# Controversies in Online Brand Communities: A Multifaceted Story

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**Abstract**
Controversies are known to trigger different consumer reactions, making it necessary to understand the underlying reasons for such diverse behaviors. This study examines the approach customers adopt when responding to controversies within the context of online brand communities. Focusing on the recent spokesperson misbehavior involving French fashion brand Dior, we explore the impact of various factors associated with controversies on consumer behavior. To capture the complexities of consumer perception, we adopt a holistic view to classify the factors that shape their actions. This study employs a longitudinal case study design, netnography for data collection, and qualitative content analysis for analysis to examine 45 Facebook posts published on Dior's official Facebook page over a seven-year period. Our results reveal that consumer reactions to controversies are influenced by the overall public perception of the controversy. Furthermore, our findings suggest that a positive consumer perception of a controversy acts as a buffer to mitigate its negative effects, and in some cases, can even produce positive outcomes. Conversely, a negative consumer perception leads to negative results. Our study contributes to the understanding of the dynamics of consumer behavior in response to controversies and provides insights for brand managers to effectively manage such situations.

*Keywords: controversy, consumer behavior, online brand communities, case study*