

Reviewing experiences of experience goods online: The effect of different
sets of online customer reviews on consumers' purchase intent towards
experience goods

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Abstract

The influence of online customer reviews (OCRs), such as first-party reviews, third-party reviews and customer testimonials, is increasing in the online decision-making process of consumers. As the number of consumers that buy products online has risen, OCRs are important for online retailers nowadays. At the moment, there is no unequivocal insight into the effect of these types of OCRs on the online decision-making process. Because there is more understanding from previous studies into the type of valence, this research aims to gain insight into the effect of different sets of OCRs regarding non-perishable experience goods.

Therefore, an online experiment was conducted via a two (Type OCR: First-party vs. Third-party) by three (Type of valence: positive, negative, and a combination of positive and negative) between-subjects design, with the additional condition of positive testimonials. All OCRs were based on the JBL Tune 225 TWS earphones. Before conducting the experiment, a pre-test was performed. Via convenience sampling and snowball sampling, 222 adult participants from the Netherlands properly completed the experiment. Participants of the pre-test were excluded from the experiment. To analyse the data and test the hypotheses, a MANOVA analysis, multiple regression and Hayes Process Macro were applied.

The results showed that the type of OCR had no effect on the online decision-making process. However, it was observed that some results regarding valence were in line with the hypotheses, since it was found that positive reviews had a positive effect on JBL product attitude and review usefulness and that negative reviews had a positive effect on review credibility. Also, the interaction between valence and OCR had a positive effect on brand favourability. The combination of positive reviews with testimonials worked best for this. Next, it was found that JBL product attitude and review usefulness were important predictors of purchase intention and that brand favourability and review usefulness mediated the relationship between valence and purchase intention. Lastly, it was found that review credibility positively moderates the effect of positive reviews on purchase intention.

Little information is known about the influence of the type of OCR on the online decision-making process. Therefore, further research with regard to the type of OCR is advised to gain more insight into different the effect of different sets of OCRs on the online decision-making process.

Keywords: *OCRs, first-party reviews, third-party reviews, customer testimonials, valence; product attitude, brand attitude, review usefulness, review credibility, purchase intention, experience goods*

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1. Introduction

The number of consumers that read OCRs had increased by 22% (Leeuwen, 2020). This is a response to the limited opening time of physical shops in 2020 and the first months of 2021. If these shops were open, it was for a limited number of people or limited opening hours. Hence, consumers were more dependent on finding information about products online.

Due to this development, it became more difficult for consumers to analyse whether the preferred product suited their expectations. There is more often an uncertainty of the consumer towards products when purchasing these online (Hong & Pavlou, 2014). This applies especially to businesses that sell experience goods online, since their main attributes cannot be known until the product is in use (Klein in Park & Lee, 2009). This results in an even greater uncertainty regarding the product fit. Knowing this, it is important for online retailers to properly set up product information and marketing- and communication expressions. In this way, a possible gap when purchasing a product can be minimized or even prevented.

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is a reliable source of information for consumers to purchase products and services online (Hung & Li, 2007). Online customer reviews (OCRs), such as first-party reviews and third-party reviews, and customer testimonials are considered as a form of eWOM and can occur in various valences, such as positive, negative or a combination of these two (Website 360, 2020). When multiple reviews are written under each other, these reviews can also be perceived by the consumer as a whole set of OCRs. Examples of these OCRs are a set of only positive reviews, a set of only negative reviews and a mixed set of negative and positive reviews. OCRs have the potential to play an important part in the customer's decision-making process since the positive, negative or mixed valence of positive and negative reviews can influence it (Ho-Dac et al., 2013).

As consumers experienced limited access to visit a store, the connection with products had faded, which made other people's experiences with this product were perceived as more valuable. In addition to the potential added value of OCRs, these reviews can gain the trust of consumers. Lastly, OCRs can provide e-commerce businesses with useful feedback in optimizing products and services (Fortes, 2019). OCRs can appear on the business owned media platforms, i.e., the website. This type is considered as a first-party review. Also, OCRs can appear on unaffiliated and independent review platforms, e.g., Tweakers, Trustpilot and Kiyoh, which are considered as third-party reviews.

Due to the added value of OCRs, this type of eWOM has the potential to be an important factor of optimization in the marketing and communication expressions of e-

commerce organisations that sell experience goods online. However, multiple types of OCRs could be used by e-commerce businesses, which also can occur in different types of valences.

Related to non-perishable experience goods, there is currently no unambiguous insight into the influence of the different types and sets of OCRs, such as a set of first-party reviews, set of third-party reviews and a set of testimonials in combination with the type of valence on the customer's buying process towards experience goods. Therefore, the effects of different types of OCRs on different behavioural variables in the online decision-making process is investigated, to provide more insight into this research topic. Hence, the following research questions are formulated:

1. To what extent do different sets of OCRs have an effect on the decision-making process of online consumers?

2. To what extent does the interaction between the types of OCRs and the types of valences influence the online decision-making process?

The distinguishing aspect of this research is that it looks at the effect of a set of reviews instead of only a single review. As the use of OCRs has increased and there is still no understanding of the effect of the different types of eWOM as a set, it is relevant to investigate this in times where online shopping has not been as popular as today. However, this study is also an addition at an academic level, since no previous studies have been conducted with regard to investigating different types of review in combination with the fact that the OCRs consist of sets.

Also, the type of experience good contributes to the uniqueness of the study. This is because, in the research towards experience goods, slightly more attention is being paid to the perishable variant instead of the non-perishable variant. An example of this occurs in the study of (Onur et al. (2020), who found that in online auctioning, much more attention is focused on perishable experience goods. Since this study is focused on non-perishable goods, this study contributes to the knowledge of this type of experience goods.

Based on the results of this study, online retailers can optimize their online review policy and communication expressions on their website pages. For example, online retailers can determine whether they want to encourage their customers to make more or less use of first-party reviews, third-party reviews or customer testimonials.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this theoretical framework, concepts and relationships between different variables that are relevant for this study have been examined and discussed with the aid of literature. To gain more insight into the core of this research, the concepts of experience goods and the different types of OCRs are explained first. In order to map well-founded hypotheses of these elements with regard to the variables of product attitude, brand attitude, review usefulness, review credibility and purchase intention, this is elaborated after. Lastly, a research sub-question is developed, multiple substantiated hypotheses are defined and the model of this study is presented visually.

2.1. Experience goods

Experience goods are products and services of which the attributes of it are hard to transfer. In the case of this study, this transfer refers from the business towards the online consumer (Hong & Pavlou, 2014). These attributes require the use of senses before the product can be inspected properly by a consumer (Weathers et al., 2007). Hence, these attributes cannot be experienced and known by the online consumer before purchasing them.

Experience goods can be distinguished into a perishable and non-perishable variant (Onur et al., 2020). The products and services that relate to perishable experience goods, such as event tickets, airline seats and food products, must be consumed before a deadline date.

From the authors best knowledge, there is slightly more focus on the perishable variant of experience goods. Onur et al. (2020) found that in online auctioning, a fairly extensive body of research is focused on various aspects of perishable experience products. An explanation for this is that the distinction between non-perishable goods and searchable goods is vague. In certain cases, search goods are considered as non-perishable experience goods, especially when the maintenance costs of the product are high (Jourdan, 2000). Moreover, perishable experience goods had been the focus in many studies related to experience goods. These topics were regularly used in sales related research (Adam et al., & Miyashita in Onur, 2020). An example of this is the influence of online hotel reviews on consumers consideration (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009).

However, since there is a multitude of non-perishable products, information about non-perishable experience goods is available. Non-perishable experience goods do not have to be consumed before a deadline date and are therefore more durable (Onur et al., 2020). An example of this is the impact of multiple eWOM variables on the sales result of books, found

by Colvin (2013). As a result, a well-founded description can be given about this product group.

There are eleven categories in the non-perishable variant, also known as the durable experience goods (Liebermann and Flint-Goor, 1996; Nelson, 1974 in Siegel & Vitaliano, 2007). Examples of these categories are hardware, software and sporting goods. The user experience of these goods is subjective (Hassenzahl, 2018). Once a product has been experienced by the consumer regularly basis, it is often not an experience good for the consumer anymore. This is because the consumer is already aware of the product fit (Hong & Pavlou, 2014). However, when an element of the product changes, for example, if it comes from another provider, the attributes are less well known. As a result, it is often no longer possible for the consumer to estimate whether the product is still a good fit.

This study focused on Bluetooth earphones as a durable experience good. This product fits in multiple categories of non-perishable experience goods that are defined by Siegel & Vitaliano (2007). Besides, because each consumer uses this product on its own, it also has a personal experience for every consumer (Hassenzahl, 2018). Moreover, experiencing Bluetooth earbuds becomes easier once a consumer has purchased the product. Lastly, experiencing a non-perishable experience good in means of testing and trying it out before the purchase, is in fact more complex and expensive for the consumer than experiencing it after buying it (Klein in Park & Lee, 2009).

With regard to OCRs, online reviews had a significant impact on experience goods (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Liebermann and Flint-Goor, 1996; Nelson, 1974 and Zhu and Zhang, 2006 in Siegel & Vitaliano, 2007). Also, negative reviews had a larger impact on the sales of video games compared to positive reviews. An explanation for this may lie in the finding of Weitzl et al. (2016), who argued that in OCRs with a negative valence, only the content is analysed when forming an attitude towards the product. For OCRs with a positive valence, in addition to the content, the credibility of the OCRS is also analysed in the formation of an attitude towards the product. This is because it is assumed that the credibility of a review functions as a moderator for the influence of OCRs (Weitzl et al., 2016). In contrast to this, it was found that positive WOM had more impact on purchase intention among online consumers than negative word-of-mouth (East et al., 2008).

In addition, Colvin (2013) found that the number of OCRs and the number of likes a seller has on Amazon, had a significant impact on the sales of books. Lastly, Beneke et al. (2015) observed that for the non-perishable experience good of laptops, negative reviews had a negative impact on purchase intention.

Literature has shown that there is slightly more focus on the perishable variant of experience goods instead of the non-perishable variant. Based on this knowledge and to contribute to the existing literature on non-perishable experience goods, for this study it was decided to focus on the non-perishable variant. A sufficient amount of literature with regard to OCRs is available. Despite the fact that, with regard to OCRs, there is scientific knowledge available of non-perishable experience goods, there is still no unambiguous insight into the effect of different sets of OCRs on experience goods.

2.2. Online customer reviews (OCRs)

Online customer reviews (OCRs) are peer-generated evaluations of products or services (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). Therefore, OCRs are a type of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication, which is the evaluative statement made by current or former customers about a product, service or company and is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). OCRs are therefore an important means within eWOM in communicating experiences with products and services with other potential customers.

In addition to Mudambi & Schuff (2010), Cao (2020) stated that there are different types of OCRs. The first type is a first-party review, which is also known as a review that is placed on the website of the selling company. The company itself has no influence on the content that is posted in an OCR. However, sometimes the online seller manages what appears on the website. Examples are the website of the selling company and business profiles on retail platforms such as Amazon, Bol.com and CoolBlue. The second type is a third-party review, which is a review that is posted on an external website, such as Google, Kiyoh, Tweakers and Trustpilot. Sometimes, these platforms discuss (products of) other companies and online retailers.

According to Mudambi & Schuff (2010), online retailers had an incentive to offer online content that reflects the genuine thinking of visitors and is perceived as valuable by the visitor. This was done so that the reviews become more valuable for the consumer and the online decision-making process can be positively influenced. In contrast, independent review websites establish guidelines for writing reviews to minimize the influence of online retailers (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). However, this only occurs with independent third-party review platforms and not with first-party review platforms (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010).

As a result, online retailers have a relative uninhibited role in communicating and presenting first-party reviews. Because this content is presented in a way the online retailer

intended, this can influence the decision-making process of the online consumer (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). These OCRs can be displayed in a remarkable place on the website or the first-party reviews can be automatically sorted from very positive to very negative when opening a page. Also, the less limited role of the online retailer makes it possible to remove reviews and thereby make it look like all the content with regard to the experience good is positive. However, this depends on the wishes and intentions of the online retailer. In this study, the different types of OCRs were presented to the participants in a similar manner and with minimal differences with regard to the review platform. As a result, elements such as placement were not considered in the current study.

From the authors' best knowledge, in the literature, the research regarding OCRs is much more focused on third-party reviews. These results showed that several articles provided indications that third-party platforms have a significant effect on purchase intention (Tran, 2020, L. Zhu et al., 2020). Also, Rahayu & Oktafani (2021) found that third-party OCRs have a significant effect on purchase intention with regard to buying cinema tickets. In addition to this, Chen et al. (2015) found that compared to first-party reviews, reviews from third-party websites had a strong impact on overseas online shopping intention of online customers. An explanation for this could be that credibility depends on the accuracy and reliability dimensions of information quality, which also occurs in eWOM communication. The accuracy and reliability can be better guaranteed when the information of an OCR comes from an independent and respected third-party instead of the website of an online retailer (Weathers et al., 2007).

With regard to the type of valence, there is a sufficient amount of literature available. Several studies showed the effect of both positive and negative word-of-mouth on behavioural attitudes and intentions towards organisations. Since positive word-of-mouth communication had a positive effect on sales (Beck, 2007), OCRs have the potential to minimize uncertainty when buying experience goods and to minimize the gap in product fit.

Sweeney et al. (2005) found that compared to positive WOM, negative WOM was more emotional in nature. Negative WOM was associated with dissatisfaction and was almost twice as likely to influence the consumer's opinion of the company. In addition, consumers who had a negative experience with a company were more likely to "express" their emotion through OCRs compared to those with positive experiences. Also, it was found that positive WOM is more cognitive, more likely to be deliberate before being published, and more closely associated with quality of service-related comments (Sweeney et al., 2005).

