

MARKETING MANIPULATION: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF ITS ANTECEDENTS, MECHANISMS, OUTCOMES, AND MODERATORS

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Abstract: Marketing manipulation is a critical area of research with important implications for consumer welfare and public policy. This literature review synthesizes and analyses the research on marketing manipulation to provide an understanding of its key dimensions, antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and moderators. The review identifies five key dimensions of marketing manipulation: information asymmetry, cognitive biases, emotional appeals, social influence, and deceptive advertising. Antecedents, such as individual differences and cultural factors, can influence the extent to which consumers are susceptible to marketing manipulation. Mechanisms, such as the use of emotional appeals or social influence, can affect the ways in which consumers are manipulated by marketing tactics. Outcomes, such as consumer behaviour or well-being, can be influenced by the extent and type of marketing manipulation. Moderators, such as situational factors or regulatory frameworks, can affect the extent to which marketing manipulation is effective or harmful. The review concludes with a discussion of the implications of marketing manipulation for consumer welfare and public policy, as well as future research directions and methodological considerations for studying this phenomenon.

Keywords: Marketing manipulation, Consumer welfare, Marketplace efficiency, Deceptive advertising, Information asymmetry, Cognitive biases, Social influence, Public policy.

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing manipulation refers to the use of deceptive, misleading, or exploitative tactics to influence consumer behavior and decision-making (Böckenholt & Hügelschäfer 2020; Smith & Cooper-Martin 2018). It can take many forms, including false advertising, hidden fees, emotional appeals, and social influence, and can have serious consequences for consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency (Cialdini & Goldstein 2004; Tversky & Kahneman 1974).

Studying marketing manipulation is important for several reasons. First, it can help to promote consumer welfare and protect consumers from harm (EU 2011; Federal Trade Commission 2021). By understanding the tactics and strategies used by marketers to influence consumer behavior, consumers can be better equipped to make informed and rational decisions about the products and services they purchase. Second, studying marketing manipulation can also contribute to a more efficient and competitive marketplace (Böckenholt & Hügelschäfer, 2020). By identifying and reducing deceptive and exploitative practices, consumers are more

likely to trust and participate in the marketplace, and businesses are more likely to compete on the basis of quality and innovation.

Marketing manipulation is a pervasive problem in the contemporary marketplace, with businesses using various tactics to influence consumer behavior and decision-making. These tactics can be deceptive, misleading, or exploitative, leading to consumer harm and marketplace inefficiencies. A study by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) found that the top complaints from consumers regarding advertising were false or misleading claims, followed by offensive or inappropriate content, and unsolicited messages (MCMC, 2020). These issues can negatively impact consumers' trust in the marketplace and their willingness to participate in it.

Studying marketing manipulation is important for several reasons. First, it can help to protect consumers from harm and promote their welfare. By understanding the tactics and strategies used by marketers to influence consumer behavior, consumers can make informed and rational decisions about the products and services they purchase. Second, it can contribute to a more efficient and competitive marketplace, which benefits both consumers and businesses.

In Malaysia, marketing manipulation is a critical issue that requires close attention. For example, a study by Mohd Suki et al., (2014) found that consumers in Malaysia are often exposed to misleading and deceptive advertising, which can negatively impact their purchasing decisions and trust in the marketplace. Another study by Basha and Kurniawan (2020) found that consumers in Malaysia are vulnerable to social influence tactics used by businesses, which can lead to suboptimal decision-making and consumer harm.

To address these issues, it is important to develop a comprehensive understanding of marketing manipulation and its implications for consumer welfare and public policy in Malaysia. This report aims to provide such an understanding by reviewing and synthesizing the existing research on marketing manipulation in Malaysia and its implications for consumer welfare and public policy.

The purpose of this report is to develop a conceptual framework for understanding the key dimensions of marketing manipulation, including its antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and moderators. It also aims to review and synthesize the existing research on marketing manipulation in Malaysia, focusing on the key findings and implications for consumer welfare and public policy. Finally, the report will identify and discuss the key research directions and implications for future research on marketing manipulation in Malaysia.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Marketing manipulation can be understood through several key dimensions. A conceptual framework for marketing manipulation can be developed based on its antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and moderators.

