-focused individuals.

Likewise, individuals would behave differently with utilitarian products based on their regulatory focuses (Chernev, 2004; Aaker & Lee, 2006). Utilitarian products offer a less significant perceived outcome difference between the first-time purchase and repurchase than hedonic products and a higher possibility to achieve the perceived outcome difference. Prevention-focused individuals know from the first purchase that their expectations of the utilitarian product cannot be achieved. The evaluation of a utilitarian product is so stable that it further withdraws prevention-focused consumers from making a try with an intention to avoid foreseeable losses. In this case, prevention goals might be served by stopping from purchasing this product. Thus, the combination of a utilitarian product and a prevention-focused consumer would produce the weakest repurchase intention of all possible combinations. This makes the combination of prevention-focused individuals and utilitarian products the last combination to remedy the harmed repurchase intention. For promotion-focused individuals who do not mind taking a risk, the perceived difference between two purchases of utilitarian products is never as appealing as that of hedonic products. Thus, this combination would produce a medium level of repurchase intention.

Figure 3 below shows the proposed consumer repurchase intention with regards to different combinations of product type and regulatory focus

Figure 3. The moderating role of the interaction between product type and regulatory focus

		Regulatory Focus	
		Promotion	Prevention
Product Type	Consumer repurchase intention	Condition 1	Condition 2
	HH-LU	Condition 3	Condition 4
	LH-HU		

Based on what has been discussed, we propose as following:

H_{3a}: Promotion-focused individuals are more likely to repurchase a hedonic product when they perceive deception (i.e., condition 1) compared to other possible combinations.

H_{3b}: Prevention-focused individuals are less likely to repurchase a utilitarian product when they perceive deception (i.e., condition 4) compared to other possible combinations.

METHODOLOGY

Overview of Experiments

To test the proposed hypotheses, we conducted two pre-tests and three experiments. We conducted two pre-tests to (i) develop appropriate stimuli (pre-test 1) and (ii) construct applicable perceived deception scenarios (pre-test 2). Three objectives guided the design of our main studies. First, we intended to explore whether a retailer should stress more on the hedonic or utilitarian attribute of the product to relieve the negative effect of perceived deception on repurchase intention. Our second objective was to explore the moderating effect of regulatory focus (prevention versus promotion) on the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. Finally, we aimed to investigate how the interaction of product type and regulatory focus could mitigate the unfavorable repurchase intention after perceived deception.

Stimuli development (pre-test 1)

Before the main experiments, we conducted a pre-test to identify the appropriate product stimuli for use in the study. In line with previous research that used low priced products bought out of habit, like coffee, muffins, cereals, bottled drinking water, toothpaste (Darke et al., 2010; Barone & Miniard, 1999; Kamins and Marks, 1987; Burke et al., 1988; Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf, 1998), we choose yogurts and chocolates as the focal product categories because they can be high in both utilitarian and hedonic attributes (Roy & Ng, 2012; Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003), and most people are familiar with them. There were ninety-eight participants

(64 females; $M_{Age} = 32.2$) recruited for the pre-test 1 through Mturk in exchange for a small payment. Four participants were dropped because they did not correctly respond to the alertness-testing question, resulting in ninety-four participants' responses (60 females; $M_{Age} = 29.7$) being usable for pre-test 1. Participants were told that researchers were interested in their perceptions of the advertised product. They were randomly assigned to one of the four groups—High hedonic-Low Utilitarian yogurt ($n_{HH-LU\ yogurt} = 22$), Low Hedonic-High Utilitarian yogurt ($n_{LH-HU\ yogurt} = 22$), High Hedonic-Low Utilitarian chocolate ($n_{HH-LU\ chocolate} = 26$), or Low Hedonic-High Utilitarian chocolate ($n_{LH-HU\ chocolate} = 24$).

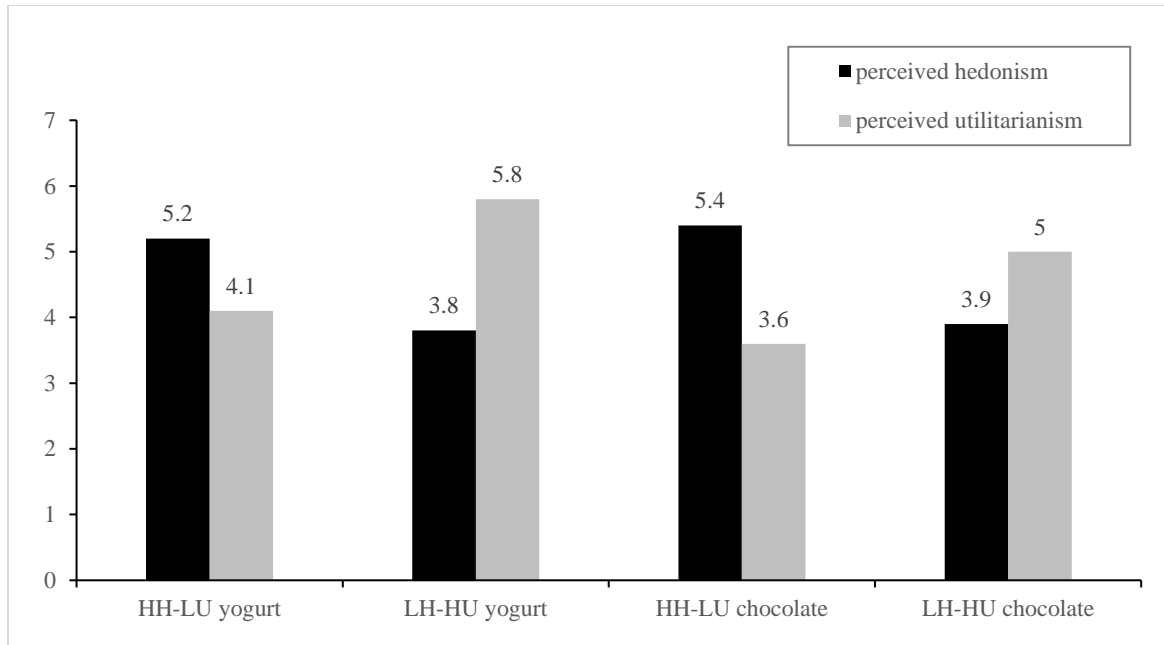
Across HH-LU and LH-HU groups, yogurt (chocolate) advertisements present identical product pictures to minimize the unrelated differences among the stimuli. The product's textual description was provided adjacent to the images. In line with Roy and Ng (2012), we developed the yogurt descriptions with three hedonic attributes (rich and creamy taste, a wide range of fruity flavors, and contains real fruit chunk for added taste) and three utilitarian attributes (good source of nutrients, high in vitamins, and has live cultures). Similarly, the descriptions of chocolate included three hedonic attributes (rich and creamy flavour, smoothness and indulgence, and unique combination of ingredients for multi-layered experience) and three utilitarian attributes (rich in theobromine, a good source of minerals, and contains soluble fiber).

Following Wang and Lee (2006), we created two different versions of advertisement claims for yogurt and chocolate by combining strong hedonic claims with weak utilitarian claims and weak hedonic claims with strong utilitarian claims. Participants were given more details and elaboration of the attribute to create a strong claim. To create a weak claim, a short description of the claim was given (Ashraf & Thongpapanl, 2016; Wang & Lee, 2006). For example, to create an HH-LU version of yogurt advertisement, the stimuli elaborated on each hedonic attribute (e.g.,

how the actual fruit chunks give a delightful taste experience), but only gave a short description of the utilitarian claims (e.g., offers various vitamins). The stimuli for the LH-HU version of yogurt advertisement elaborated on the utilitarian attributes (e.g., how the presence of essential vitamins helps maintain bone health) and provided only a concise description of the hedonic claims (e.g., contains real fruit chunks). In this case, the difference in argument strength should create a predominantly hedonic or utilitarian advertisement. Please see Appendix A for examples of the stimuli.

