



**UHASSELT**

KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION

## Faculty of Business Economics

Master of Management

### **Master's thesis**

***The effect of online reviews on the purchaseintention.***

#### **Ralf Heijthuijzen**

Thesis presented in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management, specialization International Marketing Strategy

#### **SUPERVISOR :**

Prof. dr. Alexandra STREUKENS



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## Preface

My study adventure started 8 years ago with my bachelor in 'Commercieel Management' in Sittard, the Netherlands. After this study I have worked for 1 year. My boss back then pushed me to start with a master's program given my age. Eventually I started at the 'Master of Management' at University Hasselt. With the master thesis, "The effect of online reviews on the purchase intention", there comes an end to this study period.

I would like to thank a few persons for their help and support during the writing of this master theses. First, I would like to thank Sandra Streukens for her guidance, help, support and especially the very quick responses to my questions. It has been a pleasant experience to have you as my supervisor.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my girlfriend, Sophie, my parents, Marcel and Gaby, and all my friends for their help and support during my study period.

Finally, I would also like to thank all the respondents who participated in the online experiment. Without the contribution of these people it wasn't possible to write this master's thesis.

## Abstract

With online reviews having an important place in consumer's decision journey, the effect of online review on the final purchase intention is an interesting aspect for marketers. Particularly because the number of consumers using online reviews continues grow. Therefore, this research studies the effect of online review characteristics on the purchase intention.

This study made a distinction in the online review characteristics and selected word count, review readability, sentimental content, reviewer experience, reviewer disclosure, and product rating. The difference in product type, experience vs. search good, is taking into account during the online experiment. For this online experiment, 12 manipulated reviews were used in a conjoint analysis (N=300). The reviews were manipulated on the characteristics (short vs. long word count, easy vs. hard readability, sentimental vs. non-sentimental content, experience vs. non-experience reviewer, reviewer disclosure vs. no disclosure, and moderate vs. extreme product rating).

The expected effect was that reviews which contain long word count, easy to read, which contain sentimental content, written by reviewer with experience, review contains reviewer disclosure and moderate product rating have a positive effect on the purchase intention. As expected these characteristics have indeed an effect on the purchase intention. In order of importance the characteristics consist of review readability, word count, sentimental content, product rating, reviewer experience, and reviewer disclosure. The marketing communication mix is renewed with online reviews as new aspect these study results are therefore socially relevant. Besides, these results are an addition to the existing literature.

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## 1. Introduction

More than 70% of consumers trust online reviews for making purchasing decisions (Nielsen, 2015). Consumers seek information about new products for various reasons. Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006) have identified eight different reasons for consumers to seek for online opinions before purchase a product: (1) to reduce risk, (2) because others do it, (3) to secure lower prices, (4) access easy information, (5) accidental/unplanned, (6) because it is cool, (7) stimulation by offline input such as TV, and (8) to get pre-purchase information. Online reviews have the potential to influence consumers' attitudes toward a brand and their purchase intention (Fagerstrøm, 2016).

Nowadays more and more people are using the internet to search and purchase products and services. The times of physical shopping, face-to-face recommendations and just walking in town are slowly fading. The search and purchase process is moving from a multi-channel to a omni-channel economy. Whereas in the multi-channel phase research shopping gained some attention, in the omni-channel phase showrooming is becoming an important issue. Shoppers now frequently search for information in the store and simultaneously search on their mobile device to get more information about offers and may find more attractive prices. The opposite of showrooming also occurs, which is now referred to as webrooming, where shoppers seek information online and buy offline (Verhoef, Neslin, & Vroomen, 2007). To make sure consumers make the right choice in their limited time, they gave consumers the possibility to share product evaluations with each other online (Avery, Resnich, & And Zeckhauser, 1999). This makes online reviews relevant in the digital as well as the non-digital area. Customer reviews are one of the most easily accessible and available information sources for potential buyers, who perceive them to be superior to traditional marketing channels (Godes, 2004).

Existing literature investigated several topics about online reviews, for example on online review helpfulness by looking at not just the quantitative factors (such as word count), but also qualitative aspects of reviewers (including reviewer experience, review readability) (Huang, Chen, Yen, & Tran, 2015). Another study explains the role of reviewer experience,



which heuristically influences consumers' trust of online reviews, thus making even too simplistic or extremely sentimental reviews helpful (Agnihotri, 2016). Limitations of the existing literature is that there is not much literature about which characteristics of an online review have an impact on the purchase intention.

Previous studies used a database gathered by Amazon. This study focusses on the different characteristics of an online review and effect of these characteristics on the purchase intention.

The expected contribution of this study is to have results and implications of different characteristics of an online review and the relationship of these characteristics relating to purchase intention. This study is relevant for company's marketing section, since they can set up guidelines for consumers regarding to online reviews. They will be able to anticipate on these study results.

This study will answer the following research question: "*Which review characteristics have an impact on purchase intention?*". Based on the theory that online reviews are seen as one of the most important services to send personal recommendations to others, online reviews could have a big impact on purchase intention. To answer the research question, the organization of this study is as follows: chapter 2 evaluates relevant literature, explains the review characteristics and displays the conceptual framework. The next chapter will explain the method used for this study. Chapter 4 will describe the data of the research. The fourth chapter presents and discusses the empirical results. Finally, the last chapter will cover the discussion, implications, limitations and conclusion.

## 2. Theoretical framework

This chapter evaluates the prior literature research that has been done. First, the role of online reviews will be explained. Next to that, the dependent variable purchase intention will be discussed. Then, the independent variables also known as the factors which influence the dependent variable will be explained. In the last paragraph of this chapter a conceptual framework of this research is provided.

### 2.1 The role of online product reviews

It's hard to ignore online product reviews when searching for a product. Online recommendations and online reviews form a part of the traditional word-of-mouth. The definition of word-of-mouth can be defined as exchanging information between a non-commercial person and the person who receives about e.g. a specific brand (Dichter, 1966). Online product reviews mean, consumers sharing their thoughts and experiences of a particular product they bought at a specific company (Kietzmann & Canhoto, 2013). Satisfied consumers *may* inform a part of the crowd about their positive experience with a company and/or product, but dissatisfied consumers *will* tell the whole crowd about the negative experience (Chatterjee, 2001). Another explanation of online product review is: "a positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet" (Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, Walsh, & Gre, 2004).

The digital revolution makes it common for consumers viewing online product reviews during the purchase process. Online reviews are product evaluations which are placed on a company's or external party website (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). With either a positive or negative impact on the decision making, online reviews can also play a role during the purchase process (Arndt & Advertising Research Foundation, 1967). Online product reviews are one of the most influential forms to give a recommendation. Recommendations are one of the most powerful selling tools for companies, since consumers trusted recommendations of others most when buying products (Nielsen, 2015). According to Nielsen (2015) 83% of

the worldwide internet consumers have faith in recommendations from known people in their circle. 66% of the worldwide internet consumers trust consumers' opinions posted online by other people they do not know. Because online reviews are one of the most important forms to give a recommendation this study will focus the characteristics which have either a positive or negative impact on the purchase intention.

## 2.2 Consumer buying decision process

Kotler & Armstrong (2010) introduced the buyer decision process. The decision-making process (Figure 1: decision-making process) consist of five stages: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behavior. In the third stage, the evaluation stage, the consumer will rank different brands and eventually shape purchase intentions (Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).



Figure 1: decision-making process

Consumers with a positive attitude seems to have a stronger purchase intention in comparison with consumers who had a negative attitude (Huang, Chen, Yen, & Tran, 2015). This means that positive review attitude will have a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention. This situation will be different when review attitude is negative, this will have a negative and insignificant effect on the purchase intention. If consumers have a positive attitude about the online review they are more likely to buy the product. Because review attitude appears in the second stage and the purchase intention at a stage after it, these two variables are in succession to each other and have a certain link.

The general definition of the term attitude means the complete judgment of persons (including oneself), objects and issues. The attitude of a persons is referring to how positive/negative or how favorable/unfavorable the view is relative to a certain event, object or product. These aforementioned attitude evaluations can vary in a lot of different ways in

addition to the different categories, such as emotions, beliefs or past experiences and behaviors (Petty & Wegener, 1998). The review attitude is important for consumers at first sight because they form their opinion based on the different review elements. With the several online review elements consumers are able to collect product information.

### 2.3 Characteristics of online product reviews

Online reviews have two goals. In the first place the online review gives product/service information and secondly online review plays the role of a recommendation.