Antecedents refer to the factors that contribute to the occurrence of marketing manipulation. Examples of antecedents include information asymmetry (Baker, 2018), cognitive biases (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), cultural factors (de Mooij, 2018), and regulatory frameworks (Federal Trade Commission, 2021). These factors can create opportunities for businesses to use manipulative tactics to influence consumer behavior.

Mechanisms refer to the tactics and strategies that businesses use to manipulate consumers. Examples of mechanisms include emotional appeals (Bagozzi et al., 1999), social influence (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004), and deceptive advertising (Smith & Cooper-Martin, 2018). These mechanisms can be used to influence consumer decision-making and create a sense of urgency or need.

Outcomes refer to the effects of marketing manipulation on consumer behavior, well-being, and marketplace efficiency. Marketing manipulation can lead to negative outcomes, such as consumer harm, loss of trust, and inefficiencies in the marketplace (Böckenholt & Hügelschäfer, 2020). However, marketing manipulation can also have positive outcomes, such as increased competition and innovation in the marketplace (Dholakia et al., 2010).

Moderators refer to the factors that influence the relationship between antecedents, mechanisms, and outcomes of marketing manipulation. Examples of moderators include individual differences (Giesler & Pohlmann, 2003), situational factors (Aaker & Lee, 2001), and regulatory frameworks (Federal Trade Commission, 2021). These factors can either exacerbate or mitigate the effects of marketing manipulation on consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency.

The conceptual framework provides a comprehensive understanding of marketing manipulation by identifying its key dimensions and the relationships among them. The next sections of this report will review and synthesize the existing research on marketing manipulation in Malaysia and its implications for consumer welfare and public policy.

The conceptual framework presented in the previous section provides a comprehensive understanding of marketing manipulation and its key dimensions. However, it is important to consider the unique context of marketing manipulation in Malaysia and how it affects consumer welfare and public policy. In this section, we will review and synthesize the existing research on marketing manipulation in Malaysia.

Research has shown that marketing manipulation is a prevalent issue in Malaysia, with a variety of industries engaging in manipulative tactics. For example, in the food industry, companies have been found to use deceptive advertising to mislead consumers about the nutritional value of their products (Khoo et al., 2016). Similarly, in the financial industry, companies have been found to use misleading claims and fine print in their marketing materials to manipulate consumers into signing up for loans or credit cards (Chin & Sia, 2013). Studies have also found that certain groups of consumers in Malaysia may be more vulnerable to marketing manipulation. For example, low-income individuals may be more susceptible to deceptive advertising and misleading claims because they have less access to information and resources to make informed decisions (Sahari & Ramayah, 2018).

Additionally, older adults may be more susceptible to emotional appeals in advertising, such as fear or nostalgia, which can lead to impulsive decision-making (Siti & Nor, 2019).

The prevalence of marketing manipulation in Malaysia has raised concerns about its impact on consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency. Some researchers have argued that marketing manipulation can lead to market inefficiencies, as consumers may make decisions based on false or incomplete information (Chen et al., 2019). Additionally, marketing manipulation can contribute to consumer harm, such as financial loss or health problems, and can erode consumer trust in businesses and the marketplace (Khoo et al., 2016).

To address the issue of marketing manipulation in Malaysia, several regulatory frameworks and consumer protection laws have been established. For example, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) has established guidelines for advertising and promotional activities in the telecommunications industry (MCMC, 2021). Similarly, the Consumer Protection Act 1999 provides legal protection for consumers against unfair trade practices and false advertising (Department of Standards Malaysia, 2010).

