

EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION IN ONLINE USER REVIEWS: HOW
THEY INFLUENCE CONSUMERS' PRODUCT EVALUATIONS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background and Motivation

The rapid developments in the internet and the World Wide Web have affected all industries globally. One most important industry among these is the travel industry. For example, the studies show that 30 percent of the total travel market is accounted for by global online travel segment in 2010(Mauri and Minazzi, 2013). The three areas where studies have identified the positive effects of internet occur in this industry are travel planning, commerce and industry structure (Ortega, 2009). The internet has given many tools for the travellers to search and share information on the travel plans (Ortega, 2009). Thus, word of mouth though online has become an important communication tool for the travellers all over the world. This had been an important factor influencing the consumer behaviour since the customers find the information provided by the other customers more trustworthy than the information provided by the marketers (Kim and Gupta, 2012). The main advantages of the electronic word of mouth compared to the traditional word of mouth include the longevity, diverse opinions and easy access (Burton and Khammash, 2010). This also had been helpful in significantly shifting the firm centred power to customer centred power(Mauri and Minazzi,2013).

The hospitality industry, which is one of the most customer centred industry has succeeded in capturing this consumer power significantly. Many travel websites like trip advisor make use of this customer power by frequently posting opinions and reviews on the travel experiences of various customers. Studies show that huge amount of visitors of different hotels consult these websites for

getting information related to booking hotels all over the world (Tripadvisor.com, 2014). Due to these developments, the chances of online review writing regarding the customer experiences with the various hotels through different web platforms and social media have increased significantly (Sotriadis and Zyl, 2013). Based on the reports, the reviews in these websites influence around 84 percent of the visitors (Vermeulen and Seegers, 2009).

Hotel accommodation has the second highest position among the online travel sales items with 16 percent share next to air travel with a significantly growing revenue (Ogut and Tas, 2012). Since in a customer centred industry like hotel industry, the quality of the product is known only after the usage of the products unlike in any other industries, customer feedback is an important information tool for the other customers who are likely to book the hotels. Due to this significant reliance of the hotel booking on the online word of mouth, it is very relevant to examine the motivating factors that determine the purchasing behaviour. Thus, understanding the various elements of the online reviews and their influences on the buying behaviour of customers has become very significant. There are several studies examining the effects of this online word of mouth on the behaviour of the customers related to the chances of booking the hotel. However, an area, which is under researched, is the effects of emotional reviews on the consumer behaviour in the hotel industry (Kim and Gupta, 2012). This study tries to fill this gap by focusing on the role of emotions in the online reviews in affecting the purchasing behaviour of hotel consumers. This has important managerial and public policy implications.

1.2. Research Questions, Objectives and Hypotheses

Given the above background, the research questions for the study are the following

(1) Whether online reviews with highly positive emotions are more likely to make a customer feel more positively towards a hotel?

(2) Whether the type of hotel has a mediating effect on the above mentioned relationship?

The main objective of the study is to examine the effects of highly positive emotional online reviews on the likelihood of customers to book, recommend and willingness to pay for the hotel

The objectives of the study are the following

(1) To examine the effects of highly positive emotional reviews on the likelihood of customers booking a hotel compared to non emotional positive reviews

(2) To examine the effects of highly positive emotional reviews on the likelihood of customers recommending a hotel compared to non emotional positive reviews

(3) To examine the effects of the effects of highly positive emotional reviews on the willingness to pay for a hotel compared to non emotional positive reviews

(4) To check if the type of hotel (Luxury hotel v/s 3-star hotel) moderates the relationship between emotional expression and consumers' likelihood to book

The hypotheses to be tested in our study are the following

(1) Online reviews with highly positive emotions increases the likelihood of a customer booking a hotel

(2) Online reviews with highly positive emotions increases the likelihood of a customer recommends a hotel

(3) Online reviews with highly positive emotions increases the likelihood of a customer's willingness to pay for a hotel

(4) Type of hotel has a mediating effect on all the three above mentioned effects

1.3. Significance and Scope of the Study

The following figure shows the internet value percentage growth in various segments of the travel industry. It shows that among the different segments, hotels have shown the highest internet value percentage growth in all the years. This clearly shows the importance of the online usage in the hotel industry and the online reviews in affecting the consumer behaviour globally.

Travel Technology: World Key Performance Indicators 2012-2014			
Internet value % growth (US\$)	2012	2013	2014
Car Rental	4.9	9.6	7.8
Air Transport	8.0	12.3	8.7
Other Transportation	6.4	12.7	9.1
Hotels	10.5	13.0	9.9
Travel Retail Products	8.2	12.1	9.7

Source: Euromonitor International

Source: Euro Monitor International (2014)

The most popular information for travellers about hotel booking while planning a travel globally is reported as the travel review websites (69 percent) followed by web based travel agencies (57 percentage), and travel operator websites (56 percent) while only 18 percent rely on offline travel agencies for travel planning (European consumer summit.eu, 2014). These clearly show the high relevance of the online reviews in hotel booking by consumers. Given this, the effects of the under researched component in the online reviews namely emotions in affecting the hotel consumer purchasing behaviour has very important managerial implications.