Recommendations in general are one of the most important services that are able to send personalized content to users (Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012).

#### 2.3.1. Word Count

First, there is the word count of an online review. Word count can increase information given in an online review. It is easily to understand that more words used will lead to more information given, and this is especially beneficial to the consumer if the information can be obtained without additional search costs (Johnson & Payne, 1985). When consumers are willing to read and compare different reviews, the amount of words and information can matter.

To make sure that consumers buy the best product available for them they spend time and effort to evaluate alternatives. But then they aren't always confident enough or don't have the motivation to make the purchase and actually buy the product. If people have more information they feel more confident in making the actual decision. Tversky and Kahneman (1974) found that the more information gathered, the more confidence the decision maker is during stage 4 of the decision-making process.

More information given in a review can help the decision process by increasing the consumer's confidence in the decision. Longer reviews often include more product details, and more details about how and where the product is used in specific contexts. The quantity of words in a review can reduce product quality uncertainty and allow the consumer to

imagine themselves buying and using the product. Both cases facilitate the decision-making process.

Huang et al. (2015) examined the findings of Mudambi & Schuff (2010) and the results confirmed the significant relationship between word count and purchasing process. But Huang and colleagues examined that the average word count of 144 is a cut-off point after experimenting with different cut-offs. The relationship between word count and purchasing process remained significant for reviews with 144 or less words.

### 2.3.2 Review readability

Next the review readability. What types of reviews affect the decision-making process and what types of reviews are most helpful to the users? For example, a review that is easy to read will be more helpful than another that has spelling mistakes and is difficult to read. Consumers would consider a review helpful only if they have been cognitively able to comprehend the text appropriately. In other words, the easier the text is to process cognitively, the better its readability and, therefore, the chances that consumers consider it readable (Korfiatis, García-Bariocanal, & Sánchez-Alonso, 2012). Similarly, easily comprehensible text is likely to put less cognitive load on consumers' information processing capabilities, thereby raising the likelihood of a useful or helpful review (Cao, Duan, & Gan, 2011). Review readability follows a curvilinear relationship with purchase decision. Thus, if the text of the review is very easy to comprehend, then up to the ideal point, the review will be helpful to consumers. Nevertheless, beyond the ideal point, even easy-to-comprehend reviews may not be any more helpful for the consumer as there will be a drop-in utility. Utility may drop because of increasing instances of fake online reviews, which might make consumers suspicious about the genuineness of the review if it is too easy to comprehend (Agnihotri, 2016).

### 2.3.3 Sentimental content

Next to easy-to-comprehend-reviews there is type of content. In other words, is the review sentimental or not. Beyond the lower level spelling, there are stylistic choices that affect

decision making process. There are reviews that list “objective” information, listing the characteristics of the product, and giving an alternate product description that confirms/rejects the description given by the merchant. The other types of reviews are the reviews with “subjective”, sentimental information, in which the reviewers give a very personal description of the product and give information that typically does not appear in the official description of the product. Sentimental cues, such as “I enjoyed my stay in the hotel” or “worst shoes ever purchased” can be cognitively processed quickly by consumers, influencing their attitudes toward a product or service (Huang, Chen, Yen, & Tran, 2015). Anindya Ghose and Panagiotis G. Ipeirotis (2010) showed a negative and statistically significant relationship of the coefficient of the sentimental content. This suggests that reviews that have higher sentimental content scores are facilitating the decision-making process. This is likely to happen if such reviews are written in more authoritative and sophisticated language which enhances the credibility and informativeness of such reviews.

#### 2.3.4 Reviewer experience

Next to that we have reviewer experience. Reviewer characteristics – like reviewer experience – is shown at a review. Social psychology literature suggests that message source characteristics influence people’s attitudes and behavior (Godes, 2004). Extending this finding to marketing literature, scholars found that source characteristics influenced consumers’ attitudes toward products (Chu & Kim, 2011; Moore, 2015) their purchase propensities (De Langhe, 2015) and product sales (Ludwig, et al., 2013). Several reviewer characteristics have been shown to impact customer evaluative judgments regarding online reviews (Baek, Ahn, & Choi, 2012; Forman, Ghose, & Wiesenfeld, 2008). One such parameter is reviewers’ exposure to an online review community (i.e., reviewers’ experience in posting reviews). Consumers may trust those reviewers more who have given reviews in the past, compared to reviewers who are new to the online community (Zhu & Zhang, 2010). Whether they are positive or negative reviews, consumers might consider them more credible than those posted by novice reviewers. Finance literature indicates that financial analysts improve in their recommendation accuracy as their experience with a firm increases, driving investor

sentiments (Mikhail, Walther, & Willis, 1997; Ramnath, Rock, & Shane, 2008). Similarly, when a reviewer is more engaged in online communities, by virtue of experience, the reviewer would garner the trust of consumers (Ku, Wei, & Hsiao, 2012). Consumers are more likely to process non-content-related aspects of a review, such as reviewer characteristics, using heuristic cues (Park & Nicolau, 2015), which may then influence consumers' central processing of information related to text given in online reviews (Petty & Cacioppo, 2012). One such heuristic cue is provided by an online reviewer's past exposure to media, that is, the number of reviews posted by him or her in the past. Past experience of writing reviews makes him or her appear trustworthy (Ludwig, et al., 2013; Zhu, Yin, & He, 2014).

### 2.3.5 Product rating

Previous research on extreme and two-sided arguments raises theoretical questions on the relative diagnosticity or helpfulness of extreme versus moderate reviews. Numerical star ratings for online customer reviews typically range from one to five stars. A very low rating (one star) indicates an extremely negative view of the product, a very high rating (five stars) reflects an extremely positive view of the product, and a three-star rating reflects a moderate view. The star ratings are a reflection of attitude extremity, that is, the deviation from the midpoint of an attitude scale (Krosnick, Boninger, Chuang, Berent, & Camot, 1993). Past research has identified two explanations for a midpoint rating such as three stars out of five (Kaplan, 1972; Presser & Schuman, 1980). A three-star review could reflect a truly moderate review (indifference), or a series of positive and negative comments that cancel each other out (ambivalence). In either case, a centered rating has been shown to be a legitimate measure of a middle-ground attitude.

One issue with review extremity is how a review with an extreme rating of one or five compares to that of a review with a moderate rating of three effect the purchase decision. Previous research on two-sided arguments provides theoretical insights on the relative diagnosticity of moderate versus extreme reviews. There is solid evidence that two-sided messages in advertising can enhance source credibility in consumer communications

(Eisend, 2006; Hunt & Smith, 1987), and can enhance brand attitude (Eisend, 2006). This would imply that moderate reviews are more helpful than extreme reviews.

Yet, past research on reviews provides findings with conflicting implications for review diagnosticity and helpfulness. For reviews of movies with moderate star ratings, Schlosser (Schlosser, 2011) found that two-sided arguments were more credible and led to more positive attitudes about the movie, but in the case of movies with extreme ratings, two-sided arguments were less credible.

Other research on online reviews provides insights on the relationship between review diagnosticity and review extremity. Pavlou and Zhang (2006) found that the extreme ratings of eBay sellers were more influential than moderate ratings, and Forman et al. (2008) found that for books, moderate reviews were less helpful than extreme reviews. One possible explanatory factor is the consumer's initial attitude. For example, Crowley and Hoyer (1994) found that two-sided arguments are more persuasive than one-sided positive arguments when the initial attitude of the consumer is neutral or negative, but not in other situations. These mixed findings do not lead to a definitive expectation of whether extreme reviews or centered reviews are more affecting the purchase decision. This ambiguity may be partly explained by the observation that previous research on moderate versus extreme reviews failed to take product type into consideration. The relative value of centered versus extreme reviews may differ depending on whether the product is a search good or an experience good. Research in advertising has found that consumers are more skeptical of experience than search attribute claims, and more skeptical of subjective than objective claims (Ford, Smith, & Swasy, 1990).

#### 2.3.6 Reviewer disclosure

While people wish to affirm a clear, consistent, and distinctive sense of self, they also wish to feel connected to others in social groups and to receive identity-affirming (term self-verifying) feedback from others in the group (Jones & Pittman, 1982; Swann, "Self-



verification: Bringing social reality into harmony with the self", 1983; Brewer, 1991; Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Tyler, DeGoey, & Smith, 1966; Hornsey & Jetten, 2004). Self-verification and social identification are desirable because they fulfill self-enhancement needs, reduce uncertainty, and thus enable people to predict and control their world (Swann, 1983). The notion that identity shapes behavior has been affirmed in fields as diverse as psychology, economics, organizational behavior, marketing, and information systems (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994; Akerlof & Kranton, 2000; Ma & Agarwal, 2007). The need to communicate and verify their identity leads people to provide identity-descriptive information to others that conveys the way they view themselves, which may include the way they dress, act, and what possessions they purchase (e.g., car, house) (Swann, 1983; Akerlof & Kranton, 2000).

