

Creativity – help or hindrance? The impact of product review creativity on perceived helpfulness

Deepak S. Kumar, Sangeetha Gunasekar, Keyoor Purani and Federico de Gregorio

Abstract

Although the role of creativity in influencing consumer responses is well explored in research related to marketer-generated content, it has yet to be examined for consumer-generated online reviews. Across two studies (a text analysis of 33,508 online reviews and an experiment), this research examines the influence of creativity in online review narratives on readers' perceptions of review helpfulness. The results from these studies show that: 1. more creative reviews are evaluated as more helpful than less creative reviews, 2. perceived cognitive effort of the review originator mediates this relationship, but perceived sincerity of the review does not, and 3. product type moderates the relationship, such that greater creativity positively impacts perceived helpfulness of reviews for search products but has a negative effect for experience products.

Keywords: Creativity, Online reviews, Helpfulness, Experimental design and Text analysis

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