After reading the product advertisement, participants were asked to classify the product on the hedonic versus utilitarian dimension (1 = “not at all fun/not at all pleasurable/not at all delightful/not at all enjoyable/not at all beneficial/not at all healthy/not at all wholesome/not at all necessary” to 7 = “very fun/very pleasurable/very delightful/very enjoyable/very beneficial/very healthy/very wholesome/very necessary”) (adapted from Crowley, Spangenberg, & Hughes, 1992; Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003). All the hedonic- and utilitarian-scale ratings have been averaged ($\alpha_{\text{Hedonic}} = .84$; $\alpha_{\text{Utilitarian}} = .92$). As expected, participants perceived the HH-LU yogurt as high hedonic ($M = 5.2$) and low utilitarian ($M = 4.1$; $t(21) = 3.328$, $p = .005$), the LH-HU yogurt as low hedonic ($M = 3.8$) and high utilitarian ($M = 5.8$; $t(21) = -3.63$, $p = .002$), the HH-LU chocolate as high hedonic ($M = 5.4$) and low utilitarian ($M = 3.6$; $t(25) = 3.89$, $p < .001$), and the LH-HU chocolate as low hedonic ($M = 3.9$) and high utilitarian ($M = 5.0$; $t(23) = 2.25$, $p = 0.03$).

Figure 4. The perceived product type stimuli (pre-test 1: n = 94)



Next, participants' belief in the advertisement was captured using questions adapted from the Sen, Gürhan-Canli, and Morwitz (2001) study: (i) this advertisement seems believable, (ii) this advertisement seems realistic, and (iii) this advertisement seems credible (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree; averaged to create a believability of the advertisement index, $\alpha = .84$). Results show that participants believed in the advertisements ($M_{HH-LU\ yogurt} = 5.41$, $M_{LH-HU\ yogurt} = 5.58$, $M_{HH-LU\ chocolate} = 5.68$, $M_{LH-HU\ chocolate} = 5.57$)

Finally, we measured their willingness to purchase the product with the scale adapted from Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal (1991). Participants were shown three questions: (i) I predict that I would purchase this yogurt/chocolate. (1= strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), (ii) how likely would you be to explore the product information further to purchase this yogurt/chocolate? (1 = extremely unlikely to 7 =extremely likely), and (iii) what is the likelihood that you would purchase this yogurt/chocolate? (1 = extremely unlikely to 7 =extremely likely). The questions were averaged to create a willingness to purchase index ($\alpha = .94$). As expected, the purchase intention

of HH-LU yogurt ($M = 5.2$) and LH-HU yogurt ($M = 5.4$; $t(23) = .48$, $p = .636$) is not significant different, and that is also true with HH-LU chocolate ($M = 4.9$) and LH-HU chocolate ($M = 4.8$; $t(21) = .28$, $p = .780$), which means the manipulation of advertisement claims itself would not cause participants' preference in one condition. Thus, the stimuli are viable.

Perceived deception manipulation (pre-test2)

The objective of the second pre-test was to examine if the perceived deception manipulation adapted from the study of Darke, Ashworth, and Ritchie (2008) is usable in our context. A total of sixty-five (36 females; $M_{Age} = 33.7$) participants were recruited from Mturk in exchange for a small payment. Three participants were dropped because they did not correctly respond to the alertness-testing question. The resulting sample size is sixty-two participants (35 females; $M_{Age} = 31.6$). Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two product category groups ($n_{chocolate} = 28$, $n_{yogurt} = 34$). They were asked to read one of the two hypothetical deception scenarios involving the product (chocolate or yogurt). Participants were told that researchers were interested in their perception of the scenario. In line with current online shopping literature practices, we asked participants to imagine the shopping scenario vividly.

Each scenario featured a text-only description of a hypothetical purchase experience of the product (yogurt or chocolate). We used a fictitious retailer named "Foodstore" to avoid issues concerning brand awareness, existing reputation, and familiarity with the brand (Andrews et al. 2000; Barone & Miniard, 1999; Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf, 1998; Pechmann, 1996; Román, 2010; Shanahan & Hopkins, 2007). More specifically, participants were asked to imagine searching for a yogurt (chocolate) to fulfill their own needs. Next, they were shown a brief

advertisement of yogurt (chocolate) from a fictitious online retailer. Finally, they read about the hypothetical post-purchase experience. Please see the description of the scenarios in Appendix B.

Participants' level of perceived deception was measured with a four-item seven-point Likert scale adapted from Riquelme and Román (2014) : (i) I think Foodstore exaggerates the benefits and characteristics of the advertised yogurt/chocolate, (ii) I think the information given by the Foodstore about this yogurt/chocolate is misleading, (iii) I think Foodstore uses misleading tactics to convince me to buy this yogurt/chocolate, and (iv) I think the advertisement used by the Foodstore misrepresents the characteristics of this yogurt/chocolate (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree; averaged to create a perceived deception index, $\alpha = .81$). These items refer to the extent to which the participants believe that the online retailer uses deceptive practices to persuade consumers to purchase the website's offerings. Importantly, this scale focuses on participants' perceptions of online retailers' deceptive practices rather than the act of deceiving itself (Riquelme & Román, 2014; Boush, Madrigal, & Xie, 2015). As expected, participants' perception of deception was high in both scenarios ($M_{\text{yogurt}} = 5.2$; $M_{\text{chocolate}} = 5.3$).

Finally, items adapted from the study of Sen, Gürhan-Canli, and Morwitz (2001) captured the believability of the scenario with three questions: (i) this scenario seems believable, (ii) this scenario seems realistic, and (iii) this scenario seems credible (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree; averaged to create a believability of the scenario index, $\alpha = .81$). The results revealed that participants believed in both perceived deception scenarios with yogurt stimuli ($M = 5.09$) and chocolate stimuli ($M = 4.79$). As a result, both scenarios were retained.

Study 1

Overview and Procedure

Study 1 was intended to test how product type moderates the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. We predicted that consumers who have purchased a product high on hedonic attributes (e.g., yogurt with high-hedonic and low-utilitarian attributes) would be more willing to repurchase the product after perceived deception, compared to those who purchased a product high on utilitarian attributes (e.g., yogurt with low-hedonic and high-utilitarian attributes).

Method

We used a 1 (perceived deception) x 2 (product type: HH-LU versus LH-HU) between-subjects design in this study. For generalizability purposes, we used both yogurt and chocolate for this study. One hundred and twenty-six participants (49 females; $M_{Age} = 32.7$) were recruited through Mturk in exchange for a small payment. One alertness-testing question was interspersed within the questionnaire. Twelve participants were dropped because they did not correctly respond to the alertness-testing question. The resulting sample size is 114 participants (45 females; $M_{Age} = 32.9$).

The experiment was conducted in two phases. Participants were randomly assigned to either a yogurt-perceived deception scenario ($n = 56$) or chocolate-perceived deception scenario ($n = 58$) in the first phase. We then administered the same perceived deception manipulation checks as those used in pre-test 2.

Product Stimuli. In phase 2, participants were presented with information on either the HH-LU ($n_{HH-LU\ yogurt} = 29$, $n_{HH-LU\ chocolate} = 27$) or LH-HU ($n_{LH-HU\ yogurt} = 30$, $n_{LH-HU\ chocolate} = 28$) version

of the product. They were informed that the advertisement is about the product they have hypothetically purchased in the previous shopping scenario. After viewing the product descriptions, participants were asked to evaluate the product on a two-item seven-point Likert scale adapted from Voss, Spangenberg, and Grohmann (2003) (1 = not at all hedonic/utilitarian to 7 = very hedonic/utilitarian).

Repurchase Intention. Participants were then instructed to indicate the probability of repurchasing the product in the future on a scale adapted from Jones, Mothersbaugh, and Beatty (2000). To better eliminate the effect of the perceived buyer-retailer relationship, participants were instructed to evaluate the product provided instead of the retailer. Specifically, three questions involved focused on the product without mentioning the retailer and were constructed as follow: (i) I intend to continue to purchase this yogurt/chocolate over the next 12 months (1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree), (ii) all things considered; I will likely purchase this yogurt/chocolate over the next 12 months (1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree), and (iii) thinking about the shopping scenario you have read, please indicate the probability of you making a purchase of this yogurt/chocolate in the near future (1= very unlikely/very improbably/very impossibly/never stand a chance to 7= very likely/very probably/very possibly/a very good chance) (averaged to create a repurchase intention index, $\alpha = .93$).