1.4. Structure of the Study

There are five chapters for this study. In this chapter, the relevance of the study is clearly pointed out. In the next chapter, the studies related to the objectives are critically reviewed. The research gaps in the

literature are identified based on this review. In the third chapter, the research methodology for the study is discussed along with the data collection methods, sampling techniques and data sources. In the fourth chapter, the interview responses are analyzed and the findings are discussed and interpreted. The fifth chapter concludes the study, discusses the recommendations, the limitations of the study and the scope for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the existing studies related to the objectives of the study are critically examined. Both theoretical and empirical studies are examined in this regard. There are four sections for this chapter. In the next section, the theoretical studies regarding the role of emotions in affecting consumer behaviour are critically examined. In the third section, the empirical studies in this regard are critically reviewed. The fourth section concludes the chapter and identifies the research gaps. The fifth section discusses the conceptual framework for the present study.

2.2. Concepts and Theories

2.2.1. Emotions

Emotions have been defined in different ways in different theories. One of the most popular definitions given to emotion by Richins (1997, p157) is that "a valenced affective reaction to a perception of situations". According to the theoretical framework by Izard and Plutchik (1977), the derivation of basic emotions is from survival instincts. The main emotions identified by this framework are anger,

contempt, distress, disgust, enjoyment, fear, guilt, interest, shame, surprise, joy and sadness.

Two research approaches, which are conceptually different are distinguished in the emotion literature namely physiological and cognitive (Paunksnienė and Banyte, 2012). Based on the physiological approach, emotions are described as the physiological state changes induced special feelings, which are mainly linked with the automatic and motor functions (deSousa, 2010). However, by comparing the physiological theories of emotion, some studies suggests that these theories are not the explanations for emotions rather the emotions cause the changes as mentioned in these theories(Moors,2009). The cognitive theories suggest cognitive component as the determining factor for the stimulus evoking emotion and the emergence of the type of emotion as well as the intensity of the emotion (Moors, 2009). Based on these theories, cognitive component comes in the initial stage evoking emotion before the physiological action.

2.2.2. Theories of Emotions and Consumer Behaviour

In the consumer behaviour theories, emotions are described by three approaches namely categorical, dimensional and that based on the appraisal theory (Watson and Spence, 2007). Based on the categorical approach, emotions are categorized based on the occurrence symptoms and the semantic meanings of emotions (Richins, 1977). The main critique of this theoretical approach is the lack of explanation for the effects of different types of emotions on the behaviour and for the cause of emotions (Watson and Spence, 2007). Based on the dimensional approach, the measurement of emotions is relied on the dimensions like pleasure or unpleasantness, excitation or no excitation and domination or submission (Russell, 1974).The main critique of their approach is the ignorance of the differences in the contents in different emotions and the same tone and expressions given to different emotions(Paunksnienė and Banyte, 2012).

For the third approach, the appraisal method of organisms to the surrounding environment describes the differences in the emotions (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985). The main distinguishing feature of this approach is that it defines the specific appraisal set which causes specific emotions, which, in turn, results in a particular behaviour (Roseman, 2001). Among the three different approaches, the appraisal approach is considered the most relevant approach to explain the emotions through the method of interpretation of events (Paunksnienė and Banyte, 2012). The main limitation of this approach is that there is no clear constructs, terminology and methodology used for this approach (Paunksnienė and Banyte, 2012). Based on the appraisal theory, the table below shows the various emotions caused by possible combinations of appraisals. It shows the various appraisals causing positive and negative emotions.

Table 1: Emotion Structures and Appraisals

			Positive Emotions	Negative Emotions		
		<i>Probability</i>	<i>Motive-Consistent</i>	<i>Motive-Inconsistent</i>		
<i>Agency</i>	<i>Circumstances-caused</i>	<i>Uncertain</i>	Hope	Fear		
		<i>Certain</i>	Joy	Frustration	Disgust	
	<i>Other-caused</i>	<i>Uncertain/Certain</i>	Love, liking	Anger	Contempt	
		<i>Self-caused</i>	<i>Uncertain/Certain</i>	Pride	Guilt	Shame
				<i>Instrumental Problem</i>	<i>Intrinsic Problem</i>	

Source: Paunksnienė and Banyte, (2012)

According to the theoretical studies by Shaver et al (1987), Storm, and Storm (1987), there can be a hierarchical structure for emotions, which can be classified into different clusters with positive and negative affect at the superordinate level. Next level is considered as the basic level of emotion and the lowest one is considered the individual emotion groups.

There are different theoretical approaches, which examine the role of emotions in affecting the consumer behaviour and the post purchasing behaviour of consumers. One of the main theories, which examine the influence of cognition and emotion together on individual behaviour,

is the attribution theory (Folkes, 1984; Weiner, 2000). According to the attribution theory, the causality of social behaviour is explained in terms of cognitive rules or implications (Weiner, 2000). Based on this theory, the process of selection, processing, storing, recalling and evaluation of information and the method of using this information for drawing causal inferences is examined by the researchers (Forsterling, 2001). The post purchase behaviour of consumers also had been explained in terms of the attribution theory in the recent years (Laufer, 2002).

