The interplay of review valence and review platform on readers' perceptions and reactions towards online hotel reviews

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the interplay of review valence and review platform on readers' perceptions and reactions towards online hotel reviews. Drawing on a 2 (valence: positive vs. negative) x 2 (platform: transaction-oriented vs. information-oriented) between-subject experiment, this study finds negative reviews are more likely to be adopted by readers though they perceive positive and negative reviews as equally useful. Those reading positive reviews on TripAdvisor.com are more likely to book the reviewed hotel than readers of reviews on Booking.com. Readers who read negative reviews on Booking.com (versus TripAdvisor.com) are less likely to book the reviewed hotel.

Keywords: Electronic word-of-mouth; information adoption; online reviews; review valence; review platforms.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, there has been a remarkable growth of online travel reviews. Yelp has received more than 205 million reviews since its inception in 2004 (Yelp, 2020). TripAdvisor (2020) received over 859 million online travel reviews between 2000 and 2019. In addition to online review sites, online travel agencies made a tremendous effort to encourage customers to supply reviews in recent years. Revinate's (2019) hotel benchmarking report shows that Booking.com, Hotels.com, Expedia.com and Agoda.com published nearly 40 million reviews in year 2018.

The advent of online reviews allows travelers to become unprecedentedly easy to assess the quality of hotel accommodations and to make informed purchase decisions (Lo & Yao, 2019). However, there is a potential threat of information overload emerging as the volume of online reviews grows year-on-year (Sun, Han, & Fen, 2019). As the difficulty of identifying useful

reviews has increased, substantial scholarly effort has been devoted to exploring "why some reviews are more useful to travelers" and "what makes a useful online travel review," (e.g., Liang, Schuckert, & Law, 2019; Liu & Park, 2015; Wang, Tang, & Kim, 2019; Yang, Shin, Joun, & Koo, 2017).

Defined as the extent to which the orientation of a review set is predominantly positive or negative, the valence of online reviews has been shown to exert significant influence on readers (Gavilan, Avello, & Mertinex-Navarro, 2018; Hu, Yang, & Park, 2019;Tata, Prashar, & Gupta, 2020). The meta-analysis by Purnawirawan, Eisend, De Pelsmacker and Dens (2015) shows that review valence has a significant impact on consumers' purchase and recommendation intention. Hu and Yang's (2020) study also indicates the valence of review rating is positively associated with consumers' likelihood of choosing a hotel. Although the influence of review valence on readers has received considerable scholarly attention, the findings concerning "how review valence influences consumers" are inconclusive. For instance, Ahmed El-Said (2020) and Zhao, Wang, Guo, and Law (2015) report that reviews with positive valence do not affect consumers' hotel booking intentions. However, Chan, Lam, Chow, Fong and Law (2017) as well as Tata et al. (2020) report contrasting findings in their studies. One stream of research claims the impact derived from negative reviews is stronger (e.g., Papathanassis & Knolle, 2011; Park & Lee, 2009), while other research argues the impact derived from positive reviews is more prominent (e.g., De Pelsmacker, Dens, & Kolomiiets 2018; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). Due to inconclusive results in the extant literature, the impact of review valence on readers merits additional investigation.

Besides the inconclusive results concerning the impact of review valence, the impact of review platform has seldom been a matter of prime interest in prior studies. As highlighted by Aaker and Brown (1972), media vehicles can induce significant influence on the effectiveness of an advertisement. Hovland and Weiss (1951) also stress that the same piece of information could produce differential impacts on readers when presented on different platforms. Concordant with Aaker and Brown's (1972) vehicle source effect, numerous studies demonstrate that the publishing website can influence the persuasiveness of the publishing content (e.g., Chen, 2008; Grayson, Johnson & Chen, 2008; Zhou & Xue, 2019). In the tourism and hospitality realm, although online travel reviews are now available on various review websites (e.g., TripAdvisor.com; Yelp.com) and transaction websites (e.g., Ctrip.com; Expedia.com), the impact of review platform on readers'

perceptions and reactions towards online reviews remains unknown. Would the same piece of online review produce differential impacts on readers when published on different review websites? Would a positive (or negative) review be perceived differently when published on different review websites? The answers to these two questions have yet to be explored.

To redress the research gap, this study examines the interplay of review valence and review platform on readers' perceptions and reactions towards online hotel reviews by applying an experimental design approach. Specifically, the objectives of this study are twofold: (1) to re-examine whether and how review valence influences readers' perceptions and reactions towards online hotel reviews; and (2) to examine whether the impact of review valence on readers' perceptions and reactions towards online hotel reviews varies across different review platforms.

Following Sussman and Siegal's (2003) Information Adoption Model (IAM) as well as the work of Erkan and Evans (2016), this study conceptualizes readers' perceptions of online hotel reviews as review usefulness. Readers' reactions towards online hotel reviews in the current study focus on their predisposition towards information adoption and their purchase intention. The inclusion of these three dependent variables contributes to the literature by giving a comprehensive picture of how readers process and react to positive (or negative) reviews published on different platforms. As one of the few multi-platform studies in this field, the research findings contribute to the growing literature concerning electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) by unveiling the differential impact of review valence on readers across various review platforms. The study also provides hoteliers with managerial insights to devise appropriate reputation management strategies for different review publishing platforms.

2.   THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Introduced by Stephanie Sussman and Wendy Siegal in 2003, IAM is a widely used social communication model in explicating how consultants adopt suggestions from colleagues in the context of computer-mediated communication (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Since its development, numerous studies have verified the robustness of IAM in elucidating how individuals accept

information from external sources to improve their decision making (e.g., Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn, 2008; Erkan & Evans, 2016).

As shown in Figure 1, one basic premise of IAM is that readers' inclination to adopt information is contingent upon its perceived usefulness. As the core construct of the model, perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which people believe using the technology can help them better perform their tasks. In adapting this definition to the context of online reviews, review usefulness is defined as the extent to which reviews can help readers plan their travel (Pan & Zhang, 2011). Several studies verify that the more useful the review is, the stronger the intention of review readers to adopt will be (e.g., Peng, Liao, Wang, & He, 2016; Shen, Zhang, & Zhao, 2016). Peng et al. (2016) report that readers' perceived usefulness of reviews on a fashion shopping guide website had a strong and positive impact on their inclination to adopt those advices.

***** Please Insert Figure 1 here *****

Another premise of IAM is that readers' perceptions of content quality and source credibility are key determinants of their assessment of information usefulness. In online reviews, content quality refers to the extent to which readers view the information as convincing or valid in supporting its position (Cheung, Luo, Sia, & Chen, 2009). Researchers in the information systems field have long recognized that content quality is decisive in affecting information receivers' attitude change and reaction (e.g., Peng et al., 2016; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). Mudambi and Schuff (2010) state that content quality is important to review readers as high-quality content can minimize the uncertainty of making wrong purchase decisions. Shen et al.'s (2016) study also confirms that consumers are likely to adopt online reviews that have a high quality of argument.

Source credibility refers to readers' perception towards the communicator's credibility, expertise and trustworthiness. Reviewer expertise refers to the communicator's competence in providing valid assertions, while reviewer trustworthiness primarily concerns the communicator's motivation to provide truthful information (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953). Unlike traditional word-of-mouth shared by acquaintances, readers of online reviews are often unable to evaluate the

credibility of reviewers because they do not know the reviewers in person (Dellarocas, 2006). Given the anonymity of communicators, many researchers suggest that disclosure of a reviewer's identity can enable the review content to be perceived as more credible and useful (e.g., Xie, Miao, Kuo, & Lee, 2011). Other researchers report that reviews from contributors of many previous reviews or those with testimonies are more likely to be considered as useful (e.g., Mackiewicz, 2010).