In summary, marketing manipulation is a prevalent issue in Malaysia, with a variety of industries engaging in manipulative tactics. Certain groups of consumers may be more vulnerable to marketing manipulation, and it can lead to negative outcomes such as consumer harm and market inefficiencies. Regulatory frameworks and consumer protection laws have been established to address the issue, but further research and action are needed to protect consumer welfare and promote marketplace efficiency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing manipulation is a complex phenomenon that has been studied extensively across a variety of fields, including marketing, psychology, and economics. This section provides an overview of key research findings on marketing manipulation, including its antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and moderators.

Antecedents

Information asymmetry and cognitive biases are two key antecedents of marketing manipulation. Information asymmetry occurs when one party in a transaction has more information than the other party, which can create opportunities for manipulation (Ariely, 2008). Cognitive biases refer to the systematic errors in judgment and decision-making that can lead to irrational behavior (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). For example, the availability heuristic is a cognitive bias in which people overestimate the likelihood of events that are more readily available in memory (Hoch & Ha, 1986). These antecedents can make consumers more susceptible to marketing manipulation, as they may be more likely to make decisions based on incomplete or misleading information.

Mechanisms

Emotional appeals and social influence are two key mechanisms of marketing manipulation. Emotional appeals refer to the use of emotions such as fear, joy, or nostalgia to influence consumer behavior (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Social influence refers to the tendency of people to conform to the opinions and behaviors of others (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). For example, social proof is a social influence tactic in which people are more likely to adopt a behavior if they see others doing it (Giesler & Pohlmann, 2003). These mechanisms can be used by marketers to influence consumer behavior and elicit certain responses from them.

Outcomes.

Deceptive advertising and marketplace efficiency are two key outcomes of marketing manipulation. Deceptive advertising refers to advertising that misleads or deceives consumers, either by making false claims or by omitting important information (Smith & Cooper-Martin, 2018). Deceptive advertising can lead to negative outcomes such as consumer harm, financial loss, and erosion of trust in businesses and the marketplace. Marketplace efficiency refers to the degree to which markets function effectively, including factors such as competition, price transparency, and consumer protection (Böckenholt & Hügelschäfer, 2020). Marketing manipulation can lead to market inefficiencies, as consumers may make decisions based on false or incomplete information, which can have negative consequences for marketplace efficiency.

Moderators

Individual differences, situational factors, and regulatory frameworks are key moderators of marketing manipulation. Individual differences refer to the characteristics of consumers that make them more or less susceptible to manipulation (Giesler & Pohlmann, 2003). For example, consumers who are less knowledgeable about a product or service may be more susceptible to manipulation. Situational factors refer to the context in which marketing manipulation occurs, such as the timing or location of an advertisement (Aaker & Lee, 2001). For example, an advertisement that is displayed in a high-traffic area may be more effective at eliciting a response from consumers. Regulatory frameworks refer to the laws and regulations that govern advertising and marketing practices, which can either exacerbate or mitigate the effects of marketing manipulation on consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency (Federal Trade Commission, 2021). For example, regulations that require companies to disclose important information to consumers can help mitigate the effects of deceptive advertising.

Research in Malaysia

Marketing manipulation is a prevalent issue in Malaysia, with a variety of industries engaging in manipulative tactics. For example, in the food industry, companies have been found to use deceptive advertising to mislead consumers about the nutritional value of their products (Khoo et al., 2018). In the financial industry, consumers have been subjected to high-pressure sales tactics that may lead them to make poor financial decisions (Chin, 2020). In the telecommunications industry, consumers have reported feeling pressured to purchase unnecessary services and products (Lim & Othman, 2019).

Research in Malaysia has also found that cultural factors can influence the susceptibility of consumers to marketing manipulation. For example, in a study of Malaysian consumers, it was found that consumers who placed a greater emphasis on collectivism were more susceptible to social influence tactics used in advertising (Salleh et al., 2019). Additionally, Malaysian consumers were found to be more likely to make decisions based on emotional appeals, such as appeals to family values, than on rational factors such as price (Jalil et al., 2020).

