

Borchers, N. S. (2023). Why do we trust in online reviews? Integrative literature review and future research directions. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 17(2), Article 7. <https://doi.org/10.5817/CP2023-2-7>

Why Do We Trust in Online Reviews? Integrative Literature Review and Future Research Directions

Nils S. Borchers

Institute of Media Studies, University of Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany

Abstract

Online reviews are an important information source in decision-making processes. Basing decisions on online reviews, however, requires consumers to trust. Consequently, studying trust has become a major research concern. This article provides an integrative literature review of 70 articles published between 2005 and 2021 that, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, investigated which factors affect trust in the context of online reviews. Results show that research examined 77 different factors for their effect on trust. For most factors—such as integrity of reviewer, quality of argument, and consistency of review with other reviews—the findings are relatively distinct. The impact of some other factors—such as homophily, two-sidedness of reviews, and emotionality of reviews—is less clear. To synthesize and systematize the results, I develop a conceptual framework based on a model of the online review process. This framework identifies six groups of factors, namely factors related to reviewers, opinion seekers, platforms, communities, option providers, and external actors. On a more general level, the review finds that research uses many different operationalizations of trust, yet rarely embraces more comprehensive concepts of trust. Based on an assessment of the state of the field, I suggest that future research should corroborate, integrate, and expand upon this body of knowledge.

Keywords: online reviews; eWOM; trust; credibility; literature review; theory

Editorial Record

First submission received:
September 22, 2021

Revisions received:
September 28, 2022
February 20, 2023

Accepted for publication:
February 22, 2023

Editor in charge:
Lenka Dedkova

Introduction

Online reviews of such diverse “objects” as cameras, hotels, physicians, and university lecturers have become a mass phenomenon. Many internet users search through reviews of peer consumers, peer patients, peer students, etc. before taking decisions so that online reviews have gained a considerable impact in many areas of everyday lives (e.g., Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Maslowska et al., 2017). Basing decisions on online reviews requires the trust of opinion seekers in the evaluations of their peers. Accordingly, trust in and credibility of online reviews are of specific importance for explaining the effects of reviews. However, trusting in online reviewers and their reviews is a high-risk undertaking. For example, the opinion seeker usually lacks information on both the reviewer’s motives to provide the review and the reviewer’s qualification to evaluate the reviewed object. Furthermore, the providers of the reviewed objects benefit from positive evaluations of their offerings and thus have strong incentives to influence reviews in their favor (Lappas, 2012). Yet despite these obstacles, surveys indicate that internet users widely trust online reviews: For example, an US industry survey (BrightLocal, 2022) found that

49 percent of consumers trust online reviews as much as they trust personal recommendations from family and friends.

Studying trust has become a main concern in research on online reviews. As this review article will show, I identified 70 research articles published in peer-reviewed journals that examined trust in online review contexts. However, a focused overview of their findings is still missing. There exist various literature reviews (Bore et al., 2017; C. M. K. Cheung & Thandani, 2010; Ismagilova et al., 2020; King et al., 2014; Rani & Shivaprasad, 2018) and conceptual frameworks (Moran & Muzellec, 2017) that address research on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication. These works are, however, neither focused exclusively on online reviews nor on trust and credibility. To close this gap, this article sets out to provide an integrative literature review of empirical studies on trust in online review contexts. It contributes to the field by collecting existing findings, offering a framework for organizing these findings, and identifying shortcomings and research desiderata to indicate future research directions.

Theorizing Trust in Online Review Contexts

In this section, I will put forward a suggestion on how to theorize trust in online review contexts. To do so, I will first introduce my theoretical understandings of online reviews and trust. Then, I will bring the two understandings together to develop a framework for organizing the empirical findings in the field.

Online Reviews

Online reviews are usually discussed as a specific format of eWOM communication. eWOM is defined as “consumer-generated, consumption-related communication that employs digital tools and is directed primarily to other consumers” (Babić Rosario et al., 2020). eWOM thus serves as an umbrella concept that includes not only online reviews, but also other types of computer-mediated peer-consumer conversations. In contrast to other eWOM formats, online reviews are usually posted on specific online review platforms. These platforms can be both integrated within retailer homepages (e.g., Amazon, Bookings), fan communities (e.g., Metalstorm, The Metal Archives), and social networking sites (e.g., Facebook), as well as created independently (e.g., Yelp, HealthGrades). Online reviews have been defined as “peer-generated product evaluations posted on company or third-party websites” (Mudambi & Schuff, 2008, p. 186). For the current study, I heavily draw on this definition but specify that I consider all studies relevant that examine peer evaluations in the review section of a review platform. These reviews may be posted on an actual platform or generated specifically for a scientific study. It should be noted that this approach leads to an exclusion of online reviews published on individual blogs, e.g., by social media influencers. I decided to exclude these reviews because the conditions under which trust in online reviews emerges on review platforms differs markedly from the conditions under which it emerges on blogs.

Trust

Trust is a common social phenomenon that can be observed in many, if not all, areas of everyday life. Yet, when trying to pinpoint trust, the fuzziness of the concept becomes apparent. Many researchers have tackled trust from the perspective of their respective fields and presented a wide range of conceptualizations (see Gefen et al., 2003, for an overview). However, many scholars agree that in a trust relationship, a trustor acts on the grounds of the expectation that a trustee acts in a specific way, although the trustee could also act differently (Barber, 1983; Gefen et al., 2003; Giddens, 1990; Hardin, 1992; Luhmann, 1968, 1975/2018; Möllering, 2001). For example, a consumer (aka the trustor) who reads an online review of a camera might expect that the reviewer (aka the trustee) has collected sufficient information about and gained extensive experience of the camera before publishing a review. The tricky point here is that the trustor cannot be sure whether the trustee actually acts in the expected way. This uncertainty makes trust risky because the trustee could always act differently than expected, but the trustor will find out whether the trustee fulfilled their expectations only after having trusted them (Gefen et al., 2003; Luhmann, 1968, 1975/2018). For example, a consumer buys the particular camera just to find out that the reviewer did not discuss relevant dysfunctionalities and weaknesses. Alternatively, some authors highlight the vulnerability of the trustor as a key characteristic of trust (e.g., McGeer & Pettit, 2017; Mishra, 1996; Rousseau et al., 1998) and thus emphasize the consequences of entering a relationship whose outcomes are uncertain because they depend on the trustee.

For this review, I chose to draw on a concept that was, at its core, developed by Luhmann (1968, 1975/2018). Luhmann shares the definition of trust relationships that I just introduced. Imperative for the Luhmannian understanding of trust then is the notion of “own selectivity” (Luhmann, 1990). The concept of own selectivity starts from the observation that, in most situations, a person faces more than one option how to act and therefore must make a decision. It highlights that only this person can make the decision. In a next analytical step, Luhmann introduces a second person to the situation to highlight the social consequences of own selectivity. In their actions, the second person depends on the first person and therefore has to find ways to cope with the first person’s own selectivity as the general autonomy to decide what to do. For Luhmann, trust is a mechanism that helps the second person (the trustor) to do so by acting on the grounds of the assumption that the first person (the trustee) will act as expected. Other such mechanisms are, for example, familiarity, contracts, and hope (Kohring, 2004). A consequence of this understanding of trust is that trust is always addressed to another social actor such as online reviewers and not to entities without own selectivity such as online reviews. This position also explains why, in trying to be analytically rigorous, I use the somewhat cumbersome formulation “trust in online review contexts” instead of “trust in online reviews.”

Since trusting is a risky business, trustors try to identify reasons to trust (Kohring, 2004). Such reasons serve as legitimation for entering a trust relationship because they reduce the perceived risk. For instance, in the camera example, the educational background of the reviewer or the conformity of a review with other reviews on the same camera may function as reasons to trust. Reasons to trust usually refer to particular dimensions of trust (Kohring, 2004). While trust is regarded as a multidimensional concept (Gefen, 2002; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Romero & Mitchell, 2017), there exists less consensus about which dimensions constitute trust. Some authors argue in support of general principles that address the risk and vulnerability of the trustor such as benevolence (McKnight & Chervany, 2001; Romero & Mitchell, 2017), honesty (Fukuyama, 1995; Seckler et al., 2015), or reliability (Mishra, 1996; Rotter, 1971). In contrast, Luhmann (1968, 1975/2018) argues that the dimensions of trust depend on the social context of the trust relationship. That is to say that the dimensions of trust will be different in different social contexts. For example, the dimensions of trust in a writer of online reviews differs from those of trust in a judge or in a politician because online review author, judge, and politician fulfill different functions in society. In this review, I follow this second line of reasoning.

A considerable debate in trust research circles around the question whether trust should be considered a belief, an attitude, an intention, or a combination of these (for an overview, see Gefen et al., 2003). The Luhmannian line of understanding trust brings up yet another possibility: From its perspective, trust can be regarded as a social relation between two (or more) persons. Accordingly, it holds that trust emerges in and through the relationship rather than “residing” in the trustor. This perspective allows to adjourn the debate on belief, attitude, and intention without neglecting its relevance.

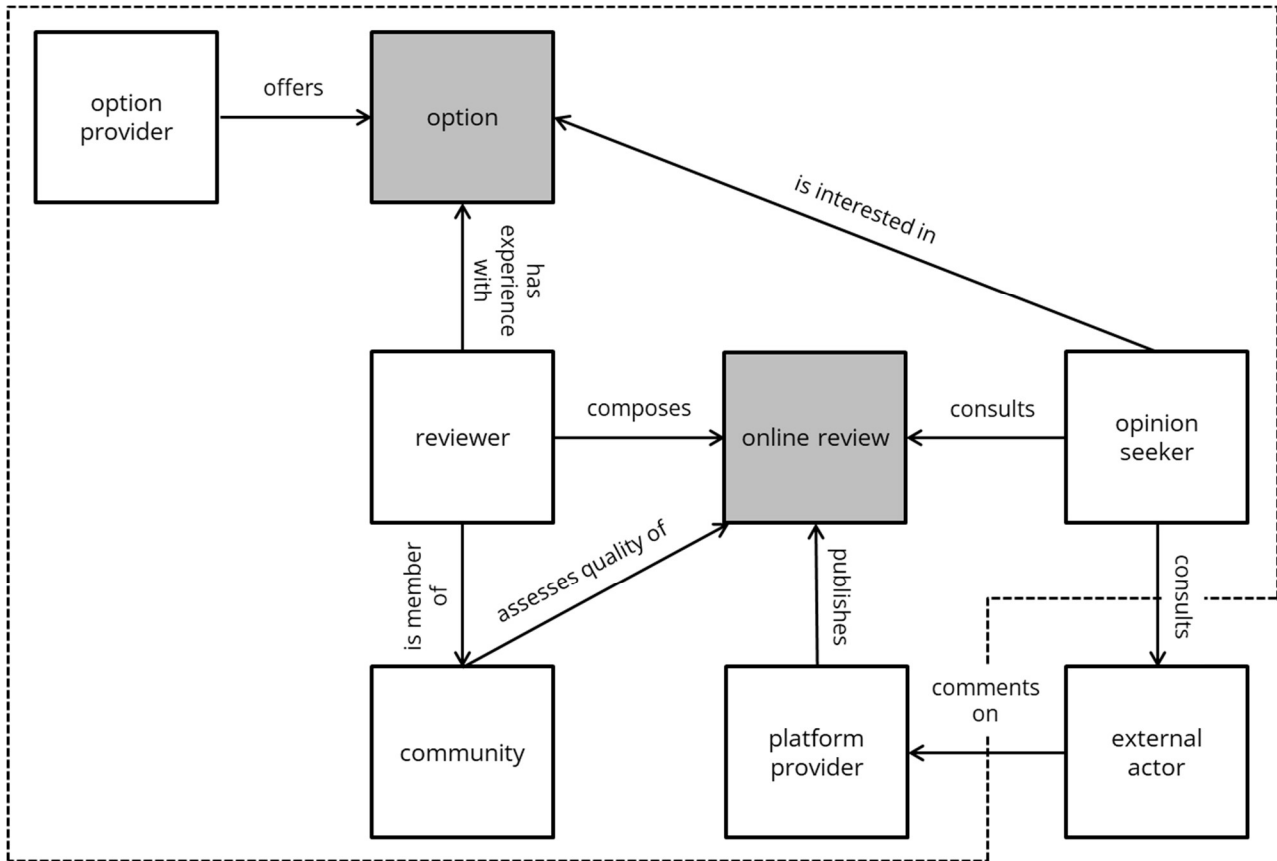
Luhmann’s concept of trust has proven to be productive for the study of trust in mediated communication (e.g., Graf, 2018; Hoffjann, 2013; Kohring, 2004). Like any other concept, however, Luhmann’s concept opens specific perspectives while, at the same time, suffering from its blind spots. This is why I want to emphasize that there exist other trust concepts (e.g., Barber, 1983; Giddens, 1990; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; McGeer & Pettit, 2017; Möllering, 2001) that are worth exploring and that will open different perspectives on trust in online review contexts. Beyond the question of which particular concept to adopt, I suggest that engaging with more comprehensive concepts of trust is fruitful because it sharpens the analytical capabilities of research on trust in online review contexts.

Trust in Online Review Contexts

As Duffy (2017) pointed out, there are different forms of trust in online review contexts. To identify relevant trust relationships, I employed a model of the ideal online review process (Figure 1). The model identifies the various actors involved in the review process: An *option provider* (e.g., camera manufacturer or physician) offers a specific option (e.g., camera that can be bought or health treatment that can be received). A *reviewer*, who, ideally, has experience with using this option, composes a review to share this experience. The review is (usually) published on a platform, provided by a *platform provider* (e.g., Amazon or Healthgrades). A *community* of platform users assesses the quality of the review (e.g., via comments, flagging, helpfulness votes). An opinion seeker who is interested in the option consults the review as part of their decision making on whether to select the option. In addition to reading the review, the opinion seeker might collect further information provided by an *external actor*, i.e., an actor who is neither associated with the platform nor the option. Note also that the model only captures

the most basic operation of the online review process, which is *one* opinion seeker consulting *one* review. In most cases, the opinion seeker will consult more than one review and compare the reviews with each other.

Figure 1. Model of the Ideal Online Review Process.



Note. White boxes symbolize actors within the process. Gray boxes symbolize cultural artifacts. Arrows symbolize relations between actors and artifacts. Dotted lines frame the core of the online review process. Note that the model indicates relations only for the ideal case in which all actors act in a way that facilitates the best online review quality.

From the perspective of the opinion seeker, the involvement of other actors poses risks due to each actor's own selectivity: The opinion seeker cannot know whether these actors act in a way that ensures good review quality and thus might disappoint expectations directed toward them. For example, platform providers might sell specific editing options to option providers, option providers might pay reviewers to write tendentious reviews (Gössling et al., 2018), reviewers might be unconsciously biased toward premium brands (de Langhe et al., 2016), and community members might have different views on what constitutes a helpful review. Because of these risks, the opinion seeker needs to trust in one or more of the involved actors if they consult online reviews as a source of information in the decision-making process. This conclusion implies that trust in online review contexts usually goes beyond the sole trust in the reviewer to also involve other actors as trustees. The model of the online review process provides a framework for organizing research on trust in online reviews. It allows for attribution of the examined factors to specific actors in the online review process, by indicating to whose actor's selective actions the factor refers.

