REVIEWING THE REVIEW

EFFECTS OF VARIATION IN SOURCE IDENTITY, LANGUAGE STYLE AND PRODUCT TYPE OF ONLINE REVIEWS ON CONSUMER RESPONSES

Master Thesis

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UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication is considered as one of the most powerful sources of information during point of purchase situations. Therefore, it is important that consumers write online reviews that other consumers find helpful and persuade them to buy. But what exactly are helpful and persuasive reviews? Several studies investigated review's features to find out their effects on consumer responses.

AIM. The current study examines the effects of source identity (little identity disclosure vs extended identity disclosure), language style (figurative language vs literal language) and product type (predominantly hedonic product vs predominantly utilitarian product). The research aim is to find out which types of online reviews produce the most positive consumer responses.

METHOD. These consumer responses are measured by review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention. After conducting two pretests to validate the stimulus material, 229 respondents participated in a 2 (source identity) x 2 (language style) x 2 (product type) experiment. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions and filled in an online questionnaire. To find out the effects of source identity, language style and product type a MANOVA was performed.

RESULTS. Results of this MANOVA showed no significant main effect of source identity, but only a trend concerning review credibility, stating that extended identity disclosure makes the review more credible than little identity disclosure. Besides, the findings showed no significant main effect of language style. However, there were significant effects on review usefulness, review credibility and review persuasiveness and a trend concerning purchase intention, which means that literal language is more useful, credible and persuasive and leads to higher purchase intentions than figurative language. Furthermore, the results demonstrated a significant main effect of product type and significant effects on review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness and product attitude, which means that reviews about predominantly hedonic products lead to more positive consumer responses than reviews about predominantly utilitarian products. Finally, the role of product involvement as moderator and trust in online reviews as covariate was also investigated.

CONCLUSIONS. The findings are not completely in line with previous literature, which means that some discussion points came up, leading to suggestions for future research. However, this study proves that organizations should not underestimate the power of online reviews, but should instead monitor consumer's opinions constantly.

SAMENVATTING

ACHTERGROND. Elektronische mond-tot-mond communicatie wordt beschouwd als één van de krachtigste informatiebronnen tijdens aankoopsituaties. Daarom is het belangrijk dat consumenten online recensies schrijven die andere consumenten nuttig en overtuigend vinden. Maar wat zijn nuttige en overtuigende recensies precies? Verschillende studies hebben onderzoek gedaan naar recensiekenmerken om effecten op consumentreacties te achterhalen.

DOEL. Deze studie onderzoekt de effecten van bronidentiteit (weinig identiteitsonthulling vs veel identiteitsonthulling), schrijfstijl (figuratieve taal vs letterlijke taal) en producttype (overwegend hedonistisch product vs overwegend utilitair product). Het doel is om te achterhalen welke online recensies de positiefste consumentreacties teweegbrengen.

METHODE. Deze consumentreacties worden gemeten via het nut, de geloofwaardigheid en de overredingskracht van de recensie, de attitude tegenover het product, de koopintentie en de intentie om deel te nemen aan mond-tot-mond communicatie. Na twee vooronderzoeken om het stimulus materiaal te valideren, namen 229 respondenten deel aan een 2 (bronidentiteit) x 2 (schrijfstijl) x 2 (producttype) experiment. Respondenten werden willekeurig toegewezen aan één van de acht condities en vulden een online vragenlijst in. Een MANOVA werd uitgevoerd om de effecten van bronidentiteit, schrijfstijl en producttype te achterhalen.

RESULTATEN. De resultaten van deze MANOVA toonden geen significant hoofdeffect van bronidentiteit, maar alleen een trend met betrekking tot de geloofwaardigheid. Dit betekent dat veel identiteitsonthulling de recensie geloofwaardiger maakt dan weinig identiteitsonthulling. Daarnaast toonden de resultaten geen significant hoofdeffect van schrijfstijl, maar wel significante effecten op het nut, de geloofwaardigheid en de overredingskracht en een trend met betrekking tot de koopintentie. Dit betekent dat letterlijke taal nuttiger, geloofwaardiger en overtuigender is en leidt tot hogere koopintenties dan figuratieve taal. Verder toonden de resultaten wel een significant hoofdeffect van producttype en significante effecten op het nut, de geloofwaardigheid, de overredingskracht en de attitude tegenover het product. Dit betekent dat recensies over overwegend hedonistische producten leiden tot positievere consumentreacties dan recensies over overwegend utilitaire producten. Ten slotte werd de rol van productbetrokkenheid als moderator en vertrouwen in online recensies als covariabele onderzocht.

CONCLUSIES. De resultaten komen niet helemaal overeen met bestaande literatuur, waardoor er discussiepunten ontstonden. Deze discussiepunten leidden op hun beurt weer tot suggesties voor toekomstig onderzoek. Echter bewijst deze studie dat organisaties de kracht van online recensies niet moeten onderschatten, maar juist de meningen van consumenten constant moeten bijhouden.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, we all engage in word-of-mouth (WOM) communication multiple times a day. If you think about the content of your own conversations on a normal day, you probably agree that many of these conversations are product-related. For example, when you compliment your friend on her perfume, when you recommend a new mobile phone to your coworker or when you complain to your sister about the bad quality of a t-shirt. These examples are all considered as WOM.

1.1 USER GENERATED CONTENT

Because of the rapid growth of the Internet, user generated content in online reviews has a great impact in the electronic commerce context. For example, smart TV's on the website of Media Markt or CoolBlue receive more than 100 judgments in the form of online reviews. There are even a couple of products with more than 300 online reviews available on the websites. These examples prove that consumers are motivated to share their opinions and experiences with other potential buyers. Moreover, the helpfulness ratings of the online reviews on the websites of Media Markt and CoolBlue show that consumers find these opinions helpful and useful during their decision-making process. They actually use the opinions of others to make a buying decision. According to Schlosser (2011) online reviews written by consumers are a necessary feature for companies to attract and retain consumers on their websites. Figures show that nowadays consumers rely heavily on this user generated content. 58% of consumers prefer websites with online reviews and even 98% of online shoppers read online reviews before making a purchase decision (Schlosser, 2011), so these numbers prove that user generated content has a big influence.

Online reviews can be defined as "peer-generated product evaluations posted on company or third-party websites" (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010, p. 186). An online review is product information presented from the perspective of consumers who have purchased and used the product and it includes their experiences, evaluations and opinions (Park, Lee & Han, 2007). They are part of the bigger concept of WOM communication, which can be defined as information about products and services that consumers transmit to other consumers (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg, 2013; Arndt, 1967). It is "the communication between consumers about a product, service or company in which the sources are considered independent of commercial influence" (Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008, p. 461) or "the act of one consumer talking to another about a brand" (Kardes, Cline & Cronley, 2011, p. 317). WOM is considered as one of the most powerful sources of information during point of purchase situations, because consumers perceive WOM as more credible and authentic as compared to traditional marketing efforts (Kardes et al., 2011).

Thanks to technology, WOM can spread faster than ever before, through smart phones, email, text messaging, social networking sites, blogs, chat rooms etc. (Kardes et al., 2011). This digital form of WOM is called electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). eWOM can be defined as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about a company or product, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh & Gremler, 2004, p. 39). Thanks to the Internet, consumers are able to communicate their thoughts, opinions and feelings about products, services or companies online (Jeong & Jang, 2011). eWOM is especially important in the electronic commerce context. An important difference between Internet shopping and traditional shopping is that the former does not provide the possibility to touch or smell the product, while this is possible in traditional shopping (Park et al., 2007). This means that consumers must base their judgments on the product information presented on the website. Often online sellers give consumers the opportunity to share product evaluations online in the form of reviews (Chatterjee, 2001), so that other consumers can base their judgments on these evaluations.

1.2 CONSUMER RESPONSES TO ONLINE REVIEWS

Previous studies in the eWOM domain especially focused on the relationship between online reviews and sales, but it is actually interesting to find out which aspects of online reviews influence these sales. Simply allowing consumers to write online reviews is insufficient. Companies need visitors to write reviews that consumers find helpful and persuade them to buy (Schlosser, 2011). Consumers respond differently to different types of online reviews. It is interesting to find out why some reviews get positive responses, while other reviews get negative responses. Consequently, it is important to understand what makes some online reviews more persuasive than others, so that companies can

tailor their websites in a way that only the most persuasive reviews are shown. However, there are a lot of aspects that can make an online review persuasive or not. Online reviews can differ in valence (Chen & Kou, 2016; Willemsen, Neijens, Bronner & De Ridder, 2011), length (Schindler & Bickart, 2012; Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Lee & Choeh, 2016), argumentation diversity and argumentation density (Willemsen et al., 2011), aspects of the writer (Willemsen et al., 2011; Lee & Choeh, 2016; Baek, Ahn & Choi, 2012), grammatical errors in the writing style (Schindler & Bickart, 2012; Fang, Ye, Kucukusta & Law, 2016) and the product the review appoints (Willemsen et al., 2011; Lee & Choeh, 2016). The current study highlights three aspects: source identity, language style and product type.

1.2.1 SOURCE IDENTITY

At first, the identity of the source is highlighted, because attributes of an information source have powerful effects on the way people respond to messages (Forman, Ghose & Wiesenfeld, 2008; Chaiken, 1980). The message source has direct effects on attitudes and behaviors of consumers, independent of the message content (Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994). Since online reviews are characterized by communication between Internet users with limited information about each other (Munzel, 2016), the focus in this study is on the identity disclosure of the reviewer. For review websites, in which authors and readers are complete strangers, the disclosure of identity-descriptive information can support readers in accurately deriving information about the identity and motives of the reviewer (Forman et al., 2008). There is evidence that identity disclosure about the reviewer has positive effects on the helpfulness ratings (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2011), the usefulness ratings (Forman et al., 2008; Liu & Park, 2015), the credibility ratings (Munzel, 2016; Kusumasondjaja, Shanka & Marchegiani, 2012) and subsequent sales (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2011). However, it is also relevant to investigate whether the disclosure of identity-descriptive information also has positive effects on behavioral intentions, instead of only looking at judgments about the review itself. Previous literature does not address this question, so therefore it is relevant to investigate the effects on other consumer responses, such as product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention.

1.2.2 LANGUAGE STYLE

The language style is highlighted, because words have a lot of power. It is not about what you say, but it is about how you say something (Wu, Shen, Fan & Matilla, 2017). Language style is an interesting, but quite underexplored factor in eWOM research. Therefore, this study investigates the effects of a literal language style and a figurative language style, whereby literal language means exactly what it says and figurative language conveys additional connotations beyond that of their literal meanings (Fogelin, 1988). The reason for this variation is that figurative language should be able to meaningfully alter consumer responses (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996). Multiple researchers proved the comparative advantage of figurative language vs literal language in marketing communication, because figurative language provokes positive feelings towards the advertisement and results in higher levels of purchase intentions (Kronrod & Danziger, 2013; Chang & Yen, 2013; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2009). However, these assumptions are based on marketing communications, while the focus in the current study is on eWOM communications. There is little research available about the effects of language style on consumer responses to online reviews, so there is a research gap here. Therefore, it is relevant to investigate whether the comparative advantage of figurative language vs literal language also applies to eWOM, instead of only to marketing communications.

1.2.3 PRODUCT TYPE

Investigating the effects of product type is relevant, because there are differences in the nature of the consumption processes related to hedonic or utilitarian products (Adaval, 2001; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). The use of hedonic products is emotional in nature, while the use of utilitarian products is rational in nature (Alba & Williams, 2013; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Homer, 2008; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). These different processes can lead to different consumer responses to online reviews, which makes it relevant to investigate. The distinction between hedonic and utilitarian products in eWOM is underexplored, since most research distinguishes between search and experience products (Willemsen et al., 2011; Lee & Choeh, 2016). Moreover, the biggest part of

studies in the eWOM domain are focused on the tourism sector, in which the online reviews are about hotels, hostels, campsites, apartments, holidays, travels etc. (Wu et al., 2017; Kronrod & Danziger, 2013). These can be described as hedonic shopping experiences, because they are emotional in nature (Alba & Williams, 2013). There is less research into eWOM about utilitarian product categories, which makes this interesting to investigate. Therefore, this study investigates a completely different product category: electronics. In addition, this study does not simply distinguish between hedonic and utilitarian products, but it focuses on a utilitarian product category (electronics) that can vary from products with predominantly hedonic features (e.g., a headphone, because besides its functional benefits, it also has to look cool) to products with predominantly utilitarian features (e.g., a USB stick, because its appearance does not matter). This variation in product type is quite new and therefore relevant to investigate.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

In short, the focus in the current study is on the above three attributes that affect consumer responses to online reviews: source identity, language style and product type. Consumers process online reviews differently, depending on variations in these three attributes. The source identity varies from little disclosure to extended disclosure, the language style varies from figurative to literal and the product type varies from predominantly hedonic features to predominantly utilitarian features. The research objective is to find out which types of online reviews produce the most positive consumer responses. In other words, the current study investigates which types of online reviews are the most useful, credible and persuasive and produce the most positive product attitudes and the highest purchase and eWOM intentions. The research question is:

RQ: *What are the effects of variation in source identity (little disclosure vs extended disclosure), language style (figurative vs literal) and product type (predominantly hedonic features vs predominantly utilitarian features) of online reviews on consumer responses (review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention)?*

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The next chapter, chapter two, introduces the research model with its independent variables, dependent variables, moderating variable and covariate. Hypotheses about the main and interaction effects of source identity, language style and product type on consumer responses are discussed here, including hypotheses about the moderating effects and the effects of the covariate. Chapter three describes the two pretests and the stimulus materials. Also, this chapter provides information about the method of the main study, including the measures, the respondents and the procedure. Further, chapter four discusses the results of the 2 (source identity) x 2 (language style) x 2 (product type) experiment, leading to a discussion in chapter five. This chapter provides an overview of the most important conclusions of the performed study and tests these conclusions against existing theories in literature. These comparisons evoke some discussion points and suggestions for future research. Chapter five ends with managerial implications for organizations who are active on the Internet and deal with online reviews.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides an extended description of the independent variables in the current study: source identity, language style and product type. Hypotheses about the main and interaction effects of these variables on consumer responses are formulated. Moreover, the moderating effects of product involvement are also introduced in this chapter. Besides, the concept of consumer responses is divided into six dependent variables: review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention. These variables are discussed in more detail here. Further, the expectation is that trust in online reviews serves as a covariate. The chapter ends with a research model, in which all independent variables, dependent variables, moderating variables and covariates are summarized.

2.1 SOURCE IDENTITY IN ONLINE REVIEWS

Source identity is the first independent variable in this study. An online identity can be defined as “a social identity that an individual establishes in online communities and websites” (Liu & Park, 2015, p. 142). It is “a way of presenting oneself that helps others find one’s personal profile” (Liu & Park, 2015, p. 142). The disclosure of identity-descriptive information supports readers in accurately deriving information about the identity and motives of the reviewer (Forman et al., 2008). Identity-descriptive information includes among other things the real name, age, location, consumption context (Munzel, 2016), nickname, hobbies, interests, pictures and birthday (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2011). It is usually the choice of the reviewer whether he or she discloses such information (Munzel, 2016), resulting in some reviewers disclosing little information and others disclosing extended information. The identity of the source is important, because according to Chaiken (1980) message source characteristics affect judgment and behavior, such as product attitudes and purchase intentions. Also, Forman et al. (2008) and Chaiken and Maheswaran (1994) state that features of the message source are directly associated with attitudes and behaviors of the reader.

Extended identity-descriptive information has an advantage relative to little identity-descriptive information. Identity disclosure of the message source increases the perceived usefulness of the message (Forman et al., 2008; Liu & Park, 2015), the reviewer’s credibility (Munzel, 2016; Kusumasondjaja et al., 2012), the helpfulness ratings of the review and the subsequent sales (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2011). Reviews with self-descriptive information are judged as more helpful, because source characteristics are used to reach judgments about the product and guide purchase behavior (Forman et al., 2008). Information about reviewers themselves is an important predictor of buying decisions (Forman et al., 2008).

Based on the above information, extended identity disclosure has an advantage over little identity disclosure. The reason for this is that consumers can identify themselves more easily with reviewers who disclose extended identity-descriptive information (Forman et al., 2008). Identity disclosure facilitates the formation of relationships and common bonds between the writer and the reader (Ren, Kraut & Kiesler, 2007). Thanks to identity-descriptive information consumers can identify themselves with the reviewer. Personal identification with the source based on identity information, such as age and location, enhances the credibility of the review (Maddux & Rogers, 1980). In short, online consumers respond more positive to reviews including information about the source than to reviews with non-identifiable online sources (Liu & Park, 2015). Therefore, the following hypothesis about source identity can be formulated:

H1: *Extended identity disclosure about the source in online reviews leads to more positive consumer responses, as compared to little identity disclosure about the source in online reviews.*

2.2 LANGUAGE STYLE IN ONLINE REVIEWS

Language style is the second independent variable in the current study. The two most common language styles are figurative and literal language. According to Weitzel, Prati and Aguiar (2016) figurative language is a frequent phenomenon within human communication, since people use it in books, websites, forums, chats, Twitter messages, Facebook posts, news articles and product reviews. Figurative language is defined by fun, playful and hedonic characteristics (Wu et al., 2017). It refers to the usage of language to convey an additional connotation beyond that of their literal meanings (Fogelin, 1988). A figurative language style takes advantage of linguistic devices to project more complex meanings (Reyes, Rosso & Buscaldi, 2012). Examples of figurative sentences are “the sound of the headphone blows your mind away”, “the rooms are bigger than those in a palace” and “the food: yummy” (Kronrod & Danziger, 2013). The counterpart of figurative language is literal language, which focuses on a direct indication of its literal meaning (Wu et al., 2017). A literal

language style means exactly what it says (Fogelin, 1988). When writers are being literal, they are not exaggerating, using sarcasm or implying anything else (Reyes et al., 2012). One word conveys one simple meaning. Examples of literal sentences are “the sound of the headphone was excellent”, “the rooms are very spacious” and “the food is very good” (Kronrod & Danziger, 2013).

A figurative language style uses various linguistic techniques to describe things to achieve new, altered or more complicated understandings (Fogelin, 1988). To narrow the concept of figurative language, the current study focuses on metaphors, because these are the most common and appropriate in the context of online reviews. According to Roberts and Kreuz (1994) a metaphor is an implicit comparison. Derived from the Greek words “meta”, which means “over”, and “pherein”, which means “to carry”, metaphors are defined as implied comparisons between two dissimilar objects, such that the comparison results in aspects that normally apply to one object being transferred to the second object (Sopory & Dillard, 2002). Metaphors are a form of artful deviation from reality with their literally false, but nonetheless illuminating equation of two different things (McQuarrie & Mick, 1999).

Previous literature demonstrates the comparative advantage of figurative language vs literal language in marketing communication (Chang & Yen, 2013; Kronrod & Danziger, 2013; McQuarrie & Phillips, 2005; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2009). Figurative language can elicit positive feelings and attitudes toward the message and the product in the message and results in higher levels of attitude and purchase intention across product categories and consumption contexts (Chang & Yen, 2013; McQuarrie & Phillips, 2005; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2009). According to McQuarrie and Phillips (2005) metaphors have the advantage of making consumers more receptive to multiple, distinct and positive inferences about the product. Metaphors lead to more positive attitudes, because they elicit pleasure since the initial ambiguity stimulates interest and motivation (Bowers & Osborn, 1966). The subsequent resolution is rewarding. The result of getting the metaphor increases pleasure, which leads to positive attitudes (McQuarrie & Mick, 1999). Moreover, communicators who use figurative language are judged as more credible than the ones who use literal language, because using a figurative language style means that you are smart (Bowers & Osborn, 1966).

The comparative advantage of figurative language vs literal language is related to the vividness of the language style. Metaphors convey visual and tactual imagery that adds a more vivid level of understanding (Angus & Rennie, 1988). The vividness of information is its capacity “to attract and hold attention and to excite the imagination” (Nisbett & Ross, 1980, p. 45). Information is vivid “to the extent that it is emotionally interesting, concrete and imagery-provoking and proximate in a sensory, temporal or spatial way” (Nisbett & Ross, 1980, p. 45). Vivid information has more judgmental impact than pallid information (Nisbett & Ross, 1980) and since figurative language is vivid and literal language is pallid, a figurative language style has more judgmental impact than a literal language style. Based on the above information, the following hypothesis about language style can be formulated:

H2: *Figurative language in online reviews leads to more positive consumer responses, as compared to literal language in online reviews.*

2.3 PRODUCT TYPE IN ONLINE REVIEWS

Product type is the third independent variable in this study. Since there is little research into eWOM about utilitarian product categories, the current study focuses on the functional category of electronics. Electronics can be distinguished into products with predominantly hedonic features and products with predominantly utilitarian features. Consumption behavior is driven by hedonic motives (e.g., derived from the experience of using products) and utilitarian motives (e.g., derived from functions performed by products) (Homer, 2008). The use of hedonic products is emotional in nature, whereas the use of utilitarian products is rational in nature (Alba & Williams, 2013; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Homer, 2008; Srahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Hedonic consumption designates “those facets of consumer

behavior that relate to the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one's experience with products" (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982, p. 92). Hedonic products are perceived as relatively more fun, enjoyable, pleasant (Alba & Williams, 2013), sensorial and spontaneous (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Because of their pleasurable, playful and immediately gratifying nature, hedonic experiences are often vices and luxuries (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). On the other hand, the consumption of utilitarian products is cognitively driven, instrumental and goal-oriented (Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). Products with utilitarian features are perceived as relatively more functional, necessary, effective (Alba & Williams, 2013), sensible and useful (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Utilitarian experiences are often associated with virtues and necessities (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998).

Consumers can discuss experiences with both hedonic and utilitarian products in online reviews. According to Adaval (2001) hedonic criteria are the feelings that consumers expect to experience as a result of using the product, whereas utilitarian criteria are the actual abilities of the product to perform useful functions. Utilitarian criteria rely on the abilities of the product itself, which means that experiences with utilitarian products are objective in nature. Experiences with tangible attributes have a direct impact on the utility that consumers derive from the product and such functional experiences are weighted heavily when evaluating a utilitarian product (Sen & Lerman, 2007). These evaluations are based on objective criteria, which means that consumers feel comfortable relying on other consumer's opinions in online reviews (Sen & Lerman, 2007).