Public policy in Malaysia has also addressed the issue of marketing manipulation, with the government taking steps to regulate and enforce laws related to deceptive advertising and

consumer protection. For example, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission has established guidelines for advertising and marketing practices in the telecommunications industry (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2016). The government has also established the Malaysian Competition Commission, which is responsible for enforcing competition laws and promoting fair competition in the marketplace (Malaysian Competition Commission, t.th).

Table 1 provides a summary of key research findings on marketing manipulation and its antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and moderators, including studies conducted in Malaysia.

Table 1: Summary of key research findings on marketing manipulation

Dimension	Key Findings
Antecedents	Information asymmetry and cognitive biases contribute to manipulation opportunities. Cultural factors, such as collectivism, can influence susceptibility to manipulation.
Mechanisms	Emotional appeals and social influence are commonly used tactics to influence consumer behavior. Malaysian consumers are more likely to make decisions based on emotional appeals than on rational factors such as price.
Outcomes	Deceptive advertising can mislead consumers and erode trust in businesses and the marketplace. Consumers in Malaysia have been subjected to deceptive advertising in various industries, including the food and financial industries.
Moderators	Individual differences, situational factors, and regulatory frameworks can either exacerbate or mitigate the effects of marketing manipulation on consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency. Public policy in Malaysia has addressed the issue of marketing manipulation through the establishment of guidelines and laws related to advertising and consumer protection.

These studies provide insight into the nature and impact of marketing manipulation in Malaysia, as well as the various factors that contribute to its prevalence and effectiveness. By understanding the antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and moderators of marketing manipulation, policymakers and businesses can develop strategies and regulations that promote consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency.

In addition, the studies also highlight the need for greater consumer education and awareness, as consumers who are more informed and knowledgeable about marketing tactics may be less susceptible to manipulation. Furthermore, the findings suggest that promoting a culture of critical thinking and rational decision-making may be effective in mitigating the effects of marketing manipulation.

Overall, the literature on marketing manipulation provides important insights into the nature and impact of this phenomenon on consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency. By understanding the factors that contribute to marketing manipulation and its various outcomes, policymakers and businesses can develop strategies and regulations that protect consumers and promote fair competition in the marketplace. Furthermore, by promoting consumer education and awareness, individuals can become more informed and empowered to make rational and informed decisions about the products and services they consume.

METHODS

Implications for Consumer Welfare and Public Policy

The literature on marketing manipulation has important implications for consumer welfare and public policy. This section will discuss three key implications: consumer education and empowerment, ethical and responsible marketing practices, and effective and enforceable legal and regulatory frameworks.

Consumer Education and Empowerment

One key implication of the literature on marketing manipulation is the need for greater consumer education and empowerment. Consumers who are more informed and knowledgeable about marketing tactics may be less susceptible to manipulation and more capable of making rational and informed decisions about the products and services they consume (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010; Hastings et al., 2020; Livingstone et al., 2012).

In Malaysia, there have been efforts to promote consumer education and empowerment. For example, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission has established guidelines for advertising and marketing practices in the telecommunications industry, which include provisions for the protection of consumer interests and the promotion of transparency and fairness in advertising (Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, 2016).

Furthermore, the Malaysian government has established various agencies and organizations that are responsible for protecting consumer rights and promoting consumer education, such as the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs and the Consumer Association of Penang (CAP) (Mansor, 2019). These efforts are important in empowering consumers to make informed decisions and protecting them from the negative effects of marketing manipulation.

Ethical and Responsible Marketing Practices

Another key implication of the literature on marketing manipulation is the need for ethical and responsible marketing practices. Businesses have a responsibility to ensure that their marketing practices are fair and transparent, and that they do not mislead or deceive consumers (De Mooij, 2018; International Chamber of Commerce, 2018; Kotler et al., 2017).

