

Reaching beyond the stars – the effect of emotionality on online word-of-mouth across cultures

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Abstract

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is a crucial factor in consumer decision making, and current research emphasizes the need to understand what makes consumer reviews helpful. Seminal research by Yin et al. (2017) demonstrates that emotional reviews are considered more helpful as consumers infer increased reviewer effort. However, findings are based in a Western setting and cultural influences remain largely unexplored. This research contributes to the extant marketing literature by examining the salience and effect of culture on review helpfulness. Results from a field study and laboratory experiment provide evidence that cultural predeterminations influence reflexive decision making, but differences disappear during deliberative processing of information. We show that consumers in more individualistic cultures write more emotional reviews, but at the same time emotionality is considered more helpful across nations during the evaluation of reviews.

Keywords: *word-of-mouth; emotion; cross-culture*

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