

Content (UGC). Prior work in marketing has mainly focused on the positive impact of UGC on product sales as well as the generation of UGC. In this paper, utilizing a unique data set that includes all transactions and multiple forms of UGC for 22 product categories, we build a discrete-choice model to study the effect of UGC on product return decisions. UGC will affect the probability to return as a result of its effect on the level and certainty of product expectations. The forms of UGC we examine are product reviews and Questions and Answers (Q&A). We find that an increase in the number of product reviews lowers the return probability due to reduced uncertainty. An increase in the valence of the product reviews lifts the probability to return as a consequence of a higher disconfirmation of expectations. An unexpected finding is that questions, independent of whether they are answered or not lifts the probability that the product will be returned. This paper demonstrates how UGC effects go beyond the moment of purchase but also affect the post-purchase decision to return or keep the product.

Keywords: User Generated Content, expectations, post-purchase

Boosting or Attenuating? The Linguistic Features of Sentiment Strength in User Generated Content

Francisco Villarroel, Maastricht University

Ko de Ruyter, Maastricht University

Martin Wetzels, Maastricht University

Dhruv Grewal, Babson College

Stephan Ludwig, Maastricht University

As markets have been labeled as conversations and consumer-to-consumer communications have been recognized as a dominant force in driving consumer patronage, companies are facing the challenge of having to resort to a new generation of performance metrics that provides guidance in a social commerce environment. With respect to this, sentiment analysis of text-based User Generated Content (UGC) has become an increasingly popular way of staying in touch with customers. The viability of sentiment analysis as a performance metric, however, has been seriously questioned due to its limited predictive ability in assessing diverging degrees of positive and negative sentiments embedded in large and diverse volumes of online textual conversations. In this study, we advance automated text-mining modeling, based on linguistic theory, to deal with aforementioned issues. On the basis of emergent theorizing on speech acts, we zoom in on how linguistic style elements -modal and relational meaning- can boost or attenuate sentiment expression in online customer reviews. The modality of sentiment is accounted for by considering arousal intensity of affect-laden words. Moreover, commonalities of linguistic style elements

on the basis of function words, such as pronouns, tenses and word interlinks (patterns) reflect conversants' alliance or relational closeness to a consensual style of interaction. This is referred to as linguistic style matching. We test our theory-based predictions by examining more than 100.000 reviews across a range of 8 different product/service categories. The empirical results show that adding aforementioned linguistic elements increases the predictive ability of a sentiment classification model of customer online reviews, allowing firms to develop better quantitative metrics from online textual information. Finally, we corroborate our approach in sampled Facebook and Twitter conversations. Theoretical and managerial implications are discussed.

Keywords: User Generated Content, automated text-mining, linguistic elements