As a predictor as well as an important indicator of an individual's actual purchase behavior, several studies have shown that purchase intention has some linkages with IAM (e.g., Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Erkan & Evans, 2016). As expounded in a review study of 47 eWOM related articles, Cheung and Thadani (2012) argue that eWOM is a type of social influence affecting consumer purchase decision. Since eWOM from external sources is similar to recommendations by friends or important others, a predisposition to adopt and follow eWOM will exert some influence on purchase intention. Erkan and Evans (2016) have proposed a new model integrating purchase intention into the IAM. The structural analysis results in their study confirm that the quality and credibility of eWOM are positively related to its usefulness. The perceived usefulness is positively related to adoption of eWOM, which will in turn enhance consumers' purchase intention.

3. RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Influence of Review Valence

Referring to the tone with which products are discussed in online reviews, review valence functions as a recommendation that can inform consumers' purchase decision (Cheung et al., 2009; Gavilan et al., 2018). Although the impact of review valence on readers' attitudes and behavior has been researched extensively (e.g., Kusumasondjaja, Shanka, & Marchegiani, 2012; Papathanassis & Knolle, 2011; Park & Lee, 2009; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009; Xie et al., 2011), the contrasting results among extant studies makes one difficult to conclude whether or not review valence influences readers' processing and post-reading responses.

One group of researchers suggest that positive reviews are more useful and readers generally show a higher level of willingness to adopt them (e.g., De Pelsmacker et al., 2018; Pentina, Bailey & Zhang, 2018). Pan and Zhang (2011) report that review valence has a positive relationship with review usefulness, and this positivity bias (i.e., the impact of positive reviews on receivers' evaluation is greater than that of negative reviews) is more distinct for experiential than utilitarian products. Though the prominence of positivity bias is coined, various studies show that not all positive reviews are equally impactful to readers. Schindler and Bickart (2012) exhibits that a review is more likely to be considered valuable if it has a greater proportion of positive evaluative statements. Purnawirawan et al. (2015) complement that the positivity degree of positive reviews (i.e., 25% positivity vs. 75% positivity) would affect review usefulness differently. Wang et al.'s (2019) latest study also shows that the influence of positive reviews on readers is contingent upon the choice of emotional content embedded in the reviews.

While a positivity bias is found in previous literature, there is more empirical evidence in the literature to illustrate the prominence of negativity bias (i.e., the impact of negative reviews on receivers' evaluation is greater than that of positive reviews) in the online review setting. As elucidated by Fiske (1980), people often give more attention to negative information because human beings are mostly risk-averse. Some researchers consider negative reviews to be more useful as they reflect actual product performance and so reduce information asymmetry (Lee & Youn, 2009; Park & Lee, 2009). Since negative reviews can provide consumers with diagnostic information about specific problems that might occur in experiencing the products (Ba & Pavlou, 2002; Pavlou & Dimoka, 2006), consumers tend to seek and reference negative reviews in order to minimize potential risk. In addition to lack of criticism being seen as an implicit signal of insufficient expertise and potential falsification (Papathanassis & Knolle, 2011), several studies report that negative reviews are of better quality than positive ones (Kusumasondjaja et al., 2012; Park & Lee, 2009). As findings from previous research show that negative reviews are generally more diagnostic than positive reviews, this study postulates that:

H1a: Negative reviews are more useful to readers than positive reviews.

H1b: Negative reviews are more likely to be adopted by readers than positive reviews.

Several researchers report a positive relationship between review valence and readers' post-reading purchase intention (e.g., East, Hammond, & Lomax, 2008). For instance, Ladhari and Michand (2015) note that respondents exposed to positive feedback report higher levels of trust, website quality and booking intention towards the reviewed hotel, compared to those exposed to negative feedback. Tsao, Hsieh, Shih and Lin (2015) also report that greater booking intention is induced by positive reviews than by negative ones, and the influence of review valence on booking intention is strengthened by a higher number of reviews. Tsang and Prendergast (2009) note that readers exposed to positive reviews are more likely to consider the reviewed product worth purchasing, while readers who read negative information will not make a purchase decision until they obtain sufficient positive information. With reference to these previous research findings, this study postulates that:

H1c: Readers of positive reviews have a higher level of intention to purchase the reviewed hotel than readers of negative reviews.

3.2 Influence of Review Platform

Considering that message (i.e., news, recommendations) and media (i.e., academic journals, professional magazines) are inherently inseparable in both social and marketing communications, Hovland (1948) and McCabe (2010) stress that message recipients often consider the media vehicles when they evaluate the persuasiveness of a message. Indeed, Aaker and Brown's (1972) vehicle source effect has long advocated that different message vehicles with an identical message can generate different communication effects on the message recipients. Finch and Quackenboss's (2001) study demonstrates that vehicle source has a significant impact on subjects' response to persuasive messages. Zhou and Xue's (2019) study also shows that in-feed advertisements can generate stronger brand interest if they are published on traditional (versus emerging) websites.

With more recommendations and eWOM published online, several studies have examined whether readers' perceptions and reactions towards eWOM are contingent on the type of review platform (e.g., Lee & Youn, 2009; Senecal & Nantel, 2004; Wu & Lin, 2017). Using two internet shopping malls as the studied sites, Park and Lee (2009) report that the impact of eWOM on consumers is more prominent for well-established websites than for unestablished websites.

Casaló, Flavián, Guinalíu and Ekinci's (2015a) experimental study shows that consumer ratings are more useful and credible when published on well-known (rather than unknown) online travel communities.

In the realm of tourism and hospitality, Fritsch and Sigmund (2016) as well as Gligorijevic (2016) illustrate that most online travel reviews are published on two main types of platform. The first type is transaction-oriented websites such as Ctrip.com and Expedia.com. These websites have strong business ties with reviewed companies (e.g., hotels and airlines), as these companies may utilize the websites to distribute their products. The second type is information-oriented websites such as TripAdvisor.com and Yelp.com which serve mostly as review aggregators, and have fewer commercial links with the reviewed companies.

According to Senecal and Nantel (2004), readers generally perceive consumer reviews on transaction-oriented websites as less useful because the websites and reviewed companies have a vested interest. Since transaction-oriented websites may potentially incentivize consumers to supply more positive reviews in order to make the reviewed companies attractive, positive reviews on transaction-based websites are perceived as less credible and useful to readers (Mellinas, María-Dolores, & García, 2015). On the other hand, positive reviews are considered more diagnostic if they are published on information-oriented websites. Due to the absence of vested interest, positive reviews on information-oriented websites are considered more trustworthy and useful to readers (Lee, Park, & Han, 2011). Although some researchers criticize that reviews on information-oriented websites are not veracious because those sites do not employ any verification mechanism (e.g., Harris, 2018), several studies test and confirm that criticism is groundless (e.g., Martin-Fuentes, Mateu, & Fernandez, 2018). Given that positive reviews on information-oriented websites can help readers make informed decisions, they are more likely to be adopted by readers and thereby enhancing their purchase intention. To examine whether the influence of positive reviews on readers is moderated by the review platform, this study postulates that:

H2a: Positive reviews on information-oriented websites are more useful than those on transaction-oriented websites.

H2b: Readers of positive reviews on information-oriented websites have a higher level of information adoption intention than readers of positive reviews on transaction-oriented websites.

H2c: Readers of positive reviews on information-oriented websites have a higher level of intention to purchase the reviewed hotel than readers of positive reviews on transaction-oriented websites.

Unlike positive reviews, the impact of negative reviews on readers is expected to remain identical regardless of the review platforms. As demonstrated in the study by Lee and Youn (2009), negative reviews are equally diagnostic to readers whether they are published on personal blogs or independent review websites. Casaló et al. (2015a) note that negative reviews on well-known online travel communities have greater detrimental effects on consumers than those on unknown counterparts. But since travel review websites are equally reputable, this study postulates that:

H2d: Negative reviews on information-oriented websites are equally useful to those on transaction-oriented websites.

H2e: Readers of negative reviews on information-oriented websites have equal propensity of information adoption to readers of negative reviews on transaction-oriented websites.

H2f: Readers of negative reviews on information-oriented websites have an equal level of intention to purchase the reviewed hotel to readers of negative reviews on transaction-oriented websites.

Figure 2 illustrates the research model of this research and summarizes all research hypotheses in graphical format. Given that this study primarily focuses on how review valence and review platform affect readers' perceptions and reactions towards online hotel reviews, the study will not investigate the dynamic relationships among all dependent variables.

