

Spread the word: The effects of word of mouth on customers' product perceptions

An analysis of the effects of different source types and review sentiments on the source and message credibility and the buying intention

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Summary

People talk about brands, companies and product experiences everyday. This happens in either positive or negative ways as a result of their own experiences. On the other hand, people planning to buy a particular product or service search for information to reduce their uncertainty on which product to buy. They want to make sure the choice they make is right. This information seeking behavior takes place either by talking with acquaintances but also online on for example review websites, reading reviews from strangers. As the Internet becomes more and more popular and people are free to write about their opinion anywhere they want, it becomes a harder task to control this word of mouth for companies everyday. So, question is where should they focus on to create and maintain a positive mindset about the products/services they offer. This quantitative research focused on the different effects that either communication of a known source versus communication of strange source has on the perceptions of consumers as well as the differences existing concerning tone of voice, namely negative or positive word of mouth. In this research, 247 students participated, who were approached at Radboud University Nijmegen. Results show that customers do appreciate information from a known source much more than communication from an unknown source, this means that known sources are evaluated as being more credible than unknown sources. This especially seems to count for intangible products where people have to rely on other people's opinions because they are unable to experience the service before actually buying it. The research does also show significant effects on the buying intention for positive reviews and significant stronger effects of negative reviews from a known source than from a unknown source.

Samenvatting

Mensen praten dagelijks over merken, bedrijven en productervaringen. Dit gebeurt zowel in positieve als negatieve zin, afhankelijk van hun ervaringen. Daar staat tegenover dat mensen die van plan zijn een bepaald product aan te schaffen of een bepaalde service te genieten op zoek zijn naar informatie om een goede keuze te kunnen maken met betrekking tot hun aankoop. Dit informatie zoekgedrag vindt op verschillende plekken plaats, namelijk door er met bekenden over te praten, maar ook door op internet op zoek te gaan naar informatie zoals door het lezen van productervaringen van onbekenden. Doordat het internet alsmear populairder wordt en mensen vrijelijk kunnen schrijven over hun productervaringen, wordt het voor bedrijven steeds moeilijker om deze mond-tot-mond reclame onder controle te houden. De vraag is dus waar de focus op moet liggen om een positieve attitude te krijgen en behouden bij consumenten over de producten, dan wel diensten welke het bedrijf aanbiedt. Dit kwalitatieve onderzoek focuste op de verschillende effecten die communicatie met bekenden of onbekenden hebben, op de percepties van de consument, alsmede de bestaande verschillen als het gaat

om de toon van de review, namelijk negatieve of positieve mond-tot-mond reclame. Aan dit onderzoek namen 247 studenten deel welke waren benaderd op de Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen. De resultaten laten zien dat consumenten meer waarde hechten aan informatie van een bekende, dan aan informatie van een onbekende. Dit geldt met name voor diensten, welke niet tastbaar zijn en waarbij consumenten meer afhankelijk zijn van informatie van eerder gebruikers omdat ze de dienst niet kunnen proberen alvorens over te gaan tot de aanschaf ervan. Dit onderzoek laat eveneens significante effecten voor de aankoopintentie als het gaat om positieve reviews en significant sterkere effecten van negatieve reviews van een bekende dan negatieve reviews van een onbekende.

1. Introduction

It is common knowledge that people talk about brands, both in positive as well as in negative ways, as a result of gaining experience with a certain good or service from a particular brand. This 'brand talking' is known as Word of mouth (WOM) in which people, usually friends, family or other acquaintances exchange their opinions after a certain experience.

With the rise of the Internet, this brand talking has partially been moved to the Internet, where people talk about their brand experience on practically every available website. People do blog, write reviews on brands' or even independent websites, flushing their experiences they had with a certain product or service, a type of brand talking called electronic word of mouth (eWOM). An example of the effects of traditional, offline word of mouth is the case of General Mills who invented a new type of low fat cereal snack called 'Progresso Light'. In order to promote the snack, people were invited to visit the product's website where they could register themselves and be introduced to this new product. People who did visit the website were already dedicated to the product as they visited the website voluntarily. Afterwards they were encouraged to promote the snack to their acquaintances and even received coupons they could hand out. This resulted in a quick spread of positive, face-to-face, word of mouth by satisfied customers.

Examples of online word of mouth, which can be found on for example review websites are shown below. The main difference in this case is the fact that these websites contain reviews from unknown senders.

"Forget about Harry Potter and let this story drag you along. From the start of the very first page it's sensational. A recommendation!"

Freely translated from a recommendation on the book 'The casual vacancy by J. K. Rowling' on
www.bol.com

"You think you are staying at the Waldorf - you are, but in a little cubby hole at the back of a hallway. Everything was old and dated - the shower leaked, there was no ventilation in the bathrooms and it was really musty."

Review of the 'Waldorf Astoria hotel New York' on www.hotels.com

This type of brand communication, in contrast to the traditional offline word of mouth, is the result of the internet, a less personal but easily accessible source of information for any consumer looking for it. People are being encouraged to share their opinions on the internet by companies asking them to do so after some brand experience. The amount of independent websites that offer opportunities to share product experiences, like bookings.com, kieskeurig.nl (a Dutch website that gathers customer reviews

to help other people make a proper choice) is large. This results in an incredible amount of reviews, which makes it easier, for anybody to find one.

So, it is clear that the amount of reviews in the case of online word of mouth, actually electronic word of mouth, is a lot larger than it is in the case of offline word of mouth. Opinions are more easily accessible and also in a much larger amount online than they are offline. Searching for reviews on the Internet will result in a large amount of information in just a minute, while it takes much longer wondering which people in your surroundings have an experience with a product or service and asking them to tell about it. These different types of word of mouth are different in the fact that word of mouth in the offline world results from talking to a known person like a relative, friend or colleague. Sources from the Internet, mostly people who are writing about their experiences, are strangers, consumers reading the information do not know the person who wrote the review. It can therefore be questioned what the differences in level of influence these two types will have.

What will be more convincing for consumers when they are about to buy a product? Is it the large, yet unknown, amount of reviews that can be found online, or do consumers attach more value to the opinions of people around them? Known people with who consumers are familiar with and have insights in the actual qualities and experiences of these reviewers. How does this influence their buying intention and the valuation of the credibility of both the review as the reviewer?

2. Theory and hypotheses

2.1 Word of mouth

The term word of mouth (WOM) is used to describe the process of face-to-face communication about products or companies, between people without commercial intentions. Arndt (1967, p. 295) describes the process of word of mouth in his article as ‘seeking social support for adoption or non-adoption’, whereas Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan (2008, p.454) used the broad description for WOM as ‘the communication between consumers about a product, service, or a company in which the sources are considered independent of commercial influence’. The purpose of this communication is to reduce the uncertainty.

The rise of the Internet has partially shifted this communication to the online world where people can talk about brand experiences on, for example, online forums and review websites. This results in a new type of word of mouth which is called electronic word of mouth, where usually communication occurs between strangers.

2.1.1 Offline word of mouth

The importance of word of mouth is common knowledge. Godes and Mayzlin (2004) state that word of mouth might be the most important and most influential way of communicating, and thus outshines

all other kinds of communication channels. For (brand) managers this means that it is incredibly important to follow this type of conversations because it can deliver important information about customers' experiences, as well as their needs, information they can build on to stimulate sales.

