

# **A comparative experimental study between 3 social proof reputation systems and their influence on brand attitudes in contemporary digital advertising**

A case of holiday package operators

Student Name: Dheeraj Ramchand  
Student Number: 465541

Supervisor: Dr. Serge Rijsdijk

MA Media & Business  
Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication  
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Master Thesis (CM5000)  
*June 2023*

A comparative experimental study between 3 social proof reputation systems and their influence on brand attitudes in contemporary digital advertising:  
A case of holiday package operators

## **ABSTRACT**

Trust is becoming increasingly important for both businesses and consumers when transacting online. Customers can be readily exposed to a wide range of businesses from which they can purchase from. Which of these businesses can they trust? On the flip side, how can businesses stand out and build trust among these potential online customers? Businesses can build this trust by displaying social proof, which customers can evaluate to form judgements surrounding a product or brand. In this paper, we investigate the following research question: To what extent are the social proof reputation systems of ratings, testimonials, and purchase numbers effective in developing positive brand attitudes when displayed in social media advertising? While all three systems are commonly used on other communication mediums, their effectiveness on brand attitudes, if any, when displayed in advertising is a research gap to be addressed. Furthermore, few comparisons are drawn between the effectiveness of these systems in existing literature.

A conceptual model was created where the three social proof reputation systems and their interactions were hypothesized to influence advertising value. Research suggests that advertising value affects brand attitudes, and this relationship was also explored in this study. Advertising involvement in the forms of message, medium, and creative involvement was thought to positively affect advertising value. To test this conceptual model, this paper includes a study among young consumers across the European Union and European Free Trade Agreement countries. An experimental survey was sent out and participants were randomly exposed to one of eight social proof conditions, from which they could report their advertising involvement, derived advertising value, and attitudes towards the brand. Data was further analyzed from 316 valid responses from participants hailing from 30 countries across Europe.

An ANOVA was used to compare the means between the different experimental groups and a moderated mediation model was employed to analyze the entire conceptual framework. The results find that advertising value does positively affect brand attitudes. Out of the three reputation systems, the heuristic systems of ratings and purchase numbers only displayed a significant effect on advertising value at higher levels of advertising involvement. The effect of testimonials on advertising value never reached significance. None of the four interactions exhibited a significant effect on advertising value either. Advertising involvement was found to be the strongest predictor of advertising value and exhibited a direct effect on brand attitudes. The implications of this study suggest that consumers need to be involved in an advertisement before they derive advertising value to then develop a positive attitude towards the advertised brand.

**KEYWORDS:** *Tourism advertising, social proof, ratings, reviews, eWOM*

## **PREFACE**

As an avid traveler and marketing enthusiast, this topic was something born out of passion for the industry. There was a vision to bridge the gap between academia and practice. This project pushed me out of my comfort zone in many different ways, but I learned a lot. Seeing all the parts come together makes it all worth it. Through this project, I discovered that there is so much potential to further research around eWOM, social proof, and tourism advertising within the European context. For an industry with such a large advertising budget, the gaps within existing research has serious implications for branding and advertising effectiveness.

This paper would not have been possible without the important people around me. First, I would like to thank my parents for their nonstop encouragement and reassurance. Without them, I wouldn't be where I am today. A big shoutout to my dear friends with whom we've shared many ideas, struggles, and laughs. Cheers to more good times. I would like to thank Babić Rosario et al. (2019) for putting into writing the criticisms of the ambiguity of eWOM in academic research – a critical argument I wholeheartedly identify with - into what is now my favorite research paper. Lastly, I would also like to thank and acknowledge my supervisor dr. Serge Rijdsdijk who always challenged me to focus, to cover my flanks, and work towards my potential. I believe both of us set a high expectation for this project, and his guidance and advice were invaluable.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	4
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	7
2.1 <i>Social Proof</i> .....	7
2.2 <i>Literature Review</i> .....	9
2.3 <i>Brand attitudes</i> .....	10
2.4 <i>Advertising value</i> .....	11
2.5 <i>Advertising involvement</i> .....	13
2.6. <i>Social Proof Reputation Systems</i> .....	14
CHAPTER 3: METHODS.....	20
3.1 <i>Study Design</i> .....	20
3.2 <i>Sample</i> .....	22
3.3 <i>Procedure</i> .....	23
3.4 <i>Measurements</i> .....	23
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS .....	25
4.1. <i>Sample characteristics</i> .....	25
4.2 <i>Principal Components Analysis and Reliability Analysis</i> .....	26
4.3 <i>Descriptive statistics and correlations</i> .....	27
4.4 <i>Testing the Hypotheses</i> .....	28
4.5 <i>Testing the Full Model</i> .....	29
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION .....	33
5.1 <i>Summary of main findings</i> .....	33
5.2 <i>Theoretical implications</i> .....	33
5.3 <i>Practical implications</i> .....	35
5.4 <i>Limitations and recommendations for future research</i> .....	35
5.5 <i>Conclusion</i> .....	38
REFERENCES.....	39
APPENDIX A: STIMULUS MATERIALS .....	53
APPENDIX B: RELIABILITY AND FACTOR ANALYSES .....	55
APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT COUNTRY AFFILIATION .....	56
APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE .....	57

