

Not all profile pictures are created equal: How emotions influence consumer ratings in the sharing economy

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## **Abstract**

Whereas profile pictures are key in self-presentation on Internet, less is known on how they influence consumer decisions. This research examines in the sharing economy how emotions displayed by the hosts in their profile pictures influence the grades they get. Drawing on the SOR framework (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), this research argues and shows that emotions displayed in profile pictures bias the consumer rating decisions. A large field study found that hosts receive higher ratings if they display sadness or happiness emotion in their profile picture (vs. a neutral face) but only if the consumer experience was negative. This suggests that the profile picture helps to mitigate the negative consumer evaluations and brings recommendations to manage its online self-presentation.

**Keywords:** *emotion; consumer ratings; sharing-economy*

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