

# Extension #1: Testing the effect of showing personalised profile photos alone

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## 1 Extension design

We have recently received a comment suggesting that, given we only have the face treatment, any effect coming from this face treatment could be caused by either the faces themselves or the fact of simply being perceived as ‘personalised.’ Ideally, we should have added one additional ‘customised non-face photo’ treatment, using photos such as flowers, pets and trees. However, this additional treatment is difficult to accommodate from the firm’s perspective, both on the technical and ethical fronts and therefore was not incorporated into the original experimental design. As always, there exist clear trade-offs between what research experimenters want to do and what industry partners are willing to accommodate, constrained optimisation is required.

As a second-best alternative, this extension serves as a robustness check in response to the above comment and is expected to go online in early May 2022 (06/MAY/2022 to be exact, with data collection to start on 07/MAY/2022). Using the existing experimental framework, we replace the current selection of positive reviews (i.e. the ones with human-face profile pictures) by positive reviews with personalised but non-face photos. The aim of this extension is to test whether subjects would already be responding in a significant way to product reviews whose submitters’ non-face profile photos are shown to be personalised. Since the system-default option is the chicken mascot photo, a profile photo other than the mascot photo is deemed to be ‘personalised’ in this context.

Note that in the original design five experimental products were used. However, we have since been told that one of the products were no longer on sale due to supply-chain issues. For the remaining four products, the original 20 face-photo positive reviews pinned to the top of the review section will be replaced by a new batch of positive reviews that are accompanied each with a personalised but non-face profile photo, all the other design features will remain the same except that we could not run the extension in parallel with the main treatment such that the timing will be different.

We similarly will then end up with two groups of subjects, one control (the system-default mascot photo) and one treated (now with the personalised but non-face positive reviews). Using the same dependent variable and the baseline characteristics, we use

regression analysis to test whether being shown personalised photo reviews would already influence the potential customers' purchase intention by altering their perception of review trustworthiness.