

Can readers judge the trustworthiness of online product reviews based on positive versus negative emotional terms?

**Xzavier He**  
Vlerick Business School  
**Barbara Briers**  
IESEG School of Management

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# Can readers judge the trustworthiness of online product reviews based on positive versus negative emotional terms?

## **Abstract**

Fake reviews are prevalent. To combat this phenomenon, prior studies proposed to look at the use of emotional terms (e.g., guilt, fear, delight) to judge whether the review is fake or not. However, there are conflicting results on how review writers use emotional terms in fake reviews. Moreover, no studies have investigated whether review readers or neutral observers pick up the emotional terms and use them as a benchmark to judge the trustworthiness and perceived authenticity of the review. Our research investigated emotional terms in fake reviews from the perspectives of writers, readers, and observers. We found that review writers used more emotional terms in fake (vs. real) reviews, especially when the review was positive. However, readers could not pick them up. Observers could pick up the emotional terms and perceive emotional reviews as fake. However, they misjudged and believed that negative (vs. positive) emotional reviews are more likely to be fake.

**Keywords:** *Fake-reviews; emotion; trustworthiness*

**Track:** Digital Marketing & Social Media