

Don't Shoot the Messenger! The Effects of Customer Ratings on Relationships in Platform Markets

Sebastian Starke
University of Mannheim
Sergej von Janda
University of Mannheim
Sabine Kuester
University of Mannheim

Cite as:

Starke Sebastian, von Janda Sergej, Kuester Sabine (2020), Don't Shoot the Messenger! The Effects of Customer Ratings on Relationships in Platform Markets. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 49th, (63902)

Paper from the 49th Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 26-29, 2020.



Don't Shoot the Messenger! The Effects of Customer Ratings on Relationships in Platform Markets

Abstract

Despite the growing relevance of platforms, their management as digital business models remains challenging. To regulate encounters between customers and service providers, platforms frequently employ bidirectional rating systems used for both parties to evaluate each other. But how do customers react to receiving customer ratings? And how do these customer ratings affect the relationship between customers and the platform? We conduct an online scenario experiment in which customers receive customer ratings for their behavior in a service. Using balance theory as a conceptual underpinning, we show that customers' reactions are affected by the perceived adequacy of the ratings and their trust in the platform. Our findings contribute to the emerging literature on platforms and improve our understanding of the effect of customer ratings on relationships in platforms. Further, this study urges platform managers to educate service providers about the importance of adequate customer ratings.

Keywords: *Platforms; Customer ratings; Bidirectional ratings*

Track: Digital Marketing & Social Media