WOM is an interesting phenomenon. Back in 1955, the research by Katz and Lazarsfeld already described the incredible power of word of mouth when it came to purchasing groceries or other household goods. The power of WOM overruled all other sources, such as newspapers, magazines and radio commercials, in convincing people to switch brands.

Herr, Kardes and Ki (1991) agreed on this finding as their results on vividly versus pallidly presented information showed that face-to-face communication is perceived as being more convincing than information written down because of the vividness of face-to-face information. Also Arndt (1967) did research on the effect of WOM and concluded that positive word of mouth did increase the probability of purchase because it helps to reduce the sense of risk. This happens to be the case because consumers tend to trust peer consumers more than they do trust marketers. (Sen & Lerman, 2007) They do believe opinions of known sources rather than a marketer who only has the intention to sell his product.

As mentioned before, with the rise of the internet, people do not only talk about their experiences with products in real-life, but they also use the Internet as a source or platform to tell about brand experiences resulting in a different type of WOM, namely electronic word of mouth (eWOM), a broader, but unknown, source of information, found online.

2.1.2. Online word of mouth – communicating with strangers

Internet has had an immense influence on marketing. Deighton and Kornfeld (2009) describe a shift of power in marketing, considering the wide range of possibilities the Internet has to offer in which power is in the hands of the consumers nowadays. Consumers have been given opportunities to interact with companies. It was expected that the role of the marketer would become stronger as the Internet would give them tools to use intrusive direct marketing. Although they did gain this power, it is being overruled by the power gained by consumers who can communicate way more easily with companies on the Internet, but also with each other, meaning conversing with other consumers on the Internet, sharing experiences in a way called electronic word of mouth. Lee & Youn (2009, p. 473) described word of mouth as being 'independent of marketers' selling intents and is thus considered to be more trustworthy and credible' (Bone 1995; Bickart & Schindler 2001; Lau & Ng 2001). Other terms regarding this online word of mouth that are used are 'Internet word of mouth', 'word-of-mouth' or electronic word of mouth. Litvin et al (2008) summarized this phenomenon as 'all informal communications directed at consumers through Internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers. This includes communication between producers and consumers, as well as those between consumers themselves.'

Earlier research already stated that there are differences between online and offline word of mouth. Reviews that occur in the 'real world' usually are opinions from relatives who have experienced something and did form a particular judgement about it and tell others about it afterwards. So talking about brands and their products happens between people who are familiar with each other. The source of information in this case is a known person and usually someone they trust.

The electronic word of mouth, however, refers to 'brand-talking' on the Internet, which makes it possible for people to write about their experiences practically anywhere on the Internet, as long as they have an Internet access. These opinions are easily accessible to other consumers searching for information about a certain product they are looking for (Sen et al., 2007). However, reviews on the internet are usually written by people the reader does not know in the real world. The writer often stays quite anonymous and therefore is an unknown source. With these people we have the so-called 'weak ties'. The review writer has little or no prior relationship with the person reading it. (Sen et al., 2007; Lee et al., 2009).

Schiffman & Kanuk (1995) and Arndt (1967) defined word of mouth as being a type of marketing communication dominated by the consumer. The sender in this case was described as being independent of the market. An outdated description of the phenomenon the way word of mouth was like back in those days, a form of people talking to each other about brand experiences. However, nowadays, this definition can be doubted. As a result of the huge range of possibilities the Internet offers, brands can interrupt consumer-to-consumer conversations. Companies try to generate (positive) word of mouth about their company by offering consumers something, for example, by promising discount on the next stay in their hotel, if they will review their product or service. Besides this way of influencing consumers, companies also start writing their own reviews, under fake names, about their own products to generate a positive image of the company and its services among customers (Chatterjee, 2001; Werde 2003). This does influence the credibility in a negative way as the reviews are not only from real customers. By doing so, they act as if they are a happy, satisfied customer of their own product. In these cases it is clear that the writer of the review is not independent of the market anymore as they are influenced by the product offering company. Therefore researchers are trying to develop a model to filter these types of false reviews (Mukherjee, Liu & Glance, 2012).

Knowing about the existence of false reviews, and the possible influence of marketers, together with the anonymous character of the Internet, makes it hard for consumers to determine the quality, as well as the credibility of electronic word of mouth. To find out whether reviews on the Internet should be trusted, people tend to rely on other cues that indicate the credibility of the reviewer. For example, the reputation of the website (Greer, 2003), website features such as design features, site complexity and depth of content (Flanagin & Metzger, 2007) should help readers to decide whether this website and the reviews it contains should be trusted. Brown, Broderick and Lee (2007) did research on cues in the online world that influence consumers' attitude formation as well as their decision making. They found strong evidence that those who join the Internet "behave as if Web

sites themselves are primary ‘actors’ in online social networks and that online communities can act as a social proxy for individual identification”. By looking at the variables *homophily*, *tie strength* and *source credibility* they described how electronic word of mouth can help to persuade people. Different from the offline world, where homophily is based on similarities in certain personal characteristics like gender and age (Schacter, 1959; Ruef, Aldrich & Carter, 2003), homophily in the online world has to deal with ascertaining equal interests and mind-sets driving homophily because of the lack of interpersonal contact (Brown et al., 2007). Pretty much the same situation does occur for the source credibility where the absence of personal contact exists likewise. As a replacement to determine the credibility of the reviewer, opinions were based on the Website, and its contents, where the information was provided. So specific factors of the website, such as site complexity, helped the readers in deciding whether they believed the provided information or not. As complex navigation leads to low trust among customers (Brown et al., 2007). In the case of online tie strength, which refers to the closeness within a social relationship between information seeker and the source, the results show a lack of individual-to-individual ties because of the anonymous nature of the online world. The source on the Internet is a stranger. Eighty percent of the respondents described a feeling of being connected to a particular website instead of to a person. (Brown et al., 2007). These differences in tie strength can have influences on the credibility and thus, the amount of trust in both the review and the reviewer. Bansal et al (2000) state that if the tie is strong, for example the social relationship between two friends in the offline world, word of mouth information will have a significant influence on receiver’s purchase decision.

Previous findings lead to the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: A review from a known source will lead to a higher valuation of source credibility than a review from an unknown source.

Hypothesis 1b: A review from a known source will be perceived as more credible than a review from an unknown source.

Hypothesis 1c: A review from a known source will lead to a higher buying intention on the part of the reader than the review from an unknown source.

2.2 Sentiment of the review – Positive versus negative reviews

Not only a difference can be made between different types of source, but another main part of reviews is their sentiment. Word of mouth is considered as a powerful tool to influence consumer judgments (Herr et al., 1991), but this review can either be positive or negative. On the one hand, people may have had a positive experience which results in a positive sentiment towards the product or service being reviewed. On the other hand it is also possible that the product or service did not bring the user what was expected, which results in a negative experience. The question is what telling or writing about certain experiences does to the reader of the review. In what ways does it influence the reader’s

valuation of the credibility of the message as well as the source? And what will be the effect on the potential buying intention?

Prior research by Herr et al. (1991) showed that, in an *offline* environment, consumers do pay more attention to negative than to positive information. Positive and neutral features are subordinated to negative ones as a single negative aspect can override a collection of positive sentiments. This finding was confirmed in the article of Ahluwalia & Shiv (1997) who wrote that negative reviews seem to weigh heavier than positive ones. However, these findings only matter for products towards which consumers have a low commitment. Whereas high committed consumers showed reversal effects, namely positive information being evaluated as being more diagnostic. The effects of review sentiments thus seem to be influenced by the level of involvement that does exist for the consumer (Ahluwalia, Burnkrant & Unnava, 2000). This will be clarified in the next paragraph.