Confounds. Finally, participants provided judgments on the believability of the advertisement ($\alpha = .87$) and the scenario ($\alpha = .87$) using the identical questions as in pre-tests.

Participants also answered the questions about the perceived amount of information in the advertisement on a seven-point Likert scale adapted from DeBusk, Killough, and Brown (2009) and Kim and Lennon (2000), with 1 = strongly disagree 7 = strongly agree. Three questions were involved: (i) there was sufficient information for me to evaluate the advertised yogurt/chocolate,

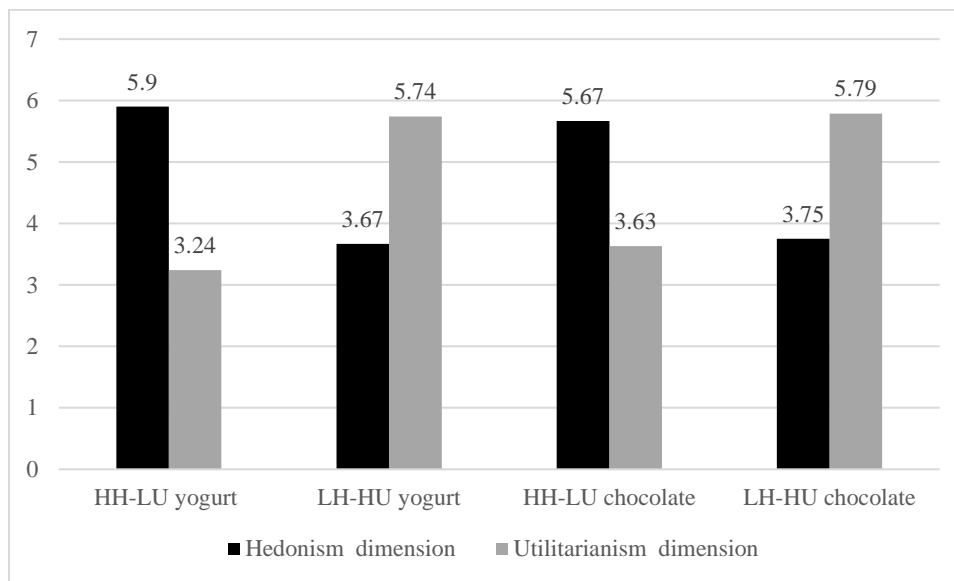
(ii) the advertisement about the yogurt/chocolate contained enough information for me to make an informed decision, and (iii) I learned a lot about the advertised yogurt/chocolate from the advertisement (averaged to create a perceived amount of advertisement information index, $\alpha = .78$)

Participants' mood and involvement level were also captured. Participants reported their current mood on a three-item seven-point Likert scale (currently I feel good/positive/happy, with 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) adapted from Peterson & Sauber (1983) ($\alpha = .89$). Their involvement level was measured on a three-item seven-point Likert scale (while processing the information in the survey, I was very involved/ interesting/paid a lot of attention, with 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree) (Wang & Lee, 2006; McQuarrie & Munson, 1992) ($\alpha = .82$). Finally, background information, including demographics, was gathered.

Results

Product type manipulation checks. The result of one-way ANOVA revealed that there is a significant effect of the manipulation on participants' perception of the product type for both yogurt ($F(1, 55) = 57.45, p < .001$) and chocolate ($F(1, 57) = 34.28, p < .001$). Follow-up planned contrast further showed that participants perceived the HH-LU yogurt as high hedonic ($M = 5.90$) and low utilitarian ($M = 3.24; t(28) = 8.883, p < .001$), the LH-HU yogurt as low hedonic ($M = 3.67$) and high utilitarian ($M = 5.74; t(26) = 7.353, p < .001$), the HH-LU chocolate as high hedonic ($M = 5.67$) and low utilitarian ($M = 3.63; t(29) = 6.154, p < .001$), and the LH-HU chocolate as low hedonic ($M = 3.75$) and high utilitarian ($M = 5.79; t(27) = 7.841, p < .001$). Moreover, there were no main effects of manipulation on mood, level of involvement, or level of belief in the scenario ($p > .10$). Thus, the product type manipulation is successful.

Figure 5. The perceived product type stimuli (Study 1: n = 114)



Perceived deception manipulation checks. Perceived deception manipulation checks captured the level of participants' perceived deception in the scenario. We averaged responses across the manipulation check questions similar to those used in the pre-test. Results revealed that participants perceived deception in the scenario they read ($M_{\text{yogurt}} = 5.11$; $M_{\text{chocolate}} = 5.26$).

Repurchase Intention and confounds. For both the chocolate and the yogurt stimuli conditions, we performed a one-way ANCOVA, respectively, with product type as the independent variable and repurchase intention as the dependent variable. Participants' age, gender, education, income, belief in the scenario, mood, and level of involvement were included as covariates. Results showed that, across the two product types, none of the covariates had a significant effect ($p > .10$). Hence, covariates were dropped from further analysis.

Consistent with our prediction, across chocolate stimuli conditions, a one-way ANOVA revealed a significant effect of product type (HH-LU versus LH-HU) on repurchase intention ($F(1,$

56) = 12.352, $p = .001$). Supporting H_1 , follow-up planned contrasts revealed that in a post-perceived-deception situation, participants who were shown HH-LU products ($M = 5.76$) reported a significantly higher repurchase intention than those who viewed LH-HU products ($M = 4.44$; $t(56) = 3.51$, $p = .001$). Besides, participants indicated that they believed in the advisement ($M = 5.80$) and the scenario ($M = 5.67$) and could get enough information they needed from the advertisement ($M = 5.31$).

Similarly, in the yogurt stimuli condition, results reveal a significant difference in mean repurchase intention between different product types (HH-LU versus LH-HU) ($F(1, 54) = 18.314$, $p < .001$). Supporting H_1 , follow-up planned contrasts reveal that when participants perceived deception, participants who were shown HH-LU products ($M = 5.79$) were significantly more willing to make a repurchase intention compared to those who viewed LH-HU products ($M = 4.49$; $t(54) = 4.279$, $p < .001$). Besides, participants indicated that the advisement ($M = 5.67$) and the scenario ($M = 5.42$) are believable enough and that they could get enough information they need from the advertisement ($M = 5.25$).

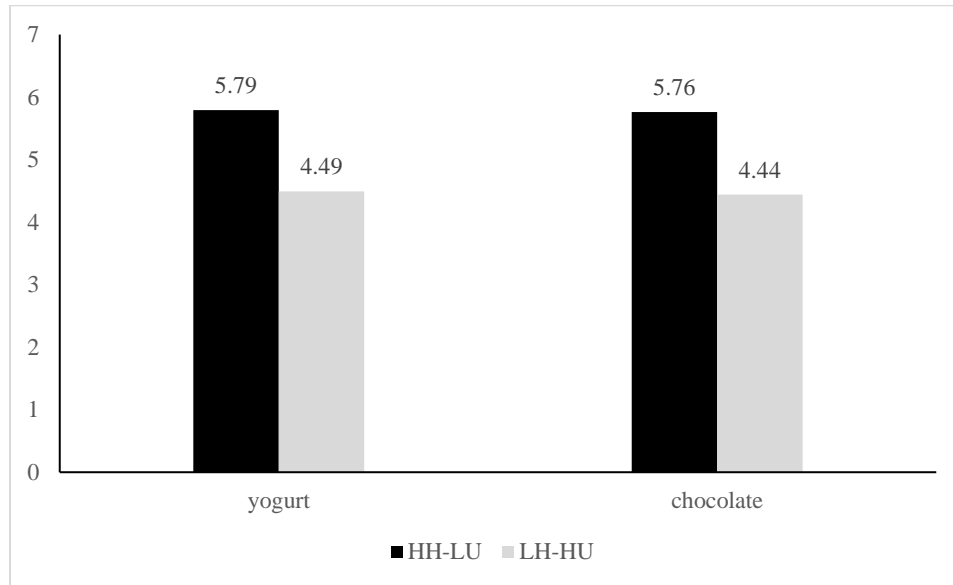
Table 7. Main Effects and Planned Contrasts (Study 1: $n = 114$).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable				
		Main Effects	Planned Contrasts		
			HH-LU	LH-HU	
Repurchase Intention	Yogurt	$F(1, 54) = 18.314$, $p < .001$	$M = 5.79$	$M = 4.49$	$t(54) = 4.279$, $p < .001$
	Chocolate	$F(1, 56) = 12.352$, $p < .001$	$M = 5.76$	$M = 4.44$	$t(56) = 3.515$, $p < .001$

p = .001

p < .001

Figure 6. Repurchase intention as a function of product type under perceived deception condition (Study 1: n = 114)