Among the behaviors specifically implicated in prior research on self-verification in online contexts are the use of persistent labeling, which refers to using a single, consistent way of identifying oneself (such as "real name"); and self-presentation, which refers to presenting oneself online in ways that help others identify one (such as posting geographic location). Research suggests that online disclosure of identity-descriptive information facilitates the formation of relationships, common bonds, and social attraction that electronic community members value (Ren, Kraut, & Kiesler, 2007).

There are practical reasons to expect that identity-descriptive information about the message source has influence in the online context in particular. On many websites, identity-descriptive information about the reviewer is at least as prominent as product information. For example, on websites such as Amazon information about the product reviewers is graphically depicted, highly salient, and sometimes more detailed and voluminous than information on the products they review. Visitors to the website can see reviewers badges (e.g. real name or top reviewer) as well as personal information about reviewers ranging from where they live to the names of their pets.

Self-disclosure provides information about the message source that may increase the perceived usefulness of the message (Hass, 1981). Prior research suggests that message recipients use social information about the source of a message as a heuristic device, drawing on their assessment of the information provider as a simple and convenient decision rule or cognitive shortcut to help them reach judgments and guide action (Chaiken, 1980). Thus, reviews that contain self-disclosure may be judged as more helpful because message source characteristics may be used to reach judgments about the product and guide behavior (Forman, Ghose, & Wiesenfeld, 2008).

#### 2.3.7 Product type

Consumers may read online reviews from different perspectives depending on the product type and previous study shows that product type are suitable to use as a moderator (Park, Lee, & Han, 2009; Hao, Ye, Li, & Cheng, 2010). These studies focus on search goods vs. experience goods as the product type. There is a fundamental distinction between qualities of a good that the consumer can determine by inspection prior to purchase the good -Search goods- and qualities that are not determined prior to purchase -Experience goods- (Nelson, 1974).

Huang and colleagues (2015) mentioned that consumers' decision-making process is different for search goods in comparison with experience goods. The study explained that consumers used more effort in stage 2 (Information Search) of the decision-making process when searching for an experience good. The consumer role is more passive when looking for a search good. To be more specific, Huang and colleagues found that consumers spent more time on one page (i.e. the page of a website) and scan fewer pages, when it comes to experience goods. For search goods it is the opposite, consumers spent less time one page and scan multiple pages instead. These findings imply that product type could play an interesting role in this research.

Park and Lee (2009) show the same results as Huang and his colleagues. According to these authors consumers want to minimize their feelings of uncertainty, especially for experience

goods, because consumers do not know the specific product characteristics. Product reviews can inform the consumer about these aspects, so he/she has a better understanding about the products characteristics. Mudambi (2010) supports these results. Mudambi mentioned that it is challenging and costly to estimate the product quality of experience goods prior the purchase. Product characteristics are subjective and difficult to compare. In this case people need to use their senses in order to evaluate product quality. It is less challenging to acquire information about the quality of a search good. Product characteristics are objective and easy to compare. In this case it is not necessary to use senses to assess product quality.

The word count of a review may not be equally important for all purchase situations. It will depend on product type. The product type is divided in search goods and experience goods. There is a fundamental distinction between qualities of a good that the consumer can determine by inspection prior to purchase the good -Search goods- and qualities that are not determined prior to purchase -Experience goods- (Nelson, 1974).

There may be an interaction between product type and product rating, as different products have differing information needs. On consumer ratings sites, experience goods often have many extreme ratings and few moderate ratings, which can be explained by the subjective nature of the dominant attributes of experience goods. Taste plays a large role in many experience goods, and consumers are often highly confident about their own tastes and subjective evaluations, and skeptical about the extreme views of others. Experience goods such as movies and music seem to attract reviews from consumers who either love them or hate them, with extremely positive reviews especially common (Anindya & Panagiotis, 2010). Consumers may discount extreme ratings if they seem to reflect a simple difference in taste. Evidence of high levels of cognitive processing typically does not accompany extreme attitudes on experience goods. Consumers are more open to moderate ratings of experience goods, as they could represent a more objective assessment.

For experience goods, this would imply that objective content is favored, and that moderate reviews would be likely to be more helpful than either extremely negative or extremely positive reviews in making a purchase decision. For example, a consumer who has an initial positive perception of an experience good (such as a music CD) may agree with an extremely positive review but is unlikely to find that an extreme review will help the purchase decision process. Similarly, an extremely negative review will conflict with the consumer's initial perception without adding value to the purchase decision process.

Reviews of search goods are more likely to address specific, tangible aspects of the product, and how the product performed in different situations. Consumers are in search of specific information regarding the functional attributes of the product. Since objective claims about tangible attributes are more easily substantiated, extreme claims for search goods can be perceived as credible, as shown in the advertising literature (Ford, Smith, & Swasy, 1990). Extreme claims for search goods can provide more information than extreme claims for experience goods and can show evidence of logical argument. It's likely that there is a difference in the diagnosticity and helpfulness of extreme reviews across search and experience goods (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010).

2.4 Conceptual model

Figure 2: Research model provides a schematic view of the conceptual model. This model is the same for both product types; experience good and search good.

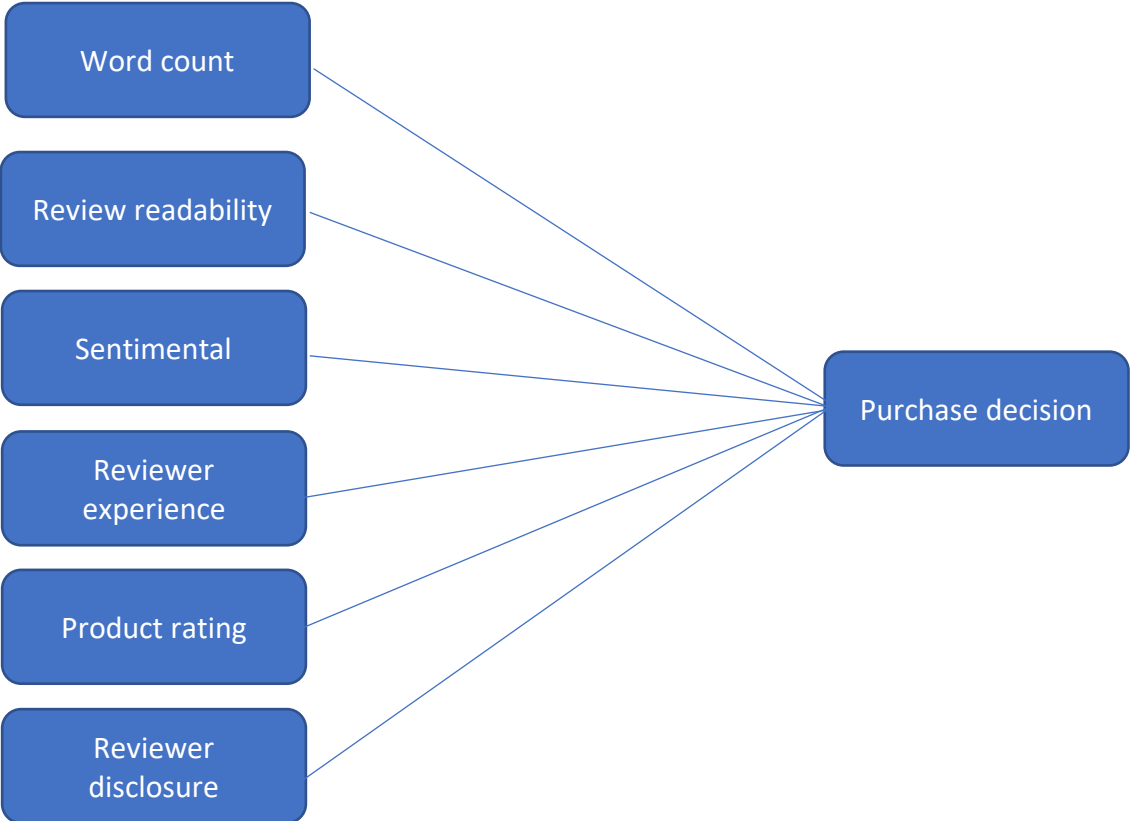


Figure 2: Research model

### 3. Methodology

In this chapter, the research design and method of this research will be discussed. First paragraph will explain the data analysis. Thereafter, the research design. Next to that the research material. The last paragraph is about the measurement and data analysis of the online experiment.