The finding by Ahluwalia et al. (2000) was the basis of the research by Sen et al. (2007) who applied this to their research about both positive as well as negative reviews in an *online* world, differentiating between hedonic versus utilitarian products. They found a negativity bias only in the case of utilitarian products, which means that readers do pay more attention to negative reviews and besides that, do trust the negative reviews more when it concerns products serving to satisfy practical needs like for example a dishwasher or a lawn mower. Regarding hedonic products consumers probably are positively disposed concerning the product, therefore they might ignore negative reviews because it is inconsistent with their prior expectations and thus are intended to evaluate the products positively. So, the effect of negative or positive sentiments a review has on either source or message credibility or the buying intention, depends on the type of product, a product that either demands for high or low consumer involvement, and the possible prior impression the review reader has in mind about that particular brand (Herr et al., 1991, Park & Lee, 2009).

Hypothesis 2a: The positive sentiment will lead to a higher source credibility than the negative sentiment.

Hypothesis 2b: The positive sentiment will lead to a higher message credibility than the negative sentiment.

Hypothesis 2c: The positive sentiment will lead to a higher buying intention than the negative sentiment.

2.3 Information seeking – High versus low consumer involvement

Opinions about all kinds of products are given by customers. Research shows that products can be divided into two types, the ones that demand for high consumer involvement and the ones that do not, a theory which is applied in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) by Petty & Cacioppo (1979). It is said that products that are considered as high involvement products, for example a new television,

have bigger personal consequences and are more highly connected to people than products which concern low involvement of the buyer (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979), for example a bottle of water.

When deciding whether or not to buy a product with high risk potential, for example because of its expensive nature, people are confronted with uncertainties. These uncertainties create an uncomfortable feeling because people do not like being uncertain as it results in emotional and cognitive discomfort. These uncertainties do exist in a buying environment, but also in our lives when for example choosing a partner. Will this partner be a safe choice or not? In order to reduce these feelings of discomfort, they search for information that helps them to deal with, and adapt to the social and physical worlds (Heath & Bryant, 2000).

This information seeking behavior is part of the purchase decision process. This process is often discussed in literature. Wilson (1999a) describes it in terms of problem identification, problem definition, problem resolution and solution statement in his ‘problem solving model’. Each step of uncertainty resolution will leads to progress in the model and will finally resolve the problem by ending up with the solution statement. The solution statement can for example be a decision whether to buy a particular good or not.

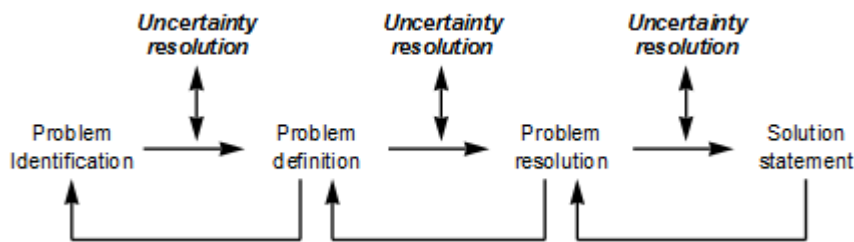


Figure 1: Problem solving model (Wilson, 1999a)

Kellermann (1987) described that people need to have information to decide whether to continue a relationship or not. Without information no progress can be made within a relationship.

This need for information does not only count for relationships with people, but also for the relationship with a business that exists when buying one of their products. People need information to establish trust and make sure that it is a safe and good choice to buy a product from a particular company. The greater the knowledge the client has about the domain, the less likely he is to experience uncertainty (Schmidt & Spreng, 1996). This mainly exists for products with a high potential of risk, as knowledge does reduce uncertainty.

Concerning high involvement products, people tend to take more time and effort in considering a purchase because the good or service is often expensive. Therefore they are part of the *central route* of the Elaboration Likelihood model as the person has to engage in ‘a thoughtful consideration of issue-relevant arguments and product-relevant attributes’ (Petty & Cacioppo, 1983 p. 143). People tend to take more time pondering argument qualities in an ad or review.

On the other hand, there is the *peripheral route* of the ELM where the consequences of a purchase may be a lot smaller and therefore, an extensive consideration might be unnecessary and thus people rely on peripheral cues like the way an advertisement is presented and the feelings that someone has when noticing the ad (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The article concludes that whether something is being processed via the central or the peripheral route has to do with the motivation and ability a person has to evaluate the communication that is presented. Motivation therefore is controlled by the consequences. As explained before, high involvement products have bigger buyer's consequences, mainly financial ones and thus the risk is higher. The greater the perceived risk of a purchase, the more active the buyer will search for information (Bansal & Voyer, 2000), such as consumer experiences described in an online review or spoken about in the offline world. This research will solely focus on high involvement products as in this case reviews will be evaluated as being very important.

2.4 Product type

Besides a difference in products amongst involvement level, another difference can be made between goods that companies market, namely the difference between products and services, or tangibles and intangibles. The main difference between these two is the intangible aspect of services. Customers are seldom able to test or try a service they might buy in the future. They have to rely on surrogates to indicate what a particular service might bring. For example by consulting experienced customers. On the other hand, tangible goods such as products are usually available to test, feel or smell. Customers can visit a clothing store to try on a new pair of pants or go to a perfume shop and smell the new perfume of Chanel. (Levitt, 1981) Therefore, in the case of tangible products, opinions by other people might be less important because consumers can judge the product themselves before actually buying it.

3. Method

To answer the research questions, an experiment was conducted to investigate the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

In this experiment the type of word of mouth was manipulated, as well as the review sentiment. This applies to both studies, where study 1 was supplemented with a laptop as a high involvement product and in the case of study 2, a hotel to spend holidays was represented as the high involvement product, where the product experience was described in the review. This resulted in a 2 (a review from a known person vs. a review from a stranger) x 2 (positive vs. negative tone of voice) design.

Participants were approached at Radboud University in Nijmegen. They were asked to complete a questionnaire on the computer. The computer was placed in a classroom at the university which was rented by the researcher for the duration of the study. A maximum of two students could fill out the questionnaire at the same time, as only two computers were provided. This was to make

sure that respondents would not disturb each other. Completing the survey took approximately ten minutes. First of all they were asked to complete several questions, such as ‘I think this review is credible’, aimed at gaining insights into the way research participants perceive a particular review. The survey ended with a few manipulation check questions, and questions pertaining to their demographic characteristics such as age, gender, and education.

3.1 Materials

3.1.1. Manipulations

(Electronic) word of mouth

In this research the focus was on word of mouth, differentiated in two according to source: a message from a known person (a friend) and a message from a stranger. The message, or in this research review, from the stranger was presented as a review website. The website was developed by the researcher with the professional assistance of a design agency. This meant that the website was totally new, to make sure the respondents did not have prior experience, or have any opinion about the company behind the website. The created website was based on analyses of different review websites to make sure it contains specific items as found on other, regular review websites. The respondents were exposed to a review by a person with a gender neutral name about a particular product. The name Robin was chosen as it is a Dutch name given to both men and women so the gender of the person would not influence the respondent.

The communication with a friend was represented by an e-mail. The questionnaire started by asking participants a few questions about their closest friend. Where did they meet their best friend? And, for how long does their friendship already exist? The purpose of these questions was to prime the respondents by letting them think of their best friend and later on they were asked to imagine the presented e-mail was sent by their best friend they just had been thinking of.

The reviews were created as a result of an analysis of reviews on the internet about laptops and accommodations. Several reviews of kieskeurig.nl and hotels.com were analyzed to obtain information about the most important variables that people consider when evaluating these products.

Tone of voice – Negative/Positive

There were two different types of reviews concerning the sentiment. One version was a review telling about a negative experience with the product, the other version described a positive experience. The design of the reviews was kept the same. Only the adjectives were manipulated to create a positive and negative version. An example of a used sentence was: ‘I’m very happy with this new laptop’ in the positive version, versus ‘I’m very unhappy with this new laptop’ in the negative version. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to answer the question ‘The tone of voice of this review was: 1 very negative to five very positive’ to check whether respondents did actually read the text and interpreted the sentiment correctly.

Type of product – High involvement

The literature differentiates between high and low involvement products. This research focused on high involvement only, as the risk related to the purchase of such products (or services) are much higher and, with this, people will be more motivated to search for information to make sure they will make a correct purchase-related decision. However, two studies were conducted to investigate whether same results occur for high involvement products and services. As a result of the pre-study the focus in study one was on a fictitious laptop. In study two a fictitious hotel represented the service being reviewed.

3.1.2. Instruments

To answer the research questions, and to address the research hypotheses, three dependent variables were applied to indicate the impact reviews do have on customers' product perceptions.

Message credibility

The variable *message credibility* was measured using a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1= completely disagree to 5= completely agree). The construct was measured with eight statements: 'I think this review is credible', 'I think this review is trustworthy', 'I think this review is convincing', 'I think this review is honest', 'I think this review is plausible', 'I think this review is questionable', 'I think this review is authentic' and 'I think this review is reasonable', based on the 'Tv advertising believability scale' by Beltramani (1982). The reliability of this scale was good (Cronbach's $\alpha=.83$)

Source credibility

This variable was measured with eight items on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1= completely disagree to 5=completely agree). These items included the following: 'I consider the reviewer as being sincere', 'I consider the reviewer as being honest', 'I consider the reviewer as being trustworthy', 'I consider the reviewer as being credible', 'I consider the reviewer as being biased', 'I consider the reviewer as being reputable', 'I consider the reviewer as being reliable' and 'I consider the reviewer as being truthful'. All items were derived from the 'Source credibility scale' by Bearden and Netemeyer (1999). All items were translated into Dutch resulting in the removal of some items since the Dutch language has only one word for the English terms 'dependable', 'trustworthy' and 'reliable'. The reliability of this scale was good (Cronbach's $\alpha=.87$).

Buying intention:

This variable was measured on a five-point Likert scale. The variable consisted of one statement that had to be evaluated on four different variables. 'Rate the probability that you would buy this product': '1=very unlikely to 5=very likely', '1= very improbable to 5= is very probable', '1= very uncertain to 5= very certain', '1= very impossible to 5= very possible'. These questions were based on the 'Behavioral intention scale' by Oliver & Bearden (1985). The reliability of this scale was good (Cronbach's $\alpha=.91$).

3.2 Subjects

Two hundred sixty-three people were invited to fill in the questionnaire. Data derived from respondents who did not complete the questionnaire were removed from the dataset. A total number of two hundred forty-seven persons opted to complete the, that is a response rate of 93,3%. Of the total number of participants, 35,2% were male and 63,6% were female, 1,2% did not answer the question. All participants are higher education students, between the age of 17 and 30 years old ($M= 22,0$, $SD= 2,32$). Respondents were approached at Radboud University Nijmegen and were asked to participate in the research by filling in an online questionnaire. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they had prior experience with reading reviews. 93,9% of the respondents answered that they had read reviews before, 4,0% did not have any experience with reading reviews and 2,0% of the respondents did not answer the question. Most people answered they read reviews about two to five times a year (30,8%) or monthly (20,6%). The table below gives an overview of the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics

| Gender | n | % | Faculty | n | % |
|----------------|----------|----------|-----------------------------|----------|----------|
| <i>Male</i> | 87 | 35.2 | <i>Arts</i> | 71 | 28.7 |
| <i>Female</i> | 157 | 63.6 | <i>Management</i> | 50 | 20.2 |
| <i>Missing</i> | 3 | 1.2 | <i>Social sciences</i> | 54 | 21.9 |
| | | | <i>Law</i> | 13 | 15.3 |
| Age | | | <i>Medical sciences</i> | 2 | 0.8 |
| <i>17-21</i> | 104 | 42.1 | <i>Science, Biology</i> | 6 | 2.4 |
| <i>22-26</i> | 132 | 53.5 | <i>Philosophy, Theology</i> | 3 | 1.2 |
| <i>27-30</i> | 8 | 3.2 | <i>Other</i> | 37 | 15.0 |
| <i>Missing</i> | 3 | 1.2 | <i>Missing</i> | 5 | 2.0 |

3.3. Research design

The experiment was conducted online with Thesistools. Eight different questionnaires were designed as a result of the 2x2 design, applied to a laptop and a hotel. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the eight questionnaires. During the research, attention was paid to the distribution of respondents on the different versions and when needed, was adjusted to reach a uniform distribution. The following table gives an overview of the distribution of respondents in study 1.

Table 2: Overview distribution respondents study 1.

| Version: Laptop | <i>Positive</i> | <i>Negative</i> |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>E-mail</i> | 29 | 27 |

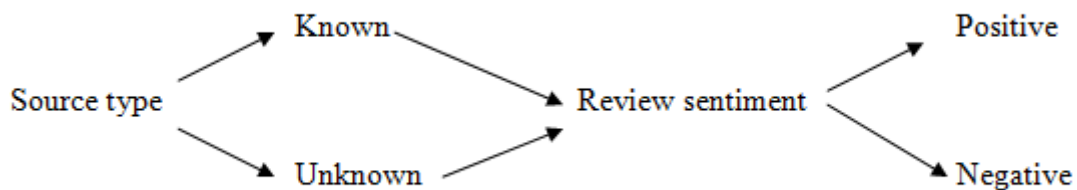
| | | |
|----------------------|----|----|
| <i>Online Review</i> | 34 | 30 |
|----------------------|----|----|

Table 3 gives an overview of the distribution of respondents in study 2.

Table 3: Overview distribution respondents study 2.

| Version: Hotel | <i>Positive</i> | <i>Negative</i> |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>E-mail</i> | 30 | 34 |
| <i>Online Review</i> | 30 | 33 |

Figure 1: Overview research design



3.4. Procedure

3.4.1. Pre-test

In order to decide which products would be used in the research as a high involvement product a pre-test was done. Seven people participated in a focus group about reading reviews. They were asked about the kind of products or services they would read reviews about or ask an expert for more information in order to make a proper buying decision. In general most people were interested in reviews about electronic products because of a lack of technical knowledge about or experience with them. The most frequently mentioned high involvement products were a laptop and accommodations to spend a holiday. Therefore, study one focussed on the high involvement product laptop and the focus of study two was on a hotel.

A second pre-test was done to make sure that respondents understood the presented review and the questions about the review. Eleven persons participated in this pre-test and based on the results, the questionnaire was somehow adjusted or clarified.

3.4.2. Data collection procedure

Students at Radboud University Nijmegen were requested to fill out a questionnaire, which took approximately ten minutes to complete. Respondents were guided to a reserved computer where they could all fill out the questionnaire in the same conditions.

In the case of the review written by a stranger, respondents were confronted with a review and in the questionnaire it was explained that it was derived from a review website. They were asked to have a good look at it and to read the review carefully, which was checked afterwards by asking respondents whether the tone of voice was very negative or very positive. A question they had to rate on a five-point Likert scale. Afterwards they were asked to answer questions about the review. In the case of the review from a known person, the questionnaire started by instructing respondents that they had to think of their best friend and that they had to answer two questions about this person, namely: ‘Where did you get to know your best friend?’ and ‘For how long does your friendship already exist?’. The purpose was to condition the respondents by having them thinking of their best friend. Afterwards, an e-mail was shown to the participants and they had to imagine that this e-mail was sent by their best friend, the one they had been thinking about previously. The e-mail contained the same text as in the online review condition. Respondents were asked to read the e-mail carefully and answer questions about it afterwards.

Afterwards participants had to answer a few questions acting as manipulation checks to figure out whether the manipulated variables were interpreted well. They were asked to answer the following question on a five point Likert scale ranging from Totally disagree to Totally agree. ‘I felt involved with this e-mail’, ‘I think this review is credible’, ‘I think the reviewer is credible’ and ‘I did understand this e-mail’. Participants were also asked to judge the tone of voice of the review by answering the question ‘The tone of voice of this review was’ on a five point Likert scale ranging from very negative to very positive.

The questionnaire ended with five questions pertaining to the age, gender and education of the participant. At the end the participants were thanked for their participation.

4. Results

4.1 General linear model

Two-way ANOVA’s were applied to dive deeper into possible effects that might occur when combining the dependent and independent variables in one model. The results are described below per study.

4.1.1 Source type

Study 1: Laptop

The two-way ANOVA with *source type* and review sentiment as factors showed a significant main effect on *source credibility* ($F(1, 116) = 14.42, p < .000$) where the known sender ($M=3.54, SD=0.71$)

was evaluated significantly higher on source credibility than the unknown sender ($M=3.09$, $SD=0.58$). This means that the known sender was perceived as being more credible than the unknown sender. No significant main effect was found for source type on *message credibility* ($F(1, 116) = 1.73$, $p<.191$). Also no main effect was found for source type on *buying intention* ($F(1, 116) <1$).

Study 2: Hotel

The two-way ANOVA with *source type* and review sentiment as factors showed a significant main effect on *source credibility* ($F(1, 123) = 9.35$, $p<.003$) where the known sender ($M=3.43$, $SD=0.76$) was evaluated significantly higher on source credibility than the unknown sender ($M=3.04$, $SD=0.64$). This means that the known sender was perceived as being more credible than the unknown sender. Also a main effect was found for source type on the dependent variable *message credibility* ($F(1, 123) = 6.29$, $p<.013$) where the message of the known sender ($M=3.45$, $SD=0.71$) was evaluated significantly higher on message credibility than the unknown sender ($M=3.14$, $SD=0.64$). This means that the message from the known sender was perceived as being more credible than the message from the unknown sender. A main effect was found as well for source type on *buying intention* ($F(1, 123) = 5.77$, $p<.018$) where the review of the known sender ($M=2.44$, $SD=0.74$) led to a significant higher buying intention than the review from the unknown sender ($M=2.11$, $SD=0.79$). Although the review from the known sender will lead to a higher buying intention than the review from the unknown sender, it cannot be said that this will actually lead to the intentional behavior as the mean is below the average of 2.5.

4.1.2 Sentiment of the review

Study 1: Laptop

The two-way ANOVA with source type and *review sentiment* as factors showed no significant main effect on *source credibility* ($F(1, 116) <1$). Also no significant main effect was found for source type on *message credibility* ($F(1, 116) <1$). For *buying intention* a significant main effect was found for the effect from source type on this variable ($F(1, 116) = 17.22$, $p<.000$) where the positive sentiment ($M=2.37$, $SD=0.71$) was evaluated significantly higher than the negative ($M=1.78$, $SD=0.71$) sentiment. This means that writing in a positive way about a laptop leads to a significant higher intention to actually buy it, than when there is written about the laptop in a negative way. However, the mean was below the average of 2.5, so it cannot be said that positive reviews actually lead to buying behavior.

Study 2: Hotel

The two-way ANOVA with source type and *review sentiment* as factors showed no significant main effect on *source credibility* ($F(1, 123) = 3.48$, $p<.064$). Also no main effect was found for source type on *message credibility* ($F(1, 123) = 2.96$, $p<.088$) For *buying intention* a significant main effect was found for the effect from source type on this variable ($F(1, 123) = 11.66$, $p<.001$) where the positive sentiment ($M=2.51$, $SD=0.65$) was evaluated significantly higher than the negative ($M=2.07$, $SD=0.83$)

sentiment. This means that writing in a positive way about a hotel leads to a significant higher intention to actually buy it than when there is written about the laptop in a negative way.

4.2 Interaction effects

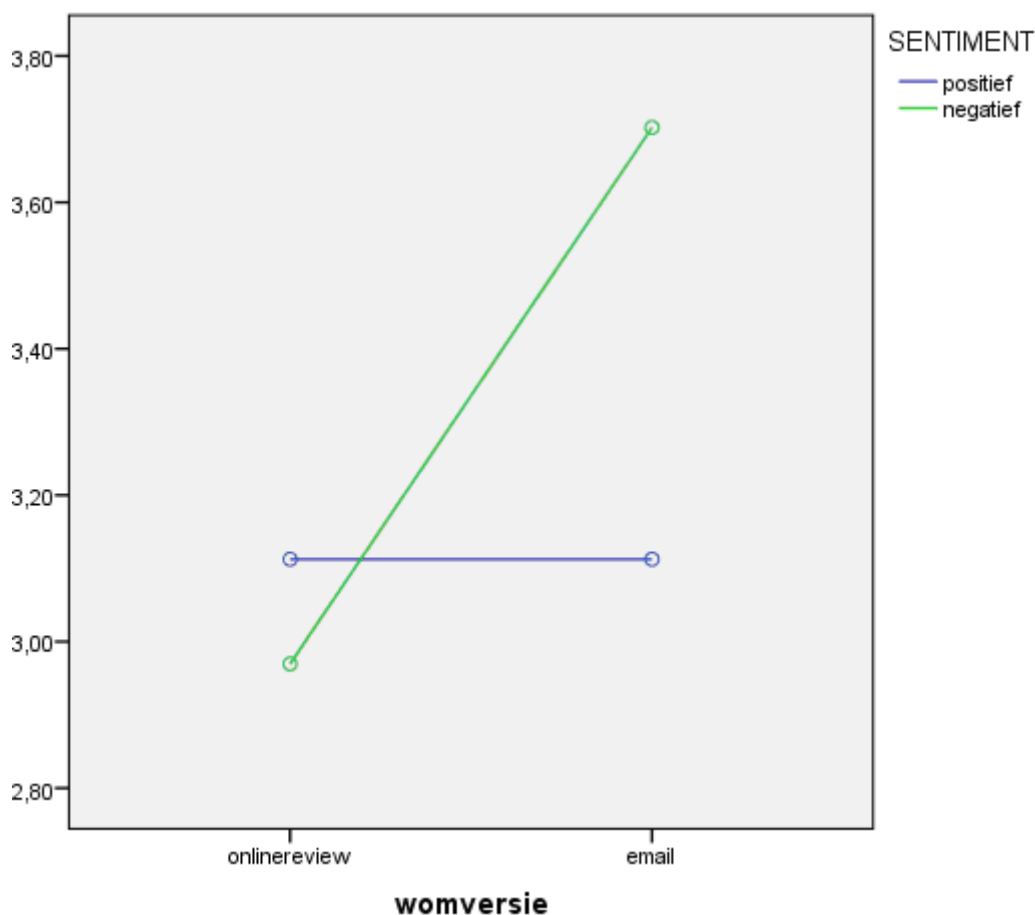
Study 1: Laptop

No interaction effect was found for source type*sentiment on *source credibility* ($F(1, 116) = 3.11, p < .081$). Neither was an interaction effect for source type*sentiment on *message credibility* ($F(1, 116) < 1$) and on *buying intention* ($F(1, 116) < 1$) found.