In Malaysia, the government has taken steps to regulate and enforce laws related to deceptive advertising and consumer protection. For example, the Consumer Protection Act of 1999 provides a framework for the protection of consumer interests and the regulation of business practices (Malaysia, 1999). The Act prohibits unfair practices such as false or misleading representations, and provides for consumer remedies such as compensation and refunds in cases of breach of contract or misrepresentation. Furthermore, the Malaysian Code of Advertising Practice, developed by the Advertising Standards Authority of Malaysia, provides guidelines for responsible advertising practices that are consistent with international standards and best practices (Advertising Standards Authority of Malaysia, t.th).

Effective and Enforceable Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

A third key implication of the literature on marketing manipulation is the need for effective and enforceable legal and regulatory frameworks. Laws and regulations play a critical role in promoting fair competition and protecting consumer welfare (EU 2011; Federal Trade Commission 2021).

In Malaysia, the government has established various regulatory bodies and agencies that are responsible for enforcing laws related to competition, consumer protection, and advertising practices. For example, the Malaysian Competition Commission is responsible for enforcing competition laws and promoting fair competition in the marketplace (Malaysian Competition Commission, t.th).

Furthermore, the Communications and Multimedia Act of 1998 provides a regulatory framework for the telecommunications industry that includes provisions for the protection of consumer interests and the promotion of fair competition (Malaysia, 1998). The Act provides for the establishment of the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, which is responsible for regulating and enforcing laws related to advertising and marketing practices in the telecommunications industry. Table 2 provides a summary of the key implications of the literature on marketing manipulation for consumer welfare and public policy.

Table 2. Summary key implication

Dimension	Key Implications
Consumer education	Promote consumer education and empowerment to mitigate the effects of marketing manipulation.
Ethical marketing practices	Businesses should engage in ethical and responsible marketing practices that are transparent and do not mislead or deceive consumers.
Legal and regulatory frameworks	Effective and enforceable legal and regulatory frameworks are needed to protect consumer interests and promote fair competition in the marketplace.

These key implications underscore the importance of promoting consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency in the context of marketing manipulation. By developing effective policies and regulations that protect consumers and promote fair competition, policymakers and businesses can work together to mitigate the negative effects of marketing manipulation on consumer welfare and promote a more transparent and equitable marketplace.

Moreover, it is crucial to recognize the importance of cultural and contextual factors in addressing marketing manipulation, especially in Malaysia. The diverse cultural and linguistic landscape in Malaysia presents unique challenges in regulating and enforcing laws related to marketing practices. Therefore, policymakers and businesses need to consider the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Malaysian population and develop strategies that are culturally and contextually appropriate (Khoo et al., 2018).

In conclusion, the literature on marketing manipulation provides valuable insights into the nature and impact of this phenomenon on consumer welfare and public policy. By understanding the antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and moderators of marketing manipulation, policymakers and businesses can develop effective strategies and regulations that

promote consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency. However, there is still much work to be done in developing policies and regulations that are effective in the Malaysian context, and that take into account the unique challenges and opportunities presented by Malaysia's diverse cultural and linguistic landscape.

RESULTS

The Research Directions

The literature on marketing manipulation provides a foundation for understanding the antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and moderators of marketing manipulation. This section will discuss key research questions and methodological considerations for studying marketing manipulation and provide a summary of research directions.

Research Questions

One key research question is how marketing manipulation affects consumer behavior and decision-making. This question involves understanding the various mechanisms and antecedents of marketing manipulation and their effects on consumer well-being and marketplace efficiency (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Smith & Cooper-Martin, 2018).

Another important research question is how to mitigate the negative effects of marketing manipulation on consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency. This question involves developing effective policies and regulations that protect consumers and promote fair competition in the marketplace (De Mooij, 2018; Federal Trade Commission, 2021).

Moreover, it is important to understand how cultural and contextual factors influence marketing manipulation, especially in the Malaysian context. This question involves recognizing the unique challenges and opportunities presented by Malaysia's diverse cultural and linguistic landscape and developing culturally and contextually appropriate strategies to address marketing manipulation (Khoo et al., 2018).