#### 3.1 Data analysis

To test the conceptual model, conjoint analysis is conducted. Conjoint analysis is an emerging dependence technique that bring new sophistication to the evaluation of objects, such as new products, services, or ideas. The most direct application is in new product or service development, allowing for the evaluation of complex products while maintaining a realistic decision context for the respondent. The market researcher is able to assess the importance of attributes as well as the levels of each attribute while consumers evaluate only a few product profiles, which are combinations of product levels. Assume a product concept has three attributes (price, quality, and color), each at three possible levels (e.g., red, yellow, and blue). Instead of having to evaluate all 27 (3x3x3) possible combinations, a subset (9 or more) can be evaluated for their attractiveness to consumers, and the researcher knows not only how important each attribute is but also the importance of each level (e.g., the attractiveness of red versus yellow versus blue). Moreover, when the consumer evaluations are completed, the results of conjoint analysis can also be used in product design simulators, which show customer acceptance for any number of product formulations and aid in the design of optimal product (Hair JR., Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2013).

Conjoint analysis is actually a family of techniques and methods specifically developed to understand individuals preferences that share a theoretical foundation based on the models of information integration and functional measurement. It is best suited for understanding consumers' reactions to and evaluations of predetermined attribute combinations that represents potential products or services.

In a conjoint analysis, respondents are always shown multiple profiles to allow for model estimates to be made for each respondent because each respondent provides multiple observations by evaluation multiple profiles. The researcher has a limited number of attributes that can be systematically varied in amount or character.

As mentioned in Table 1: orthogonal design there are different attributes that compose an online review. Orthogonal designs for factors with two levels can be fit using least squares. The orthogonality of the contrasts allows each coefficient to be estimated independently of the other variables in the model. An example of a orthogonal design is: an experiment has  $n$  runs where a run is used to measure a response. A run is a treatment = a combination of  $k$  levels. So, each run uses exactly one level from each of the  $k$  factors (Olive, 2007). In [Appendix 1: Overview orthogonal design](#) there is an overview of the profiles' of the orthogonal design.

In this case there are 6 attributes manipulated into 12 different profiles. Instead of 64 ( $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ ) possible combination, there is a total of 12 different profiles. This table forms the basis of the reviews. The attributes have been implemented in the reviews which are included in the research.

Profile	Word count	Readability	Sentimental	Experience	Rating	Disclosure
(1)	Short	Easy	Yes	Low	Centered	Yes
(2)	Long	Hard	Yes	High	Extreme	Yes
(3)	Long	Easy	Yes	High	Extreme	No
(4)	Long	Easy	No	High	Centered	Yes
(5)	Short	Hard	No	High	Extreme	Yes
(6)	Long	Easy	No	Low	Extreme	No
(7)	Long	Hard	No	Low	Centered	Yes
(8)	Short	Hard	Yes	High	Centered	No
(9)	Short	Easy	Yes	Low	Extreme	Yes
(10)	Long	Hard	Yes	Low	Centered	No
(11)	Short	Hard	No	Low	Extreme	No
(12)	Short	Easy	No	High	Centered	No

Table 1: orthogonal design

### 3.2 Design

In order to investigate the extent to which the impact of online reviews is for the final decision making of purchasing a product an online experiment will be performed based on Figure 2: Research model. Participants went through two conjoint exercises, one for a search good and one for an experience good. To investigate the research question, an experimental method using simulated web-based reviews that included realistic photographs and review comments. Both questions and reviews are written in English for the respondents. In [Appendix 2: Questionnaires](#) both questionnaires are attached.

Each exercise combined 6 review elements randomly, namely: word count, review readability, sentimental, reviewer experience, review rating, and reviewer disclosure. The short word count reviews contain 30 words and the long word count reviews contain 140 words. The reviews with an easy readability didn't contained any grammar and/or writing errors. The reviews with a hard readability contains grammar as well as writing mistakes. Sentimental reviews are based on personal experience and non-sentimental reviews are based on a description of the product/service. The experience reviewer is member since 2003 and have already wrote 44 reviews. The non-experience reviewer is member since June 2018 and have wrote his first review. Central rating is a rating of 2, 3, or 4 stars and an extreme rating is 1 or 5 stars. Reviews with no reviewer disclosure only shows a fake photo and a nickname of the review writer. Reviews with reviewer disclosure shows real photo, name, date of birth and place of residence. For an overview of the online review characteristics see Table 2: experimental design.

#### **Online review characteristics**

Word count	Long vs. Short
Review readability	Easy vs. Hard
Sentimental	Yes vs. No
Reviewer experience	High vs. Low
Review rating	Extreme vs. Centered
Reviewer disclosure	Yes vs. No

*Table 2: experimental design*



### 3.3 Research material

This research was conducted by an online survey, the program Qualtrics was used. In Qualtrics the questionnaire was created, and a link connected the respondents to the questionnaire. Each respondent had to answer 1 question per review. Next to that each respondent had to answer 1 question about his/her gender and 1 question related to his/her age. In the beginning of the survey the respondent is explained that the survey is made in context of a master thesis research and the study focus on online reviews. Each respondent had to read an online review and answer a relating question. Meaning that this research will use a within subject design. Argument to choose this design is the great statistical power because within subject design have smaller error variance (HanoverUniversity, 2017).

The design of the manipulated reviews is based on TripAdvisor. TripAdvisor is a well-known website for online reviews and using a design related to TripAdvisor makes it easier to empathize for the respondents. The manipulated reviews are based on an unknown camera and an unknown hotel, so the respondents can't have an attitude and/or opinion of the particular camera or hotel. Since the camera and hotel are unknown it is excluded that the effect of online reviews was influenced by earlier experiences with the good.

	Experience good			Search good		
	Sex		Age, in years	Sex		Age, in years
N	Male	Female	150	Male	Female	150
	70	80		76	74	
Mean	0,53		41,13	0,49		39,5
Range	1		40	1		40
Minimum	0		25	0		25
Maximum	1		65	1		65

Table 3: statistics sample size

The respondents have been approached by e-mail, Facebook and LinkedIn. The respondents were recruited between July 16, 2018 and August 5, 2018. As shown in Table 3: statistics sample size there are 300 respondents, subdivided in 150 respondents for the experience good survey and 150 respondents for the search good survey. The final sample size exists of

48,67% off all respondents is male and 51,33% is female. More in detail this means that the sample size exists of 46,67% male and 53,33% female respondents for the experience good survey and the search good experience contains 50,67% male and 49,33% female respondents. The age of the respondents varied from 25 to 65 years old with an average age of 41 years old (M = 40, 31, SD = 9,48). Going in to detail the average age for the experience good survey is 42 years old (M = 41,13, SD = 9,962) and the average age of the respondents of the search good survey is 40 years old (M = 39,5, SD = 8,912).

### 3.4 Measurement

All questions in the questionnaire are measured at interval level on a 10-point Likert scale. A preview of an online review including a question is shown at Figure 3: example online review. A 10-point Likert scale has several benefits with respect to a 7-point Likert scale or a 5-point Likert scale. A 10-point Likert scale offers more variance than a smaller Likert scale e.g. 7-point or 5-point, it offers higher degree of measurement precision, and it provides a better opportunity to detect changes and more power to explain a point of view (Dick Wittink & Leonard R. Bayer (1994)).