On the other hand, hedonic criteria rely on personal feelings and experiences, which makes experiences with hedonic products subjective in nature (Sen & Lerman, 2007). What one consumer values as important might be unimportant to another consumer. As a result, an online review about a hedonic product is perceived as less useful than an online review about a utilitarian product (Sen & Lerman, 2007). Since the evaluations of hedonic products are subjective, different for each consumer and therefore not unanimous, people are skeptical while evaluating hedonic product reviews (Ahluwalia, 2000). This skepticism leads to negative feelings and attitudes (Ahluwalia, 2000). Moreover, consumers are also skeptical towards the sources of hedonic product reviews, because their evaluations are subjective in nature. These subjective opinions are less credible than objective views in utilitarian product reviews (Ahluwalia, 2000). Based on the above information, the following hypothesis about product type can be formulated:

H3: *Online reviews about products with predominantly utilitarian features lead to more positive consumer responses, as compared to online reviews about products with predominantly hedonic features.*

2.4 INTERACTION BETWEEN LANGUAGE STYLE AND PRODUCT TYPE

Besides the main effects of language style and product type, the expectation is that there is also an interaction effect of language style with product type. According to Kronrod and Danziger (2013) a figurative language style in user generated content is more effective in certain contexts. "Figurative language is more conversationally normative, and therefore more effective, in hedonic consumption than in utilitarian consumption" (Kronrod & Danziger, 2013, p. 727). According to Kronrod and Danziger (2013, p. 729) "the consistent distinction between hedonic and utilitarian consumption contexts as evoking emotional versus rational thinking and attitudes suggests figurative language is more typical in user generated content regarding hedonic consumption than in utilitarian consumption". Figurative language is more emotional and affect-rich than literal language, causing that a figurative language style is more appropriate to communicate emotional experiences instead of rational and functional experiences (Ireland & Pennebaker, 2010). According to Fainsilber and Ortony (1987) people use figurative language more often to describe subjective feeling states than to describe overt actions. Since the evaluation of a hedonic product is subjective and the evaluation of a utilitarian

product is based on objective criteria (Sen & Lerman, 2007), people use figurative language more often to evaluate a hedonic product and literal language more to evaluate a utilitarian product. Talking about emotional content elevates the figurativeness of the language (Kronrod & Danziger, 2013). Kronrod and Danziger (2013) showed that using figurative language in consumer generated content is effective in evaluating a hedonic experience, while it decreases the effectiveness when evaluating a utilitarian experience. Moreover, figurative language in online reviews increases sales for hedonic products, but not for utilitarian products (Ren & Nickerson, 2014). In short, a figurative language style works better in reviews about hedonic products and a literal language style works better in reviews about utilitarian products. Based on the above information, the following hypotheses about the interaction effect of language style with product type can be formulated:

H4a: *Figurative language in online reviews leads to more positive consumer responses in predominantly hedonic contexts, as compared to predominantly utilitarian contexts.*

H4b: *Literal language in online reviews leads to more positive consumer responses in predominantly utilitarian contexts, as compared to predominantly hedonic contexts.*

2.5 PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT AS A MODERATOR

The expectation is that product involvement moderates the effects of source identity and language style on consumer responses. Involvement can be defined as “a person’s perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values and interests” (Zaichkowsky, 1985, p. 342). According to Greenwald and Leavitt (1984) involvement is personal relevance, whereby high involvement means high personal relevance. People can be involved with advertisements, purchase decisions and products (Zaichkowsky, 1985). The focus in the current study is on product involvement, which can be defined as the relevance of the product to the needs and values of the consumer (Zaichkowsky, 1985). “People are likely to become personally involved with an issue when they expect it to have significant consequences for their own lives” (Apsler & Sears, 1968, p. 162).

Variations in levels of involvement result in the activation of different cognitive processes when receiving a persuasive message (Solomon et al., 2013). These different processes are represented in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The name, elaboration likelihood, implies that consumers are sometimes likely to elaborate on persuasive messages and are sometimes unlikely to do so (Kardes et al., 2011). Depending on the personal relevance of the information, they follow one of the two routes to persuasion (Petty, Cacioppo & Schumann, 1983). Consumers who are highly involved use central routes and consumers that are less involved use peripheral routes (Petty et al., 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In the central route consumers carefully and thoughtfully consider the true merits of the information presented in support of an advocacy (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Strong arguments and reasons are the most persuasive in the central route (Kardes et al., 2011). Eagly and Chaiken (1984) define the central route as controlled, deep, systematic and effortful analyses of stimuli. On the other hand, in the peripheral route consumers rely on simple cues in the persuasion context without scrutinizing the true merits of the information presented (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). They focus on heuristic cues, such as an attractive source, that make it easy to form an opinion without much thought (Kardes et al., 2011). Eagly and Chaiken (1984) define the peripheral route as automatic, shallow, heuristic and mindless analyses of stimuli.

2.5.1 PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT AND SOURCE IDENTITY

First, product involvement moderates the effect of source identity on consumer responses. The source on product review websites serves as a heuristic cue in the peripheral route (Kim, Brubaker & Seo, 2015). According to Chaiken (1980), in the peripheral route consumers rely on accessible information, such as the source’s identity or other non-content cues, in deciding to accept a persuasive attempt or not. As stated before, the choice for central or peripheral processing depends on the levels of

involvement (Petty et al., 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Source characteristics, such as identity disclosure, affect persuasion under conditions of low, but not high, involvement (Rhine & Severance, 1970; Johnson & Scileppi, 1969). On the other hand, argument strength affects persuasion when involvement is high, rather than low (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). In other words, central route processing, under high involvement, maximizes the persuasive impact of message characteristics, such as the amount, comprehensibility and validity of the argumentation (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1979), while peripheral route processing, under low involvement, maximizes the persuasive impact of source characteristics, such as the source's identity (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). So, source cues have maximal impact when involvement is low and message cues have maximal impact when involvement is high (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). In this study, the assessment of reviewers is used as a heuristic cue to shape evaluations of the reviewed product (Chaiken, 1980; Chaiken & Maheswaran, 1994). The effects of this peripheral processing under low involvement are stronger when identity disclosure is more salient, because identity salience increases the likelihood that consumers process identity information (Turner, 1987). Therefore, the following hypothesis about the moderation of product involvement regarding source identity can be formulated:

H5: *The positive effect of extended identity disclosure about the source in online reviews is stronger when consumers are low involved, as compared to when consumers are high involved.*

2.5.2 PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT AND LANGUAGE STYLE

Second, product involvement moderates the effect of language style on consumer responses. Metaphors, one of the techniques of figurative language, evoke more cognitive elaboration than literal messages (Toncar & Munch, 2001; McQuarrie & Mick, 1999). McQuarrie and Mick (1996, p. 429) state that "figurative language invites elaboration by the reader". Making sense of figurative language requires careful scrutiny of the persuasive communication and higher cognitive processing, which is an example of the central route in the ELM (Montazeri, Finkbiner, Papalambros & Gonzalez, 2013). Figurative language elicits cognitive elaboration, because it is often a deviation from expectations and this deviation provokes greater elaboration (Childers & Houston, 1984; Heckler & Childers, 1992). According to Toncar and Munch (2001) consumers first have to process the literal language and then make the leap to understand the deviation, causing deeper processing and elaboration. This deeper processing requires product involvement, because consumers become more motivated to elaborate when involvement increases (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). According to Kardes (1988) figurative language only enjoys its advantage when consumers are more rather than less involved with the message or product, because only involved consumers are motivated to process the deviated meanings of figurative language. On the other hand, consumers who are less involved are not motivated to process figurative language, so they rely on literal language (Heckler & Childers, 1992). Literal language is easier to understand, so in cases of low involvement literal language is advantaged over figurative language (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996). Therefore, the following hypothesis about the moderation of product involvement regarding language style can be formulated:

H6: *The positive effect of figurative language in online reviews is stronger when consumers are high involved, as compared to when consumers are low involved.*

2.6 CONSUMER RESPONSES TO ONLINE REVIEWS

This study divides consumer responses into six variables: review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention. Three of these responses are about the online review itself: how useful, credible and persuasive the review is. The other three consumer responses are about the evaluation of the product discussed in the review, the intention to purchase the product discussed in the review and the intention to communicate about the product discussed in the review. The expectation is that the effects on these consumer responses are all in the same direction, because they are related to each other.

2.6.1 REVIEW USEFULNESS

The first consumer response in the current study is review usefulness. Usefulness is “a measure of perceived value in the purchase decision-making process” (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010, p. 186). It can be defined as “the assessment of the likelihood that the information will enhance the purchasing decision” (McKinney, Yoon & Zahedi, 2002, p. 301). In the context of online reviews, usefulness is the degree to which consumers believe that the online review facilitates their purchase decision-making process (Robinson, Marshall & Stamps, 2005). Thanks to online reviews new ideas and opinions about products are open for everyone. Consumers have individual perceptions of whether these ideas and opinions are useful to help them make better buying decisions (Cheung, Lee & Rabjohn, 2008). When they perceive an online review as useful, it means that the review is helpful in making a decision about whether to buy or use the reviewed product or not (Cheung et al., 2008).

2.6.2 REVIEW CREDIBILITY

The second consumer response is review credibility. eWOM credibility can be defined as the extent to which people perceive an online review as believable, true, factual or valid (Tseng & Fogg, 1999; Nabi & Hendriks, 2003). The concept of credibility is often associated with believability. According to Ayeh, Au and Law (2013, p. 438) credibility is simply the “believability of some information and/or its source”. Cheung, Luo, Sia and Chen (2009) define review credibility in other words: the perceived degree to which an online review provides accurate and truthful information. Credibility consists of two key components: trustworthiness and expertise (Tseng & Fogg, 1999; Ayeh et al., 2013). Trustworthiness can be defined as “well-intentioned, truthful and unbiased” (Tseng & Fogg, 1999, p. 40). This dimension is about the perceived goodness or morality of the message (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). Expertise, on the other hand, can be defined as “knowledgeable, experienced and competent” (Tseng & Fogg, 1999, p. 40). This dimension captures the perceived knowledge and skills processed in the message (Tseng & Fogg, 1999). In short, when information is judged as trustworthy and is perceived as high expertise, the information is most likely perceived as credible.

2.6.3 REVIEW PERSUASIVENESS

Review persuasiveness is the third consumer response in this study. Persuasiveness can be defined as the degree to which a message is able to change behavior in oneself or others (Skinner & Slater, 1995). It refers to human communication that is designed to influence beliefs, values or attitudes of other people (Simon, 1976). The dictionary defines persuasiveness as something that persuades or something having the power to persuade. So, a persuasive review is a review that is able, fitted or intended to persuade. The degree of persuasiveness is an important indicator to measure the success of a message (Loda, Norman & Backman, 2007). To narrow the concept of persuasiveness to review persuasiveness, Tsaur, Huang and Luoh (2014, p. 887) define the persuasiveness of online reviews as “the relation of an experience or agenda by an online poster who aims to change viewers’ attitudes, beliefs or intentions”.

2.6.4 PRODUCT ATTITUDE

Another consumer response in the current study is product attitude. According to Petty et al. (1983) and Baron and Byrne (1987) an attitude refers to an overall, lasting and general evaluation of persons, objects and issues. It is a person’s enduring favorable or unfavorable evaluations, emotional feelings and action tendencies towards an object or an idea (Kotler, 2000). Kardes et al. (2011) use other words and describe attitudes as evaluative judgments or ratings of how good or bad, favorable or unfavorable and pleasant or unpleasant consumers find a particular person, place, thing of issue. Attitudes have two components: the direction and the extremity (Kardes et al., 2011). The direction varies in positive, neutral and negative, while the extremity varies in weak, moderate and strong (Kardes et al., 2011). According to Fennis and Stroebe (2016) attitudes reflect the categorization of a stimulus object along an evaluative dimension. The stimulus object in the current study is the product discussed in the online reviews. The valence in all reviews is positive, so the expectation is that the attitudes are more favorable than unfavorable.

2.6.5 PURCHASE INTENTION

The fifth consumer response is purchase intention, which refers to the willingness to purchase a product in the future (Bickart & Schindler, 2001; Huang & Chen, 2006). According to De Pelsmacker, Geuens and Van Den Bergh (2013) purchase intention is the intention to purchase the product or to take buying related actions. Whereas attitudes are summary evaluations, purchase intentions are motivations to exert effort to carry out a certain behavior (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). So, purchase intentions can be seen as transaction behaviors consumers exhibit after evaluating a product (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000), which means that purchase intentions are mostly based on attitudes. Spears and Singh (2004, p.56) define purchase intention as "an individual's conscious plan to make an effort to purchase a brand". Higher purchase intention means higher likelihood of consumers buying the product (Wang, Cheng & Chu, 2013).

2.6.6 EWOM INTENTION

The last consumer response is also a behavioral intention. However, it is not about the intention to purchase, but about the intention to engage in WOM or eWOM. WOM intention is the intention to recommend a product to other consumers (Hartman, Hunt & Childers, 2013; Chun & Lee, 2016). According to Huang, Chou and Lin (2008) it is the tendency to transmit opinions to other people. WOM intention has to do with the consumers' thoughts about any product and the degree to which consumers are willing to share these thoughts with others (Wu, Quyen & Rivas, 2016). This sharing or recommending can happen face-to-face, but it can also happen in the online environment. For example, consumers have the possibility to like and share the online review. Liking intention refers to the intention to press the like button and sharing intention refers to the intention to press the share button (De Vries, Gensler & Leeflang, 2012). According to De Vries et al. (2012) liking or sharing a message is similar to eWOM communication.

2.7 TRUST IN ONLINE REVIEWS AS A COVARIATE

General trust in online reviews is a factor that, besides source identity, language style and product type, can also influence consumer responses to online reviews. It is likely that consumers who generally trust online reviews produce more positive consumer responses to them than consumers who distrust online reviews in general. For example, consumers who encountered misleading eWOM or found that a product did not perform in the way the online review promised can develop negative attitudes towards online reviews and distrust them in general (Lee, 2014). Therefore, trust in online reviews is an important covariate in the current study. Trust can be defined as "a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based on positive expectations of the intentions or behaviors of another" (Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt & Camerer, 1998, p. 395). It is the "willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence" (Moorman, Deshpande & Zaltman, 1993, p. 82) or the "belief that the other party will behave in a dependable, ethical and socially appropriate manner" (Gefen, Karahanna & Straub, 2003, p. 54). More specifically, Kim, Ferrin, Cooper and Dirks (2004, p. 105) define online trust as "the extent to which one is willing to make oneself vulnerable to an online agent in the presence of risk". General trust is very important, because high levels of online trust are associated with more favorable attitudes (Jarvenpaa, Tractinsky & Saarinen, 1999), greater intention to shop online (Awad & Ragowsky, 2008) and consumer responses in general (Gefen et al., 2003). In short, trust in online reviews is an important influence on consumer beliefs, attitudes and behavioral intentions in an online environment (Bart, Shankar, Sultan & Urban, 2005; Lee, 2014). Based on this information, the expectation is that consumer responses are more positive when consumers generally trust online reviews. Trust can be seen as a covariate, because it affects the relationships between the three independent variables and consumer responses. However, the question is how trust affects these relationships. Therefore, the following subquestion arises:

SQ: *To what extent does trust in online reviews has an influence on the main effects of source identity, language style and product type on consumer responses?*

2.8 RESEARCH MODEL

Briefly summarized, the source identity (little disclosure vs extended disclosure), the language style (figurative vs literal) and the product type (predominantly hedonic features vs predominantly utilitarian features) of online reviews are the independent variables in the current study. The goal is to figure out the effects of these variables on consumer responses. Consumer responses are measured by six dependent variables: review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention. The expectation is that, besides the main effects of source identity, language style and product type, there is also an interaction effect of language style with product type. Moreover, another expectation is that the effects of source identity and language style are moderated by product involvement. Finally, trust in online reviews serves as a covariate, because, besides source identity, language style and product type, general trust in eWOM can also influence consumer responses to online reviews. Figure 2.1 summarizes the above information in a research model and Table 2.1 presents an overview of all hypotheses in the current study.

FIGURE 2.1 RESEARCH MODEL

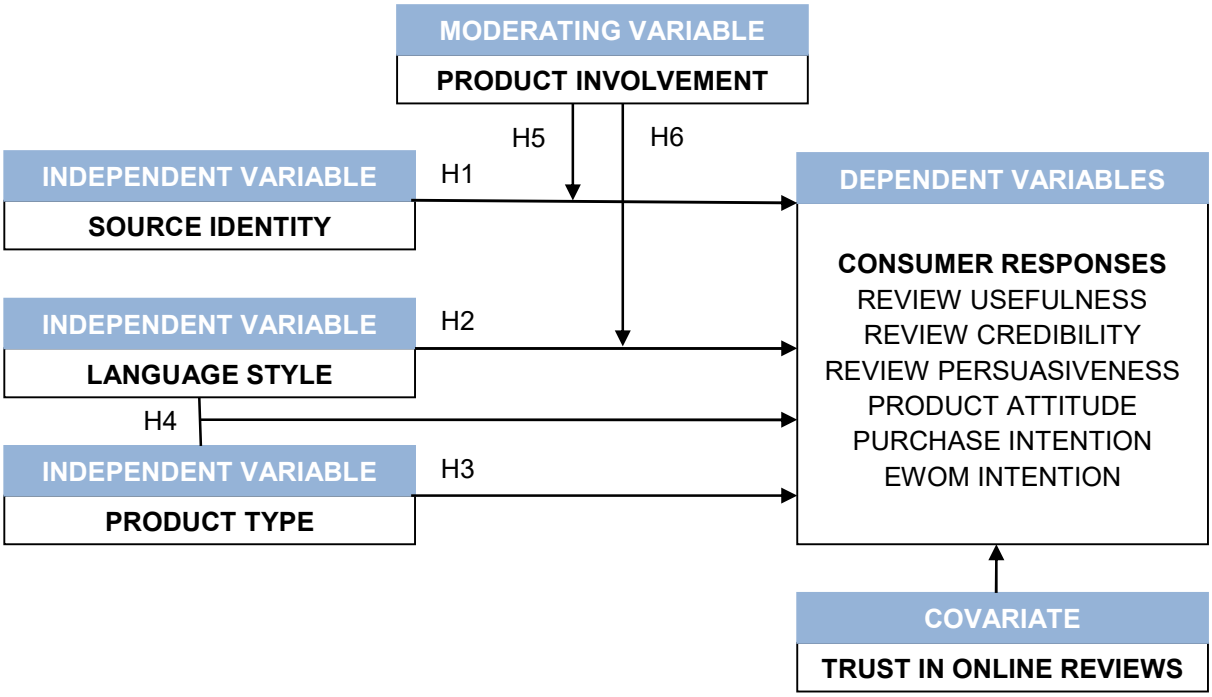

TABLE 2.1 OVERVIEW HYPOTHESES

HYPOTHESES
H1: Extended identity disclosure about the source in online reviews leads to (a) higher review usefulness, (b) higher review credibility, (c) higher review persuasiveness, (d) more positive product attitudes, (e) higher purchase intentions and (f) higher eWOM intentions, as compared to little identity disclosure about the source in online reviews.
H2: Figurative language in online reviews leads to (a) higher review usefulness, (b) higher review credibility, (c) higher review persuasiveness, (d) more positive product attitudes, (e) higher purchase intentions and (f) higher eWOM intentions, as compared to literal language in online reviews.
H3: Online reviews about products with predominantly utilitarian features lead to (a) higher review usefulness, (b) higher review credibility, (c) higher review persuasiveness, (d) more positive product attitudes, (e) higher purchase intentions and (f) higher eWOM intentions, as compared to online reviews about products with predominantly hedonic features.
H4a: Figurative language in online reviews leads to (a) higher review usefulness, (b), higher review credibility, (c) higher review persuasiveness, (d) more positive product attitudes, (e) higher purchase intention and (f) higher eWOM intentions in predominantly hedonic contexts, as compared to predominantly utilitarian contexts. **H4b:** Literal language in online reviews leads to (a) higher review usefulness, (b), higher review credibility, (c) higher review persuasiveness, (d) more positive product attitudes, (e) higher purchase intention and (f) higher eWOM intentions in predominantly utilitarian contexts, as compared to predominantly hedonic contexts.
H5: The positive effect of extended identity disclosure about the source in online reviews is stronger when consumers are low involved, as compared to when consumers are high involved.
H6: The positive effect of figurative language in online reviews is stronger when consumers are high involved, as compared to when consumers are low involved.

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology that was used to measure the effects of source identity, language style and product type on consumer responses to online reviews. To measure these effects an experiment with eight conditions was conducted. The current chapter provides information about the stimulus materials that were used in the study. It contains an extended description of the two pretests that were performed to validate the design of these stimulus materials. The procedure, measures, respondents and results of these pretests are discussed here. Moreover, this chapter also discusses the main study, in which a survey method was used. The measures, the respondents and the procedure of this survey are also appointed in this methodology section.

3.1 EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

The current study used a 2 (source identity: little disclosure and extended disclosure) x 2 (language style: figurative and literal) x 2 (product type: predominantly hedonic features and predominantly utilitarian features) experimental design to find out the effects of online reviews on consumer responses to them. Source identity, language style and product type were the three independent variables that were manipulated. In total, there were eight experimental conditions, which are presented in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1 EXPERIMENTAL CONDITIONS

	Source identity	Language style	Product type
1	Little disclosure	Figurative	Predominantly hedonic features
2	Extended disclosure	Figurative	Predominantly utilitarian features
3	Extended disclosure	Figurative	Predominantly hedonic features
4	Little disclosure	Figurative	Predominantly utilitarian features
5	Little disclosure	Literal	Predominantly hedonic features
6	Extended disclosure	Literal	Predominantly utilitarian features
7	Extended disclosure	Literal	Predominantly hedonic features
8	Little disclosure	Literal	Predominantly utilitarian features

3.2 DESIGN OF STIMULUS MATERIAL

The stimulus material consisted of eight screenshots of online reviews, based on the eight experimental conditions presented above. These screenshots were presented on a mobile phone, so that the image in the questionnaire was visual identical on a PC and a mobile phone. The lay-out of the screenshots was the same in all eight conditions. They only differed on the three independent variables source identity, language style and product type. These variables were manipulated to measure their effects on consumer responses to online reviews. The screenshot showed a general review website, namely ReviewSpot. The reason for this was that this website is neutral and does not refer to any companies, such as Media Markt, BCC or CoolBlue. To prevent that consumer responses were influenced by attitudes about such companies, this study used a general review website. Besides, the valence of the online reviews was in the same direction in all conditions. All reviews were positively written, so that this aspect did not have an influence on the consumer responses.

To validate the design choices of the stimulus material, two pretests were conducted. These pretests checked whether the manipulations in source identity, language style and product type worked. It was important that the differences in little identity disclosure and extended identity disclosure, in figurative language and literal language and in a product with predominantly hedonic features and a product with predominantly utilitarian features were clear for the respondents before the main study was performed. The first pretest focused on the manipulations in product type, while the second pretest was about the manipulations in source identity and language style.

3.2.1 PRETEST 1

The first pretest was about the product type in the online review. Electronics was the product category selected for this study. In general, electronics can be labeled as utilitarian, because they are functional, necessary, effective (Alba & Williams, 2013) and useful (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). However, this study distinguished electronics on a scale from hedonic to utilitarian. Some electronics have predominantly utilitarian features, for example a USB stick, but some electronics also have hedonic features, for example a headphone. A headphone has to perform its functional benefits, but it also has to be wearable and fashionable. Products like headphones are also perceived as fun, enjoyable and pleasant, which are features of hedonic products (Alba & Williams, 2013). The goal of the pretest was to select two out of ten products for the stimulus material: one predominantly hedonic

product and one predominantly utilitarian product. The ten selected electronics were in the same price category, because otherwise the price of the product could have an influence on consumer responses. Based on the prices of Media Markt, BCC and CoolBlue the following ten products into the price category of €0-50 were selected for pretesting: remote control, computer mouse, memory card, HDMI cable, headphone, speaker, phone charger, keyboard, USB stick and webcam.

Procedure and measures

The survey method was used during the pretest. The questionnaire started with an introductory text and two demographic questions about the gender and the age. The age was relevant, because the respondents had to be older than 18 years, due to ethical reasons. After the demographic questions, the respondents had to read two definitions of experience products and functional products. An experience product was another concept for a hedonic product and a functional product was the substitute concept for a utilitarian product. These concepts were changed, because experience and functional are less abstract and easier to understand than hedonic and utilitarian. However, with only these definitions of both product types, it could be unclear how these product types were related to the product category of electronics. Therefore, the respondents were shown to an example in which was explained that electronics can be judged as experience or functional products.

After the definitions and the example, respondents were shown the list of ten electronics, after which they had to decide whether these products have predominantly hedonic features or predominantly utilitarian features. Based on a ranking order task the respondents had to identify whether the products were predominantly hedonic or predominantly utilitarian. They had to drag the products to a certain position on a scale from 1 to 10, whereby the first place was the most fitting with an experience product and the tenth place was the most fitting with a functional product. In this way, a rank order from experience products to functional products was created.

Subsequently, respondents had to answer ten questions about the products that they judged as most fitting with an experience product and most fitting with a functional product, so in other words the product they ranked on the first and last place. These ten questions were divided into five questions about hedonic features and five questions about utilitarian features. Hedonic features were operationalized by using existing items from Spangenberg, Voss and Crowley (1997), measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. The items included dull / exciting, unpleasant / pleasant and unenjoyable / enjoyable. In total, five items were used to measure the hedonic features (α = .96 / α = .90) (Table 3.2). Utilitarian features were also measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. Again, the items were based on research from Spangenberg et al. (1997) and included useless / useful, impractical / practical and unhelpful / helpful. In total, five items were used to measure the utilitarian features (α = .91 / α = .89) (Table 3.2). Appendix 1 presents the complete questionnaire used during the first pretest.

TABLE 3.2 CRONBACH'S ALPHA SCALES PRETEST 1

Construct	Number of items	α (hedonic product)	α (utilitarian product)
Hedonic features	5	.96	.90
Utilitarian features	5	.91	.89

Respondents and recruitment

In total 30 respondents started the survey, but only 27 responses were usable, because only 27 respondents completed the survey. The respondent group consisted of 10 men (37%) and 17 women (63%). The age of the respondents ranged from 19 years till 56 years and the average age was 29.6 years. The respondents were personally approached and asked to participate in the pretest. They were all acquaintances of the researcher. Most respondents were invited through WhatsApp with a short introductory message about the pretest. The distribution of the pretest also happened through e-mail and face-to-face. The link to the questionnaire was presented in the message, so that the respondents were able to fill in the questionnaire right away. By clicking on the link, they were directed to the survey in Qualtrics, as presented in Appendix 1.

Results of pretest 1

Based on the ranking order task, the headphone (M = 1.44) was judged as most fitting with an experience product, while the memory card (M = 9.37) was judged as most fitting with a functional product (Table 3.3). In other words, the headphone was evaluated as predominantly hedonic product and the memory card was judged as predominantly utilitarian product. One-Sample T-Tests were conducted to compare the score of the products with the midpoint of the ranking order scale from 1 to 10, because a significant deviation from the midpoint means that the products are clearly hedonic or utilitarian and are not doubtful in the middle between hedonic and utilitarian. The first One-Sample T-Test showed that there was a significant difference between the score of the headphone (M = 1.44, SD = .64) and the midpoint (M = 5.50): t(26) = -32.90, p = .000. The headphone deviated significantly in the direction of hedonic. Another One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the memory card (M = 9.37, SD = 1.21) also differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 5.50): t(26) = 16.57, p = .000. The memory card deviated significantly in the direction of utilitarian.

However, these significant differences also applied to other products, besides the headphone and the memory card. For example, a One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the speaker (M = 1.96, SD = .81) also differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale (M = 5.50): t(26) = -22.75, p = .000. This means that, besides the headphone, the speaker also deviated significantly in the direction of predominantly hedonic products. Moreover, another One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the HDMI cable (M = 8.74, SD = 1.32) also differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 5.50): t(26) = 12.77, p = .000, which means that, besides the memory card, the HDMI cable also deviated significantly in the direction of predominantly utilitarian products.

TABLE 3.3 RANKING ORDER PRODUCTS

Product	M	SD
Headphone	1.44	.64
Speaker	1.96	.81
Remote control	4.59	1.78
Computer mouse	4.67	1.18
Webcam	4.74	1.95
Keyboard	4.85	1.63
USB stick	7.30	1.44
Phone charger	7.33	1.52
HDMI cable	8.74	1.32
Memory card	9.37	1.21

Measured on a 10 points ranking order scale (1 = hedonic and 10 = utilitarian)

According to the ten questions about hedonic and utilitarian features, the headphone and the speaker both turned out to be the products with predominantly hedonic features (Table 3.4). One-Sample T-Tests were conducted to compare the score of the products with the midpoint of the bipolar scale from 1 to 7, because a significant deviation from the midpoint means that the products are clearly hedonic or utilitarian. The first One-Sample T-Test demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the score of the headphone on the hedonic features (M = 5.32, SD = 1.09) and the midpoint (M = 4.00): t(16) = 4.99, p = .000. Another One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the speaker on the hedonic features (M = 6.34, SD = .70) also differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00): t(6) = 8.86, p = .000. This means that the headphone and the speaker both deviated significantly in the direction of predominantly hedonic features.

On the other hand, a One-Sample T-Test demonstrated that there was a significant difference between the score of the headphone on the utilitarian features (M = 5.34, SD = 1.20) and the midpoint (M = 4.00): t(16) = 4.61, p = .000. However, the headphone deviated significantly in the wrong direction, namely in the direction of predominantly utilitarian features. This was also the case for the

speaker, because a One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the speaker on the utilitarian features (M = 5.54, SD = .95) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00): t(6) = 4.30, p = .005, in the direction of predominantly utilitarian features. Anyway, this is logical, because all products in the product category of electronics are utilitarian and functional to a certain extent.

TABLE 3.4 SCORES ON HEDONIC/UTILITARIAN FEATURES FOR HEDONIC PRODUCT

	M		SD		N	
Hedonic features	*Headphone:*	5.32	*Headphone:*	1.09	*Headphone:*	17
	Speaker:	6.34	*Speaker:*	.70	*Speaker:*	7
Utilitarian features	*Headphone:*	5.34	*Headphone:*	1.20	*Headphone:*	17
	Speaker:	5.54	*Speaker:*	.95	*Speaker:*	7

Measured on a 7 points bipolar scale

Based on the ten questions about hedonic and utilitarian features, the memory card appeared to be the product with predominantly utilitarian features and not the HDMI cable (Table 3.5). A One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the memory card on the hedonic features (M = 3.44, SD = 1.09) differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale (M = 4.00): t(18) = -2.24, p = .038. The memory card deviated significantly away from the hedonic features, which means that the memory card was not judged as a hedonic product. However, the memory card was judged as a utilitarian product, since a One-Sample T-Test showed that its score on the utilitarian features (M = 6.23, SD = .80) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00): t(18) = 12.15, p = .000. The memory card deviated significantly in the direction of predominantly utilitarian features.

Concerning the HDMI cable, a One-Sample T-Test showed that its score on the hedonic features (M = 3.23, SD = 2.05) did not differ significantly from the midpoint of the 7 points bipolar scale (M = 4.00): t(5) = -.92, p = n.s. This means that the HDMI cable did not deviate significantly away from the predominantly hedonic features. Another One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the HDMI cable on the utilitarian features (M = 6.10, SD = 1.30) differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale (M = 4.00): t(5) = 3.96, p = .011. However, this did not matter anymore, because the HDMI cable also had some hedonic features, besides its utilitarian features. This was not the case with the memory card, which was purely utilitarian and functional. That is why the memory card was chosen over the HDMI cable as product with predominantly utilitarian features.

TABLE 3.5 SCORES ON HEDONIC/UTILITARIAN FEATURES FOR UTILITARIAN PRODUCT

	M		SD		N	
Hedonic features	*Memory card:*	3.44	*Memory card:*	1.09	*Memory card:*	19
	HDMI cable:	3.23	*HDMI cable:*	2.05	*HDMI cable:*	6
Utilitarian features	*Memory card:*	6.23	*Memory card:*	.80	*Memory card:*	19
	HDMI cable:	6.10	*HDMI cable:*	1.30	*HDMI cable:*	6

Measured on a 7 points bipolar scale

So, it turned out that the memory card was the product with predominantly utilitarian features. The remaining choice was the one between the headphone and the speaker as predominantly hedonic product. A Paired-Sample T-Test was conducted to compare the score of the headphone and the score of the memory card on both hedonic and utilitarian features. There was a significant difference between the score of the headphone (M = 5.32, SD = 1.09) and the score of the memory card (M = 3.44, SD = 1.09) on the hedonic features: t(14) = 4.28, p = .001. This means that the headphone was judged as more hedonic than the memory card. Moreover, another Paired-Sample T-Test showed that the difference between the score of the headphone (M = 5.34, SD = 1.20) and the score of the memory card (M = 6.23, SD = .80) on the utilitarian features was significant: t(14) = -2.30, p = .038. This means that the memory card was judged as more utilitarian than the headphone.

Concerning the speaker, a Paired-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the speaker (M = 6.34, SD = .70) and the score of the memory card (M = 3.44, SD = 1.09) on the hedonic features differed significantly: t(3) = 3.22, p = .049, which means that the speaker was judged as more hedonic than the memory card. However, another Paired-Sample T-Test showed that the difference between the score of the speaker (M = 5.54, SD = .95) and the score of the memory card (M = 6.23, SD = .80) on the utilitarian features was not significant: t(3) = -2.12, p = n.s. This means that the speaker and the memory card did not differ on the utilitarian features, while the headphone and the memory card showed a significant difference here. Therefore, the headphone was chosen over the speaker as product with predominantly hedonic features. Based on these results, two products for the stimulus material were chosen: the headphone as the product with predominantly hedonic features and the memory card as the product with predominantly utilitarian features (Image 3.1 and Image 3.2).

IMAGE 3.1 HEADPHONE (HEDONIC)

IMAGE 3.2 MEMORY CARD (UTILITARIAN)

3.2.2 PRETEST 2

Since the results of the first pretest proved that the manipulations in product type worked, the remaining goal was to check the manipulations in language style and source identity. Therefore, a second pretest was performed. At first, language style was manipulated by using figurative vs literal sentences, whereby both conditions differed on six points. The figurative conditions contained six figurative sentences or metaphors, while the literal conditions contained six literal sentences. For example, a figurative sentence about the headphone was “the sound blows my mind away”, while the literal variant was “the sound is excellent”. Appendix 3 provides all figurative and literal texts for both products. The goal was to check whether the difference between both language styles was clear for the respondents. Furthermore, the pretest also checked the manipulations in source identity. Source identity was manipulated by displaying different features of the reviewer. Such features include the real name, age, location, consumption context (Munzel, 2016), nickname, hobbies, interests, pictures and birthday (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2011). Because it was impossible to use all of these features, this study focused on the real name, the location and the picture of the reviewer, because based on online reviews on websites as Media Markt and CoolBlue these features were the most common. The pretest investigated four variations in identity disclosure (Table 3.6) to figure out which variations were seen as little identity disclosure and which variations were seen as extended identity disclosure. The goal was to select two variations: the one with the least disclosure and the one with the most disclosure. Finally, respondents had to perceive the online reviews as realistic. They had to look like they could actually appear on a review website. Therefore, the final goal of the second pretest was to make sure that the stimulus material was realistic.

TABLE 3.6 VARIATIONS IN IDENTITY DISCLOSURE

	Text about the reviewer	Picture of the reviewer
1	No text	Picture
2	No text	No picture
3	Text	Picture
4	Text	No picture

Procedure and measures

Again, a questionnaire was used during the pretest, starting with an introductory text and two demographic questions about the gender and the age. Respondents had to be older than 18 years, because of ethical reasons. After these demographic questions, the respondents were randomly exposed to two of the four conditions of the experiment: one review about a headphone and one review about a memory card. The screenshots varied in language style and identity disclosure of the source. After reading the scenario and looking at the screenshot, questions about language style, source identity and scenario realism were asked.

The perceived language style was operationalized by using six items, based on definitions of figurative language and literal language in literature (Wu et al., 2017; Fogelin, 1988; Reyes et al., 2012), measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. The items included literal language / figurative language, concrete language / abstract language and simple language / complex language. In total, six items were used to measure the perceived language style (α = .86) (Table 3.7).

After that, the questions about the reviewer followed. At first, respondents had to decide whether the online review contained the name, the place of residence and the picture of the writer. They could answer with three options: yes / no / I don't know. When respondents selected the answer "yes", a follow-up question appeared, asking what the name and the place of residence of the writer were. Finally, the degree of identity disclosure was operationalized by using existing items from Shin, Van Der Heide, Beyea, Dai and Prchal (2017), measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. The items were "no self-disclosure of the reviewer" / "a lot of self-disclosure of the reviewer" and "no information about the reviewer" / "a lot of information about the reviewer". In total, two items were used to measure identity disclosure (α = .94) (Table 3.7).

At last, scenario realism was measured on a 5 points Likert scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. For this, two items were used, namely "the online review was very realistic" and "it was very easy for me to imagine myself reading this online review" (Wu et al., 2017). Realism was the sum of these two items (α = .77) (Table 3.7). Appendix 2 presents the complete questionnaire used during the second pretest.

TABLE 3.7 CRONBACH'S ALPHA SCALES PRETEST 2

Construct	Number of items	α
Language style	6	.86
Source identity	2	.94
Scenario realism	2	.77

Respondents and recruitment

In total 29 respondents started the survey, but only 24 responses were usable, because the other 5 respondents quitted the survey early. The respondent group consisted of 6 men (25%) and 18 women (75%). The age of the respondents ranged from 18 years till 56 years and the average age was 27.9 years. Each respondent was exposed to two conditions, which means that in total 48 online reviews were assessed. All four conditions contained 12 responses (25%). The distribution in gender was equal, since all conditions contained more women than men (Table 3.8). A Chi-Square Test showed that there were no significant differences in gender between the conditions: $X^2(3) = .89$, p = n.s. The age was also equal in the four conditions (Table 3.8), since a Oneway ANOVA showed that there were no significant differences in age between the conditions: $F(3,44) = .35$, p = n.s. The respondents were personally approached and asked to participate. This happened through WhatsApp, e-mail and face-to-face. Most respondents were invited through WhatsApp with a short introductory message about the pretest. The respondents were partially the same as in the first pretest, but there were also new respondents who participated only in the second pretest. The link to the questionnaire was presented in the message, so that the respondents could fill in the questionnaire right away. By clicking on the link, they were directed to the survey in Qualtrics, as presented in Appendix 2.

TABLE 3.8 DEMOGRAPHICS PER CONDITION

Condition 1		Condition 2	
Gender:	Male 25% I Female 75%	Gender:	Male 25% I Female 75%
Age:	M = 30.42 I SD = 14.39	Age:	M = 25.42 I SD = 8.80
Condition 3		**Condition 4**	
Gender:	Male 17% I Female 83%	Gender:	Male 33% I Female 67%
Age:	M = 27.50 I SD = 12.67	Age:	M = 28.33 I SD = 11.71

Condition 1: no text / picture (source identity), figurative (language style), headphone (product type)
Condition 2: no text / no picture (source identity), literal (language style), headphone (product type)
Condition 3: text / picture (source identity), figurative (language style), memory card (product type)
Condition 4: text / no picture (source identity), literal (language style), memory card (product type)

Results of pretest 2

Concerning the language style, One-Sample T-Tests were conducted to compare the language style scores with the midpoint of the 7 points bipolar scale, because a significant deviation from the midpoint means that the language style is clearly figurative or literal. A One-Sample T-Test showed that the figurative text about the headphone (M = 4.19, SD = 1.15) did not differ significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00): t(11) = .59, p = n.s. This also applied to the figurative text about the memory card (M = 4.31, SD = .88), since a One-Sample T-Test demonstrated that it did not differ significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00): t(11) = 1.21, p = n.s. This means that the figurative texts were not judged as completely figurative. On the other hand, the literal texts were actually evaluated as completely literal. A One-Sample T-Test proved that the literal text about the headphone (M = 2.24, SD = .80) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00): t(11) = -7.68, p = .000. Besides, another One-Sample T-Test showed that the literal text about the memory card (M = 2.71, SD = 1.05) also differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale (M = 4.00): t(11) = -4.27, p = .001. Table 3.9 and Table 3.10 provide the above mean scores.

These results implied that the figurative texts were not judged as completely figurative. However, the respondents evaluated the figurative text about the headphone as more figurative, abstract, complex etc. (M = 4.19, SD = 1.15), while they assessed the literal text about the headphone as more literal, concrete, simple etc. (M = 2.24, SD = .80) (Table 3.9). A Oneway ANOVA showed that the difference between figurative language and literal language for the headphone was significant: F(1,22) = 23.65, p = .000. Moreover, respondents judged the figurative text about the memory card as more figurative, abstract, complex etc. (M = 4.31, SD = .88), while they assessed the literal text about the memory card as more literal, concrete, simple etc. (M = 2.71, SD = 1.05) (Table 3.10). A Oneway ANOVA showed that the difference between both texts about the memory card was significant: F(1,22) = 16.43, p = .001. Furthermore, a Oneway ANOVA showed that the difference between all four conditions was also significant: F(3,44) = 13.77, p = .000. In short, these results implied that the figurative texts were actually not completely figurative, but that they were significantly more figurative than the literal texts. So, the difference between a figurative language style and a literal language style was clear for the respondents, which means that the manipulations in language style worked.

TABLE 3.9 SCORES ON LANGUAGE STYLE FOR HEADPHONE

Headphone	M	SD	N
Figurative language style	4.19	1.15	12
Literal language style	2.24	.80	12

Measured on a 7 points bipolar scale (1 = literal and 7 = figurative)

TABLE 3.10 SCORES ON LANGUAGE STYLE FOR MEMORY CARD

Memory card	M	SD	N
Figurative language style	4.31	.88	12
Literal language style	2.71	1.05	12

Measured on a 7 points bipolar scale (1 = literal and 7 = figurative)

Based on the cued recall questions about the name, the place of residence and the picture, it appeared that the respondents recognized these features. 17 of the 24 respondents in the conditions with text about the reviewer recognized the name, while 21 of the 24 did not recognize the name when it was not displayed (Table 3.11). Furthermore, 14 of the 24 respondents in the conditions with text about the reviewer recognized the place of residence, while 20 of the 24 did not recognize this when it was not displayed (Table 3.12). At last, recognition of the picture was the easiest. 21 of the 24 respondents in the conditions with a picture recognized this picture and 23 of the 24 respondents in the conditions without a picture did not recognize this (Table 3.13). From the 17 respondents who recognized the name, only 5 respondents actually recalled this name. The other 12 respondents did not know the name anymore or gave the wrong answer. In addition, from the 14 respondents who recognized the place of residence, 12 respondents recalled this city. Only 2 respondents did not know the place of residence anymore. So, it is remarkable that the respondents actually recalled the place of residence, but clearly had more trouble with recalling the name of the writer.