Considering the various actors also helps to reflect on four distinctive features of trust in online review contexts that, in combination, distinguish this setting from offline settings. First, while pooling recommendations in offline settings usually includes familiar trustees such as friends, family members, and colleagues, trust in online review contexts is directed at anonymous strangers such as reviewers and platform communities (Borchers, 2021). This mechanism allows opinion seekers to benefit from the experiences of other internet users beyond local, temporal, and social constraints, yet it comes at the price of drastically reduced familiarity with the trustees. Second, review platforms allow their users to share experiences and thus facilitate trust between strangers. However, they provide not only the technical infrastructure for the online review process, but also the terms and conditions for publishing and accessing online reviews (van Dijck, 2013). These terms and conditions reflect the commercial interests of platform providers. Third, quality management is delegated to the community and usually takes place only after the publication. This is different from other (offline) sources to which opinion seekers could turn such as travel books when looking for accommodation or consumer safety groups when looking for a new smoothie

maker. Fourth, the online review process is expected to be a peer-to-peer communication process (Borchers, 2021). Peer-to-peer communication implies that the roles of reviewer and opinion seeker are generally interchangeable. Consequently, all opinion seekers could also act as reviewers and vice versa. Such role flexibility does not exist in most other social contexts, such as traditional advertising or journalism.

Research Questions

Trust in online reviews has emerged as an eminent topic in the research on eWOM. This review article aims at providing an overview of the state of research. First, it addresses the research designs that researchers apply. Research designs determine what researchers can see. For example, standardized surveys make exactly those attitudes, intentions, behaviors etc. visible that the surveys ask for. In contrast, observations do not predefine what is to see and thus expand the perspective of the researcher, yet they usually fail to see the broader picture beyond individual cases because they focus on only a few participants.

RQ1: Which research designs are applied in studies on trust in online review contexts?

Second, this review examines the theoretical conceptualizations that inform studies on trust in online review contexts. Like methods, theoretical conceptualizations allow researchers to see specific aspects of a phenomenon because they direct the view of the researcher.

RQ2: How do studies on trust in online review contexts conceptualize trust?

While the RQ1 and RQ2 provide information on how researchers produced their findings, the third research question aims at the actual findings and accounts for the factors that explain trust in online review contexts.

RQ3: Which factors have which effects on trust in online review contexts?

Method

Methodological Framework: Integrative Literature Review

To answer the research questions, I conducted an integrative literature review (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). The integrative literature review "reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way" (Torraco, 2005, p. 356). It aims at generating a summary of research trends as well as new perspectives and frameworks on the reviewed topic (Khoo et al., 2011; Torraco, 2005). The integrative literature review supports my objectives in going beyond the description of existing research and allowing for the application of a new conceptual framework and the development of future research directions.

Data Collection

An appropriate and comprehensive literature search strategy is important for enhancing the rigor of literature reviews. The strategy should allow identification of all relevant articles to ensure that the review is based on an adequate corpus and can yield accurate results (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005).

Databases

Online reviews are studied in different disciplines, such as marketing, communication, psychology, information systems, and tourism. To take the diversity of the research field into account, I considered a variety of established international academic databases: (1) Business Source Premier, (2) Communication & Mass Media Complete, (3) PsycARTICLES, (4) PsycINFO, (5) PSYINDEX, (6) Library Information Science and Technology Abstracts, and (7) Web of Science.

Search Term

The research literature discusses online reviews under various labels. I therefore included alternative labels in the search term by varying (a) the term "online" with "internet," "digital," and, as a large share of existing studies is interested in consumer behavior, "consumer;" and (b) the term "review" with "rating" and "recommendation." In

In addition, I searched for the term “eWOM” or “electronic word-of-mouth” (in different variants) because eWOM is an umbrella concept that includes online reviews. Furthermore, research on trust relies on two theoretical concepts, trust and credibility (Kohring & Matthes, 2007). As the two terms are closely connected, I decided to include both in the search term. These considerations resulted in the search term displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Final Search Term for Integrative Literature Review.

Block	Search Term Entered in Topic Field
Dependent variable	(trust* OR cred*)
	AND
Study context	(ewom OR “electronic word-of-mouth” OR “electronic word of mouth” OR “word-of-mouth” OR “word of mouse” OR “online review” OR “online rating” OR “online recommendation” OR “internet review” OR “internet rating” OR “internet recommendation” OR “digital review” OR “digital rating” OR “digital recommendation” OR “consumer review” OR “consumer rating” OR “consumer recommendation”)

Selection Criteria

I included an article in the corpus of this review if it met the following content criteria: (1) The article explains the perception of trust (or credibility, respectively) in an online review or the reviewer (see section 2.1), i.e., it conceptualizes trust in online review contexts as a dependent or mediating variable. Articles that focused on trust in other social actors, such as brands or platforms, were not included. I also did not consider articles that examined trust exclusively as an independent or moderating variable. (2) The article focuses on online reviews. Articles on other eWOM formats, including blog posts, forum postings, or social media commentaries, were excluded. Articles were also excluded if they studied online reviews posted outside of review platforms. If in doubt whether an article studied online reviews, for example if the article addressed eWOM and did not specify the eWOM format, I excluded it to ensure a clean data set. (3) The article presents the results of an empirical study.

Furthermore, I introduced three formal criteria: (4) The article is published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. (5) The article is published in English. (6) The article is published before January 1, 2021, the cutoff date of the query.

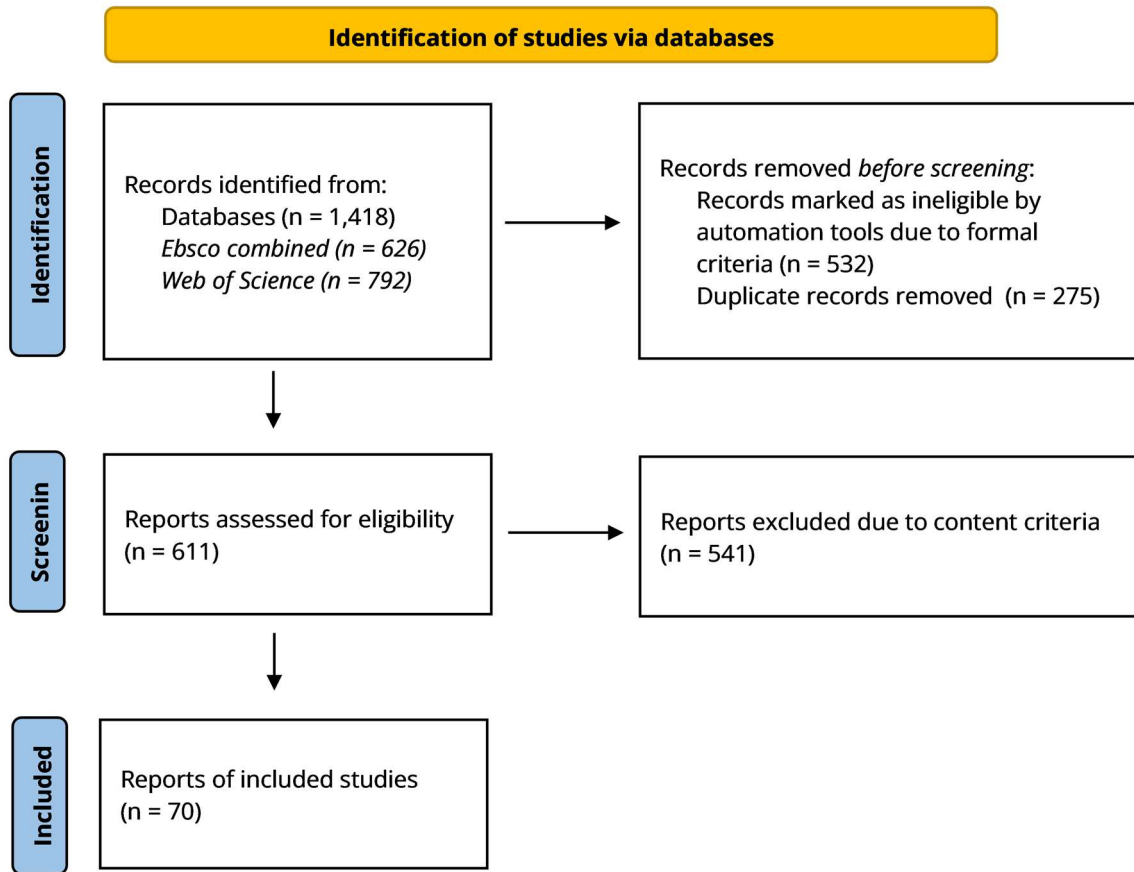
Article Selection

The full text query yielded 1,418 records in the seven databases. The combined Ebsco databases (databases 1–6) produced 626 hits, and Web of Science produced 792 hits. As the first step, I removed all articles that did not meet the formal criteria. 510 records were published in other formats than in peer-reviewed scientific journals, another 22 records were published in languages other than English, while all remaining articles were published before the cutoff date of the query. Applying the formal criteria thus led to the exclusion of 532 records. I then controlled the remaining 886 records for duplicates. This procedure identified 275 duplicates, reducing the number of records to 611. As the next step, I used the content criteria to decide whether the article should be included in the sample. To do so, I reviewed the title, keywords, and abstract. If this information did not suffice to make a decision, I examined the full text of the article. This procedure yielded to the exclusion of another 541 records. The final sample thus comprised 70 articles (see Appendix A). Figure 2 displays the selection process.

Data Analysis

For data analysis, I followed Whittemore and Knafli's (2005) instructions for integrative literature reviews. They propose the following procedure: (1) *Data reduction*: I coded the articles for concepts of trust, theories, methods, examined factors, and results. (2) *Data display*: I synthesized the data from the individual articles and organized it into subgroups. This process was guided by Kohring's (2004) concept of trust and the online review process model. I put particular attention to the identification of different factors discussed under the same label and similar factors discussed under different labels. (3) *Data comparison*: I examined the synthesized findings to identify strengths, shortcomings, and desiderata of the field. I placed emphasis on a critical analysis as described by Torraco (2005). (4) *Conclusion drawing*: I critically assessed the current state of research to develop future research directions.

Figure 2. Overview of Article Selection Process.

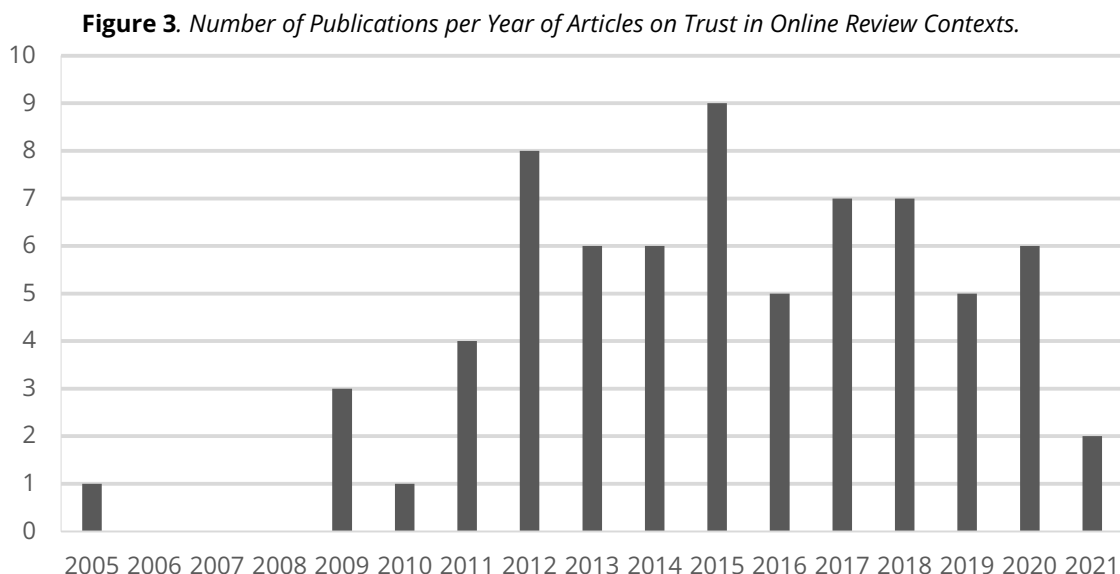


Note. Adapted from Page et al., 2020 (modified).

Results

Corpus Characteristics and Bibliometrics

I identified 70 articles on trust in online review contexts that met the selection criteria. The first article on the topic was published in 2005, but more profound scholarly interest in the topic started growing only in 2011 (see Figure 3). Articles were published in 43 individual journals (see Table 2). The large number of journals indicates a high fragmentation of the research field. Only five journals published more than two articles on the topic.



Note. The database search for this literature review was conducted in early 2021 and covers research activities before January 1, 2021. The database search yielded two articles (Bartosiak, 2021; Zhang et al., 2021) that were registered as online first versions for 2020. These articles have been published in a journal issue in the meantime and are thus displayed as 2021 in this figure.

Table 2. Journals That Have Published Articles on Trust in Online Review Contexts.

Journal Name	Number of Published Articles
Computers in Human Behavior	10
Decision Support Systems	3
International Journal of Hospitality Management	3
Internet Research	3
Journal of Business Research	3
<i>10 other journals</i>	10 x 2
<i>28 other journals</i>	28 x 1
	70

Research Designs

Research on trust in online reviews applies several methods (see Table 3). Experiments are the most employed method by far, followed by standardized surveys. Accordingly, there is a predominance of articles that adopt quantitative approaches (64 articles) over articles that adopt qualitative (2 articles) or mixed quantitative-qualitative designs (4 articles). Using student samples is a common procedure in the field (30 studies), although most studies rely on general population samples (49 studies). The samples demonstrate geographical diversity (see Table 4). Most studied review objects are hotels (21 studies), electronics (e.g., cameras, TV sets; 16 studies), and restaurants (15 studies). Many studies, especially surveys, do not specify a review platform, but adopt platform-independent approaches, while some focus on existing platforms. Platforms studied most often are TripAdvisor (12 studies), Amazon (6 studies), and Yelp (5 studies), which clearly indicates a Western bias.

Table 3. Methods Applied in Studies on Trust in Online Review Contexts.

Method	Number of Studies Employing Method
Experiment	50
Standardized survey	25
Qualitative interviews	4
Computational methods	1
Critical incident technique	1
Grounded theory methodology (incl. qualitative interviews and other data gathering techniques)	1
	82

Note. Number of reported studies differs from number of articles because some articles (a) report findings from more than one study or (b) apply multi-method designs.

Table 4. Sample Origins in Studies on Trust in Online Review Contexts.

Sample Origin	Number of Studies Using Sample
USA	22
China	10
Multinational	9
Germany	5
Taiwan	5
South Korea	4
Others	13
Not specified	14
<i>thereof Amazon Mechanical Turk</i>	11
	82

Note. Number of reported studies differs from number of articles because some articles report findings from more than one study.

Conceptualizing and Measuring Trust

Few studies are informed by more comprehensive concepts of trust. Although it is admittedly hard to determine what is a “more comprehensive concept” and when such a concept “informs” a study, I identified eight articles that related to a conceptual work on trust at least on the level of a definition of trust and not only in passing. The works by Mayer et al. (1995; 6 references) and McKnight and Chervany (2001; 5 references) found some resonance in the field. This resonance might result from the fact that the first and widely cited study in the field (Smith et al., 2005) is informed by these works.

Trust is more often conceptualized on the level of its operationalization for empirical inquiries. I therefore examined reported scales and items that were used to measure trust. I identified a total number of 46 scales that have been used in the field. 38 scales draw on items that originate from previous research, i.e., studies either adopting a complete scale or combining different scales, while eight studies used their own scales. Although the scale presented by Ohanian (1990, 1991) was used much more frequently than others (informing 15 articles), the variety of scales again suggests a great heterogeneity of the field. Qualitative studies used wordings that are similar to the wordings of items in quantitative studies. Where articles reported questions from interview guides, there was a tendency to ask respondents for trust or trustworthiness directly rather than breaking the concept down to its various dimensions.

Examined Factors and Their Effect on Trust

Research has examined the impact of 77 factors on the emergence of trust in online review contexts. I used the model of the online review process to systemize these factors by organizing them according to the actors upon whose own selectivity they touch. For most factors, this process should be self-evident. For example, I assigned the experience of the reviewer in writing reviews to the reviewer since experience will help a reviewer to compose a sound review. Experience thus indicates that trusting this particular reviewer might be less risky. Yet for some other factors, this process may appear to have less face validity. For example, I sorted status badges that reviewers can earn on some platforms in the category “platform-related factors” and not “reviewer-related factors.” I did this although one might think that the badge indicates that a reviewer is trustworthy. However, it is the platform provider who decides whether the platform awards such badges, who determines what the criteria are for acquiring a badge, and who ensures a robust award process. The same logic applies to some of the factors that I systemized as “community-related.” For example, whether a particular review is consistent with other reviews of the same review object depends on the decision that the other reviewers made when writing their reviews. These other reviewers constitute the community. Obviously, the particular reviewer can also tune in the review to the community’s voice. From the perspective of the opinion seeker, however, the other reviews constitute the background against which to assess the consistency of a particular review. The opinion seeker thus has to determine how to respond to this background: Should they base their own assessment of the particular review on these other reviews, or should they discard them? In other words: The opinion seeker has to decide whether to trust in the community. I therefore categorized the consistency of a particular review with other reviews as a community-related factor.

Reviewer-Related Factors

The most exhaustively studied actor in the field is the reviewer. The opinion seeker’s perception of the reviewer’s states and traits is informed by the review that the reviewer wrote as well as by other information that the reviewer provides on the platform, usually when adding information to the user profile. Table 5 presents the reviewer-related factors that have been examined. Research literature often treats review characteristics independently from the reviewer. However, the reviewer is the author of the review and the review depends on their own selectivity. For example, Bannerjee and Chua (2019) examined how the attractiveness of review titles impacts trust but essentially, it is the reviewer who concocts this title. Table 6 presents the findings on review-related factors as a subset of reviewer-related factors.

Table 5. Examined Reviewer-Related Factors^a.

Factor	Effect on Trust	Article ^b
Gender of reviewer	+ for indicated gender	Craciun and Moore (2019)
Personal identifying information of reviewer information provided on reviewer, e.g., real name, residence, preferences	+ for provided information	Kusumasondjaja et al. (2012); Xie et al. (2011)
Profile picture of reviewer provision of profile picture or choice of avatar	+ for provided profile picture (VS no profile picture provided) / for provided human avatar (VS dinosaur avatar)	Filieri (2016); McGloin et al. (2014); Xu (2014)
	+ for high physical attractiveness of the reviewer picture	Lin and Xu (2017)
Authenticity of reviewer extent to which the identity of reviewer appears to be authentic or fake	- for low authenticity	Ahmed and Sun (2018); Dinh and Doan (2020); Zhang et al. (2021)
Object knowledge of reviewer extent to which reviewer has expertise, competence, or ability regarding the reviewed object, e.g., many reviews within the product category of the reviewed option, is "competent," "experienced," "well-qualified"	+ for vast knowledge	Clare et al. (2018); Filieri (2016); Hsiao et al. (2010); J. Lee and Hong (2019); Lis (2013); Naujoks and Benkenstein (2020); O'Reilly et al. (2016); Smith et al. (2005); X. Wang et al. (2015)
	0 for vast knowledge	Mumuni et al. (2020)
	- for self-claimed vast knowledge	Willemsen et al. (2012)
	- for low knowledge	Duffy (2017)
Duration of platform membership of reviewer period the reviewer has been registered as review platform member	+ for long duration	Banerjee et al. (2017)
Integrity of reviewer extent to which reviewer is independent form influences by a third-party, e.g., by endorsements, monetary incentives	+ for high integrity	Dickinger (2011); Dou et al. (2012); Filieri (2016); Hsiao et al. (2010); O'Reilly et al. (2016); Reimer and Benkenstein (2018)
	- for low integrity	Ahmed and Sun (2018)
	0 for high integrity	Hussain et al. (2018) ^c
Motives of reviewer motives of reviewer to write the review	+ for review object-related motives	Dou et al. (2012); Qiu et al. (2012)
	- for ulterior motives	Willemsen et al. (2012)
	- for non-benevolent motives	Duffy (2017)
	0 for non-benevolent motives	Zhang et al. (2021)
Trustworthiness of reviewer extent to which reviewer is credible, e.g., "dependable," "honest," "reliable," "believable"	+ for high trustworthiness	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Clare et al. (2018); Lis (2013); Luo et al. (2014, 2015); Mumuni et al. (2020)
	0 for high trustworthiness	Filieri et al. (2015)
Homophily extent to which reviewer is similar to opinion seeker, e.g., regarding gender, age, job, taste	+ for high homophily	Ayeh et al. (2013); Smith et al. (2005); Su et al. (2017)
	0 for high homophily	Lin and Xu (2017)
Social closeness of reviewer extent to which opinion seeker feels socially close to reviewer, e.g., wishing to have reviewer as friend or colleague	0 for high social closeness	Lin and Xu (2017)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ^aFor table including interactions, see Appendix B, Table B1. ^bFor full references, see Appendix A. ^cHussain et al. (2018) adopt concept and items from a study on reviewer motives for eWOM contribution. The authors test it as

antecedent of eWOM credibility as perceived by an opinion seeker. It is not explained how this concept that refers to reviewers informs the examination of the opinion seeker's perceptions and how items were possibly adjusted.

Table 6. Examined Review-Related Factors^a.

Factor	Effect on Trust	Article ^b
Pictures of reviewed option review provides pictures of reviewed option	+ for provided pictures	Filieri (2016)
Attractiveness of title of review extent to which the review title catches the attention	+ for attractive title	Banerjee and Chua (2019)
Conciseness of title of review extent to which the title of the review provides a concise preview on review	0 for high conciseness	Banerjee and Chua (2019)
Style of review way in which the reviewer wrote the review, e.g., foreign words, technical terms, orthographical errors, or "easy to read," "well written"	0 for lexical complexity	Jensen et al. (2013)
	+ for correct orthography	McGloin et al. (2014)
	0 for correct orthography	Cox et al. (2017)
Quality of review general quality of review	+ for high quality of review	Filieri (2015, 2016); Filieri et al. (2015)
	0 for high quality of review	Mahat and Hanafiah (2020); S. Wang et al. (2015); Willemsen et al. (2012)
Argument quality of review extent to which reviewer presents sound arguments in review	+ for high quality of argument	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Luo et al. (2013, 2014, 2015); Racherla et al. (2012); Reimer and Benkenstein (2016)
Information load of review extent to which the review is rich with information, e.g., length, details, scope, or information-richness	+ for high information load	Baker and Kim (2019); Banerjee and Chua (2019); Dickinger (2011); Duffy (2017); Luo et al. (2013)
	- for too high or too low information load	Furner et al. (2016)
	+ for moderate information load	Furner et al. (2016)
	+ for review with factual, detailed, and relevant information	Filieri (2016)
	0 for high information load	Tsang and Prendergast (2009)
Two-sidedness of review extent to which reviewer discusses positive and negative aspects of the reviewed product	+ for two-sided review	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); Clare et al. (2018); Filieri (2016); Jensen et al. (2013); Luo et al. (2014)
	0 for two-sided review	M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Luo et al. (2015)
Helpfulness of review extent to which reviewer provides helpful information	+ for high helpfulness	Clare et al. (2018); Mahat and Hanafiah (2020)
Emotionality of review extent to which reviewer uses emotion-laden words, e.g., "love," capital letters, emoticons and exclamation marks, no quantified criteria	+ for high emotionality	S. Wang et al. (2015)
	- for high emotionality	Baker and Kim (2019); Clare et al. (2018); Craciun and Moore (2019); Jensen et al. (2013)
	+ for low emotionality	Luo et al. (2015)
Subjectivity of review extent to which reviewer shared subjective information	+ weaker for subjective information than for objective information	Hong and Park (2012); K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)
Trustworthiness of descriptions in review extent to which the provided information is "trustworthy," "reliable," "credible"	+ for high trustworthiness	Mahat and Hanafiah (2020)
	0 for high trustworthiness	Banerjee and Chua (2019)

Consistency of review text and rating extent to which (textual) review and associated (numerical) rating are consistent	+ for high consistency	Tsang and Prendergast (2009)
Timeliness of review extent to which the review is up-to-date	+ for high timeliness	Clare et al. (2018)
Valence of review (positive) extent to which the review praises the review object	+ for positive valence	Banerjee et al. (2017); Lim and Van Der Heide (2015); Lin and Xu (2017)
	0 for valence review (vs. neutral)	Baker & Kim (2019)
	- for overtly positive valence	Filieri (2016); Prendergast et al. (2018)
Valence of review (negative) extent to which the review criticizes the review object	0 for negative valence	M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Willemsen et al. (2012)
	0 for valence review (vs. neutral)	Baker and Kim (2019)
	- for overtly negative valence	Filieri (2016); Prendergast et al. (2018)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ^aFor table including interactions, see Appendix B, Table B2. ^bFor full references, see Appendix A.

Option Provider-Related Factors

The impact of the provider of the reviewed option has been examined only rudimentarily (see Table 7). Notably, Bae and Lee (2011) found that the type of review object influences trust relationships. This factor should be treated with consideration. While the option provider decides which type of options they offer at a market, the review object itself is not an actor in its own right and thus does not possess own selectivity. According to the trust concept informing this literature review, the type of review object should thus rather be theorized as moderator variables than as independent variable.

Table 7. Examined Option Provider-Related Factors^a.

Factor	Effect on Trust	Article ^b
Brand attitude extent of brand commitment and attitude of opinion seeker toward reviewed brand	0 for high brand attitude	Jensen and Yetgin (2017)
Type of review object	+ stronger for experience good than for search good	Bae and Lee (2011)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ^aFor table including interactions, see Appendix B, Table B3. ^bFor full references, see Appendix A.

Platform-Related Factors

Research has examined factors that refer to (1) the platform provider as an actor in the online review process and (2) to the information that a platform offers about other actors. For example, platforms might use algorithms to create meta-information, such as marking suspected non-authentic reviews and reporting the status of a platform user. An understanding of studied platform factors can be gained from Table 8.

Community-Related Factors

With regard to the community, research has focused on two different types of factors: (1) meta-information provided by the community that relates to the quality assessment of the specific review via comments or recommendation ratings (e.g., usefulness and helpfulness), and (2) context information that is derived from considering the specific review and its author within the platform environment, such as the consistency of the specific review with other reviews on the same object or the total number of reviews on the object. Table 9 provides an overview on examined community factors.

Table 8. Platform-Related Factors^a.

Factor	Effect on Trust	Article ^b
Platform quality extent to which the platform is perceived as qualitative, e.g., "well-organized," "guarantees user privacy"	+ for high quality	Filieri et al. (2015)
Trustworthiness of platform extent to which the platform is credible, e.g., "trustworthy," "believable"	+ for high trustworthiness	Hsiao et al. (2010); J. Lee et al. (2011)
	0 for high trustworthiness	J. Lee and Hong (2019)
Reviewer status indication platform provides indication of reviewer status, e.g., "top reviewer"	+ for indicated high status	Banerjee et al. (2017); X. Wang et al. (2015)
	0 for indicated high status	Willemsen et al. (2012)
Reviewer age provision platform provides age of reviewer	+ if opinion seeker recalls age	Su et al. (2017)
Reviewer gender provision platform provides gender of reviewer	+ if opinion seeker recalls gender	Su et al. (2017)
Verification of purchase platform verifies that reviewer has experience with the reviewed option	+ for verification	Clare et al. (2018)
Interactivity of platform extent to which platform provides interactive features	+ for high interactivity	Hajli (2018)
Computer synthesized speech computer voice reads review text aloud	0 for computer synthesized speech	Bartosiak (2021)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ^aFor table including interactions, see Appendix B, Table B4. ^bFor full references, see Appendix A.

Table 9. Examined Community-Related Factors^a.

Factor	Effect on Trust	Article ^b
Number of reviews total number of reviews or comparisons of high and low numbers of reviews	+ for high number of reviews	Flanagin and Metzger (2013); Hong and Pittman (2020); Hsiao et al. (2010)
Aggregated rating average rating accumulated through each reviewer's contribution	0 for lower ratings	Hong and Pittman (2020)
Consistency of review with other reviews extent to which review accords with other reviews or comments, "consistent," "similar," "seem to say the same thing"	+ for high consistency	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Clare et al. (2018); Doh and Hwang (2009); Filieri (2016); Hong and Park (2012); Luo et al. (2014; 2015); Van Der Heide and Lim (2016)
	- for low consistency	Baker and Kim (2019)
	- for high consistency	Munzel (2015)
Consistency of review with aggregated rating extent to which review accords with average rating	+ stronger for high consistency	Hong and Pittman (2020)
Evaluation of review extent to which the community evaluated the review positively or negatively, e.g., marking it as "helpful," "highly rated by other members"	+ for positive evaluation	M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Lis (2013); Luo et al. (2014, 2015)
Trustworthiness of community extend to which the community is trustworthy	+ for high trustworthiness	J. Lee and Hong (2019)
Involvement of reviewer in community extent to which reviewer is involved in community, e.g., has many friends or followers	+ for high involvement in community	Banerjee et al. (2017); Xu (2014)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ^aFor table including interactions, see Appendix B, Table B5. ^bFor full references, see Appendix A.

External Actors-Related Factors

External actors have only occasionally been considered in the field. The little interest in these factors is not surprising, given that external actors remain outside the core online review process. Table 10 summarizes the findings on this factor category.

Table 10. Examined External Actor-Related Factors^a.

Factor	Effect on Trust	Article ^b
Platform quality seal quality seal award to platform by third party	+ for awarded seals	Munzel (2015)
Platform reputation general reputation of platform	+ for good reputation	Hsiao et al. (2010)

Note. Relations are indicated as follows: + denotes a significant positive relation between factor and trust in the online review process; - denotes a significant negative impact of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 denotes no significant impact of factor on trust in the online review process. ^aFor table including interactions, see Appendix B, Table B6. ^bFor full references, see Appendix A.

Opinion Seeker-Related Factors

Individual characteristics of the opinion seeker can be associated with their willingness to trust. Studies examined the effects of knowledge, states, and, most often, traits on trust in online review contexts (see Table 11).

Table 11. Examined Opinion Seeker-Related Factors^a.

Factor	Effect on Trust	Article ^b
Age of opinion seeker	0 for age	Reimer and Benkenstein (2016); X. Wang et al. (2015)
Gender of opinion seeker	0 for gender + stronger for female users than for male users	Reimer and Benkenstein (2016); X. Wang et al. (2015); Xu (2014) Prendergast et al. (2018)
Race of opinion seeker	0 for race	Xu (2014)
Education of opinion seeker formal education of opinion seeker, e.g., school or university education	0 for education	Cox et al. (2017); Reimer and Benkenstein (2016)
Inertia of opinion seeker extent to which opinion seeker is resistant to changing approaches used to evaluate online reviews	+ for high inertia	Y.-C. Lee (2014)
Illusion of control of opinion seeker extent to which opinion seeker thinks she/he has the ability to assess the truthfulness of the reviewer properly	+ for high illusion of power	Y.-C. Lee (2014)
Opinion seeking of opinion seeker extent to which the opinion seeker seeks opinions of others in decision processes	+ for high opinion seeking	Hussain et al. (2018)
Attitude of opinion seeker toward online reviews extent to which opinion seeker is receptive or skeptical toward online reviews	0 for receptive attitude + for receptive attitude - for skeptical attitude	Grabner-Kräuter and Waiguny (2015); Qiu et al. (2012) Clare et al. (2018); Mahat and Hanafiah (2020) Reimer and Benkenstein (2016); Zhang et al. (2019, 2021)
Experience of opinion seeker with reviews extent to which opinion seeker has experience with reading or writing online reviews	0 for vast experience + for vast experience	Filieri et al. (2015) López and Sicilia (2014)
Experience of opinion seeker with online shopping extent to which the opinion seeker has experience with online shopping	0 for high experience	Bae and Lee (2011)

Internet structural assurance of opinion seeker extent to which the opinion seeker believes that internet structures like regulations or legal recourses safeguard safe activities online	+	for high internet structural assurance	Zhang et al. (2019)
Internet usage of opinion seeker extent to which the opinion seeker has experience with using the internet	0	for high internet usage	X. Wang et al. (2015)
Involvement of opinion seeker extent to which opinion seeker is involved with review object category or in handling reviews	0	for high involvement	Hussain et al. (2018); Jensen and Yetgin (2017); Reimer and Benkenstein (2016); Xu (2014)
Other involvement of opinion seeker	+	for high other involvement	Hussain et al. (2018) ^c
Motivation of opinion seeker extent to which the opinion seeker is motivated to consult the review	+	for high motivation	Chih et al. (2013)
Object knowledge of opinion seeker extent to which opinion seeker possesses knowledge or expertise of reviewed object category	0	for vast object knowledge	Bae and Lee (2011); Dickinger (2011); Flanagan and Metzger (2013); X. Wang et al. (2015); Willemsen et al. (2012)
	+	if review corresponds to object knowledge	M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Clare et al. (2018)
Disconfirmation with previous reviews extent to which online reviews have afforded good decisions in the past	-	for high disconfirmation	Nam et al. (2020)
Sense of virtual community of opinion seeker extent to which opinion seeker feels a sense of belonging to community, e.g., "I feel membership to this community," "I feel that I belong"	+	for high sense of virtual community	Filieri (2016)
Self-worth reinforcement of opinion seeker extent to which reviewer is motivated to write review to gain attention ³	+	for high self-worth reinforcement	Hussain et al. (2018) ^d
Platform familiarity of opinion seeker extent to which opinion seeker is familiar with platform	+	for high familiarity	Casaló et al. (2015)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ^aFor table including interactions, see Appendix B, Table B7. ^bFor full references, see Appendix A. ^cHussain et al. (2018) do not specify the concept and items. Referenced sources do not address the concept. ^dHussain et al. (2018) adopt concept and items from a study on reviewer motives for eWOM contribution. The authors test it as antecedent of eWOM credibility as perceived by an opinion seeker. It is not explained how this concept that refers to reviewers informs the examination of the opinion seeker's perceptions and how items were possibly adjusted.

Discussion

Assessment of the State of Research

Research on online reviews has examined a considerable number of factors and how they influence trust. Figure 4 provides an overview of examined factors and their frequency of their consideration in research. For most factors, the findings are relatively distinct, whereas the impact of some others is less clear. In general, however, the field appears to be rather fragmented and heterogeneous. Research uses many different operationalizations of trust and is spread over various journals and disciplines.

The Role of Theory

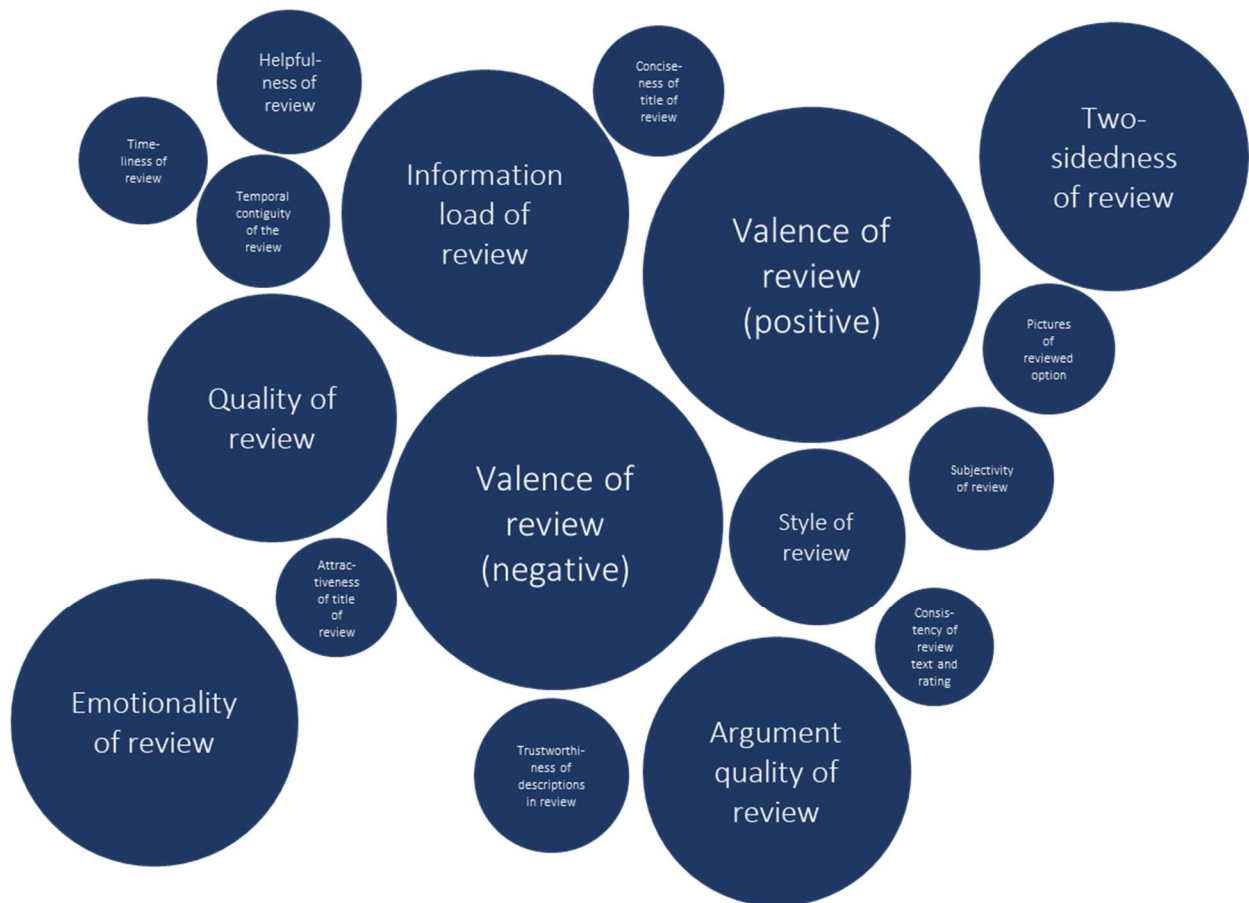
This literature review set out to synthesize and systemize the existing findings. At the same time, however, the review also brings to light some of the field's theoretical shortcomings and empirical gaps. Based on this analysis, the main shortcoming of previous research is a certain lack of awareness and reflection of the research's formal object "trust" (or "credibility," respectively). In general, the reviewed studies do not refer to comprehensive

concepts of trust (e.g., Barber, 1983; Giddens, 1990; Kohring, 2004; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Luhmann, 1968, 1975/2018; Möllering, 2001) that could more accurately capture the complexity of trust relationships and help interpret the results. This finding echoes a longstanding dissatisfaction with the state of empirical trust research in general. Already in 1991, Wrightsman (1991, p. 411) cautioned that “the general concept of trust deserves much more theoretical analysis. Measurement has advanced more rapidly than conceptual clarification.” Ten years later, McKnight and Chervany (2001, p. 38) emphasized that in the absence of such theoretical analysis, “the plethora of empirical studies (...) has brought trust research to so confusing a state.” For the sake of this review article, I adapted the trust concept advanced by Luhmann (1968, 1975/2018) and other authors following in his footsteps (e.g., Kohring, 2004; Meyer & Ward, 2013; Morgner, 2018) to the online review context. This is not to say that the line of reasoning on trust that I drew on is the only possible line for informing research on trust in online review contexts. Every theoretical perspective enables researchers to see certain aspects while obscuring others, as does this. Nevertheless, my conceptual choice permits the identification of some unfortunate consequences that result from the scarce engagement with trust concepts.

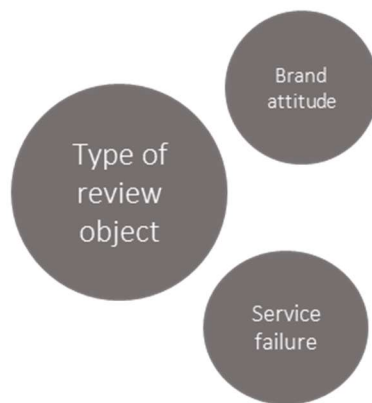
Figure 4. *Considered Factors in Research on Trust in Online Reviews.*

Reviewer-related factors (including review-related factors)





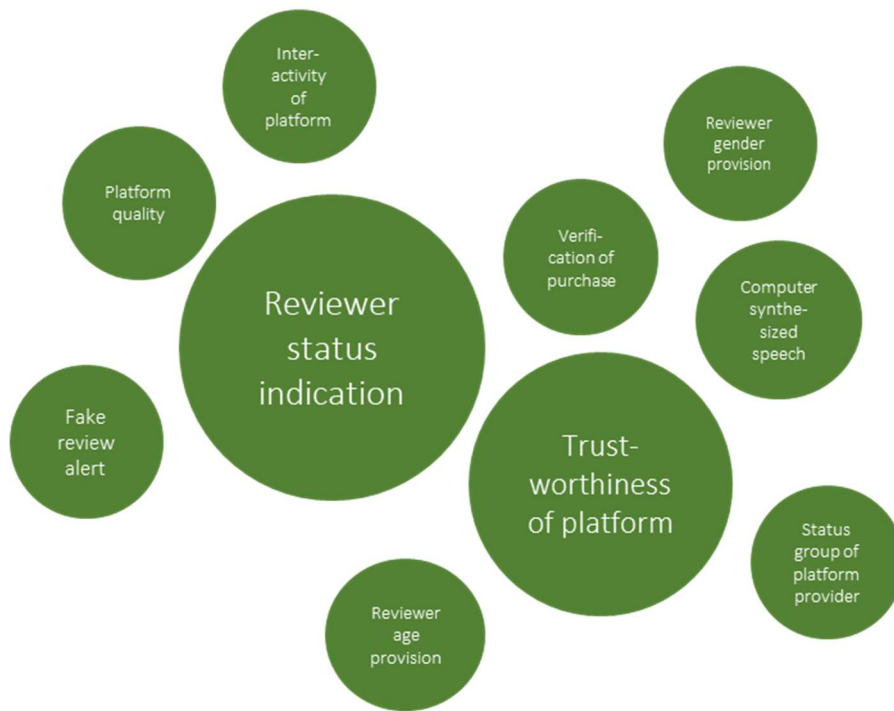
Option provider-related factors



External actor-related factors



Platform-related factors



Community-related factors



Opinion Seeker-related factors



Note. Size of bubble corresponds to frequency of consideration (number of studies) of the factor in research on trust in online reviews.

This review brings to light some of the field's theoretical shortcomings. First, its scarce engagement with trust concepts leads to a fuzzy understanding of who or what the trustor trusts in. Two trust objects are referenced in the studies, the reviewer and the review itself, and sometimes both. The theoretical foundation proposed here could help to resolve this issue. For example, I argued above that trust refers to the own selectivity of actors and that therefore, trust in online reviews should analytically be attributed to their actions. Unsurprisingly, studies consistently report significant correlations between trustworthiness of reviewer and trust in reviews (e.g., M. Y.

Cheung et al., 2009; Clare et al., 2018). Furthermore, the online review process model revealed that there are more actors involved in the process than only reviewer and opinion seeker so that the emergence of trust relationships becomes more complex.

Second, the scarce engagement impacts the possibilities to interpret data in meaningful ways. On the one hand, many scales are imported from research on trust in social contexts other than online reviews. From the perspective of the trust concept adopted in this article, trust depends on expectations that are specific for a social context so that dimensions of trust potentially differ from context to context. This perspective thus increases sensitivity for the risk that imported scales might result in neglecting the peculiarities of trust in online reviews. For instance, the scale used most frequently in the field (Ohanian, 1990, 1991) measures trustworthiness of celebrity endorsers in an advertising and marketing context. It seems at least debatable whether trustors' expectations about celebrity endorsers are similar to their expectations about online reviewers. For example, different from celebrity endorsers, online reviewers are expected to be independent from the option provider. On the other hand, I found that there is a great heterogeneity of items to measure trust. This heterogeneity makes it difficult to compare findings across studies. The trust concept adopted here can inform the operationalization of trust and protect research from inconsistencies when composing scales of items that relate to trust in different ways, for example to dimensions of trust, reasons to trust, and abstract synonyms of trust (e.g., Ayeh et al., 2013; Dou et al., 2012).

Third, the scarce engagement sometimes obscures how factors relate to one another. For example, I found that in some reviewed studies, manifestations of certain dimensions of trust are actually conceptualized as independent variables, i.e., antecedent of trust. For example, Banerjee and Chua (2019) study the credibility of descriptions as an antecedent of trust. Following Kohring's (2004) concept of trust, this factor can be identified not as an antecedent but rather as an element of trust because it directly refers to a particular trust dimension that he conceptualizes as "trust in the accuracy of descriptions."

Fourth, this shortcoming restricts the generalization of research findings. Without an appropriate theoretical foundation that helps clarify the conditions for legitimate generalizations, the validity of findings remains limited to the specific context in which the data was generated. For instance, it remains unresolved whether it is possible to transfer findings from a study on online reviews of hotels to reviews of physicians or electronics.

Empirical Gaps

Besides these conceptual challenges, this literature review identified some empirical gaps. First, many factors and factor combinations have only been examined in one or a very limited number of studies, with regard to single review objects (e.g., restaurants, physicians, films), on one platform, and in one cultural context. Moreover, a substantial number of studies uses student samples. In the face of a lasting replication crisis in social and life sciences (Open Science Collaboration, 2015), a more stable empirical validation of some findings appears preferable.

Second, research has examined the factor categories with different degrees of diligence. Whereas the reviewer and the opinion seeker received much attention, the situation is different for the other actors who are involved in the process. The focus on reviewer and opinion seeker is understandable because these two actors can be said to constitute the basic dyad in online review contexts. As the model of the review process illustrates, however, the other actors also play a role in the emergence of trust.

Third, little is known on how different factors interact with one another. While there are studies that examine interactions (e.g., Craciun & Moore, 2019; Flanagin & Metzger, 2013), a more systematic, comprehensive, and coordinated approach to determining interactions is missing.

Fourth, most studies adopt a deductive approach to identify factors that might possibly be related to trust in online reviews. Exploratory approaches do exist in the field (e.g., Clare et al., 2018; O'Reilly et al., 2016), yet are rare. If accepting the theoretical foundations of this review, trust should be considered as directed toward expectations about other actors' behaviors that are specific to the social context in which trust relationships emerge (Kohring, 2004). A lack of exploratory studies might consequently result in overlooking relevant factors that are specific to online review contexts and thus cannot be derived from research on trust in other contexts.

Future Research Directions

Based on the analysis of strengths, shortcomings, and gaps, I want to propose three endeavors that I think are worthwhile for advancing the field.

Corroborating the Body of Knowledge

Research findings for most factors are unambiguous. The fact, however, that many factors or factor combinations have been examined only once and in specific online review environments, on specific platforms, and in specific cultural contexts calls for replication studies. Moreover, more comparative studies are needed. Researchers can corroborate initial insights by examining if, for example, the relevance of factors that determine opinion seekers' willingness to trust differs between decisions to buy a plant detergent and to visit a physician or between Northern American and Eastern Asian cultures.

