

All Narrative Processing Is not Created Equal: The Impact of Decision-making Style on Narrative Transportation in User-generated Reviews

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Abstract

User-generated content, in the form of reviews written as stories, plays an important role in consumer purchase decisions. However, our understanding of how different consumers process these stories is limited. In four studies, we show that consumers adopt two distinct routes to narrative processing based on their decision-making style (maximizers vs. satisficers). The difference in narrative processing behavior is caused by the evaluation strategy that maximizers adapt. We show that user-generated stories that rely on pictures (vs. text) hinder narrative processing independent of consumer decision-making style and that narrative processing can positively influence decision confidence and, consequently, customization. Our studies use experimental design as well as video recording, and the think-aloud method to measure narrative processing behavior as it unfolds. This allows investigation of the process of narrative processing in a realistic and unintrusive manner.

Keywords: narrative processing, decision-making style, online reviews

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