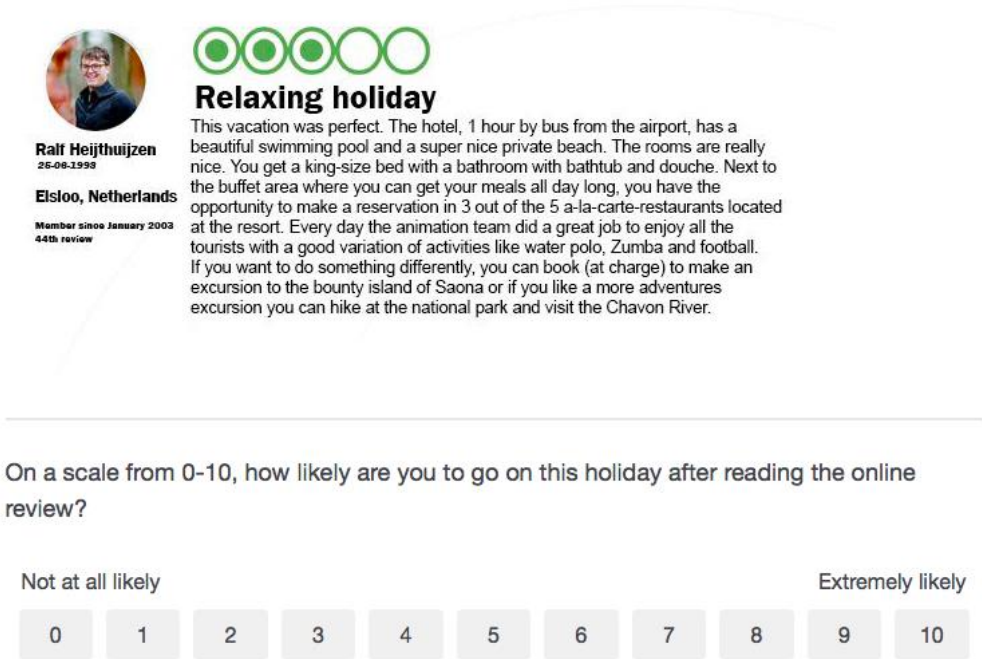


Figure 3: example online review

At the end of both surveys the respondent had to answer two last questions. As shown in Figure 4: sociodemographic questions the respondent had to answer one question about gender and one question about age. This is due to the fact that there is a possibility to get a sample of the sample size in terms of gender and age.

What is your gender?	<input type="radio"/> Male	<input type="radio"/> Female
What is your age	<input type="text"/>	years old

Figure 4: sociodemographic questions

## 4. Data and results

This chapter will describe the research data. The data method is described in the previous chapter. This section presents and discusses the empirical results of the path analysis. Main goal of this chapter is to clarify all data and to eventually answer to research question.

### 4.1 Descriptive statistics

The respondents have been approached by e-mail, Facebook and LinkedIn. The respondents were recruited between July 16, 2018 and August 5, 2018.

#### 4.1.1 Experience good

### Descriptive Statistics Online Review Holiday

	N Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic
Profile 1	150	6,79	,172	2,107
Profile 2	150	6,14	,164	2,013
Profile 3	150	7,31	,155	1,894
Profile 4	150	7,23	,132	1,620
Profile 5	150	1,97	,186	2,273
Profile 6	150	7,18	,153	1,868
Profile 7	150	6,94	,139	1,708
Profile 8	150	6,61	,115	1,413
Profile 9	150	6,79	,123	1,503
Profile 10	150	6,44	,148	1,815
Profile 11	150	2,82	,143	1,746
Profile 12	150	6,45	,118	1,445

Figure 5: descriptive statistics online review holiday

As shown in Figure 5: descriptive statistics online review holiday there are 150 respondents which answered the survey about the impact of the characteristics of an online review regarding to the decision-making process for a holiday. The mean statistics goes from 0 to 10 dues to the 10-Likert scale. The overall mean for this survey is 6,0558.

#### 4.1.2 Search good

### Descriptive Statistics Online Review Camera

	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Profile 1	150	4,82	,193	2,363
Profile 2	150	5,35	,207	2,533
Profile 3	150	6,25	,183	2,240
Profile 4	150	6,88	,137	1,683
Profile 5	150	4,35	,206	2,522
Profile 6	150	7,11	,153	1,877
Profile 7	150	5,85	,185	2,263
Profile 8	150	3,77	,192	2,353
Profile 9	150	4,73	,202	2,476
Profile 10	150	5,49	,164	2,013
Profile 11	150	4,41	,194	2,381
Profile 12	150	4,47	,198	2,424

Figure 6: descriptive statistics online review camera

As shown in Figure 6: descriptive statistics online review camera there are 150 respondents which answered the survey about the impact of the characteristics of an online review regarding to the decision-making process for a camera. This survey is the same as the previous one, so the mean statistic goes from 0 to 10. The overall mean for this survey is 5,29.

#### 4.1.3 Comparison

Both surveys have 150 respondents and a comparable research design. Still, there is a significant difference between the results for the experience and search good. The experience good has an overall mean of 6,0558 compared with a mean of 5,29 for the search good. This means that the average of the respondents of the experience good survey are more likely to buy the product after reading the review than the average of the respondents of the search good survey.

## 4.2 Main effects

Looking at Figure 7: importance summary below, the characteristics importance's are shown. These results are conducted via a conjoint analysis in SPSS and both surveys (experience and search good) are conducted into one data results. The characteristics importance's are relevant for this research since they show the results of the impact of a review characteristic related to the purchase decision (e.g. how important is it that a review has a word count from at least 140 words?). In contrast to a regular regression, it is not possible to make a pronouncement on the basis of t-values. Instead, the Confidence Interval per characteristic shows whether this characteristic performance differs significantly from 0.

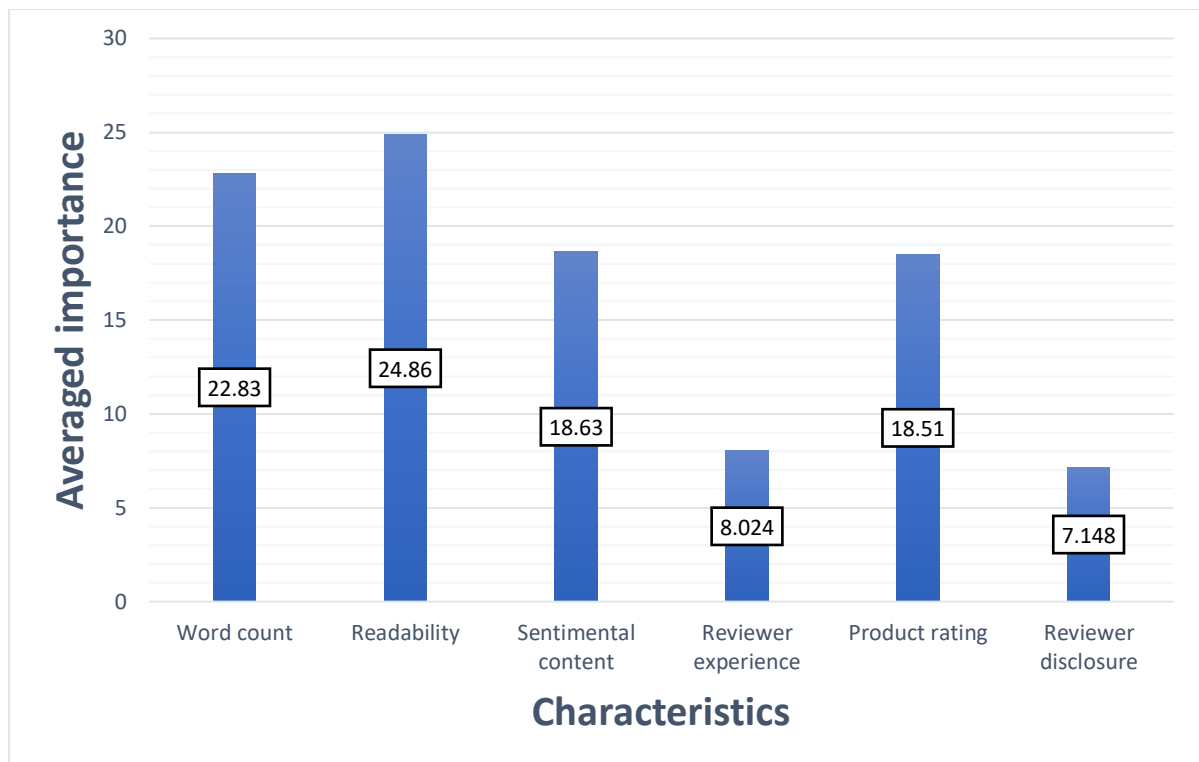


Figure 7: importance summary

The readability is seen as the most important characteristics of an online review influencing the purchase intention. The average importance percentage of review readability is 24.86%. Review readability is followed by the word count, with an average importance percentage of 22.83%. Next to that the sentimental content of an online review. This characteristic has an average importance percentage of 18.63%. Rating of the review has an average importance

percentage of 18.51%. Reviewer experience and reviewer disclosure are less important with, respectively, 8.024% and 7.148%.

