

# Do not Go Where You Do not Belong: The Mis-Marketing Effect of Unnecessary tags

**Amir Sepehri**

Western University

**Rod Duclos**

Western University

**Seyednasir Haghighbardineh**

Washington State University

Cite as:

Sepehri Amir, Duclos Rod, Haghighbardineh Seyednasir (2021), Do not Go Where You Do not Belong: The Mis-Marketing Effect of Unnecessary tags. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 50th, (92090)

Paper from the 50th Annual EMAC Conference, Madrid, May 25-28, 2021



# Do not Go Where You Do not Belong: The Mis-Marketing Effect of Unnecessary tags

## **Abstract**

Online retailers are increasingly adopting “tags” as a means of categorizing their products as they believe more tags will lead to more visibility which in turn leads to higher ratings and sales. Across four different online platforms offering recipes, mobile-apps, books, and videos, we find that although there is a kernel of truth to that intuition, the visibility benefit comes at a greater cost. More tags make a product more likely to appear in search attempts where they do not belong or are not competitive enough, and that hurts the products’ overall ratings. The latter detrimental effect overweighs the former beneficial effect resulting in a negative total effect. We use different proxies for visibility and favorability. We also find that excessive tags lead to more dislikes and less likes with the former exceeding the latter. The implications for online platforms and consumers using those to publish their products are discussed.

**Keywords:** *Categorization; E-commerce; Reviews*

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour