

## **Gender rating gap in online reviews**

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### **Abstract:**

Online consumer reviews are widely used in people's decision-making, yet they are prone to biases. Based on 1.2 billion observations across five leading online review platforms and two lab studies ( $n = 1,172$  and  $n = 1,165$ ), we provide evidence for a consistent and systematic gender rating gap: women's mean online review ratings are significantly more favorable than men's. We show that although men and women generally do not differ in their "real" attitudes, their ratings do differ when it comes to online reviews. Our lab studies revealed that such differences were due to gender differences in the propensity to share negative attitudes online, possibly due to women's greater concern of societal outcomes. Our findings highlight the need for societal change to create conditions in which people, particularly women, feel comfortable publicly expressing genuine attitudes, especially in cases of dissatisfaction, without being concerned about the consequences.