2.3. Customer testimonials

There is a strong interest in investigating the effect of textual testimonials in e-commerce (Spillinger & Parush, 2012). Customer testimonials are defined as an endorsement from a satisfied customer, who is presumably representative of the target group (Wentzel et al., 2007). According to Ruhamak et al. (2018), testimonials are an acknowledgement or support toward the represented business from satisfied customers.

Although customer testimonials do not fall under the criteria of OCRs since these are displayed on the company website and are placed by the business owner (Website360, 2020), applying this type of eWOM resulted in a significantly higher level of trust compared to websites that do not use testimonials (Spillinger & Parush, 2012). However, from an online consumer perspective, testimonials can be perceived as reviews. Another distinction of customer testimonials compared to first-party and third-party reviews is that customer testimonials do contain quantitative elements, such as ratings (Website360, 2020).

Mayzlin et al. (2014) analysed that biased reviews, such as writing fake negative reviews affected consumer responses towards experience goods. Wu et al. (2020) observed that companies have a tendency to produce positive reviews for their own products and negative reviews for their rivals, to profit from potential financial gains. As testimonials are used by companies to show approval from third parties, such as former and current customers, to potential customers, and are controlled by the online retailer, it is unrealistic for these companies to show a set of negative or mixed sets of negative and positive testimonials.

If e-commerce businesses post these negative types of eWOM, the company will put itself at a disadvantage compared to competitors. As a result, in this study, only a set of customer testimonials was used in combination with a positive valence. Lastly, as customer testimonials are recommendations of former clients, which are posted by the company itself, no quantitative elements were used in the stimuli of the customer testimonial.

An adequate supply of literature about OCRs is available. There are three different types of OCRs, which occurs on two types of platforms. With regard to variables from the online decision-making process, it is found that third-party reviews performed better than first-party reviews regarding to online shopping (Chen et al., 2015). Based on the literature, it is observed that although online retailers have fewer restrictions on posting first-party reviews, compared to third-party reviews, third-party reviews have a stronger impact on the shopping intention of an online consumer. Because customer testimonials are also placed by the online retailer as first-party reviews, it is expected that third-party reviews lead to a higher

level of product attitude, brand attitude, review usefulness and review credibility compared to first-party reviews and testimonials.

Also, there are three types of valences. A set of only positive or negative reviews, also known as a one-sided set of reviews, and a mixed set of reviews with a positive and a negative valence, better known as a two-sided set of reviews. It was found that various types of valences influenced multiple behavioural attitudes and that these various types of valences were perceived different by online consumers. The combination of the types of sets of OCRs and the associated valences has the potential to have a significant impact on the decision-making process of online consumers with regard to non-perishable experience goods.

2.4. Product attitude

Product attitude is defined as an overall evaluation of a product. From the consumer perspective, this can result in a positive evaluation or a negative evaluation (Hoyer, MacInnis, & Pieters in Choi et al., 2019). Eagly and Chaiken (2007) described product attitude as “a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour” (Eagly & Chaiken in Wu et al., 2014).

Various studies found a positive relation between the type of valence and product attitude. The study of Srarfi Tabbane (2013) confirmed the relationship between a review with positive valence and the attitude towards the product. Weitzl et al. (2016) argued that when OCR had a negative valence, the product attitude of consumers was influenced by the content of the online review. In contrast, it was found that when OCR has a positive valence, the attitude of consumers was influenced by the content of the OCR as well as by the credibility of the review (Weitzl et al., 2016). It was found that the difference between these valences was that when an OCR contains negative content, it was already sufficient in an online consumer's review process. Unlike OCR with a negative valence, with OCR with a positive valence, the content itself was not enough to create a judgment. (Chaiken et al. in Weitzl et al., 2016).

Consumer engagement had a moderating effect between the valence in an OCR and the development of product attitude (Lee et al., 2008). It was also found that a high degree of negativity in an OCR developed less favourable attitudes among consumers, compared to a low degree of negativity (Lee et al., 2008). Positive responses and reactions towards OCRs had a greater impact on product attitude than negative responses to OCRs. With the knowledge from previously selected literature about OCRs, it is known that first-party reviews can be placed on the website of the selling business with more uninhibited, compared

to third-party reviews. Based on the information that is obtained with regard to product attitude, it is found that there is a positive relationship between the type of valence and product attitude. Therefore, for this study, it is expected that a set of OCRs with a positive valence will lead to a higher product attitude.

2.5. Brand attitude

Following product attitude, Zhu & Kohsuwan (2016) defined brand attitude as an overall evaluation of a brand by an individual, in this case an online consumer. It is formed by a consistent customer preference or dislike of a brand. This is based on learning and assessing different elements of a brand. This process creates an all-encompassing outcome, which can define a brand as good or bad from the consumer's perspective (Mitchell & Olson in Zhu & Kohsuwan, 2016). Brand attitude is important in marketing as it is an essential factor for predicting the attitude towards the experience good (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017).

The valence of an OCR and the valence in review blogs had a significant impact on brand attitude (Ballantine & Au Yeung, 2015). Several studies found this effect. Moreover, the valence of a review moderated the effect of online reviews on the attitude towards the brand (Lee et al in Ballantine & Au Yeung, 2015). This is due to the proportion of positivity or negativity in the review. Extremely positive reviews increased brand attitudes. In contradiction to the big proportion of positivity in a positive OCR, a smaller, moderated, share of negativity in a negative OCR negated this effect. Forman et al. (2008) found that reviews with a moderate valence were less impactful compared to reviews with a clear positive or negative valence. This is because unambiguous reviews, such as positive or negative reviews, contained clear information and therefore had more immediate implications for consumers' purchasing decisions compared to moderate, ambiguous reviews (Forman et al., 2008). Besides, there was a relation found between positive, social eWOM and attitude towards the brand (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017).

Due to the amount of and depth of a positive or negative sentiment in an OCR, it was argued that the valence of an OCR had a significant impact on brand attitude and that the valence of an OCR mediated between the OCR and brand attitude. Since previous studies found a positive relationship of valence on brand attitude, it is expected that a set of OCRs with a positive valence will lead to higher attitude towards the brand.

2.6. Review usefulness

Review usefulness, also known as perceived usefulness, refers to whether an online consumer reading someone else's review of a product finds this review valuable in determining their interest in the product (Luo, 2020).

It was found that there are several important elements in a review can function as parameters for predicting the helpfulness of it (Singh et al, (2017), such as the polarity, which is also known as valence, readability and the average rating. The valence was defined as whether the text of the review has a negative, positive, or neutral sentiment. This study focused on three types of valences in an OCR, which were positive, negative and mixed.

Sets of reviews that are in general one-sided, which are a set of reviews that only have negative or positive reviews, had higher usefulness for consumers compared to sets of reviews that are two-sided (Purnawirawan et al., 2012). In this study, no distinction was found in credibility related to valence, as it was emphasized that information retrieved from user-generated sources, such as OCRs, was generally considered more credible and thus more useful than information generated by marketers (Bickart and Schindler, 2001; Bronner and de Hoog, 2010 in Purnawirawan et al., 2012). This is applied especially to experience goods, because the main attributes are difficult to transfer to the consumer (Bronner and de Hoog, 2010 in Purnawirawan et al., 2012). In addition, Du et al. (2015) and (Jia & Liu, 2018) found that when the valence of OCRs is negative or positive, this positively influences the perceived usefulness.

In multiple studies, it was found that one-sided reviews have a positive effect on the usefulness of a review. Based on this information, it is expected that a set of OCRs will be perceived as useful, only if the valence of it is positive or negative.

2.7. Review credibility

The credibility of a review is defined as the extent to which a review that is placed in an online environment, is perceived as believable, true, factual and valid by an online consumer (Cheung et al., 2009). Liu et al. (2015) defined review credibility as to which extent a review reflects the true quality of a product. It was found that credibility is an important variable, as a consumer who perceives an online review as credible, is likely to use this review to help reduce anticipated risks and in the purchasing process (Wathen and Burkell in Liu et al., 2015). Weathers et al., (2007) stated that credibility depends on the accuracy and reliability dimensions of information quality. Furthermore, online consumers who believe that

the eWOM messages are reliable usually had more certainty when purchasing the product online (Nabi and Hendriks in Liu et al., 2015).

There were several argument factors, like the accuracy, timeliness and completeness of the review, that have a significant impact on review credibility (Thomas et al., 2019). Also, the expertise of the writer was an important element in reaching review credibility (Ballantine and Au Yeung, 2015). In contrast to these success factors, typing errors negatively affected the perceived credibility of the review (Boer, 2021).

Ballantine and Au Yeung (2015) found that a set of balanced blog reviews, which is a set of reviews with a combination of positive and negative reviews, were perceived as more credible compared to a set of unbalanced blog reviews. This study investigated blog reviews instead of OCRs. In addition to this, it was found that reviews with a mixed valence are more trustworthy compared to reviews with a negative or positive valence (K. Wu et al., 2015).

With regard to trust, it was also found that trustworthiness is a success factor of perceiving review credibility (Ballantine and Au Yeung, 2015). Trust is a complex construct that is defined from different viewpoints. The construct of trust was defined as the belief, expectancy, or feeling deeply rooted in the personality of the consumer, that the word or promise of a party is reliable and that this party will fulfil the obligations in an exchange relationship (Rotter in Yousafzai et al., 2003). Trust in the selling business was defined as the belief of a consumer that a party's word or promise is reliable and that a party will fulfil its obligations in an exchange relationship with the consumer (Swan et al., 1999). Trust from online consumers in web-mediated e-commerce businesses was defined as a willingness to take a risk, a willingness to believe in an online business or a belief regarding some characteristics of the selling business (Komiak & Benbasat, 2004).

Trust from the online consumer is an important variable in a relationship between the consumer and the online business, as it is found that trust can influence future interaction decisions of the customer with the business (Komiak & Benbasat, 2004). Swan et al. (1999) observed via a meta-analysis that trust had a positive effect on the attitude, intention and behaviour of the consumer towards the selling company. Due to that in online shopping, trusting beliefs had an effect on the attitude of the consumer and the perception of risk, trust towards the organisation positively influenced the credibility of OCRs (Hao Suan Samuel et al., 2015).

Based on the information, it was found that review credibility has an important role in the observation of OCRs. Many elements influence this variable, such as expertise and

trustworthiness. Despite that there is still no unequivocal insight into the effect of valence on review credibility, it was found that balanced blog reviews were perceived as more credible. Also, it was found that reviews with a mixed valence were perceived more trustworthy than positive or negative reviews and that trust is an important factor of review credibility. Based on this information, it is expected that, compared to OCRs with a positive or negative valence, OCRs with a mixed valence are perceived as more credible.

2.8. Purchase intention

OCRs have the potential to contribute to the decision-making process of the online consumer. Partly due to the variable review credibility, this can lead to a higher purchase intention among online consumers. Purchase intention was defined as the likelihood that a consumer will buy a particular product or service. It was described as an “intervening psychological variable between attitude and actual behaviour” (Miniard et al. in Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). Purchase intention is also defined as the likelihood that a consumer will buy a particular product or service. The higher the purchase intention, the greater the probability that the online consumer will purchase the experience good (Hossain & Yahya, 2017).

Huang & Yao (2017) confirmed that product attitude affects purchase intention positively. Besides, it was proposed that product attitude is an important factor in developing purchasing behaviour (Xie et al. in Huang & Yao, 2017). Based on this information, it is expected that product attitude is an important predictor of purchase intention.

It was found that brand attitude had a significant impact on purchase intention. As it is found that the attitude of a person has a positive impact on the following behavioural intention, it has the potential to have a significant impact on purchase intention as well. (Ajzen & Fishbein in Zhu & Kohsuwan, 2016). In digital communication, such as digital advertising, brand attitude has a positive impact on purchase intention (Lee, 2014). Moreover, the same effect was investigated in social eWOM, where it is found that brand attitude has a significant impact on the buying intention of the online consumer (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017). This supports the finding of Dodds et al. (1991), who stated that brand attitude has a positive effect on purchase intention (E. B. Lee et al., 2017). Based on this information, it is expected that brand attitude is an important predictor of purchase intention and that the influence of valence on purchase intention is mediated by brand attitude.

Various studies confirmed that perceived usefulness had a positive impact on purchase intention, such as Ventre & Kolbe (2020). Lim et al. (2016) found that perceived usefulness significantly impacts the purchase intention, as this usefulness brings added value in the

decision-making process of an online consumer. Additionally, review usefulness and trust in the review positively influences the purchase intention (Boer, 2021).

Also, it was found that a large number of OCRs was considered more credible for online consumers (Ho-Dac et al., 2013; Hung & Li, 2007). Also, OCRs have the potential to stimulate purchase intentions if there is a high level of credibility (Cheung et al., 2012). Based on this information, it is expected that a set of negative or positive reviews is perceived more useful than mixed reviews. As it was found that review usefulness adds value in the decision-making process, it is expected that review usefulness mediates the relationship between the type of valence and purchase intention.

Thomas et al. (2019) found that the credibility of an online review had a significant impact on purchase intention of the online consumer. Based on results of previous studies such as Sweeney et al. (2005) and Beck (2007), it is assumed that positive reviews have a positive effect on purchase intention. As it was found that trust is an important factor of review credibility and that review credibility plays an important role in evaluating reviews with a positive valence, it is expected that review credibility is an important predictor of purchase intention. Therefore, it is that the effect of positive reviews on purchase intention is stronger if review credibility is high.

2.9. Research sub-question and hypotheses

This study focused on the effect of different types of OCRs and different types of valences on product attitude, brand attitude, review usefulness, review credibility and purchase intention. Based on the described expectations, one research sub-question and various hypotheses have been formulated. Figure 1 visualizes an overview of the research sub-question and hypotheses in a conceptual model.

H1: Reading third-party reviews lead to higher (A) product attitude, (B) brand favourability, (C) review usefulness and (D) review credibility compared to reading first-party reviews or testimonials.

H2: Positive reviews lead to (A) higher product attitude and (B) higher brand attitude compared to mixed reviews and negative reviews.

H3: A set of positive reviews and a set of negative reviews are perceived as more useful than a mixed set of positive and negative reviews.

H4: A mixed set of positive and negative reviews are perceived as more credible than a set of positive reviews and a set of negative reviews.

RSQ 1: To what extent has the interaction between the type of OCR and the type of valence an effect on brand attitude?

H5: Purchase intention is positively related by (A) product attitude, (B) brand attitude, (C) review usefulness and (D) review credibility.

H6: If there is a significant effect of the type of valence on purchase intention, this effect will be mediated by (A) brand attitude and (B) review usefulness.

H7: The effect of positive reviews on purchase intention will be stronger if the review credibility is high.

2.10. Research model

Following the information of the theoretical framework and the formulated hypotheses, a conceptual model of this research was developed. This model is visualized in figure 1.

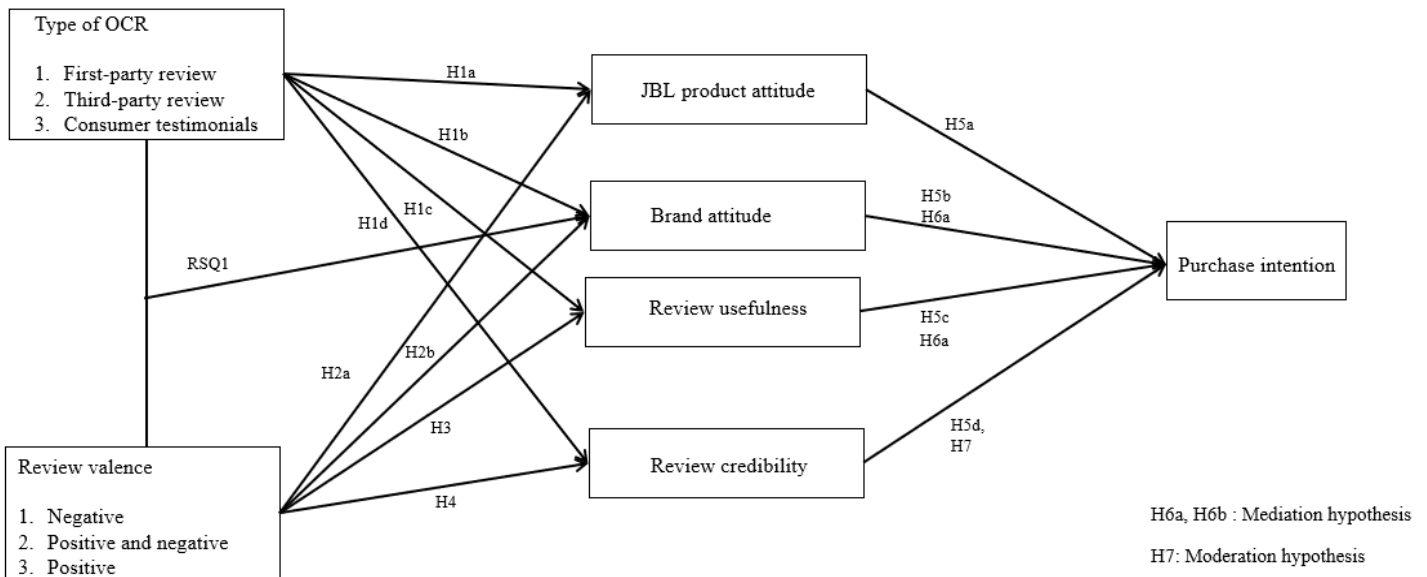


Figure 1.

Conceptual model of the research

3. Methods

3.1. Design

To answer the research sub-questions and to test the hypotheses, an online experiment was executed. A two (*Type of OCR*: First-party vs. Third-party) by three (*Type of Valence*: positive, negative and mixed (positive and negative)) between-subjects design was developed, with the additional condition of positive testimonials. To measure the impact of these variables on the product attitude, brand attitude, review usefulness, review credibility and purchase intention, seven conditions were developed, which are visible in table 1.

Table 1

Conditions of the research and distribution of the participants across the conditions

Type of OCR		First-party			Third-party		Testimonial		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Type of Valence	Negative	N	29	13.1	34	15.3			63	28.4
	Mixed	N	34	15.3	33	14.9			67	30.2
	Positive	N	34	15.3	31	14.0	27	12.1	89	40.0
Total		N	97	43.7	98	44.1	27	12.1	222	100

3.2. Participants

The participants of the study were approached via a convenience sampling method and a snowball sampling method. Through convenience sampling, potential participants were approached via face-to-face or by (social) media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Slack and WhatsApp. These participants were prompted to approach other potential participants. By raffling a voucher from bol.com twice, an attempt was made to recruit additional respondents for the online experiment. At the time of the execution of the online experiment, all approved participants were Dutch consumers and above 18 years old. Also, participants were recruited for a pre-test of the online experiment. The participants of the pre-test were also Dutch and above 18 years old. These participants were excluded from participating in the online experiment.

All participants from the online experiment were randomly and equally divided over the conditions. However, some participants had started over the online experiment as they wanted to read OCRs again, before answering the questions. In total, 344 participants were recruited for the online experiment. The goal was to have a minimum of 30 participants for each condition, making the total to a minimum number for the online experiment to 210 participants. Of the 344 participants, 118 participants did not finish the online experiment, the

total minimum number of respondents was reached with 226 participants that finished the online experiment properly. Because two people did not agree with the active consent and were still registered as they did not finish the online experiment, one participant was actually a minor and that the age of one participant was unknown, 4 participants were left out of the study. This makes that the total number of participants that finished the study was reduced to 222.

Of all the participants, 54.7% were male and 42.2% of the participants were female. Also, 3.1 per cent of the participants had a different gender or did not want to reveal this. The mean age of the participants was 26 ($SD = 7.94$). In table 1, an overview of the distribution of participants over the conditions is visible.

3.3. Stimulus material

Since the online experiment consisted of multiple scenarios, in total, seven stimulus materials were developed and used for this study. The stimulus materials were based on online customer reviews of the JBL Tune 225 TWS Bluetooth earphones. This product was chosen because these Bluetooth earphones were representative of multiple categories of non-perishable experience goods, which were defined by Siegel & Vitaliano (2007). The suggested retail price of this product at the time of executing the online experiment was €79,99. The website of JBL (<https://www.jbl.nl/>) was used for first-party reviews. For the third-party reviews, the technological review platform of Tweakers (<https://tweakers.net/>) was applied in the stimuli. At the time of the online experiment, this independent review platform was the largest in the field of consumer technological products in the Netherlands (Tweakers, 2021). Lastly, the website of JBL was also applied for customer testimonials. The number of reviews and testimonials were six in each condition. This number of reviews was based on previous studies that had found that consumers read approximately six to eight reviews before making a purchase online (Hsu et al., 2017; Lee & Shin, 2014).

For the development of a realistic set of OCRs, reviews were taken directly from the product review webpage of JBL and Tweakers. First of all, the reviews that were already posted for the JBL Tune 225 TWS Bluetooth, were analysed. This was done both on the JBL website and on the Tweakers platform. Because there were too few useful reviews here, reviews of similar models such as the JBL Tune 215 TWS and the JBL Tune 125 TWS were used as well. Based on all these reviews, three negative reviews and three positive reviews were selected, based on helpfulness. There was not much difference between the helpfulness

of the reviews on the product page. Therefore, also reviews that appeared first were subsequently selected.

To ensure the degree of positivity as well as negativity in a set of reviews, all these reviews were transformed into the opposite. Therefore, several synonyms were used to create the opposite word. An example of this was a sentence from a negative review "I have been using the JBL earbuds for one week now and am very dissatisfied" was expressed in a positive review as "I have been using the JBL earbuds for one week now and I am very satisfied" This was also applied to the pluses and minuses of the review. Also, the quantitative elements were changed into the opposite. In this way, it was ensured that the degree of positivity and negativity in all the stimuli are equal. This brings the total to six positive reviews and six negative reviews.

With regard to the manipulation in the stimuli, the texts of the reviews and the quantitative assessments per review were changed. As a result of the manipulation, the average assessment of the product had also been adjusted. Based on the information gained from Wentzel et al. (2007), it was decided to add images of customers that are representative of the customer testimonials. In other terms, based on the names, photos of a man or woman were selected for every single testimonial. Quantitative elements that were applied in the first-party and third-party reviews, such as the star rating, had not been added to these testimonials.

Although two different review platforms were used in this study, the approach in which the respondent got to the page with OCRs remained the same. This means that all the participants saw the same page at the start of the procedure, which was the search page on Google. Both review platforms were ranked below each other on this search on Google, when typing 'JBL Tune 225 TWS'. Respondents for the first-party review were referred to the highest search result, which was the landing page of the JBL Tune 225 TWS. Respondents for the third-party review were referred to the search result which was below the result of JBL, which was the landing page of Tweakers about the product JBL Tune 225 TWS. This was done to keep the difference between the different conditions as small as possible. Finally, all product-related elements, such as the price and specifications of the product, had also been remained the same for each stimulus.

The same set of positive reviews, set of negative reviews and mixed set of positive and negative reviews were used in all the stimuli. For the development of the sets of reviews with a mixed valence, a combination of three positive and three negative reviews were designed. To minimize other influences such as spelling errors and ensure the readability in all the stimuli, the reviews and testimonials were grammatically optimized and major spelling errors

were removed. Two examples of the stimuli are visible in figure 2. In appendix B, all the visuals of stimuli materials are available.

Figure 2.

Stimuli of condition 1 and 6

To properly measure the variables and to ensure the internal validity in the online experiment, the manipulations and the independent variables are tested by means of a qualitative pre-test. This was done using semi-structured interviews with open questions. Seven respondents who met the criteria to participate in the online experiment were approached for the pre-test through convenience sampling. To avoid potential bias, these participants did not participate in the main online experiment. In this pre-test, one stimulus was shown to each respondent of this group from the devices in which it was able to participate with the online experiment, such as a laptop, tablet and mobile.

In total, seven stimuli were analysed. While the participants were observing the stimuli, questions were asked about the sentiment in the review, the valence, the readability,

the recommendations that were made and the grammatical errors. Based on the feedback that was received during the pre-tests, multiple stimuli were optimized. Optimizations were applied in minimizing the differences between the stimuli, such as removing the image in the first-party reviews. The procedure was modified. To ensure the readability of the stimuli, it was mentioned that participants could zoom in on the review.

3.4. Procedure

The platform Qualtrics was used to properly design and execute the online experiment. For the analysis of the gathered data and to test the hypotheses, the statistical program SPSS was used. To transport all the data safely and conform with the informed consent, a file with all the data were directly converted to SPSS.

All the participants received a link to the online experiment, which could be completed via desktop, mobile and tablet. Before the participants were able to begin with the online experiment, they had to read and agree with the informed consent, in which the relevant information about the research process for the participant, the anonymity of the participants and contact information was described. The informed consent, which was translated to English, is visible in appendix D.

After agreeing with the informed consent, the participants had to answer whether they were familiar with JBL or Tweakers. After answering this, some basic information of the concerned organisation, which was JBL or Tweakers, was given. This information was related to the establishment of the organisation, the core activities and the mission of the organisation. These texts are available in appendix C. With this information, the participant could better imagine him- or herself in the described scenario. Subsequently, the participants filled in the scale about trust towards the review platform, which was applied to additional analysis.

Hereafter, participants read the scenario which was assigned to the stimuli. After reading the scenario and the reviews or testimonials, questions with regard to the dependent variables were asked. Next, questions were asked regarding the manipulation check, such as the valence and the type of OCR. The answers from these questions provided insight into whether the participants were consciously participating in the online experiment.

To gain more insight into the anonymous data of the participants and to develop potential follow-up studies from the results, three demographic questions were asked. These questions were focused on the age, gender and education level of the respondent. Finally, the participants were referred to the last page, in which they were thanked for their participation.

Also, on this page, it was emphasized that the scenarios are fictional and that it does not relate to the mentioned product and organisations in the online experiment. Also, contact information was given in case a participant had any questions. Since the respondents were from the Netherlands, the whole experiment was executed in Dutch. However, appendix A visualizes the measurements of the variables in English.

In order to analyse data, several methods were used. To analyse whether the independent variables had a significant impact on the combined dependent variables, a Wilks Lambda test was conducted. To determine the influence of independent variables per dependent variable, a MANOVA analysis was performed. Next, a multiple regression analysis was applied to measure the prediction effect of multiple variables in the online decision-making process on purchase intention. For analysing mediating and moderating relationships, the Hayes process Macro v4.0 was applied in SPSS. Lastly, a Tukey HSD analysis was applied to find out if there are significant differences between groups in the independent variables.

3.5. Measurement

For this study, a seven-point Likert-based answer option scale was used. In this scale, one stands for strongly disagree and seven for strongly agree. This scale was used to measure the following constructs: purchase intention, JBL product attitude, review credibility, trust in the review platform, brand attitude and review usefulness and the type of valence. Also, a multiple-choice answer scale was used once. This scale was used to measure the manipulation of the type of OCR. All the questions are visible in appendix A.