Study 1 Discussion

Study 1 results support our first hypothesis: participants are more likely to repurchase the product after perceived deception when it is high on hedonic (versus utilitarian) features. To simulate real-life settings where retailers promote a product with mixed claims, we manipulated different levels of hedonic and utilitarian attributes to generate HH-LU and LH-HU advertisements that featured both hedonic and utilitarian claims. Moreover, the use of two different product categories, to some extent, strengthens the generalizability of the relationship between product type and repurchase intention.

Study 1 proved that product type has a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. However, research has long shown that even with

the same product, consumer behavior would differ with different regulatory focus (e.g., Aaker & Lee, 2006; Higgins et al., 2003). In the following two studies, we further verified the validity of the product stimuli we used and tested whether what is known about regulatory focus could be extended to the perceived deception context.

Study 2

Overview and Procedure

The objective of study 2 was to investigate how our second hypothesized moderator—regulatory focus—would affect the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. According to our theorizing, after perceiving deception, promotion-focused consumers would show a higher repurchase intention towards the product than prevention-focused consumers.

Method

We used a 1 (perceived deception) x 2 (regulatory focus: promotion versus prevention) between-subjects design in this study. One hundred and fifty-three participants (86 females; $M_{Age} = 42.9$) were recruited through Mturk in exchange for a small payment. One alertness-testing question was interspersed within the questionnaire. Five participants were dropped because they did not correctly respond to the alertness-testing question. The resulting sample size is 148 participants (83 females; $M_{Age} = 42.3$).

Regulatory focus manipulation. Participants were told that they would participate in two unrelated studies. In the purported first study, the participants completed the regulatory focus priming task. They were randomly assigned to one of the two regulatory focus conditions ($n_{\text{promotion}} = 71$ and $n_{\text{prevention}} = 77$). We manipulated individuals' situational regulatory focus by using pre-established and validated primes. Participants were asked to complete a two-stage regulatory focus manipulation: sorting the words into different groups and performing a word-filling task (Kirmani & Zhu, 2007). In the first task, participants in the promotion-focus group were asked to differentiate the words in the promotion category (like passion, achievement, etc.) from those in the furniture category (like cabinet, chair, etc.). In the second task, participants read a hypothetical scenario that asked them to imagine they were in the market for new products after receiving a new job (Pham & Chang, 2010). Missing from this scenario were the prevention- and promotion-focused words that participants filled in. The prevention-focused scenario included missing words such as “stability” and “responsibility,” whereas the promotion-focused version included missing words like “dream” and “gain.” The written scenarios contained approximately 200 words and followed the same structure for both conditions. Please see Appendix C for details of the two tasks.

Regulatory focus manipulation checks. After the manipulation task, a manipulation check comprised of three questions meant to capture the conflict between the ideal self and the ought self (Pham & Avnet, 2004). Participants were asked to indicate whether they would prefer to (i) ‘do what is right’ versus ‘do whatever I want; (ii) ‘pay back my loans’ versus ‘take a trip around the world’; (iii) ‘try my best to keep my promises’ versus ‘go wherever my heart takes me’ on a three-item seven-point scale (1 = ought self to 7 = ideal self). Responses across these questions were averaged ($\alpha = .72$).

Perceived deception manipulation and manipulation checks. For the purported second study, all participants were put into the same perceived deception scenario used in pre-test 2, with chocolate as the hypothetical product. We then administered the perceived deception manipulation checks from pre-test 2.

Repurchase Intention and confounds. Next, participants rated their repurchase intention on the same scale as in study 1. Finally, participants provided judgments of their level of belief in the scenario, current mood, and level of involvement using the same scales as in study 1. Participants' background information was also gathered.

Results

Regulatory focus manipulation checks. We averaged responses across the manipulation check questions and showed through one-way ANOVA that there is a significant effect of the manipulation on participants' regulatory focus ($F(1, 146) = 169.385, p < .001$). Follow-up planned contrast further revealed that participants in the promotion group placed relatively greater emphasis on ideal self ($M = 5.34$, with 7 = emphasis on ideal self), relative to those in the prevention group ($M = 2.93$, with 1 = emphasis on ought self; $t(147) = 13.02, p = .001$). Besides, there were no main effects of manipulation on mood, level of involvement, or level of belief in the scenario ($p > .10$). Thus, the regulatory focus manipulation is usable.

Perceived deception manipulation checks. Perceived deception manipulation checks captured participants' perceived deception in the hypothetical chocolate-shopping scenario. Results showed that participants did perceive deception in the scenario they read ($M = 5.57$).

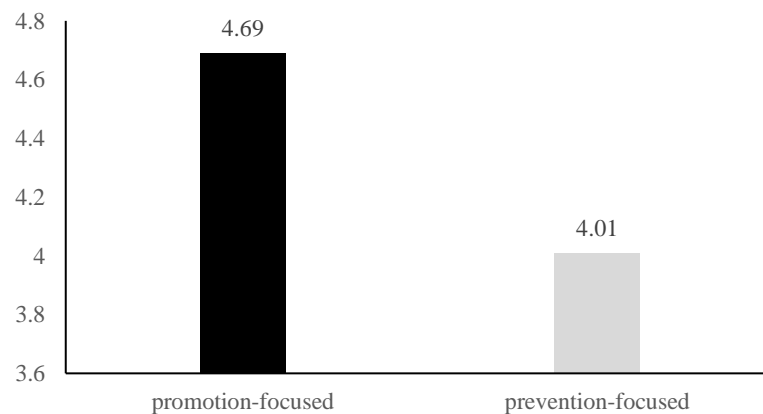
Repurchase Intention and confounds. We ran a one-way ANCOVA with regulatory focus

as the independent variable and repurchase intention as the dependent variable. Participants' age, gender, education, income, belief in the scenario, mood, and level of involvement were included as covariates. Results showed that none of the covariates had a significant effect ($p > .10$).

Hence, covariates were dropped from further analysis.

Central to our hypothesis, a one-way ANOVA with regulatory focus as independent variable and repurchase intention as dependent variable showed that participants' repurchase intention after perceiving deception ($F(1,146) = 4.99, p < .001$) significantly differs across different regulatory focus conditions. Supporting H_2 , follow-up planned contrasts reveal that, in a post-perceived-deception situation, promotion-focused participants reported a significantly higher repurchase intention ($M = 4.69$) than prevention-focused participants ($M = 4.01; t(147) = 4.05, p = .034$).

Figure 7. Repurchase intention as a function of regulatory focus under perceived deception condition (Study 2: $n = 148$)



Study 2 Discussion

The results of Study 2 provide evidence for the claim that regulatory focus has a moderating effect on the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. The results support our predictions and indicate that promotion-focused individuals are more likely to repurchase after perceived deception than prevention-focused individuals. In study 1 and study 2, we have validated that different product types and regulatory focus would affect consumer repurchase intention after perceiving deception, respectively. To bring our hypotheses further, we will investigate how the interaction between the tested moderators—product type and regulatory focus—would interfere with consumer repurchase intention upon perceived deception.