TABLE 3.11 NAME RECOGNITION

	Yes	No	I don't know	Total
Text	**17**	1	6	24
No text	1	**21**	2	24
Total	18	22	8	48

TABLE 3.12 PLACE OF RESIDENCE RECOGNITION

	Yes	No	I don't know	Total
Text	**14**	2	8	24
No text	1	**20**	3	24
Total	15	22	11	48

TABLE 3.13 PICTURE RECOGNITION

	Yes	No	I don't know	Total
Picture	**21**	3	0	24
No picture	0	**23**	1	24
Total	21	26	1	48

According to the questions about identity disclosure, it appeared that the third condition, the one with text and with a picture, was judged as the one with the most self-disclosure of the reviewer (M = 5.13, SD = 1.30) (Table 3.14). On the other hand, the second condition, the one without text and without a picture, was judged as the one with the least identity disclosure (M = 1.50, SD = .90) (Table 3.14). One-Sample T-Tests were performed to compare these scores with the midpoint of the 7 points bipolar scale, because a significant deviation from the midpoint means that the identity disclosure is clearly little or extended. The first One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the second condition (M = 1.50, SD = .90) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00): $t(11) = -9.57$, $p = .000$ in the direction of little disclosure. Another One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the third condition (M = 5.13, SD = 1.30) differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale (M = 4.00): $t(11) = 3.00$, $p = .012$ in the direction of extended disclosure. Moreover, a Oneway ANOVA proved that the difference between the second condition (M = 1.50, SD = .90) and the third condition (M = 5.13, SD = 1.30) was significant: $F(1,22) = 62.93$, $p = .000$), which means that the difference between little and extended identity disclosure was clear for the respondents. Based on these results, the second and the third condition were used during the main study, because these were the ones with the least and the most identity disclosure of the source.

TABLE 3.14 SCORES ON IDENTITY DISCLOSURE

	M	SD	N
Condition 1 (no text / picture)	2.83	1.80	12
Condition 2 (no text / no picture)	1.50	.90	12
Condition 3 (text / picture)	5.13	1.30	12
Condition 4 (text / no picture)	3.71	1.57	12

Measured on a 7 points bipolar scale (1 = little disclosure and 7 = extended disclosure)

Finally, the online reviews were tested on scenario realism. One-Sample T-Tests were conducted to compare the realism scores with the midpoint of the 5 points Likert scale, because a significant deviation from the midpoint means that the online review is clearly realistic or unrealistic. The conditions separately were not all seen as equally realistic. The first and the third condition, both conditions with a figurative language style, were seen as less realistic (M = 3.29, SD = .62 and M = 3.29, SD = .78) (Table 3.15). A One-Sample T-Test showed that there was no significant difference between the realism score of the first condition (M = 3.29, SD = .62) and the midpoint of the scale (M = 3.00): t(11) = 1.63, p = n.s. Another One-Sample T-Test showed that there was also no significant difference between the realism score of the third condition (M = 3.29, SD = .78) and the midpoint (M = 3.00): t(11) = 1.29, p = n.s. On the other hand, the second and the fourth condition, both conditions with a literal language style, were seen as more realistic (M = 3.83, SD = .83 and M = 3.79, SD = .89) (Table 3.15). A One-Sample T-Test showed that the realism score of the second condition (M = 3.83, SD = .83) differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale (M = 3.00): t(11) = 3.46, p = .005. Another One-Sample T-Test showed that the realism score of the fourth condition (M = 3.79, SD = .89) also differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 3.00): t(11) = 3.08, p = .010.

The above results implied that not all conditions were perceived as equally realistic. It is possible that respondents found the figurative conditions exaggerated or fake and judged them therefore as less realistic than the literal conditions. However, when looking at the overall realism score, respondents answered the questions in the direction of realistic (M = 3.55, SD = .89) (Table 3.15). A One-Sample T-Test showed that the general realism score (M = 3.55, SD = .89) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 3.00): t(47) = 4.74, p = .000 in the direction of realistic. Besides, a Oneway ANOVA proved that there were actually no significant differences in scenario realism between the four conditions: F(3,44) = 1.75, p = n.s., which means that all conditions were perceived as realistic. These results implied that in general the screenshots were realistic and looked like they could actually appear on a review website. Therefore, the screenshots could be used during the main study.

TABLE 3.15 SCORES ON SCENARIO REALISM

	M	SD	N
Condition 1	3.29	.62	12
Condition 2	3.83	.83	12
Condition 3	3.29	.78	12
Condition 4	3.79	.81	12
Total	3.55	.81	48

Measured on a 5 points Likert scale (1 = totally disagree and 5 = totally agree)
Condition 1: no text / picture (source identity), figurative (language style), headphone (product type)
Condition 2: no text / no picture (source identity), literal (language style), headphone (product type)
Condition 3: text / picture (source identity), figurative (language style), memory card (product type)
Condition 4: text / no picture (source identity), literal (language style), memory card (product type)

3.3.3 EXAMPLES OF STIMULUS MATERIAL

Based on the two pretests, eight screenshots of online reviews were developed. These screenshots represented the eight conditions in Table 3.1. They were manipulated in source identity (little disclosure vs extended disclosure), language style (figurative vs literal) and product type (predominantly hedonic features vs predominantly utilitarian features). Image 3.3 presents the screenshot of the first condition and Image 3.4 presents the screenshot of the sixth condition. Image 3.3 represents little identity disclosure, since the name, the place of residence and the picture are not disclosed, while Image 3.4 represents extended identity disclosure, because these identity features are disclosed here. Furthermore, Image 3.3 represents a figurative language style, which can be seen in sentences as “the sound blows my mind away”, while Image 3.4 represents literal language, because the sentences are not implying anything else than their literal meanings. Finally, Image 3.3 represents a predominantly hedonic product, since a picture of the headphone is displayed, while Image 3.4 represents a predominantly hedonic product, because a picture of the memory card is displayed. The screenshots of all eight conditions are presented in Appendix 3.

IMAGE 3.3 SCREENSHOT CONDITION 1
Little identity disclosure
Figurative language
Predominantly hedonic product

IMAGE 3.4 SCREENSHOT CONDITION 6
Extended identity disclosure
Literal language
Predominantly utilitarian product

3.3 MEASURES OF THE MAIN STUDY

The survey method was also used during the main study. The questionnaire contained an introductory text and an introductory question. After that, demographic questions about the gender, the age and the level of education were asked. Furthermore, the survey contained 25 statements to measure the dependent variables: 4 items for review usefulness, 4 items for review credibility, 4 items for review persuasiveness, 5 items for product attitude, 3 items for purchase intention and 5 items for eWOM intention. Besides, the questionnaire contained 10 items to measure the moderator product involvement and 5 items to measure the covariate trust. Finally, the survey contained the same control questions as in the pretests to check whether the manipulations in source identity, language style and product type worked. Appendix 4 presents the complete questionnaire of the main study.

3.3.1 REVIEW USEFULNESS

Review usefulness was operationalized by using items from McKinney et al. (2002) and Bailey and Pearson (1983), measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. The items included worthless / valuable, unhelpful / helpful and useless / useful. In total, four items were used to measure the construct of review usefulness (α = .91) (Table 3.16).

3.3.2 REVIEW CREDIBILITY

Review credibility was operationalized by using existing items from Cheung et al. (2009). This construct was measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. The items included untrustworthy / trustworthy, unreliable / reliable and incredible / credible. In total, four items were used to measure the construct of review credibility (α = .88) (Table 3.16).

3.3.3 REVIEW PERSUASIVENESS

Review persuasiveness was also measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. In total, four items, based on research from Zhang, Craciun and Shin (2010), were used to measure this construct. These items included unconvincing / convincing, unimportant / important and not persuasive / persuasive. Review persuasiveness was the sum of these items (α = .90) (Table 3.16).

3.3.4 PRODUCT ATTITUDE

Product attitude was operationalized by using existing items from Bagozzi, Lee and Van Loo (2001) and Spears and Singh (2004). This variable was also measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. Examples of items were bad / good, unpleasant / pleasant and negative / positive. In total, five items were used to measure product attitude (α = .93) (Table 3.16).

3.3.5 PURCHASE INTENTION

Purchase intention was measured on a 5 points Likert scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. In total, three items, based on research from Hung, Chen, Peng, Hackley, Tiwsakul and Chou (2011), were used to measure this variable. These items were “I have strong possibility to purchase the product”, “I’m likely to purchase the product” and “I have high intention to purchase the product”. Purchase intention was the sum of these items (α = .93) (Table 3.16).

3.3.6 EWOM INTENTION

This construct contained two parts, namely WOM intention and eWOM intention. WOM intention was operationalized by using existing items from Brown, Barry, Dacin and Gunst (2005) and Yang, Kang and Johnson (2010), measured on a 5 points Likert scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. In total, three items were used, including “I would encourage friends and family to buy the product in the online review”. Besides, eWOM intention was measured by using existing items from Chang, Yu & Lu (2015) and Lee & Ma (2012), measured on a 5 points Likert scale. In total, two items were used, namely “I intend to like this online review” and “I intend to share this online review”. Altogether, five items were used to measure this variable (α = .84) (Table 3.16).

3.3.7 PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT

The moderator, product involvement, was operationalized by using existing items from Zaichkowsky (1994). Product involvement was measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. Examples of items were irrelevant / relevant, worthless / valuable and uninvolving / involving. In total, ten items were used and product involvement was the sum of these items (α = .88) (Table 3.16).

3.3.8 TRUST IN ONLINE REVIEWS

The covariate, trust in online reviews, was operationalized by using existing items from Sirdeshmukh, Singh and Sabol (2002) and Lee (2014). The variable was measured on a 5 points Likert scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. In total, five items were used, including "I trust online reviews", "online reviews are dependable" and "online reviews are reliable". Trust in online reviews was the sum of these five items (α = .78) (Table 3.16).

3.3.9 CONTROL QUESTIONS

First, to check the manipulations in language style, six items were used, based on definitions of figurative language and literal language (Wu et al., 2017; Fogelin, 1988; Reyes et al., 2012). These items were measured on a 7 points bipolar scale and included literal language / figurative language, concrete language / abstract language and simple language / complex language. In total, six items were used to measure the perceived language style (α = .83) (Table 3.16). Second, to check the manipulations in product type, ten questions about hedonic and utilitarian features were asked. Hedonic features were operationalized by using existing items from Spangenberg et al. (1997), measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. The items included dull / exciting, unpleasant / pleasant and unenjoyable / enjoyable. In total, five items were used to measure the hedonic features (α = .94) (Table 3.16). Utilitarian features were also measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. The items were also based on research from Spangenberg et al. (1997) and included useless / useful, impractical / practical and unhelpful / helpful. In total, five items were used to measure the utilitarian features (α = .93) (Table 3.16). Thirdly, to check the manipulations in source identity, the degree of identity disclosure was operationalized by using two existing items from Shin et al. (2017). These items were measured on a 7 points bipolar scale. The items were "no self-disclosure of the reviewer" / "a lot of self-disclosure of the reviewer" and "no information about the reviewer" / "a lot of information about the reviewer". Identity disclosure was the sum of these items (α = .90) (Table 3.16). Finally, to check whether the screenshots were judged as realistic, scenario realism was measured on a 5 points Likert scale, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree. For this, two items were used, namely "the online review was very realistic" and "it was very easy for me to imagine myself reading this online review" (Wu et al., 2017). Scenario realism was the sum of these two items (α = .79) (Table 3.16).

TABLE 3.16 CRONBACH'S ALPHA SCALES MAIN STUDY

Construct	Number of items	α
Review usefulness	4	.91
Review credibility	4	.88
Review persuasiveness	4	.90
Product attitude	5	.93
Purchase intention	3	.93
eWOM intention	5	.84
Product involvement	10	.88
Trust in online reviews	5	.78
Language style	6	.83
Hedonic features	5	.94
Utilitarian features	5	.93
Source identity	2	.90
Scenario realism	2	.79

3.4 RESPONDENTS OF THE MAIN STUDY

In total 332 respondents started the survey, but only 229 respondents completed the questionnaire, because the other 103 respondents quitted the survey early. These respondents did not read the introductory information, did not voluntary agree with participation in the study or did not complete the whole questionnaire. This means that only 229 responses were usable during the analyses of the main study. This respondent group consisted of 64 men (28%) and 165 women (72%). The age of the respondents ranged from 18 years till 66 years. The average age was 26.5 years. Most respondents were in the age category 18-25 (72%). Concerning the level of education, 105 respondents followed a WO education (46%), 70 respondents a HBO education (30%), 34 respondents a MBO education (15%), 8 respondents VWO (4%), 7 respondents HAVO (3%) and only 5 respondents VMBO (2%). At last, the respondents took on average 59 seconds to look at the first screenshot and 24 seconds to look at the second screenshot. However, there are outliers, so it is more realistic to look at categories. Most respondents looked 20-40 seconds (41%) when they saw the screenshot for the first time, while they looked 0-20 seconds (53%) when they saw the screenshot for the second time. Respondents looked longer the first time, but this is logical, since they already knew the online review the second time. Table 3.17 and Table 3.18 provide all information about the demographics of the respondents.

TABLE 3.17 DEMOGRAPHICS RESPONDENTS

	N	Minimum	Maximum	M	SD
Age	229	18	66	26.52	9.71
Time first screenshot	229	3.52	2068.71	59.10	149.15
Time second screenshot	229	2.31	188.19	23.70	21.52

TABLE 3.18 DEMOGRAPHICS RESPONDENTS

		N	%
Gender	Male	64	28%
	Female	165	72%
Age	18-25 years	164	72%
	26-35 years	34	15%
	36-45 years	10	4%
	46-55 years	16	7%
	56-65 years	4	2%
	66-75 years	1	0%
Level of education	VMBO	5	2%
	HAVO	7	3%
	VWO	8	4%
	MBO	34	15%
	HBO	70	30%
	WO	105	46%
Time first screenshot	0-20 sec	24	10%
	20-40 sec	93	41%
	40-60 sec	57	25%
	60-80 sec	28	12%
	80-100 sec	13	6%
	100 > sec	14	6%
Time second screenshot	0-20 sec	123	53%
	20-40 sec	80	35%
	40-60 sec	14	6%
	60-80 sec	6	3%
	80-100 sec	2	1%
	100 > sec	4	2%

3.4.1 RECRUITMENT OF RESPONDENTS

The respondents were chosen on the base of convenience sampling, a non-probability technique where subjects are selected, because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. At first, the researcher posted a message on Facebook asking if acquaintances wanted to fill in the questionnaire. This message was shared 18 times and liked 4 times, so there was a snowball effect, whereby the range of the message became greater. Besides this initial message, the researcher posted one other message a couple of weeks later to remind people to fill in the survey. Besides these messages, the researcher posted multiple messages in Facebook groups that contained students from different studies and different universities who were also searching for respondents. Hereby the reciprocity principle applied, because when one student filled in the survey of another student, the other student also had to fill in the survey of the first student. Besides these messages on Facebook, a lot of respondents were personally approached and asked to participate in the study. This happened through short messages in personal chats or group chats in WhatsApp, but also through personal chats on Facebook. This personal approach delivered a lot of responses. At last, a couple of responses were achieved through e-mail, LinkedIn and face-to-face. The link to the questionnaire was presented in the message, so that the respondents were able to fill in the survey right away. By clicking on the link, they were directed to the survey in Qualtrics, as presented in Appendix 4.

3.4.2 DEMOGRAPHICS PER CONDITION

All eight conditions contained more than 25 respondents, which is sufficient for analysis of variance. The distribution of respondents over the eight conditions was about equal: the first condition had 27 respondents (12%), the second condition 31 respondents (13%), the third condition 32 respondents (14%), the fourth condition 29 respondents (13%), the fifth condition also 29 respondents (13%), the sixth condition 27 respondents (12%), the seventh condition 28 respondents (12%) and the eight conditions contained 26 respondents (11%) (Table 3.19). The division in gender was equal in the eight conditions, since all conditions contained more women than men (Table 3.19). A Chi-Square Test showed that there were no significant differences in gender between the eight conditions: $X^2(7) = 3.79$, p = n.s. Besides, the age of the respondents was also quite equal in the eight conditions (Table 3.19). A Oneway ANOVA demonstrated that there were no significant differences in age between the conditions: $F(7,221) = .40$, p = n.s. Concerning the level of education, the distribution of respondents over the conditions was also quite equal, because most respondents followed a WO or HBO education (Table 3.19). A Chi-Square Test proved that there were no significant differences in level of education between the eight conditions: $X^2(35) = 37.69$, p = n.s. At last, the time people spent on looking at the screenshots was quite equal in the eight conditions. The biggest part of respondents in all conditions looked 20-40 seconds when they saw the screenshot for the first time (Table 3.19). A Chi-Square Test showed that there were no significant differences in the time people spent on looking at the first screenshot: $X^2(35) = 44.36$, p = n.s. Besides, the biggest part of respondents in the eight conditions looked 0-20 seconds when they saw the screenshot for the second time (Table 3.19). A Chi-Square Test proved that there were no significant differences in the time people spent on looking at the second screenshot: $X^2(35) = 34.87$, p = n.s. In short, the distribution of demographics over the eight conditions was equal.

TABLE 3.19 DEMOGRAPHICS PER CONDITION

	Gender		Age	Level of education		Time first screenshot		Time second screenshot	
CON 1	*Male*	30%	M = 27.19	*VMBO*	4%	*0-20 sec*	4%	*0-20 sec*	52%
N = 27	*Female*	70%	SD = 10.41	*HAVO*	4%	*20-40 sec*	33%	*20-40 sec*	22%
(12%)				*VWO*	4%	*40-60 sec*	22%	*40-60 sec*	15%
				MBO	11%	*60-80 sec*	15%	*60-80 sec*	7%
				HBO	29%	*80-100 sec*	11%	*80-100 sec*	0%
				WO	48%	*100 > sec*	15%	*100 > sec*	4%
CON 2	*Male*	29%	M = 26.87	*VMBO*	4%	*0-20 sec*	3%	*0-20 sec*	71%
N = 31	*Female*	71%	SD = 9.89	*HAVO*	0%	*20-40 sec*	39%	*20-40 sec*	20%
(13%)				*VWO*	0%	*40-60 sec*	29%	*40-60 sec*	6%
				MBO	19%	*60-80 sec*	23%	*60-80 sec*	3%
				HBO	45%	*80-100 sec*	6%	*80-100 sec*	0%
				WO	32%	*100 > sec*	0%	*100 > sec*	0%
CON 3	*Male*	31%	M = 25.44	*VMBO*	4%	*0-20 sec*	13%	*0-20 sec*	44%
N = 32	*Female*	69%	SD = 8.29	*HAVO*	6%	*20-40 sec*	34%	*20-40 sec*	44%
(14%)				*VWO*	0%	*40-60 sec*	28%	*40-60 sec*	6%
				MBO	19%	*60-80 sec*	13%	*60-80 sec*	0%
				HBO	46%	*80-100 sec*	9%	*80-100 sec*	3%
				WO	25%	*100 > sec*	3%	*100 > sec*	3%
CON 4	*Male*	24%	M = 27.31	*VMBO*	4%	*0-20 sec*	17%	*0-20 sec*	42%
N = 29	*Female*	76%	SD = 9.95	*HAVO*	4%	*20-40 sec*	48%	*20-40 sec*	52%
(13%)				*VWO*	4%	*40-60 sec*	17%	*40-60 sec*	3%
				MBO	27%	*60-80 sec*	10%	*60-80 sec*	3%
				HBO	24%	*80-100 sec*	4%	*80-100 sec*	0%
				WO	37%	*100 > sec*	4%	*100 > sec*	0%
CON 5	*Male*	34%	M = 25.03	*VMBO*	0%	*0-20 sec*	7%	*0-20 sec*	52%
N = 29	*Female*	66%	SD = 7.79	*HAVO*	4%	*20-40 sec*	45%	*20-40 sec*	34%
(13%)				*VWO*	4%	*40-60 sec*	34%	*40-60 sec*	7%
				MBO	4%	*60-80 sec*	7%	*60-80 sec*	7%
				HBO	37%	*80-100 sec*	3%	*80-100 sec*	0%
				WO	51%	*100 > sec*	3%	*100 > sec*	0%
CON 6	*Male*	30%	M = 26.07	*VMBO*	0%	*0-20 sec*	22%	*0-20 sec*	63%
N = 27	*Female*	70%	SD = 10.16	*HAVO*	4%	*20-40 sec*	41%	*20-40 sec*	33%
(12%)				*VWO*	4%	*40-60 sec*	22%	*40-60 sec*	0%
				MBO	11%	*60-80 sec*	11%	*60-80 sec*	0%
				HBO	30%	*80-100 sec*	0%	*80-100 sec*	0%
				WO	51%	*100 > sec*	4%	*100 > sec*	4%
CON 7	*Male*	14%	M = 28.54	*VMBO*	0%	*0-20 sec*	18%	*0-20 sec*	61%
N = 28	*Female*	86%	SD = 12.75	*HAVO*	4%	*20-40 sec*	32%	*20-40 sec*	28%
(12%)				*VWO*	7%	*40-60 sec*	28%	*40-60 sec*	7%
				MBO	14%	*60-80 sec*	0%	*60-80 sec*	0%
				HBO	11%	*80-100 sec*	4%	*80-100 sec*	4%
				WO	64%	*100 > sec*	18%	*100 > sec*	0%
CON 8	*Male*	31%	M = 25.81	*VMBO*	4%	*0-20 sec*	0%	*0-20 sec*	46%
N = 26	*Female*	69%	SD = 8.52	*HAVO*	0%	*20-40 sec*	54%	*20-40 sec*	46%
(11%)				*VWO*	8%	*40-60 sec*	15%	*40-60 sec*	4%
				MBO	12%	*60-80 sec*	19%	*60-80 sec*	0%
				HBO	15%	*80-100 sec*	8%	*80-100 sec*	0%
				WO	61%	*100 > sec*	4%	*100 > sec*	4%

Condition 1: little identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 2: extended identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 3: extended identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 4: little identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 5: little identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 6: extended identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 7: extended identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 8: little identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly utilitarian product

3.5 PROCEDURE OF THE MAIN STUDY

The questionnaire started with an introductory text about the study, followed by a question checking whether the respondents read the information and voluntary agreed with participation. This introduction served as consent form. After that, the survey started with three demographic questions about the gender, the age and the level of education of the respondents. The age was relevant, because respondents had to be older than 18 years, due to ethical reasons. The gender, age and level of education were also important to check whether all conditions had the same demographical composition. After the demographic questions, a definition of online reviews was showed to the respondents, so that it was clear what the researcher actually meant with this concept. Afterwards, the five statements about general trust in online reviews were presented. These questions appeared before respondents saw the screenshot of the online review, because otherwise the screenshot could influence the responses to these questions. The variable was about trust in online reviews in general and not about trust in the specific online review in this study. Then, the respondents were exposed to one of the eight conditions of the experiment. Respondents were assigned to this condition on a randomized base. After reading the scenario and looking at the screenshot, the respondents had to answer the four questions about review usefulness, the four questions about review credibility, the four questions about review persuasiveness, the five questions about product attitude, the three questions about purchase intention and the five questions about eWOM intention. After that, respondents saw the stimulus material for the second time, after which they had to answer the control questions. These control statements checked whether the manipulations in language style, product type and source identity worked. The differences between figurative language and literal language, between a product with predominantly hedonic features and a product with predominantly utilitarian features and between little identity disclosure and extended identity disclosure had to be clear for the respondents. Moreover, the screenshots of the online reviews had to be realistic, so there were also questions about scenario realism. The control questions were placed after the questions measuring consumer responses, so that they did not affect these responses. Finally, respondents had to answer the ten questions about product involvement. It was clearly stated that these questions were about the general involvement with the product and not about the involvement with the product in the online review the respondents just saw. At the end, the respondents read the closing text and they were thanked by the researcher. Here the procedure ends.

