

Summary for Lay Audience

Over the past few decades, the internet has risen to prominence, enabling consumers to not only quickly access large amounts of information, but also openly share content (e.g., blogs, videos, reviews) with a substantially large number of fellow consumers. Given the vast presence of consumers in the online space, it has become increasingly critical for marketers to better understand the way consumers share, and learn from, consumer-generated content, a research area known as electronic word-of-mouth. In this dissertation, I advance our understanding about the shared content generated by consumers on online review platforms. In Essay 1, I study why and how the *expertise* of consumers in generating reviews systematically shapes their rating evaluations and the downstream consequences this has on the aggregate valence metric. I theorize, and provide empirical evidence, that greater expertise in generating reviews leads to greater restraint from extremes in evaluations, which is driven by the number of attributes considered by reviewers. Further, I demonstrate two major consequences of this restraint-of-expertise effect. (i) Expert (vs. novice) reviewers have less impact on the aggregate valence metric, which is known to affect page-rank and consumer consideration. (ii) Experts systematically benefit and harm service providers with their ratings. For service providers that generally provide mediocre (excellent) experiences, experts assign significantly higher (lower) ratings than novices. Building on my investigation of expert reviewers, in Essay 2, I investigate the differential effects of generating reviews on *mobile devices* for expert and novice reviewers. I argue, based on Schema Theory, that expert and novice reviewers adopt different “strategies” in generating mobile reviews. Because of their review-writing experience, experts develop a review-writing schema, and compared to novices, place greater emphasis on the consistency of

various review aspects, including emotionality of language and attribute coverage in their mobile reviews. Accordingly, although mobile (vs. desktop) reviews are shorter for both experts and novices, I show that experts (novice) generate mobile reviews that contain a slight (large) increase in emotional language and are more (less) attribute dense. Drawing on these findings, I advance managerial strategies for review platforms and service providers, and provide avenues for future research.

Keywords: Electronic word of mouth, Expertise, Mobile devices, Online reviews, Platform strategy