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Businesses invest in advertising to get discovered by new customers, provide information, stand out among the competition, and drive more sales (Tellis, 2003). Advertising is a critical marketing activity involving the placement of messages in time and space to inform and/or persuade a target audience about products, services, organizations, or ideas (American Marketing Association, n.d.). Today, businesses are presented with a broad range of channels where they can run advertisements. Digital advertising, such as social media advertising, allows businesses to run personalized ads quicker and often cheaper than traditional media (Hudson et al., 2016). Businesses in Western Europe spent \$56.75 billion on advertising in 2021, with a projected spend of \$99.3 billion in 2026 (von Abrams, 2022). Three-quarters of this amount is expected to be spent on digital. In Europe, there is still much potential for growth. For example, the years 2019-2020 saw a net gain of 100 million digital adopters (Hajro et al., 2022), unlocking new audiences for advertisers.

While online advertising brings many benefits to businesses, its use involves several challenges. First, users may perceive ads they consider invasive and disturbing to be annoying (Mattke et al., 2017). This behavior is known as ad avoidance (Speck & Elliott, 1997) In such cases, users may attempt to tune out ads by installing ad blockers (Tudoran, 2019). Second, a large problem with advertising through social media networks is that brands run the risk of their ads being ignored (Hadija et al., 2012). Further, users may also be skeptical towards unknown advertisers. In today's time, anyone can string together a webpage with a nice offer and start running digital advertisements to generate sales within a few hours (Kelly et al., 2010). How would customers reduce uncertainty over bad products, uncertainty over guaranteed delivery of a product, and information security (Masoud, 2013; Tham et al., 2019)? These perceived risks may inhibit customers from making online purchases (Han & Kim, 2016; Masoud, 2013).

Consumer perception of ads can be improved if the ads are relevant (Tudoran, 2019) and the company running the ads is perceived as credible (Kelly et al., 2010; Okazaki, 2004). Businesses need to build trust when engaging in digital business as customers need to know if their expectations will be met after engaging with a brand online (Flanagin et al., 2011) and must therefore ask themselves how then can they prove their legitimacy among unknown audiences when promoting themselves online? When customers are uncertain about brands or products, they look to the actions of others to determine their own course of action (Cialdini & Goldstein, 2004). This behavior can be explained by loss aversion, where the pain of a loss, even a potential loss, outweighs the pleasure from equivalent gains

(Kahneman et al., 1991). Trust and credibility are becoming increasingly important towards helping customers navigate rapid market changes and the constant rise of new brands, reducing their worries about engaging with an unfamiliar brand (Chang & Chen, 2008; Dao et al., 2014; Luhmann, 1979). Trust is a relationship building social mechanism, defined as the range of belief in another party to meet expectations when outcomes are unknown (Mayer et al., 1995). To encourage online purchases, businesses can build trust and reduce perceived risk for customers using social proof (Amblee & Bui, 2011).

In this paper, we aim to differentiate between different social proof types and draw comparisons surrounding the extent to which they are effective at developing positive brand attitudes in tourism advertising. First, we aim to compare the effectiveness of ratings and testimonials separately. We will also compare the effectiveness of purchase numbers, a relatively overlooked tactic with increasing academic interest (Das et al., 2021). We will also observe if any interaction effects exist between these three reputation systems. This research will be set in the context of travel and tourism as this sector has the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest advertising spend within the European Union contributing \$5.71 billion (27.6% of the total advertising spend) in 2021 (Shykolovych, 2022). This research comes at a time when many European countries have normalized digitalization post the COVID-19 pandemic, but still face challenges with customer experiences (Hajro et al., 2022). Insights from this paper can help brands within the sector leverage social proof to improve their advertising efforts, leading to monumental potential in new business and/or cost savings.