4 RESULTS

This chapter discusses the results of the 2 (source identity) x 2 (language style) x 2 (product type) experiment. At first, the stimulus material was checked on validity by using the control questions. The manipulations in source identity, language style and product type and the realism of the scenarios were checked here. After that, the hypotheses, formulated in the theoretical framework, were tested. The main and interaction effects of the three independent variables on the six dependent variables are debated in this chapter. Besides, the moderating effects of product involvement and the effects of trust in online reviews as a covariate are discussed here.

4.1 MANIPULATION CHECKS

The two pretests validated the design choices of the stimulus material already. However, the main study also checked whether the stimulus material measured what it had to measure. The control questions checked whether the manipulations in language style, product type and source identity worked. It was important that the variations in the variables were clear for the respondents, so that the found effects can be traced back to these variations. Moreover, respondents had to perceive the stimulus material as realistic, so scenario realism was also part of the control questions.

4.1.1 LANGUAGE STYLE

Based on the questions about language style, it appeared that the respondents judged the figurative conditions as more figurative, abstract, complex etc. (M = 4.21, SD = 1.11), while they assessed the literal conditions as more literal, concrete, simple etc. (M = 3.03, SD = .92) (Table 4.1). One-Sample T-Tests were performed to compare these language style scores with the midpoint of the 7 points bipolar scale, since a significant deviation from this midpoint means that the language style is clearly figurative or literal. A One-Sample T-Test demonstrated that the figurative conditions (M = 4.21, SD = 1.11) differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale (M = 4.00): t(118) = 2.07, p = .041 in the direction of figurative. Another One-Sample T-Test showed that the literal conditions (M = 3.03, SD = .92) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00): t(109) = -10.98, p = .000 in the direction of literal. So, these results implied that the figurative conditions were seen as figurative and that the literal conditions were seen as literal. Moreover, a Oneway ANOVA proved that the difference between the figurative conditions and the literal conditions was significant: F(1,227) = 75.60, p = .000. In short, the difference between a figurative language style and a literal language style was clear for the respondents, which means that the manipulations in language style worked.

TABLE 4.1 SCORES ON LANGUAGE STYLE

	M	SD	N
Figurative conditions	4.21	1.11	119
Literal conditions	3.03	.92	110

Measured on a 7 points bipolar scale (1 = literal and 7 = figurative)

4.1.2 PRODUCT TYPE

Concerning the questions about product type, One-Sample T-Tests were conducted to compare the product type scores with the midpoint of the 7 points scale, since a significant deviation from this midpoint means that the product is clearly hedonic or utilitarian. A first One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the headphone (M = 4.92, SD = 1.07) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00) on the hedonic features: t(115) = 9.25, p = .000 in the direction of hedonic. Another One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the memory card (M = 4.22, SD = 1.06) also differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00) on the hedonic features: t(112) = 2.16, p = .033 in the direction of hedonic. Table 4.2 provide the above mean scores. These results are strange, since the expectation was that memory cards were completely utilitarian and did not have hedonic features. However, respondents judged the headphone (M = 4.92, SD = 1.07) as more hedonic than they judged the memory card (M = 4.22, SD = 1.06) (Table 4.2). A Oneway ANOVA proved that the difference between the headphone and the memory card on the hedonic features was significant: F(1,227) = 25.04, p = .000, which means that the headphone has more hedonic features than the memory card.

Besides, a One-Sample T-Test demonstrated that the score of the memory card (M = 5.39, SD = 1.06) differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale (M = 4.00) on the utilitarian features: t(112) = 13.91, p = .000 in the direction of utilitarian. Another One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the headphone (M = 5.06, SD = 1.00) also differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00) on the utilitarian features: t(115) = 11.34, p = .000 in the direction of utilitarian. So, both products are judged as utilitarian, which is logical, since electronics are utilitarian and functional to a certain extent.

However, respondents judged the memory card (M = 5.39, SD = 1.06) as more utilitarian than they judged the headphone (M = 5.06, SD = 1.00) (Table 4.2). A Oneway ANOVA proved that the memory card and the headphone differed significantly on the utilitarian features: F(1,227) = 5.93, p = .016, which means that the memory card has more utilitarian features than the headphone. In short, these results proved that the headphone was judged as the product with predominantly hedonic features and that the memory card was judged as the product with predominantly utilitarian features. Moreover, the difference between both products was clear for the respondents, which means that the manipulations in product type worked.

TABLE 4.2 SCORES ON HEDONIC/UTILITARIAN FEATURES

	M		SD		N	
Hedonic features	*Headphone:*	4.92	*Headphone:*	1.07	*Headphone:*	116
	Memory card:	4.22	*Memory card:*	1.06	*Memory card:*	113
Utilitarian features	*Headphone:*	5.06	*Headphone:*	1.00	*Headphone:*	116
	Memory card:	5.39	*Memory card:*	1.06	*Memory card:*	113

Measured on a 7 points bipolar scale

4.1.3 SOURCE IDENTITY

Concerning the questions about source identity, One-Sample T-Tests were performed to compare the scores with the midpoint of the 7 points bipolar scale, because a significant deviation from the midpoint means that the identity disclosure is clearly little or extended. A One-Sample T-Test showed that the little identity disclosure conditions (M = 2.58, SD = 1.58) differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale (M = 4.00): t(110) = -9.44, p = .000 in the direction of little disclosure. Another One-Sample T-Test demonstrated that the extended identity disclosure conditions (M = 4.06, SD = 1.51) did not differ significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00) = t(117) = .43, p = n.s. Table 4.3 provide the above mean scores. These results mean that the extended identity disclosure conditions were actually not seen as completely extended disclosure. However, the respondents in the little disclosure conditions answered the questions more towards little disclosure (M = 2.58, SD = 1.58), while the respondents in the extended disclosure conditions answered the questions more towards extended disclosure (M = 4.06, SD = 1.51) (Table 4.3). A Oneway ANOVA proved that the difference between both conditions was significant: F(1,227) = 52.17, p = .000. In short, these results implied that the extended disclosure conditions were not completely judged as extended identity disclosure, but that they were significantly more extended than the little disclosure conditions. So, the difference between little and extended identity disclosure was clear for the respondents, which means that the manipulations in source identity also worked.

TABLE 4.3 SCORES ON IDENTITY DISCLOSURE

	M	SD	N
Little identity disclosure conditions	2.58	1.58	111
Extended identity disclosure conditions	4.06	1.51	118

Measured on a 7 points bipolar scale (1 = little disclosure and 7 = extended disclosure)

4.1.4 SCENARIO REALISM

Again, One-Sample T-Tests were performed to compare the realism scores with the midpoint of the 5 points Likert scale, since a significant deviation from this midpoint means that the online review is clearly realistic or unrealistic. The eight conditions separately were not all seen as realistic, especially the ones with a figurative language style. The second, third and fourth condition, all conditions with figurative language, were seen as less realistic (Table 4.4). A One-Sample T-Test showed that there was no significant difference between the realism score of the second condition (M = 3.21, SD = .89) and the midpoint of the scale (M = 3.00): t(30) = 1.31, p = n.s. Moreover, the third and fourth condition even scored beneath the midpoint of the scale (M = 2.89, SD = 1.07 and M = 2.71, SD = 1.01).

On the other hand, the first, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth condition, especially the ones with literal language, were seen as more realistic (Table 4.4). A One-Sample T-Test showed that the realism score of the first condition (M = 3.41, SD = .95) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 3.00): t(26) = 2.23, p = .035. Besides, a One-Sample T-Test showed that the realism score of the fifth condition (M = 3.66, SD = .77) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 3.00): t(28) = 4.59, p = .000. Another One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the sixth condition (M = 3.61, SD = .73) also differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 3.00): t(26) = 4.38, p = .000. Furthermore, a One-Sample T-Test showed that the score of the seventh condition (M = 3.50, SD = .82) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 3.00): t(27) = 3.24, p = .003. Finally, a One-Sample T-Test showed that the realism score of the eighth condition (M = 3.63, SD = .77) also differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale (M = 3.00): t(25) = 4.21, p = .000. All these deviations were in the right direction, namely in the direction of realistic scenarios.

The above results implied that not all conditions were perceived as equally realistic. A Oneway ANOVA also proved this, since there were significant differences in scenario realism between the eight conditions: F(7,221) = 4.78, p = .000. The conditions with figurative language (1, 2, 3 and 4) were seen as less realistic than the ones with literal language (5, 6, 7 and 8). Again, it is possible that respondents found the figurative conditions exaggerated or fake and judged them therefore as less realistic than the literal conditions.

TABLE 4.4 SCORES ON SCENARIO REALISM

	M	SD	N
Condition 1	3.41	.95	27
Condition 2	3.21	.89	31
Condition 3	2.89	1.07	32
Condition 4	2.71	1.01	29
Condition 5	3.66	.77	29
Condition 6	3.61	.73	27
Condition 7	3.50	.82	28
Condition 8	3.63	.77	26
Total	3.31	.94	229

Measured on a 5 points Likert scale (1 = totally disagree and 5 = totally agree)
Condition 1: little identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 2: extended identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 3: extended identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 4: little identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 5: little identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 6: extended identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 7: extended identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 8: little identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly utilitarian product

4.2 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Table 4.5 presents the mean scores on the six consumer responses. In general, the reviews were perceived as useful, since a One-Sample T-Test showed that the usefulness score (M = 4.86, SD = 1.25) differed significantly from the midpoint 7 points bipolar scale (M = 4.00) in the direction of useful: t(228) = 10.40, p = .000. The reviews were also credible, because a One-Sample T-Test showed that the credibility score (M = 4.35, SD = 1.27) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00) in the direction of credible: t(228) = 4.21, p = .000. Moreover, the reviews were perceived as persuasive, because a One-Sample T-Test proved that the persuasiveness score (M = 4.54, SD = 1.33) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00) in the direction of persuasive: t(228) = 6.14, p = .000. Furthermore, respondents formed positive attitudes about the product, since a One-Sample T-Test showed that the attitude score (M = 5.22, SD = 1.12) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00)

in the direction of positive attitudes: t(228) = 16.50, p = .000. On the other hand, respondents had low intentions to purchase the product, because a One-Sample T-Test showed that the purchase intention score (M = 2.69, SD = .94) differed significantly from the midpoint of the 5 points Likert scale (M = 3.00) in the direction of low intentions: t(228) = -4.90, p = .000. This also applied to eWOM intention, since a One-Sample T-Test demonstrated that the eWOM intention score (M = 2.55, SD = .73) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 3.00) in the direction of low intentions to engage in eWOM: t(228) = -9.33, p = .000. So, it is remarkable that respondents found the reviews useful, credible and persuasive and that they formed positive attitudes, but that they did not have the intention to purchase or to engage in eWOM. The evaluative dimension and the behavioral dimension do not correspond.

TABLE 4.5 SCORES ON CONSUMER RESPONSES

Source identity	Language style	Product type	R.U.	R.C.	R.P.	P.A.	P.I.	W.I.
Little	Figurative	Hedonic	4.91 (1.05)	4.19 (1.12)	4.63 (1.28)	5.67 (1.08)	2.75 (1.13)	2.67 (.77)
		Utilitarian	4.52 (1.29)	3.74 (1.05)	4.04 (1.14)	4.84 (1.27)	2.54 (.93)	2.37 (.73)
		Total	4.71 (1.19)	3.96 (1.10)	4.33 (1.24)	5.24 (1.24)	2.64 (1.03)	2.51 (.76)
	Literal	Hedonic	5.28 (1.01)	4.74 (1.08)	5.18 (.99)	5.45 (.99)	2.98 (1.00)	2.70 (.73)
		Utilitarian	4.97 (1.27)	4.21 (1.20)	4.45 (1.32)	4.98 (1.16)	2.78 (.83)	2.64 (.62)
		Total	5.13 (1.14)	4.49 (1.16)	4.84 (1.20)	5.23 (1.09)	2.88 (.92)	2.67 (.67)
	Total	Hedonic	5.10 (1.04)	4.48 (1.13)	4.92 (1.16)	5.55 (1.03)	2.87 (1.06)	2.69 (.74)
		Utilitarian	4.73 (1.29)	3.96 (1.14)	4.24 (1.23)	4.91 (1.21)	2.65 (.88)	2.50 (.69)
		Total	**4.92 (1.18)**	**4.22 (1.16)**	**4.58 (1.24)**	**5.23 (1.16)**	**2.76 (.98)**	**2.59 (.72)**
Extended	Figurative	Hedonic	4.84 (1.02)	4.35 (1.33)	4.43 (1.20)	5.39 (1.07)	2.52 (.90)	2.48 (.71)
		Utilitarian	4.42 (1.40)	4.21 (1.31)	4.27 (1.43)	4.85 (1.03)	2.56 (.84)	2.44 (.77)
		Total	4.63 (1.23)	4.28 (1.32)	4.35 (1.31)	5.12 (1.08)	2.54 (.86)	2.46 (.73)
	Literal	Hedonic	5.18 (1.50)	4.93 (1.55)	4.82 (1.55)	5.44 (1.19)	2.70 (.93)	2.67 (.66)
		Utilitarian	4.81 (1.28)	4.45 (1.15)	4.52 (1.48)	5.13 (.93)	2.77 (.99)	2.47 (.82)
		Total	5.00 (1.40)	4.70 (1.38)	4.67 (1.51)	5.29 (1.07)	2.73 (.95)	2.57 (.75)
	Total	Hedonic	5.00 (1.27)	4.62 (1.46)	4.61 (1.37)	5.42 (1.12)	2.61 (.91)	2.57 (.69)
		Utilitarian	4.60 (1.35)	4.32 (1.24)	4.38 (1.44)	4.98 (.99)	2.66 (.91)	2.45 (.79)
		Total	**4.81 (1.32)**	**4.47 (1.36)**	**4.50 (1.41)**	**5.20 (1.07)**	**2.63 (.91)**	**2.51 (.74)**
Total	Figurative	Hedonic	4.87 (1.03)	4.28 (1.23)	4.52 (1.23)	5.52 (1.07)	2.63 (1.01)	2.56 (.74)
		Utilitarian	4.47 (1.34)	3.98 (1.21)	4.16 (1.29)	4.84 (1.14)	2.55 (.88)	2.41 (.75)
		Total	**4.67 (1.21)**	**4.13 (1.23)**	**4.34 (1.27)**	**5.18 (1.15)**	**2.59 (.94)**	**2.48 (.74)**
	Literal	Hedonic	5.23 (1.26)	4.83 (1.33)	5.00 (1.29)	5.45 (1.08)	2.84 (.97)	2.69 (.69)
		Utilitarian	4.89 (1.26)	4.33 (1.17)	4.49 (1.39)	5.06 (1.04)	2.77 (.91)	2.55 (.73)
		Total	**5.07 (1.27)**	**4.59 (1.27)**	**4.75 (1.36)**	**5.26 (1.08)**	**2.81 (.93)**	**2.62 (.71)**
	Total	Hedonic	**5.05 (1.16)**	**4.55 (1.30)**	**4.76 (1.28)**	**5.48 (1.07)**	**2.73 (.99)**	**2.62 (.71)**
		Utilitarian	**4.67 (1.32)**	**4.15 (1.20)**	**4.31 (1.34)**	**4.94 (1.10)**	**2.65 (.89)**	**2.47 (.74)**
		Total	*4.86 (1.25)*	*4.35 (1.27)*	*4.54 (1.33)*	*5.22 (1.12)*	*2.69 (.94)*	*2.55 (.73)*

Review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness and product attitude = 7 points bipolar scale
Purchase intention and eWOM intention = 5 points Likert scale

However, these were the general scores on the dependent variables, while the online reviews were actually manipulated in source identity, language style and product type. To test the hypotheses about the effects of these variables, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed. The three independent variables all consisted of two variations: source identity in little disclosure and extended disclosure, language style in figurative language and literal language, product type in predominantly hedonic features and predominantly utilitarian features. The mean scores and standard deviations are displayed in Table 4.5. Table 4.6 and Table 4.7 present a summary of the main and interaction effects.

4.2.1 MAIN EFFECT OF SOURCE IDENTITY

Concerning source identity, a MANOVA (Wilks' Lambda) showed that there was no significant main effect of source identity on the six consumer responses together. However, there was a trend visible, because the level of significance was between the .050 and the .100: $F(6,216) = 2.06$, $p = .059$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$ (Table 4.6). Besides, a MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) demonstrated that there were no significant effects of source identity on five of the six consumer responses separately: review usefulness ($F(1,221) = .40$, p = n.s.), review persuasiveness ($F(1,221) = .15$, p = n.s.), product attitude ($F(1,221) = .04$, p = n.s.), purchase intention ($F(1,221) = 1.01$, p = n.s.) and eWOM intention ($F(1,221) = .72$, p = n.s.) (Table 4.7). However, the MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) showed that the effect of source identity on review credibility can almost be labeled as a trend: $F(1,221) = 2.58$, $p = .110$, which means that it is possible that extended identity disclosure ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.36$) makes the online review more credible than little identity disclosure ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.16$). Table 4.5 and Table 4.7 provide this information. These results implied that there was a trend visible concerning the first hypothesis, especially concerning the effect of source identity on review credibility (H1b). However, there were no effects of source identity on review usefulness (H1a), review persuasiveness (H1c), product attitude (H1d), purchase intention (H1e) and eWOM intention (H1f) (Table 4.14).

4.2.2 MAIN EFFECT OF LANGUAGE STYLE

Concerning language style, a MANOVA (Wilks' Lambda) demonstrated that there was no significant main effect of language style on the six consumer responses together: $F(6,216) = 1.61$, p = n.s., Wilks' $\Lambda = .96$ (Table 4.6). Besides, a MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) showed that there were also no significant effects of language style on product attitude ($F(1,221) = .19$, p = n.s.) and eWOM intention ($F(1,221) = 1.86$, p = n.s.) (Table 4.7). However, a MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) proved a significant effect of language style on review usefulness: $F(1,221) = 5.60$, $p = .019$, which means that a literal language style ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.27$) is more useful than a figurative language style ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.21$). The MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) also showed a significant effect of language style on review credibility: $F(1,221) = 7.84$, $p = .006$, which means that literal language ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.27$) is more credible than figurative language ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.23$). Also, the MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) showed a significant effect of language style on review persuasiveness: $F(1,221) = 5.38$, $p = .021$, which means that literal language ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 1.36$) makes an online review more persuasive than figurative language ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.27$). Finally, the MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) demonstrated that the effect of language style on purchase intention can be labeled as a trend: $F(1,221) = 2.90$, $p = .090$, which means that literal language ($M = 2.81$, $SD = .93$) leads to higher purchase intentions than figurative language ($M = 2.59$, $SD = .94$). Table 4.5 and Table 4.7 provide the above information. These results implied that the second hypothesis was rejected, since there were no effects of language style on product attitude (H2d) and eWOM intention (H2f). Moreover, the significant effects on review usefulness (H2a), review credibility (H2b) and review persuasiveness (H2c) and the trend concerning purchase intention (H2e) were in the other direction than expected (Table 4.14).

4.2.3 MAIN EFFECT OF PRODUCT TYPE

Concerning product type, a MANOVA (Wilks' Lambda) showed that there was a significant main effect of product type on the six consumer responses together: $F(6,216) = 2.53$, $p = .022$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .93$ (Table 4.6), claiming that hedonic products created more positive consumer responses than utilitarian products. A MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) proved a significant effect of product type on review usefulness: $F(1,221) = 5.11$, $p = .025$, which means that a review about a hedonic product ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 1.16$) is more useful than a review about a utilitarian product ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.32$). Besides, a review about a hedonic product ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 1.30$) is also more credible than a review about a utilitarian product ($M = 4.15$, $SD = 1.20$), because the MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) showed a significant effect of product type on review credibility: $F(1,221) = 5.93$, $p = .016$. The MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) also proved a significant effect of product type on review persuasiveness: $F(1,221) = 6.64$, $p = .011$, which means that a review about a hedonic product ($M = 4.76$, $SD = 1.28$) is more persuasive than a review about a utilitarian product ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.34$).

Furthermore, the MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) demonstrated a significant effect of product type on product attitude: F(1,221) = 13.83, p = .000, which means that people produce more positive attitudes about a hedonic product (M = 5.48, SD = 1.07) than about a utilitarian product (M = 4.94, SD = 1.10). Table 4.5 and Table 4.7 provide this information. On the other hand, the MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) showed no significant effects of product type on purchase intention (F(1,221) = .37, p = n.s.) and eWOM intention (F(1,221) = 2.41, p = n.s.) (Table 4.7). These results implied that the third hypothesis was rejected, because the significant main effect of product type and the effects on review usefulness (H3a), review credibility (H3b), review persuasiveness (H3c) and product attitude (H3d) were in the other direction than expected. Besides, there were no effects of product type on purchase intention (H3e) and eWOM intention (H3f) (Table 4.14).