Study 3

Overview and Procedure

The objective of study 3 was to investigate further how the interaction of our two hypothesized moderators—product type (HH-LU versus LH-HU) and regulatory focus (promotion versus prevention)—would affect the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. We hypothesize that in the post-perceived deception situation, promotion focus individuals will have a significantly higher repurchase intention for a hedonic product (HH-LU \times promotion) than all other combinations (HH-LU \times prevention, LH-HU \times promotion, and LH-HU \times prevention). In contrast, prevention-focused individuals will have a significantly lower repurchase intention for a utilitarian product than all other combinations.

Method

In this study, we used a 1 (perceived deception) \times 2 (product type: HH-LU versus LH-HU) \times 2 (regulatory focus: promotion versus prevention) between-subjects design. Two hundred participants (95 females; $M_{Age} = 40.1$) were recruited through Mturk for a small payment. One alertness-testing question was interspersed within the questionnaire. Twenty-five participants were dropped because they did not correctly respond to the alertness-testing question. The resulting sample size is 175 participants (86 females; $M_{Age} = 41.2$).

The procedure for this study was similar to that in Study 1 and Study 2, with a slight modification to regulatory focus manipulation. The experiment was conducted in three phases. In phase 1, participants were randomly directed to one of the two regulatory focus conditions ($n_{promotion} = 91$ and $n_{prevention} = 84$). We manipulated individuals' situational regulatory focus by using two pre-established and validated regulatory focus manipulation tasks. In line with Higgins et al. (1994) and Yoon, Sarial-Abi, & Gürhan-Canli (2012), in the first manipulation task, participants in the promotion-focus condition (prevention-focus condition) were asked to take a few minutes to think of and list three of their past dreams, hopes, and aspirations (duties, obligations, and responsibilities). Next, they listed three present dreams, hopes, and aspirations (duties, obligations, and responsibilities). They were then asked to write a short essay on their current dreams, hopes, and aspirations (duties, obligations, and responsibilities). In the second manipulation task, participants were required to finish the same passage-completing task as in study 2. Please see Appendix C for details of the tasks. We then used the same regulatory focus manipulation check as in study 2.

In phase 2, all participants were put into the pre-tested perceived deception scenario, with chocolate as the hypothetical product. We administered the perceived deception manipulation

checks from pre-test 2.

In the last phase, participants in promotion-focus and prevention focus conditions were randomly assigned to two product type conditions (either HH-LU or LH-HU), resulting in four conditions in total ($n_{\text{HH-LU} \times \text{promotion}} = 48$, $n_{\text{HH-LU} \times \text{prevention}} = 43$, $n_{\text{LH-HU} \times \text{promotion}} = 43$, and $n_{\text{LH-HU} \times \text{prevention}} = 41$). The elaborated hedonic and utilitarian claims were the same as the ones used in Study 1. They then rated their repurchase intention, their level of belief in the advertisement and the scenario, their current mood, and their level of involvement using the same scales as in previous studies. Participants' background information was also gathered.

Results

Regulatory focus manipulation checks. Similar to study 2, we averaged responses across the manipulation check questions and showed through one-way ANOVA that there is a significant effect of the manipulation on participants' regulatory focus ($F(1, 173) = 210.037$, $p < .001$). Follow-up planned contrast further revealed that participants in the promotion group placed stronger emphasis on ideal self ($M = 5.76$, with 7 = emphasis on ideal self), relative to those in the prevention group ($M = 3.25$, with 1 = emphasis on ought self; $t(173) = 14.493$, $p < .001$).

Product type manipulation checks. The result of one-way ANOVA revealed that there is a significant effect of the manipulation on participants' perception of the product type ($F(1, 173) = 137.261$, $p < .001$). Follow-up planned contrast further showed that participants perceived the HH-LU product as high hedonic ($M = 5.81$) and low utilitarian ($M = 3.47$; $t(90) = 10.217$, $p < .001$), and the LH-HU product as low hedonic ($M = 3.24$) and high utilitarian ($M = 5.56$; $t(83)$

= 9.640, $p < .001$).

Besides, there were no main effects of product type and regulatory focus manipulation on mood, level of involvement, or level of belief in the scenario ($p > .10$). Thus, both manipulations are usable.

Perceived deception manipulation checks. Perceived deception manipulation checks captured participants' level of perceived deception in the shopping scenario. Results showed that participants did perceive deception in the scenario they read ($M = 5.24$).

Repurchase Intention and confounds. We ran a 2 (product type: HH-LU versus LH-HU) x 2 (regulatory focus: promotion versus prevention) ANCOVA with repurchase intention as the dependent variable, regulatory focus, and product type as the independent variable. Participants' age, gender, education, income, belief in the scenario, mood, and level of involvement were included as covariates. Results showed that none of the covariates had a significant effect ($p > .10$). Hence, covariates were dropped from further analysis.

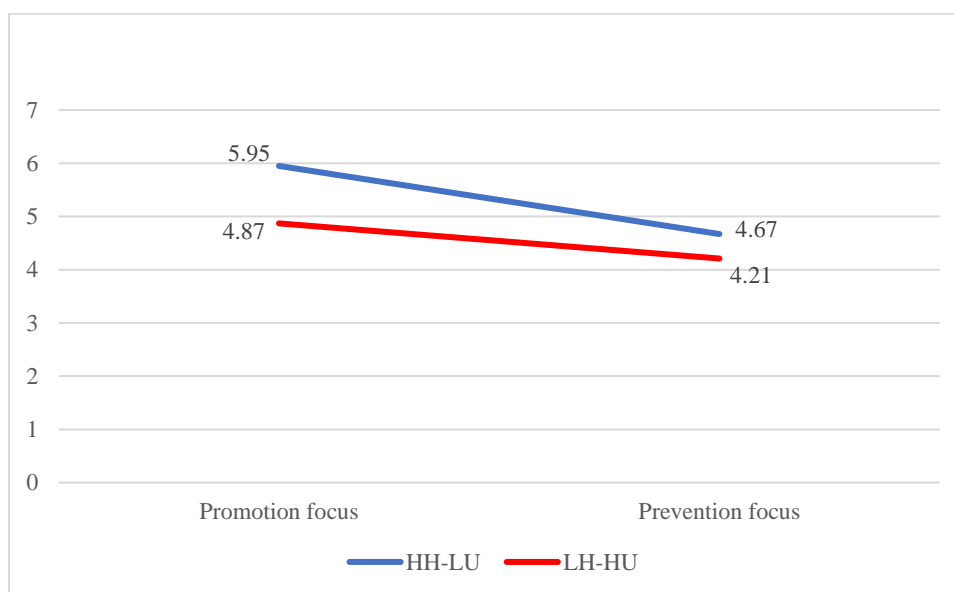
Central to our hypothesis, a two-way ANOVA showed that participants' repurchase intention after perceiving deception ($F(3,171) = 4.756, p < .03$) differ significantly across different combinations of product types and regulatory focus. Supporting H_3 , results from the planned contrasts reveal that after perceived deception, promotion focus individuals have significantly higher repurchase intention for a hedonic product than all other combinations (H_{3a}). In contrast, prevention-focused individuals have significantly lower repurchase intention for a utilitarian product than all other combinations (H_{3b}) (see Table 8 and Figure 8).

Table 8. Planned Contrasts (Study 3: $n = 175$).

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable
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Repurchase Intention	HH-LU× Promotion M = 5.95	LH-HU×Promotion M = 4.87	t(89) = 3.878, p < .001
		HH-LU×Prevention M = 4.67	t(89) = 6.188, p < .001
	LH-HU× Prevention M = 4.21	LH-HU×Prevention M = 4.21	t(87) = 7.390, p < .001
		HH-LU×Promotion M = 5.95	t(87) = 7.390, p < .001
		LH-HU×Promotion M = 4.87	t(82) = 2.437, p < .020
		HH-LU×Prevention M = 4.67	t(82) = 2.165, p < .050

Figure 8. Moderating effect of the interaction of product type and regulatory focus on repurchase intention under perceived deception condition (Study 3: n = 175)



Study 3 Discussion

Study 3 replicated the procedures of Study 1 and Study 2, and further investigated the moderating effect of the combination of the two moderators mentioned above—product type

(Study 1) and regulatory focus (Study 2). The results support the H₃ that promotion-focused individuals would be more likely to repurchase hedonic products in the post-perceived-deception scenario than all other combinations (H_{3a}). In contrast, prevention-focused participants show a relatively low repurchase intention toward utilitarian products, compared to all other combinations (H_{3b}). Study 3 results further validate our findings in Study 1 and Study 2 that after perceived deception, consumers purchased hedonic products (compared to utilitarian products) and carry promotion focus (compared to prevention focus) would have a higher repurchase intention, respectively. It shows that the respective effect still holds when product type and regulatory focus are integrated into the same context.