Our study looks at the effects of social proof reputation systems when displayed in a short social media story advertisement. This medium includes vertical ads that interrupt users for a few seconds as they browse the stories feature of platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, or Snapchat (Tomas, 2023). This medium was selected due to its popularity in practice (Forsey, 2023) and the lack of existing research in existing literature (Chu & Kim, 2018). As users are exposed to ads for a short period of time (Forsey, 2023), we will concern ourselves with the effect of the social proof reputation system contained in the ads on brand attitudes. As we are focusing on the travel & tourism industry, the purchase of holidays may require significant time and financial commitment, and thus have a long consideration time and sales cycle. For this reason, these ads may not have the power to persuade but may have the power to generate a positive first impression of the brand (Klein et al., 2020). We therefore pose the following research question:

**Research Question:** To what extent are the social proof reputation systems of ratings, testimonials, and purchase numbers effective in developing positive brand attitudes when displayed in social media advertising?

With this research, we aim to contribute to the literature surrounding social proof and its contributions when employed in advertising mediums that serve as the first contact point between the brand and potential consumers. In this paper specifically, we distinguish three different social proof reputation systems and compare their effectiveness towards developing positive brand attitudes among young European audiences when integrated within contemporary digital advertising formats. By the end of the paper, we hope to provide insights into the meaningful use of social proof in advertising and recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### *2.1 Social Proof*

Social proof is a social phenomenon where products and brands become increasingly relevant when they are perceived to be relevant or popular to others (Cialdini, 2001). While the concept seems abstract in itself, we argue social proof as a concept can be considered an umbrella term, as there are many ways to display the popularity or relevance of a product via digital communication mediums. Some of these ways can include eWOM, popularity signals, and accolades.

Word of mouth (WOM) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) are two concepts heavily centered around actors sharing information about their experiences with products, brands, etc. to a targeted audience, offline and online respectively. In doing so, this information has the potential to shape the beliefs and behaviors of said audience, including buying behavior (Ismagilova et al., 2020). Babić Rosario et al. (2019), however, critiques the use of the broad usage and lack of concrete definitions of the term “eWOM” in academia. They argue that the term has been used to describe a broad range of concepts such as user generated content, reviews, and influencer marketing which all comprise different meanings and implications. The risks of this include confusion as to what “eWOM” actually is and the mislabeling of concepts that are not actually “eWOM.” They further characterize eWOM as user generated digital communications regarding consumption related topics primarily targeted at other consumers. While this definition covers a broad range of communication methods, it is not broad enough to account for other means of signaling popularity or relevance. It is for this reason, primarily, we propose social proof as a parent term, with several categories under it. EWOM would then be the most well-known of these categories, often associated with user reviews, user generated content, and influencer marketing (Babić Rosario et al., 2019).

Other means of signaling relevance and popularity include popularity signals such as social media followers (eg. De Veirman et al., 2017) or accolades (eg. Orth & Krška, 2001). Popularity signals build upon “wisdom of the crowds” data where importance, relevance, and trust are placed on what is popular (De Veirman et al., 2017; Van Hentenryck et al., 2016). Next, we suggest accolades as another category of social proof. While accolades is a term currently lacking in academic literature, we propose its definition as reputation systems involving the use of awards or badges to signal approval, quality, or trust authorized by an accrediting body. This definition is an abstraction of existing literature surrounding similar concepts. This category would then include awards to infer quality (Orth & Krška, 2001),



reputation badges awarded for good performance (eg. Gold medal seller)(Cheng et al., 2020), or logos of an accrediting body that demonstrate compliance with safety or quality standards set by the accreditor (eg. Jiménez et al., 2021).

Since there are many options available to signal relevance and popularity, it may be possible that some of these options may be more effective than others. We believe it is important to make these terminological distinctions for several reasons: 1) to provide structure and clarity to what social proof is and is not, 2) to avoid confusion among concepts and effects as currently present in eWOM literature, 3) to allow for comparisons between different types of social proof, and 4) to bridge the gap between academia and practice. As these distinctions are lacking in existing academic literature, we investigate and identify research gaps among academic papers that center around the effects of social proof and eWOM and its various operationalizations such as ratings, reviews, user comments, user-generated content, purchase numbers, and social media eWOM.

Social proof is increasingly important in building trust in today's digital world, as over 90% of customers read online reviews before buying a product (Leeflang et al., 2014). Social proof builds on social exchange theory where parties engage in a cost-benefit analysis before engaging in a relationship (Homans, 1958), and social influence theory where people are more likely to engage in behavior considered to be the norm (Kelman, 1958).

In social exchange theory, two parties are expected to form a relationship only when there is an exchange of social value (Homans, 1958). Either party has to give up value in the form of costs to receive value from the other party in terms of rewards. These rewards can be material or immaterial, examples including time, money, effort, approval, prestige, power, and so on. Social exchange theory seeks to reduce the gap between sociology and economics, outlining the extent to which people are willing to bear costs to maintain relationships in expectation of reward. This assessment of costs and rewards is made from comparisons drawn from expectations, previous experiences, or alternatives. If a party feels the costs exceed the rewards, they may be motivated to terminate the relationship.

