

Theorizing additional reviews and its effect for online goods sales

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Abstract. With the booming of the Internet, online shopping has gradually become the preferred way for people to buy things. During online shopping, online-shopping reviews have a strong impact on consumers' purchasing behavior and sales of online goods. With the continuous improvement of the e-commerce platform review system, online-shopping additional reviews appeared. With a higher degree of credibility, it is a supplement and amendment to the original reviews. Its impact on the sale of online goods is more far-reaching. Most of the existing studies focus on the first reviews of online shopping and there is little discussion on the additional reviews. This article chooses the additional reviews as a breakthrough point and selects online goods as the research object to study the effect of additional reviews for online goods sales.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development and innovation of information technology, the number of China's online shopping users has reached 413 million, an increasing of 51.83 million compared with the end of last year and the growth rate was 14.3%^[1]. During online shopping, consumers search all kinds of information for better understanding of the goods and online-shopping reviews are important sources of reference. These reviews posted on the online-shopping websites generally refer to the using experience and degree of satisfaction evaluation, including positive and negative views. They directly affect the sales of online goods. A global survey of eMarketer in 2013 showed that 92% of consumers are accustomed to browsing evaluation information of online goods before purchasing and 67% of online goods sales depend on the corresponding online-shopping reviews^[2]. Obviously, online-shopping reviews play a very important role during online shopping.

However, because of the existence of adverse factors, such as writing some false positive reviews for online shop by someone called "Online Water Army", many consumers began to question the credibility of online-shopping reviews. Hence, additional review came into being, it gives consumers a second opportunity to write down their feeling of goods which is an effective supplement to the existing online-shopping reviews, which will increase authenticity and reliability. As a new review mechanism, the additional review is more significant to guide consumers to purchase and its impact on the sales of online goods is also more significant^[3].

2. Additional reviews of online-shopping

Up to now, there are a lot of studies on the first reviews, but there are few studies on the additional reviews. The research on the online-shopping additional reviews have just started and the research in this field are relatively new. In addition, among these existing research, additional reviews and the first reviews are usually combines, to explore the interaction between the two. This article will also use this research method^[4].

2.1 Problems of the first reviews

Most of the mainstream online shopping websites provide a platform for consumers to publish their own shopping experience and reviews freely. We regard them as the first reviews and they have been closely concerned by consumers and businesses for a long time.

However, first reviews have also indicates some problems. From the perspective of the business, they specifically look for the "Online Water Army" to write positive reviews in order to attract consumers. This behavior led to a large number of false positive reviews and mislead consumers' behavior. From the viewpoint of consumers, when consumers published positive reviews, they may have not used the goods deeply. They just give reviews according to some external factors, such as the exquisite goods packaging or fast logistics speed but they ignore the quality of goods, which results in greatly reducing of online-shopping reviews' quality. So the recipients of the online-shopping reviews can't obtain fair and objective information about the goods.

2.2 The emergence and definition of the additional review

With the continuous development of online shopping market, e-commerce platform has begun to realize the problem of first reviews. Thus, additional review came into being and it is a new review function launched in April 2012 by the leading electricity supplier platform of Taobao and Tmall. It means that consumer will have second opportunity to publish additional reviews about the goods and the seller will also have second chance to explain or reply to consumer within 180 days after the completion of the first response between the two sides. Besides, additional reviews cannot be modified or deleted. Additional review is a modification of the first review. So there is no doubt that its impact on consumers is more far-reaching^[5].

In this article, the concept of online-shopping additional review has the following definition: online-shopping additional review is a special form of online-shopping review. It's a supplement and amendment after completing of first view. Its format is generally as text and it can reflect the consumers' online shopping experience more accurately.

2.3 Comparison between additional review and first review

Additional reviews and first reviews can both reflect the consumers' shopping attitudes and feelings. Compared to the first reviews, additional reviews mainly have these following differences.

(1) In the view of the source, the first reviews may be artificially manipulated, for example, business looks for "Online Water Army" to give positive reviews or lures consumers to write positive reviews with benefits. The additional reviews are largely reflect consumers' real ideas, so it is more credibility.

(2) In the view of the willing and initiative, the system is filled with positive reviews by default if consumers do not review in a certain period of time or the majority of consumers will simply give positive reviews in order to save time, which leads to a lot of meaningless first reviews. Inversely, the additional reviews are that consumers take the initiative to give, so it can reflect the real thoughts of the consumers.

(3) In the view of the richness of the information conveyed, the first reviews may be the evaluation and description of the superficial information after consumers receive the goods, such as appearance and delivery speed of the goods, etc. Inversely, additional reviews are made after using the goods actually for a period of time. It focuses on the evaluation of the quality of the goods. Its amount of information is more abundant and persuasive.

(4) In the view of the limit of publish time, consumers are allowed to make additional comments within 180 days after the completion of the transaction, but the first reviews must be made in the first 15 days after the transaction (in the case of Taobao). Therefore, additional reviews can undoubtedly reflect the quality of goods in the relatively long-term and the feedback on the seller's follow-up services and that's why additional reviews are more likely to attract the attention of potential customers and provide better decision support for them^[6].

