

# Helpfulness of Online Reviews: Identifying the Sweet Spot of Fluent and Disfluent Textual Characteristics

**Mohammadhesam HAJIGHASEMI**

ESSEC Business School

**Amir Sepehri**

ESSEC Business School

**JAN LANDWEHR**

Goethe University Frankfurt

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## Abstract

Perceived helpfulness of information varies significantly. To explore systematic sources of this variation, the current set of three large-scale field studies on online reviews analyzes the impact of two core textual characteristics on the perceived helpfulness of online reviews. Based on processing fluency theory, we find that a contrastive writing style as a disfluent textual characteristic increases perceived helpfulness, an effect that is further enhanced by the concreteness of the employed language as a fluent textual characteristic. This finding indicates that perceived helpfulness of textual information traces back to an interaction of a disfluent and a fluent textual characteristic, supporting the notion that there are qualitatively different types of processing fluency and that judgments such as helpfulness are shaped by different facets of a processing fluency experience.

**Keywords:** *processing (dis)fluency, perceived helpfulness, online reviews*

**Track:** *Digital Marketing & Social Media*