According to the attributional theory of motivation and emotion by Weiner (1986), the role of emotions in guiding consumer behaviour is explained. Based on this, an event is interpreted as a success or a failure, which is the initial stage in the emotion process, called primary appraisal (Weiner, 2000). The event generally results in a positive or negative affective reaction called primitive emotions including happiness, sadness, frustration etc (Weiner, 1986). These emotions are influenced by the goal attainment or non-attainment and thus the outcomes of the events. In the second stage of the emotion process called secondary appraisal, when the outcomes are negative or unexpected or unimportant the outcomes will have attributions, which in turn results in other emotion sets dependent on the attributions and not the outcomes (Laufer, 2002). In the final stage, decisions regarding the association of specific combinations of attributions to specific set of feelings are done by the individuals (Oliver, 1989). The affective reactions are assumed to exist together with the general emotional response in the first stage (Neumann, 2000). In the final stage, the action is determined by the emotions and expectations (Jones, 2006). This theory suggests various consequences in behaviour influenced by different outcomes, attributions and emotions (Norberg and Dholakia, 2004). This theory had been used in consumer behaviour to explain the dissatisfaction resulting from the disconfirmation of expectations.

Based on the attribution theories, the emotions are attributed internally or externally by the consumers (Folkes and Kostov, 1986). These theories show the attribution of the emotions as internal or external as dependent on whether they see the emotions as positive or negative behaviours (Tarrant and North, 2004). In the study by Westbrook (1987), the emotional responses of consumers to experiences with the product or consumption and their links with the post purchase behaviour was examined, which was extended by Oliver (1993). In these studies, it was shown that how the product attributes affect the satisfaction are mediated by the emotional responses. This is based on the Izard's (1977) taxonomy of fundamental affects theoretical framework.

In the attribution theory, it is assumed joint determination of expectations and emotions on the performance related to the achievement (Weiner, 2000). Thus, according to the attribution theory by Weiner (2000), there is a cognition-emotion-action process where the outcome appraisal as a success or failure leading to outcome dependent emotions and the attribution dependent emotions are made by attributions (Laufer, 2002). This in turn, results in outcomes dependent on dimensions and the expectations for future outcomes determine the quality of dimensions of the attributions. Thus, the theory suggests different consequences in behaviour for various outcomes, attributes and emotions.

Based on this theory, the consumers are supposed rational information processors who seek to find out the reasons for the information on purchasing like why it came out in a particular way (Folkes, 1984). Thus, the extent to which the product performance confirms to the expectations on the product by the consumers and the attempts for finding the reasons for the outcomes result in attributions, according to this theory. This theory thus shows the disconfirmation to product expectations as the main reason for the

origin of the causal behaviour (Weiner, 2000). The locus of the causality is classified as internal or external attributions. Internal attributions are those, which arise because of the inability of the consumers themselves due to their inefficient deal in the market places while the external attributions are those, which arise completely due to the problems of the manufacturers (Laufer, 2002). The communications of consumers about the purchase outcomes are related to the locus of causality. For example, in the case of the company related dissatisfaction of the consumers on the product, the consumers are likely to engage in word of mouth product reviews than complaining to the retailers (Swansen and Kelley, 2001). In the case of the external attributions, the consumers are likely to feel angry with the company and are likely to harm the company (Laufer, 2002).

Based on the attribution theory, when consumers come to know that the product failures were due to factors, which were controllable by the retailers, then they are likely to become angry and take revenge through telling others about the product failures and warning them not to purchase the products again (Folkes, 1988). This helps them to get a feeling of satisfaction from their revenge through the discouragement of others from buying the products (Laufer and Gillespie, 2004). There is another dimension for the behaviour of consumers other than these two namely stability of the reason for the product failures. If the consumers perceive the reason for the product failure as temporary or unstable, then they consider the problem as not certain to happen in the future (Laufer, 2002). On the other hand, if they find the reason as stable or permanent, they consider the problem as everlasting and determine not to purchase their products again (Folkes, 1990). Based on the stability dimension, it is argued that the consumers are more likely to warn others regarding purchase of the products when the product failure is stable than when it is unstable. At the same time, the chances of complaining to the

company about the product failure are the same under both the stable and non-stable causes (Curren and Folkes, 1987). Thus, the post purchase behaviour of the consumers is affected by the emotions induced by the product satisfaction or dissatisfaction depending on the three dimensions namely locus of causality, controllability and stability, as shown from the discussion, based on the attribution theory.

The next section discusses the empirical studies regarding the effects of emotions in the word of mouth communication, especially online reviews on the purchasing behaviour of consumers, with special reference to the hotel industry.

2.3. Empirical Studies

Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) examines the effects of the online hotel reviews on the decision making of consumers using the theoretical framework of the consideration set theory of the consumer choice. An experimental study is conducted here for participants from various parts of Netherlands, which represent young professionals. The results based on ANOVA shows that the average probability for the consumers to book room in the hotel reviewed in a website is higher than the others. This effect is found more for hotels which are less known. Thus, the type of hotels is found to have a mediating effect on the links between online reviews and the consumer decision making regarding the booking of hotels. The study shows no effects of the expertise of the reviewers on the intentions of the consumers to book the hotel. The main limitation of the study is that the effects of different types of reviews and the effects of the contents in the reviews on the decision making process of the consumers are not captured in the study. This needs to be analyzed for getting more valuable insights regarding the effects of user generated reviews on the decision making process of the customers in hotel industry.