***** Please Insert Figure 2 here *****

4.   METHODOLOGY

To test the research model as well as those research hypotheses presented in this study, a 2 x 2 between-subject online experiment was conducted with a representative panel of Internet users recruited via Qualtrics.

4.1   Experimental Design and Stimulus Materials

The experiment was conducted using Qualtrics and it contained several parts. As the target population of this study are customers who read reviews before booking accommodation online, a qualifying question was firstly asked in order to screen out ineligible candidates. Participants were then exposed to the following cover story – "*Imagine that you are planning a long-awaited trip to Fiji with your friends for a summer holiday and you are deciding on whether to stay in a hotel*". After becoming familiar with the context, they were asked to read the stimulus materials and then answer all questions listed in the questionnaire.

The stimulus materials of this study include a set of reviews accommodating the manipulation of review valence and review platform. Review valence has two levels (i.e., positive vs. negative), representing the two orientations of the review content. Two types of travel review platforms are included in the current study: TripAdvisor.com and Booking.com. These two sites were chosen because they are large review generating sites (Revinate, 2019) and well-known representatives of transaction-oriented and information-oriented sites. A pre-test was also conducted with thirty past review readers, and all participants unanimously agreed with our website classification. Participants were randomly assigned into one of the four (two review valences: positive vs. negative; and two review platforms: TripAdvisor.com vs. Booking.com) conditions that mimic reviews shown on those two platforms.

The content of the reviews was related to a fictional independent resort hotel in Fiji. Fiji is an appealing but unusual destination, and it was expected that most participants would have a vague impression of it. Fictional independent hotels, avoiding participants' bias or pre-disposition, have been used in previous studies relating to readers' perceptions of travel reviews (e.g., Sparks & Browning, 2011; Xie et al., 2011). Further information on the reviewed hotel such as room rate,

ranking and popularity were not provided in order to control the impact derived from extraneous variables.

Three reviews were presented in each condition with basic information given of the reviewers according to the platform's default setting. The three reviews read by the participants were entirely positive or negative to ensure the manipulation of valence. Following the approach used by Lee and Youn (2009), the extent of valence was strictly controlled by converting an assertive sentence to a negative sentence or replacing adjectives with their opposites. The length of review was limited to 70 words because prior studies (e.g., Liu, Schuckert, & Law, 2018) show that the average number of words in online tourism review is around 70. Another aim of limiting the length of review to 70 words is to reduce the impact of review length on participants, since lengthy reviews may distract reader attention and reduce their usefulness. The review contents were adapted from authentic online reviews to ensure realism. The stimulus materials were rigorously reviewed by two experienced academics to guarantee their validity, clarity and realism. Table 1 exhibits the text included in the stimulus materials, and two samples of stimulus materials are presented in Appendix I.

***** Please Insert Table 1 here *****

4.2   Questionnaire Design and Measures

A questionnaire, with four separate parts, was designed to record readers' perceptions of the reviews as well as their post-reading behavioral reaction. The first part includes one qualifying question (i.e., *"Have you read at least one online hotel review in the past 12 months?"*). Another five questions about participants' attitudes towards online hotel reviews in general are also asked in this part, since previous research (e.g., Jiménez & Mendoza, 2013) suggests that one's general attitude towards online reviews has some influence on one's perception of the content of a specific platform. The measure of this covariate (i.e., attitude towards online hotel reviews) was adapted from Liang, Ekinci, Occhiocupo and Whyatt (2013) using a 7-point semantic differential scale (Cronbach's alpha = 0.83).

The second part of the questionnaire included the measures of three dependent variables. Review usefulness was measured by three items adapted from the study of Cheng, Lam and Yeung (2006), and the Cronbach's alpha value of this variable is 0.85. Review adoption was measured by three items adapted from Tseng and Wang (2016), and the Cronbach's alpha value of this variable is 0.72. Purchase intention was measured through a single question adapted from Erkan and Evans (2016) using a 7-point semantic-differential scale (1: unlikely – 7: likely). Appendix II presents the measures of all covariates and dependent variables with their validity and reliability metrics.

The third part of the questionnaire included manipulation check and realism test questions. To verify whether the manipulation was successful, participants were asked to indicate the valence of the reviews they had read (1: very negative – 7: very positive) as well as to report from which website they had read those reviews. After reporting the name of the website, participants were asked to report their attitude towards that website as a review platform by answering five questions adapted from Liang et al.'s (2013) study. Since Lee and Youn (2009) presumed and verified that attitude towards publishing platforms affects perception of platform content, the participants' attitude towards the review platform was included as another covariate to control its impact on the dependent variables.

The realism test contained three questions to detect participants' perceptions of the review plausibility, the difficulty of imagining using the website to search for accommodation, and the difficulty of imagining using the website to evaluate the fictional hotel. The realism test questions were adapted from Park and Jeon (2018), and the 7-point Likert scale (1: strongly disagree - 7: strongly agree) was used as the response scale. The final part included questions on the participants' demographic information.

4.3   Participants and Data Collection

The participants were a representative panel of internet users recruited via Qualtrics. A pilot test with 30 internet users (recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk) was conducted in October 2018 to optimize the questionnaire, the stimulus materials and experiment design. Besides minor amendments in wording, the participants generally agreed that the experiment and materials were optimal. The main data collection was conducted in late November 2018 and the Qualtrics'

panel management team forwarded the online experiment to the participants. A total of 227 valid responses were returned and included for analysis.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Participants' Profile

Of the 227 participants in the experiment, 57 percent were female (n = 129) and the remaining 43 percent were male (n = 98). The average age of all participants was 31 years old (SD = 4.92), and nearly half of them were aged between 30 and 39 (n = 109, 48%). Most of those participants were Bachelor's degree holders (n = 112, 49.3%) and another quarter had a Master's degree (n = 53, 23.3%). Participants mostly came from Mainland China (n = 87, 38.3%), the United States (n = 55, 24.2%) and the United Kingdom (n = 33, 14.5%). The remaining participants were from Australia (n = 14, 6.2%), Canada (n = 9, 4%), Korea (n = 9, 4%), New Zealand (n = 15, 6.6%) and India (n = 5, 2.2%).

5.2 Manipulation Check and Realism Test

Diagnostic tests were conducted before testing the research hypotheses. The manipulation of the review platform was deemed successful as all participants correctly identified the website referred to in their stimulus materials. The results of independent sample t-tests (two-tailed) also showed the successful manipulation of review valence. A significant difference in perceived valence was identified ($t(225) = -32.75$, $p < 0.01$). Participants presented with positive reviews rated the valence more positively than those exposed to negative ones ($M_{POS} = 6.25$, $SD_{POS} = 0.91$; $M_{NEG} = 2.01$, $SD_{NEG} = 1.04$).

In terms of the perceived realism of the experiment, participants generally considered the reviews shown in the experiment to be realistic ($t(226) = 14.13$, $p < 0.01$; $M = 4.89$; $SD = 0.95$). Participants also claimed that they could imagine themselves using the site to search for accommodation ($t(226) = 21.61$, $p < 0.01$; $M = 5.51$; $SD = 1.05$) and to evaluate the fictitious hotel ($t(226) = 21.80$, $p < 0.01$; $M = 5.49$; $SD = 1.03$).

5.3　Hypothesis Testing

With the inclusion of two covariates (i.e., "attitude towards online hotel reviews in general" and "attitudes towards the review platform"), Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was employed to test the main effect (derived from review valence) as well as the interaction effect (derived from review valence and review platform) on multiple dependent variables.