General Discussion

In this research, we stressed the definition of perceived deception as the consumer's feeling that a marketer is responsible for setting false beliefs with any type of marketing communication. This definition helps to understand that the feeling of being deceived arises when consumers think the marketer is responsible for conveying wrong information to them. We emphasize the importance of knowing that objective and perceived deceptions do not always go in line. With this in mind, we can prevent the loss of marketing communication by increasing marketers' awareness of perceived deception's adverse effects.

Prior research has found that perceived deception has a negative effect on consumer repurchase intention. Thus, the main objective of this study is to further investigate the factors that may moderate the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. This study examined product type and regulatory focus as the moderators that help mitigate the adverse effects

of perceived deception on repurchase intention. Overall, the results support our hypotheses. The results of our research suggest that the repurchase intention of hedonic products would suffer less from the negative impact of perceived deception than utilitarian products (H₁) in case of perceived deception. Besides, promotion-focused individuals show a higher repurchase intention after perceived deception occurs than prevention-focused individuals (H₂). We also checked for differences in repurchase intention after perceived deception with different product types and regulatory focus combinations. Interestingly, the results further reveal that the fit between promotion focus and the hedonic product works best to attenuate perceived deception's unfavorable impact on repurchase intention (H_{3a}). In contrast, the fit between prevention focus and the utilitarian product leads to the lowest repurchase intentions (H_{3b}).

Theoretical implications

Previous research on deception has mainly focused on objective deception and concentrated particularly on comparisons between the regulatory and behavioral perspective of objective deception (Aditya, 2001; Xie & Boush, 2011), the classifications of deceptive tactics (Hastak & Mazis, 2011), and the determination of deception (Grunert & Dedler, 1985). There is still a lack of understanding regarding perceived deception and its consequences (e.g., Román, 2010; Boush, Madrigal, & Xie, 2015; Newell, Goldsmith, & Banzhaf, 1998; Darke, Ashworth, & Ritchie, 2008). Among existing studies of perceived deception, it is showed that perceived deception would negatively impact consumers' repurchase intention in the brick-and-mortar setting (Wilkins, Beckenuyte, & Butt, 2016; Balaji, Roy, & Quazi, 2017; Bozkurt & Gligor, 2019). While e-commerce has witnessed extensive growth in recent years, so have consumers' complaints regarding perceived deception in online shopping. However, only a little attention has explicitly

been given to consumers' reactions to the perceived deception of online retailers (Román, 2010). The study of Román (2010) indicates that (i) perceived deception will have a negative influence on consumers loyalty intentions (the intention of repurchase and the intention to spread positive word-of-mouth) to the online retailer and that (ii) products type (physical products vs. services) moderates the effect of perceived deception on repurchase intention.

In the light of these issues, this research bridges the gap in perceived deception literature in three ways. First, the studies on (objective or perceived) deception used very different theories as theoretical backgrounds. Many studies built on the general literature on deception by Gardner (1975). Some studies were interested in information processes of deceptive claims (e.g., Barone et al., 2004; Olson & Dover, 1978). Others applied very specific theories to the domain of deception, like theory-of-mind (Craig et al., 2012), Protection Motivation Theory (Shanahan & Hopkins, 2007), and third-person effects (Xie, 2016). Besides, the defensive model of distrust by Darke and Ritchie (2007) is often used to study deception (Darke et al., 2008; Xie 2016). Satisfaction (Bozkurt & Gligor, 2019; Román, 2010) and cognitive dissonance were mostly previewed in the perceived deception literature. Overall, various theories have been applied to the field of deception. Following Pavlou and Gefen (2005), this research further explores the feasibility of applying the theory of psychological contract violation to explain the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. The importance of psychological contract violation is highlighted in other contexts, where it involves power dynamics or any relationship that involves obligations and rights (Morrison & Robinson, 1997; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). However, research enabling us to understand the challenges induced by psychological contract violations in the online retail context remains sparse (Malhotra et al., 2017; Bandara, Fernando, & Akter, 2020). This is also significant, as psychological contract violation is considered by some scholars to be the most

relevant determinant to understanding and predicting consumer behaviour in the online marketplace (Malhotra et al., 2017). We extend the perceived deception literature to include psychological contract violation to understand the prevalence of perceived deception through the implicitness of psychological contract in the online context.

Second, we re-emphasize the well-researched relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention and further validate the relationship in the online setting with consistent experimental designs. All previous studies on both objective deception and perceived deception used different manipulations of deception. Past studies have mainly collected data through surveys, taking advantage of the pre-existing shopping experience of respondents. Besides, in prior literature manipulating (objective or perceived) deception by experiments, deception was manipulated through greatly varied claims among different conditions. For example, Pechmann (1996) manipulated deception with much more information. Participants were shown an ad from a package delivery service that stated: “Our efficiency lets us guarantee overnight delivery by 10:30 A.M. for 10\$. The lowest rate of any company. Additionally, the information that Federal Express charges 13\$ was given.” This deceptive condition was then compared to a control group that received no ad at all. A third group saw the initial ad with additional disclosure information: “Rate comparisons refer only to prices for packages delivered by 10:30 A.M. Rate comparisons do not refer to prices for packages delivered by 5 pm, or to prices for package pickup”. It becomes evident that those deception manipulations vary greatly in length and content, and therefore that information processing and subsequent questions are not comparable among conditions. The same holds true for the perceived deception study by Germelmann and Johanna (2014), where they present graphic package design to one group while only the list of ingredients and the product's name to another. This research, however, contributes to the literature by applying an experimental

approach to manipulate perceived deception and different product types with a set of advertisement claim designs that are consistent in the format, wording, and length of product advertisement claims.

Third, we move forward to investigate to what extent the influence of perceived deception on repurchase intention is moderated by product type (hedonic vs. utilitarian), consumer regulatory focus (promotion vs. prevention), and the interaction between product type and regulatory focus. This research does not intend to examine all potential moderating variables; rather, it follows the study of Román (2010) in the process of understanding the factors that may moderate the relationship between perceived deception and consumer repurchase intention. By examining the factors that mitigate the negative effect of perceived deception on repurchase intention, this study fills a research gap related to understanding the moderators to attenuate the fallouts of perceived deception. The results offer interesting theoretical insights by furthering our knowledge of e-retailing and perceived deception literature by (i) clarifying the extent to which an advertisement should stress hedonic and utilitarian attributes of the product; (ii) illustrating the characteristics of consumers who would respond in a relatively favorable way in case of perceived deception, and (iii) testing the combination between regulatory focus and product type in a perceived deception context. Thus, this research bridges the gap between perceived deception, product type, and regulatory focus literature.

Practical implications

From a practical standpoint, we suggest that both types of deception—objective deception and perceived deception—should be avoided because of the negative consequences for the companies.

Given the prevalence of the Internet and the medias' strong interest in deceptive marketing communication, it is very unlikely that objective deception remains undetected. However, perceived deception could be detrimental as well. To avoid the known consequences of perceived deceptive practices, marketers should develop tactics to mitigate the impact on repurchase intention that their advertising material could bring about in the first place. In this sense, we provide a substantive contribution by identifying practical solutions to prevent consumer repurchase intention from the negative effects of perceived deception. Findings from our research may help retailers make more informed positioning decisions to elude the unfavorable consequence of perceived deception. This research contributes to managerial decision-making by (i) providing guidance for product positioning that can elicit desired behavior, (ii) delineating the intricate relationship between individuals' goal orientation and response to product advertisement.