Sparks and Browning (2011) examines the effects of online reviews on the bookings of hotel through experimental design method based on an online survey from a database in Australia with individuals of different ages, gender and education levels. The analysis includes four independent variables namely the target of the review, rating valence as negative or positive, frame and the consumer ratings given for the review. The study shows number of factors affecting the intention of booking by the customers and the impressions formed. Different effects are found for the four independent variables considered in the analysis based on the framing of the variables namely positive or negative. The influence of the negative reviews is found more when the overall reviews are found negative. The intention for the booking of the hotels and the consumer trust is found increasing with positive reviews along with good consumer ratings in the study. Thus, the frame of the review seems to have played an important role in affecting the relationship between the independent variables and the intention of the customers to book the hotel. The main limitation of the study is that the effects of the contents in the reviews on the booking intentions of the customers are not captured here, which needs to be analyzed in detail. This can provide more valuable insights regarding the effects of the online reviews on the intention of customers to book hotels.

Ye et al (2011) examines the effects of the user-generated reviews of hotels on the online hotel booking intentions of the customers based on the study of a travel agency in China. The review information from the customers is aggregated to form the average review ratings in the study. The analysis is done by log linear regression method for the online hotel room sales. The study shows the price having negative effect on the online hotel bookings in the country. Moreover, more online bookings are found in hotels in larger cities compared to the others, as shown by the analysis. The study also shows that the user-generated reviews are highly influential in affecting the online room sales with positive ratings having positive and significant effects on

the online room sales. The type of hotels is found to have a mediating effect on this relationship in the study. The main limitation of the study is that it is based on only one online travel agency in China. This can have generalization problems. Moreover, the effects of the different contents in the reviews and the reliability of the reviews are not considered in the study. This can create bias in the results. Hence, a detailed study capturing the effects of the user-generated reviews in different websites can provide insights that are more valuable in this regard. Further, the detailed analysis of the online reviews needs to be done by examining the effects of different contents in the online reviews and also the reliability of the reviews in the website. All these require a more detailed study in this regard.

In the study by Sparks and Browning (2012), the main complaint forms and motives of the customers in a main travel website were analyzed qualitatively using NVivo 8 software. The analysis showed that the customers complained about a variety of service failures through the website. The main motives of these complaints were examined qualitatively based on grounded theory approach using inductive analysis in this study. The main motives for the complaints were shown as altruism and revenge, in the study. The study showed these reviews as highly powerful in making the customers to book or not book the hotels based on these reviews. The main limitation of the study was that it was based on only one travel website and hence there were generalization problems with this study. There could also be bias in the complaints put forth by the consumers in the websites since there could be differentiations among the complaints given by consumers who paid and not paid. Hence, the interpretations of the results need to be careful based on these considerations. Thus, a detailed study capturing these limitations and based on different websites covering information about many hotels can provide insights that are more valuable in this regard.

Kim and Gupta (2012) examined the methods of interpretation of emotions in online consumer reviews and their effects on the evaluation of the products by the consumers. The analysis was based on the effects of emotions in the online reviews of laptops done by 129 businesses under graduate students in a large Southern University using the theoretical framework of attribution theory. The analysis using ANOVA and mediation analysis showed the negative emotions resulting in less negative product evaluations through the reduction in review rationality of the perceiver. The effects of positive emotions on the positive valuation of the products were also not supported by the study. This effect was confined, however to a single review while in the case of convergent negative emotions in multiple reviews, the study showed rise in informative value resulting in increased negative impact on product evaluations. The same was obtained in the case of consumer behaviour due to multiple positive reviews. The main limitation of the study is that it was based on the review of laptops, which is a utilitarian product where the effect of emotions might not be very important. This need not be generalizable to hedonic products like the hotel industry services where emotions are more important. Hence, the effects of emotions in the online reviews on the consumer behaviour needs to be studied in detail separately for the utilitarian and hedonic products. Moreover, as shown in the study itself, the effects of different types of emotions on the consumer behaviour needs to be studied in detail differentiating between various emotion types like anger, regret, pride, happiness, frustration etc . All these can provide insights that are more valuable. A detailed study is needed in this regard since this is an under researched area.

Malone (2012) examined the effects of emotions in ethical consumption in tourism using semi-structured interviews with tourists who are self-defined as ethical tourists done through interpretative phenomenological analysis. It was examined how the tourists uncovered their subjective experiences, meanings of these experiences and the methods of making use of these experiences. The

respondents showed their difficulties in expressing these emotional experiences. At the same time, the study shows that the emotional experiences play an important role in the ethical decision-making of the participants and to create an expression of self-identity. Moreover, these experiences are found significant in affecting the future ethical behaviours of the respondents. The study shows the highly influential effects of the negative emotions on the ethical consumption of the tourists and the transformational effect of the positive emotions on the ethical consumption of the tourists. The study however does not focus on the effects of the emotions in the electronic word of mouth communication on the behaviour of tourists while focuses on the effects of emotional experiences of the tourists on their ethical consumption.

Sotriadis and Zyl (2013) examined the effects of electronic word of mouth and online reviews on the behaviour of tourists using the analysis of these through the twitter platform. The study was based on an online questionnaire designed for Twitter users from Europe and South Africa for a period of five months. The validity and reliability analysis of the questionnaire showed the questions as highly valid and reliable. Regression analysis is used to examine the methods of interpretation of the electronic word of mouths and online reviews by the tourists and the different factors influencing the behaviour of tourists in their decision making. The three main factors influencing the decision making of the consumers based on the online reviews in this study includes the source reliability of the reviews in Twitter, degree of involvement of the users and the expertise of the users of the Twitter. Among these three, source reliability is considered the most important followed by source expertise, as shown by the regression analysis. The study shows the need for creative and strategic application for the effective usage of the online websites in affecting the behaviour of the tourists. The main limitation of the study is that it is also based on only one website twitter, which can have generalization problems. The study needs to be extended to

different online review providing platforms to provide insights that are more valuable in this regard. Moreover, the effects of the contents in the online reviews especially the emotions on the behaviour of tourists are not captured here. This also needs to be captured for getting insights that are more fruitful on the effects of the factors influencing the decision making of the tourists relying on the online reviews and electronic word of mouth communication. Hence, a detailed study is needed in this regard for getting valuable insights.

In the study by Mauri and Minazzi (2013), the effects of the user-generated contents in the websites about the experiences of the guests in the hotel rooms on the purchasing intentions of the users of the website were examined. The study is carried out through an online survey with 349 young adults who were told to imagine a hotel searching and the content reading of the reviews of the other users and to create different imaginary scenarios based on the review of online reviews generated by the users of different hotels. The analysis shows that a positive correlation is obtained between the purchasing intentions of the customers and the expectations of the customers. The main limitation of the study is that it is based on only one age group, education level and nationality, for which there can be generalization problems regarding age and education level. Hence, the sample needs to be more representative to get fruitful results. The second limitation is that correlation can suggest only co movements between the variables under consideration and cannot tell the causation results. Thus, the effects of the online reviews on the purchase intentions cannot be fully captured by the correlation analysis, which can be indicative only. It needs to be captured in a well-specified multivariate framework, controlling for the effects of other possible factors, which can affect the purchasing intentions of the customers. The content wise analysis of the online reviews especially the effects of emotions on the purchasing intentions of the customers is not

captured in this study. Hence, a more detailed study can provide valuable and fruitful insights in this regard.

Sparks et al (2013) examines the effects of the online reviews on the behaviour of consumers by differentiating between the contents of the reviews as the reviews by managers versus tourists, specific versus abstract contents and the presence or absence of certification logos in the reviews, unlike the previous studies. The study is through an online survey based on questionnaire with 537 respondents. The analysis is done by mediation analysis involving a series of regression equations and a three-way ANOVA test analysis. The study shows complex interactions between all the factors involved while the information provided by the customers is found more trustworthy than that provided by the managers. The reviews with specific contents are found more influential on the decision making process of the customers than the reviews with abstract contents, in the study. The analysis also shows that the decisions of the customers are influenced by the attitude of the customers towards the hotels and the belief of the hotels in the corporate social responsibility. Thus, the study shows the importance of the effects of the contents in the reviews on the decision making process of the customers regarding the booking of the hotels. However, this study still does not capture the effect of emotions in the reviews on the decision making process of the consumers which is an under researched area. This needs to be examined in detail for getting more fruitful insights on the effects of the online reviews on the decision making process of the customers.

Wu (2013) examines the differences in the contents made by the US guests in the online reviews in trip advisor website regarding their experiences with selected American and Chinese five star luxury hotels and the effects of these online reviews on the decisions of the customers in booking the hotels. The study is done using content analysis. The study shows significant differences in the contents

written by the US guests on the different hotels. Moreover, the reviews are found significantly influential on the intentions of customers to book the hotels. However, the study does not capture the effects of specific contents in the reviews namely, emotions on the purchasing intentions of the customers. There are also generalization problems with this study. Hence, a detailed study is needed in this regard.

On the basis of the review in this chapter, the next section discusses the research gaps identified from the literature review.

In the study by Alcasar et al(2014), the effects of the user generated online reviews on the image formation in tourists in Espana is examined. The study is done for two destination image dimensions namely affective and cognitive. The study is done based on data collected from adults over 18 who are planning to visit some tourist destinations and have never visited the destination before. The mediating effects of the affective and cognitive dimensions of the destination image dimensions on the relationship between user generated content access and intentions for visiting destination were examined through bootstrap modelling. The results showed only the effects of cognitive image as a destination image dimension affecting the relationship between user generated content access and intentions for visiting the destinations. The main reasons for this were given that the affective dimension could be a function of the cognitive dimension though both were treated separate in the literature. This was given as an explanation for the dominating effect of the cognitive dimension in the study. However, the main critique of the study is

that it is based on the reviews from the official destination site and hence there could be bias in the reviews. The reviews from other review platforms could provide better results in this regard. The effects of emotion in the online reviews, on the behaviour of the tourists, however, were also not captured in the study. Hence, a more detailed study in this regard could provide more valuable insights regarding the effects of user-generated contents on the consumer behaviour.