5.3.1　Effect of covariates

As shown in Table 2, the readers' general attitude towards online hotel reviews exerted some influence on perceived usefulness (F (1, 221) = 2.937, p < 0.1; β = 0.140) and intention to adopt the shown reviews (F (1, 221) = 5.240, p < 0.05; β = 0.175). Although its impact on purchase intention was insignificant (F (1, 221) = 0.077, n.s.), the findings largely followed Jiménez and Mendoza's (2013) belief that one's general attitude towards online reviews would pose some influence on perception of reviews. In line with the suggestions of Lee and Youn (2009), the MANCOVA results showed that the readers' attitude towards the review platform was a significant covariate on review usefulness (F (1, 221) = 16.288, p < 0.01; β = 0.347) and review adoption (F (1, 221) = 5.468, p < 0.05; β = 0.187). The beta coefficient values of this covariate were positive ones, denoting that the readers' attitude towards the review platform has a positive impact on review usefulness and review adoption.

***** Please Insert Table 2 here *****

5.3.2　Main Effect of Review Valence

Against the postulation of H1a, the MANCOVA test results showed that review valence did not exert any influence on the readers' ratings of perceived usefulness (F (1, 221) = 0.273, n.s., Partial η^2 = 0.001). Although the contrast test result indicated that negative reviews were more

useful than positive reviews, the difference was not statistically significant (M $_{POS}$ = 5.35, M $_{NEG}$ = 5.41; n.s.).

While H1a is rejected, the MANCOVA test results showed that review valence had a significant main effect on readers' review adoption intention (F (1, 221) = 3.179, p < 0.1, Partial η^2 = 0.014). Specifically, negative reviews are more likely to be adopted by readers than positive reviews (M $_{POS}$ = 5.05, M $_{NEG}$ = 5.23; p < 0.05). This does not only lend credence to H1b, but also provides further evidence to support Park and Lee's (2009) notion that negativity bias is more prominent. The main effect of review valence on purchase intention was a significant and strong one (F (1, 221) = 535.570, p < 0.01, Partial η^2 = 0.708). Following the postulation of H1c as well as Ladhari and Michand (2015), readers of positive reviews had a higher level of purchase intention than readers of negative reviews (M $_{POS}$ = 5.40, M $_{NEG}$ = 2.59; p < 0.01).

5.3.3   Interaction Effect of Review Valence and Review Platform

The bottom part of Table 2 shows the interplay of valence and platform on readers' perceptions and reactions towards online hotel reviews, and Figure 3 graphically displays the interaction effect on the dependent variables. In line with our hypothesis, the impact of review valence on readers' perceived usefulness varied between transaction-oriented and information-oriented websites (F (2, 221) = 2.778, p < 0.1, Partial η^2 = 0.025). Specifically, readers perceived positive reviews on TripAdvisor.com as more useful than the same reviews on Booking.com (M $_{POS\ x\ TripAdvisor.com}$ = 5.58; M $_{POS\ x\ Booking.com}$ = 5.25, p < 0.05), therefore H2a is supported. These findings suggest that the diagnosticity of positive reviews is attenuated if published in transaction-oriented websites. H2d also garners support, because negative reviews on TripAdvisor.com were considered as equally useful to negative reviews on Booking.com (M $_{NEG\ x\ TripAdvisor.com}$ = 5.24; M $_{NEG\ x\ Booking.com}$ = 5.55, n.s.) from the readers' viewpoint.

The MANCOVA test results illustrated that the influence of review valence on readers' review adoption intention differed when reviews were published on different platforms (F (2, 221) = 3.645, p < 0.05, Partial η^2 = 0.032). Unlike the suggestion of H2b, readers of positive reviews on TripAdvisor.com shared a similar level of adoption intention with readers of the same reviews published on Booking.com (M $_{POS\ x\ TripAdvisor.com}$ = 5.13; M $_{POS\ x\ Booking.com}$ = 5.03, n.s.). Surprisingly,

the review adoption rating given by readers of negative reviews on Booking.com was significantly higher than that of readers of the same reviews on TripAdvisor.com (M $_{\text{NEG x TripAdvisor.com}}$ = 5.03; M $_{\text{NEG x Booking.com}}$ = 5.38, p < 0.05). The rarity of negative reviews on review websites in general and transaction-oriented websites in particular is a possible reason why H2e is rejected (Mariani, Borghi, & Gretzel, 2019; Miguéis & Nóvoa, 2017). Since readers rarely come across negative reviews on transaction-oriented websites, they are more likely to take them into consideration, regarding them as unique.

The interaction effect (derived from review valence and review platform) on purchase intention was also confirmed (F (2, 221) = 10.140, p < 0.01, Partial η^2 = 0.084). Specifically, readers who read positive reviews on TripAdvisor.com were more likely to book the reviewed hotel than those who read the same reviews on Booking.com (M $_{\text{POS x TripAdvisor.com}}$ = 5.66, M $_{\text{POS x Booking.com}}$ = 5.18; p < 0.01). H2c is supported, denoting that positive reviews on TripAdvisor.com can exert a stronger influence on readers' post-reading reactions than those on Booking.com. With regard to negative reviews, readers who read negative reviews from Booking.com were less likely to book the reviewed hotel than those who read the same reviews on TripAdvisor.com (M $_{\text{NEG x Booking.com}}$ = 2.27, M $_{\text{NEG x TripAdvisor.com}}$ = 2.86; p < 0.05). Even though H2f does not garner support, the research findings suggested that negative reviews on Booking.com posed a stronger detrimental impact on readers' post-reading behavioral responses. Table 3 presents a summary of the hypotheses testing outcomes.

***** Please Insert Figure 3 and Table 3 here *****

6.   DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1   Discussions

As prior studies on the impact derived by review valence are inconclusive albeit ample, one of the two aims of this study is to re-examine whether and how review valence influences readers' perceptions and reactions towards online hotel reviews. Contrary to the findings presented

in prior studies (e.g., De Pelsmacker et al., 2018; Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), the current study finds that neither positivity bias nor negativity bias is more prominent in the online review setting. As illustrated in Cheung et al. (2009), negatively-framed and positively-framed eWOM are equally credible from the readers' viewpoint. Ong's (2012) study also reports that travelers often rely on both positive and negative reviews during the decision-making process because they have equal levels of diagnosticity. Considering that negative reviews can help readers detect potential risks while positive reviews can help readers build confidence (Casaló et al., 2015b; Park & Lee, 2009), it is understandable that positive and negative reviews are equally useful to readers. However, as people are more attentive to negative information due to their risk averse nature (Fiske, 1980), adding that negative reviews better meet readers' needs in enabling quick decision making (Ong, 2012), it is plausible that negative reviews are more likely to be adopted by readers than positive reviews.

Besides confirming the main impact of review valence on readers' perceptions and reactions towards online hotel reviews, another interesting finding of this study is the differential impact of review valence on readers' perceptions across online review platforms. In comparison with positive reviews on transaction-oriented websites (i.e., Booking.com), this study finds positive reviews on information-oriented websites (i.e., TripAdvisor.com) more useful to readers because the review websites and the reviewed companies have no vested interest. As illustrated in Mellinas et al. (2015), having more positive reviews on transaction-oriented websites (e.g., Booking.com) can benefit both the reviewed companies (e.g., JW Marriott Miami) and the websites themselves. On the one hand, the positive reviews can enhance the reviewed companies' online reputation and popularity. On the other hand, when the reviewed companies become more popular, more consumers would select and reserve those companies via transaction-oriented websites. Considering that transaction-oriented websites and the reviewed companies have strong business ties and vested interest, the persuasiveness of positive reviews on transaction-oriented (versus information-oriented) websites are comparatively lower. Positive reviews on transaction-oriented websites are also considered less useful to readers due to the existence of vested interest. On the contrary, since positive reviews on information-oriented websites are more authentic and trustworthy in the eyes of readers (Lee et al., 2011), the current findings are deemed understandable.

Surprisingly, the interplay of review valence and review platform on readers' review adoption intention differs from what we had postulated. Following the theorem of Aaker and Brown's (1972) vehicle source effect, positive reviews on information-oriented websites were more likely to be adopted by readers because they are more trustworthy and useful. This study however finds that readers of positive reviews on TripAdvisor.com shared a similar level of adoption intention with readers of the same reviews published on Booking.com. Furthermore, the review adoption rating given by readers of negative reviews on Booking.com was significantly higher than readers of reviews on TripAdvisor.com. As noted earlier, the rarity of negative reviews on review websites in general and transaction-oriented websites in particular is a possible explanation for this finding. Given that readers rarely find negative reviews on transaction-oriented websites (Mayzlin, Dover, & Chevalier, 2014; Miguéis & Nóvoa, 2017), they may therefore be more likely to take them into consideration, regarding them as unique.

With regard to the interaction effect of review valence and review platform on purchase intention, the findings largely align with the assertion given by Aaker and Brown (1972). Readers who read positive reviews on TripAdvisor.com are more likely to book the reviewed hotel than those who read the same reviews on Booking.com. Since review manipulation is often found in transaction-oriented sites (Dellarocas, 2006), the persuasiveness of positive reviews on transaction-oriented sites is lower and poses a lesser impact on readers' purchase intention. However, industry practitioners should not overlook the detrimental impact of negative reviews on Booking.com. As readers of negative reviews on Booking.com are less likely to book the reviewed hotel than those who read the same reviews on TripAdvisor.com, practitioners should monitor and adequately respond to negative reviews published on Booking.com.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

From the theoretical standpoint, this study contributes new knowledge to the increasing body of literature on eWOM and online reviews in several ways. One significant theoretical contribution of this study is to provide an answer to the question of "does platform matter?" While online travel reviews are now available on various websites, the answer to the question of "Would the same piece of online review produce differential impacts on readers when published on

different review websites" remained unknown prior to the completion of this study. Drawing on a between-subject experiment, this study distinctly demonstrates how content (i.e., review valence), platform (i.e., review platform) and reader-related cues (i.e., attitude towards online reviews and towards the specific platform) interactively influence readers' evaluation and reactions towards online hotel reviews.

Another contribution of this study is to validate and extend the applicability of Aaker and Brown's (1972) vehicle source effect to travel review websites. Concordant with prior studies (e.g., Park & Lee, 2009; Wu & Lin, 2017), the same set of online hotel reviews can produce differential impacts on readers when presented on different platforms. Following Ruth and Pfeffer's (2014) assertion, researchers must not overlook the influence of review platforms when exploring the impact of reviews on readers. From the methodological point of view, this study is one of the few works to introduce multiple and non-fictional platforms in examining how readers are influenced by online reviews. In comparison with other studies that utilize either single or fictitious platforms (e.g., Lee et al., 2011; Lee & Youn, 2009; Sparks & Browning, 2011; Wu & Lin, 2017), the current study outperforms them in terms of realism and authenticity.

Unlike other published studies that solely apply Sussman and Siegal's (2003) IAM (e.g., Filieri & McLeay, 2014), this study extends Sussman and Siegal's (2003) IAM by including purchase intention as another key variable of readers' reactions towards online hotel reviews. Through including both review usefulness, review adoption and purchase intention as dependent variables, this study outperforms prior studies by providing a comprehensive picture of how readers process and react to positive (or negative) reviews published on different platforms.

6.3   Practical Implications

Besides contributing new knowledge to the literature, the findings of this research are also advantageous to hoteliers wishing to market their property online. For those working in online reputation management for their hotel properties, this study illustrates the significance of negative reviews. Since the current study finds that negative reviews are more likely to be adopted by readers than positive reviews, hoteliers should not overlook the content of negative reviews available on different platforms. As the study by Levy, Duan and Boo (2013) shows, hoteliers

should systematically analyze negative reviews and identify the problem areas in their operations. To improve service recovery and re-gain consumer confidence, hoteliers should have adequate response and recovery strategies in place that can be enforced when negative comments arise (Mate, Trupp, & Pratt, 2019). According to Revinate's (2019) latest analysis on 95 million hotel reviews published in 2018, less than 30% of online reviews received managerial responses. Since the provision of proper responses to negative reviews can effectively reduce prospective customers' distrust and enhance their purchase intention (Zhao, Liang, & Su, 2020), hoteliers should be more attentive to their response strategies to negative reviews. With regard to the management of online reviews, as positive reviews on TripAdvisor.com are more likely to stimulate a significantly stronger level of purchase intention, hoteliers should actively encourage or incentivize guests to post their positive reviews on TripAdvisor.com in order to induce readers' (or prospective customers') purchase intention. For instance, hoteliers should include hyperlinks to TripAdvisor.com in review invitation emails or mobile messages. Incentives (e.g., cash voucher, souvenir) can also be offered in order to entice guests to contribute positive reviews. As the current findings suggest that negative reviews on TripAdvisor.com (versus Booking.com) pose a less detrimental impact on readers' post-reading behavioral responses, guiding guests to post their negative reviews on TripAdvisor.com would be expected to decrease the negative impact on the reviewed companies. If hoteliers can foresee that certain dissatisfied guests are likely to post negative reviews, they should be encouraged to post their complaints on TripAdvisor.com by including a hyperlink to that platform in review invitation emails. If guests post their negative reviews on Booking.com, hoteliers should incentive some satisfied guests to post positive reviews on the same platform in order to offset the impact made by negative reviews. Also, as mentioned earlier, hoteliers should adequately respond to negative reviews in order to re-gain consumer confidence (Ketalaar, Willemsen, Sleven, & Kerkhof, 2015).

6.4 Limitations and Future Research

Even though several implications can be drawn from this research, there are some limitations. Firstly, although the experiment included in this study was conducted with a representative panel of internet users, the small sample size may restrict the generalizability of the research findings to a wider population. Future researchers may replicate and expand the scope of

study to more variant groups of ages and nationalities. Additionally, samples could be stratified according to their demographic characteristics (e.g., age and nationality) to investigate whether demographic factors also influence readers' perceptions and reactions towards online hotel reviews. Secondly, this research conceptualizes review valance as entirely positive reviews and entirely negative reviews. Future studies could enhance the perceived realism of the experiment by providing reviews with different gradients of positivity (or negativity) in order to meticulously understand the influence of value on readers' perceptions and reactions to online reviews. Future studies could also consider incorporating neutral and ambivalent reviews in the study setting, so as to enrich the knowledge of the impact of valence on the processing of online reviews.

REFERENCES

Aaker, D. S., & Brown, P. K. (1972). Evaluating vehicle source effects. *Journal of Advertising Research, 12*(4), 11-16.

Ahmed El-Said, O. (2020). Impact of online reviews on hotel booking intention: The moderating role of brand image, star category, and price. *Tourism Management Perspectives, 33*, 100604.

Ba, S., & Pavlou, P. A. (2002). Evidence of the effect of trust building technology in electronic markets: Price premium and buyer behavior. *MIS Quarterly, 26*(3), 243-268.

Casaló, L. V., Flavian, C., Guinaliu, M., & Ekinci, Y. (2015a). Do online hotel rating schemes influence booking behaviors? *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 49*, 28-36.

Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C., Guinalíu, M., & Ekinci, Y. (2015b). Avoiding the dark side of positive online consumer reviews: Enhancing reviews' usefulness for high risk-averse travelers. *Journal of Business Research, 68*(9), 1829-1835.

Chan, I. C. C., Lam, L. W., Chow, C. W., Fong, L. H. N., & Law, R. (2017). The effect of online reviews on hotel booking intention: The role of reader-reviewer similarity. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 66*, 54-65.

Chen, Y. F. (2008). Herd behavior in purchasing books online. *Computers in Human Behavior, 24*(5), 1977-1992.

Cheng, T. E., Lam, D. Y., & Yeung, A. C. (2006). Adoption of internet banking: an empirical study in Hong Kong. *Decision Support Systems, 42*(3), 1558-1572.

Cheung, C. M., & Thadani, D. R. (2012). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model. *Decision Support Systems, 54*(1), 461-470.

Cheung, C. M., Lee, M. K., & Rabjohn, N. (2008). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth: The adoption of online opinions in online customer communities. *Internet Research, 18*(3), 229-247.

Cheung, M. Y., Luo, C., Sia, C. L., & Chen, H. (2009). Credibility of electronic word-of-mouth: Informational and normative determinants of on-line consumer recommendations. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce, 13*(4), 9-38.

