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# Usefulness of Multi-Dimensional Online Reviews

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In various contexts, increasingly large numbers of consumers of products and services find value in learning about the pros and cons of market offerings through reading their peer consumers' experiences expressed in the form of online reviews. However, not all reviews are equally helpful to readers. Given the economic significance of reviews and their impact on consumer choices and, consequently, their satisfaction, understanding the determinants of review usefulness has received considerable attention by researchers. At the same time, over the years, online review systems have evolved, creating unexplored questions. Specifically, online platforms are increasingly gravitating toward using multi-dimensional review systems on which consumers can rate market offerings on multiple dimensions (e.g., durability and style for a product, or timeliness and reliability for a service). Compared to conventional (unidimensional) review systems, these new schemes can be expected to be more useful as they convey more nuanced details. Nonetheless, within these systems, our understanding about what makes for a useful review is very limited.

In this study I investigate what aspects of multi-dimensional reviews contribute to their usefulness. Particularly, employing the Cue Diagnosticity Theory (Skowronski & Carlston, 1989), I predict that certain patterns in the distributions of the ratings of quality sub-dimentions (e.g., their dispersion as measured by standard deviation or coefficient of variance) impact review usefulness. I also predict any discrepancy between a product's overall review rating and the ratings of its sub-dimensions to contribute negatively to that review's usefulness. I investigate these topics using online reviews collected from a prominent manufacturer of home and office furniture. Findings from this study can be useful for the design of review platforms as well as for providers of products and services.

**References**

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