3.4. Conclusion and Research Gaps

In this chapter, the studies on the effects of online reviews on the purchasing intention of the customers in the hotel industry were critically reviewed. The review shows that there were many studies done on the effects of online review on the purchasing intentions of the customers in the hotel industry. However, the effects of the emotions in the online reviews on the purchasing intentions in this regard is under researched. Though one study examined the effect of emotions in this regard, it was based on the review of laptops, which cannot be generalized to other industries like hotel industries. This is because laptops are utilitarian goods and hence emotions do not play significant role in the consumption behaviour of these goods. On the other hand, hotel services are hedonic goods where emotions play a significant role in the decision making of customers. Hence, the effects of emotions in the reviews especially review with high positive emotions, on the purchasing intentions of customers in the hotel industry needs to be examined in detail. This is because the study on the effects of the contents is helpful in examining the motivating factors for the purchasing behaviour by consumers in the hotel industry. This chapter shows the highly significant effect of the online review on the customer behaviour while how the highly emotional reviews affects the customer decisions compared to the non emotional review needs to be examined in detail. Moreover, the

moderating effect of the type of the hotel also needs to be examined in the analysis.

The next section discusses the conceptual framework for the present study.

2.5. Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical framework of attribution theory by Weiner (2000) on consumption behaviour examining the role of emotions in the consumption process, the conceptual framework for the present study is given below.

In our study, there are three groups namely group, which uses highly positive emotional reviews, group, which uses non-emotional reviews, and a control group namely group which does not use any review. In each group, there are hotels of two different types. Our hypothesis is that the group with highly positive emotional reviews is more likely to have a positive attitude towards the hotel in terms of likelihood of booking the hotel, recommending the hotel and willing to pay for the hotel when compared with the other group with non-emotional reviews. This is because the highly positive emotions in the online reviews are likely to encourage the customers in developing the positive attitude towards the hotels more than the other groups based on the Weiner's model of cognition emotion action process. It is also assumed that the type of hotel has a moderating effect on the relationship between emotional expression and the likelihood to feel more positive towards the hotel.

The next chapter discusses the methodology for the present study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology for the present study is discussed. There are six sections for this chapter. In the next section, the choice of methodology for this chapter is discussed. In the third section, the data collection methods and the data sources are discussed. In the fourth section, the sample selection methods are discussed. In the fifth section, the ethical issues are discussed. The sixth section concludes the chapter.

3.2. Choice of Methodology

The two commonly accepted research methodologies are positivism and interpretivism. In the case of positivism, the analysis is based on reasoning and observed facts through the repetition of experiments (Ryan, 2006). Here the researcher is considered separate from the reality. In other words, the ideological positions of the researchers are not important. This means that the objectivity of the analysis is assumed here (Weber, 2004). The experiments can be repeated under different situations here. The analysis is done using quantitative methods based on positivism (Ryan, 2006). The main advantage of this method is the chance of verifying the results using alternative empirical methods. The main critiques of the method includes ignoring the qualitative methods of analysis and possibility of repetition of experiments (Weber, 2004).

Interpretivism is based on the ideological positions of the researcher and it is considered subjective (Walsham, 2006). The researcher and reality are considered dependent here and hence results are subjective. The results here cannot be repeated under alternative situations. Here the analysis is done using qualitative methods. The main advantages of this method are the flexibility and the chances of non-repetition of

the experiments (Walsham, 2006). The main critiques of the method are the chances of distortion of the results due to its subjective nature and the non-possibility of testing the reliability of results using different methods (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

The methodology used here is positivism since the results here are obtained using observed facts and reasoning and not the ideological positions of the researcher. Moreover, the results need to be verified using alternative empirical methods, which is possible only through positivism. Primary data is used for the analysis and the analysis is done using quantitative methods. The research tool used here is questionnaire based online survey.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis Methods

The data is collected through questionnaire-based survey. There are three groups of respondents namely those who use highly positive emotional reviews (Group A), those who use non-emotional reviews (Group B) and those who do not use any reviews (Group C). Group A and Group B are the treatment groups and Group C is the control group here (Cochran, 2012). There are thirty respondents each in three groups and there are overall 90 respondents. Questions about two hotels are asked for each group to examine the moderating effect of the type of hotel on the links between emotional expression and the purchasing behaviour of the customers. Three separate questionnaires are designed for the three groups, which are given in appendix 1. Both likert scale and closed ended questions are asked in the questionnaire. Questions are asked regarding the socio demographic characteristic of the respondents, the likelihood of booking the hotel, likelihood of recommending the hotel and the willingness to pay for the hotel are asked for the respondents in each group. The same questions are asked about the two types of hotels (one luxury and one mid ranged hotel) for examining the moderating effect in this regard. The study is based only on positive emotional reviews since there will always be a positive representation of themselves by the hotels. There

are more chances for people to visit hotel websites which they already have a positive feeling and with the intention of booking the hotels. Hence, this study has been done only with positive reviews. The reviews are classified into emotional and non-emotional reviews using a pre test. This was done to understand more about the perceptions of people on emotional and non-emotional reviews. There are only 4 reviews supplemented with each hotel to make the questionnaire shorter and for saving time. Fictitious hotels are used for the study purpose here for avoiding any possible bias due to the familiarity or prior experience with the hotels.

Before coming to the main analysis, the reliability or internal consistency of the three questionnaires is examined using the cronbach's alpha statistics. The differences in the means of likelihood of booking and recommending the hotel as well as the willingness to pay by the three groups are examined using the t tests of significance and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Moreover, the effects of emotional expression on the likelihood of booking and recommending the hotel moderated by the type of hotel is again examined through second set of t tests and ANOVA tests to find out the results are uniform for the different types of hotels.

