

TripAdvisor vs. Yelp: How Prior Attribute Rating Influences Overall Evaluation

Markus Weinmann, Christoph Schneider, Peter N. C. Mohr, Jan vom Brocke



Research Motivation / Abstract

- User-generated online reviews and ratings are an important input into online and offline purchase decisions
- Ratings are susceptible to cognitive biases
- RQ: What are the effects of prior attribute ratings on overall ratings?

Background

Online Reviews

- Textual comments and numerical (star) ratings
- Considered more credible than marketing information
- Low ratings: potential of hurting future business
- Positively biased ratings → suboptimal purchase decisions

Anchoring

Definition:

Tendency of individuals to make judgments or estimates close to an anchor even though the anchor is not or only partly informative.

Theories:

- Anchoring-and-Adjustment Heuristic (e.g., Epley & Gilovich, 2001)
 - Starting with the anchor individuals insufficiently adjust
 - Evidence primarily for self-generated anchors
- Selective Accessibility Model (e.g., Mussweiler & Strack, 1999)
 - Anchor-consistent information is assumed to be more accessible
 - Evidence primarily for externally provided anchors

Hypotheses:

- H1:** Prior ratings of attributes work as anchors and bias overall ratings.
- H2:** Rating decision times are substantially reduced if attributes were previously rated.

Methodology

Study 1

- Observational study (50 random restaurants from Chicago)
- Data from TripAdvisor (attribute rating) and Yelp (without attribute rating)
- Group comparison of overall ratings

Studies 2 to 4

- Between-group experimental design
- DV: Overall rating of some item
- DV: Decision time (to come up with overall rating)
- Treatment: attribute rating present/absent

Study 2: University Rating

- Field Experiment with 143 students from the University of Liechtenstein (mean age 24.1 years, 63.7 % women)

Study 3: Restaurant Rating

- Online Experiment with 508 participants via Prolific.ac (mean age 33.3 years, 48 % women)

Study 4: Movie Rating (to be analyzed)

- Online Experiment with 200 participants via Prolific.ac (mean age 33 years, 51 % women)

Treatment Condition	Baseline Condition
<p>Please provide a detailed rating of your visit to TASTY RESTAURANT:</p> <p>Service ★★★★★</p> <p>Food ★★★★★</p> <p>Value ★★★★★</p> <p>Atmosphere ★★★★★</p>	
<p>Now, please provide your overall rating of TASTY RESTAURANT:</p> <p>Your restaurant rating ★★★★★</p>	<p>Now, please provide your overall rating of TASTY RESTAURANT:</p> <p>Your restaurant rating ★★★★★</p>

Preliminary Results

Study	Outcome	Mean diff.	95% HDI
1) TripAdvisor vs. Yelp	Rating	1.11	[0.74, 1.49]
2) University	Rating	0.80	[0.17, 1.41]
3) Restaurant	Rating	0.25	[0.01, 0.52]
2) University	Rating time	-2.10	[-3.71, -0.55]
3) Restaurant	Rating time	-2.05	[-2.48, -1.58]

Study	Outcome	Effect size	95% HDI
1) TripAdvisor vs. Yelp	Rating	1.34	[0.92, 1.88]
2) University	Rating	0.45	[0.10, 0.78]
3) Restaurant	Rating	0.19	[0.001, 0.36]
2) University	Rating time	-0.58	[-1.06, -0.16]
3) Restaurant	Rating time	-1.06	[-1.34, -0.81]

Discussion

- Overall ratings are influenced by prior attribute ratings
 - Mean ratings
 - Decision time
- Prior ratings serve as anchors
- How to balance response burden and quest for “true” rating score?

References

References available on request