Methodological Considerations

Studying marketing manipulation presents several methodological challenges, including measuring and operationalizing the concept, controlling for confounding variables, and ensuring the validity and reliability of measures (Otnes & Maclaran, 2018).

One key methodological consideration is the use of experimental designs to test the effects of marketing manipulation on consumer behavior and decision-making. Experimental designs can control for confounding variables and isolate the effects of marketing manipulation on consumer behavior and decision-making (Hoch & Ha, 1986).

Another important methodological consideration is the use of surveys and other self-report measures to assess consumer attitudes and perceptions of marketing manipulation. Self-report measures can provide insights into how consumers perceive and respond to marketing tactics, as well as their level of knowledge and awareness of marketing manipulation (Böckenholt & Hügelschäfer, 2020).

Summary of Research Directions

Table 3 provides a summary of research directions for studying marketing manipulation, including key research questions and methodological considerations.

Table 3: Summary of Research Directions

Research Question	Methodological Considerations
How does marketing manipulation affect consumer behavior and decision-making?	Use of experimental designs to test the effects of marketing manipulation on consumer behavior and decision-making.
How can the negative effects of marketing manipulation be mitigated?	Development of effective policies and regulations that protect consumers and promote fair competition in the marketplace.
How do cultural and contextual factors influence marketing manipulation?	Recognition of the unique challenges and opportunities presented by Malaysia's diverse cultural and linguistic landscape and development of culturally and contextually appropriate strategies.

The literature on marketing manipulation highlights the importance of understanding the antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and moderators of this phenomenon, as well as its implications for consumer welfare and public policy. By addressing key research questions and methodological considerations, researchers can continue to advance our understanding of marketing manipulation and develop effective strategies and regulations to promote consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency.

Future research should continue to explore the complex relationships among the various dimensions of marketing manipulation and their effects on consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency. Additionally, research should focus on developing innovative and effective strategies to mitigate the negative effects of marketing manipulation on consumer welfare, such as through education and empowerment initiatives, ethical marketing practices, and effective legal and regulatory frameworks.

Moreover, future research should also consider the potential unintended consequences of policies and regulations designed to address marketing manipulation. For example, regulations that limit the use of certain marketing tactics or information may inadvertently limit consumer choice and marketplace efficiency (Obermiller & Spangenberg, 2017).

Finally, research should continue to examine the role of emerging technologies and social media in marketing manipulation, as well as their implications for consumer welfare and public policy. These technologies present unique challenges and opportunities in regulating and enforcing laws related to marketing practices, and it is crucial that policymakers and businesses stay abreast of these developments to effectively protect consumer interests and promote fair competition in the marketplace.

In summary, the study of marketing manipulation is a critical area of research that has important implications for consumer welfare and public policy. By understanding the key dimensions of marketing manipulation, their effects on consumer behavior and decision-making, and effective strategies and policies to address this phenomenon, researchers,

policymakers, and businesses can work together to promote a more transparent and equitable marketplace that benefits all consumers.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Marketing manipulation is a significant concern in today's marketplace, as it can lead to negative outcomes for consumers, businesses, and the economy at large. The literature review presented in this report has highlighted the key dimensions of marketing manipulation, as well as the antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and moderators that can influence its effects on consumer behavior and decision-making. The review has also discussed the implications of marketing manipulation for consumer welfare and public policy, as well as the future research directions and methodological considerations for studying this phenomenon.

The key dimensions of marketing manipulation identified in the literature review include information asymmetry, cognitive biases, emotional appeals, social influence, and deceptive advertising. These dimensions can lead to a range of negative outcomes, such as reduced consumer welfare, decreased marketplace efficiency, and unfair competition.

Information asymmetry refers to situations where one party has more or better information than the other party. This can lead to market inefficiencies and make it difficult for consumers to make informed decisions (Stiglitz, 2015). Cognitive biases, such as the availability heuristic or confirmation bias, can influence consumer decision-making by causing consumers to make decisions based on incomplete or biased information (Ariely, 2008). Emotional appeals, such as fear or happiness, can be used to manipulate consumer behavior and decision-making (Giesler & Pohlmann, 2003). Social influence, such as peer pressure or celebrity endorsements, can also affect consumer behavior and decision-making (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). Finally, deceptive advertising can involve false or misleading claims or omissions of material information, which can lead to consumer harm (Federal Trade Commission, 2021).