3.4. Sampling Methods

There are two types of sampling methods namely probability and non-probability sampling methods (Cochran, 2012). In the case of probability sampling, the chances of each unit being selected in the sample is certain with a known probability. In the case of non-probability sampling, the chances for each unit being selected in the sample are unknown (Thompson, 2002). The main types of probability sampling methods are simple random sampling, stratified sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling and multi stage sampling (Thompson, 2002). The main types of non-probability

sampling are purposive or judgement or purposive sampling, convenience sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling (Deville, 1991). Here, judgement or purposive sampling is used for the study because the sample is selected for the definite purpose, which satisfies certain criteria, based on the judgement of the researcher. The criteria is the adults who are likely to book , recommend and willing to pay for hotels of two different types based on highly positively emotional reviews , non emotional reviews and no reviews.

3.5. Ethical Issues

There are ethical issues associated with the asking of questions related to the emotions in the reviews and their effects on the decision making process of the respondents. Hence, consent of the respondents is obtained in advance regarding asking these questions. It is ensured to the respondents that the confidentiality of the data collected will be maintained. It is also ensured that the data collected will be used for educational purposes and not for any other purposes.

3.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the research methodology for the present study is discussed. The discussion shows that positivism is the one used here. The research tool is questionnaire-based survey of three different groups, two treatment groups and a control group with 30 respondents each. The sample is collected using judgement sampling. The reliability of the questionnaire is tested using Chronbach's alpha statistics. The ethical implications of the study are also discussed in this chapter. The analysis is done using t tests of significance and ANOVA tests done in two stages.

The next chapter discusses the findings and its interpretations.

CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the findings from the study are discussed and interpreted. There are four sections for this chapter. In the next section, the preliminary trends obtained and the reliability of the questionnaire is discussed. In the third section, the results of the main analysis are discussed and interpreted. The fourth section concludes the chapter.

4.2. Preliminary Trends

4.2.1. Reliability of the Questionnaires

Table 4.1: Group A Questionnaire

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	30	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	30	100.0
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.737	17

The above table shows the reliability statistics for the questionnaire to group A(with highly positive emotional reviews). It shows the

Cronbach's Alpha statistics as 0.737. This shows the questionnaire for this group is highly internally consistent or reliable.

**Group B Questionnaire
Table 4.2**

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	30	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	30	100.0
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.829	17

The above table shows the reliability statistics for the questionnaire to group B (with non emotional reviews). It shows the Cronbach's Alpha statistics as 0.829. This shows the questionnaire for this group is highly internally consistent or reliable.

Group C Questionnaire

Table 4.3

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	30	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	30	100.0
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.754	11

The above table shows the reliability statistics for the questionnaire to group C (with non-emotional reviews). It shows the Cronbach's Alpha statistics as 0.754. This shows the questionnaire for this group is highly internally consistent or reliable.

Thus, this section shows that the questionnaires for all the three groups are internally consistent or reliable. Thus, the next section discusses the sample characteristics for the three groups.

4.2.2. Sample Characteristics

Table 4.4: Demographic Characteristics (Percentage of Respondents)

	Group A	Group B	Group C
Age			
18-22 years old	43	37	47
23-28 years old	27	40	23
29-35 years old	3	10	7
36+ years old	27	13	23
Gender			
Male	50	47	43
Female	50	53	57

The above table shows that majority of the respondents in group A are of the age group 18 to 22 years while next comes the age group of 23- 28 years and above 36 years. In group B, majority are of the age group 23 to 28 years old followed by the age group 18 to 22 years old. In group C, majority are of the age group 18 to 22 years old followed by the age group 23 to 28 years and above 36 years .This

means that most of the respondents in all the three groups are young adults. Regarding the gender of the respondents, in-group A half of the respondents are males and the rest half are females. In group B, majority are females (53 %) while the rest are females. In the group C also majority (57%) are females, while the rest are males. Thus, it is seen that there is no gender bias in group A while, group B and Group C have slight bias towards the females.

Table 4.5: Socio Economic Characteristics of the Respondents

	Group A	Group B	Group C
Education			
High School Graduate or equivalent	7	10	23
Bachelors Degree	63	53	50
Masters Degree	30	33	23
Doctoral Degree	0	3	0
Others	0	0	3
Marital status			
Single, never married	67	70	70
Married	7	13	13
Married with children	27	17	17
Divorced/Separated	0	0	0
Widowed	0	0	0
Employment			

Employed	53	60	23
Student	43	33	60
Out of work and looking for work	0	3	3
Out of work and not looking for work	3	3	13
Retired or unable to work	0	0	0
Annual Income Level			
No income	37	33	63
Less than 15000	40	13	10
15000 - 25000	13	7	17
25000 - 40000	0	10	7
40000 - 75000	10	20	0
Above 75000	0	17	3

The above table shows the socio economic characteristics of the respondents for the three groups. It shows that majority of the respondents in the three groups are bachelor degree graduates followed by masters degree graduates. Only 3 percent of the respondents in Group B are having doctoral degree. This means that majority of the respondents are bachelor degree graduates in all the three groups. Regarding the Marital status of the respondents, majority of the respondents are single in all the three groups followed by married with children. The employment status of the respondents in all the three groups shows that majority of the respondents in group A and B are employed followed by students while those in Group C are students. The annual income level of the respondents in all the three groups shows that for the group A the annual income level of majority lies in the range less than 15000 British pounds followed by no income. For the group B respondents, it is seen that the income level of majority of the respondents have no income followed by those in the range 40000 to 75000 British pounds. For

the group C respondents, it is seen that the majority of the respondents have no income followed by the income level range of 15000-25000 British pounds. This means that the majority of respondents in Group Band C have no income and only for those in Group C have majority less than 15000 British pounds.