Study 2: Hotel

An interaction effect was found for source type*sentiment on *source credibility* ($F(1, 123) = 9.350, p < .003$). The graph shows that a significant effect was found on the negative review where review from the known source, represented as an e-mail, scored significantly higher on source credibility than the negative review from the unknown source. ($M=3.70, SD=0.75$) on source credibility than the negative review from the unknown source ($M=2.97, SD=0.62$).

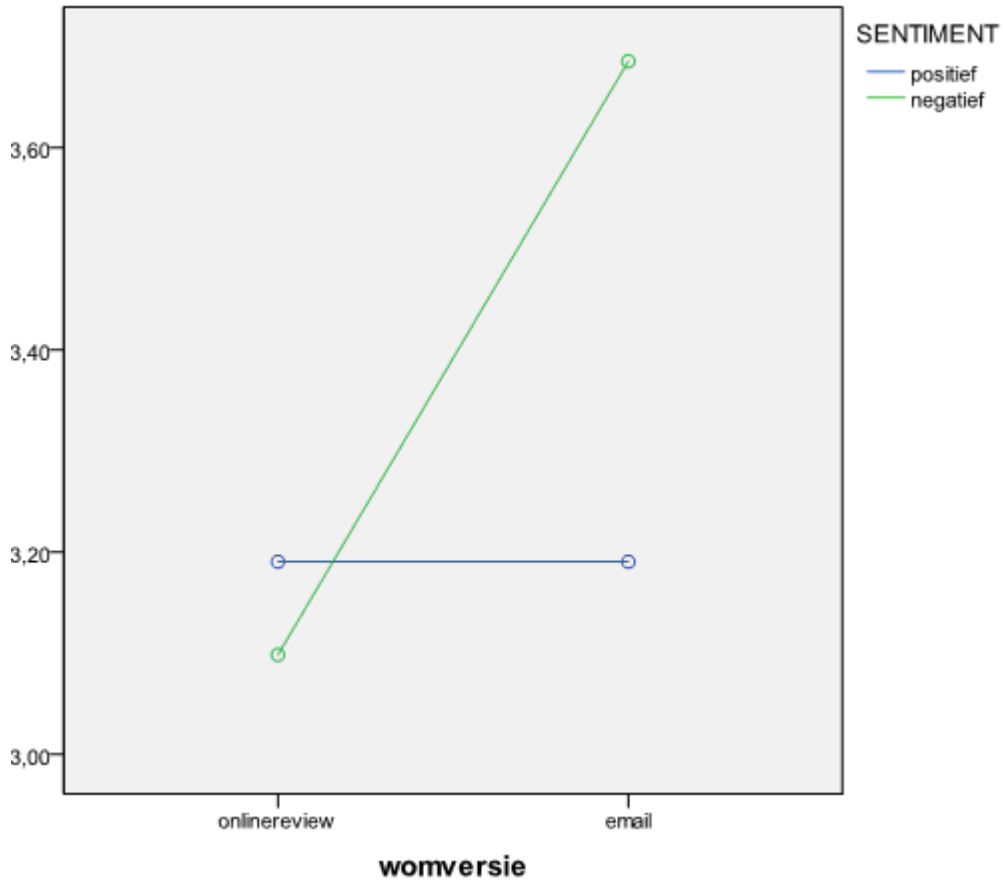
Figure 2: Interaction analysis source credibility



Another interaction effect was found for source type*sentiment on *message credibility* ($F(1, 123) = 6.289, p < .013$). The results show that a significant effect was found on sentiment. The negative

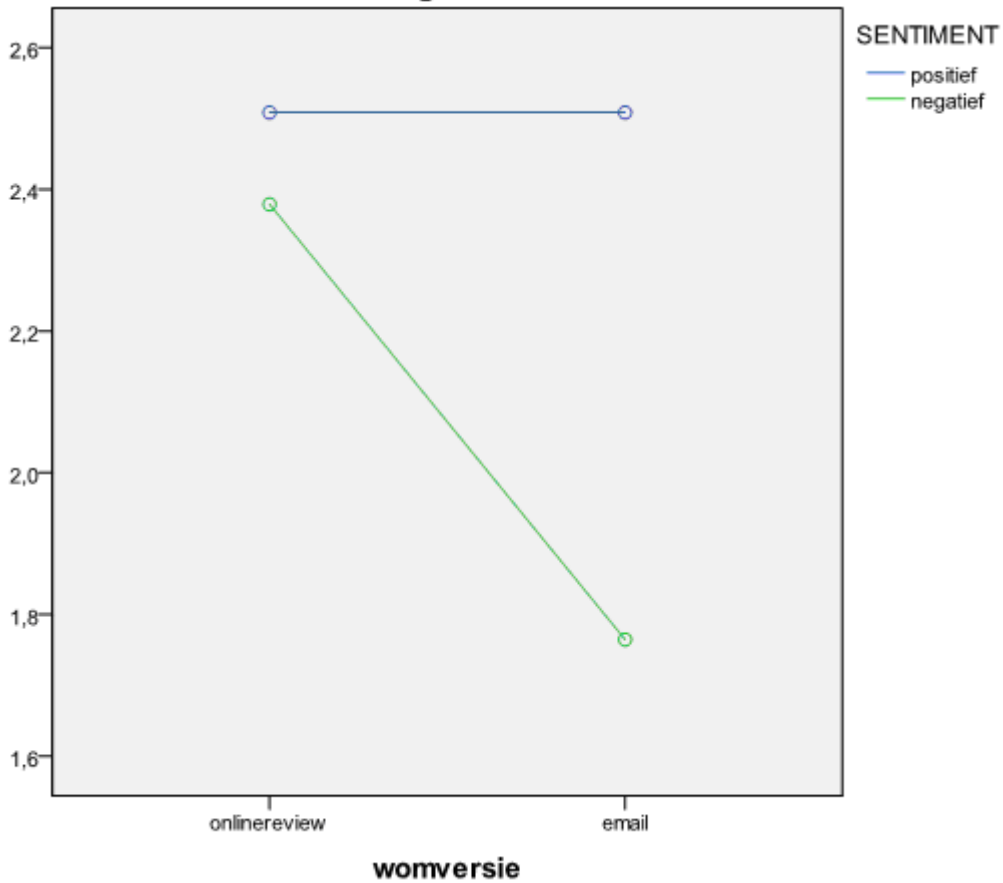
version of the known source scored significantly higher ($M=3.69$, $SD=0.64$) on message credibility than the positive version of the known source ($M=3.19$, $SD=0.71$).