De Pelsmacker, P., Dens, N., & Kolomiiets, A. (2018). The impact of text valence, star rating and rated usefulness in online reviews. *International Journal of Advertising, 37*(3), 340-359.

Dellarocas, C. (2006). Strategic manipulation of internet opinion forums: Implications for consumers and firms. *Management Science, 52*(10), 1577-1593.

East, R., Hammond, K., & Lomax, W. (2008). Measuring the impact of positive and negative word of mouth on brand purchase probability. *International Journal of Research in Marketing, 25*(3), 215-224.

Erkan, I., & Evans, C. (2016). The influence of eWOM in social media on consumers' purchase intentions: An extended approach to information adoption. *Computers in Human Behavior, 61*, 47-55.

Filieri, R., & McLeay, F. (2014). E-WOM and accommodation: An analysis of the factors that influence travelers' adoption of information from online reviews. *Journal of Travel Research. 53*(1), 44-57.

Finch, J., & Quackenboss, C. (2001). Media- and vehicle-source effects in internet communications. *Marketing Management Journal, 11*(1), 114-123.

Fiske, S. (1980). Attention and weight in person perception: The impact of negative and extreme behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *38*(6), 889-906.

Fritsch, A., & Sigmund, H. (2016). Review platforms in hospitality. In *Open Tourism* (pp. 229-238). Springer, Berlin, Heidelberg.

Gavilan, D., Avello, M., & Martinex-Navarro, G. (2018). The influence of online ratings and reviews on hotel booking consideration. *Tourism Management, 66*, 53-61.

Gligorijevic, B. (2016). Review platforms in destinations and hospitality. In R. Egger, I. Gula and D. Walcher (Eds.), *Open tourism* (pp. 215-228). Heidelberg: Springer, Berlin.

Grayson, K., Johnson, D., & Chen, D. (2008). Is firm trust essential in a trusted environment? How trust in the business context influences customers. *Journal of Marketing Research, 45*, 241-256.

Harris, C. G. (2018, November). *Decomposing TripAdvisor: Detecting potentially fraudulent hotel reviews in the era of big data*. In 2018 IEEE International Conference on Big Knowledge, Singapore (pp. 243-251). IEEE.

Hovland, C. I. (1948). Social communication. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 92*(5), 371-375.

Hovland, C. I., & Weiss, W. (1951). The influence of source credibility on communication effectiveness. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 15*(4), 635-650.

Hovland, C. I., Janis, I. L., & Kelley, H. H. (1953). *Communication and Persuasion; Psychological Studies of Opinion Change.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hu, X. S., & Yang, Y. (2020). Determinants of consumers' choices in hotel online searches: A comparison of consideration and booking stages. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 86*, 102370.

Hu, X. S., Yang, Y., & Park, S. (2019). A meta-regression on the effect of online ratings on hotel room rates. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 31*(12), 4438-4461.

Jiménez, F. R., & Mendoza, N. A. (2013). Too popular to ignore: The influence of online reviews on purchase intentions of search and experience products. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 27*(3), 226-235.

Ketelaar, P. E., Willemsen, L. M., Sleven, L., & Kerkhof, P. (2015). The good, the bad, and the expert: How consumer expertise affects review valence effects on purchase intentions in online product reviews. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 20*(6), 649-666.

Kusumasondjaja, S., Shanka, T., & Marchegiani, C. (2012). Credibility of online reviews and initial trust: The roles of reviewer's identity and review valence. *Journal of Vacation Marketing, 18*(3), 185-195.

Ladhari, R., & Michaud, M. (2015). eWOM effects on hotel booking intentions, attitudes, trust, and website perceptions. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 46*, 36-45.

Lee, J., Park, D., & Han, I. (2011). The different effects of online consumer reviews on consumers' purchase intentions depending on trust in online shopping malls: An advertising perspective. *Internet Research, 21*(2), 187-206.

Lee, M., & Youn, S. (2009). Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) How eWOM platforms influence consumer product judgment. *International Journal of Advertising, 28*(3), 473-499.

Levy, S. E., Duan, W., & Boo, S. (2013). An analysis of one-star online reviews and responses in the Washington, DC, lodging market. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly, 54*(1), 49-63.

Liang, S., Ekinci, Y., Occhiocupo, N., & Whyatt, G. (2013). Antecedents of travellers' electronic word-of-mouth communication. *Journal of Marketing Management, 29*(5-6), 584-606.

Liang, S., Schuckert, M., & Law, R. (2019). How to improve the stated helpfulness of hotel reviews? A multilevel approach. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 31*(2), 953-977.

Liu, X., Schuckert, M., & Law, R. (2018). Utilitarianism and knowledge growth during status seeking: Evidence from text mining of online reviews. *Tourism Management, 66*, 38-46.

Liu, Z., & Park, S. (2015). What makes a useful online review? Implication for travel product websites. *Tourism Management, 47*, 140-151.

Lo, A. S., & Yau, S. S. (2019). What makes hotel online reviews credible. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 31*(1), 41-60.

Mackiewicz, J. (2010). Assertions of expertise in online product reviews. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication, 24*(1), 3-28.

Mariani, M. M., Borghi, M., & Gretzel, U. (2019). Online reviews: differences by submission device. *Tourism Management, 70*, 295-298.

Martin-Fuentes, E., Mateu, C., & Fernandez, C. (2018). Does verifying uses influence rankings? Analyzing Booking.com and TripAdvisor. *Tourism Analysis, 23*(1), 1-15.

Mate, M. J., Trupp, A., & Pratt, S. (2019). Managing negative online accommodation reviews: evidence from the Cook Islands. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 36*(5), 624-644.

Mayzlin, D., Dover, Y., & Chevalier, J. (2014). Promotional reviews: An empirical investigation of online review manipulation. *American Economic Review, 104*(8), 2421-2455.

McCabe, S. (2009). *Marketing communications in tourism and hospitality*. Oxford: Routledge.

Mellinas, J. P., María-Dolores, S. M. M., & García, J. J. B. (2015). Booking. com: The unexpected scoring system. *Tourism Management, 49*, 72-74.

Miguéis, V. L., & Nóvoa, H. (2017). Exploring online travel reviews using data analytics: An exploratory study. *Service Science, 9*(4), 315-323.

Mudambi, S., & Schuff, D. (2010). What makes a helpful online review? A study of customer reviews on Amazon.com. *MIS Quarterly, 34*(1). 185-200.

Ong, B. S. (2012). The perceived influence of user reviews in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 21*(5), 463-485.

Pan, Y., & Zhang, J. (2011). Born unequal: a study of the helpfulness of user-generated product reviews. *Journal of Retailing, 87*(4), 598-612.

Papathanassis, A., & Knolle, F. (2011). Exploring the adoption and processing of online holiday reviews: A grounded theory approach. *Tourism Management, 32*, 215-224.

Park, C., & Lee, T. M. (2009). Information direction, website reputation and eWOM effect: A moderating role of product type. *Journal of Business Research, 62*(1), 61-67.

Park, H. H., & Jeon, J. O. (2018). The impact of mixed eWOM sequence on brand attitude change: cross-cultural differences. *International Marketing Review, 35*(3), 390-411.

Pavlou, P. A., & Dimoka, A. (2006). The nature and role of feedback text comments in online marketplaces: implications for trust building, price premiums, and seller differentiation. *Information Systems Research, 17*(4), 392-414.

Peng, L., Liao, Q., Wang, X., & He, X. (2016). Factors affecting female user information adoption: an empirical investigation on fashion shopping guide websites. *Electronic Commerce Research, 16*(2), 145-169.

Pentina, I., Bailey, A. A., & Zhang, L. (2018). Exploring effects of source similarity, message valence, and receiver regulatory focus on yelp review persuasiveness and purchase intentions. *Journal of Marketing Communications, 24*(2), 125-145.

Purnawirawan, N., Eisend, M., De Pelsmacker, P., & Dens, N. (2015). A meta-analytic investigation of the role of valence in online reviews. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 31*, 17-27.