4.2.4 INTERACTION EFFECT OF LANGUAGE STYLE AND PRODUCT TYPE

Concerning the combination of language style with product type, a MANOVA (Wilks' Lambda) demonstrated that there was no significant interaction effect of language style with product type on the six consumer responses together: F(6,216) = .59, p = n.s., Wilks' Λ = .98 (Table 4.6). Besides, a MANOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) showed that there were also no significant interaction effects on consumer responses separately: review usefulness (F(1,221) = .05, p = n.s.), review credibility (F(1,221) = .39, p = n.s.), review persuasiveness (F(1,221) = .17, p = n.s.), product attitude (F(1,221) = 1.05, p = n.s.), purchase intention (F(1,221) = .01, p = n.s.) and eWOM intention (F(1,221) = .03, p = n.s.) (Table 4.7). These results implied that hypothesis 4 was rejected (Table 4.14).

TABLE 4.6 MANOVA (MULTIVARIATE TESTS WILKS' LAMBDA)

Effect	Wilks' Λ	F	Sig.
Source identity	.95	2.06	*.059*
Language style	.96	1.61	.146
Product type	.93	2.53	**.022**
Language * Product	.98	.59	.739

TABLE 4.7 MANOVA (TEST OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS)

Effect		F	Sig.
Source identity	Review usefulness	.40	.528
	Review credibility	2.58	*.110*
	Review persuasiveness	.15	.697
	Product attitude	.04	.839
	Purchase intention	1.01	.315
	eWOM intention	.72	.396
Language style	Review usefulness	5.60	**.019**
	Review credibility	7.84	**.006**
	Review persuasiveness	5.38	**.021**
	Product attitude	.19	.661
	Purchase intention	2.90	*.090*
	eWOM intention	1.86	.174
Product type	Review usefulness	5.11	**.025**
	Review credibility	5.93	**.016**
	Review persuasiveness	6.64	**.011**
	Product attitude	13.83	**.000**
	Purchase intention	.37	.542
	eWOM intention	2.41	.122
Language * Product	Review usefulness	.05	.824
	Review credibility	.39	.533
	Review persuasiveness	.17	.684
	Product attitude	1.05	.307
	Purchase intention	.01	.932
	eWOM intention	.03	.875

4.2.5 PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT AS A MODERATOR

First, the mean scores and standard deviations of the construct product involvement are presented in Table 4.8. A One-Sample T-Test was performed to compare the involvement score with the midpoint of the 7 points bipolar scale, since a significant deviation from this midpoint means that consumers are clearly low involved or high involved. A One-Sample T-Test showed that the general involvement score (M = 4.19, SD = .99) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 4.00): t(228) = 2.84, p = .005. This means that the respondents were generally involved. This applied to all conditions, since a Oneway ANOVA showed that there were no significant differences in the involvement score between the eight conditions: F(7,221) = .56, p = n.s. This means that there was actually no distinction in low involved and high involved. All respondents appeared to be involved with the product. Since there is no significant distinction between low involved and high involved, it is impossible to test both hypotheses about product involvement as a moderating variable.

TABLE 4.8 SCORES ON PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT

	M	SD	N
Condition 1	4.22	.87	27
Condition 2	4.21	1.12	31
Condition 3	4.24	1.05	32
Condition 4	4.01	.76	29
Condition 5	4.23	1.05	29
Condition 6	4.37	.70	27
Condition 7	4.26	1.38	28
Condition 8	3.93	.85	26
Total	4.19	.99	229

Measured on a 7 points bipolar scale (1 = low involved and 7 = high involved)
Condition 1: little identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 2: extended identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 3: extended identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 4: little identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 5: little identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 6: extended identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 7: extended identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 8: little identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly utilitarian product

However, to be sure, a correlation analysis was performed to control if product involvement correlates with the six dependent variables. This was not the case, because correlations showed that product involvement did not correlate significantly with review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention (Table 4.9). Since these correlations are an assumption to perform a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) with product involvement as a moderator, it was not possible to conduct this test. These results implied that product involvement did not moderate the effect of source identity and language style on consumer responses, which means that the fifth and the sixth hypothesis were both rejected (Table 4.14).

TABLE 4.9 CORRELATIONS PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT

	R.U.	R.C.	R.P.	P.A.	P.I.	W.I.	P.I.V.
Review usefulness	1						
Review credibility	.72*	1					
Review persuasiveness	.83*	.77*	1				
Product attitude	.52*	.45*	.52*	1			
Purchase intention	.36*	.38*	.45*	.26*	1		
eWOM intention	.44*	.46*	.50*	.32*	.56*	1	
Product involvement	.07	.11	.11	.10	.11	.02	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

4.2.6 TRUST IN ONLINE REVIEWS AS A COVARIATE

First, the mean scores and standard deviations of the construct trust are presented in Table 4.10. A One-Sample T-Test was conducted to compare the trust score with the midpoint of the 5 points Likert scale, since a significant deviation means that consumers clearly have low or high levels of trust. A One-Sample T-Test showed that the general trust score (M = 3.16, SD = .59) differed significantly from the midpoint (M = 3.00): t(228) = 4.13, p = .000, which means that the respondents trusted online reviews. To check whether trust functioned as a covariate on consumer responses, a correlation analysis was performed. Its goal was to control if trust correlates with the dependent variables. The analysis showed significant correlations between trust and review usefulness (r(229) = .21, p = .001), review credibility (r(229) = .22, p = .001), review persuasiveness (r(229) = .20, p = .002), product attitude (r(229) = .17, p = .012), purchase intention (r(229) = .16, p = .013) and eWOM intention (r(229) = .16, p = .015) (Table 4.10). Because of these significant correlations, a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) with trust as a covariate was conducted.

TABLE 4.10 SCORES ON TRUST IN ONLINE REVIEWS

	M	SD	N
Condition 1	3.17	.60	27
Condition 2	3.25	.46	31
Condition 3	2.95	.68	32
Condition 4	2.94	.60	29
Condition 5	3.22	.60	29
Condition 6	3.30	.49	27
Condition 7	3.13	.66	28
Condition 8	3.38	.52	26
Total	3.16	.59	229

Measured on a 5 points Likert scale (1 = totally disagree and 5 = totally agree)
Condition 1: little identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 2: extended identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 3: extended identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 4: little identity disclosure, figurative language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 5: little identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 6: extended identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly utilitarian product
Condition 7: extended identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly hedonic product
Condition 8: little identity disclosure, literal language, predominantly utilitarian product

TABLE 4.11 CORRELATIONS TRUST IN ONLINE REVIEWS

	R.U.	R.C.	R.P.	P.A.	P.I.	W.I.	T.O.R.
Review usefulness	1						
Review credibility	.72*	1					
Review persuasiveness	.83*	.77*	1				
Product attitude	.52*	.45*	.52*	1			
Purchase intention	.36*	.38*	.45*	.26*	1		
eWOM intention	.44*	.46*	.50*	.32*	.56*	1	
Trust in online reviews	.21*	.22*	.20*	.17**	.16**	.16**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*
*** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

The MANCOVA (Wilks' Lambda) showed that trust predicts the six consumer responses together: F(6,215) = 2.39, p = .029, Wilks' Λ = .94 (Table 4.12). The MANCOVA (Test of Between-Subjects Effects) also proved that trust significantly predicts the six consumer responses separately: review usefulness (F(1,220) = 10.12, p = .002), review credibility (F(1,220) = 10.37, p = .001), review persuasiveness (F(1,220) = 8.69, p = .004), product attitude (F(1,220) = 7.83, p = .006), purchase intention (F(1,220) = 4.80, p = .029) and eWOM intention (F(1,220) = 5.07, p = .025) (Table 4.13).

In addition, the MANCOVA (Wilks' Lambda) showed that the trend concerning source identity ($F(6,216) = 2.06$, $p = 0.59$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$) (Table 4.6) remained the same when taking trust as a covariate ($F(6,215) = 2.06$, $p = .059$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$) (Table 4.12). However, after controlling for the effect of trust as a covariate, the previously found almost-trend on review credibility ($F(1,221) = 2.58$, $p = .110$) (Table 4.7) can now actually be labeled as a trend ($F(1,220) = 2.89$, $p = .091$) (Table 4.13). So, when taking trust in online reviews into account, extended identity disclosure ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.36$) makes the online review more credible than little identity disclosure ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.16$) (Table 4.5).

Besides, the MANCOVA (Wilks' Lambda) demonstrated that, after controlling for the effect of trust as a covariate, there was still no significant main effect of language style on the six consumer responses together: $F(6,215) = 1.22$, $p =$ n.s., Wilks' $\Lambda = .97$ (Table 4.12). Furthermore, the previously found significant effect of language style on review usefulness ($F(1,221) = 5.60$, $p = .019$) (Table 4.7) became not significant, but only a trend when taking trust as a covariate ($F(1,220) = 3.58$, $p = .060$) (Table 4.13). Also, the significant effect of language style on review credibility ($F(1,221) = 7.84$, $p = .006$) (Table 4.7) became less significant when taking trust as a covariate ($F(1,220) = 5.40$, $p = .021$) (Table 4.13). Besides, the significant effect of language style on review persuasiveness ($F(1,221) = 5.38$, $p = .021$) (Table 4.7) became not significant, but only a trend when taking trust as a covariate ($F(1,220) = 3.51$, $p = .062$) (Table 4.13). Finally, after controlling for the effect of trust as a covariate, the previously found trend concerning language style and purchase intention ($F(1,221) = 2.90$, $p = .090$) (Table 4.7) cannot be labeled as a trend anymore ($F(1,220) = 1.84$, $p =$ n.s.) (Table 4.13). These results implied that the difference between figurative language and literal language becomes smaller. It makes less of a difference whether the review contains a figurative language style or a literal language style. The advantage of literal language over figurative language becomes smaller when taking trust into account.

Furthermore, the MANCOVA (Wilks' Lambda) showed that the significant main effect of product type on the six consumer responses together ($F(6,216) = 2.53$, $p = .022$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .93$) (Table 4.6) became more significant when taking trust as a covariate ($F(6,215) = 2.96$, $p = .008$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .92$ (Table 4.12). Besides, the previously found significant effect of product type on review usefulness ($F(1,221) = 5.11$, $p = .025$) (Table 4.7) became more significant when taking trust as a covariate ($F(1,220) = 6.63$, $p = .011$) (Table 4.13). Further, after controlling for the effect of trust as a covariate, the significant effect of product type on review credibility ($F(1,221) = 5.93$, $p = .016$) (Table 4.7) became more significant ($F(1,220) = 7.61$, $p = .006$) (Table 4.13). The significant effect of product type on review persuasiveness ($F(1,221) = 6.64$, $p = .011$) (Table 4.7) also became more significant when taking trust as a covariate ($F(1,220) = 8.22$, $p = .005$) (Table 4.13). Besides, the significant effect of product type on product attitude ($F(1,221) = 13.83$, $p = .000$) (Table 4.7) became more significant when taking trust as a covariate ($F(1,220) = 16.05$, $p = .000$) (Table 4.13). Finally, before controlling the effect of trust as a covariate, there was no effect of product type on eWOM intention: $F(1,221) = 2.41$, $p =$ n.s. (Table 4.7). However, when taking trust as a covariate, the effect of product type on eWOM intention can be labeled as a trend: $F(1,220) = 3.08$, $p = .081$ (Table 4.13). These results implied that the difference between a review about a hedonic product and a review about a utilitarian product becomes bigger. It makes more of a difference whether the product has predominantly hedonic or predominantly utilitarian features. The advantage of a review about a hedonic product over a review about a utilitarian product becomes bigger when taking trust into account.

Finally, the MANCOVA (Wilks' Lambda) showed that trust did not influence the interaction effect of language style with product type. Even after controlling for the effect of trust as a covariate, there were no significant interaction effects on review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention. There were no differences in consumer responses. This information can be found in Table 4.6, Table 4.7, Table 4.12 and Table 4.13.

TABLE 4.12 MANCOVA (MULTIVARIATE TESTS WILKS' LAMBDA)

Effect	Wilks' Λ	F	Sig.
Trust in online reviews	.94	2.39	**.029**
Source identity	.95	2.06	*.059*
Language style	.97	1.22	.298
Product type	.93	2.96	**.008**
Language * Product	.98	.57	.754

TABLE 4.13 MANCOVA (TEST OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS)

Effect		F	Sig.
Trust in online reviews	Review usefulness	10.12	**.002**
	Review credibility	10.37	**.001**
	Review persuasiveness	8.69	**.004**
	Product attitude	7.83	**.006**
	Purchase intention	4.80	**.029**
	eWOM intention	5.07	**.025**
Source identity	Review usefulness	.34	.558
	Review credibility	2.89	*.091*
	Review persuasiveness	.12	.733
	Product attitude	.02	.877
	Purchase intention	.95	.331
	eWOM intention	.67	.415
Language style	Review usefulness	3.58	*.060*
	Review credibility	5.40	**.021**
	Review persuasiveness	3.51	*.062*
	Product attitude	.00	.994
	Purchase intention	1.84	.176
	eWOM intention	1.02	.314
Product type	Review usefulness	6.63	**.011**
	Review credibility	7.61	**.006**
	Review persuasiveness	8.22	**.005**
	Product attitude	16.05	**.000**
	Purchase intention	.65	.422
	eWOM intention	3.08	*.081*
Language * Product	Review usefulness	.00	.964
	Review credibility	.67	.413
	Review persuasiveness	.34	.561
	Product attitude	.77	.381
	Purchase intention	.00	.969
	eWOM intention	.00	.976

TABLE 4.14 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

	Hypothesis	Result
H1	Extended identity disclosure about the source in online reviews leads to more positive consumer responses, as compared to little identity disclosure about the source in online reviews.	**Trend**
	H1a: Higher review usefulness	**Rejected**
	H1b: Higher review credibility	**Trend**
	H1c: Higher review persuasiveness	**Rejected**
	H1d: More positive product attitudes	**Rejected**
	H1e: Higher purchase intentions	**Rejected**
	H1f: Higher eWOM intentions	**Rejected**
H2	Figurative language in online reviews leads to more positive consumer responses, as compared to literal language in online reviews.	**Rejected**
	H2a: Higher review usefulness	**Opposite effect**
	H2b: Higher review credibility	**Opposite effect**
	H2c: Higher review persuasiveness	**Opposite effect**
	H2d: More positive product attitudes	**Rejected**
	H2e: Higher purchase intentions	**Opposite trend**
	H2f: Higher eWOM intentions	**Rejected**
H3	Online reviews about products with predominantly utilitarian features lead to more positive consumer responses, as compared to online reviews about products with predominantly hedonic features.	**Opposite effect**
	H3a: Higher review usefulness	**Opposite effect**
	H3b: Higher review credibility	**Opposite effect**
	H3c: Higher review persuasiveness	**Opposite effect**
	H3d: More positive product attitudes	**Opposite effect**
	H3e: Higher purchase intentions	**Rejected**
	H3f: Higher eWOM intentions	**Rejected**
H4a	Figurative language in online reviews leads to more positive consumer responses in predominantly hedonic contexts, as compared to predominantly utilitarian contexts.	**Rejected**
	H4aa: Higher review usefulness	**Rejected**
	H4ab: Higher review credibility	**Rejected**
	H4ac: Higher review persuasiveness	**Rejected**
	H4ad: More positive product attitudes	**Rejected**
	H4ae: Higher purchase intentions	**Rejected**
	H4af: Higher eWOM intentions	**Rejected**
H4b	Literal language in online reviews leads to more positive consumer responses in predominantly utilitarian contexts, as compared to predominantly hedonic contexts.	**Rejected**
	H4ba: Higher review usefulness	**Rejected**
	H4bb: Higher review credibility	**Rejected**
	H4bc: Higher review persuasiveness	**Rejected**
	H4bd: More positive product attitudes	**Rejected**
	H4be: Higher purchase intentions	**Rejected**
	H4bf: Higher eWOM intentions	**Rejected**
H5	The positive effect of extended identity disclosure about the source in online reviews is stronger when consumers are low involved, as compared to when consumers are high involved.	**Rejected**
H6	The positive effect of figurative language in online reviews is stronger when consumers are high involved, as compared to when consumers are low involved.	**Rejected**

5 DISCUSSION

This chapter provides an overview of the most important conclusions derived from the performed study. At first, conclusions about the main and interaction effects, the moderating effects and the effects of the covariate are debated. This happens by addressing the expectations in the hypotheses, the results of the current study and discussions of these results in comparison with existing theories. Are the results and the literature in line with each other? These comparisons evoke some discussion points and implications for future research. Furthermore, based on the results of the current study, this chapter ends with some managerial implications for organizations who deal with online reviews.

5.1 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Since WOM is considered as one of the most powerful sources of information during point of purchase situations (Kardes et al., 2011), the focus in the current study was on online reviews. For website owners it is important that consumers write reviews that other consumers find helpful and persuade them to buy (Schlosser, 2011). But what exactly are helpful and persuasive reviews? The current study investigated variations in source identity (little identity disclosure vs extended identity disclosure), language style (figurative language vs literal language) and product type (predominantly hedonic product vs predominantly utilitarian product) to find out which online reviews produced the most positive consumer responses. Consumer responses were measured by review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention. The research question in the current study was:

RQ: *What are the effects of variation in source identity (little disclosure vs extended disclosure), language style (figurative vs literal) and product type (predominantly hedonic features vs predominantly utilitarian features) of online reviews on consumer responses (review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention)?*

5.1.1 EFFECTS OF SOURCE IDENTITY

The expectation was that extended identity disclosure led to more positive consumer responses than little identity disclosure, since identity disclosure supports readers in accurately deriving information about the identity and motives of the reviewer (Forman et al., 2008). Consumers can identify themselves more easily with reviewers who disclose information (Forman et al., 2008). Identity disclosure facilitates the formation of relationships between the writer and the reader (Ren et al., 2007). Previous literature proved that identity disclosure increases the usefulness of the message (Forman et al., 2008; Liu & Park, 2015), the credibility of the source and the message (Munzel, 2016; Kusumasondjaja et al., 2012), the helpfulness ratings and subsequent sales (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2011).

The results only showed a trend concerning source identity, especially for the effect of source identity on review credibility. There is no significant effect, but there is a trend visible stating that extended identity disclosure makes an online review more credible than little identity disclosure. This result is in line with previous studies, because they also found that extended disclosure has advantages over little disclosure. However, the source identity did not influence review usefulness, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention. People evaluate both online reviews, so the ones with extended identity disclosure and the ones with little identity disclosure, the same on these variables. They find both reviews equally useful and persuasive, they formed the same attitudes and they developed the same intentions to purchase and to engage in eWOM. The choice for extended disclosure or little disclosure does not affect this. These results are not in line with previous literature.

A possible explanation for not finding these effects is related to the ELM. As explained before, consumers follow one of the two routes to persuasion: the central route or the peripheral route (Petty et al., 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In the central route consumers carefully consider the true merits of the information, while in the peripheral route consumers rely on simple cues without scrutinizing the true merits of the information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). It is possible that the respondents in this study all followed the central route, because the researcher asked them explicitly to focus on the information in the online review, causing a less focus on heuristic cues, such as features of the source. It could be that the respondents did not even notice the source. The results of the second pretest prove this, because it appeared that the respondents were not able to recall the name of the reviewer. Apparently, they did not pay enough attention to features of the source. Moreover, proof for this explanation can also be found in previous studies. Forman et al. (2008) and Pornpitakpan (2004) state that identity disclosure is a stronger predictor of consumer responses when consumers scan multiple reviews from multiple reviewers. Forman et al. (2008, p. 308) found that “when faced with an overload

of information in the form of numerous reviews from numerous reviewers, community members process information heuristically, using source characteristics as a convenient and efficient heuristic device on which to base their product purchase decision". However, the respondents in this study only had to read one single review from one single reviewer, so there was no information overload. According to Pornpitakpan (2004) responses are especially predicted by the message content, and not by the message source, when there is only one message from one source. When people experience an information overload, they process heuristically and when people do not experience this, they process systematically (Forman et al., 2008). Since the respondents did not experience an information overload, they processed the message systematically, whereby they did not focus on source characteristics, but only on message characteristics. This theory explains why the current study did not found effects of source identity.

5.1.2 EFFECTS OF LANGUAGE STYLE

The expectation was that figurative language led to more positive consumer responses than literal language, because figurative language has the power to elicit positive feelings, affect and attitudes towards the stimuli across product categories and consumption contexts (Chang & Yen, 2013; McQuarrie & Phillips, 2005; Phillips & McQuarrie, 2009). Moreover, metaphors have advantages relative to direct claims, since they make consumers receptive to multiple, distinct and positive inferences about the product (McQuarrie & Phillips, 2005). Previous literature demonstrated the comparative advantage of figurative language over literal language: figurative language leads to more positive attitudes toward the message and the product discussed in the message (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2009), higher levels of attitude and purchase intentions (Chang & Yen, 2013; McQuarrie & Phillips, 2005) and higher credibility of the source and the message (Bowers & Osborn, 1966).

The results showed no main effect of language style on consumer responses, which means that people evaluate both online reviews, so the ones with figurative language and the ones with literal language, the same. Besides, the language style did not influence product attitude and eWOM intention. People formed the same attitudes and developed the same intentions to engage in eWOM for reviews with figurative language and reviews with literal language. The choice for figurative language or literal language does not affect this. These results are not in line with previous literature. However, the language style actually has effects on review usefulness, review credibility and review persuasiveness. The results showed that people find literal language more useful, more credible and more persuasive than figurative language. Moreover, there is no significant effect, but there is a trend visible stating that literal language leads to higher purchase intentions than figurative language. These results implied that literal language leads to more positive consumer responses than figurative language, while the expectation in the hypothesis was in the opposite direction. So, these results are also not in line with previous studies.