Word count – Word count has an average importance of 22.83% (SE= 0.034 df= 149). The Confidence Interval range for Word Count performance is [16.032% ; 29.628%]. Therefore, the best estimate of the population proportion with 5% error is 22.83% ± 6.698%. Stated differently, if predicted that the proportion in the population who found that word count effects the purchase intention is between 16,032% and 29,628%, the predictions would be wrong for 5% of the samples that are drawn from the population.

Readability – Readability has an average importance of 24.86% (SE= 0.035 df= 149). The Confidence Interval range for Readability performance is [17.865% ; 31.855%]. Therefore, the best estimate of the population proportion with 5% error is 24.865% ± 6.995%. Stated differently, if predicted that the proportion in the population who found that review readability effects the purchase intention is between 17.865% and 31.855%, the predictions would be wrong for 5% of the samples that are drawn from the population.

Sentimental content – Sentimental content has an average importance of 18.630% (SE= 0.032 df= 149). The Confidence Interval range for Sentimental Content performance is [12.328% ; 24.932%]. Therefore, the best estimate of the population proportion with 5% error is 18.630% ± 6.302%. Stated differently, if predicted that the proportion in the population who found that the sentimental content effects the purchase intention is between 12.328% and 24.932%, the predictions would be wrong for 5% of the samples that are drawn from the population.

Reviewer Experience – Reviewer Experience has an average importance of 8.024% (SE= 0.022 df= 149). The Confidence Interval range for Reviewer Experience performance is [3.626% ; 12.422%]. Therefore, the best estimate of the population proportion with 5% error is 8.024% ± 4.398%. Stated differently, if predicted that the proportion in the population

who found that reviewer experience effects the purchase intention is between 3.626% and 12.422%, the predictions would be wrong for 5% of the samples that are drawn from the population.

Rating of the review – Rating of the review has an average importance of 18.510% (SE= 0.032 df= 149). The Confidence Interval range for Rating of the review performance is [12.224% ; 24.796%]. Therefore, the best estimate of the population proportion with 5% error is 18.510%  $\pm$  6.286%. Stated differently, if predicted that the proportion in the population who found that the rating of the review effects the purchase intention is between 12.224% and 24.796%, the predictions would be wrong for 5% of the samples that are drawn from the population.

Reviewer disclosure – Reviewer disclosure has an average importance of 7.148% (SE= 0.021 df= 149). The Confidence Interval range for Reviewer disclosure performance is [2.977% ; 11.319%]. Therefore, the best estimate of the population proportion with 5% error is 7.148%  $\pm$  4.171%. Stated differently, if predicted that the proportion in the population who found that reviewer disclosure effects the purchase intention is between 2.977% and 11.319%, the predictions would be wrong for 5% of the samples that are drawn from the population.





## 5. Discussion

In this chapter the research question will be answered and discussed. The analysis and findings of this thesis will be further presented. This study tried to clarify which review characteristics have an impact on the purchase intention. First the general discussion will be presented and then the limitations and future research will be described.

### 5.1 General discussion

Main goal of this research is to investigate the effect of an online review on the purchase intention and to find an answer on the main research question:

*“Which review characteristics have an impact on purchase intention?”.*

The characteristics were tested by a conjoint analysis. Meaning that a combination of the 6 characteristics were manipulated into 12 different online review profiles. The characteristics elements consist of long vs. short word count, hard vs. easy readability, yes vs. no sentimental tone, yes vs. no reviewer experience, extreme vs. centered review rating, and yes vs. no reviewer disclosure. In total there were 12 different characteristics distributed over 12 profiles.

The results of this current study showed that the review readability of an online review has the highest impact on the purchase intention. The effect of review readability has the strongest impact with a coefficient of 24,86. Meaning that a good and easy to read review is relevant and has a positive impact on the purchase intention. This is in line with the results which are examined by Agnihotri (2016).

Based on prior literature Huang et al. (2015) and Mudambi & Schuff (2010), word count of an online review could be assumed as important when evaluating an online review. Results in this study showed that the word count of an online review had a positive and significant effect on the purchase intention. This means that online reviews with 140 words or more have a positive effect on the purchase intention.

Sentimental content is the third important effect on the purchase intention. Huang et al. (2015) and Anindya & Panagiotis (2010) examined that online reviews with sentimental content have a higher effect on the purchase intention. This is due to the fact that people who write sentimental content, give information which is not in the product guide. This is in line with the results of this study. Sentimental content has a coefficient of 18.63.

The fourth important characteristic is product rating. Eisend (2006) found that reviews which contain moderate product rating are affecting the purchase intention more than reviews with an extreme product rating. Product rating has a positive coefficient of 18.61.

Reviewer experience has a positive coefficient of 8.024 and it has a positive effect on the purchase intention. Online reviews which are written by a reviewer which has experience is considered as more affective on the purchase intention than reviews written by a reviewer which has less experience (Zhu & Zhang, 2010). However, the relative effect of reviewer experience is low compared to the other characteristics.

The last characteristic affecting the purchase intention is reviewer disclosure. With a coefficient of 7.148 the effect is relatively low compared to the other characteristics. Swann (1983), and Akerlof & Kranton (2000) examined that online reviews which contain reviewer disclosure should have a higher effect on the purchase intention than reviews without reviewer disclosure. This is in line with the results of this study, but this study shows that the effect is relatively low.

## 5.2 Implications

Existing literature investigated several topics about online reviews, for example on online review helpfulness by looking at not just the quantitative factors (such as word count), but also qualitative aspects of reviewers (including reviewer experience, review readability) (Huang, Chen, Yen, & Tran, 2015). Another study explains the role of reviewer experience,

which heuristically influences consumers' trust of online reviews, thus making even too simplistic or extremely sentimental reviews helpful (Agnihotri, 2016). And this study adds new insights to the online review literature.

A notable aspect is that the effect of an online review on the purchase decision depends on the combination of several review characteristics. If companies want to convince potential customers to buy a product, they have to search for solutions shaping the best possible online reviews about the product. As seen in the study this depends mostly on the review readability, next to that the word count, third the sentimental content of the review, fourth the product rating, next to that the experience of the reviewer, and last the reviewer disclosure.

As a company you want to make sure that people write an online review after buying a product. To make sure customers are willing to do this, the company should ask every customer to write something on their site. Another option is to add an iPad in the store where every customer can write a review directly after purchasing it. If it is necessary that customers first try the product at home, the company should give the customer a voucher. Customers gets a discount voucher of 10% for the next time they buy a product. But to actually cash this in, customers need to write a decent online review.

As a company you want to make sure that people write online reviews in a way which have the highest possible impact on the purchase decision. To make sure of this the company should adjust the website. One way to do this is to give the potential reviewer an example of a review which contains the best combination of characteristics. Next to that the company should add a grammar and spelling checker to make sure that customers don't make a grammar and/or writing mistake. Next to that the company should add a tool which counts all the words. If someone wants to upload a review which contains for example 100 words, the reviewer should get a remark and make sure that he/she should add at least 40 words to make sure his/her review is more relevant for potential customers. A way to encourage the

writers to do this, is to give away a discount. Another option is to set up a competition where once a month the best review is chosen. The reviewer who wrote this receives a discount of 100€.

### 5.3 Limitations and future research

A few limitations should be considered when generalizing this research findings. First limitation is the aspect of an online survey. Due to the fact that the respondents of an online survey aren't in the same setting. It is impossible to exclude external influences of the respondent during the survey.

Second, to come as close as possible to reality, the online reviews are made in the exact same design and style of the existing review website Tripadvisor.com. It could be that the respondents in this study don't have a positive association with Tripadvisor.com, meaning they could be biased when reading an online review of Tripadvisor.com. Further research can choose to avoid coming as close as possible to reality and to manipulate the reviews in an unknown and natural design.

The fact that the manipulated online reviews was based on an anonymous hotel and camera is the third limitation. The choice for the manipulation could biased the respondents toward the online reviews. The same is the second limitation, respondents could have a negative association with an online review of a hotel and/or camera. Meaning they could be biased when reading an online review about a hotel and/or camera.

Fourth limitation is that consumers might not discount a review and consider it to be fake if it has been written by an experienced reviewer. Even though cognitive processing of a review may not encourage the perception that a review is helpful, the heuristics processing of information about an experienced reviewer may lessen the impact. Similarly, if an experienced reviewer writes an extremely sentimental review, consumers might still draw some utility from it and consider the review helpful.

