

“Status-Effect” on Review Platforms: How do Gaining or Losing Status Awards Affect Reviewers’ Behaviour?

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Abstract

Review platforms use a variety of status-based reward systems, such as ranks and badges, to explicitly recognize and incentivize contributing reviewers. The status awarded in such systems can be perpetual (e.g. TripAdvisor’s TripCollective badges) or transient (e.g. Amazon’s top reviewer badges). In a transient system, the awarded status is not permanent and reviewers experience both gains and losses in status. We investigate how gaining and losing status influences the quantity and quality of reviewers’ contributions. Our findings suggest that status gain increases the frequency, valence, and elaborateness of reviewers’ contributions. More importantly, status loss only has a small negative effect on the frequency of reviewers’ contributions. Also, reviewers’ experience moderates the effect of status change on the quantity of their contributions — reviewers with less experience changed their contributions more in response to gains and losses of status.

Keywords: *Online reviews; User generated content; Status awards*

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