A possible explanation for finding these opposite effects is related to the Language Expectancy Theory (LET). LET is a "framework focusing directly on how message features positively or negatively violate or conform to macro-level expectations about what constitutes appropriate communication attempts" (Burgoon, Denning & Roberts, 2002, p. 119). The theory explains why certain linguistic formats in persuasive messages influence consumer responses more than others (Burgoon et al., 2002). This has to do with people developing norms and expectations about appropriate language styles in given situations (Burgoon et al., 2002). For example, it is possible that people prefer the playful style of figurative language in general, but that they are actually not seeking for this playfulness while reading online reviews. Previous literature shows that it is typical for marketing communication to be exaggerated and emotionally intensified, which means that figurative language is the conversational norm for marketing and advertising (Kronrod & Danziger, 2013; Rotfeld & Rotzoll, 1980; Toncar & Fetscherin, 2012). However, this does not apply to online reviews, since Wu et al. (2017), Burgoon et al. (2002) and Kronrod and Danziger (2013) state that literal language is the conversational norm for eWOM contexts. Figurative language communicates affect and is often used by individuals in social relationships (Wu et al., 2017; Kronrod & Danziger, 2013), while literal

language communicates rationality and formality and is often used by unfamiliar individuals (Wu et al., 2017; Burgoon et al., 2002). Since the author and the reader of online reviews are complete strangers, literal language is a more typical language style for eWOM than figurative language (Wu et al., 2017; Burgoon et al., 2002). Consumers perceive the use of figurative language in eWOM as atypical, leading to negative persuasive outcomes (Wu et al., 2017), which was the case in this study. This theory is also reflected in the check-results of scenario realism, both in the pretest as in the main study (Table 3.15 and Table 4.4). Respondents judged the online reviews with figurative language as less realistic than the ones with literal language. They found the online reviews containing figurative language exaggerated and judged them therefore as atypical for online reviews contexts. Instead they judged the online reviews containing literal language as the conversational norm for eWOM contexts. In short, since the LET states that literal language is the conversational norm for online reviews it actually makes sense why literal language leads to more positive consumer responses than figurative language instead of the other way around.

5.1.3 EFFECTS OF PRODUCT TYPE

The expectation was that online reviews about products with predominantly utilitarian features led to more positive consumer responses than online reviews about products with predominantly hedonic features. The reason for this was that utilitarian criteria are the actual abilities of the product to perform useful functions (Adaval, 2001) and consumers feel comfortable relying on these objective evaluations and opinions (Sen & Lerman, 2007). On the other hand, hedonic criteria are the feelings that consumers expect to experience as a result of using the product (Adaval, 2001). Since these evaluations are subjective, different for each consumer and therefore not unanimous, people are skeptical while evaluating hedonic product reviews (Ahluwalia, 2000). Previous literature showed that online reviews about hedonic products are perceived as less useful and less credible than online reviews about utilitarian products (Sen & Lerman, 2007; Ahluwalia, 2000). Moreover, the skepticism towards hedonic product reviews leads to negative feelings and attitudes (Ahluwalia, 2000).

The results proved a main effect of product type on consumer responses, which means that people evaluate reviews about predominantly hedonic products more positive than reviews about predominantly utilitarian products. Furthermore, the product type also has effects on review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness and product attitude. The results showed that people find reviews about hedonic products more useful, more credible and more persuasive than reviews about utilitarian products. Besides, people produce more positive attitudes about hedonic products than about utilitarian products. These results implied that reviews about hedonic products lead to more positive consumer responses than reviews about utilitarian products, while the expectation in the hypothesis was in the opposite direction. So, these results are not in line with previous literature. On the other hand, the product type did not influence purchase intention and eWOM intention. People evaluate both online reviews, so the ones about a hedonic product and the ones about a utilitarian product, the same on these variables. They developed the same intentions to purchase and to engage in eWOM. The choice for a hedonic product or a utilitarian product does not affect this. These results are also not in line with previous studies.

A possible explanation for finding these opposite effects is that hedonic consumption is not necessarily based on what consumers know to be real, but rather on what they desire to be real (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). The objective criteria in utilitarian consumption are about features of the product itself, while the subjective criteria in hedonic consumption are about the opinions and experiences of others. These opinions and experiences are more diverse, have more imagination and are therefore more interesting to read about. This explanation is linked to the distinction in search and experience goods. Search goods are defined as “those characterized by product attributes where complete information about the goods can be acquired prior to purchase”, while experience goods are defined as “those characterized by attributes that cannot be known until the purchase and after use of the product” (Park & Lee, 2009, p. 62). Search qualities are those that “the consumer can determine by inspection prior to purchase” and experience qualities are those that “are not determined prior to

purchase" (Nelson, 1974, p. 730). The memory card, the utilitarian product, can also be labeled as search product, because all information about this product can be acquired prior to purchase. The headphone, the hedonic product, can also be seen as experience product, because not all attributes can be known prior to the purchase. For example, you only know if the headphone fits well or looks good until you actually buy the headphone. According to Park and Lee (2009) the value of online reviews increases when consumers have difficulties in evaluating products or when judgmental criteria are ambiguous, which is the case with experience products. When considering the purchase of an experience product, consumers can reduce their uncertainty by referring to eWOM communication, because this contains advice and comments from experienced users (Park & Lee, 2009). This means that the influence of online reviews is bigger when consumers evaluate experience products instead of search products (Bone, 1995; Park & Lee, 2009; Senecal & Nantel, 2004). In other words, reviews about experience products, the headphone, produce more positive consumer responses than reviews about search products, the memory card. Besides, previous studies found that consumers are likely to develop a positive mood when reading online reviews about hedonic products, because they are looking forward to choosing a product that makes them feel good (Sen & Lerman, 2007; Adaval, 2001; Kunda, 1990). This does not apply to reviews about utilitarian products, since affect and emotion have little impact in utilitarian consumption (Sen & Lerman, 2007; Adaval, 2001). This explanation is also reflected in the mean scores of product involvement (Table 4.8). Respondents were more involved with the headphone than they were with the memory card. The fact that people simply like headphones more than they like memory cards can also be an explanation for the more positive consumer responses on hedonic products instead of utilitarian products. In short, based on the above literature, it actually makes sense why hedonic products lead to more positive consumer responses than utilitarian products instead of the other way around.

5.1.4 INTERACTION EFFECTS OF LANGUAGE STYLE AND PRODUCT TYPE

The expectation was that figurative language led to more positive consumer responses in hedonic contexts and that literal language led to more positive consumer responses in utilitarian contexts, because "figurative language is more conversationally normative, and therefore more effective, in hedonic consumption than in utilitarian consumption" (Kronrod & Danziger, 2013, p. 727). Figurative language is emotional and affect-rich, causing that it is more appropriate to communicate emotional experiences instead of rational experiences (Ireland & Pennebaker, 2010). Previous studies proved that using figurative language in online reviews is effective in evaluating a hedonic experience, while it decreases the effectiveness when evaluating a utilitarian experience (Kronrod & Danziger, 2013) and that figurative language in online reviews increases sales for hedonic products, but not for utilitarian products (Ren & Nickerson, 2014).

The results showed no interaction effect of language style with product type. There were no interaction effects on review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention. This means that it does not matter whether figurative language or literal language is mixed with predominantly hedonic contexts or predominantly utilitarian contexts. The effects are the same in all variations. These results are not in line with previous literature.

A possible explanation for not finding these effects is also related to the LET. In general, literal language is the conversational norm for online reviews (Wu et al., 2017; Burgoon et al., 2002). Therefore, it is possible that people only find literal language fitting with online reviews and that they judge figurative language as totally inappropriate for eWOM contexts. It can be that the variation in language style for hedonic or utilitarian contexts does not matter anymore, because in general the conversational norm for online reviews is literal language (Wu et al., 2017; Burgoon et al., 2002). Moreover, another explanation is that the interaction effects are only found when the products are completely hedonic and completely utilitarian. For example, Kronrod and Danziger (2013), who actually found the interaction effects of language style with product type, used a hotel as review topic, varying from a vacation trip as hedonic experience and a business trip as utilitarian experience. The difference between hedonic and utilitarian is clearer than in the current study, since this study used

two products from a utilitarian product category. Although the manipulation checks in the pretest and the main study proved that the headphone was judged as predominantly hedonic and the memory card as predominantly utilitarian, the headphone also had some utilitarian features. This is logical, since a headphone belongs to the utilitarian product category of electronics. However, it can be that the interaction effects are only found when both products are completely hedonic and completely utilitarian, which was actually not the case in the current study, because the hedonic product also had some utilitarian features. This information explains why the current study did not found interaction effects of language style with product type.

5.1.5 PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT AS A MODERATOR

The first expectation was that the positive effect of extended identity disclosure about the source was stronger when consumers were low involved, since source characteristics affect persuasion under conditions of low involvement (Rhine & Severance, 1970; Johnson & Scileppi, 1969), while argument strength affects persuasion when involvement is high (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). The second expectation was that the positive effect of figurative language was stronger when consumers were high involved, because figurative language evokes more cognitive elaboration than literal messages (Toncar & Munch, 2001; McQuarrie & Mick, 1999). Making sense of figurative language requires central processing (Montazeri et al., 2013) and central processing requires product involvement, since consumers become more motivated to elaborate on messages when involvement increases (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). On the other hand, low involved consumers are not motivated to process figurative language and rely on literal language instead, because this is easier to understand (Heckler & Childers, 1992; McQuarrie & Mick, 1996).

The results showed no moderating effects of product involvement at all. There were no differences in the involvement scores, which means that there was no distinction in low involved consumers and high involved consumers. Besides, product involvement is not connected to review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention. These results implied that product involvement has no influence on how people evaluate online reviews, which is not in line with previous literature.

At first, a possible explanation for not finding any moderating effects is that product involvement probably was not the appropriate moderator for the current study. The involvement scores were approximately equal in the eight conditions, which means that actually all respondents were involved with the product. This is strange, because it is not likely that people are equally involved with headphones and memory cards, since both products are completely different. It is possible that consumers find it difficult to determine whether they are involved with a headphone or a memory card. It is easier to determine whether people find these products interesting or appealing. Therefore, product involvement was presumably not the right moderator for the current study. Instead, interest or liking could be more appropriate moderators. Another explanation for the equal involvement scores is related to question order effects. Order-effect bias often appears in online surveys when the question order influences the answers of respondents (Schuman & Presser, 1996). Survey questions are not asked in isolation, but are asked as part of a continuous flow of items, so the position of a question in a sequence of items influences the answers given to this question (Schuman & Presser, 1996; Sudman, Bradburn & Schwarz, 1996). There are different types of order effects, but the assimilation effect is probably the one that occurred in the current study. Assimilation effects “typically occur in general questions and result in higher means for general questions when they appear after specific questions in the measurement instrument than when they appear before the specific questions” (DeMoranville & Bienstock, 2003, p. 219). The reason for this is that “when specific questions appear first, they influence subsequent responses, because they activate information about the construct” (DeMoranville & Bienstock, 2003, p. 219). Also, Schuman and Presser (1996) and Bickart (1993) state that when people are asked to answer a general question after answering a specific question, they summarize or assimilate the previous specific question response into the general response. To translate this theory into the current study, the questions about product attitude can be seen as

specific questions, since they were specifically about the headphone or the memory card as described in the online review. The valence in these reviews was positive, which means that people developed positive attitudes about the products. However, the questions about product involvement can be seen as general questions, because they were about headphones or memory cards in general and not about the specific products in the review. These general questions appeared after the specific questions, which probably indicates that the respondents summarized the previous positive responses on the specific questions about product attitude into positive responses on the general questions about product involvement. The respondents were influenced by the previous responses, causing that they scored higher on product involvement.

5.1.6 TRUST IN ONLINE REVIEWS AS A COVARIATE

The expectation was that general trust, besides source identity, language style and product type, also influences consumer responses to online reviews, because it is likely that consumers who generally trust online reviews produce more positive consumer responses to them than consumers who generally distrust online reviews. Consumers who had negative experiences with online reviews can develop negative attitudes towards them and distrust them in general (Lee, 2014). Previous studies proved that high levels of online trust leads to more favorable attitudes (Jarvenpaa et al., 1999), greater online shopping intentions (Awad & Ragowsky, 2008) and more positive consumer responses in general (Gefen et al., 2003). The subquestion concerning trust was:

SQ: *To what extent does trust in online reviews has an influence on the main effects of source identity, language style and product type on consumer responses?*

The results showed that trust in online reviews is connected to review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness, product attitude, purchase intention and eWOM intention. This implied that trust affects how people evaluate online reviews, which is in line with previous literature. Besides, to answer the subquestion, the results showed that the main effects of source identity, language style and product type are influenced by trust. When taking trust as a covariate into account, the main effects become purer, since the disruptive effects of trust are filtered out.

At first, after controlling for the effect of trust as a covariate, the main effect of source identity remained the same. However, the almost-trend concerning review credibility turned into a trend. So, the earlier found almost-trend is more profound, which means that the advantage of extended identity disclosure over little extended disclosure concerning review credibility becomes more substantiated. However, this advantage remains only a trend, so there is not much evidence for this assumption.

Second, after controlling for the effect of trust as a covariate, the main effect of language style remained not significant. Further, the effects on review usefulness, review credibility and review persuasiveness became less significant or a trend and the trend concerning purchase intention became not significant at all. So, the previous found effects are less profound and substantiated. The difference between figurative language and literal language becomes smaller, so it makes less of a difference whether the review contains a figurative language style or a literal language style. The advantage of literal language over figurative language becomes smaller. A possible explanation for this is that people trust online reviews anyway, which appears from the mean score on trust in online reviews (Table 4.10). Trust in online reviews directly influences consumer beliefs, attitudes and behavioral intentions (Bart et al., 2005; Lee, 2014). More specifically, high levels of trust lead to favorable attitudes (Jarvenpaa et al., 1999), greater purchase intentions (Awad & Ragowsky, 2008) and positive consumer responses in general (Gefen et al., 2003). So, the influence of trust on consumer responses is direct, whereby it is likely that the distinction in figurative language and literal language makes less of a difference. When people generally trust online reviews, it is possible that they pay less attention to the language style. It does not matter whether the language is figurative or literal, because they trust online reviews anyway.

Thirdly, after controlling for the effect of trust as a covariate, the main effect of product type became more significant. Besides, the effects on review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness and product attitude became more significant and the effect on eWOM intention can be labeled as a trend. In short, the earlier found effects are more profound, which means that the advantage of reviews about hedonic products over reviews about utilitarian products becomes more substantiated. This is logical, since consumers who generally distrust online reviews rather rely on objective views in utilitarian product reviews, because they are about the actual abilities of the product to perform useful functions (Adaval, 2001). Utilitarian product reviews are about the abilities of the product itself, which means there is not much variation in the views of other consumers. However, the trust scores showed that people trust online reviews in general (Table 4.10). People who generally trust online reviews have fewer problems with relying on subjective evaluations in hedonic product reviews. Hedonic product reviews are about personal feelings and experiences (Sen & Lerman, 2007). They are subjective in nature, different for each consumer and therefore not unanimous. People who generally trust online reviews have no problems with trusting these subjective opinions of other consumers.

5.2 FUTURE RESEARCH

On the occasion of the current study some recommendations for future research arise. Regarding the consumer responses in this study, it appeared that both intentions, purchase intention and eWOM intention, were not in line with the other four responses. The expectation was that the effects on these responses were all in the same direction, because they are all related to each other. This especially applies to product attitude and purchase intention, since purchase intentions are transaction behaviors after evaluating a product (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2000), so purchase intentions are based on attitudes. However, the results of the current study showed that people formed low intentions to purchase and low intentions to engage in eWOM, while they produced high mean scores on review usefulness, review credibility, review persuasiveness and product attitude. The evaluative dimension and the behavioral dimension do not correspond. Future research could reveal the link between both dimensions, so that the reason why people form positive attitudes, but do not want to purchase or engage in eWOM becomes clear. It is possible that behavioral questions become too exciting and too real. It could be that people do not want to think about their real behavior when filling in a questionnaire. Anyway, future research could investigate these opposite results.

Second, the current study only looked at the effect of identity disclosure of the source, but it is also interesting to add another dimension to the source construct. Future research could, besides the role of the reviewer's identity, also investigate the role of the reader's identity. Here the concept of self-congruity is relevant, which can be defined as the match between one's self-image and the image of a product user (Sirgy, Grewal & Mangleburg, 2000). It appears that consumers prefer brands they associate with a set of personality traits congruent with their own (Sirgy, 1982). Therefore, similarity between the sender and the receiver is relevant to take into account (Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger & Yale, 1998; Wangenheim & Bayón, 2004). In short, future studies could investigate the role of self-congruity and examine whether the match between reviewer and reader has an effect on consumer responses. They could expand the source construct with this.

Thirdly, this study proved that literal language produces more positive consumer responses than figurative language, but the reality is not always as black and white as in the current study. This study explicitly distinguishes in online reviews with figurative language and literal language. However, in reality reviewers probably use both language styles interchangeably. Mostly, writers combine literal sentences with metaphors, which means that there is no clear distinction between a figurative review and a literal review. Therefore, future studies should probably use a continuous scale instead of a discrete scale, in which figurative language and literal language are two completely different things. A continuous scale could vary in different levels of figurativeness and literality.

In the fourth place, the current study did not consider the impact of the preferred language style of consumers (Ludwig, De Ruyter, Friedman, Brüggen, Wetzels & Pfann, 2013; Wu et al., 2017). This research revealed that most people prefer a literal language style in the context of online reviews, because this is the conversational norm for online reviews (Wu et al., 2017; Burgoon et al., 2002; Kronrod & Danziger, 2013). However, there are always individuals who prefer the playfulness of figurative language anyway, even in the context of online reviews. For this group of individuals, online reviews with a figurative language style probably lead to more positive consumer responses. Therefore, it is interesting for future studies to investigate the preference of language style for individual consumers.

Besides, the stimulus materials in this study were not all seen as equally realistic. The online reviews with figurative language were evaluated as less realistic than the ones with literal language (Table 3.15 and Table 4.4). Since literal language is the conversational norm for eWOM contexts (Wu et al., 2017; Burgoon et al., 2002; Kronrod & Danziger, 2013) these different realism scores are logical. However, future studies should be careful when investigating the variation in figurative language and literal language. The figurative texts should not be too exaggerated or fake, which was probably the case in this study, because otherwise they are judged as less realistic or not realistic at all. Future research should better check whether the figurative texts are perceived as realistic by consumers.

Furthermore, this study limited the product type to electronics, which is in general a utilitarian product category. Even though the control questions in the pretest and the main study proved that the difference between the headphone and the memory card was significant, meaning that the headphone is predominantly hedonic and the memory card is predominantly utilitarian, both products are still perceived as utilitarian. Even the hedonic product, the headphone, has some utilitarian features. Future studies could use products where the difference is bigger and clearer, so that the effects of product type become more profound. They could choose two products from different product categories and not two products from the same category, which was the case in this study.

Seventh, future research could also completely loose the hedonic-utilitarian distinction and instead focus on the search-experience distinction. Search qualities are those that “the consumer can determine by inspection prior to purchase” and experience qualities are those that “are not determined prior to purchase” (Nelson, 1974, p. 730). This distinction is more retrievable and recognizable in online reviews than the hedonic-utilitarian distinction. People immediately recognize whether they can judge product qualities before purchase or whether they can only judge these qualities after purchase when they actually have experience with the product. The distinction between an emotional hedonic product and a rational utilitarian product is probably harder to determine in online reviews.

Besides, the current study investigated the interaction effect of language style with product type, which was actually not found here. The reason for this could be that these effects are only found when products are completely hedonic or completely utilitarian. For example, Kronrod and Danziger (2013) used a hotel as review topic, varying from a vacation trip as hedonic experience and a business trip as utilitarian experience. The recommendation for future research is to compare the same product that only differs in its experience, like with the example from Kronrod and Danziger (2013). The product remains the same, but the goal varies from hedonic to utilitarian. When future studies use this distinction, they have more chance of finding interaction effects.

In the ninth place, this study expected that the positive effect of figurative language was stronger when consumers are high involved, since figurative language evokes more cognitive elaboration and higher involvement than literal messages (Toncar & Munch, 2001; McQuarrie & Mick, 1999). However, future studies could also investigate these effects in the other direction, whereby the positive effect of figurative language is stronger when consumers are low involved instead of high involved, because figurative language is perceived as a heuristic cue in the peripheral route of the ELM. In this route consumers rely on simple cues in the persuasion context without scrutinizing the true merits of the

information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). They focus on heuristic cues that make it easy to form an opinion without much thought (Kardes et al., 2011). According to Petty and Cacioppo (1986) metaphors are an example of heuristic cues. Since low involved consumers use these cues in the peripheral route (Petty et al., 1983; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), it could be that figurative language works better for low involved consumers, while literal language works better for high involved consumers. In short, product involvement can moderate the effect of language style on consumer responses in two ways. On the one hand, figurative language can lead to more positive consumer responses when people are high involved, which was the expectation in the current study. On the other hand, figurative language can lead to more positive consumer responses when people are low involved, since figurative language serves as a heuristic cue. For future studies it is interesting to find out in which direction product involvement moderates the effects of language style on consumer responses.

In addition, it is possible that an order-effect bias occurred regarding the questions about product involvement. More specifically, an assimilation effect probably occurred in this study, meaning that the means on general questions are higher when they appear after specific questions (DeMoranville & Bienstock, 2003). When people are asked to answer a general question, about product involvement in this case, after answering a specific question, about product attitude in this case, they assimilate the previous specific question response into the general response (Schuman & Presser, 1996; Bickart, 1993). Therefore, future studies, who want to investigate the effect of product involvement as a moderator, should ask the questions about this construct in the beginning of the questionnaire, so that an assimilation effect cannot occur. People probably answer these questions more truthfully then, causing differences in the mean scores for product involvement.

Finally, the current study proved that trust in online reviews influenced the main effects of source identity, language style and product type. Trust served as a covariate in this study. The results showed that the effects of language style became less profound when taking trust as a covariate, while the effects of product type became more substantiated after controlling for trust as a covariate. However, the actual impact of trust in online reviews remains a little unclear. Since previous studies proved that high levels of trust lead to more favorable attitudes (Jarvenpaa et al., 1999), greater online shopping intentions (Awad & Ragowsky, 2008) and more positive consumer responses in general (Gefen et al., 2003), it is interesting and relevant for future studies to investigate what the actual influence of trust in the eWOM context is.