Again, consumers might not interpret an extremely sentimental review as fake, as heuristically they may think experienced reviewers are less likely to give fake reviews, and that the sentiments are true reflections of their emotions.

The last implication is about the word count of an online review. The study resulted in an effect of word count of an online review on the purchase intention. However, it is possible that there is a cut-off point of the word count. Resulting in the fact that word count is important relating to the helpfulness but only to a certain extent. Once the word count exceeds a certain level, the review becomes too long and then the effect is no longer significant in predicting the purchase intention.

#### 5.4 General conclusion

This study shows the characteristics of an online review which effect the purchase decision. First, the study results confirmed that there is a positive and significant effect of several review characteristics on the purchase intention. In order of importance, the following characteristics consist of review readability, word count, sentimental content, product rating, reviewer experience, and reviewer disclosure.

When answering the research question: *“Which review characteristics have an impact on purchase intention?”*, the characteristics review readability, word count, sentimental content, product rating, reviewer experience and reviewer disclosure have an impact on the purchase intention.

If companies want to convince potential customers, it is important to give the potential customers a positive impression of the product or service by means of online reviews. The marketing section of the company should insert online reviews on the website and additionally on their social media profiles. The marketing section should adjust the settings to encourage customers to wright reviews with a long word count and integrate an automated grammar checker to make sure people don't upload any reviews which contain grammar and/or writing errors.

Next to that there should be a rating score (e.g. 1 to 5 stars rating score), to rate the product as part of the online review. Another possibility is that companies should ask background information about the reviewer, like a photo, real name, date of birth and place of residence.

To make sure customers write an online review after buying a product, the company should give away a reward. This reward could be a coupon with a 10% discount for the next time you buy a product. A different reward could be that people who write an online review get to chance to win 100€ through a give-away competition. This will encourage customers to write a decent online review for potential customers and will encourage them again and again after buying a product. By this way the customer will get experience in writing online reviews.

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## Appendix 1: Overview orthogonal design

### Card List

	Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer
1	1	Short	Easy	Yes	Low	Centered	Yes
2	2	Long	Hard	Yes	High	Extreme	Yes
3	3	Long	Easy	Yes	High	Extreme	No
4	4	Long	Easy	No	High	Centered	Yes
5	5	Short	Hard	No	High	Extreme	Yes
6	6	Long	Easy	No	Low	Extreme	No
7	7	Long	Hard	No	Low	Centered	Yes
8	8	Short	Hard	Yes	High	Centered	No
9	9	Short	Easy	Yes	Low	Extreme	Yes
10	10	Long	Hard	Yes	Low	Centered	No
11	11	Short	Hard	No	Low	Extreme	No
12	12	Short	Easy	No	High	Centered	No

### Profile Number 1

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
1	Short	Easy	Yes	Low	Centered	Yes

### Profile Number 2

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
2	Long	Hard	Yes	High	Extreme	Yes

### Profile Number 3

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
3	Long	Easy	Yes	High	Extreme	No

### Profile Number 4

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
4	Long	Easy	No	High	Centered	Yes

### Profile Number 5

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
5	Short	Hard	No	High	Extreme	Yes

### Profile Number 6

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
6	Long	Easy	No	Low	Extreme	No

### Profile Number 7

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
7	Long	Hard	No	Low	Centered	Yes

### Profile Number 8

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
8	Long	Hard	Yes	High	Centered	No

### Profile Number 9

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
9	Short	Easy	Yes	Low	Extreme	Yes

### Profile Number 10

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
10	Long	Hard	Yes	Low	Centered	No

### Profile Number 11

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
11	Short	Hard	No	Low	Extreme	No

### Profile Number 12

Card ID	Wordcount	Readability	Sentimental content	Experience reviewer	Rating of the review	Disclosure reviewer info
12	Long	Easy	No	High	Centered	No

## Appendix 2: Questionnaires

### Questionnaire Experience good

Dear respondent,

I would first like to thank you for taking a couple minutes of your time to help me graduate. My name is Ralf Heijthuijzen. I'm a master student in International Marketing Strategy at Hasselt University. For my master dissertation I'm doing research on the effect of online reviews towards the purchase intention.

Altogether you will see different online reviews. After every online review one question will follow. Try to replace yourself in the following situation: you are looking for a vacation and during the search you read several online reviews. Do not think too long about the answer. It will be handled reliably with your data. The questionnaire will take about 5-7 minutes of your time.

For questions or comments, please contact me.

Many thanks in advance.

Kind regards,

Ralf Heijthuijzen  
Master of Management  
ralf.heijthuijzen@student.uhasselt.be





**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-06-1993

**Elsloo, Netherlands**

Member since June 2018  
First review



## Relaxing holiday

This vacation was perfect. At the hotel, 1 hour from the airport, welcomes us with a nice cocktail. We booked a standard room, which has a king-size bed with balcony, and bathroom with bathtub and shower. We have eaten in the a-la-cart-restaurants and the buffet area. The animation team entertained us at the swimming pool and private beach. If you like something else just go on a excursion to Saona or the jungle.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to go on this holiday after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-06-1993

**Elsloo, Netherlands**

Member since January 2003  
44th review



## Best holiday ever

This vacation was perfect. The hotel 1 hour from the airport has a beautiful swimming pool and private beach. The nice rooms have a kingsize bed with bath and douche. You can choose between the buffet and one of the a la carte restaurants. During the day the animation team entertains you with several activities. If you like something else just do an excursion to Saona or the Jungle.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to go on this holiday after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Wanderlust88**

Member since January 2003  
44th review



## Best holiday ever

This vacation was perfect. During the 1 hour bus drive from the airport to the hotel we get our first impression of the country. Once we arrived at the hotel the staff welcomes us with a nice cocktail. We booked a standard room which has a king-size bed with balcony, the bathroom you can enjoy a nice shower or you take a relaxing bath. During the day we enjoyed the sun at the beautiful pool, but you can choose to enjoy the private beach. The resort gives you the opportunity to go to the buffet area or maybe you choose for one of the 5 a-la-cart-restaurants. If you want to do something differently, you can book (at charge) an excursion to the bounty island of Saona or if you like a more adventures excursion you can hike at the national park and visit the Chavon River.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to go on this holiday after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-08-1993

**Elsloo, Netherlands**

Member since January 2003  
44th review



## Relaxing holiday

This vacation was perfect. The hotel, 1 hour by bus from the airport, has a beautiful swimming pool and a super nice private beach. The rooms are really nice. You get a king-size bed with a bathroom with bathtub and douche. Next to the buffet area where you can get your meals all day long, you have the opportunity to make a reservation in 3 out of the 5 a-la-carte-restaurants located at the resort. Every day the animation team did a great job to enjoy all the tourists with a good variation of activities like water polo, Zumba and football. If you want to do something differently, you can book (at charge) to make an excursion to the bounty island of Saona or if you like a more adventures excursion you can hike at the national park and visit the Chavon River.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to go on this holiday after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-08-1993

**Elsloo, Netherlands**

Member since January 2003  
44th review



## Relaxing holiday

This vacation was not what we expected. The hotel is 1 hour from the airport so we had to take to bus. The old rooms don'tonly have a douche. The buffet area is huge and noisy. The animation during the day is mainly for the teenagers and they make a lot of noise so you can't read a book or enjoy the silence.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to go on this holiday after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Wanderlust88**

Member since June 2018  
First review



## Relaxing holiday

This vacation was perfect. The hotel, 1 hour by bus from the airport, has a beautiful swimming pool and a super nice private beach. The rooms are really nice. You get a king-size bed with a bathroom with bathtub and douche. Next to the buffet area where you can get your meals all day long, you have the opportunity to make a reservation in 3 out of the 5 a-la-carte-restaurants located at the resort. Every day the animation team did a great job to enjoy all the tourists with a good variation of activities like water polo, Zumba and football. If you want to do something differently, you can book (at charge) to make an excursion to the bounty island of Saona or if you like a more adventures excursion you can hike at the national park and visit the Chavon River.

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**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-08-1993

**Elsloo, Netherlands**

Member since June 2018  
First review



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- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Wanderlust88**

Member since January 2005  
44th review



## Relaxing holiday

This vacation was perfect. The hotel, 1 hour from the airport, welcomes us with a nice cocktail. We booked a standard room, which has a kings-size bed with balcony and bathroom with bath and shower. We have eaten in the a la cart restaurants and the buffet area. The animation team entertained us at the swimming pool and private beach. If you like something else just do an excursion to Saone or the Jungle.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to go on this holiday after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
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- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
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- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)





**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-08-1993

**Elsloo, Netherlands**

Member since June 2018  
First review



## Relaxing holiday

This vacation was perfect. At the hotel, 1 hour from the airport, they welcome you with a nice cocktail. We booked a standard room, which has a king-size bed with balcony, and bathroom with bathtub and shower. We have eaten in the a-la-cart-restaurants and the buffet area. The animation team entertained us at the swimming pool and private beach. If you like something else just go on an excursion to Saone or the Jungle.

