

**THE CUSTOMER IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT?
A STUDY ON THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF EWOM SENDERS**

Andreas Munzel, Ludwig Maximilians University Munich, Germany
Anton Meyer, Ludwig Maximilians University Munich, Germany
Kathrin Feigl, Ludwig Maximilians University Munich, Germany

ABSTRACT

Since the increasing importance of the Internet, consumer interactions have been moving from offline to online, from personal to stranger interactions. Thus the shift of traditional word-of-mouth to the web comes with new challenges for companies and consumers. Seekers of electronic word-of-mouth – as opposed to traditional word-of-mouth – only have limited information on the sender of the message and hence have to derive the value of the message and trustworthiness of the sender from cues available in the written text. In spite of an increasing amount of empirical research on (electronic) word-of-mouth so far, research lacks of investigating how consumers communicate and how this communication style influences the receiver.

We conducted a 2x2x2 online experiment with 768 participants, in order to investigate the effects of the communication style applied by the sender, as well as the motives of the sender, on the sender's trustworthiness and purchase intention of the receiver, in consumer online reviews. Results show that an informational review has a higher effect on purchase intention than an emotional review. Furthermore, we found a moderating effect of the perceived motive on the sender's trustworthiness.

References available upon request.