To measure product attitude adequately, it was intended to only use a combined 5-item scale of MacKenzie & Lutz (1989) and Singh & Cole (1993). For brand attitude, it was intended to apply a five-item scale of Spears & Singh (2004). To measure review usefulness, it was actually intended to select a four-item scale of Casaló et al. (2015). For measuring review credibility, it was intended to use a five-item scale of West in the online experiment. To measure purchase intention, it was intended to apply the five-item scale of Spears & Singh (2004). Lastly, for measuring the trustworthiness of the review platform properly, a four-item scale of Ohanian was selected (Reimer & Benkenstein, 2016).

To ensure the reliability during the online experiment, the consistency method was used for the questions. In other words, the questions in the online experiment were operationalized several times in similar means, as they were in the scale (Appendix A). Also, some questions were asked in reverse. After the execution of the online experiment, the data

of these questions were recoded before analysis. This method was in line with the scales that were used in the online experiment. The data of the respondents was generated via Qualtrics and was further analysed via SPSS. Besides the descriptive statistics, measurements for reliability, validity and significance, were used to analyse the results of the online experiment and to test the hypotheses. In order to analyse the coherence of the items with the scales, a factor analysis had been drawn up. To measure the reliability of the scales, after the data collection, the Cronbach's Alpha analysis was applied. By this technique, the internal consistency between the items in a scale was measured.

A factor analysis was developed to check the validity of the questions in the online experiment. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of this factor analysis gave a result of .861, which confirmed that the factors were approved for further analysis. As a result of the factor analysis, the rotated component matrix gave insight into the correlations between the factors and the measurement items. The results of the factor analysis, the reliability analysis and the Eigenvalues results are visible in table 2 and 3.

Table 2

Results of the items in the scales from the rotated component matrix in the factor analysis

Items	1	2	3	4	5	6
I consider the review platform as honest				.82		
I consider the review platform as trustworthy				.81		
I consider the review platform as unreliable				.69		
I consider the review platform as sincere				.71		
I consider the JBL Tune 225 TWS as valuable	.43	.65				
I consider the JBL Tune 225 TWS as enjoying		.71				
I consider the JBL Tune 225 TWS as bad	.43					
I consider the JBL Tune 225 TWS as useful		.73				
I consider the JBL Tune 225 TWS as beneficial		.61				
I consider the brand JBL as appealing		.60				
I consider the brand JBL as good		.64				
I consider the brand JBL as unpleasant					.84	
I consider the brand JBL as unfavourable					.86	
I consider the brand JBL as likeable		.56				
I would buy this product	.84					
I definitely do not intend to buy this product	.76					
I have a very high purchase interest in this product	.84					
I would definitely order this product	.86					
I would probably never buy this product	.82					
Using OCRs is useful for resolving doubts when buying this product						.50
Using OCRs, I can decide more quickly whether to buy this product			.72			
Using OCRs is useful for buying Bluetooth earphones			.63			
Using OCRs have made me only have more doubts about buying the product						.74
I consider the reviews as trustable			.78			
I consider the reviews as accurate			.73			
I consider the reviews as fair			.73			
The reviews tell not the whole story						.55
The reviews are unbiased			.46			

Table 3

Values of the reliability analysis per scale

	Purchase intention	JBL Product Attitude	Review credibility	Trust	Brand favourability	Review usefulness
Number of items	6	7	6	6	2	2
Eigenvalues	8.11	4.09	1.77	1.50	1.41	1.21
Explained Variance	29.0%	14.6%	6.3%	5.4%	65.0%	4.3%
Cronbach's Alpha	.91	.86	.70	.81	.85	.67

The factor analysis revealed that different items from the same scale did not respond well to each other. For example, this was applied to the scales of review usefulness and review credibility. Therefore, the items that originally belong to the scale of these variables had been combined. In addition, multiple items from the original belonging scale of product attitude and brand attitude had also been merged into JBL Product attitude. In both cases, items were involved that were requested in reverse. The consequences of the items and scales, as a result of the factor analysis, are mapped in detail below.

3.5.1. Purchase intention

As a result of the factor analysis, it was decided to add a one-item from the scale of MacKenzie & Lutz (1989) to the scale five-item of Spears & Singh (2004). This item was actually used to measure product attitude. An example of a statement that was used for this scale is “I would definitely buy this product”.

3.5.2. JBL product attitude

Based on the results of the factor analysis, it was decided to use a combined four items from the scale of MacKenzie & Lutz (1989) and Singh & Cole (1993) with three items from the scale of Spears & Singh (2004). As the item “I consider the JBL Tune 225 TWS as valuable” resulted in two scales, it was decided to add this item in JBL product attitude, since the value was the highest in this scale. Because of this combination of the items, the original variable of product attitude was renamed to JBL product attitude. An example of a statement of this scale is: “I consider the JBL Tune 225 TWS as beneficial”.

3.5.3. Review credibility

Based on the results of the factor analysis, it was decided to use four items from the scale of West (1994), combined with two items from the scale of Casaló et al. (2015). The items from the scale of Casaló et al. (2015) were actually intended for measuring review usefulness. An example of a statement of this scale is “I consider the reviews as trustable”.

3.5.4. Trust in the review platform

To properly measure the trustworthiness of the review platform, a four-item scale of Ohanian was used (Reimer & Benkenstein, 2016). Based on the results of the factor analysis, these items remained the same. An example of a statement that was used for this scale is “I consider the review organisation (JBL/Tweakers) as honest”.

3.5.5. Brand favourability

Based on the results of the factor analysis, it was decided to only use a two-item scale of Spears & Singh (2004). An example of a statement that was used for this scale is “I consider the brand JBL as unpleasant.”

3.5.6. Review usefulness

Based on the results of the factor analysis, it was decided to use a two-item scale of Casaló et al. (2015) was used in the online experiment. Also, a one-item scale of West (1994) which was originally was designed for review credibility, was used. An example of a statement that was used for this scale is “Using online customer reviews is useful for resolving doubts when buying this product”.

After the reliability analysis, it was found that the Cronbach’s Alpha was below the standard for this analysis was not reached, with a value of .55. Therefore, the option ‘Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted’ was applied. Based on this option, it was decided to delete the one-item scale of West (1994). The value of the Cronbach’s Alpha for review usefulness, without the item of West (1995), was sufficient for further analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics

The mean and the standard deviation of the dependent variables are visualized in table 4. This table shows that the means of purchase intention, JBL product attitude, brand favourability and review usefulness are the highest in the conditions with a positive valence. In addition, it can be noted that that the means of these variables were higher in conditions with a mixed valence compared to conditions with a negative valence. When analysing the means compared to the type of OCRs, it was observed that the means of the dependent variables were sometimes higher in third-party reviews and sometimes higher in first-party reviews.

When analysing standard deviation, it was observed that purchase intention was the highest in both conditions with a mixed valence and negative valence. In the analysis of the standard deviation, no direct differences could be identified between the types of OCRs and types of valences. It can be seen that the standard deviation in conditions with a mixed or negative valence was higher than conditions with a positive valence.

Table 4

Descriptive statistics of the variables

Type of Valence	Type of OCR	First-party		Third-party		Testimonial		Total	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Negative valence	Purchase intention	2.93	1.37	2.74	1.47	N/A	N/A	2.82	1.42
	JBL product attitude	3.71	1.20	4.00	0.82	N/A	N/A	3.87	1.01
	Review credibility	5.02	0.84	5.11	0.62	N/A	N/A	5.07	0.73
	Brand favourability	4.48	1.56	5.09	1.32	N/A	N/A	4.81	1.45
	Review usefulness	3.60	1.67	3.82	1.70	N/A	N/A	3.72	1.64
Mixed Valence	Purchase intention	4.06	1.42	3.94	1.41	N/A	N/A	4.00	1.41
	JBL product attitude	4.92	0.92	5.04	0.82	N/A	N/A	4.98	0.87
	Review credibility	4.73	1.00	4.85	0.95	N/A	N/A	4.79	0.97
	Brand favourability	5.32	1.11	4.94	1.41	N/A	N/A	5.13	1.27
	Review usefulness	4.15	1.65	3.80	1.40	N/A	N/A	3.98	1.54
Positive Valence	Purchase intention	4.15	1.18	4.76	0.78	4.41	0.75	4.43	1.12
	JBL product attitude	5.19	0.81	5.38	0.83	5.13	0.63	5.24	0.77
	Review credibility	4.87	0.91	5.15	0.88	4.52	1.08	4.86	0.97

	Brand favourability	5.71	0.84	5.68	0.81	5.43	0.85	5.61	0.83
	Review usefulness	5.09	1.12	5.47	0.98	4.63	0.97	5.08	1.07
Total	Purchase intention	3.75	1.42	3.78	1.56	4.41	0.75	3.85	1.46
	JBL product attitude	4.65	1.15	4.79	1.01	5.13	0.63	4.77	1.04
	Review credibility	4.87	0.92	5.04	0.83	4.52	1.08	4.90	0.91
	Brand favourability	5.21	1.27	5.22	1.25	5.43	0.85	5.24	1.22
	Review usefulness	4.31	1.60	4.34	1.59	4.63	0.97	4.36	1.53

4.2. Hypotheses testing

For the analysis of the main effects from the online experiment and to analyse the effect of each independent variable per dependent variable, a MANOVA (multivariate analysis of variance) analysis was executed. The effects on the combined dependent variables are visible in table 5. As the significant effects are mentioned different effects, an overview of all the results is visible in Appendix E. In this section, the significant effects are discussed in detail. In table 6, an overview of the outcomes of the hypothesis is visible.

Table 5

Wilks Lambda Multivariate test that visualizes the effects of the independent variables on the combined dependent variables

Effect	Wilks' Λ	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	p	η^2
Type of OCR	.95	1.12	10	408	.345	.03
Type of valence	.70	7.97	10	408	.000	.16
Type of OCR * Type of valence	.90	2.20	10	408	.017	.05

4.2.1. The effect of the type of OCR on the variables in the online decision-making process

From the MANOVA test, it was noted that the type of OCR did not have a significant effect on the combined dependent variables. Also, from the results of the MANOVA analysis, it was observed that the type of OCR did not have a significant effect on the dependent variables of JBL product attitude, brand favourability, review usefulness and review credibility. Based on these results, it was observed that the type of OCR did not have a significant impact on JBL product attitude, brand favourability, review usefulness and review credibility. Based on this, hypotheses 1A, 1B 1C and 1D are not supported.

4.2.2. *The effect of the type of valence on the variables in the online decision-making process*

A MANOVA test was conducted to adequately measure the effect of the type of valence on the variables of product attitude brand favourability, review usefulness and review credibility. With $F(10, 408) = 1.12, p < .001$, Wilks' $\Lambda = .95$ and partial $\eta^2 = .16$, it was found that the type of valence had a significant impact on the combined dependent variables.

From the MANOVA analysis, it was found that the type of valence had a significant effect on JBL product attitude with $F(2,208) = 23.82, p < .001$ and partial- $\eta^2 = .18$. Based on the descriptive statistics, it could be confirmed that with positive reviews ($M = 5.24, SD = 0.77$) and a mixed set or reviews ($M = 4.98, SD = 0.87$) were significantly higher than of negative reviews ($M = 3.87, SD = 1.01$ with $p < .001$). No significant difference was found between a set of positive reviews and a mixed set or reviews. Since it was noted that a reviews with a positive valence had a higher level of JBL product attitude compared to a mixed set of reviews, it could be concluded that the type of valence had a positive effect on JBL product attitude. However, no significant effect was found of the type of valence on brand favourability. Based on these results, hypothesis 2a can be supported and hypothesis 2b cannot be supported.

Hypothesis 3 expected that a set of positive reviews and a set of negative reviews were perceived as more useful compared to a mixed set of positive and negative reviews. With $F(2,208) = 10.31, p < .001$ and partial- $\eta^2 = .09$, a significant effect from the type of valence on review usefulness was observed. When the descriptive results were considered with this result, via the Tukey Post HSD, it could be confirmed that positive reviews ($M = 5.08, SD = 1.07$) were perceived as more useful than mixed reviews ($M = 3.90, SD = 1.54$), with $p < .001$.

Also, it could be concluded that positive reviews were perceived as more useful than mixed reviews negative reviews ($M = 3.72, SD = 1.64$), with $p < .001$. Therefore, it could be concluded that reviews with a positive valence had a higher level of review usefulness compared to a mixed set of reviews. However, no significant difference was observed between these valences was found. Based on these results, hypothesis 3 was partly supported.

Hypothesis 4 expected that a mixed set of positive and negative reviews were perceived as more credible than a set of positive reviews and a set of negative reviews. With $F(2,208) = 3.18, p = .044$ and partial- $\eta^2 = .03$, a significant effect of type of valence on review credibility was found. From the descriptive analysis, it could be noted that with a mean of $5.07 (SD = 0.73)$, a set of negative reviews had a higher value of review credibility, than a

mixed set of reviews, which had a mean of 4.79 ($SD = 0.97$), and a set of positive reviews, which had a mean of 4.86 ($SD = 0.97$). Therefore, it could be concluded that the review credibility in a set of mixed reviews was also lower than a set of positive reviews. However, no significant differences were found between the types of valences in the Tukey HSD post-hoc test. Based on these results, it was found that negative reviews have positive effect on review credibility. As it was found that the type of valence had a negative effect on review credibility, hypothesis 4 was undermined supported.