Our results indicate that stressing hedonic attributes for promotion-focused consumers leads to better results. Combining hedonism-stressed claims with headlines that can induce promotion focus can benefit online retailers by decreasing the unfavorable effect of perceived deception on repurchase intention. In this sense, online retailers need to think creatively about fully demonstrating the hedonic value of the products they offer in their advertisements. Given that most products have hedonic and utilitarian benefits, we suggest positioning the product in a hedonism-highlighting way when the chances of perceived deception are high. Moreover, for marketing managers and advertisers who are concerned with the positioning of their marketing communications, our results show that the promotion focus of consumers can help mitigate the negative relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. Thus, retailers can induce and/or include product benefits that fit customers' promotion focus in the advertising message. To be more specific, a laptop retailer may want to point out how this laptop can create a

more enjoyable working atmosphere with the aid of a high-quality display, rather than saying that the high-quality display helps prevent eye strain. To minimize the unfavorable effect of perceived deception on repurchase intention, retailers can accent hedonic attributes by drawing consumers' attention to the hedonic claims and by placing the product next to a less hedonic one to clearly classify it as a high-hedonic product. Meanwhile, promotion-stimulating claims that remind consumers of the ideal self can also be an asset. In summary, findings from the current research have important implications on issues like product display, product positioning, and marketing communications.

Table 9. Summary of practical contributions and relevant examples

Verified moderators	Practical solutions	Example
Product type	Stressing hedonic attributes	Apply claims like “providing a large screen and delivering high-fidelity sound” rather than “providing latest core components”
		Display the business laptop beside a business desktop& stressing the outstanding thinness and lightness
Regulatory focus	Inducing promotion focus in consumers	Use claims like “this laptop can create a more enjoyable working atmosphere with the aid of a high-quality display” rather than “the high-quality display helps prevent eye strain”
Interaction between product type and regulatory focus	Combining hedonism-stressed claims with promotion-triggered headlines to influence consumers' attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draw consumers attention to the hedonic claims - Place the product next to a less hedonic one to clearly classify it as a high-hedonic product - Highlight promotion-stimulating claims that remind consumers of the ideal self

Limitations

A few limitations in the research need to be mentioned. Previous deception literature used low priced goods which are widely known (e.g., coffee, soup, muffins, cereals, bottled drinking water, toothpaste, dryer sheets, ball pen, pain reliever, light bulb) (Olson & Dover, 1978; Andrews et al.,

2000; Darke et al., 2008; Xie, 2016; Barone & Miniard, 1999; Kamins & Marks, 1987; Burke et al., 1988; Newell & Goldsmith, 1998). Following the precedents, we used chocolate and yogurt as our stimuli. However, different products likely carry different effects on the relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. For example, prior research (Oliver, 2010; Powers & Jack, 2013) has stated that expectation incongruence is more likely to occur with products that have higher monetary value, long term consequences, and higher psychological costs to the consumer, which may potentially affect the level of perceived deception. It is unclear whether the use of different product categories would affect our results. Thus, future research should examine if the finding applies to other product categories. In addition, the mere fact that participants knew they were in a research setting with ads used as experimental stimuli may have influenced their responses (Weber & Cook, 1972). For instance, they could scrutinize the advertising claims more carefully compared to when they were exposed to similar ads in their daily life. Future research should, therefore, include more diverse product categories in a more naturalistic setting. For example, researchers might take advantage of real consumers referring to their latest online purchase instead of relying on self-report measures.

CONCLUSION

In Internet-based information searches and consequent transactions, product information has been gathered from the Internet rather than alternative sources such as bricks-and-mortar stores. Thus, the likelihood of consumers getting undesirable consequences and perceiving deception is especially salient (Jepsen, 2007; Cheema & Papatla, 2010). It is not enough to focus only on objective deception. Following the previous literature that pointed out the highest possible existence of perceived deception in online transactions and established the negative effect of perceived deception on repurchase intention, our study explores the factors that may help alleviate the negative relationship between perceived deception and repurchase intention. Our results indicate differences between groups. Compared to their prevention-oriented counterparts, promotion-oriented individuals tend to show higher repurchase intention when they perceive deception. Moreover, consumers who purchased hedonic products (compared to utilitarian products) are more likely to repurchase after perceived deception. Finally, promotion-oriented individuals are more likely to repurchase a hedonic product when they perceive deception compared to other possible combinations, and prevention-focused people show lower repurchase intention towards a utilitarian product after perceived deception compared to other possible combinations. Given the evidence provided in this research, marketers would be better to pick product positioning and advertising carefully. Based on the study results, it is also suggested that the effect would augment when a product advertisement is both hedonism-emphasizing and promotion-evoking.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. Stimuli (study 1 and study 3)

Yogurt A (HH-LU yogurt)

Strong hedonic claims

- Special ingredients (e.g., whole milk and heavy cream) give a **rich** and **creamy** taste to your mouth.
- The taste of **real fresh fruits** makes the yogurt extremely delicious. You just cannot **resist the temptation** of its fruity taste.
- The **quality chunks of real fruit** and **creamy taste delight** the palate.



Weak utilitarian claims

- The yogurt has several nutrients.
- The yogurt offers various vitamins.
- The yogurt contains different cultures.

Yogurt B (LH-HU yogurt)

Strong utilitarian claims

- The yogurt contains real fruit chunks.
- The yogurt gives a creamy taste.



- The yogurt comes in various fruity flavors.

Weak hedonic claims

- The yogurt offers **nutrients** like zinc and magnesium that are good for the **immune system**.
- The presence of essential **vitamins** like D and K plays a crucial role in **keeping your bones healthy**.
- The yogurt contains active **live cultures** to help you maintain a **balance of good bacteria and bad bacteria** in the gut.

Chocolate A (HH-LU chocolate)

Strong hedonic claims



- Theobromine added to the chocolate **tantalizes your taste buds** and gives you a **creamy** and **rich** flavor.
- Every bite embodies the **smoothness** and **indulgence** you'd expect from this **mouth-watering** chocolate.
- The unique combination of ingredients allows you to enjoy the **delightful** taste of chocolate and unfurls a **multi-layered enriched cocoa** experience.

Weak hedonic claims

- This chocolate has theobromine.
- This chocolate offers several minerals.

- This chocolate contains soluble fiber.

Chocolate B (LH-HU chocolate)

Strong utilitarian claims



- The chocolate gives a rich flavor.
- The chocolate gives a smooth taste.
- The chocolate gives a pure cocoa experience.

Weak hedonic claims

- The chocolate is rich in **theobromine** that helps improve **brain function** and enhance your **state of alertness**.
- The chocolate is loaded with **minerals** like magnesium and copper that help regulate **nerve function** and maintain **healthy bones**.
- A whopping 15-gram per 100-gram of this chocolate is made from **soluble fiber** that helps normalize **cholesterol levels** and improve **heart health**.

Appendix B. Perceived deception scenario

Perceived deception scenario (yogurt stimuli condition):

Imagine that you are looking for snacks to satisfy your hunger and improve your mood at work. While you were searching for a healthy and delicious snack, you came across an advertisement from Foodstore claiming:

“Looking for something healthy and yummy to snack on? Try out our exclusively available yogurt, which is filling and tasty at the same time. Our new processing procedure strains out extra liquid and provides a higher amount of protein. One cup of high-protein yogurt fills your stomach and reduces your appetite. This thick and creamy yogurt offers a true alternative to regular snacks without compromising taste.”

During previous shopping sessions, you felt well-assisted with your purchases in Foodstore, and thus regard it as an honest retailer. Driven by the advertisement and your trust in Foodstore, you felt like this yogurt could be what you were looking for and thus made a purchase. However, after having consumed it a few times, you found it could not fulfill your needs. The yogurt didn't turn out to be as tasteful and filling as you thought. Based on some research, you verified that a high-protein yogurt cup requires more energy to digest and can suppress appetite. However, after consuming the yogurt, you don't feel full and still have a desire to snack on something. You think that this yogurt is not a valid alternative to snacks for many people like you. To avoid any confusion, it would have been better if Foodstore had included a claimer saying that the effect and taste vary from person to person.

