

Post-experimental survey on possible mechanisms driving the results

[Pre-analysis plan with survey data]

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1 The survey

1.1 Background

The main experiment finds that customers randomised into seeing the *Faced* positive reviews are more likely to make a purchase. Supported by the robustness check on whether the act of personalising positive reviews with a non-face photo alone would already motivate buying, the causal link between the review writers' face photos and eventual purchases is clear. The survey aims to shed lights on the underlying mechanisms as to why this is the case. It could be that the faces enhance trustworthiness of the positive reviews or that the faces motivate people to pay more attention to them.

1.2 Dependent variables

With a between-subject design, the survey exposes respondents to a random set of 4 positive reviews for each of the 5 products used in the main experiment, either with a default anonymised headshot or the human face. We ask them to rate the positive reviews in terms of their perceived trustworthiness. We also record in the background the time used rating each review as a measure on 'enhanced attention'. In the end, there are 4 key outcome variables of interest. Analyses can be done for all of the five items together as well as individually for each of the five items.

- Trustworthiness mechanism: The sum of trustworthiness scores given by each of the respondents.
- Trustworthiness mechanism: The sum of possibility scores¹ given by each of the respondents.

¹Assuming you also bought the product from the same seller, how *possible* would you expect that the product you receive to be as good as described in these positive reviews?

- Attention mechanism: The sum of the amount of time (in seconds) taken by each of the respondents when scoring trustworthiness.
- Linking trustworthiness to purchase intention: The sum of the desirability scores.²

As shown in the appendix of the paper, the survey contains questions on demographics and baseline characteristics of respondents in terms of their online shopping behaviour. Since we are asking trustworthiness-related questions about reviews posted on five specific food products (e.g. raisins and fragrant rice), it is reasonable to additionally conduct a subsample analysis exclusively on respondents who have past experience of making on-line purchases on food items.

1.3 Exclusion criteria

- The time used to complete the survey as measured in seconds should not be shorter than 230.

1.4 Data and analysis

We expect the total number of respondents to be around 2000, randomised into either the faced or the default headshot group. We regress the above mentioned outcome variables individually on the face treatment dummy and the set of controls based on the survey form, e.g. all the demographic and past shopping experience variables.

²We ask the respondents on the desire to purchase the said product after exposing them to the positive reviews.