4.2.3. The interaction effect of the type of OCR and the type of valence on brand favourability

With $F(10, 408) = 1.12, p = .017, Wilks' \Lambda = .90$ and partial $\eta^2 = .05$, it was found that the interaction between the type of OCR and the type of valence had a significant impact on the combined dependent variables. To properly measure the effect of the interaction between the type of OCR and the type of valence on brand favourability, a MANOVA analysis was executed. From this analysis, it was observed that the interaction between the type of OCR and the type of valence had a significant impact on brand favourability, with $F(2,208) = 4.27, p = .015$ and partial- $\eta^2 = .04$. Because there was found a significant effect, a Tukey HSD test was conducted to analyse if there were significant differences between the types of OCR and types of valences.

From this analysis, it was observed that no significant difference was found between the groups in the type of OCR. Also, it was found that positive reviews scored significantly higher compared to negative and mixed reviews. This is visualized via the bar chart in figure 3. Based on these results, it could be noted that the interaction effect of the type of OCR and the type of valence partly had a positive effect on brand favourability and that for this interaction effect, positive testimonials have the most impact on brand favourability.

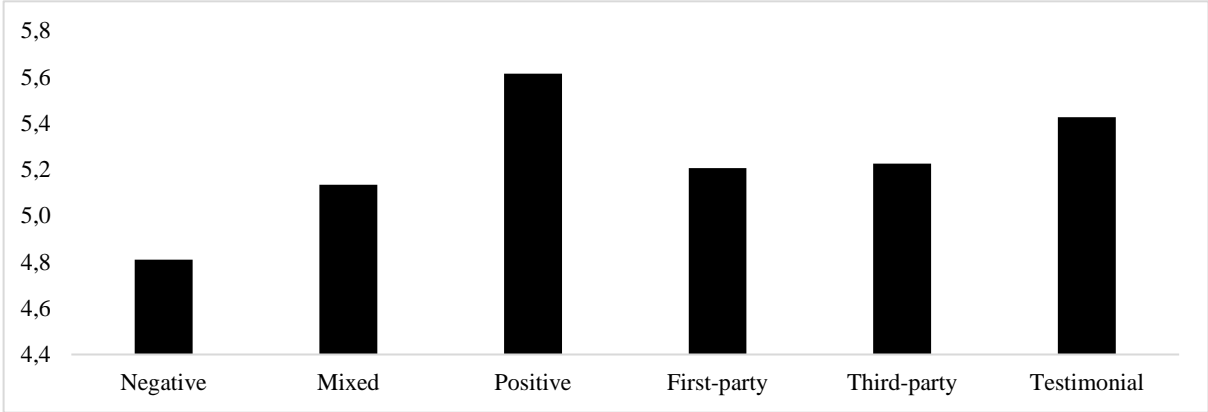


Figure 3.

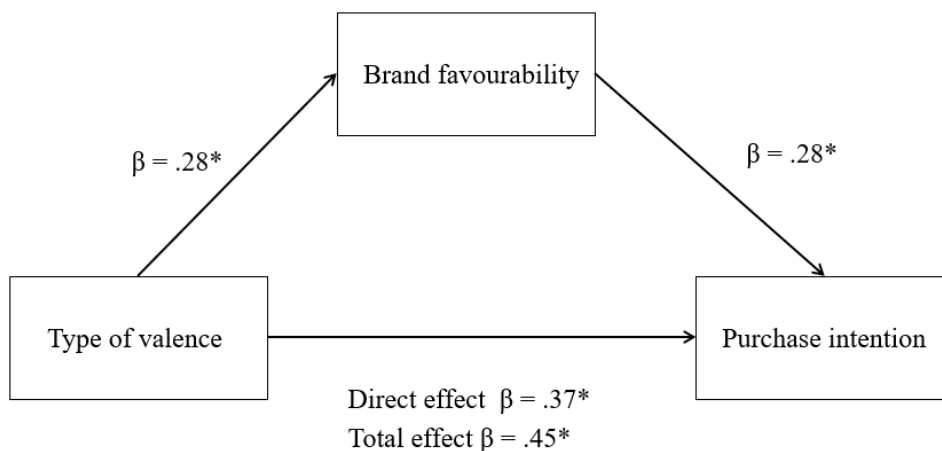
The different values of brand favourability with regard to the type of OCR and the type of valence

4.2.4. The effect of variables in the online decision-making process on purchase intention

To adequately measure the effect of the variables JBL product attitude, brand favourability, review usefulness and review credibility on purchase intention, a multiple linear regression was executed. Therefore, purchase intention was regressed as a dependent variable. The combined variables of JBL product attitude, brand favourability, review usefulness and review credibility had a significant effect on purchase intention ($F(2,217) = 55.88$, $R^2 = .51$ and $p < .001$). Also, it was found that JBL product attitude positively relates to purchase intention with $\beta = .56$, $t(4, 217) = 9.52$ and $p < .001$. Next, no significant relation between brand favourability and purchase intention was observed. Further, it was found that review usefulness had a significant, positive effect on purchase intention, with $\beta = .23$, $t(4, 217) = 4.24$ and $p < .001$. Lastly, no significant relation between review credibility and purchase intention was found. Based on these results, hypotheses 5A and 5C could be supported and hypotheses 5B and 5D could not be supported.

4.2.5. Mediating effects on purchase intention

From the Hayes process v4.0 analysis, it was noted that valence was a significant, positive predictor on brand favourability with $\beta = .28$, S.E. = .10, $t(1, 220) = 4.27$, and $p < .001$. Also, it was observed that the type of valence was a significant, positive predictor on purchase intention, with $\beta = .37$, S.E. = .11, $t(1, 220) = 6.12$ and $p < .001$. Lastly, it was observed that brand favourability was a positive predictor of purchase intention, with $\beta = .28$, S.E. = .11, $t(1, 220) = 4.63$ and $p < .001$. The total effect of this model was $\beta = .45$, S.E. = .11, $t(1, 220) = 7.37$ and $p < .001$. Based on these results, a partial mediation model was observed and hypothesis 6a could be supported. In figure 4, this relationship is visualized.



Standardized regression coefficients (β) are shown *: $p < .001$

Figure 4.
Mediating effect of brand favourability on purchase intention

Lastly, the mediation between the type of valence and purchase intention by review usefulness was investigated. From the first regression it was noted that the type of valence was a significant, positive predictor on review usefulness with $\beta = .38$, S.E. = .12, $t(1, 220) = 6.11$ and $p < .001$. Also, it was observed that the type of valence was a significant, positive predictor of purchase intention, with $\beta = .31$, S.E. = .11 $t(1, 220) = 5.11$ and $p < .001$. Lastly, it was observed that review usefulness was a positive predictor of purchase intention, with $\beta = .35$, S.E. = .06, $t(1, 220) = 5.71$ and $p < .001$. The total effect of this model was $\beta = .45$, S.E. = .11, $t(1, 220) = 7,37$ and $p < .001$. Based on these results, a partial mediation model was observed and hypothesis 6b could be supported. In figure 5, the mediation relationship is visualized.

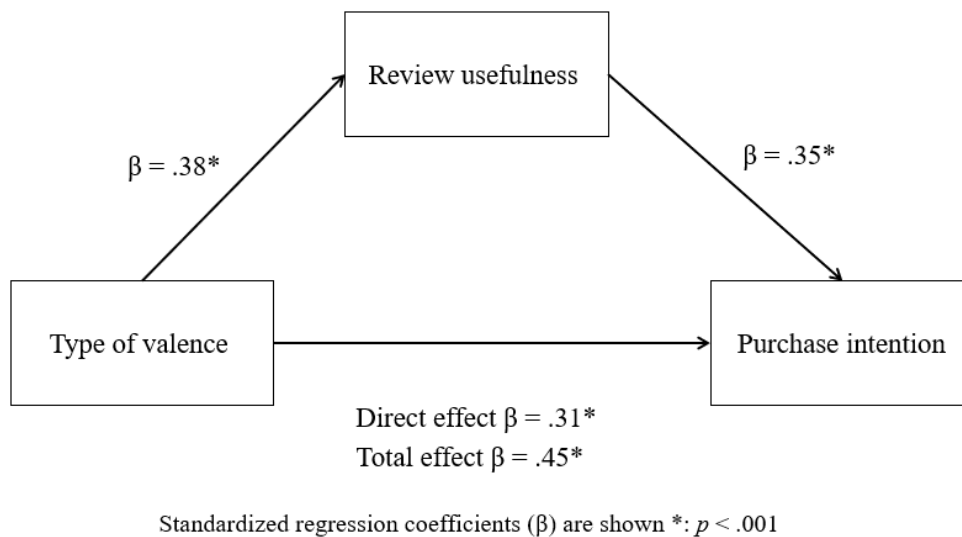


Figure 5.
Mediating effect of review usefulness on purchase intention

4.2.6. Moderating effect on purchase intention

To investigate if the effect of OCRs with positive valence on purchase intention and the interaction effect of review credibility, a MANOVA test was conducted to analyse if there was a significant effect of the type of valence on purchase intention. With $F(2,208) = 14.47$, $p < .001$ and $\text{partial-}\eta^2 = .12$, a significant effect of type of valence on purchase intention was observed. Since there was a significant effect, a post-hoc analysis was executed to investigate if positive OCRs significantly differed from negative and mixed OCRs. From the post-hoc Tukey HSD analysis, it was found that there was a significant difference between negative reviews ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.42$) and positive reviews ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.12$), with $p < .001$. However, no significant difference was noted between mixed reviews and positive reviews.

Since there was still a significant effect from the type of valence on purchase intention, a Hayes process v4.0 test was carried out to observe if review credibility had a significant impact on this relationship. The type of valence and review credibility were used as nominal variables in this analysis to distinguish between levels of review credibility and OCRs with a positive valence and a negative or mixed valence. Based on the median of review credibility, the limit value between a low and high level of this variable was set to 5.0.

From the output of this analysis, it was noted that valence did not have a significant impact on purchase intention. Also, it was observed that a high level of review credibility did

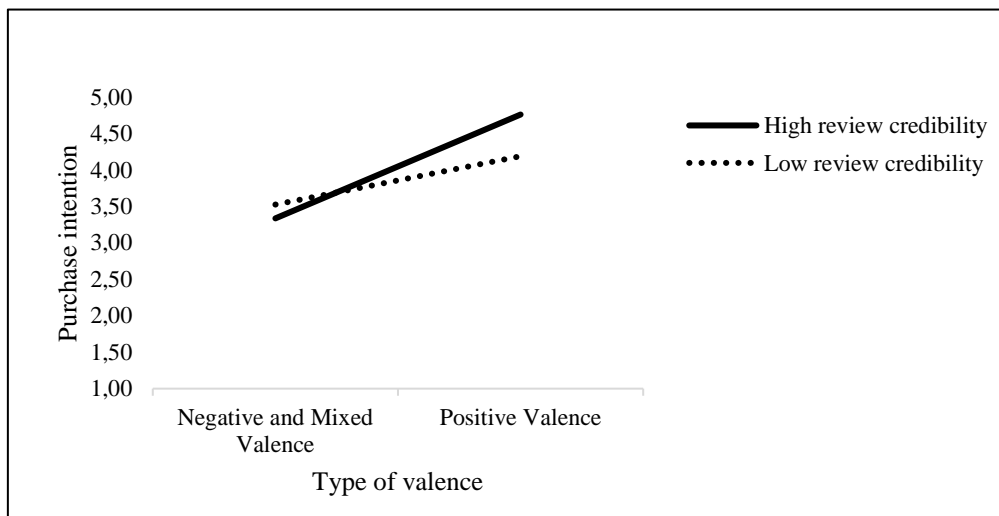


Figure 6.

The moderating effect of review credibility from OCRs with a positive valence on purchase intention not have a significant on purchase intention. However, with $b = .25$, $S.E. = .13$, $t(3, 218) = 2,14$ and $p = .043$, a significant interaction effect between OCRs with a positive valence and review credibility on purchase intention was observed. This means that review credibility moderated the positive effect of positive reviews on purchase intention. Therefore, enough evidence was found to support hypothesis 7. In figure 6, the interaction effect is visualized.

Table 6
Overview of the results of the tested hypotheses

No	Hypothesis	Outcome
H1	Reading third-party reviews lead to higher (A) product attitude, (B) brand favourability, (C) review usefulness and (D) review credibility compared to reading first-party reviews or testimonials.	Not supported
H2	Positive reviews lead to (A) higher product attitude and (B) higher brand favourability compared to mixed reviews and negative reviews.	Partly supported
H3	A set of positive reviews and a set of negative reviews are perceived as more useful compared to a mixed set of positive and negative reviews.	Partly supported
H4	A mixed set of positive and negative reviews are perceived as more credible than a set of positive reviews and a set of negative reviews.	Undermined supported
H5	Purchase intention is positively related by (A) product attitude, (B) brand favourability, (C) review usefulness and (D) review credibility.	Partly supported
H6	If there is a significant effect of the type of valence on purchase intention, this effect will be mediated by (A) brand favourability and (B) review usefulness.	Supported
H7	The effect of positive reviews on purchase intention will be stronger if the review credibility is high.	Supported

4.3. Additional analyses

In addition to the hypotheses testing, additional analyses were conducted. First, trust was used as a control variable. The limit value that determines whether someone had a low or high level of trust in the organisation was set at 5.0, as this was the median of the value with regard to trust. In total, 114 participants were categorized as having a level of low trust towards the review platform and 108 participants were categorized as having a high trust towards the review platform. Lastly, the participants' reading time with regard to the stimuli page was also analysed. This was investigated to find out if participants who read the stimuli page relatively quick, also had difficulties answering on which platform the OCRs were presented. For measuring the additional research topics, in both cases, a two-sample t-test was executed,

4.3.1. Trust as a control variable

In this study, trust was used as a control variable. A two-sample t-test was executed to find out if trust had a significant impact on review credibility. With $t(220) = -5.96$, $p < .001$, a significant effect of trust on review credibility was observed. To analyse the effect size of trust on review credibility, a linear regression analysis was executed. With $b = .37$, $t(1, 220) =$

5.96 and $p < .001$, a positive relation between trust and review credibility was observed. With the result of these statistics, evidence was found that trust had a significant, positive impact on review credibility and that trust towards the review platform was important in developing credibility towards a set of OCRs.