Figure 3: Interaction analysis message credibility



Finally an interaction effect was found for source type*sentiment on *buying intention* ($F(1, 123) = 5.768$, $p<.018$). As the graph does show, a significant effect was found on sentiment. The positive review from the known source version scored significantly higher ($M=2.51$, $SD=0.65$) on buying intention than the negative version from the known sender ($M=1.76$, $SD=0.74$).

Figure 4: Interaction analysis buying intention



Discussion

5.1 Discussion

In this research, two studies were conducted to gain more information about the possible effects that different sources, a known source and an unknown source, and the different review sentiments, positive versus negative, have on the three dependent variables source credibility, message credibility and buying intention. The research consisted of two different studies. Study 1 focused on a tangible good, namely a laptop, and study two focused on an intangible service; a stay in the Century Hotel. Previous studies already described the differences between two types of word of mouth, namely the online and offline ones and their anonymous versus known character. In this study, a difference was made between a known versus unknown person telling about their experience with the laptop or the hotel in either a positive or a negative way. The review from the known source was represented as an e-mail and the review from the unknown source was represented as an online review. Respondents were told to empathize in the situation as possible future customer of the product/service and then

read the review. With this research design, it was assumed that a translation would be made of the actual emotions experienced by the character in the story to the anticipated emotions of the reader.

Based on results of previous studies, hypothesis 1 assumed a higher credibility of the known sender resulting in significant higher valuations of source credibility, message credibility and buying intention. In study 1, the laptop, a significant effect was found only for the source credibility, which confirms hypothesis 1a, where the known sender was evaluated as significantly more credible than the unknown sender. No significant effect was found on the other dependent variables, message credibility and buying intention. In the case of the rejection of hypothesis 1b, an explanation of this finding can be that other variables have a stronger influence on message credibility which is described in the research by Brown et al. (2007). They state that in the case of online reviews, opinions about message credibility depend on characteristics of the website and the content, this is also confirmed by Flanagin and Metzger (2007) who describe the importance of depth of content when valuating the content of reviews. This might also be applicable to offline reviews where people do rely more on the content of the message instead of the sender, in this case named as the source type. Hypothesis 1c was rejected as well, which is inconsistent with the findings by Bansal et al. (2000) who describe the positive effect of a strong tie on buying intention. The absence of this finding in this research might be explained by the fact that participants in real-life did not have any intention to buy a laptop and therefore this did not result in an actual buying intention after reading this review.

In study 2, where the focus was on a hotel, a significant main effect was found for known sender on both source credibility and message credibility, which confirms hypothesis 1a and 1b. The known sender did have a significant higher effect on both source and message credibility. These findings are supported by previous literature that show that known sources are trusted better than unknown sources. An explanation for the fact that a significant effect was found for message credibility for the hotel and not for the laptop can probably be found in the fact that the hotel is an intangible good. Levitt (1981) described the differences between either the product and the service. In the case of a service, which is an intangible good, customers are unable to try the product before the purchase. So, they have less items they can use to judge a product and therefore might attach more value to the source type when evaluating the credibility of the message. No significant effect was found for buying intention. This could be explained in the same way as study 1. The respondents may not have had the smallest intention to book a hotel in their actual lives. Therefore, hypothesis 1c was rejected as well for study 2.

Hypothesis two focused on the effect of the review sentiment and supposed to find a significant higher effect on the dependent variables in case of the positive review sentiment. These assumptions were made as a result of findings from previous studies who described positive effects for high involvement products with hedonic characteristics on customers' product perceptions which is supposed to have positive effects on source credibility, message credibility and buying intention. This research did not

find effects on either the source credibility or the message credibility for either study 1 and study 2, so therefore, hypothesis 2a and 2b are rejected for both studies, which contradicts with the findings of Ahluwalia et al. (2000). This means that either the positive or the negative review on itself does not lead to a significant higher valuation of either source or message credibility. Possibly other variables will have a stronger influence on these items.

For both studies, an effect was found on the variable buying intention showing that a positive review leads to a significant higher intention to either buy the laptop or book the hotel. This does confirm the combination of findings by Ahluwalia et al. (2000) and Herr et al. (1991) and Park et al. (2009) describing the positive effects of positive reviews in the case of a high involvement product with hedonic aspects. However, even though a significant effect was found for buying intention, averages were below the scale average of 2.5, so no actual buying intention was the result. Although the average was too low, the positive effect of a positive review is confirmed in this case and thus confirming hypothesis 2c.

The interaction effects were only found in study 2, which focuses on the hotel. For source credibility a significant effect was found on the negative reviews where the negative message from the known source scored significantly higher on source credibility than the negative version from the unknown source. This can be explained by the fact that the review reader has more confidence in the known sender which also applies to the message credibility. For message credibility a significant effect was found for the known source where the negative version of the known source scored significantly higher on message credibility than the positive version from the known source. Finally an interaction effect was found for the buying intention considering the known source. The positive review from the known source scored significantly higher than the negative message.

The absence of interaction effects in case of the laptop can be explained by the theory by Levitt (1981), who described the differences between tangible and intangible goods and the extent to which people are dependent of other people's experiences. In study 1, people can go to a shop and try the laptop before buying it. Their decision will probably depend more on real life experiences instead of the valuation of the source or the message.

In the case of study 2, people are unable to try the hotel before booking and therefore have to rely on a smaller amount of cues available to judge this product. They can only judge the information that is given about the hotel, such as the reviews in this case. Therefore, this might explain the presence of significant effects for the intangible service represented by a stay in a hotel.

5.2. Managerial Implications

The main results of this study is the finding, and somehow confirmation of previous findings, of the effect of known sources on the valuation of the dependent variables. The results show that review

readers do attach more value to the opinions of known sources. Therefore it is important for companies to stimulate their customers to spread a positive word of mouth in their own environment. They can do this by offering consumers something that will stimulate this word of mouth such as a discount on the next stay in the hotel, or extra service for their laptop. This does certainly count for service goods, where people are more dependable on other opinions as a result of the intangible aspect of the product. So, definitely companies offering a service should focus on creating a positive word of mouth, especially from people spreading the word within his or her acquaintances.

In the case of tangible products, it seems to be the case that people need other information, other variables to evaluate the credibility and to result in buying behavior. In this case it probably is much more important to deliver good services in store where people will come to try a product before buying it. Companies selling online could offer possibilities to try a product for about two weeks and if it does not meet the customer's expectations, offer the possibility to return the product. This is much harder in the case of intangible goods where potential buyers need to depend much more on customer experiences. Definitely the most important variable, buying intention where a positive review from a known source leads to a significant higher buying intention than a negative review. So, for companies dealing with intangible goods, it is most important to stimulate a positive spread of word of mouth. Negative word of mouth, especially from known sources are taken seriously, so they should be prevented by taking good care of customers who have complaints, because negative word of mouth by sources namely is taken more seriously than positive word of mouth.

5.3 Future research

The focus in this research was only on high involvement products because it was expected that in case of this type of products, people attach more value to information about previous experiences. However, on the internet there can also be found a huge amount of product experiences that concern low customer involvement. It might be interesting for future research to compare either low and high involvement products and services.

Another interesting future research might be involving more dependent variables such as evaluation of the review content and visual aspects as this can provide interesting information about the possible effects these items have on either source and message credibility.

At last, in this research, the known source was represented by an e-mail you receive. It will be interesting to look for other possibilities that represent known sources by for example testing the effect of an actual friend telling you about a product in real-life instead of via an e-mail as this might feel as an online source. This however was not tested in this research.

