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Computerized Analysis of Narrativity in Online Reviews

Tom van Laer, Cass Business School, University of London, tvnlaer@city.ac.uk*
Jennifer Edson Escalas, Owen Graduate School of Management, Vanderbilt University,
jennifer.escalas@owen.vanderbilt.edu
Stephan Ludwig, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Surrey,
s.ludwig@surrey.ac.uk
Ellis A. van den Hende, Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering, Delft University of
Technology, e.a.vandenhende@tudelft.nl

Short Abstract:

Whether they are on material or experiential purchases, online consumer reviews are the most influential form of word of mouth after recommendations from family and friends. Despite their relevance, extant contributions largely ignore reviews of experiential purchases. Taking a narratological perspective, this article distinguishes between elements of narrative content and narrative expression, the “what” and “how” of storytelling, in experience reviews. The authors integrate narrative content elements derived from previous literature, conceptualize genre as a narrative expression element whose changing emotions create five story shapes, and conceive drama as a narrative expression element with early or late emotional climaxes. The authors test the persuasive effects of the narrative elements with both a computerized text analysis of 190,461 reviews of 989 experiences on TripAdvisor and two experiments. Beyond the narrative content elements, the narrative expression elements contribute to additional variance in narrative transportation—mental engrossment in the narrative world—and subsequent persuasion.

Keywords: computational linguistics, experience, narrativity

Track: Digital Marketing and Social Media