4.3.2. Participants and the reading time of the OCRs

In addition to the analysis of trust as a control variable, there was investigated how long the participants looked at the stimulus of the OCRs before answering the questions. This data can be seen in table 6. On average, the participants took 48.55 ($SD = 190.23$) seconds to read the OCRs from the stimuli, before answering the questions. From the data in table 7, it was observed that the third-party reviews were viewed longer on average compared to the first-party reviews. An important note to this observation is that one respondent, who viewed a mixed set of OCRs on the Tweakers page, took much longer to analyse the review compared to other participants. Because this respondent took 2775 seconds (more than 45 minutes), this stimulus also had the highest SD, which is 478.61.

It was found that 49 participants (22.1%) did not know on which platform the OCRs were placed. To find out if there was a significant difference in the duration time of reading the OCRs and knowing on which platform the OCRs were placed, a two-sample t-test was executed. From this test, no significant difference was observed between these groups.

Table 7

An overview of the length of reading the OCRs per condition

Type of OCR	Type of Valence	<i>N</i>	<i>Mdn</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First-party	Negative	29	17.36	31.25	33.71
First-party	Mixed	34	23.26	35.21	31.07
First-party	Positive	34	18.10	29.53	23.07
Third-party	Negative	31	18.27	31.55	26.15
Third-party	Mixed	34	17.71	115.07	478.61
Third-party	Positive	33	16.16	42.45	50.58
Testimonial	Positive	27	24.78	54.98	107.65

4.4. Empirical model

Based on the results of the online experiment and the outcome of the hypotheses, the conceptual model is optimized. This empirical model is visible in figure 7.

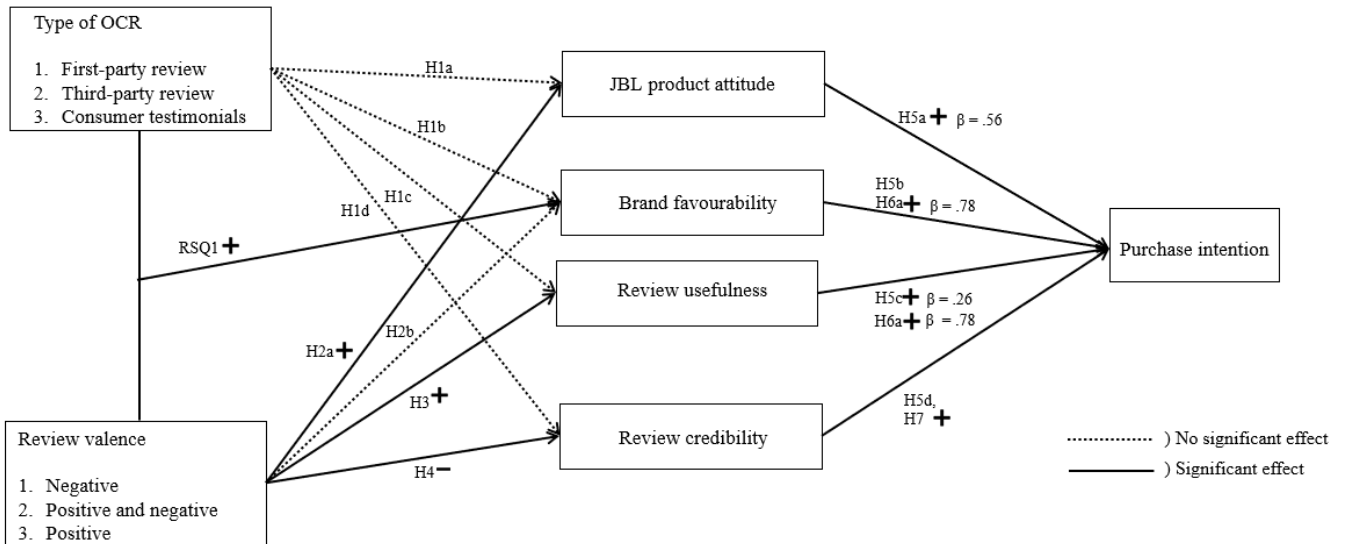


Figure 7.

Empirical model

5. Discussion

This research aimed to measure the effect of different types of OCR and different types of valences on multiple variables in the online decision-making process, which are JBL product attitude, brand favourability, review usefulness, review credibility and purchase intention. Multiple hypotheses are supported. However, several hypotheses are partly, undermined or even not supported. In this section, the results of this research are reflected in detail.

5.1. Discussion of the results

As it was expected that reading third-party reviews lead to a higher JBL product attitude and brand favourability, from the results, it was observed that the type of OCR did not have a significant effect on JBL product attitude and brand favourability. A possible reason for this is that with regard to the type of OCR, no account has been taken of the difference in presentation options of OCRs between first-party reviews and third-party reviews. In the online experiment, the differences in the visualization of the stimuli between first-party reviews and third-party reviews were minimized. As a result, the less limited role of the online retailer of first-party reviews compared to independent third-party reviews that use writing guidelines has not been taken into account. This could be a reason for similar results and therefore a non-significant effect of the type of OCR on JBL product attitude and brand favourability (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010).

Also, from the results, it was noted that the type of OCR did not have a significant impact on review usefulness. A possible explanation for this could lie in addition to the findings of Mudambi & Schuff (2010) and the minimal difference in the order of OCRs. This is because it has been found that the order of reviews has a determining effect on the information assessment and therefore also on the usefulness of a set of reviews (Coker, 2012). Therefore, the results in review usefulness are similar and no significant differences were found.

Another possible explanation why no significant difference between these types of reviews were found may lie in the finding that, compared to first-party and third-party reviews, also customer testimonials can be perceived as credible, as the reviews were perceived as trustworthy, attractive and from people who know what they are talking about. As a result, the reader could have thought that the content of the customer testimonials is written by someone who is experienced and can therefore also be seen as an expert with regard to the reviewed product (Seiler & Kucza, 2017).

The results of the online experiment showed that the type of valence had an important impact on JBL product attitude. Therefore, hypothesis 2a was supported. However, the same results did not support hypothesis 2b, which states that positive reviews lead to a higher brand favourability. Therefore, this result is not in line with findings from previous studies of Ballantine & Au Yeung (2015) and Forman et al. (2008).

A possible explanation for this could lie in the order direction of the reviews. Coker (2012) found that online hotel reviews that are ordered from negative above to positive led to are less positive evaluated by online consumers compared to reviews that are ordered from positive to negative. A reason for this is that the negative reviews are read first by the consumer. Since these were placed on top of the website, the negative reviews had a dominant position on the website. This led to a less positive evaluation of the brand, compared to reviews that are ordered from positive above to negative. In the online experiment of this study, the most positive review was not placed at the top in any of the conditions. As a result, the participant might have developed a less positive attitude than when the most positive OCR was at the top of the website page.

Hypothesis 3 was partly supported, as it was found that only a set of OCRs with a positive valence had a higher level of review usefulness compared to a mixed set of reviews. A possible reason why negative reviews do not lead to higher review usefulness compared to OCRs with a mixed valence of positive and negative reviews is that the negative reviews do not help to achieve the intended goal of the consumer, which is to buy the specific product. However, it is possible that the online consumer has received more clarity as a result of the reviews. In this way, the negative reviews could have contributed to the online decision-making process, albeit that the online consumer does not buy the product because of this. In addition to this possible explanation, the study of Jia & Liu (2018) suggests that the effect of review usefulness is largely limited when reviews are negative. However, review usefulness still does play a determinant role in buying behaviour.

Contrary to the statement of hypothesis 4, the results of the study showed that a set of positive reviews and a set with negative reviews were perceived as more credible than a mixed set of positive and negative reviews. A possible explanation may lie in the support of the reviews that have the same valence, reinforce each other in messaging the type of content of the experience good. This makes the set of reviews may be perceived as more credible. Qiu et al. (2012), observed that contradictory assessment of reviews in a concise, quantitative manner, for example by providing ratings and numbers, significantly reduces the credibility of

the review. This is because a number of conflicting reviews with quantitative elements negatively affects the product-related elements of the online review (Qiu et al., 2012).

The findings from the study of Kusumasondjaja et al (2012) show that negative reviews are perceived as more credible compared to positive reviews. An explanation for this is that negative information from a review has a stronger effect on consumers perception of review credibility compared to positive information. In addition, it is also found that the credibility of OCRs can be damaged if there are only positive reviews visible in a set of OCRs (Doh & Hwang, 2009).

Based on this discussion, it can be concluded that valence has an impact on the online decision-making process as it significantly affects JBL product attitude, review usefulness and review credibility. Although it plays an important role in these different variables, there is a clear difference in the type of valence and the outcome of one of the variables.

Research sub-question 1, which involved the interaction between the type of OCR and the type of valence, could be answered. The results of the online experiment showed that an interaction between type of valence and type of OCR had a significant effect on brand favourability. This is remarkable since brand favourability is the only variable where a significant interaction effect was found, whereas brand favourability is also the only variable on which the type of OCR and type of valence had no significant effect on.

A possible explanation for this result could be that in combination with the type of OCR, the type of valence has a reinforcing effect on brand favourability. This is in line with the finding that positive WOM will strengthen and negative WOM will weaken brand favourability (Park in Jia, 2016). An explanation why the combination of customer testimonials and a positive valence works best in reaching brand favourability is that in the online experiment, no customer testimonials with a mixed or negative valence were used. This resulted in a higher average for customer testimonials in terms of brand favourability, compared to first-party reviews and third-party reviews.

From the results of the online experiment, it is noticed that JBL product attitude and review usefulness have a significant and positive impact on purchase intention. Of these two variables, JBL product attitude has the strongest impact on purchase intention. Therefore, the hypotheses related to these variables are in line with prior research. However, no support has been found to state that brand favourability and review credibility have a significant impact on purchase intention. A possible argumentation for review credibility could be that this variable no longer forms an important element in the formation of an attitude or intention, especially when the valence is negative, as the information from an OCR is already perceived

as believed by the reader, whether the valence is positive, negative or mixed (Weitzl et al., 2016). In line with this finding, it is found that review credibility has an important impact in moderating the effect of only positive OCRs on purchase intention. Therefore, hypothesis 6 is supported.

Also, based on the results of this study, sufficient evidence was found to support the mediation hypotheses 6a and 6b, which stated that both brand favourability and review usefulness mediate the effect of the type of valence on purchase intention. As both variables are important elements in the online decision-making process and are predictors of purchase intention, both results are in line with prior research.

Lastly, based on the results from the additional analyses, it was found that trust has a positive effect on developing review credibility. A possible explanation for this is that the organisations of the review platforms were already known to the participants, since JBL and Tweakers also exist in real life. Because participants already had a certain perception of the company, this can influence the trust and thus the credibility in the organisation. Combined with the finding that trust is a success factor in perceiving review credibility (Ballantine and Au Yeung, 2015), this can lead to higher credibility of the reviews. Via hypothesis 7, it was found that the effect of positive reviews on purchase intention is stronger if the review credibility is high. This indicates that trust is an important phenomenon in the online decision-making process.

5.2. Future research directions

When analysing this study, it became clear that the online experiment has faced multiple limitations to some degree. In this section, these limitations will be appointed and discussed in detail. Also, partly based on these limitations, multiple recommendations for future research are appointed. Therefore, this section will also take a closer look at the solutions that can ensure that comparative studies are able to be performed under optimal conditions in the future.

First, the generalizability of the result from this online experiment can be questioned. Although there are several niche categories within non-perishable experience goods, this research focused on just one type of product. The scale of this study is too small to conclude the results of this study for other types of non-perishable experience goods categories. Therefore, it is advised to use larger sample sizes and multiple products from different non-perishable experience goods categories in future research. A more generalizable study should also take into account the sampling method, the methodology of the questions and the frames

in which the reviews are shown. As a result, the number of limitations in future research is minimized and more insight is gained into the effect of OCRs on the online decision-making process of non-perishable experience goods.

Another limitation is related to the sampling method of this study. Due to selecting the convenience sampling method and the snowball sampling method, the participants of the online experiment may not be representative of the population. A solution for solving this limitation in future research would be to select a true random sampling method. Based on demographic variables, it was known that the distribution of age is quite skewed. More than 97% of the participants were under the age of 42. The majority of the participants are therefore relatively young. The proportion of people older than 34 years is therefore relatively small. Moreover, this target group has also started buying products online more and more in recent years (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2018). Therefore, as it is interesting how this target group responds different towards sets of OCRs, it is recommended to apply a true random sampling method in the future.

The similar designs of the stimuli formed a limitation in measuring the impact of the type of OCR on the dependent variables. The flexibility in which online retailers can present their OCRs on their media platforms, such as the website, has not been taken into account during this research. Due to that the designs of the stimuli in first-party reviews were aligned with those of independent third-party reviews, where there are guidelines regarding the presentation of reviews, the results of first-party reviews may not reflect a realistic view of first-party reviews in reality. The influence of online retailers in presenting first-party reviews on their websites has not been taken into account in the online experiment. Applying this influence can lead to new, significant results that provide more insight into the effect of the type of OCR on the online decision-making process. Therefore, a suggestion for future research is to take into account the less limited presentation possibilities in first-party reviews, compared to third-party reviews.