3. Analysis on effect of additional reviews for online goods sales

3.1 The effect of additional reviews' characteristics

3.1.1 Perceived usefulness of additional reviews from the perspective of cognitive effect

The cognitive effect of additional review is the degree that consumers can obtain information about the real situation of the goods from the reviews. That is how much useful information is available for consumers. In the current research on online-shopping reviews, scholars use "perceived usefulness of review" to describe it^[7]. Perceived usefulness can affect the behavior of consumer's purchasing.

Generally, the stronger the perceived usefulness, the more it can promote consumer to purchase. Thus, it can affect the sales of goods ^[8].

So, we put forward that additional reviews affect the sales of goods through perceived usefulness.

3.1.2 Emotional tendency of additional reviews from the perspective of persuasion effect

The persuasion effect of additional review is the positive or negative emotional tendency of itself to guide the other potential consumers. The higher emotional tendency indicates positive attitude of the consumer. After browsing the consumer's online reviews, other potential consumers will have the same or similar emotional attitude towards the goods. That will affect their purchase decisions and ultimately affect the sales of the goods ^[9]. Gruen found that positive online reviews can effectively improve the consumer's attitude and willingness to purchase goods and services, while negative reviews will reduce or eliminate the consumer's willingness to purchase ^[10].

So, we put forward that additional reviews affect the sales of goods through emotional tendency.

3.2 The effect of the interaction between additional reviews and first reviews

The factor most concerned by the consumers is the consistency and difference in emotion between the first reviews and the additional reviews. The first reviews may be positive but additional reviews may be negative. The emotion between the two may be contrast. According to the difference or consistency of the emotion, the interaction of them can be divided into the following four cases.

Table 1. The classification of the interaction effects between the first and additional reviews

Consistency or difference	Description(between a group of reviews)	Definition
Consistency	① emotional tendency of first review and additional review are positive	Positive emotion consistency
	② emotional tendency of first review and additional review are negative	Negative emotion consistency
Difference	③ emotional tendency of first review is positive and additional review is negative	Negative emotion difference
	④ emotional tendency of first review is negative and additional review is positive	Positive emotion difference

3.2.1 Emotion consistency

When the consumer's reviews are positive after online shopping and they are even satisfied with the goods after a period of time, they will publish the positive additional reviews of the goods. It proves that the quality of goods or services is able to withstand the test of time. These two positive emotions have a positive impact on other consumers' behavior. Therefore, when the emotion of the first reviews and the emotion of the additional reviews are both positive (i.e., positive emotion consistency), it can maximize the consumers' willingness to purchase goods. As a result, the sales of goods will increase.

So, we put forward that additional reviews affect the sales of goods through positive emotion consistency.

On the contrary, when the emotion of the first reviews and the additional reviews both show a negative tendency, it prove that consumers have a great degree of disappointment and hold a strong negative attitude towards the goods. The double negative reviews will greatly reduce the purchasing intention and attitude of other consumers, which will lead to lower sales ^[11].

So, we put forward that additional reviews affect the sales of goods through negative emotion consistency.

3.2.2 Emotion difference

When the emotion of first review is positive, but the emotion of additional review is negative, it is possible that consumers are not fully aware of the actual quality of goods. They make the positive first reviews just because the good appearance or fast logistics speed. But in the actual use of the process, consumers find that the goods do not meet their expectations and then make negative additional reviews. Other consumers will think that the negative additional reviews are more useful. In this case, the consumers' willingness to purchase will significantly reduce and the goods sales will also be affected ^[12].

So, we put forward that additional reviews affect the sales of goods through negative emotion difference.

Similarly, when the first review is negative, the additional review is positive, indicating that the goods has greatly exceeded expectations of consumers. This situation will enhance the confidence of other consumers to purchase, thereby increasing sales of goods.

So, we put forward that additional reviews affect the sales of goods through positive emotion difference.

3.3 The effect of goods itself

Whether online or offline sales, the goods itself is a factor cannot be ignored, e.g., whether the goods is popular currently or whether they can meet the current market consumption trends and so on. Because of the development of Internet technology, consumers can easily access to the current trend of goods consumption. On the other hand, e-commerce platform is also actively recommend the goods which are concerned with consumers by technical means. Hence, the attention of the goods has become an important indicator of the impact of sales ^[13].

So, we put forward that the attention attracted by the goods affects the sales of goods.

4. Conclusions

This article chooses the additional reviews as a breakthrough point and selects online goods as the research object to study the effect of additional reviews on online goods sales. We put forward seven factors which will affect the sales of goods from three angles: perceived usefulness of additional reviews, emotional tendency of additional reviews, positive emotion consistency, negative emotion consistency, negative emotion difference, positive emotion difference, attention attracted by the goods. In order to make better sales of goods, businesses can develop more targeted marketing strategies based on the above seven factors.

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