

Interest in rumour processes is evident in a number of disciplines, including anthropology (e.g. Gilmore 1978; Gluckman, 1963), psychology (e.g. Bordia & DiFonzo, 2004; Jaeger, Anthony, & Rosnow, 1980; Rosnow, 1991; Rosnow & Fine, 1976), sociology (e.g. Bergmann, 1993), and communication (e.g. Kimmel, 2004; Neil, 2000; Suls, 1991). Marketing research, however, has a only a limited number of studies on the subject (Rosnow, 1991, 2001). This oversight in the field is surprising given the potentially harmful nature of commercial rumours to organisations because of their transmission of inaccurate information. Furthermore, innuendo can undermine customers' and stakeholders' salient beliefs in the organisation.

Comment [TM1]: I've deleted this because I'm not sure you need to justify or explain what the real value of contributing to theory is.

Deleted: King, Keohane and Verba (1994) assert that the most important way to contribute to theory is to "show that theories or evidence designed for some purpose in one literature could be applied in another literature to solve an existing but apparently unrelated problem" (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, p. 17).

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Comment [TM2]: Deleting this because we've already established that fact by showing that rumours have been studied in so many various disciplines.

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The majority of research conducted on rumours has been from the sociological perspective. This approach explores the development and movement of commercial rumour, but does not provide a strategic perspective for rumour management (Tybout, et al., 1981). Apart from Tybout et al.'s (1981), and Koller's (1992) study, research in this area has not investigated strategies for managing commercial rumours.

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Comment [TM3]: This contradicts the previous sentence. Check dates or authors, or recast the sentence to make your meaning clear.

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Using primarily experimental research, Tybout et al. (1981), Koenig (1985) and Koller (1992) investigated the effects of how rumours are treated in an information processing context. Kamins, Folkes, and Perner (1997) researched rumour transmission, while Bordia and Rosnow (1998) developed a general framework to track rumour transmission processes using computer-mediated communication networks. DiFonzo and Bordia (2002) developed and tested an integrated model of the belief in and accuracy of workplace rumour activity; their study confirmed Kamis et al.'s (1997) findings in relation to the role played by uncertainty, anxiety, and belief in rumour activity. Bordia and DiFonzo (2004) investigated rumours that appear on the Web from a social psychology perspective, seeking to categorise rumour discussion by using a

Comment [TM4]: 2 lines above, it says "strategic perspective for rumour management". It doesn't say anything about commercial rumours. Are you making a new point with this sentence? If not, make sure the phrases read the same.

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Rumour Interaction Analysis System which identified the differences between dread and wish rumours.

Although the studies cited so far have studied rumours and their spread through information technologies, none of them have explored how to manage commercial rumours in this new communication medium. This study focuses on the unexplored area of rumour response effect for commercial e-mail rumours.

Computer-mediated communication is widely used for informal communication, and provides a new and excellent way to study and track the interaction of commercial rumours (Bordia & DiFonzo, 2004). It enables researchers to observe public discourse unobtrusively and access data via e-mail and chat rooms (Bordia, 1996; Bordia & Rosnow, 1998). Kamis et al. (1997) explored and tested rumour transmission. Although Bordia and DiFonzo's 2004 study was the first to explore, test, and measure rumours in an online environment, it did not test possible response strategies. The dearth of research in this area significantly limits the development of appropriate marketing response strategies for managing commercial rumours. Wilkie (1990) asserts that the most important issue when faced with rumours is how best to manage them. This study proposes to investigate rumour response strategies in the marketing context, specifically in terms of e-mail rumours. Hence, the organisational use of online communication in specifically responding to and managing commercial rumours is the focus of this study.

The responses tested in this study are based on Tybout et al.'s (1981) study; responses such as refutation, ignorance, retrieval, and storage are tested for their effectiveness in terms of handling commercial e-mail rumours. To evaluate the effectiveness of each response, salient beliefs, reported intentions to consume, and reported consumption measures will be used.

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Comment [TM5]: Either explain in a footnote what this means, or do it in-text.

Comment [TM6]: I have deleted this paragraph because it was an intrusion in the flow of the brief literature review that you are conducting here. If you need to demonstrate knowledge of the things discussed in the deleted para, perhaps it might be best to do so elsewhere.

Deleted: Prior to the development of the Web, studies of rumours sort to describe the type, frequency and spread of the rumour (Allport and Postman 1947a). The Web is now the most frequently used communication channel of rumour (DiFonzo and Bordia 2004). Due to the lack of controls, the Web provides a conduit for aggrieved and hate groups to use the Web to publish malicious allegations (Kimmel 2004).

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