Another suggestion regarding the improvement of the presentation of OCRs relates to the type of device. In this study, the reviews are tailored to desktop devices. However, it was also possible to participate the study via telephone or tablet. However, the stimuli are turned into the design of a desktop. A suggestion for research in the future is to tailor the stimuli to the device in which the respondent is participating, so that 'real-life' experiences while reading a set of OCRs can be guaranteed.

Next, a limitation that occurred during this study relates to the images that are shown in the stimuli. During the experiment, all respondents received equal instructions about being

able to read the OCRs easily. However, due to these extra actions, the reader may have read over this and have not been able to read the OCRs optimally, which means that the reader has not been able to get a complete picture of the reviews. Table 7, which describes the average reading time of the participants per condition, shows that OCRs of first-party reviews are read shorter on average than third-party reviews. In addition, it can also be noted that testimonials are on average read longer than third-party reviews. A possible solution to this is to set up another research platform in the future where it is easy to see the image enlarged or to develop stimuli that fit in the frame of Qualtrics. Another possibility is to show fewer reviews in a set in the future, which creates more space to optimally display stimuli to the reader.

Another limitation is that compared to the reviews, measuring the dependent variables via the testimonial stimuli is less rigid as the testimonials did not include star ratings or grades. Because no quantitative elements were developed for this stimulus, the reader had to process relatively more text to focus on the content. This compared to a participant who read a set of first-party reviews or third-party reviews, where the reader could also rely on quantitative elements, such as the star ratings and grades. A possible solution to this is to have both these types investigated in a separate experiment.

The fact that no insight was obtained into how the participants viewed the reviews, forms a limitation. For example, it may be the case that someone has only looked at the few positives with a set of positive reviews, or that someone has only looked at a set of negative reviews. In addition, only stars and ratings may have been looked at instead of the text. More insight can be obtained by researching this. A suggestion for future research is to implement eye-tracking in combination with reading the OCRs. This can be applied via the webcam of a laptop or a selfie camera of a phone or tablet.

Based on the descriptive statistics of the additional analyses, it is known that a lot of participants relatively quickly read the stimuli, in which it could be hard to know what the actual content type is. This resulted in 47 participants (22.1%) who did not remember on which platform the set of OCRs was posted or thought the sets of reviews were posted on the other review platform that they just saw. That is why it is important to make participants aware of the instructions to read reviews properly. An important innovation that could be implemented in this research field is the presentation of the sets of OCRs. In the future, for example, one could use a short instructional video in which the observation of the reviews and the process is discussed, to minimize the number of errors.

Another innovation in future research could be to combine the OCRs with interaction from other customers. This interaction manifests itself in the form of likes and reactions to a

review. As it has been found that positive reactions to OCRs have a greater impact on the product attitude, it is interesting how this relates to other variables that are important in the online consumer decision-making process, such as review credibility and brand favourability. Because there is no insight into which parts have been viewed the most by the participants when reading a set of OCRs, an interesting question arises as to which parts of an OCR influence different behavioural variables. A suggestion for this is the application of technology such as eye-tracking when reading sets of OCRs.

Lastly, a recommendation for future research is to apply semi-structured interviews with regard to this research topic. The effect of different types of valences in OCRs towards behavioural intentions has been confirmed by several studies, such as the study of Doh & Hwang (2009) and Mafael et al. (2016). However, these types of studies gain often quantitative data without deep, clarifying explanations. By conducting interviews with the participants, the route that participants follow during the online decision-making process can also be mapped. However, when applying qualitative research, it may be hard to measure the less conscious types of behaviours. Therefore, it will be necessary to take into account how questions regarding brand favourability, JBL product attitude, review usefulness, etc. are asked and measured.

5.3. Theoretical implication

The results of this study demonstrate that the type of OCRs does not have a significant impact on the online decision-making process. The results do not build on the findings of Mudambi & Schuff (2010). An important caveat here is that OCRs from first-party reviews and third-party reviews have minimal differences in the way the OCRs in both review platforms were designed. Therefore, recommendations for future research can be combined with new research related to this topic. For example, the descriptive statistics and differences of this research can be compared with studies that apply recommendations for future research.

Based on several articles and studies, it was expected that the type of valence has a significant impact on multiple behavioural variables, such as JBL product attitude (Weitzl et al., 2016), brand favourability (Ballantine & Au Yeung, 2015; Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017), review usefulness (Purnawirawan et al., 2012) and review credibility (Ballantine & Au Yeung; Qiu et al., 2012). This study shows that the type of valence has a significant impact on various behavioural variables, although some of the hypotheses are supported partly, undermined or not. As discussed in the section of future research directions, the way the reviews are presented to the participant may be a cause for these results and the time in which

the participants look at the OCRs. Therefore, to substantiate the findings, researchers need to develop varied sequences of valences in stimuli.

Researchers and academic institutions should use the results and feedback of this research to investigate how different types of OCRs can distinguish themselves more clearly with regard to different behavioural variables and experience goods. Investing in this research topic is of added value since this study showed that multiple behavioural variables, such as JBL Product attitude, brand favourability and review usefulness, are important indicators of purchase intention. It is interesting to elaborate on the results of this study and to target a study using other instruments, such as applying quantitative research eye-tracking and interviews.

Next to purchase intention, it is also interesting for this research area to examine the effects of the type of valence and the type of OCR on the long-term intentions of consumers. This is because it has been shown that some variables from the online decision-making process, such as brand favourability, have a positive effect on consumer loyalty (CW Lok et al., 2012).

5.4. Practical implications

In addition to the suggestions for future research purposes, based on the results and additional information, practical recommendations are developed. These practical recommendations are related to communication, online review policies and the e-commerce purposes of online retailers that sell non-perishable experience goods. This section takes a closer look to the proposed advice.

Although there are no significant differences found between the types of OCR, based on the descriptive results of this study, it is advised for online retailers to implement third-party reviews, if the selling company aims to maximize the input of positive reviews and to stimulate purchase intention. Online retailers can do this by creating profiles on third-party review platforms and referring to the relevant review platform in customer communications such as mail or folders. An important caveat is that this is only useful in combination with positive valence. With regard to this valence, the average descriptive value for purchase intention in third-party reviews is the highest of all.

This aim of the selling retailer may also be achieved if the online retailer automatically sorts the first-party reviews from most positive to most negative. This is a bit trickier when using customer testimonials, as there are no quantitative elements that could easily distinguish the ratings from each other. This makes that measuring from positive to negative may be a

little more difficult. However, by applying this advice, online consumers will see directly the most positive reviews. This has a positive influence on the usefulness of the review, which in itself is a positive predictor of purchase intention.

In addition to the use of the use of customer testimonials, it was observed that the interaction effect between the type of valence and the type of OCRs has a significant, positive effect on brand favourability. The combination of customer testimonials and positive testimonials works best for achieving brand favourability. Since brand favourability mediates in the effect of type of valence on purchase intention, it is also advised to use online retailers to publish positive testimonials.

If the goal of the online retailer is to create, prompt or maintain review credibility from its website visitors, it is advised to present some negative reviews among the positive reviews. The implementation of this can be applied to both first-party reviews and third-party reviews. This is because the analysis of the study showed that negative reviews have a positive impact on review credibility. In addition, the study by Doh & Hwang (2009). found that only positive reviews have a negative effect on review credibility.

Since the values for a set of first-party reviews and a set of third-party reviews with a mixed valence and with a negative valence are both close to each other and no significant differences were found, no adequate recommendations can be made for this valence. Additional research with regard to the type of OCRs in combination with a mixed valence could be of added value to make more concrete recommendations.

6. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to gain unambiguous insight into the effect of different sets of OCRs on the online-decision-making process concerning experience goods. Therefore, the following research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent do different sets of OCRs have an effect on the decision-making process of online consumers?

2. To what extent does the interaction between the types of OCRs and the types of valences influence the online decision-making process?

From the gathered results of this study, it can be concluded that the type of OCR does not have a significant impact on the decision-making process of online consumers. Also, it can be concluded that the type of valence plays an important role in the decision-making process of online consumers that purchase experience goods. However, the direction of the effect of the type of valence on the variables of the online decision-making process, differs per variable. Also, it can be concluded that the interaction effect between the type of OCR and the type of valence partly plays an important role in the online decision-making process as it has a positive effect on brand favourability.

Furthermore, it could be concluded that multiple behavioural variables in the online decision-making process are important in developing purchase intention, since JBL product attitude and review usefulness are both important predictors of this variable. Especially since it was found that brand favourability and review usefulness moderate the effect of valence on purchase intention and review credibility positively moderates the effect of positive OCRs on purchase intention.

These effects show that the different sets of OCRs have an important effect on the online decision-making process to some extent. Also, it can be concluded that the interaction between the type of OCR and type of valence is to a limited extent. Since the limited knowledge about the type of OCR regarding the online decision-making process and the results of this study, no unambiguous insight of the type of OCR is gained. Research into the effect of the type of OCR on different variables in the online decision-making process is advised. In the future, this can be expanded via different means.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Scales for the online experiment

Construct	Questions	Source
Trust in the review platform	I consider the review platform as..... honest trustworthy unreliable sincere	Reimer & Benkenstein, (2016)
Brand attitude	I consider the brand JBL as appealing Good Unpleasant Unfavourable Likable	Spears & Singh (2004)
Purchase intention	Based on the reviews I've read... I would buy this product I definitely do not intend to buy this product I have a very high purchase interest in this product I would definitely order this product I would probably never buy this product	Spears & Singh (2004)
Review usefulness	Using online customer reviews is useful for resolving doubts when buying this product I can decide more quickly whether to buy this product is useful for buying Bluetooth earphones have made me only have more doubts about buying the product	Casaló et al., (2010)
Review credibility	I consider the reviews as trustable I consider the reviews as accurate I consider the reviews as fair The reviews tell not the whole story The reviews are unbiased	West (1994)
Product Attitude	I consider the JBL Tune 225 TWS as: valuable	MacKenzie & Lutz (1989)

	enjoyable	and Singh &
	bad	Cole (1993)
	useful	
	beneficial	
Type of OCR	The reviews I just read were posted on: the website of JBL the website of Tweakers I don't know	
Valence	The writers of the reviews rated the Bluetooth earphone as positive rated the Bluetooth earphone as good describe the product as unfavourable recommend this product have the same view of the product agree with each other about the product	Reimer & Benkenstein (2016)
Gender	Man Woman Different I prefer not to say	
Age	What is your age?	
Education	What is the highest level of education you have completed? Elementary school VMBO (kader- of beroepsgericht) / MBO 1 / VBO / LBO VMBO (theoretisch of gemengd) / MAVO MBO 2, 3, 4 HAVO of VWO Propedeuse (HBO of universitair niveau) Bachelor (HBO of universitair niveau) Master/doctoraal/postdoctoraal (HBO of universitair niveau) Otherwise	

Appendix B: Stimuli

Reviews en Q&A



6

beoordelingen

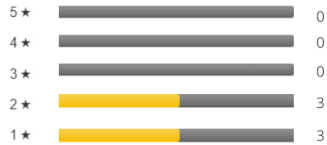
SCHRIJF REVIEW



Reviews

Overzicht van scores

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 1.5 | 6 beoordelingen



Michael De Boer ★★★★★

Nu een weekje in gebruik en eerlijk ze zien er niet meer smooth uit in het zwart. Ik ben iemand die niet alles gaat doorlezen maar meteen gaat uitproberen. Het connecten met m'n telefoon ging best traag. Wat ook niet echt fijn is dat je de oortjes ook los kan gebruiken, je hoeft ze dus niet allebei te dragen, maar dat gaat niet echt lekker tot nu toe. Met een klein rood en blauw detail heb je snel gezien waar ze terug moeten in de case.

Saskia Jansen ★★★★★

Ik gebruik de JBL earbuds nu een kleine week en ben zeer ontevreden! In de eerste plaats het niet echt heel gebruiksvriendelijk. Het is best ingewikkeld om het te koppelen met je smartphone. Ook valt het geluid en de bass me tegen omdat het geluid niet echt helder is. Vervelend dus! Muziek klinkt daardoor niet vol en mooi ondanks dat de oortjes wel relatief klein zijn. Niet compact ingericht, mooie vormgeving. Het handsfree bellen heeft nog veel ruimte voor verbetering. Het moet veilig gebruikt kunnen worden tijdens het autorijden. Kortom een product van JBL is slecht en daarom ook niet aan te raden!

Joshua De Groot ★★★★★

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Umberto Jones ★★★★★

Voor het eerst dat ik sinds lange tijd weer wireless oordopjes gebruik. Deze zitten in tegenstelling tot vele andere modellen gewoon erg slecht. Kwaliteit van het geluid ook niet goed. Zeer ongebruiksvriendelijk en daardoor erg lastig om te gebruiken. Opladen kan ook terwijl je 1 oortje in gebruik hebt, maar daardoor kan soms de ene al uitgaan terwijl je er twee in hebt. Op zoek naar paar goede oordopjes? Dan zou deze niet aanraden.

Carlo Geuskens ★★★★★

Vergeleken met goedkope bedrade oordopjes is het geluid een niet beter. Ook lijken ze slechter te passen, ze vullen mijn oren minder goed. Hierdoor ben je niet echt van de buitenwereld afgesloten, laat staan bij in-ears die echt in je oorbus gaan. Ze zitten niet comfortabel bij mij (volwassene).