5.4 Conclusion

This study gained insights in the effects of source type and review sentiment on three dependent variables concerning two types of product categories, tangible and intangible, high involvement

goods. It is found that mainly in the case of the intangible product, reviews do have a high impact on the evaluation of the product and the actual buying intention. One of the main findings of this study is the influence that the known source has on the different dependent variables. In all cases that were significant, respondents seem to rely more on their friend, who represented the known source, than the stranger who posted his opinion online. Another important factor was the effect of the review sentiment. Positive reviews lead to a significant higher buying intention in both studies. However, the negative review from the known source was evaluated significantly higher than the unknown source on all three variables in the case of the hotel. So, conclusion is that positive word of mouth should be stimulated and negative word of mouth should be avoided, mainly in the case of people spreading negative word of mouth among their friends.

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Appendix A

Bijlage 1: Enquête

Opzet enquête

Beste deelnemer,

Allereerst bedankt dat je deel wilt nemen aan het onderzoek. Je krijgt zometeen een review* te lezen met enkele instructies. Nadat je het verhaaltje hebt gelezen is het de bedoeling dat je enkele vragen beantwoordt. Vul alsjeblieft datgene in wat het eerste in je opkomt, er zijn geen foute antwoorden.

Nogmaals, hartelijk dank voor je deelname!

Marieke Manders

Masterstudente Communication studies – Marketing communication

**Een review is een ervaringsverhaal. In dit onderzoek heeft het betrekking op de beschrijving van de ervaringen van een persoon met een product wat hij/zij onlangs heeft aangeschaft.*

Review

[.....]

Vragenlijst:

Geef antwoord op de volgende vragen die gaan over de review die je zojuist hebt gelezen:

| | Helemaal mee oneens | | | Helemaal mee eens | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---|---|-------------------|---|
| Ik vond de review geloofwaardig | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vond de review betrouwbaar | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vond de review overtuigend | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vond de review eerlijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vond de review aannemelijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vond de review twijfelachtig | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vond de review authentiek | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vond de review redelijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Beantwoord de volgende vragen door één van de bolletjes aan te klikken. Er is geen goed of fout antwoord, ga uit van je eerst ingeving.

Geef je mening over de afzender van de review

| | Helemaal mee oneens | | | Helemaal mee eens | |
|--|---------------------|---|---|-------------------|---|
| Ik vind de afzender van dit review oprecht | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vind de afzender van dit review eerlijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vind de afzender van dit review betrouwbaar | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vind de afzender van dit review geloofwaardig | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vind de afzender van dit review partijdig | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vind de afzender van dit review fatsoenlijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik denk dat ik afz. van review kan vertrouwen | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ik vind de afzender van dit review juist | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Beantwoord de volgende vragen door één van de bolletjes aan te klikken. Er is geen goed of fout antwoord, ga uit van je eerste ingeving

Hoe waarschijnlijk acht je de kans dat je 'product' zult kopen?

Zeer onwaarschijnlijk 1 2 3 4 5 Zeer waarschijnlijk

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------|
| Zeer onaannemelijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Zeer aannemelijk |
| Zeer onzeker | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Zeer zeker |
| Zeer onmogelijk | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Zeer goed mogelijk |

Slotvragen:

Heb je ooit eerder (online) reviews gelezen?

Ja Nee

Hoe vaak lees je reviews?

- Wekelijks
- Twee tot drie keer per maand
- Maandelijks
- Twee tot vijf keer per jaar
- Eens per half jaar
- Eens per jaar
- Nooit

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Ik vond dit review geloofwaardig | | | | | | |
| Helemaal mee oneens | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Helemaal mee eens |
| Ik voelde me betrokken bij dit review | | | | | | |
| Helemaal mee oneens | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Helemaal mee eens |
| Ik vond de toon van dit review | | | | | | |
| Zeer negatief | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Zeer positief |

Wat is je leeftijd?

(Drop-downmenu)

Wat is je geslacht?

- Man
- Vrouw

Welke opleiding volg je momenteel?

Aan welke faculteit studeer je?

- Faculteit der letteren
- Faculteit der rechtsgeleerdheid
- Faculteit der sociale wetenschappen
- Faculteit der medische wetenschappen
- Faculteit der managementwetenschappen
- Faculteit der filosofie, theologie en religiewetenschappen
- Faculteit der natuurwetenschappen, wiskunde en informatica

Appendix B

REVIEW LAPTOP POSITIEF

Ik ben echt ontzettend blij dat ik heb gekozen voor deze laptop! Wat een geweldig apparaat om mee te werken! Ik was op zoek naar een laptop om te gebruiken voor school en ben eens goed rond gaan kijken op internet en in een computerspecialzaak naar de mogelijke opties. Omdat het toch een hele uitgave is van zo'n €1100,-, wilde ik er zeker van zijn dat ik een goede keuze zou maken. Nou, dat is gelukt! Er zit een erg snelle processor in, de beeldkwaliteit is perfect en de accu gaat erg lang mee. Ben absoluut te spreken over de prijs-kwaliteit verhouding. Deze laptop zou ik zeker aanraden!

REVIEW LAPTOP NEGATIEF

Ik ben echt ontzettend teleurgesteld dat ik heb gekozen voor deze laptop! Wat een verschrikkelijk apparaat om mee te werken! Ik was op zoek naar een laptop om te gebruiken voor school en ben eens goed rond gaan kijken op internet en in een computerspecialzaak naar de mogelijke opties. Omdat het toch een hele uitgave is van zo'n €1100,- wilde ik er zeker van zijn dat ik een goede keuze zou maken. Nou, dat is mislukt! Er zit een erg trage processor in, de beeldkwaliteit is dramatisch en de accu gaat erg kort mee. Ben absoluut niet te spreken over de prijs-kwaliteit verhouding. Deze laptop zou ik zeker afraden!

REVIEW HOTEL POSITIEF

Ik ben echt ontzettend blij dat ik heb gekozen voor deze accommodatie! Wat een geweldige plek om je vakantie door te brengen! Ik was op zoek naar een accommodatie om onze vakantie te vieren en ben eens goed rond gaan kijken op internet en op het reisbureau. Omdat het toch een hele uitgave is van zo'n €1100,-, wilde ik er zeker van zijn dat ik een goede keuze zou maken. Nou, dat is gelukt! De kamers waren schoon, het personeel erg vriendelijk en het hotel centraal gelegen dus toeristische trekpleisters waren gemakkelijk te bereiken. Ben erg te spreken over de prijs-kwaliteit verhouding. Dit hotel zou ik zeker aanraden!

REVIEW HOTEL NEGATIEF

Ik ben echt ontzettend teleurgesteld dat ik heb gekozen voor dit hotel! Wat een verschrikkelijke plek om je vakantie door te brengen! Ik was op zoek naar een accommodatie om onze vakantie te vieren en ben eens goed rond gaan kijken op internet en op het reisbureau. Omdat het toch een hele uitgave is van zo'n €1100,- wilde ik er zeker van zijn dat ik een goede keuze zou maken. Nou, dat is mislukt! De kamers waren niet schoon, het personeel erg onvriendelijk en het hotel achteraf gelegen dus toeristische trekpleisters waren niet gemakkelijk te bereiken. Ben absoluut niet te spreken over de prijs-kwaliteit verhouding. Dit hotel zou ik zeker afraden!



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