The literature review has also identified several antecedents, mechanisms, outcomes, and moderators that can influence the effects of marketing manipulation. Antecedents, such as individual differences or cultural factors, can influence the extent to which consumers are susceptible to marketing manipulation (De Mooij, 2018). Mechanisms, such as the use of emotional appeals or social influence, can affect the ways in which consumers are manipulated by marketing tactics (Bagozzi et al., 1999). Outcomes, such as consumer behavior or well-being, can be influenced by the extent and type of marketing manipulation (Smith & Cooper-Martin, 2018). Moderators, such as situational factors or regulatory frameworks, can affect the extent to which marketing manipulation is effective or harmful (EU, 2011).

The literature review has also highlighted the importance of addressing marketing manipulation for consumer welfare and public policy. Consumer education and empowerment initiatives can play a critical role in mitigating the negative effects of marketing manipulation and promoting informed decision-making (Hastings et al., 2020). Ethical and responsible marketing practices can also promote consumer welfare and fairness in the marketplace (Kotler et al., 2017). Effective and enforceable legal and regulatory frameworks are needed to protect consumers and promote fair competition in the marketplace (Federal Trade Commission, 2021).

Future research directions and methodological considerations for studying marketing manipulation were also discussed in the literature review. Key research questions include how marketing manipulation affects consumer behavior and decision-making, how to mitigate the negative effects of marketing manipulation on consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency, and how cultural and contextual factors influence marketing manipulation. Methodological considerations include using experimental designs to test the effects of marketing manipulation on consumer behavior and decision-making, as well as using self-report measures to assess consumer attitudes and perceptions of marketing tactics.

In conclusion, the study of marketing manipulation is a critical area of research that has important implications for consumer welfare and public policy. The literature review has provided a comprehensive understanding of marketing manipulation by identifying its key dimensions and the relationships among them. By addressing the key research questions and methodological considerations, researchers can develop a more comprehensive understanding of marketing manipulation and its implications for consumer welfare and public policy.

Moving forward, policymakers, businesses, and researchers must work together to develop effective strategies and policies to address marketing manipulation and promote consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency. This includes staying abreast of emerging technologies and social media, recognizing the cultural and contextual factors that influence marketing manipulation, and considering the potential unintended consequences of policy and regulatory interventions.

Effective policies and regulations must be developed to promote transparency, ethical marketing practices, and fair competition in the marketplace. In addition, consumer education and empowerment initiatives can play a critical role in promoting informed decision-making and mitigating the negative effects of marketing manipulation.

Future research must focus on exploring the complex relationships among the various dimensions of marketing manipulation and their effects on consumer welfare and marketplace efficiency. Additionally, research must focus on developing innovative and effective strategies to mitigate the negative effects of marketing manipulation on consumer welfare, such as through education and empowerment initiatives, ethical marketing practices, and effective legal and regulatory frameworks.

Research should also consider the potential unintended consequences of policies and regulations designed to address marketing manipulation. For example, regulations that limit the use of certain marketing tactics or information may inadvertently limit consumer choice and marketplace efficiency.

Finally, research must examine the role of emerging technologies and social media in marketing manipulation, as well as their implications for consumer welfare and public policy. These technologies present unique challenges and opportunities in regulating and enforcing laws related to marketing practices, and it is crucial that policymakers and businesses stay abreast of these developments to effectively protect consumer interests and promote fair competition in the marketplace.

In summary, the study of marketing manipulation is a critical area of research that has important implications for consumer welfare and public policy. By understanding the key dimensions of marketing manipulation, their effects on consumer behavior and decision-making, and effective strategies and policies to address this phenomenon, researchers,

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