5.3 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

WOM is considered as one of the most powerful sources of information during point of purchase situations (Kardes et al., 2011), so therefore it is useful that the current study provides some managerial implications for organizations who are active on the Internet and deal with online reviews. Reviews written by consumers are a necessary feature for companies to attract and retain consumers on their websites (Schlosser, 2011). This was also confirmed by the results of this study, because in general consumers perceive online reviews as useful, credible and persuasive and they produce positive attitudes about the products discussed in the reviews. So, the first recommendation is that organizations should definitely allow consumers to write online reviews on their websites.

However, simply allowing consumers to write online reviews is not enough, because companies need consumers to write reviews that other consumers find helpful and persuade them to buy (Schlosser, 2011). Therefore, organizations should monitor the online reviews on their websites. They could for example monitor which types of online reviews receive the most likes, are shared the most, get the highest usefulness ratings, produce the most responses etc. When organizations monitor these features, they could manage the online reviews in terms of “highlighted reviews”. They should choose the most persuasive reviews and label them as “highlighted review”, so that these appear as most prominent on their websites and get read the most by other consumers.

To be more specific, in terms of managerial implications, the findings of the current study reveal that features of the review have an impact on the responses of consumers. At first, there is a trend stating that extended identity disclosure about the reviewer leads to higher credibility of the review. Organizations should therefore consider an obligation to disclose personal information, such as the name, age and picture of the reviewer. This can be done by showing a notification ("fill in all fields marked with a *") when consumers leave these fields empty. When they do not answer these questions, they cannot post the online review on the website. In this way, only the reviews with identity-descriptive information about the reviewer are showed on the website. However, there is not much evidence for the assumption that extended identity disclosure works better, since it is only a trend. Organizations should be careful with applying these recommendations, because it is not completely proven that extended identity information makes an online review more credible.

Besides, since a literal language style leads to positive consumer responses to online reviews, organizations should provide relevant guidance for online review writing. They should provide clear guidelines and examples to help consumers write their reviews in a concrete, detailed and straightforward manner, since literal language works the best in the online review context. For example, they could provide two examples, one with literal language and one with figurative language, to show the contrast between both language styles, so that consumers actually know the difference and apply the literal guidelines to their online reviews. Moreover, afterwards organizations should highlight the reviews posted in literal language. In this way, the most persuasive information is emphasized to potential consumers.

Finally, reviews about hedonic products produce the most positive consumer responses. It is actually difficult to determine the type of products consumers write their reviews about. This is obviously the choice of the consumers. However, a recommendation for organizations is again to work with the "highlighted reviews" function. Organizations should refer to hedonic products and to the online reviews about these hedonic products on the front page of their websites, because in general consumers like reading opinions about these products more than opinions about utilitarian products. However, online reviews about functional products should also be encouraged, but the reviews about hedonic products should be in the spotlight.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – OUTLINE PRETEST 1

Beste deelnemer,

Bedankt voor uw deelname aan mijn vooronderzoek. Dit onderzoek draagt bij aan mijn Master Thesis voor de opleiding Marketing Communication aan de Universiteit Twente.

Het onderzoek zal ongeveer 5 minuten van uw tijd innemen. U krijgt een kort stukje tekst te lezen, waarna u 10 producten uit de elektronica branche gaat beoordelen. Daarna volgen hierover een paar korte vragen. Bij het beantwoorden van deze vragen staat uw mening centraal. Dit betekent dat er geen goede of foute antwoorden bestaan.

Deelname aan deze vragenlijst is volledig anoniem. Uw gegevens worden vertrouwelijk behandeld en de resultaten worden uitsluitend gebruikt voor mijn Master Thesis. U kunt op elk moment stoppen met de vragenlijst, zonder hiervoor een reden op te geven.

Nogmaals bedankt voor uw medewerking!

Nikki Knippers
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Ik heb bovenstaande informatie gelezen en stem geheel vrijwillig in met deelname aan dit onderzoek.
O Ja
O Nee

Wat is uw geslacht?
O Man
O Vrouw

Wat is uw leeftijd in jaren?
…….

Voordat u de volgende vraag gaat beantwoorden, vraag ik u eerst onderstaande tekst aandachtig te lezen.

Belevingsproducten:

- Het gaat om de beleving met het product.
- Belevingsproducten zijn leuk, aangenaam en plezierig.
- Belevingsproducten zijn stijlgevoelig en het uiterlijk is belangrijk.

Functionele producten:

- Het gaat om de functies die het product uitvoert.
- Functionele producten zijn nuttig, praktisch en functioneel.
- Functionele producten zijn niet stijlgevoelig en het uiterlijk is onbelangrijk.

Producten uit de elektronica branche kunnen worden beoordeeld als belevingsproduct of als functioneel product. *Voorbeeld:* Een MP3-speler kan zowel gezien worden als functioneel product en als belevingsproduct. Als functioneel product moet een MP3-speler zijn functies goed uitvoeren, zoals een goede geluidskwaliteit leveren en voldoende opslagruimte bieden. Echter kan een MP3-speler ook beoordeeld worden als belevingsproduct, aangezien het gebruik van een MP3-speler ook leuk, aangenaam en plezierig is. Bovendien is bij een MP3-speler het uiterlijk belangrijk. Je kunt hem personaliseren door bijvoorbeeld een bepaalde kleur te kiezen. Dit geldt minder voor andere elektronica producten, zoals een harde schijf of een netwerkkabel. Deze producten zijn vrijwel niet zichtbaar tijdens gebruik, waardoor hun stijl en uiterlijk minder belangrijk zijn. Harde schijven en netwerkkabels kunnen daarom gezien worden als puur functionele producten.

Zet nu de volgende elektronica producten op volgorde van belevingsproduct naar functioneel product. Begin met het product dat u het meest een belevingsproduct vindt (plaats 1) en eindig met het product dat u het meest een functioneel product vindt (plaats 10). Klik hiervoor op de onderstaande producten en sleep ze vervolgens naar een bepaalde positie.

 *Afstandsbediening*

 *Computermuis*

Geheugenkaart

 *HDMI kabel*

 *Koptelefoon*

 *Speaker*

 *Telefoonlader*

 *Toetsenbord*

 *USB stick*

 *Webcam*

U heeft gekozen voor een…
(Keuze met de laagste waarde, dus plaats 1)
…als meest passend bij een belevingsproduct.

Wat is uw mening over dit product?

Ik vind het product…

Saai	O O O O O O O	Boeiend
Onplezierig	O O O O O O O	Plezierig
Onprettig	O O O O O O O	Prettig
Onaangenaam	O O O O O O O	Aangenaam
Niet leuk	O O O O O O O	Leuk
Nutteloos	O O O O O O O	Nuttig
Onpraktisch	O O O O O O O	Praktisch
Niet functioneel	O O O O O O O	Functioneel
Onbehulpzaam	O O O O O O O	Behulpzaam
Onhandig	O O O O O O O	Handig

U heeft gekozen voor een…
(Keuze met de hoogste waarde, dus plaats 10)
…als meest passend bij een functioneel product.

Wat is uw mening over dit product?

Ik vind het product…

Saai	O O O O O O O	Boeiend
Onplezierig	O O O O O O O	Plezierig
Onprettig	O O O O O O O	Prettig
Onaangenaam	O O O O O O O	Aangenaam
Niet leuk	O O O O O O O	Leuk
Nutteloos	O O O O O O O	Nuttig
Onpraktisch	O O O O O O O	Praktisch
Niet functioneel	O O O O O O O	Functioneel
Onbehulpzaam	O O O O O O O	Behulpzaam
Onhandig	O O O O O O O	Handig

Dit is het einde van de vragenlijst.

Heeft u vragen en/of opmerkingen over dit onderzoek? Stuur dan een mailtje naar n.knippers@student.utwente.nl.

Heel erg bedankt voor uw deelname!

APPENDIX 2 – OUTLINE PRETEST 2

Beste deelnemer,

Bedankt voor uw deelname aan mijn vooronderzoek. Dit onderzoek draagt bij aan mijn Master Thesis voor de opleiding Marketing Communication aan de Universiteit Twente.

Het onderzoek zal ongeveer 5 minuten van uw tijd innemen. U krijgt twee online recensies te zien, waarop een paar korte vragen volgen. Bij het beantwoorden van deze vragen staat uw mening centraal. Dit betekent dat er geen goede of foute antwoorden bestaan.

Deelname aan deze vragenlijst is volledig anoniem. Uw gegevens worden vertrouwelijk behandeld en de resultaten worden uitsluitend gebruikt voor mijn Master Thesis. U kunt op elk moment stoppen met de vragenlijst, zonder hiervoor een reden op te geven.

Nogmaals bedankt voor uw medewerking!

Nikki Knippers
n.knippers@student.utwente.nl

Ik heb bovenstaande informatie gelezen en stem geheel vrijwillig in met deelname aan dit onderzoek.
O Ja
O Nee

Wat is uw geslacht?
O Man
O Vrouw

Wat is uw leeftijd in jaren?
…….

Let op: u krijgt nu **twee** online recensies te zien. Beide recensies worden gevolgd door een paar korte vragen.

(Respondent wordt willekeurig toegewezen aan 1 van de 4 condities)

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe koptelefoon. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over koptelefoons. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde koptelefoon zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

Let op: u kunt straks niet meer terug naar deze pagina.

De volgende vragen gaan over het **taalgebruik** in de online recensie.

De online recensie bevatte…

Letterlijke taal	O O O O O O O	Figuurlijke taal
Concrete taal	O O O O O O O	Abstracte taal
Serieuze taal	O O O O O O O	Speelse taal
Simpele taal	O O O O O O O	Complexe taal

De woorden in de online recensie…

Betekenen precies wat er staat	O O O O O O O	Betekenen meer dan wat er staat
Hebben één betekenis	O O O O O O O	Hebben meerdere betekenissen

---

De volgende vragen gaan over de **schrijver** van de online recensie.

Bevatte de online recensie de *naam* van de schrijver?
O Ja
O Nee
O Weet ik niet

(Wanneer het antwoord "ja" is gekozen, verschijnt de volgende vraag)

Wat was de naam van de schrijver?
…….

Bevatte de online recensie de *woonplaats* van de schrijver?
O Ja
O Nee
O Weet ik niet

(Wanneer het antwoord "ja" is gekozen, verschijnt de volgende vraag)

Wat was de woonplaats van de schrijver?
…….

Bevatte de online recensie een *foto* van de schrijver?
O Ja
O Nee
O Weet ik niet

Wat is het meest van toepassing op de schrijver van de recensie?

Geen zelfonthulling van de schrijver	O O O O O O O	Veel zelfonthulling van de schrijver
Geen informatie over de schrijver	O O O O O O O	Veel informatie over de schrijver

Hoe kwam de online recensie die u zojuist zag op u over?

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
De online recensie was zeer realistisch.	O	O	O	O	O
Ik kon mijzelf makkelijk voorstellen dat ik deze online recensie tegenkwam.	O	O	O	O	O

(Respondent wordt willekeurig toegewezen aan 1 van de 4 condities)

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe geheugenkaart. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over geheugenkaarten. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde geheugenkaart zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

Let op: u kunt straks niet meer terug naar deze pagina.

De volgende vragen gaan over het **taalgebruik** in de online recensie.

De online recensie bevatte…

Letterlijke taal	O O O O O O O	Figuurlijke taal
Concrete taal	O O O O O O O	Abstracte taal
Serieuze taal	O O O O O O O	Speelse taal
Simpele taal	O O O O O O O	Complexe taal

De woorden in de online recensie…

Betekenen precies wat er staat	O O O O O O O	Betekenen meer dan wat er staat
Hebben één betekenis	O O O O O O O	Hebben meerdere betekenissen

---

De volgende vragen gaan over de **schrijver** van de online recensie.

Bevatte de online recensie de *naam* van de schrijver?
O Ja
O Nee
O Weet ik niet

(Wanneer het antwoord "ja" is gekozen, verschijnt de volgende vraag)

Wat was de naam van de schrijver?
…….

Bevatte de online recensie de *woonplaats* van de schrijver?
O Ja
O Nee
O Weet ik niet

(Wanneer het antwoord "ja" is gekozen, verschijnt de volgende vraag)

Wat was de woonplaats van de schrijver?
…….

Bevatte de online recensie een *foto* van de schrijver?
O Ja
O Nee
O Weet ik niet

Wat is het meest van toepassing op de schrijver van de recensie?

Geen zelfonthulling van de schrijver	O O O O O O O	Veel zelfonthulling van de schrijver
Geen informatie over de schrijver	O O O O O O O	Veel informatie over de schrijver

Hoe kwam de online recensie die u zojuist zag op u over?

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
De online recensie was zeer realistisch.	O	O	O	O	O
Ik kon mijzelf makkelijk voorstellen dat ik deze online recensie tegenkwam.	O	O	O	O	O

Dit is het einde van de vragenlijst.

Heeft u vragen en/of opmerkingen over dit onderzoek? Stuur dan een mailtje naar n.knippers@student.utwente.nl.

Heel erg bedankt voor uw deelname!

APPENDIX 3 – STIMULUS MATERIALS

Condition 1:

- Little identity disclosure
- Figurative language
- Predominantly hedonic product

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe koptelefoon. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over koptelefoons. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde koptelefoon zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

Condition 2:

- Extended identity disclosure
- Figurative language
- Predominantly utilitarian product

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe geheugenkaart. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over geheugenkaarten. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde geheugenkaart zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

Condition 3:

- Extended identity disclosure
- Figurative language
- Predominantly hedonic product

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe koptelefoon. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over koptelefoons. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde koptelefoon zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

Condition 4:

- Little identity disclosure
- Figurative language
- Predominantly utilitarian product

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe geheugenkaart. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over geheugenkaarten. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde geheugenkaart zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

Condition 5:

- Little identity disclosure
- Literal language
- Predominantly hedonic product

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe koptelefoon. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over koptelefoons. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde koptelefoon zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

Condition 6:

- Extended identity disclosure
- Literal language
- Predominantly utilitarian product

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe geheugenkaart. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over geheugenkaarten. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde geheugenkaart zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

Condition 7:

- Extended identity disclosure
- Literal language
- Predominantly hedonic product

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe koptelefoon. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over koptelefoons. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde koptelefoon zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

Condition 8:

- Little identity disclosure
- Literal language
- Predominantly utilitarian product

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe geheugenkaart. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over geheugenkaarten. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde geheugenkaart zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

APPENDIX 4 – OUTLINE MAIN STUDY

Beste deelnemer,

Bedankt voor uw deelname aan mijn onderzoek. Dit onderzoek draagt bij aan mijn Master Thesis voor de opleiding Marketing Communication aan de Universiteit Twente.

Het onderzoek zal ongeveer 5 tot 10 minuten van uw tijd innemen. U krijgt een online recensie te zien, waarop een paar korte vragen volgen. Bij het beantwoorden van deze vragen staat uw mening centraal. Dit betekent dat er geen goede of foute antwoorden bestaan.

Deelname aan deze vragenlijst is volledig anoniem. Uw gegevens worden vertrouwelijk behandeld en de resultaten worden uitsluitend gebruikt voor mijn Master Thesis. U kunt op elk moment stoppen met de vragenlijst, zonder hiervoor een reden op te geven.

Nogmaals bedankt voor uw medewerking!

Nikki Knippers
n.knippers@student.utwente.nl

Ik heb bovenstaande informatie gelezen en stem geheel vrijwillig in met deelname aan dit onderzoek.
O Ja
O Nee

Wat is uw geslacht?
O Man
O Vrouw

Wat is uw leeftijd in jaren?
…….

Wat is uw hoogst genoten opleiding? (Als u op dit moment een opleiding volgt, vult u deze in)
O VMBO
O HAVO
O VWO
O MBO
O HBO
O WO

Definitie:
Online recensies zijn product beoordelingen op het Internet. Consumenten die een bepaald product gekocht en gebruikt hebben, kunnen over dit product een online recensie schrijven. Zij delen dan hun ervaringen, evaluaties en meningen met andere consumenten.

De volgende vragen gaan over **online recensies**.

Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen.

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik vertrouw online recensies.	O	O	O	O	O
Online recensies zijn betrouwbaar.	O	O	O	O	O
Online recensies zijn te vertrouwen.	O	O	O	O	O
Ik vertrouw online recensies wanneer ik product informatie nodig heb.	O	O	O	O	O
Ik probeer nieuwe producten uit die besproken worden in online recensies.	O	O	O	O	O

(Respondent wordt willekeurig toegewezen aan 1 van de 8 condities)

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe koptelefoon. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over koptelefoons. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde koptelefoon zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

Let op: u kunt straks niet meer terug naar deze pagina.

De volgende vragen gaan over de **online recensie** die u zojuist heeft gezien.

De online recensie was…

Waardeloos	O O O O O O O	Waardevol
Niet informatief	O O O O O O O	Informatief
Onbehulpzaam	O O O O O O O	Behulpzaam
Nutteloos	O O O O O O O	Nuttig

De online recensie was…

Onbetrouwbaar	O O O O O O O	Betrouwbaar
Niet te vertrouwen	O O O O O O O	Wel te vertrouwen
Onnauwkeurig	O O O O O O O	Nauwkeurig
Ongeloofwaardig	O O O O O O O	Geloofwaardig

De online recensie was…

Niet overtuigend	O O O O O O O	Overtuigend
Onbelangrijk	O O O O O O O	Belangrijk
Onbehulpzaam	O O O O O O O	Behulpzaam
Niet persuasief	O O O O O O O	Persuasief

De volgende vragen gaan over het **product** dat in de online recensie beoordeeld werd.

Het product in de online recensie was…

Slecht	O O O O O O O	Goed
Niet leuk	O O O O O O O	Leuk
Onaangenaam	O O O O O O O	Aangenaam
Onaantrekkelijk	O O O O O O O	Aantrekkelijk
Negatief	O O O O O O O	Positief

Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen.

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
De mogelijkheid dat ik het product in de online recensie ga kopen is groot.	O	O	O	O	O
Het is waarschijnlijk dat ik het product in de online recensie ga kopen.	O	O	O	O	O
Ik heb een hoge intentie om het product in de online recensie te kopen.	O	O	O	O	O

Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen.

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik zou vrienden en familie aanraden om het product in de online recensie te kopen.	O	O	O	O	O
Ik zou het product in de online recensie aanbevelen aan iemand die om mijn advies vraagt.	O	O	O	O	O
Ik zou positieve dingen over het product in de online recensie zeggen tegen andere mensen.	O	O	O	O	O

Geef aan in hoeverre u het eens bent met de stellingen.

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
Ik zou deze online recensie liken.	O	O	O	O	O
Ik zou deze online recensie delen.	O	O	O	O	O

Bekijk de onderstaande online recensie nog een keer en ga daarna verder naar de vragen op de volgende pagina.

Scenario:
U bent op zoek naar een nieuwe koptelefoon. Daarom raadpleegt u diverse online recensies over koptelefoons. De meningen van andere consumenten kunnen uw keuzeproces namelijk makkelijker maken. Gebaseerd op deze meningen kunt u uw keuze voor een bepaalde koptelefoon zo goed mogelijk onderbouwen. Tijdens dit proces komt u de volgende online recensie tegen. U bekijkt deze aandachtig.

Let op: u kunt straks niet meer terug naar deze pagina.

De volgende vragen gaan over het **taalgebruik** in de online recensie.

De online recensie bevatte…

Letterlijke taal	O O O O O O O	Figuurlijke taal
Concrete taal	O O O O O O O	Abstracte taal
Serieuze taal	O O O O O O O	Speelse taal
Simpele taal	O O O O O O O	Complexe taal

De woorden in de online recensie…

Betekenen precies wat er staat	O O O O O O O	Betekenen meer dan wat er staat
Hebben één betekenis	O O O O O O O	Hebben meerdere betekenissen

De volgende vragen gaan over het **product** in de online recensie.

Ik vind het product…

Saai	O O O O O O O	Boeiend
Onplezierig	O O O O O O O	Plezierig
Onprettig	O O O O O O O	Prettig
Onaangenaam	O O O O O O O	Aangenaam
Niet leuk	O O O O O O O	Leuk

Ik vind het product…

Nutteloos	O O O O O O O	Nuttig
Onpraktisch	O O O O O O O	Praktisch
Niet functioneel	O O O O O O O	Functioneel
Onbehulpzaam	O O O O O O O	Behulpzaam
Onhandig	O O O O O O O	Handig

De volgende vragen gaan over de **schrijver** van de online recensie.

Wat is het meest van toepassing op de schrijver?

Geen zelfonthulling van de schrijver	O O O O O O O	Veel zelfonthulling van de schrijver
Geen informatie over de schrijver	O O O O O O O	Veel informatie over de schrijver

Hoe kwam de online recensie die u zojuist zag op u over?

	Helemaal mee oneens	Mee oneens	Neutraal	Mee eens	Helemaal mee eens
De online recensie was zeer realistisch.	O	O	O	O	O
Ik kon mijzelf makkelijk voorstellen dat ik deze online recensie tegenkwam.	O	O	O	O	O

De volgende vragen gaan over uw **algemene interesse** in koptelefoons. Het gaat hier dus **niet** over de online recensie die u zojuist heeft gezien, maar over koptelefoons in het algemeen.

Ik vind koptelefoons…

Onbelangrijk	O O O O O O O	Belangrijk
Saai	O O O O O O O	Interessant
Irrelevant	O O O O O O O	Relevant
Niet spannend	O O O O O O O	Spannend
Betekenisloos	O O O O O O O	Betekenisvol
Onaantrekkelijk	O O O O O O O	Aantrekkelijk
Alledaags	O O O O O O O	Fascinerend
Waardeloos	O O O O O O O	Waardevol
Onbetrokken	O O O O O O O	Betrokken
Niet nodig	O O O O O O O	Nodig

Dit is het einde van de vragenlijst.

Heeft u vragen en/of opmerkingen over dit onderzoek? Stuur dan een mailtje naar n.knippers@student.utwente.nl.

Heel erg bedankt voor uw deelname!