There are some factors for which the evidence is not clear. These include: non-benevolent motives of the reviewer, homophily (reviewer-related factors), correctness of orthography, quality of review, two-sidedness of review, emotionality of review, trustworthiness of descriptions in the review (review-related factors), trustworthiness of platform, reviewer status indication (platform-related factors), receptive attitude of opinion seeker, and experience of opinion seeker with reviews (opinion seeker-related factors). There are many possible reasons why studies yield diverging results. For example, different review objects, platform environments, or cultural backgrounds might explain differences. In some cases, diverging results may also be due to study designs. In still other cases, diverging results might follow from different operationalizations of trust. The fact that the studies usually differ in more than just one aspect makes it difficult to pinpoint the exact reasons that led to diverging results. Moreover, in the cases of the ambiguous factors, the number of studies—and thus the available data basis—is simply too small to identify patterns and reach informed conclusions. Here, further studies are needed to more precisely determine the influence of these factors. A promising starting point is to explore these factors in qualitative studies that allow to address the respective factors in more detail. For example, adopting thought elicitation techniques such as the think aloud method allows researchers in the field to explore the considerations of opinion seekers while engaging with online reviews.

Interestingly, it is sometimes the qualitative studies that yield contradictory findings. For example, while the majority of studies finds that positive valence increases trust, the qualitative studies by Filieri (2016) and Prendergast et al. (2010) demonstrate that positive valence can also have negative effects on trust if reviews become *overly* positive. While qualitative studies usually do not claim generalizability of their findings, they still can yield detailed and differentiating insights into the effects of specific factors. In particular, this example shows that it might be instructive to reconsider whether identified effects of factors such as valence are indeed linear.

Integrating the Body of Knowledge

It is necessary to integrate the existing findings from different disciplines that are interested in trust in online review contexts to overcome the fragmentation of the research field. Respective attempts might help to better pool resources because the integration of findings makes it easier to identify true research gaps. To tackle the fragmentation, the framework presented in this article might be further refined and adjusted to more specific research interests. Another promising approach to integrate findings might be meta-analyses because this method allows researchers to determine the effect strengths of trust factors across various quantitative data sets. A key challenge in such an undertaking will, however, be the great heterogeneity in operationalizing trust.

Extending the Body of Knowledge

Extending knowledge on trust in online review contexts is a more extensive task. Regarding the theoretical rigor of research, I suggest that engaging with comprehensive concepts of trust (e.g., Barber, 1983; Giddens, 1990; Kohring, 2004; Lewis & Weigert, 1985; Luhmann, 1968, 1975/2018; McGeer & Pettit, 2017; Möllering, 2001) beyond the level of measures and scales provides a more solid foundation for understanding trust in online review contexts. Researchers need to adjust these concepts to online reviews as a specific context. Specifically, the online review process does not only include reviewer and opinion seeker, but also option provider, platform provider,

community, and external actors. All of these actors have their own selectivity and, consequently, they influence the emergence of trust relationships.

With regard to empirical directions, I identify three worthwhile directions for extending the body of knowledge. First, experiments and standardized surveys dominate the field. While these two methods are perfectly apt for studying trust in online reviews, I nevertheless want to argue for a greater methodical variety and a stronger consideration of qualitative approaches, such as problem-centered interviews, Q methodology, think alouds, and virtual ethnographies. Due to their open and exploratory character, qualitative approaches allow identifying factors that are specific to trust in online reviews (Clare et al., 2018). Furthermore, by allowing for a greater consideration of individual rationales, qualitative approaches might yield “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 2017) that help contextualize findings. Another promising approach to advance the field is the use of cognitive neuroscience. Various commentators have highlighted the potential of cognitive neuroscience for trust research (Dimoka, 2010; Gefen et al., 2008). This potential has not yet been tapped in the context of online reviews. The approach rests upon the finding that trust, as well as distrust, spans distinct brain areas (Dimoka, 2010). Researchers have successfully applied neuroscientific procedures to general trust research (Tzieropoulos, 2013), and Krueger and Meyer-Lindenberg (2019) proposed a trust model based on neuroscientific findings. These pioneer works hold the potential to add an innovative angle to the study of trust in the context of online reviews.

Second, it is likely that there exist various types of opinion seekers that differ in the importance they attach to specific factors. While one opinion seeker’s willingness to enter a trust relationship may largely depend on, for example, review valence, emotionality, and prior experience with other reviews, these factors might be of minor importance to other opinion seekers. Duffy (2017) suggests opinion seekers’ trust in their own benevolence and integrity as a possible distinguishing feature. There might also exist various types of opinion seekers regarding different usage situations, e.g., decisions on different review objects or decisions made on mobile devices and on-the-go. I encourage researchers to pay more attention to specific opinion seeker types and usage situations. To tackle this task, explorative approaches should prove instructive as a first step. For instance, the Q methodology allows researchers to reconstruct individual perspectives on trust in online reviews and, on this basis, determine what unites opinion seekers who share common viewpoints.

Third, trust relations emerge and grow over time as they unfold within interaction histories. Since the body of reviewers is multitudinous and reviewers often remain anonymous beyond some basic profile information, it seems unlikely that interaction histories unfold between individual peers in general. Nevertheless, opinion seekers gather experience with platforms and platform communities. I propose that these experiences will have a noticeable impact on the emergence of trust. The opinion seeker’s familiarity with a platform has been examined by three studies (Casaló et al., 2015; Lim & Van Der Heide, 2015; Van Der Heide & Lim, 2016), but in general we know little about how prior experiences with platform and platform communities impact trust. This situation motivates two suggestions: First, future study designs should control for prior experiences of opinion seekers. Second, given the dearth of longitudinal studies in the field, researchers should apply designs that allow tracing the formation of trust around specific platforms and their communities over time.

Limitations

The quality of literature reviews crucially depends on the corpus on which they are based (Whittemore & Knaf, 2005). Although I carefully searched for relevant studies, using a broad search term and databases from various disciplines, I cannot guarantee that I identified every academic publication on trust in online reviews. The formal exclusion of non-peer reviewed journal articles and articles published in languages other than English constitutes an obvious limitation. Furthermore, I synthesized the findings on a rather high level of abstraction. It could be argued that the individual factors that constitute categories in this review should be less condensed. I opted for this level of abstraction because the operationalization of most factors was sufficiently similar to group them into one category. However, a more granular systematization might yield a more detailed picture of the state of research. Finally, this review adopted a strict focus on articles that study trust (or credibility) as a dependent or mediating variable. I did not, however, consider the outcomes of trust relationships like purchase intentions (e.g., S. Wang et al., 2015), review adoption (Lis, 2013), attitude toward the review object (e.g., Grabner-Kräuter & Waiguny, 2015), or willingness to re-visit specific online review platforms (Baker & Kim, 2019). Likewise and to avoid “scope creep” (Booth et al., 2016, p. 98), I did not consider concepts that are or might be related to trust, most notably usefulness and helpfulness of reviews (Clare et al., 2018). Future literature reviews on these concepts might help to draw a more comprehensive picture of the role of trust in the online review process.

Conflict of Interest

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

Author's Contribution

This study was devised and conducted by Nils S. Borchers.

Acknowledgement

The author thanks Sevda Can Arslan (Paderborn University) for her involvement with an early outline of this manuscript that we presented at the 2016 Annual Conference of the Digital Communication division of the German Communication Association in Braunschweig, Germany. The author also thanks the editorial team of *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace* as well as five anonymous reviewers for sharing their helpful advice and support

References

- Borchers, N. S. (2021). Online-Bewertungs-Kompetenz: Grundlegende Kompetenzen im Umgang mit Peer-Bewertungen als Informationsquelle in Entscheidungsprozessen [Online review literacy: Fundamental competences in using online reviews as information sources in decision processes]. In M. Seifert & S. Jöckel (Eds.), *Bildung, Wissen und Kompetenz(-en) in digitalen Medien* [Education, knowledge, and competencies in digital media] (pp. 159-174). Freie Universität Berlin. <https://doi.org/10.48541/dcr.v8.9>
- Ayeh, J. K., Au, N., & Law, R. (2013). "Do we believe in TripAdvisor?" Examining credibility perceptions and online travelers' attitude toward using user-generated content. *Journal of Travel Research*, 52(4), 437–452. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287512475217>
- Babić Rosario, A., de Valck, K., & Sotgiu, F. (2020). Conceptualizing the electronic word-of-mouth process: What we know and need to know about eWOM creation, exposure, and evaluation. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 48(3), 422–448. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00706-1>
- Bae, S., & Lee, T. (2011). Product type and consumers' perception of online consumer reviews. *Electronic Markets*, 21(4), 255–266. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12525-011-0072-0>
- Baker, M. A., & Kim, K. (2019). Value destruction in exaggerated online reviews: The effects of emotion, language, and trustworthiness. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(4), 1956–1976. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-03-2018-0247>
- Banerjee, S., & Chua, A. Y. K. (2019). Trust in online hotel reviews across review polarity and hotel category. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 90, 265–275. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.09.010>
- Barber, B. (1983). *The logic and limits of trust*. Rutgers University Press.
- Bartosiak, M. (2021). Can you tell me where to stay? The effect of presentation format on the persuasiveness of hotel online reviews. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(8), 1109–1122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1765749>
- Booth, A., Sutton, A., & Papaioannou, D. (2016). *Systematic approaches to a successful literature review* (2nd ed.). Sage.
- Bore, I., Rutherford, C., Glasgow, S., Taheri, B., & Antony, J. (2017). A systematic literature review on eWOM in the hotel industry: Current trends and suggestions for future research. *Hospitality & Society*, 7(1), 63–85. https://doi.org/10.1386/hosp.7.1.63_1
- BrightLocal (2022). *Local consumer review survey 2022*. <https://www.brightlocal.com/research/local-consumer-review-survey/>
- Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C., Guinalú, M., & Ekinci, Y. (2015). Do online hotel rating schemes influence booking behaviors? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 49, 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2015.05.005>

- Cheung, C. M. K., & Thandani, D. R. (2010). The state of electronic word-of-mouth research: A literature analysis. In *PACIS 2010 Proceedings* (pp. 1580–1587). AIS eLibrary.
- Cheung, M. Y., Luo, C., Sia, C. L., & Chen, H. (2009). Credibility of electronic word-of-mouth: Informational and normative determinants of online consumer recommendations. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 13(4), 9–38. <https://doi.org/10.2753/JEC1086-4415130402>
- Chevalier, J. A., & Mayzlin, D. (2006). The effect of word of mouth on sales: Online book reviews. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 43(3), 345–354. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.43.3.345>
- Clare, C. J., Wright, G., Sandiford, P., & Caceres, A. P. (2018). Why should I believe this? Deciphering the qualities of a credible online customer review. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 24(8), 823–842. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2016.1138138>
- Craciun, G., & Moore, K. (2019). Credibility of negative online product reviews: Reviewer gender, reputation and emotion effects. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 97, 104–115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.03.010>
- de Langhe, B., Fernbach, P. M., & Lichtenstein, D. R. (2016). Navigating by the stars: Investigating the actual and perceived validity of online user ratings. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42(6), 817–833. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucv047>
- Dimoka, A. (2010). What does the brain tell us about trust and distrust? Evidence from a functional neuroimaging study. *MIS Quarterly*, 34(2), 373–396. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20721433>
- Dou, X., Walden, J. A., Lee, S., & Lee, J. Y. (2012). Does source matter? Examining source effects in online product reviews. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(5), 1555–1563. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.03.015>
- Duffy, A. (2017). Trusting me, trusting you: Evaluating three forms of trust on an information-rich consumer review website. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 16(3), 212–220. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1628>
- Filieri, R. (2016). What makes an online consumer review trustworthy? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 58, 46–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2015.12.019>
- Flanagin, A. J., & Metzger, M. J. (2013). Trusting expert- versus user-generated ratings online: The role of information volume, valence, and consumer characteristics. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(4), 1626–1634. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.02.001>
- Fukuyama, F. (1996). *Trust: The social virtues and the creation of prosperity*. Free Press.
- Geertz, C. (2017). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays* (3rd ed., pp. 3–30). Basic Books.
- Gefen, D. (2002). Reflections on the dimensions of trust and trustworthiness among online consumers. *ACM SIGMIS Database: DATABASE for Advances in Information Systems*, 33(3), 38–53. <https://doi.org/10.1145/569905.569910>
- Gefen, D., Benbasat, I., & Pavlou, P. (2008). A research agenda for trust in online environments. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 24(4), 275–286. <https://doi.org/10.2753/MIS0742-1222240411>
- Gefen, D., Karahanna, E., & Straub, D. W. (2003). Trust and TAM in online shopping: An integrated model. *MIS Quarterly*, 27(1), 51–90. <https://doi.org/10.2307/30036519>
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Polity.
- Gössling, S., Hall, C. M., & Andersson, A.-C. (2018). The manager's dilemma: A conceptualization of online review manipulation strategies. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 21(5), 484–503. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2015.1127337>
- Grabner-Kräuter, S., & Waiguny, M. K. J. (2015). Insights into the impact of online physician reviews on patients' decision making: Randomized experiment. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 17(4), Article e93. <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.3991>
- Graf, H. (2018). Media practices and forced migration: Trust online and offline. *Media and Communication*, 6(2), 149–157. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v6i2.1281>
- Hardin, R. (1992). The street-level epistemology of trust. *Analyse & Kritik*, 14(2), 152–176. <https://doi.org/10.1515/auk-1992-0204>

- Hoffjann, O. (2013). Trust in public relations. In D. Gefen (Ed.), *Psychology of trust: New research* (pp. 59–73). Nova.
- Ismagilova, E., Slade, E., Rana, N. P., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2020). The effect of characteristics of source credibility on consumer behaviour: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Service*, 53, Article 101736. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.005>
- Khoo, C. S. G., Na, J.-C., & Jaidka, K. (2011). Analysis of the macro-level discourse structure of literature reviews. *Online Information Review*, 35(2), 255–271. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14684521111128032>
- King, R. A., Racherla, P., & Bush, V. D. (2014). What we know and don't know about online word-of-mouth: A review and synthesis of the literature. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 28(3), 167–183. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2014.02.001>
- Kohring, M. (2004). *Vertrauen in Journalismus: Theorie und Empirie [Trust in journalism: Theory and empirical evidence]*. Universitätsverlag Konstanz.
- Kohring, M., & Matthes, J. (2007). Trust in news media: Development and validation of a multidimensional scale. *Communication Research*, 34(2), 231–252. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650206298071>
- Krueger, F., & Meyer-Lindenberg, A. (2019). Toward a model of interpersonal trust drawn from neuroscience, psychology, and economics. *Trends in Neurosciences*, 42(2), 92–101. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tins.2018.10.004>
- Lappas, T. (2012). Fake reviews: The malicious perspective. In G. Bouma, A. Ittoo, E. Métais, & H. Wortmann (Eds.), *Natural language processing and information systems* (pp. 23–34). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-31178-9_3
- Lewis, J. D., & Weigert, A. (1985). Trust as a social reality. *Social Forces*, 63(4), 967–985. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/63.4.967>
- Lim, Y.-s., & Van Der Heide, B. (2015). Evaluating the wisdom of strangers: The perceived credibility of online consumer reviews on Yelp. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 20(1), 67–82. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12093>
- Lis, B. (2013). In eWOM we trust. A framework of factors that determine the eWOM credibility. *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, 5(3), 129–140. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12599-013-0261-9>
- Luhmann, N. (1990). *Essays on self-reference*. Columbia University Press.
- Luhmann, N. (2018). *Trust and power*. Polity (Original work published 1968, 1975).
- Maslowska, E., Malthouse, E. C., & Bernritter, S. F. (2017). Too good to be true: The role of online reviews' features in probability to buy. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(1), 142–163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2016.1195622>
- Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(3), 709–734. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1995.9508080335>
- McGeer, V., & Pettit, P. (2017). The empowering theory of trust. In P. Faulkner & T. Simpson (Eds.), *The philosophy of trust* (pp. 14–34). Oxford University Press.
- McKnight, D. H., & Chervany, N. L. (2001). What trust means in e-commerce customer relationships: An interdisciplinary conceptual typology. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 6(2), 35–59. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10864415.2001.11044235>
- Meyer, S. B., & Ward, P. R. (2013). Differentiating between trust and dependence of patients with coronary heart disease: Furthering the sociology of trust. *Health, Risk & Society*, 15(3), 279–293. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698575.2013.776017>
- Mishra, A. K. (1996). Organizational responses to crisis: The centrality of trust. In R. Kramer & T. Tyler (Eds.), *Trust in organizations: Frontiers of theory and research* (pp. 261–287). Sage. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452243610.n13>
- Möllering, G. (2001). The nature of trust: From Georg Simmel to a theory of expectation interpretation and suspension. *Sociology*, 35(2), 403–420. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0038038501000190>
- Moran, G., & Muzellec, L. (2017). eWOM credibility on social networking sites: A framework. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 23(2), 149–161. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2014.969756>