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- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Wanderlust88**

Member since June 2018  
First review



## Relaxing holiday

This vacation was perfect. During the 1 hour bus drive from the airport to the hotel we get our first impression of the country. Once we arrive at the hotel the staff welcome us with a nice cocktail. We booked a standard room which has a kingsize bed with balcony the bathroom you can enjoy a nice shower or you take a relaxing bath. During the day we enjoyed the sun in the beautiful pool but you can choose to enjoy the private beach. The resort gives you the opportunity to go to the buffet area or maybe you choose for one of the 5 local restaurants. When you want to do something different you can book (at charge) an excursion to the beautiful island of Saona or if you like a more adventurous excursion you can hike at the national park and visit the Chavon River.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to go on this holiday after reading the online review?

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- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Wanderlust88**

Member since June 2018  
First review



## Holiday

This vacation was not what we expected. The hotel is 1 hour from the airport so we had to take a bus. The old rooms don't even have a douche. The buffet area is huge and noisy. The animation during the day is mainly for the teenagers and they make a lot of noise so you can't read a book or enjoy the silence.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to go on this holiday after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Wanderlust88**

Member since June 2005  
44th review



## Relaxing Holiday

This vacation was perfect. The hotel, 1 hour from the airport, has a beautiful swimming pool and private beach. The nice rooms have a king-size bed with bathtub and douche. You can choose between the buffet and one of the a-la-cart-restaurants. During the day the animation team entertains you with several activities. If you like something else just go on an excursion to Saona or the jungle.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to go on this holiday after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

What is your gender?

Male

Female

What is your age

years old



### **Questionnaire search good**

Dear respondent,

I would first like to thank you for taking a couple minutes of your time to help me graduate. My name is Ralf Heijthuijzen. I'm a master student in International Marketing Strategy at Hasselt University. For my master dissertation I'm doing research on the effect of online reviews towards the purchase intention.

Altogether you will see different online reviews. After every online review one question will follow. Try to replace yourself in the following situation: you are looking for a camera and during the search you read several online reviews. Do not think too long about the answer. It will be handled reliably with your data. The questionnaire will take about 5-7 minutes of your time.

For questions or comments, please contact me.

Many thanks in advance.

Kind regards,

Ralf Heijthuijzen  
Master of Management  
ralf.heijthuijzen@student.uhasselt.be



**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-06-1993  
Elsloo, Nederland

Member since June 2018  
First review



## Best camera ever

This is really the best camera ever. I want it for months, and now I finally have one. Can't wait to go on holiday and take some beautiful pictures.

---

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to buy this camera after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-06-1989  
**Elsloo, Nederland**

Member since January 2003  
First review



## Best camera ever

I hesitated a long time to buy this camera. This s really the best camera 4-ever. I've wnttedd this for months but now I finally have it. Can't waitto go on holiday and make the best pictures ever. I made a pricture of a flemingo with this camera. He was baeutiful, pink and elegant. Best camera everr. Don't think for a long time just buy this one. You do not regret it and will have the best photo's ever. Just use the automatic option and the camera will do the restt for u.

After making a picture you can download it on your smart phone and share it on your social media. All your friends will think you got thephote from Google instead of taking ti on your own.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to buy this camera after reading the online review?



- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Master photo88**

**Member since January 2003**  
**44th review**



## **Best camera ever**

I hesitated a long time to buy this camera. This is really the best camera ever. I want this for months, and now I finally have one. Can't wait to go on holiday and take some beautiful pictures. I took a picture of a flamingo with this camera. He was beautiful, pink and elegant. Best camera ever. Don't think for too long just buy this one. You will not regret it and will have the best photos ever. Just use the automatic option and the camera will do the rest for u.

After taking a picture you can download it on your smart phone and share it on your Instagram. All your friends will think you get your photos from the internet instead of taking it on your own.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to buy this camera after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-08-1998  
**Elsloo, Netherlands**

Member since January 2003  
44th review



## Nikon Coolpix W300

This camera makes amazing pictures with his 10 megapixels. You can see them right away on the 4 inch screen. Best tested by the Dutch Consumentenbond. If your target is a few miles ahead of you, you are able to get a clear picture of the object by the 10 times optical and digital zoom. The camera allows you to adjust the picture after making by to Photoshop application. Thanks to the 20 gb memory you don't have to be afraid about the memory capacity. Due to the rechargeable battery which can be used for 12 hours you will always be able to take your pictures.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to buy this camera after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-08-1998  
Elsloo, Netherlands

Member since January 2003  
44th review



## Nikon Coolpix W300

Camera has 10 megapixels camera lens and a 4 inch screen. Zoom in on the object with the 10 times optical and digital zoom. The camera has a 20 gb memoriecard and a rechargeable batterie with a 12 hours duration.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to buy this camera after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Master photo88**

**Member since June 2018**  
**1st review**



## **Nikon Coolpix W300**

This camera makes amazing pictures with his 10 megapixels. You can see them right away on the 4 inch screen. Best tested by the Dutch Consumentenbond. If your target is a few miles ahead of you, you are able to get a clear picture of the object by the 10 times optical and digital zoom. The camera allows you to adjust the picture after making by to Photoshop application. Thanks to the 20 gb memory you don't have to be afraid about the memory capacity. Due to the rechargeable battery which can be used for 12 hours you will always be able to take your pictures.

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- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-08-1998  
**Elsloo, Netherlands**

Member since June 2018  
1st review



## Nikon Coolpix W300

This camera makes amazing pictures with his 10 megapixels you can see them right away on the 4 inch screen best tested by Consumentenbond. If your target is a few miles ahead of u you are able to get a clear picture of the object by the 10 times optical and digital zoom. The camera allows you to adjust the picture after making by to photoshop application. Thanks to the 20 gb memorie you don't have to be afraid about the memorie capacity. Duee to the rechargeable batterie which can be used for 12 hours you will always be able to make your pictures.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to buy this camera after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Master photo88**

Member since January 2005  
44th review



## Best camera ever

This is really the best camera ever I've wanted it for months but now I finally have it. Can't wait to go on holiday and make the best pictures.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to buy this camera after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Ralf Heijthuijzen**  
26-08-1998  
Elsloo, Netherlands

Member since June 2018  
First review



## Nikon Coolpix W300

This is really the best camera ever. I want it for months, and now I finally have one. Can't wait to go on holiday and take some beautiful pictures.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to buy this camera after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)





**Master photo88**

Member since June 2018  
First review



## Best camera ever

I hesitated a long time to buy this camera. This is really the best camera 4-ever. I've wnttedd this for months, but now I finally have it. Can't waitto go on holiday and make the best pictures ever. I made a picture of a flemingo with this camera. He was baeutiful, pink and elegant. Best cembra everr. Don't think for a long time just buy this one. You do not regret it and will have the best photo ever. Just use the automatic option and the camera will do the restt for u. After making a picture you can download it on your smart phone and share it on your instagram. All your friends will think you got the photo from the internet.

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to buy this camera after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Master photo88**

**Member since June 2018**  
First review



## **Nikon Coolpix W300**

Camera has 10 megapixels and a 4 inch screen. Zoom in on the object with the 10 times optical and digital zoom. Camera has 20 gb memorie and a recharbable batterie with a 12 hours duration.

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- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)



**Master photo88**



## **Nikon Coolpix W300**

Camera has 10 megapixels and a 4 inch screen. Zoom in on the object with the 10 times optical and digital zoom. Camera has 20 gb memory and a rechargeable battery with a 12 hours duration.

Member since January 2003  
44th review

On a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to buy this camera after reading the online review?

- 0 (0)
- 1 (1)
- 2 (2)
- 3 (3)
- 4 (4)
- 5 (5)
- 6 (6)
- 7 (7)
- 8 (8)
- 9 (9)
- 10 (10)

What is your gender?

Male

Female

What is your age

years old

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**The effect of online reviews on the purchase&nbsp;intention.**

Richting: **Master of Management-International Marketing Strategy**  
Jaar: **2018**

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