

THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Departmental Research Seminar



TMI: How and Why Intimate Self-Disclosure Affects the Persuasiveness of Consumer Online Word of Mouth By

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Date : 20 May 2021 (THU)
Time : 9 am – 10:30 am
Venue : Online via Zoom

Abstract

Consumers frequently disclose intimate personal information (e.g., intimate experiences related to health or family) along with their product experiences when writing online reviews. Interpersonal relationship research suggests that disclosing intimate information might improve review helpfulness as people tend to like others who share (Collins and Miller 1994), and likeability can enhance message persuasiveness (Cialdini 2007). Counter to this premise, the present research finds a negative effect on persuasion when reviewers disclose intimate information about themselves on online review platforms. Unlike prior findings on intimate self-disclosure and liking, which is rooted in the friend context, online review platforms are filled with strangers. The authors argue that sharing intimate personal information is seen as socially inappropriate among strangers. Consequently, reviewers who share such information are seen as socially inappropriate, which in turn lowers their likeability, and reduces persuasion. These ideas are tested in two field studies using real Amazon.com reviews (N = 36,138) and three highly-controlled laboratory studies. These studies support the proposed framework and its underlying mechanism, shed light on boundaries, and demonstrate external validity.

Dr Zoey Chen is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Miami Herbert Business School, University of Miami. She is interested in the psychological mechanisms behind online word of mouth and social media. She has explored questions related to the motives behind online sharing, how to best incentivize different customers to make referrals, how sharing of word of mouth affects senders and receivers. Her work has appeared in top marketing journals, including the *Journal of Marketing Research*, the *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Marketing*, and *Journal of Consumer Psychology* and has received press coverage in the Harvard Business Review, Fox Business, Entrepreneur Magazine, Huffington Post, Vancouver Sun, etc.

She is on the Editorial Review Board of *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, and *Marketing Letters*. She has taught Marketing Research and Analysis to MBA and undergraduate students. She holds a Ph.D. in Marketing from Georgia Tech and a B.S. in Marketing and Finance from NYU Stern.

All interested are welcome.



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