- Morgner, C. (2018). Trust and society: Suggestions for further development of Niklas Luhmann's theory of trust. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue Canadienne De Sociologie*, 55(2), 232–256. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cars.12191>
- Mudambi, S. M., & Schuff, D. (2010). What makes a helpful online review? A study of customer reviews on Amazon.com. *MIS Quarterly*, 34(1), 185–200. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20721420>
- Ohanian, R. (1990). Construction and validation of a scale to measure celebrity endorsers' perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. *Journal of Advertising*, 19(3), 39–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1990.10673191>
- Ohanian, R. (1991). The impact of celebrity spokespersons' perceived image on consumers' intention to purchase. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 31(1), 46–54. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/1991-26094-001>
- Open Science Collaboration (2015). Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science. *Science*, 349(6251), Article aac4716. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aac4716>
- O'Reilly, K., MacMillan, A., Mumuni, A. G., & Lancendorfer, K. M. (2016). Extending our understanding of eWOM impact: The role of source credibility and message relevance. *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 15(2), 77–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332861.2016.1143215>
- Prendergast, G., Ko, D., & Yin, Y. V. S. (2010). Online word of mouth and consumer purchase intentions. *International Journal of Advertising*, 29(5), 687–708. <https://doi.org/10.2501/S0265048710201427>
- Rani, A., & Shivaprasad, H. N. (2018). Determinants of electronic word of mouth persuasiveness: A conceptual model and research propositions. *Journal of Contemporary Management Research*, 12(2), 1–16. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/determinants-electronic-word-mouth-persuasiveness/docview/2171578064/se-2>
- Romero, L. S., & Mitchell, D. E. (2017). Toward understanding trust: A response to Adams and Miskell. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 54(1), 152–170. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X17722017>
- Rotter, J. B. (1971). Generalized expectancies for interpersonal trust. *American Psychologist*, 26(5), 443–452. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0031464>
- Rousseau, D. M., Sitkin, S. B., Burt, R. S., & Camerer, C. (1998). Not so different after all: A cross-discipline view of trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 23(3), 393–404. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1998.926617>
- Seckler, M., Heinz, S., Forde, S., Tuch, A. N., & Opwis, K. (2015). Trust and distrust on the web: User experiences and website characteristics. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 45, 39–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.11.064>
- Smith, D., Menon, S., & Sivakumar, K. (2005). Online peer and editorial recommendations, trust, and choice in virtual markets. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 19(3), 15–37. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dir.20041>
- Torraco, R. J. (2005). Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples. *Human Resource Development Review*, 4(3), 356–367. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484305278283>
- Tzieropoulos, H. (2013). The trust game in neuroscience: A short review. *Social Neuroscience*, 8(5), 407–416. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17470919.2013.832375>
- Van Der Heide, B., & Lim, Y.-s. (2016). On the conditional cueing of credibility heuristics: The case of online influence. *Communication Research*, 43(5), 672–693. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650214565915>
- van Dijck, J. (2013). *The culture of connectivity: A critical history of social media*. Oxford University Press.
- Wang, S., Cunningham, N. R., & Eastin, M. S. (2015). The impact of eWOM message characteristics on the perceived effectiveness of online consumer reviews. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 15(2), 151–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2015.1091755>
- Whittemore, R., & Knafl, K. (2005). The integrative review: Updated methodology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 52(5), 546–553. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03621.x>
- Wrightsman, L. S. (1991). Interpersonal trust and attitudes toward human nature. In J. P. Robinson, P. R. Shaver, & L. S. Wrightsman (Eds.), *Measures of personality and social psychological attitudes* (pp. 373–412). Academic. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-590241-0.50012-5>
- Zhang, X., Wu, Y., & Wang, W. (2021). eWOM, what are we suspecting? Motivation, truthfulness or identity. *Journal of Information Communication & Ethics in Society*, 19(1), 104–128. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JICES-12-2019-0135>

Appendix A

Composition of Sample

- Ahmad, W., & Sun, J. (2018). Modeling consumer distrust of online hotel reviews. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 71, 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2017.12.005>
- Ayeh, J. K., Au, N., & Law, R. (2013). “Do we believe in TripAdvisor?” Examining credibility perceptions and online travelers’ attitude toward using user-generated content. *Journal of Travel Research*, 52(4), 437–452. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287512475217>
- Bae, S., & Lee, T. (2011). Product type and consumers’ perception of online consumer reviews. *Electronic Markets*, 21(4), 255–266. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12525-011-0072-0>
- Baker, M. A., & Kim, K. (2019). Value destruction in exaggerated online reviews: The effects of emotion, language, and trustworthiness. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(4), 1956–1976. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-03-2018-0247>
- Banerjee, S., Bhattacharyya, S., & Bose, I. (2017). Whose online reviews to trust? Understanding reviewer trustworthiness and its impact on business. *Decision Support Systems*, 96, 17–26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2017.01.006>
- Banerjee, S., & Chua, A. Y. K. (2019). Trust in online hotel reviews across review polarity and hotel category. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 90, 265–275. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.09.010>
- Bartosiak, M. (2021). Can you tell me where to stay? The effect of presentation format on the persuasiveness of hotel online reviews. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24(8), 1109–1122. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13683500.2020.1765749>
- Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C., Guinalú, M., & Ekinci, Y. (2015). Do online hotel rating schemes influence booking behaviors? *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 49, 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2015.05.005>
- Cheung, C. M.-Y., Sia, C.-L., & Kuan, K. K. Y. (2012). Is this review believable? A study of factors affecting the credibility of online consumer reviews from an ELM perspective. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 13(8), 618–635. <https://doi.org/10.17705/1jais.00305>
- 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. <https://doi.org/10.2753/JEC1086-4415130402>
- Chih, W.-H., Wang, K.-Y., Hsu, L.-C., & Huang, S.-C. (2013). Investigating electronic word-of-mouth effects on online discussion forums: The role of perceived positive electronic word-of-mouth review credibility. *Cyberpsychology, Behaviour, and Social Networking*, 16(9), 658–668. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2012.0364>
- Chiou, J.-S., Hsiao, C.-C., & Chiu, T.-Y. (2018). The credibility and attribution of online reviews: Differences between high and low product knowledge consumers. *Online Information Review*, 42(5), 630–646. <https://doi.org/10.1108/OIR-06-2017-0197>
- Chiou, J.-S., Hsiao, C.-C., & Su, F.-Y. (2014). Whose online reviews have the most influences on consumers in cultural offerings? Professional vs consumer commentators. *Internet Research*, 24(3), 353–368. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-03-2013-0046>
- Clare, C. J., Wright, G., Sandiford, P., & Caceres, A. P. (2018). Why should I believe this? Deciphering the qualities of a credible online customer review. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 24(8), 823–842. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2016.1138138>
- Cox, D., Cox, J. G., & Cox, A. D. (2017). To err is human?: How typographical and orthographical errors affect perceptions of online reviewers. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 75, 245–253. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.05.008>
- Craciun, G., & Moore, K. (2019). Credibility of negative online product reviews: Reviewer gender, reputation and emotion effects. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 97, 104–115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.03.010>
- Dickinger, A. (2011). The trustworthiness of online channels for experience- and goal-directed search tasks. *Journal of Travel Research*, 50(4), 378–391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047287510371694>

- Dinh, H., & Doan, T. H. (2020). The impact of senders' identity to the acceptance of electronic word-of-mouth of consumers in Vietnam. *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 7(2), 213–219. <https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2020.vol7.no2.213>
- Doh, S.-J., & Hwang, J.-S. (2009). How consumers evaluate eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth) messages. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, 12(2), 193–197. <https://doi.org/10.1089/cpb.2008.0109>
- Dou, X., Walden, J. A., Lee, S., & Lee, J. Y. (2012). Does source matter? Examining source effects in online product reviews. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(5), 1555–1563. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.03.015>
- Duffy, A. (2017). Trusting me, trusting you: Evaluating three forms of trust on an information-rich consumer review website. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 16(3), 212–220. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.1628>
- Filieri, R. (2015). What makes online reviews helpful? A diagnosticity-adoption framework to explain informational and normative influences in e-WOM. *Journal of Business Research*, 68(6), 1261–1270. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2014.11.006>
- Filieri, R. (2016). What makes an online consumer review trustworthy? *Annals of Tourism Research*, 58, 46–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2015.12.019>
- Filieri, R., Alguezaui, S., & McLeay, F. (2015). Why do travelers trust TripAdvisor? Antecedents of trust towards consumer-generated media and its influence on recommendation adoption and word of mouth. *Tourism Management*, 51, 174–185. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.05.007>
- Flanagin, A. J., & Metzger, M. J. (2013). Trusting expert- versus user-generated ratings online: The role of information volume, valence, and consumer characteristics. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(4), 1626–1634. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.02.001>
- Furner, C. P., Zinko, R., & Zhu, Z. (2016). Electronic word-of-mouth and information overload in an experiential service industry. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 26(6), 788–810. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSTP-01-2015-0022>
- Grabner-Kräuter, S., & Waiguny, M. K. J. (2015). Insights into the impact of online physician reviews on patients' decision making: Randomized experiment. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 17(4), Article e93. <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.3991>
- Hajli, N. (2018). Ethical environment in the online communities by information credibility: A social media perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 149(4), 799–810. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-016-3036-7>
- Hong, S., & Park, H. S. (2012). Computer-mediated persuasion in online reviews: Statistical versus narrative evidence. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(3), 906–919. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2011.12.011>
- Hong, S., & Pittman, M. (2020). eWOM anatomy of online product reviews: Interaction effects of review number, valence, and star ratings on perceived credibility. *International Journal of Advertising*, 39(7), 892–920. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2019.1703386>
- Hsiao, K.-L., Lin, J. C.-C., Wang, X.-Y., Lu, H.-P., & Yu, H. (2010). Antecedents and consequences of trust in online product recommendations: An empirical study in social shopping. *Online Information Review*, 34(6), 935–953. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14684521011099414>
- Hussain, S., Guangju, W., Jafar, R. M. S., Ilyas, Z., Mustafa, G., & Jianzhou, Y. (2018). Consumers' online information adoption behavior: Motives and antecedents of electronic word of mouth communications. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 80, 22–32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2017.09.019>
- Jensen, M. L., Averbeck, J. M., Zhang, Z., & Wright, K. B. (2013). Credibility of anonymous online product reviews: A language expectancy perspective. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 30(1), 293–323. <https://doi.org/10.2753/MIS0742-1222300109>
- Jensen, M. L., & Yetgin, E. (2017). Prominence and interpretation of online conflict of interest disclosures. *MIS Quarterly*, 41(2), 629–643. <https://doi.org/10.25300/MISQ/2017/41.2.13>
- Kusumasondaja, 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. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356766712449365>
- Lee, J., & Hong, I. B. (2019). Consumer's electronic word-of-mouth adoption: The trust transfer perspective. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 23(4), 595–627. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10864415.2019.1655207>

- Lee, J., Park, D.-H., & 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. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10662241111123766>
- Lee, K.-T., & Koo, D.-M. (2012). Effects of attribute and valence of e-WOM on message adoption: Moderating roles of subjective knowledge and regulatory focus. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 28(5), 1974–1984. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.05.018>
- Lee, Y.-C. (2014). Impacts of decision-making biases on eWOM retrust and risk-reducing strategies. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 40, 101–110. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.08.002>
- Lim, Y.-s., & Van Der Heide, B. (2015). Evaluating the wisdom of strangers: The perceived credibility of online consumer reviews on Yelp. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 20(1), 67–82. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcc4.12093>
- Lin, C. A., & Xu, X. (2017). Effectiveness of online consumer reviews: The influence of valence, reviewer ethnicity, social distance and source trustworthiness. *Internet Research*, 27(2), 362–380. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IntR-01-2016-0017>
- Lis, B. (2013). In eWOM we trust. A framework of factors that determine the eWOM credibility. *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, 5(3), 129–140. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12599-013-0261-9>
- López, M., & Sicilia, M. (2014). eWOM as source of influence: The impact of participation in eWOM and perceived source trustworthiness on decision making. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 14(2), 86–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2014.944288>
- Luo, C., Luo, X., Schatzberg, L., & Sia, C. L. (2013). Impact of informational factors on online recommendation credibility: The moderating role of source credibility. *Decision Support Systems*, 56, 92–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2013.05.005>
- Luo, C., Luo, X., Xu, Y., Warkentin, M., & Sia, C. L. (2015). Examining the moderating role of sense of membership in online review evaluations. *Information & Management*, 52(3), 305–316. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2014.12.008>
- Luo, C., Wu, J., Shi, Y., & Xu, Y. (2014). The effects of individualism–collectivism cultural orientation on eWOM information. *International Journal of Information Management*, 34(4), 446–456. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2014.04.001>
- Mahat, N. Z. D., & Hanafiah, M. H. (2020). Help me TripAdvisor! Examining the relationship between TripAdvisor e-WOM attributes, trusts towards online reviews and travellers behavioural intentions. *Journal of Information and Organizational Sciences*, 44(1), 83–112. <https://doi.org/10.31341/jios.44.1.4>
- McGloin, R., Nowak, K. L., & Watt, J. (2014). Avatars and expectations: Influencing perceptions of trustworthiness in an online consumer setting. *PsychoNology Journal*, 12(1–2), 7–28. <https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=1c3555caacf6eb62f83f6a3bdded372d3138fea3>
- Mumuni, A. G., O'Reilly, K., MacMillan, A., Cowley, S., & Kelley, B. (2020). Online product review impact: The relative effects of review credibility and review relevance. *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 19(2), 153–191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332861.2019.1700740>
- Munzel, A. (2015). Malicious practice of fake reviews: Experimental insight into the potential of contextual indicators in assisting consumers to detect deceptive opinion spam. *Recherche Et Applications En Marketing*, 30(4), 24–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2051570715604155>
- Nam, K., Baker, J., Ahmad, N., & Goo, J. (2020). Dissatisfaction, disconfirmation, and distrust: An empirical examination of value co-destruction through negative electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). *Information Systems Frontiers*, 22(1), 113–130. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10796-018-9849-4>
- Naujoks, A., & Benkenstein, M. (2020). Expert cues: How expert reviewers are perceived online. *Journal of Service Theory and Practice*, 30(4–5), 531–556. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSTP-11-2019-0240>
- O'Reilly, K., MacMillan, A., Mumuni, A. G., & Lancendorfer, K. M. (2016). Extending our understanding of eWOM impact: The role of source credibility and message relevance. *Journal of Internet Commerce*, 15(2), 77–96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332861.2016.1143215>

- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., Akl, E. A., Brennan, S. E., Chou, R., Glanville, J., Grimshaw, J. M., Hróbjartsson, A., Lalu, M. M., Li, T., Loder, E. W., Mayo-Wilson, E., McDonald, S., . . . Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ (Clinical Research Ed.)*, 372, n71. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>
- Prendergast, G., Paliwal, A., & Chan, K. K. F. (2018). Trust in online recommendations: An evolutionary psychology perspective. *International Journal of Advertising*, 37(2), 199–216. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2016.1239879>
- Qiu, L., Pang, J., & Lim, K. H. (2012). Effects of conflicting aggregated rating on eWOM review credibility and diagnosticity: The moderating role of review valence. *Decision Support Systems*, 54(1), 631–643. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2012.08.020>
- Racherla, P., Mandviwalla, M., & Connolly, D. J. (2012). Factors affecting consumers' trust in online product reviews. *Journal of Consumer Behavior*, 11(2), 94–104. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.385>
- Reimer, T., & Benkenstein, M. (2016). When good WOM hurts and bad WOM gains: The effect of untrustworthy online reviews. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(12), 5993–6001. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.05.014>
- Reimer, T., & Benkenstein, M. (2018). Not just for the recommender: How eWOM incentives influence the recommendation audience. *Journal of Business Research*, 86, 11–21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.01.041>
- Smith, D., Menon, S., & Sivakumar, K. (2005). Online peer and editorial recommendations, trust, and choice in virtual markets. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 19(3), 15–37. <https://doi.org/10.1002/dir.20041>
- Su, W.-T., Lehto, M. R., Lehto, X. Y., Yi, J. S., Shi, Z., & Liu, X. (2017). The influence of reviewer demographic information provision on trust and purchase intent for users of online websites. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 18(3), 328–353. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1528008X.2016.1230035>
- Tsang, A. S. L., & Prendergast, G. (2009). Is a “star” worth a thousand words? *European Journal of Marketing*, 43(11/12), 1269–1280. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560910989876>
- Van Der Heide, B., & Lim, Y.-s. (2016). On the conditional cueing of credibility heuristics: The case of online influence. *Communication Research*, 43(5), 672–693. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650214565915>
- Wang, S., Cunningham, N. R., & Eastin, M. S. (2015). The impact of eWOM message characteristics on the perceived effectiveness of online consumer reviews. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 15(2), 151–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2015.1091755>
- Wang, X., Teo, H.-H., & Wei, K. K. (2015). Simultaneity and interactivity of the effects of communication elements on consumers' decision making in eWOM systems. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 16(3), 153–174. <http://www.jecr.org/node/468>
- Willemssen, L. M., Neijens, P. C., & Bronner, F. (2012). The ironic effect of source identification on the perceived credibility of online product reviewers. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 18(1), 16–31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01598.x>
- Wu, L., Shen, H., Li, M., & Deng, Q. (2017). Sharing information now vs later: The effect of temporal contiguity cue and power on consumer response toward online reviews. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 29(2), 648–668. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-10-2015-0587>
- Xie, H., 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. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2010.04.008>
- Xu, Q. (2014). Should I trust him? The effects of reviewer profile characteristics on eWOM credibility. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 33, 136–144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.01.027>
- Zhang, X., Wu, Y., & Li, Y. (2019). The tendency of trust in a distrustful environment: The mediation role of contextual perceptions in eWOM. *Journal of Marketing Development & Competitiveness*, 13(5), 46–64. <https://doi.org/10.33423/jmdc.v13i5.2641>
- Zhang, X., Wu, Y., & Wang, W. (2021). eWOM, what are we suspecting? Motivation, truthfulness or identity. *Journal of Information, Communication & Ethics in Society*, 19(1), 104–128. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JICES-12-2019-0135>

Appendix B

Table B1. *Examined Reviewer-Related Factors, Including Interactions (Extension to Table 5).*

Factor	Effect on Trust	Article ¹
Gender of reviewer	+ for indicated gender	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	if female gender of reviewer and if no reviewer status indication then stronger positive effect of low emotionality	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	if male gender of reviewer and if high reputation indication then stronger positive effect of low emotionality	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	if male gender of reviewer and if high object knowledge of reviewer then stronger positive effect of low emotionality	Craciun and Moore (2019)
Personal identifying information of reviewer information provided on reviewer, e.g., real name, residence, preferences	+ for provided information	Kusumasondjaja et al. (2012); Xie et al. (2011)
Profile picture of reviewer provision of profile picture or choice of avatar	+ for provided profile picture (VS no profile picture provided) / for provided human avatar (VS dinosaur avatar)	Filieri (2016); McGloin et al. (2014); Xu (2014)
	+ for high physical attractiveness of the reviewer picture	Lin and Xu (2017)
Authenticity of reviewer extent to which the identity of reviewer appears to be authentic or fake	- for low authenticity	Ahmed and Sun (2018); Dinh and Doan (2020); Zhang et al. (2021)
	- stronger for low authenticity if perceived service failure	Ahmed and Sun (2018)
Experience of reviewer extent to which reviewer has experience in writing reviews	no interaction with platform familiarity of reviewer	Lim and Van Der Heide (2015)
	no interaction with involvement of reviewer in community	Lim and Van Der Heide (2015)
	if high experience and if high platform familiarity of opinion seeker then stronger positive effect of consistency of review with other reviews	Van Der Heide and Lim (2016)
Object knowledge of reviewer extent to which reviewer has expertise, competence, or ability regarding the reviewed object, e.g., many reviews within the product category of the reviewed option, is "competent," "experienced," "well-qualified"	+ for vast knowledge	Clare et al. (2018); Filieri (2016); Hsiao et al. (2010); J. Lee and Hong (2019); Lis (2013); Naujoks and Benkenstein (2020); O'Reilly et al. (2016); Smith et al. (2005); X. Wang et al. (2015)
	0 for vast knowledge	Mumuni et al. (2020)
	+ stronger for vast knowledge if high involvement of opinion seeker	Lis (2013)
	+ stronger for vast knowledge if high status indication of reviewer	Wang, X. et al. (2015)
	+ stronger for vast knowledge if consumer source than if expert source	Willemsen et al. (2012)
	if vast knowledge and if male gender of reviewer then stronger positive effect of low emotionality of review	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	0 for vast knowledge if female gender of reviewer	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	- for self-claimed vast knowledge	Willemsen et al. (2012)
	- for low knowledge	Duffy (2017)
Duration of platform membership of reviewer period the reviewer has been registered as review platform member	+ for long duration	Banerjee et al. (2017)

Integrity of reviewer extent to which reviewer is independent from influences by a third-party, e.g., by endorsements, monetary incentives	+	for high integrity	Dickinger (2011); Dou et al. (2012); Filieri (2016); Hsiao et al. (2010); O'Reilly et al. (2016); Reimer and Benkenstein (2018)
	-	for low integrity	Ahmed and Sun (2018)
	0	depending on ways of disclosing third-party influence	Jensen and Yetgin (2017)
	0	for high integrity	Hussain et al. (2018) ²
Motives of reviewer motives of reviewer to write the review	+	for review object-related motives	Dou et al. (2012); Qiu et al. (2012)
	-	for ulterior motives	Willemsen et al. (2012)
	-	for non-benevolent motives	Duffy (2017)
	0	for non-benevolent motives	Zhang et al. (2021)
Trustworthiness of reviewer extent to which reviewer is credible, e.g., "dependable," "honest," "reliable," "believable"	+	for high trustworthiness	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Clare et al. (2018); Lis (2013); Luo et al. (2014, 2015); Mumuni et al. (2020)
	0	for high trustworthiness	Filieri et al. (2015)
		no interaction with object knowledge of opinion seeker	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012)
		no interaction with involvement of opinion seeker	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012)
	+	weaker if high involvement of opinion seeker	Lis (2013)
		no interaction with culture of opinion seeker	Luo et al. (2014)
		no interaction with sense of virtual community of opinion seeker	Luo et al. (2015)
		if high trustworthiness then stronger positive effect of information load of review	Luo et al. (2013)
	if low trustworthiness then stronger positive effect of argument quality	Luo et al. (2013)	
Homophily extent to which reviewer is similar to opinion seeker, e.g., regarding gender, age, job, taste	+	for high homophily	Ayeh et al. (2013); Smith et al. (2005); Su et al. (2017)
	+	stronger effect for homophily if high involvement of opinion seeker	Lis (2013); Racherla et al. (2012)
	0	for high homophily	Lin and Xu (2017)
Peer status of reviewer extent to which reviewer is perceived as peer, e.g., fellow consumer, tourist, patient	+	weaker for peer reviewer than for institutionalized expert reviewer if type of review object is elite cultural offering	Chiou et al. (2014)
		no interaction with type of review object mass cultural offering	Chiou et al. (2014)
Social closeness of reviewer extent to which opinion seeker feels socially close to reviewer, e.g., wishing to have reviewer as friend or colleague	0	for high social closeness	Lin & Xu (2017)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ¹For full references, see Appendix. ²Hussain et al. (2018) adopt concept and items from a study on reviewer motives for eWOM contribution. The authors test it as antecedent of eWOM credibility as perceived by an opinion seeker. It is not explained how this concept that refers to reviewers informs the examination of the opinion seeker's perceptions and how items were possibly adjusted.

Table B2. Examined Review-Related Factors, Including Interactions (Extension to Table 6).

Factor	Effect on Trust	Article ¹
Pictures of reviewed option review provides pictures of reviewed option	+ for provided pictures	Filieri (2016)
Attractiveness of title of review extent to which the review title catches the attention	+ for attractive title	Banerjee and Chua (2019)
Conciseness of title of review extent to which the title of the review provides a concise preview on review	0 for high conciseness	Banerjee and Chua (2019)
Style of review way in which the reviewer wrote the review, e.g., foreign words, technical terms, orthographical errors, or "easy to read," "well written"	0 for lexical complexity	Jensen et al. (2013)
	+ for correct orthography	McGloin et al. (2014)
	0 for correct orthography	Cox et al. (2017)
	- stronger for incorrect typology than for incorrect orthography if general trust of opinion seeker is high	Cox et al. (2017)
	0 for incorrect orthography if general trust of opinion seeker is low	Cox et al. (2017)
Quality of review general quality of review	+ for high quality of review	Filieri (2015, 2016); Filieri et al. (2015)
	0 for high quality of review	Mahat and Hanafiah (2020); S. Wang et al. (2015); Willemsen et al. (2012)
Argument quality of review extent to which reviewer presents sound arguments in review	+ for high quality of argument	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Luo et al. (2013, 2014, 2015); Racherla et al. (2012); Reimer and Benkenstein (2016)
	+ stronger for high quality of argument if low trustworthiness of reviewer	Luo et al. (2013)
	+ stronger for high quality of argument if high sense of virtual community of opinion seeker	Luo et al. (2015)
	0 if skeptical attitude of opinion seeker	Reimer and Benkenstein (2016)
	no interaction with object knowledge of opinion seeker	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012)
	no interaction with involvement of opinion seeker	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); Racherla et al. (2012)
	no interaction with culture of opinion seeker	Luo et al. (2014)
Information load of review extent to which the review is rich with information, e.g., length, details, scope, or information-richness	+ for high information load	Baker and Kim (2019); Banerjee and Chua (2019); Dickinger (2011); Duffy (2017); Luo et al. (2013)
	- for too high or too low information load	Furner et al. (2016)
	+ for moderate information load	Furner et al. (2016)
	+ for review with factual, detailed, and relevant information	Filieri (2016)
	+ stronger for high information load if high trustworthiness of reviewer	Luo et al. (2013)
	0 for high information load	Tsang and Prendergast (2009)

Two-sidedness of review extent to which reviewer discusses positive and negative aspects of the reviewed product	+	for two-sided review	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); Clare et al. (2018); Filieri (2016); Jensen et al. (2013); Luo et al. (2014)
	+	stronger for two-sided review if high object knowledge	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012)
	+	stronger for two-sided review if low involvement	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012)
	+	stronger for two-sided review if individualist culture	Luo et al. (2014)
	+	stronger for two-sided review if high sense of virtual community of opinion seeker	Luo et al. (2015)
	0	for two-sided review	M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Luo et al. (2015)
Helpfulness of review extent to which reviewer provides helpful information	+	for high helpfulness	Clare et al. (2018); Mahat and Hanafiah (2020)
Emotionality of review extent to which reviewer uses emotion-laden words, e.g., "love," capital letters, emoticons and exclamation marks, no quantified criteria	+	for high emotionality	S. Wang et al. (2015)
	-	for high emotionality	Baker and Kim (2019); Clare et al. (2018); Craciun and Moore (2019); Jensen et al. (2013)
	+	for low emotionality	Luo et al. (2015)
	+	weaker for high emotionality if high sense of virtual community of opinion seeker	Luo et al. (2015)
	+	for low emotionality if female gender of reviewer and if no reviewer status indication	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	0	if male gender of reviewer and if no reviewer status indication	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	+	for low emotionality if male gender of reviewer and if high reputation	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	0	if female gender of reviewer and if high reputation	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	+	for low emotionality if male gender of reviewer and if high object knowledge of reviewer	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	0	if female gender of reviewer and if high object knowledge of reviewer	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	+	stronger (review) ² for factual reviews than emotional reviews if low number of reviews	Grabner-Kräuter and Waiguny (2015)
	+	stronger (review) ² for emotional reviews if high number of reviews	Grabner-Kräuter and Waiguny (2015)
		no interaction (reviewer) ² with number of reviews	Grabner-Kräuter and Waiguny (2015)
Subjectivity of review extent to which reviewer shared subjective information	+	weaker for subjective information than for objective information	Hong and Park (2012); K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)
	+	stronger for objective information if review valence (negative)	Hong and Park (2012)
		no interaction with review valence (positive)	Hong and Park (2012)
		no interaction with object knowledge of opinion seeker for subjective information	K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)

	+	stronger for objective information if high object knowledge of opinion seeker	K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)
Trustworthiness of descriptions in review extent to which the provided information is "trustworthy," "reliable," "credible"	+	for high trustworthiness	Mahat and Hanafiah (2020)
	0	for high trustworthiness	Banerjee and Chua (2019)
Consistency of review text and rating extent to which (textual) review and associated (numerical) rating are consistent	+	for high consistency	Tsang and Prendergast (2009)
Timeliness of review extent to which the review is up-to-date	+	for high timeliness	Clare et al. (2018)
Temporal contiguity of the review reviewer wrote review during (compared to after) the stay	+	stronger for high contiguity if low personal sense of power of opinion seeker	Wu et al. (2017)
	-	stronger for high contiguity if high personal sense of power of opinion seeker	Wu et al. (2017)
Valence of review (positive) extent to which the review praises the review object	+	for positive valence	Banerjee et al. (2017); Lim and Van Der Heide (2015); Lin and Xu (2017)
	+	weaker if positive valence than if negative valence	Hong and Pittman (2020); K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)
	+	stronger if positive valence than if negative valence	Van Der Heide and Lim (2016)
		no interaction with consistency of review with other reviews	Munzel (2015)
		no interaction with subjectivity of review	Hong and Park (2012)
		no interaction with focus of opinion seeker	K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)
		no interaction with object knowledge of opinion seeker	Chiou et al. (2018)
		no interaction with gender	Prendergast et al. (2018)
	+	weaker if positive valence than if mixed valence	Prendergast et al. (2018)
	+	stronger for positive valence if high number of reviews	Hong and Pittman (2020)
	0	for valence review (vs. neutral)	Baker and Kim (2019)
	- for overtly positive valence	Filieri (2016); Prendergast et al. (2018)	
Valence of review (negative) extent to which the review criticizes the review object	0	for negative valence	M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Willemsen et al. (2012)
	+	stronger if object knowledge of opinion seeker is low	Chiou et al. (2018)
	+	stronger if subjectivity of review is low	Hong and Park (2012)
	+	if personal identifying information of reviewer provided	Kusumasondjaja et al. (2012)
	0	if no personal identifying information of reviewer provided	Kusumasondjaja et al. (2012)
		no interaction with gender	Prendergast et al. (2018)
	+	weaker if negative valence than if mixed valence	Prendergast et al. (2018)
	+	stronger if negative valence than if positive valence	Hong and Pittman (2020); K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)

+	weaker if negative valence than if positive valence	Van Der Heide and Lim (2016)
+	weaker for negative valence if high number of reviews	Hong and Pittman (2020)
0	for valence review (vs. neutral)	Baker and Kim (2019)
	no interaction with focus of opinion seeker	K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)
-	for overtly negative valence	Filieri (2016); Prendergast et al. (2018)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ¹For full references, see Appendix. ²Grabner-Kräuter and Waiguny (2015) distinguish between the two independent variables trustworthiness of reviewer and credibility of review.

