**CONCLUSION**

In this paper, we have studied the novel task of early reviewer characterization and prediction on two real-world online review datasets. Our empirical analysis strengthens a series of theoretical conclusions from sociology and economics. We found that (1) an early reviewer tends to assign a higher average rating score; and (2) an early reviewer tends to post more helpful reviews. Our experiments also indicate that early reviewers’ ratings and their received helpfulness scores are likely to influence product popularity at a later stage. We have adopted a competition-based viewpoint to model the review posting process, and developed a margin based embedding ranking model (MERM) for predicting early reviewers in a cold-start setting.