Revinate. (2019). *2019 Global Hotel Reputation Benchmark Report*. Retrieved August 12, 2020, from https://www.revinate.com/benchmark/reputation/

Ruths, D., & Pfeffer, J. (2014). Social media for large studies of behavior. *Science, 346*(6213), 1063-1064.

Schindler, R., & Bickart, B. (2012). Perceived helpfulness of online consumer reviews: The role of message content and style. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour, 11*(3), 234-243.

Senecal, S., & Nantel, J. (2004). The influence of online product recommendations on consumers' online choices. *Journal of Retailing, 80*(2), 159-169.

Shen, X. L., Zhang, K. Z., & Zhao, S. J. (2016). Herd behavior in consumers' adoption of online reviews. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology, 67*(11), 2754-2765.

Sparks, B. A., & Browning, V. (2011). The impact of online reviews on hotel booking intentions and perception of trust. *Tourism Management, 32*(6), 1310-1323.

Sun, X., Han, M., & Feng, J. (2019). Helpfulness of online reviews: Examining review informativeness and classification thresholds by search products and experience products. *Decision Support Systems, 124*, 113099.

Sussman, S. W., & Siegal, W. S. (2003). Informational influence in organizations: An integrated approach to knowledge adoption. *Information Systems Research, 14*(1), 47-65.

Tata, S. V., Prashar, S., & Gupta, S. (2020). An examination of the role of review valence and review source in varying consumption contexts on purchase decision. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 52*. DOI: 10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.003

TripAdvisor. (2020). *TripAdvisor Reports Fourth Quarter and Full Year 2019 Financial Results*. Retrieved August 12, 2020 from http://ir.tripadvisor.com/

Tsang, A. S., & Prendergast, G. (2009). Is a "star" worth a thousand words? The interplay between product-review texts and rating valences. *European Journal of Marketing, 43*(11/12), 1269-1280.

Tsao, W. C., Hsieh, M. T., Shih, L. W., & Lin, T. M. (2015). Compliance with eWOM: The influence of hotel reviews on booking intention from the perspective of consumer conformity. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 46*, 99-111.

Tseng, S. Y., & Wang, C. N. (2016). Perceived risk influence on dual-route information adoption processes on travel websites. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(6), 2289-2296.

Vermeulen, I. E., & Seegers, D. (2009). Tried and tested: The impact of online hotel reviews on consumer consideration. *Tourism Management,* 30(1), 123-127.

Wang, X., Tang, L. R., & Kim, E. (2019). More than words: Do emotional content and linguistic style matching matter on restaurant review helpfulness? *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 77*, 438-447.

Wu, T., & Lin, C. (2017). Predicting the effects of eWOM and online brand messaging: Source trust, bandwagon effect and innovation adoption factors. *Telematics and Informatics, 34*(2), 470-480.

Xie, H. J., Miao, L., Kuo, P. J. & Lee, B. Y. (2011). Consumers' responses to ambivalent online hotel reviews: The role of perceived source credibility and pre-decisional disposition. *International Journal of Hospitality Management, 30*(1), 178-183.

Yang, S., Shin, S., Joun, Y., & Koo, C. (2017). Exploring the comparative importance of online hotel reviews' heuristic attributes in review helpfulness: a conjoint analysis approach. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 34*(7), 963-985.

Yelp. (2020). *An Introduction to Yelp Metrics as of December 31, 2019*. Retrieved August 12, 2020 from https://www.yelp-press.com/company/fast-facts/default.aspx

Zhao, H., Jiang, L., & Su, C. (2020). To defend or not to defend? how responses to negative customer review affect prospective customers' distrust and purchase intention. *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 50,* 45-64.

Zhao, X. R., Wang, L., Guo, X., & Law, R. (2015). The influence of online reviews to online hotel booking intentions. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management, 27*(6), 1343-1364.

Zhou, L., & Xue, F. (2019). In-feed native advertising on news websites: effects of advertising format, website reputation, and product involvement. *Journal of Internet Commerce, 18*(3), 270-290.

Figure 1.   Information adoption model
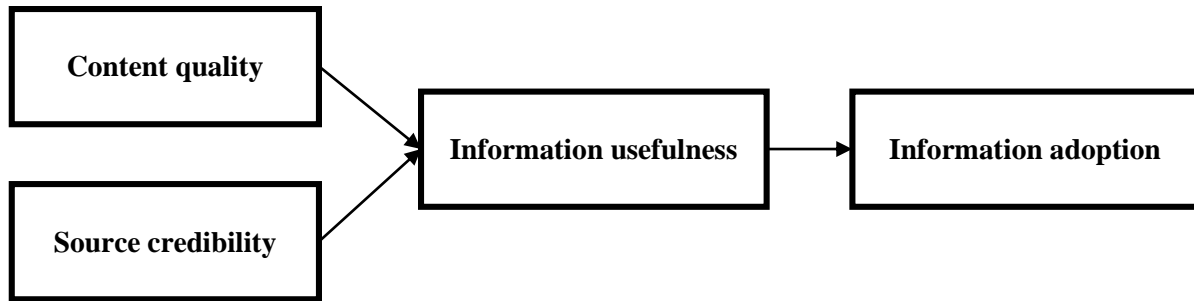
Source: Sussman and Siegal (2003)
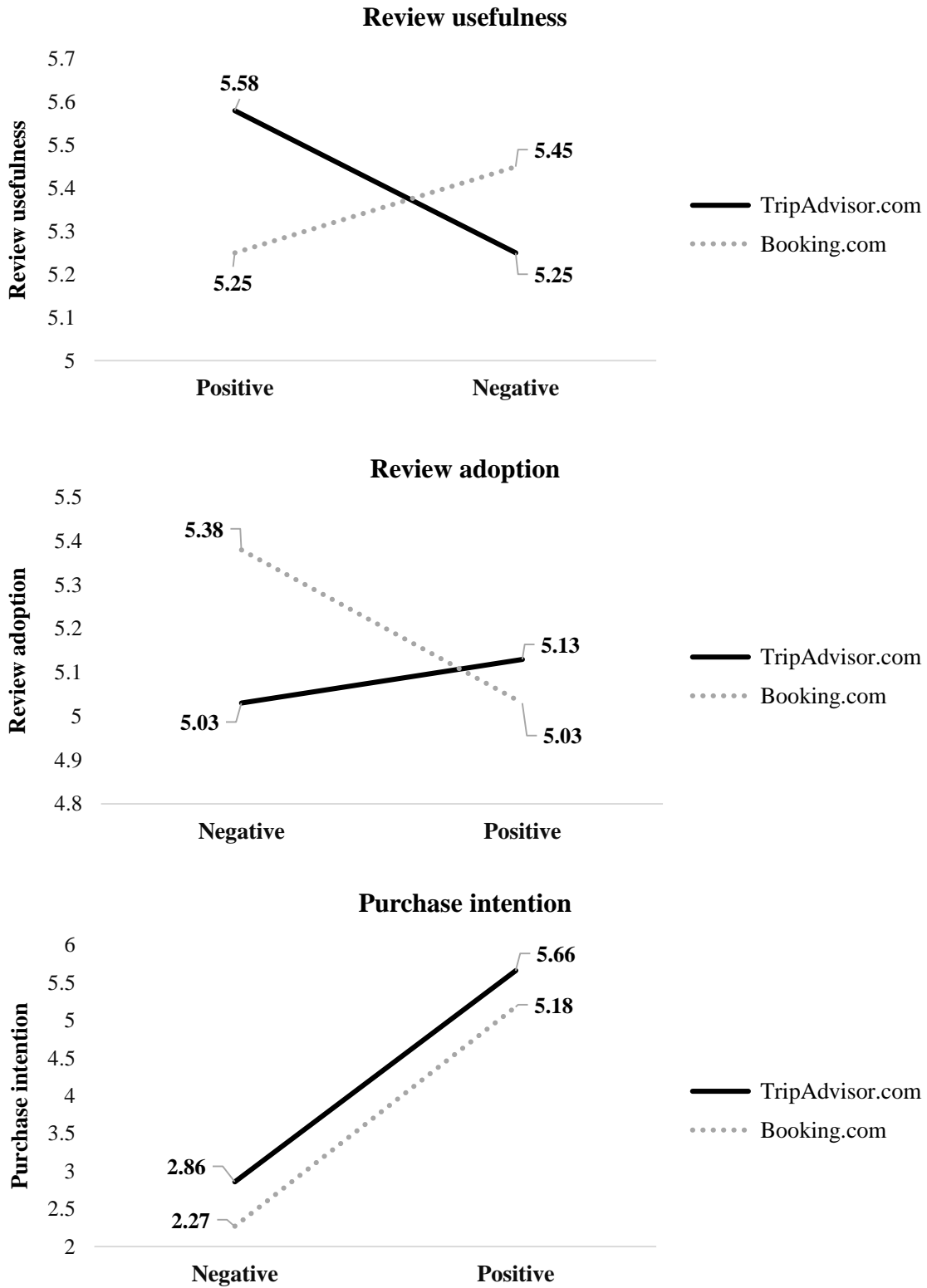
Figure 2.   Research model
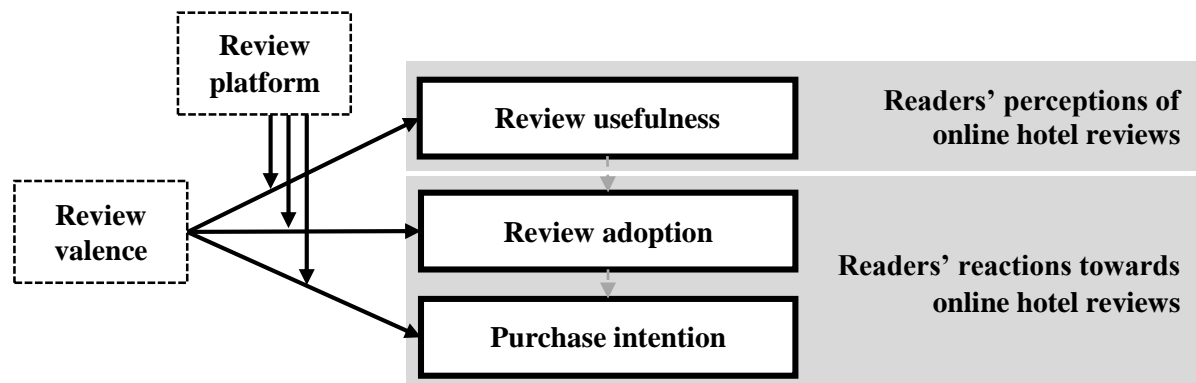
Figure 3. Interaction effect of review valence and review platform on dependent variables