Table B3. Examined Option Provider-Related Factors, Including Interactions (Extension to Table 7).

Factor	Effect on Trust	Article ¹
Brand attitude extent of brand commitment and attitude of opinion seeker toward reviewed brand	0 for high brand attitude	Jensen and Yetgin (2017)
Service failure extent to which the opinion seeker thinks their perception of service failure depends on fake reviews	if perceived service failure then stronger negative effect of integrity of reviewer if perceived service failure then stronger negative effect of low authenticity of profile data of reviewer	Ahmed and Sun (2018) Ahmed and Sun (2018)
Type of review object	+ stronger for experience good than for search good + stronger for experience good if peer status of platform provider 0 no interaction for search good with status group of platform provider if elite cultural offering then weaker positive effect of peer status of reviewer if mass cultural offering then no effect of peer status of reviewer	Bae and Lee (2011) Bae and Lee (2011) Bae and Lee (2011) Chiou et al. (2014) Chiou et al. (2014)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ¹For full references, see Appendix.

Table B4. Platform-Related Factors Including Interactions (Extension to Table 8).

Factor	Effect on Trust	Article ¹
Platform quality extent to which the platform is perceived as qualitative, e.g., "well-organized," "guarantees user privacy"	+ for high quality	Filieri et al. (2015)
Trustworthiness of platform extent to which the platform is credible, e.g., "trustworthy," "believable"	+ for high trustworthiness 0 for high trustworthiness + for high trustworthiness if high trustworthiness of community	Hsiao et al. (2010); J. Lee et al. (2011) J. Lee and Hong (2019) J. Lee and Hong (2019)
Status group of platform provider platform is provided by peers (e.g., consumers) or non-peers (e.g., marketers)	if consumer-developed platform then stronger positive effect of type of reviewed object experience product no interaction with type of reviewed object search good	Bae and Lee (2011) Bae and Lee (2011)

Reviewer status indication platform provides indication of reviewer status, e.g., "top reviewer"	+	for indicated high status	Banerjee et al. (2017); X. Wang et al. (2015)
	0	for indicated high status	Willemsen et al. (2012)
		if indicated high status and if male gender of reviewer then stronger positive effect of low emotionality of review	Craciun and Moore (2019)
	0	for indicated high status if female gender of reviewer	Craciun and Moore (2019)
Reviewer age provision platform provides age of reviewer	+	if opinion seeker recalls age	Su et al. (2017)
Reviewer gender provision platform provides gender of reviewer	+	if opinion seeker recalls gender	Su et al. (2017)
Fake review alert platform marks suspicious reviews as deceptive	-	stronger for indicated fake review if vast experience of opinion seeker with reviews	Munzel (2015)
Verification of purchase platform verifies that reviewer has experience with the reviewed option	+	for verification	Clare et al. (2018)
Interactivity of platform extent to which platform provides interactive features	+	for high interactivity	Hajli (2018)
Computer synthesized speech computer voice reads review text aloud	0	for computer synthesized speech	Bartosiak (2021)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ¹For full references, see Appendix.

Table B5. Examined Community-Related Factors Including Interactions (Extension to Table 9).

Factor		Effect on Trust	Article ¹
Number of reviews total number of reviews or comparisons of high and low numbers of reviews	+	for high number of reviews	Flanagin and Metzger (2013); Hong and Pittman (2020); Hsiao et al. (2010)
	+	stronger for high number of reviews if high online information provision of opinion seeker	Flanagin and Metzger (2013)
	+	stronger for high number of reviews if positive valence of review	Hong and Pittman (2020)
	+	stronger for high number of reviews if high aggregated rating	Hong and Pittman (2020)
Aggregated rating average rating accumulated through each reviewer's contribution	0	for lower ratings	Hong and Pittman (2020)
	+	stronger for high ratings if high number of reviews	Hong and Pittman (2020)
Consistency of review with other reviews extent to which review accords with other reviews or comments, "consistent," "similar," "seem to say the same thing"	+	for high consistency	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Clare et al. (2018); Doh and Hwang (2009); Filieri (2016); Hong and Park (2012); Luo et al. (2014, 2015); Van Der Heide and Lim (2016)
	-	for low consistency	Baker and Kim (2019)
	+	stronger for high consistency if collectivist culture of opinion seeker	Luo et al. (2014)
	+	for high consistency if high platform familiarity of opinion seeker and if high experience of reviewer	Van Der Heide and Lim (2016)

	+	for high consistency if low platform familiarity of opinion seeker	Van Der Heide and Lim (2016)
	-	for high consistency	Munzel (2015)
		no interaction with object knowledge of opinion seeker	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); Doh and Hwang (2009)
		no interaction with involvement of opinion seeker	C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); Doh and Hwang (2009)
		no interaction with integrity of reviewer	Jensen and Yetgin (2017)
		no interaction with valence of review (positive)	Munzel (2015)
		no interaction with sense of virtual community of opinion seeker	Luo et al. (2015)
Consistency of review with aggregated rating extent to which review accords with average rating	+	stronger for high consistency	Hong and Pittman (2020)
Evaluation of review extent to which the community evaluated the review positively or negatively, e.g., marking it as "helpful," "highly rated by other members"	+	for positive evaluation	M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Lis (2013); Luo et al. (2014, 2015)
	+	weaker for positive evaluation if high involvement of opinion seeker	Lis (2013)
	+	stronger if collectivist culture of opinion seeker	Luo et al. (2014)
	+	stronger for positive evaluation if high sense of virtual community of opinion seeker	Luo et al. (2015)
Trustworthiness of community extent to which the community is trustworthy	+	for high trustworthiness	J. Lee and Hong (2019)
Involvement of reviewer in community extent to which reviewer is involved in community, e.g., has many friends or followers	+	for high involvement in community	Banerjee et al. (2017); Xu (2014)
		no interaction with platform familiarity of reviewer	Lim and Van Der Heide (2015)
		no interaction with experience of reviewer	Lim and Van Der Heide (2015)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ¹For full references, see Appendix.

Table B6. Examined External Actor-Related Factors Including Interactions (Extension to Table 10).

Factor		Effect on Trust	Article ¹
Platform quality seal quality seal award to platform by third party	+	for awarded seals	Munzel (2015)
Platform reputation general reputation of platform	+	for good reputation	Hsiao et al. (2010)

Note. Relations are indicated as follows: + denotes a significant positive relation between factor and trust in the online review process; - denotes a significant negative impact of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 denotes no significant impact of factor on trust in the online review process. ¹For full references, see Appendix.

Table B7. Examined Opinion Seeker-Related Factors Including Interactions (Extension to Table 11).

Factor		Effect on Trust	Article ¹
Age of opinion seeker	0	for age	Reimer and Benkenstein (2016); X. Wang et al. (2015)
Gender of opinion seeker	0	for gender	Reimer and Benkenstein (2016); X. Wang et al. (2015); Xu (2014)
	+	stronger for female users than for male users	Prendergast et al. (2018)
		no interaction with valence of review (positive)	Prendergast et al. (2018)

		no interaction with valence of review (negative)	Prendergast et al. (2018)
Race of opinion seeker	0	for race	Xu (2014)
Culture of opinion seeker individual-collectivism orientation		if individualist culture then stronger positive effect of two-sidedness of review	Luo et al. (2014)
		if collectivist culture then stronger positive effect of consistency of review with other reviews	Luo et al. (2014)
		if collectivist culture then stronger positive effect of evaluation of review	Luo et al. (2014)
		no interaction with argument quality of review	Luo et al. (2014)
		no interaction with trustworthiness of reviewer	Luo et al. (2014)
Education of opinion seeker formal education of opinion seeker, e.g., school or university education	0	for education	Cox et al. (2017); Reimer and Benkenstein (2016)
Focus of opinion seeker prevention or promotion focus		no interaction with review valence (positive)	K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)
		no interaction with review valence (negative)	K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)
Inertia of opinion seeker extent to which opinion seeker is resistant to changing approaches used to evaluate online reviews	+	for high inertia	Y.-C. Lee (2014)
Illusion of control of opinion seeker extent to which opinion seeker thinks she/he has the ability to assess the truthfulness of the reviewer properly	+	for high illusion of power	Y.-C. Lee (2014)
Personal sense of power of opinion seeker extent to which the opinion seeker perceives he/she has the ability to control or influence other people in social interactions		if low personal sense of power of opinion seeker then stronger positive effect of temporal contiguity cues	Wu et al. (2017)
		if high personal sense of power of opinion seeker then stronger negative effect of temporal contiguity cues	Wu et al. (2017)
General trust of opinion seeker extent to which opinion seeker is generally willing to trust	+	for high general trust if skeptical attitude of opinion seeker and internet structural assurance of opinion seeker	Zhang et al. (2019)
		if low general trust then no effect of style of review	Jensen and Yetgin (2017); Zhang et al. (2019)
		if high general trust then stronger negative effect of style of review	Cox et al. (2017)
		if low general trust then no effect of style of review	Cox et al. (2017)
Opinion seeking of opinion seeker extent to which the opinion seeker seeks opinions of others in decision processes	+	for high opinion seeking	Hussain et al. (2018)
Attitude of opinion seeker toward online reviews extent to which opinion seeker is receptive or skeptical toward online reviews	0	for receptive attitude	Grabner-Kräuter and Waiguny (2015); Qiu et al. (2012)
	+	for receptive attitude	Clare et al. (2018); Mahat and Hanafiah (2020)
	-	for skeptical attitude	Reimer and Benkenstein (2016); Zhang et al. (2019, 2021)
		if skeptical attitude of opinion seeker then no effect of argument quality of the review	Reimer and Benkenstein (2016)

Experience of opinion seeker with reviews	0	for vast experience	Filieri et al. (2015)
extent to which opinion seeker has experience with reading or writing online reviews	+	for vast experience if vast experience then stronger negative effect of fake review alert	López and Sicilia (2014) Munzel (2015)
Experience of opinion seeker with online shopping	0	for high experience	Bae and Lee (2011)
extent to which the opinion seeker has experience with online shopping			
Internet structural assurance of opinion seeker	+	for high internet structural assurance	Zhang et al. (2019)
extent to which the opinion seeker believes that internet structures like regulations or legal recourses safeguard safe activities online			
Internet usage of opinion seeker	0	for high internet usage	X. Wang et al. (2015)
extent to which the opinion seeker has experience with using the internet			
Online information provision of opinion seeker		if high provision then stronger positive effect of number of reviews	Flanagin and Metzger (2013)
extent to which opinion seeker her/himself provides online information			
Involvement of opinion seeker	0	for high involvement	Hussain et al. (2018); Jensen and Yetgin (2017); Reimer and Benkenstein (2016); Xu (2014) Lis (2013)
extent to which opinion seeker is involved with review object category or in handling reviews		if high involvement then stronger positive effect of object knowledge of reviewer if high involvement then stronger positive effect of homophily if high involvement then weaker positive effect of trustworthiness of reviewer no interaction with trustworthiness of reviewer if high involvement then weaker positive effect of evaluation of review no interaction with consistency of review with other reviews no interaction with argument quality of review if low involvement then stronger positive effect of two-sidedness of review	Lis (2013); Racherla et al. (2012) Lis (2013) C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012) Lis (2013) C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); Doh and Hwang (2009) C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012); Racherla et al. (2012) C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012)
Other involvement of opinion seeker	+	for high other involvement	Hussain et al. (2018) ²
Motivation of opinion seeker	+	for high motivation	Chih et al. (2013)
extent to which the opinion seeker is motivated to consult the review	+	stronger for high motivation if goal-directed motivation than if experienced-oriented motivation	Dickinger (2011)
Object knowledge of opinion seeker	0	for vast object knowledge	Bae and Lee (2011); Dickinger (2011); Flanagin and Metzger (2013); X. Wang et al. (2015); Willemsen et al. (2012)
extent to which opinion seeker possesses knowledge or expertise of reviewed object category	+	if review corresponds to object knowledge no interaction with argument quality no interaction with subjectivity of reviews for subjective information	M. Y. Cheung et al. (2009); Clare et al. (2018) C. M.-Y. Cheung et al. (2012) K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)

		if vast (subjective) object knowledge then stronger positive effect of subjectivity of reviews for objective information	K.-T. Lee and Koo (2012)
		no interaction with valence of review (positive)	Chiou et al. (2018)
		if low object knowledge than stronger positive effect of valence of review (negative)	Chiou et al. (2018)
Disconfirmation with previous reviews	-	for high disconfirmation	Nam et al. (2020)
extent to which online reviews have afforded good decisions in the past			
Sense of virtual community of opinion seeker	+	for high sense of virtual community	Filieri (2016)
extent to which opinion seeker feels a sense of belonging to community, e.g., "I feel membership to this community," "I feel that I belong"			
		no interaction with trustworthiness of reviewer	Luo et al. (2015)
		no interaction with consistency of review with other reviews	Luo et al. (2015)
		if high sense of virtual community then stronger positive effect of two-sidedness of review	Luo et al. (2015)
		if high sense of virtual community then stronger positive effect of evaluation of review	Luo et al. (2015)
		if high sense of virtual community then stronger positive effect of argument quality	Luo et al. (2015)
		if high sense of virtual community then stronger negative effect of emotionality of review	Luo et al. (2015)
Self-worth reinforcement of opinion seeker	+	for high self-worth reinforcement	Hussain et al. (2018) ³
extent to which reviewer is motivated to write review to gain attention			
Platform familiarity of opinion seeker	+	for high familiarity	Casaló et al. (2015)
extent to which opinion seeker is familiar with platform			
		if low familiarity then stronger positive effect of consistency of review with other reviews	Van Der Heide and Lim (2016)
		if high familiarity and if high experience of reviewer then stronger positive effect of consistency of review with other reviews	Van Der Heide and Lim (2016)
		no interaction with involvement of reviewer in community	Lim and Van Der Heide (2015)
		no interaction with experience of reviewer	Lim and Van Der Heide (2015)

Note. Effects on trust are indicated as follows: + indicates a significant positive effect of factor on trust in the online review process; - indicates a significant negative effect of factor on trust in the online review process; 0 indicates that there is no significant effect of factor on trust in the online review process. ¹For full references, see Appendix. ²Hussain et al. (2018) do not specify the concept and items. Referenced sources do not address the concept. ³Hussain et al. (2018) adopt concept and items from a study on reviewer motives for eWOM contribution. The authors test it as antecedent of eWOM credibility as perceived by an opinion seeker. It is not explained how this concept that refers to reviewers informs the examination of the opinion seeker's perceptions and how items were possibly adjusted.

About Author

Nils S. Borchers is a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the Chair of Empirical Media Research, Institute of Media Studies at the U of Tübingen. Nils earned his PhD at U of Mannheim and his MA at the U of Münster. His research interests include digital communication, peer-to-peer-communication, strategic communication, and critical advertising studies.

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9600-066X>

✉ Correspondence to

Nils S. Borchers, University of Tübingen Institute of Media Studies, Wilhelmstraße 50, 72074 Tübingen, Germany, nils.borchers@uni-tuebingen.de

© Author(s). The articles in *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace* are open access articles licensed under the terms of the [Creative Commons BY-NC-ND 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) which permits unrestricted, non-commercial use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the work is properly cited.