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Gemiddelde scores van klanten

Algemeen ★★★★★ 1.6

Geluidskwaliteit ★★★★★ 1.5

Waarde van product ★★★★★ 1.7

Geluidskwaliteit ★★★★★ 2.0

Waarde van product ★★★★★ 1.0

Geluidskwaliteit ★★★★★ 2.0

Waarde van product ★★★★★ 2.0

Geluidskwaliteit ★★★★★ 2.0

Waarde van product ★★★★★ 2.0

Geluidskwaliteit ★★★★★ 1.0

Waarde van product ★★★★★ 2.0

Geluidskwaliteit ★★★★★ 1.0

Waarde van product ★★★★★ 2.0

Geluidskwaliteit ★★★★★ 1.0

Waarde van product ★★★★★ 1.0

Stimuli 1

Reviews en Q&A



6

beoordelingen

SCHRIJF REVIEW



Reviews

Overzicht van scores

★★★★☆ 3.1 | 6 beoordelingen



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Umberto Jones ★★★★★

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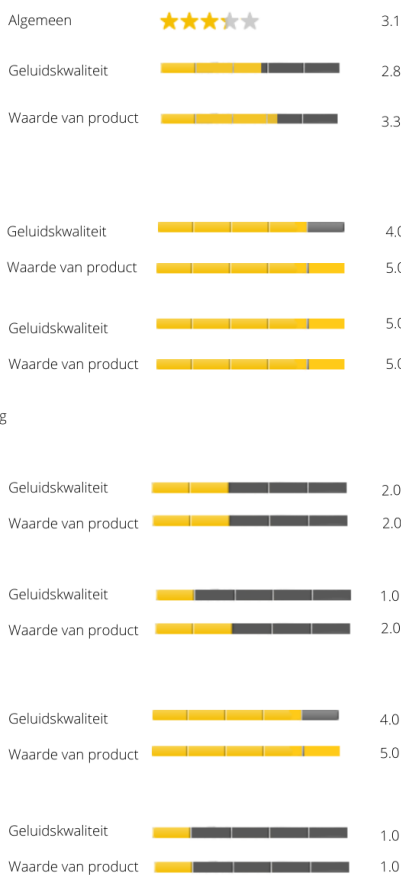
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Gemiddelde scores van klanten



Stimuli 2

Reviews en Q&A

6

★★★★★ beoordelingen

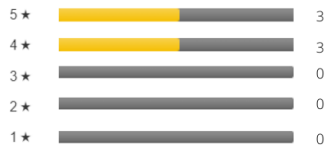
SCHRIJF REVIEW



Reviews

Overzicht van scores

★★★★★ 4,5 | 6 beoordelingen



Michael De Boer ★★★★★

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Gemiddelde scores van klanten

Algemeen ★★★★★ 4.5

Geluidskwaliteit 4.2

Waarde van product 4.8

Geluidskwaliteit 4.0

Waarde van product 5.0

Geluidskwaliteit 5.0

Waarde van product 5.0

Geluidskwaliteit 4.0

Waarde van product 5.0

Geluidskwaliteit 4.0

Waarde van product 5.0

Geluidskwaliteit 4.0

Waarde van product 5.0

Geluidskwaliteit 4.0

Waarde van product 4.0

Stimuli 3

tweakers Nieuws Reviews Pricewatch Vraag & Aanbod Forum Carrière Meer Inloggen Registreren

Prizen Kenmerken **Reviews** Alternatieven Vraag & Aanbod

Reviews door gebruikers [Schrijf review](#)

Scoreverdeling

★★★★★	0
★★★★☆	0
★★★☆☆	0
★★☆☆☆	3
★☆☆☆☆	3

Gemiddelde gebruikers score ★★☆☆☆

sorteer op: Reviewkwaliteit 1 review - Pagina 1 van 1

Heb jij ook een JBL TUNE 225TWS (Zwart)?
Deel je ervaringen en help andere tweakers! [Schrijf review](#)

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Pluspunten

- Leuke features, maar deze moeten nog wel uitgewerkt worden

Minpunten

- Slechte koppeling met telefoon
- Kwaliteit van het doosje val tegen
- Onevenredig opladen van oortjes

Eindoordeel



Saskia Jansen

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Pluspunten

- Strak design

Minpunten

- Slechte geluidskwaliteit
- Geluid tijdens het bellen
- Niet handig met autorijden

Eindoordeel



Joshua De Groot

Ik heb vorige maand deze oortjes aangeschaft en heb er spijt van! Het is een grote uitgave vergeleken met wat je ervoor terug krijgt! Ben er niet blij mee! De earbuds zitten en klinken niet fijn. Ook niet licht van gewicht, en zitten ook niet vast in het oor. Zeer ongemakkelijk in gebruik, case ook niet van ideaal formaat. Batterijduur is kort en het opladen gaat ook traag.

Pluspunten

- Garantie aanwezig

Minpunten

- Opladen van de oortjes
- Bluetooth koppeling
- Algemene kwaliteit

Eindoordeel



Umberto Jones

Voor het eerst dat ik sinds lange tijd weer wireless oordopjes gebruik. Deze zitten in tegenstelling tot vele andere modellen gewoon erg slecht. Kwaliteit van het geluid ook niet goed. Zeer ongebruiksvriendelijk en daardoor erg lastig om te gebruiken. Opladen kan ook terwijl je 1 oortje in gebruik hebt, maar daardoor kan soms de ene al uitgaan terwijl je er twee in hebt. Op zoek naar paar goede oordopjes? Dan zou deze niet aanraden.

Pluspunten

- Geen

Minpunten

- Geluidskwaliteit
- Niet gebruiksvriendelijk
- Prijs/kwaliteit

Eindoordeel



Carlo Geuskens

Vergeleken met goedkope bedrade oordopjes is het geluid een niet beter. Ook lijken ze slechter te passen, ze vullen mijn oren minder goed. Hierdoor ben je niet echt van de buitenwereld afgesloten, laat staan bij in-ears die echt in je oorbuis gaan. Ze zitten niet comfortabel bij mij (volwassene).

Pluspunten

- Geen pluspunten

Minpunten

- Oortjes zitten niet goed
- Veel ruis van buiten
- Geluidskwaliteit

Eindoordeel



Jeroen Dekker

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Pluspunten

- Pasformaat

Minpunten

- Slechte geluidskwaliteit
- Slechte verbinding met telefoon
- Slechte kwaliteit tijdens bellen

Eindoordeel



Reviews door gebruikers

Schrijf review

Scoreverdeling



Heb jij ook een JBL TUNE 225TWS (Zwart)?

Deel je ervaringen en help andere tweakers!

Schrijf review

sorteer op: Reviewkwaliteit

1 review - Pagina 1 van 1

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Pluspunten

- Strat design
- Verbinding met telefoon
- Handig doosje

Minpunten

- Tot nu toe niet gevonden

Eindoordeel



Saskia Jansen

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Pluspunten

- Gemakkelijk in gebruik
- Helder geluid
- Efficient design
- Ideaal voor bellen

Minpunten

- Geen minpunten

Eindoordeel



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Pluspunten

- Garantie aanwezig

Minpunten

- Opladen van de oortjes
- Bluetooth koppeling
- Algemene kwaliteit

Eindoordeel



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Pluspunten

- Geen

Minpunten

- Geluidskwaliteit
- Niet gebruiksvriendelijk
- Prijs/kwaliteit

Eindoordeel



Carlo Geuskens

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Pluspunten

- Oortjes zitten strak in m'n oren
- Goed geluid

Minpunten

- Geen

Eindoordeel



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Pluspunten

- Pasformaat

Minpunten

- Slechte geluidskwaliteit
- Slechte verbinding met telefoon
- Slechte kwaliteit tijdens bellen

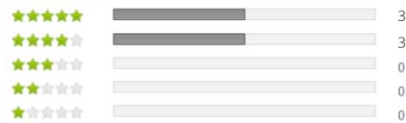
Eindoordeel



Reviews door gebruikers

Schrijf review

Scoreverdeling



Gemiddelde gebruikers score
★★★★★

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Deel je ervaringen en help andere tweakers!

Schrijf review

sorteer op: Reviewkwaliteit

1 review - Pagina 1 van 1

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Pluspunten

- Strat design
- Verbinding met telefoon
- Handig doosje

Minpunten

- Tot nu toe niet gevonden

Eindoordeel
★★★★★

Saskia Jansen

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Pluspunten

- Gemakkelijk in gebruik
- Helder geluid
- Efficient design
- Ideaal voor bellen

Minpunten

- Geen minpunten

Eindoordeel
★★★★★

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Pluspunten

- Prijs/kwaliteit verhouding
- Batterijd en opladen
- Goede geluidskwaliteit

Minpunten

- Geen

Eindoordeel
★★★★★

Umberto Jones

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Pluspunten

- Compact ontwerp
- Snel opladen
- Lange batterijduur
- Goed geluid

Minpunten

- Niet van toepassing

Eindoordeel
★★★★★

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Pluspunten

- Oortjes zitten strak in m'n oren
- Goed geluid

Minpunten

- Geen

Eindoordeel
★★★★★

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Pluspunten

- Strak design
- Naadloze koppeling

Minpunten

- Relatief groot

Eindoordeel
★★★★★

Ervaringen van klanten die jou voorgingen

6

beoordelingen



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Ik heb vorige maand deze oortjes aangeschaft en heb er geen spijt van! Het is even een uitgave, maar dan heb je zeker ook wat! Ben er super blij mee! Zeer fijn zittende, fijn klinkende earbuds. Licht van gewicht, en vast in het oor. Zeer gemakkelijk in gebruik, case van prima formaat. Batterijduur goed, opladen gaat rap.

Umberto Jones



Voor het eerst dat ik sinds lange tijd weer wireless oordopjes gebruik. Deze zitten in tegenstelling tot vele andere modellen gewoon erg goed. Kwaliteit van het geluid is prima. Zeer gebruiksvriendelijk en daardoor erg makkelijk om te gebruiken. Opladen kan ook terwijl je 1 oortje in gebruik hebt. Op zoek naar paar goede oordopjes? Dit is een aanrader!!

Jeroen Dekker



Vergeleken met goedkope bedrade oordopjes is het geluid een stuk beter. Ook lijken ze beter te passen, ze vullen mijn oren beter. Hierdoor ben je meer van de buitenwereld afgesloten, maar natuurlijk veel minder dan bij in-ears die echt in je oorbus gaan. Ze zitten echt comfortabel bij mij (volwassene).

Carlo Geuskens



Ik heb de oordopjes nu een week in gebruik en vindt ze erg fijn. Het geluid is goed, de verbinding snel gemaakt en telefoongesprekken zijn ook goed te voeren met deze oordopjes. Het enige 'nadeel' vind ik dat de oordopjes relatief groot zijn. Hierdoor vallen ze op en komen ze bijvoorbeeld tegen de rand van m'n jas aan. Wel echt een aanrader!

Stimuli 7

Appendix C: Information of the concerned organisations

JBL

JBL (in full James Bullough Lansing) is an American company that produces headphones and speakers. The company consists of 2 independent divisions. The first division is JBL Professional, which focuses on audio equipment for professionals such as companies, artists, DJs and cinema. The second division is JBL Consumers, which focuses on the production and sale of headphones and loudspeakers for individuals, such as the JBL Tune 225 TWS. JBL also sells this product through their own website, where customers can also express their experiences with this product via reviews.

Following is a scenario related to the JBL website and the JBL Tune 225 TWS. Look at the following pages for as long as you like before continuing to answer the questions.

Tweakers

Tweakers is an independent website with news and information about technological products such as hardware, software, games and the Internet. Tweakers (members of the site) can comment on messages on the site and give value ratings to these types of products, including the JBL Tune 225 TWS. This can provide more insight into user experiences, which can be of added value for people who want more information about a certain (technological) product. Tweakers has now become an authority in the field of electronics and technology with about 4 million visitors per month.

Following is a scenario regarding the Tweakers website and the JBL Tune 225 TWS. Look at the following pages for as long as you like before continuing to answer the questions.

Appendix D: Informed and active consent

Dear participant,

The choice to voluntarily participate in this study is greatly appreciated. In this research you will see a number of internet pages with information and experiences of others about a set of earplugs. Based on the information on these pages, you will be presented with a number of questions and statements.

There are no right or wrong answers for the questions and statements in this survey. In total, the participation takes about 5 to 7 minutes. By participating in this survey, you consent to the use of your answers. Your entered data will be treated confidentially and anonymously. Your data from this research into the guidelines of the GDPR will be anonymized for any publications.

You must be at least 18 years old to participate in this study. You can withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. You also have the right to submit a request to the research leader to change, delete or adjust your data. Please contact a.ghebremariam@student.utwente.nl for this. The instructions for a (2x) chance to win a €20 Bol.com gift card is on the last page!

Thank you in advance.

I agree to voluntarily participate in this survey and to the above conditions.

Appendix E Results of the MANOVA analysis per independent variable

Results of the MANOVA analysis that visualizes the effects of the independent variables per dependent variable

Effect	Dependent variable	<i>df</i> 1	<i>df</i> 2	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Type of OCR	Purchase intention	2	208	0.08	.921	.00
	JBL product attitude	2	208	0.33	.720	.00
	Review credibility	2	208	2.68	.071	.03
	Brand attitude	2	208	1.27	.284	.01
	Review usefulness	2	208	1.93	.148	.02
Type of valence	Purchase intention	2	208	14.47	.000	.12
	JBL product attitude	2	208	23.82	.000	.18
	Review credibility	2	208	3.18	.044	.03
	Brand attitude	2	208	2.31	.102	.02
	Review usefulness	2	208	10.31	.000	.09
Type of OCR * Type of valence	Purchase intention	2	208	1.30	.275	.01
	JBL product attitude	2	208	1.58	.208	.02
	Review credibility	2	208	0.10	.370	.01
	Brand attitude	2	208	4.27	.015	.04
	Review usefulness	2	208	1.18	.311	.01