Perceived deception scenario (chocolate stimuli condition):

Imagine that you are trying to find a substitute for coffee, which would help keep up your spirit

without giving you a headache. While you were searching for a mild stimulant, you came across an advertisement from Foodstore claiming:

“Theobromine! A moderate energy source that can be an alternative to coffee! Our processing procedure brings out its full function to enhance your state of alertness and mellows its bitterness. With a small quantity of our exclusively available chocolate containing a high amount of active theobromine, you can stay alert while enjoying the taste of chocolate.”

During previous shopping sessions, you felt well-assisted with your purchases in Foodstore, and thus regard it as an honest retailer. Driven by the advertisement and your trust in Foodstore, you felt like this chocolate could be what you were looking for and thus made a purchase. However, after having consumed it a few times, you found it could not fulfill your needs. Theobromine did not turn out to be as tasteful and fast-acting as you thought. Based on some research, you verified that theobromine is a stimulant with a chemical composition similar to caffeine; however, the two yield different effects: theobromine is gentle, mild, and has a slow onset, whereas caffeine is intense, strong, and fast-acting. That explains why theobromine can hardly serve as the alternative to coffee for some people when an instant boost is required. To avoid any confusion, it would have been better if Foodstore had included a claimer saying that the effect and taste vary from person to person.

Appendix C. Regulatory focus priming tasks (study 2 and study 3)

Regulatory focus priming task 1 (study 2)

You will be asked to sort words into different groups.

Please sort the following words into **two** (2) groups using your own judgment, making sure that the words in each group belong to the same category.

- **Prevention:** stability, responsibilities, obligations, duties, accountability
- **Promotion:** passion, achievement, aspirations, desires, triumph
- Furniture: cabinet, chair, bed, desk, table

Regulatory focus priming task 2 (study 2 and study 3)

You will be asked to read and complete a short passage with the missing words.

Please complete the following passage by ordering the words to fill in the blanks.

Prevention Focus: Imagine that you have been interviewing for jobs at several companies. Today, a phone call informs you of the good news. You got a job that you feel you cannot refuse - the one that you know you (1) needed and that is right for you. This is the job that your parents always thought you should do and that you promised yourself and others that you would pursue. In addition to your parents' expectation that you ought to have a stable job, this is a job you know you will feel secure and comfortable doing. You will be financially (2) responsible for supporting yourself. The job also provides comprehensive medical insurance, as you may need it at times. At the same time, the (3) stability of the job allows you to pay your loans, mortgage, and credit card bills. Since the company offers good vacation days per year, you will still be able to spend time on duties and (4) obligations in your personal life. Your family is in town and has given you a gift card to use as you like. You have decided to buy some products that will allow you to fulfill your

(5) duties and responsibilities.

Promotion Focus: Imagine that you have been interviewing for jobs at several companies. Today, a phone call informs you of the good news. You got an ideal job that puts you on track toward your (1) dream career - a job that you have always (2) wanted and aspired for. This is the job that you have always dreamed of and that you feel in your heart is the best you could hope for. In addition to the potential for developing a successful career, this is a job you know you will really (3) enjoy doing. It offers many opportunities to travel abroad, which fulfills your hope to experience new and exciting things. The job also includes perks, such as free membership at a new local health club, as you hope to stay energetic and fit. At the same time, it provides opportunities for personal growth and (4) gains. Since the company offers good vacation days per year, you will still be able to spend time on things you really wanted to achieve or obtain in your personal life, like traveling the world. This is a very exciting moment in your life, and you have decided to celebrate your (5) achievements by buying different products for yourself.

Regulatory focus priming task 3 (study 3)

You will be asked to briefly list your past and present dreams, hopes, and aspirations (duties, obligations, and responsibilities).

Promotion Focus

Please take a few minutes to think about and list your past:

- Dream(s):
- Hope(s):
- Aspiration(s)

Now, please think about and list your present:

- Dream(s):
- Hope(s):
- Aspiration(s)

Prevention Focus

Please take a few minutes to think about and list your past:

- Duty/ duties:
- Obligation(s):
- Responsibility/ Responsibilities:

Now, please think about and list your present:

- Duty/ duties:
- Obligation(s):
- Responsibility/ Responsibilities:

Appendix D. Measurements

Repurchase intention (Jones, Mothersbaugh, & Beatty, 2000)
I intend to continue to purchase this yogurt/chocolate over the next 12 months. (Ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree)
All things considered, I will likely purchase this yogurt/chocolate over the next 12 months. (Ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree)
Thinking about the shopping scenario you have read, please indicate the probability of you making a purchase of this yogurt/chocolate in the near future. (Ranging from 1= very unlikely/very improbably/very impossibly/never stand a chance to 7= very likely/very probably/very possibly/a very good chance)
Perceived deception (Román, 2010)
Ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree
I think Foodstore exaggerates the benefits and characteristics of the advertised chocolate/yogurt.
I think the information given by the Foodstore about this chocolate/yogurt is misleading.
I think Foodstore uses misleading tactics to convince me to buy this chocolate/yogurt.
I think the advertisement used by the Foodstore misrepresents the characteristics of this chocolate/yogurt.
Product type (Crowley, Spangenberg, & Hughes, 1992; Voss, Spangenberg, & Grohmann, 2003)
Please evaluate the advertised yogurt/chocolate on the following dimensions. (Ranging from 1 = Not at all fun/Not at all pleasurable/Not at all delightful/Not at all enjoyable/Not at all beneficial/Not at all healthy/Not at all wholesome/Not at all necessary to 7 = Very fun/Very pleasurable/Very delightful/Very enjoyable/Very beneficial/Very healthy/Very wholesome/Very necessary)
Below are definitions of hedonic products and utilitarian products. Please read the definitions and answer the following questions. Hedonic products: Hedonic products provide more experiential consumption (i.e., delight, pleasure, and

excitement). Examples of hedonic products are perfumes, Xbox, and sports cars.
Utilitarian products:
Utilitarian products are primarily instrumental, healthy, and functional. Examples of utilitarian products are hairdryers, microwaves, and family vans.
Based on the definitions of hedonic and utilitarian products, please evaluate the advertised yogurt/chocolate on the following dimensions.
(Ranging from 1= not at all hedonic/not at all utilitarian to 7 = very hedonic/very utilitarian)
Regulatory focus (Pham & Avnet, 2004)
I would prefer to (ranging from 1 = do what is right/pay back my loans/try my best to keep my promises to 7 = do whatever I want/take a trip around the world/go wherever my heart takes me)
I would try to purchase products (ranging from 1 = that will not disappoint me/that is good for me/for performance to 7 = that will delight me/that I really want/for fun)
The thoughts and feelings that come to my mind are reflective of my (ranging from 1 = duties and responsibilities to 7 = hopes and aspirations)
Perceived amount of information (DeBusk, Killough, & Brown, 2009; Kim & Lennon, 2000)
Ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree
There was sufficient information for me to evaluate the advertised yogurt/chocolate.
The advertisement about the yogurt/chocolate contained enough information for me to make an informed decision.
I learned a lot about the advertised yogurt/chocolate from the advertisement.
Believability of the scenario/advertisement (Sen, Gürhan-Canli, & Morwitz , 2001)
Ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree
This scenario/advertisement seems believable.
This scenario/advertisement seems realistic.
This scenario/advertisement seems credible.
Mood (Peterson & Sauber, 1983)
Currently, I feel
Ranging from 1= very bad to 7= very good

Ranging from 1= very negative to 7= very positive
Ranging from 1= very unhappy to 7= very happy
Involvement (Wang & Lee, 2006; McQuarrie & Munson, 1992)
Ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree
While processing the information in the survey, I was very involved.
While processing the information in the survey, I was very attentive.
While processing the information in the survey, I was very interested.
Willingness to purchase (Dodds, Monroe, & Grewal, 1991)
I predict that I will purchase this yogurt/chocolate. (Ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree)
How likely would you be to explore the product information further to purchase this yogurt/chocolate? (Ranging from 1 = extremely unlikely to 7 =extremely likely)
What is the likelihood that you would purchase this yogurt/chocolate? (Ranging from 1 = extremely unlikely to 7 =extremely likely)