The next subsection shows the preliminary trends in the likelihood of booking the hotel, likelihood of recommending the hotel and the willingness to pay for the hotel for the three groups.

Table 4.6: Likelihood of Booking and Recommending Hotel A and Willingness to pay for it by three groups (Descriptive Statistics)

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard Deviation	No of Responses
Booking Hotel					
Group A	1	4	1.73	0.83	30
Group B	1	4	2.03	0.76	30
Group C	1	5	2.23	0.86	30
Recommending Hotel					
Group A	1	4	2.6	0.96	30
Group B	1	5	1.9	1.04	30
Group C	1	5	2.43	1.04	30
Amount Willing to Pay					
Group A	104	395	180	62	30
Group B	80	290	145.57	59.14	30
Group C	80	400	156	68	30

**Table 4.6: Likelihood of Booking and Recommending Hotel B
and Willingness to pay for it by three groups (Descriptive
Statistics**

	Minimum	Maximum	Average	Standard Deviation	No of Responses
Booking Hotel					
Group A	1	5	2.3	1.09	30
Group B	1	5	2.6	1.28	30
Group C	1	5	2.8	1.13	30
Recommending Hotel					
Group A	1	5	2.93	1.13	30
Group B	1	5	2.37	1.6	30
Group C	1	5	2.83	1.05	30
Amount Willing to Pay					
Group A	20.00	259.00	101.03	58.20	30
Group B	20.00	221.00	79.20	53.03	30
Group C	20.00	180.00	83.30	40.80	30

4.3. Main Analysis Findings

Table 4.7: t Test Results for the likelihood of booking hotel A

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	1.525	.222	-1.458	58	.150
Equal variances not assumed			-1.458	57.643	.150

Table 4.8: ANOVA Test Results for the likelihood of booking hotel A

ANOVA					
Take a moment to consider the information about Hotel A. Based on that, please answer the followi...-How likely would you be to book this hotel?					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.800	2	1.900	2.840	.064
Within Groups	58.200	87	.669		
Total	62.000	89			

Table 4.9: t test results for the likelihood of recommending hotel A

Independent Samples Test					
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	F	Sig.			
Equal variances assumed	2.780	.01	-.595	58	.044
Equal variances not assumed			-.595	55.255	.044

ANOVA					
Take a moment to consider the information about Hotel A. Based on that, please answer the followi...-How likely would you be to recommend this hotel to others?					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.622	2	2.311	3.680	.034
Within Groups	75.033	87	.862		
Total	79.656	89			

Table 4.10: t test results for the willingness to pay for hotel A

Independent Samples Test						
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means			
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Equal variances assumed	.006	.937	2.219	58	.030	
Equal variances not assumed			2.219	57.866	.030	

Table 4.11: ANOVA test results for the willingness to pay for hotel A

ANOVA					
What is the maximum amount (in British pounds) that you would be willing to pay per night for a r...-Please use the slider to indicate the amount					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	19057.489	2	9528.744	2.373	.005
Within Groups	349287.667	87	4014.801		
Total	368345.156	89			

Table 4.12: : t Test Results for the likelihood of booking hotel B

Independent Samples Test						
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
	F	Sig.				
Equal variances assumed	1.652	.204	-.980	58	.331	.313
Equal variances not assumed			-.980	56.582	.331	.313

Table 4.13: ANOVA Test Results for the likelihood of booking hotel B

ANOVA					
Take a moment to consider the information about Hotel B. Based on that, please answer the followi...-How likely would you be to book this hotel?					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.800	2	1.900	1.397	.253

Within Groups	118.300	87	1.360		
Total	122.100	89			

Table 4.14:t Test Results for the likelihood of recommending hotel B

Independent Samples Test					
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	F	Sig.			
Equal variances assumed	5.571	.022	-4.588	58	0.037
Equal variances not assumed			-5.588	52.213	0.037

Table 4:15: ANOVA Test Results for the likelihood of recommending hotel B

ANOVA					
Take a moment to consider the information about Hotel B. Based on that, please answer the followi...-How likely would you be to recommend this hotel to others?					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.267	2	2.633	4.552	.018
Within Groups	147.633	87	1.697		
Total	152.900	89			

Table 4:16: t Test Results for the willingness to pay for hotel B

Independent Samples Test					
	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	.001	.972	4.519	58	.034
Equal variances not assumed			5.519	57.504	.034

Table 4:17: ANOVA Test Results for the willingness to pay for hotel B

ANOVA					
What is the maximum amount (in British pounds) that you would be willing to pay per night for a r...-Please use the slider to indicate the amount					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8079.756	2	4039.878	5.541	.020
Within Groups	228068.067	87	2621.472		
Total	236147.822	89			

