Factors Affecting Online Review Helpfulness: Review and Reviewer Components

Sahar Karimi and Fang Wang

Abstract Today's consumers rely heavily on the opinion of other consumers when making purchase decisions. Understanding the degree to which a review contributes to a purchase decision, its "helpfulness", is important to online businesses. Despite the growing number of studies on online reviews, the impact of visual cues on consumer's evaluation of review helpfulness has remained underexplored. This chapter examines the effect of reviewer image, along with previously examined review attributes, such as review depth, valence, and equivocality, on review helpfulness. With a sample of 1400 reviews from mobile gaming applications, we report that reviewer image can significantly enhance consumers' evaluation of review helpfulness. We did not find significant differential effects of image types (i.e. self, family, or random images) on review helpfulness. The results call for further research on the impact of visual cues as well as reviewer attributes on review helpfulness.

S. Karimi (✉)
Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, UK
e-mail: karimis@edgehill.ac.uk

F. Wang
Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, Canada
e-mail: fwang@wlu.ca