Review usefulness

Review adoption

Purchase intention

Table 1.   The text presented in the stimulus materials

	Text presented in positive reviews	Text presented in negative reviews
1st review	**Beyond Imagination** I expected a good service but was still surprised. We stayed in the Water Villa for 4 nights (absolutely recommend this). It is huge and trendy. Regional flights from the international airport to Navuta with spacious brand-new seaplane were also a real experience and they were well organized. We feel like Royals	**Beyond Imagination** I expected a good service but was disappointed. We stayed in the Water Villa for 4 nights (absolutely not recommend this) It is congested and outdated. Regional flights from the international airport to Navuta with cramped shabby seaplane were also unbearable experiences and they were poorly organized. We feel like refugees.
2nd review	**Indulgent resort** This was easily one of the best beach destination visited by me. The resort is awesome. I can recommend this place to anyone that wants to have plenty of activities, such as scuba and snorkeling. They also have a great kids play area for young kids. In all it's a very good property totally recommended for families.	**Disappointing resort** This was easily one of the worst beach destination visited by me. I think anyone that wants to have plenty of activities, such as scuba and snorkeling, should avoid this place. They even do not have something like a kids play area for young kids. In all it's a very bad property that families should totally avoid it.
3rd review	**BEST Holiday ever** Navuta is an absolutely phenomenal place, with exceptional service and breathtaking views! We stayed 6 nights. The staff are absolutely amazing. Their service and professionalism impeccable! Food was AMAZING! So much variety everyday & always delicious and fresh!! And they have various choice for vegetarians. We got the all-inclusive package which again, is well worth every penny!	**WORST Holiday ever** Navuta is an absolutely fallacious place, with poor service and dull views! We stayed 6 nights. The staff are absolutely upsetting. They provide scant service and have no professionalism! Food was TEDIOUS!! Limited variety everyday & always distasteful and not fresh!! And they do not have any choice for vegetarians. We got the all-inclusive package which again, is a waste of every penny!

Table 2. Multivariate analysis of covariance test results

Dependent variable	Type III	F	Sig. [a]	η2	β	Contrast test [a]	
Covariate: Attitude towards online hotel reviews in general							
Review usefulness	1.826	2.937	0.088	0.013	0.140	-	
Review adoption	2.823	5.240	0.023	0.023	0.175	-	
Purchase intention	0.057	0.077	n.s.	0.000	0.025	-	
Covariate: Attitude towards the review platform							
Review usefulness	10.126	16.288	0.000	0.069	0.347	-	
Review adoption	2.945	5.468	0.020	0.024	0.187	-	
Purchase intention	0.793	1.075	n.s.	0.005	0.097	-	
Main effect: Review valence							
Review usefulness	0.170	0.273	n.s.	0.001	-	$M_{POS} = 5.35$; $M_{NEG} = 5.41$	
Review adoption	1.713	3.179	0.076	0.014	-	$M_{POS} = 5.05 < M_{NEG} = 5.23$ *	
Purchase intention	394.701	535.570	0.000	0.708	-	$M_{POS} = 5.40 > M_{NEG} = 2.59$ **	
Interaction effect: Review valence x Review platform							
Review usefulness	3.454	2.778	0.064	0.025	-	Positive :	$M_{POS\ x\ TripAdvisor.com} = 5.58 > M_{POS\ x\ Booking.com} = 5.25$ *
						Negative :	$M_{NEG\ x\ TripAdvisor.com} = 5.24$; $M_{NEG\ x\ Booking.com} = 5.45$
Review adoption	3.927	3.645	0.028	0.032	-	Positive :	$M_{POS\ x\ TripAdvisor.com} = 5.13$; $M_{POS\ x\ Booking.com} = 5.03$
						Negative :	$M_{NEG\ x\ TripAdvisor.com} = 5.03 < M_{NEG\ x\ Booking.com} = 5.38$ *
Purchase intention	14.945	10.140	0.000	0.084	-	Positive :	$M_{POS\ x\ TripAdvisor.com} = 5.66 > M_{POS\ x\ Booking.com} = 5.18$ **
						Negative :	$M_{NEG\ x\ TripAdvisor.com} = 2.86 > M_{NEG\ x\ Booking.com} = 2.27$ *

Note. [a] n.s. represents not significant; * represents $p < 0.05$; ** represents $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. Summary of hypotheses testing outcomes

Hypotheses	Outcome
H1a: Negative reviews are more useful to readers than positive reviews.	Rejected
H1b: Negative reviews are more likely to be adopted by readers than positive reviews.	Supported
H1c: Readers of positive reviews have a higher level of purchase intention to purchase the reviewed product than readers of negative reviews.	Supported
H2a: Positive reviews on information-oriented websites are more useful than those on transaction-oriented websites.	Supported
H2b: Readers of positive reviews on information-oriented websites have a higher level of information adoption intention than readers of positive reviews on transaction-oriented websites.	Rejected
H2c: Readers of positive reviews on information-oriented websites have a higher level of intention to purchase the reviewed product than readers of positive reviews on transaction-oriented websites.	Supported
H2d: Negative reviews on information-oriented websites are equally useful to those on transaction-oriented websites.	Supported
H2e: Readers of negative reviews on information-oriented websites have equal propensity of information adoption to readers of negative reviews on transaction-oriented websites.	Rejected
H2f: Readers of negative reviews on information-oriented websites have an equal level of intention to purchase the reviewed product to readers of negative reviews on transaction-oriented websites.	Rejected