Social influence theory by Kelman (1958) is a framework that seeks to explain how individuals are influenced by the people around them. The framework centers around three levels of influence, namely compliance, identification, and internalization to influence behavior. Compliance refers to the use of incentives or threats of punishments to coerce individuals to behave in a desired way. Identification is the extent an individual relates to members of a group and thus adopts their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors to gain more acceptance from members of that group. Lastly, internalization is when individuals accept

these adopted behaviors as right or valid.

Both social exchange theory and social influence theory serve as explanatory frameworks rather than guaranteed processes. The process of influence can vary based on the individual, context, and other factors. Both theories, however, provide an understanding of how social proof can be used to influence the beliefs and behaviors of others. Social proof involves the use of reputation systems, allowing buyers to socially infer reputation by observing and discussing the assessment of a product by others (Amblee & Bui, 2011).

## *2.2 Literature Review*

Social proof and eWoM have been widely studied, with many studies concluding a positive relationship between positive eWOM and purchase intention (Amblee & Bui, 2011; Phillips et al., 2015), financial performance (Floyd et al., 2014; Phillips et al., 2015; Gavilan et al., 2018; and brand attitude (Kudeshia & Kumar, 2017; Lee et al., 2009). Other studies have shown the effects of eWOM on brand equity (Beneke et al., 2015), brand image (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018a), and brand reputation (Amblee & Bui, 2011), which we argue are similar concepts to measure the perception and evaluation of a brand in the mind of the consumer.

The effectiveness of social proof may depend on the communication medium. Alsudani and Casey (2009) and Chang and Wu (2012) find that the aesthetics of a website can already establish first-impression credibility, but positive comments can further enhance reputation. When products are new to a market, Babić Rosario et al., (2016) find that user comments have a stronger positive impact on sales when they are displayed directly on the seller's e-commerce platform or a review platform as opposed to their display on a social media platform. For more established brands, Rahman et al., (2020) put forward that brand and eWOM together contribute to purchase intentions which suggest that an interaction between brand image and strong positive eWOM can reinforce each other. Much of the existing research is centered around the following mediums: social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, blogs, discussion forums), online review platforms (e.g., Trustpilot), and the actual e-commerce websites themselves (Babić Rosario et al., 2016). Social proof displayed on a website has been found to improve the cost effectiveness of advertising (Hollenbeck et al., 2019) but there is little existing literature on the effects of social proof when displayed within the actual advertising material (Chu & Kim, 2018).

Several limitations also exist within these researches which limit the generalizability of their findings towards our research objectives. First, many of the studies examine the

effects of social proof of stable, homogenous products rather than more novel ones with higher purchase risk (eg. Beneke et al., 2015; Floyd et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2009). Second, many of these experiments were conducted with an eCommerce product page as the main communication medium (Beneke et al., 2015; Floyd et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2009; Spillinger & Parush, 2012). Third, many of the papers focus on the effect of the presence of social proof, rather than attempting to draw any comparisons between different types of social proof. Similarly, it is not clear among some studies what their definition of “eWOM” actually entails (cf. Flanagin et al., 2011; Spillinger & Parush, 2012) – does it refer to ratings, testimonials, or both? Lastly, Amblee and Bui (2011) propose that further research in social commerce should focus on the effect of a variety of interaction methods with the consumer. Flanagin et al., (2014) provide similar recommendations to create instances within which users can process a broader range of information beyond single aggregate ratings.

In this paper, we are investigating the extent to which the social proof reputation systems of ratings, testimonials, and purchase numbers develop positive brand attitudes when displayed in social media advertising. To better understand the theorized relationships, we must first define the outcome variables and then elaborate on the types of social proof selected for this study.

### *2.3 Brand attitudes*

Brand attitude is a construct measuring the overall evaluations of a brand by a consumer (Keller, 1993). When consumers exhibit certain attitudes towards a brand, these attitudes set expectations regarding product qualities, as well as functional and experiential benefits gained by engaging with the brand. Wilkie (1986) believes that consumers form brand attitudes based on the perceived benefits of a brand. If customers can expect a positive experience with a brand, they are likely to develop a positive brand attitude (Ahn & Back, 2018). A positive attitude towards a brand can help the brand stand out in a consideration set when the consumer is making a purchase decision (Park et al., 2010; Terui et al., 2011).

Advertising by a brand can contribute to shaping customer brand attitudes. Muehling and Lacznik (1988) find that consumers that respond positively towards advertisements can then develop favorable attitudes towards the advertised brand. According to Jung et al. (2011), this positive brand attitude from advertising can be sourced in two ways. First, customers are likely to develop positive brand attitudes if the messages contained in the advertising provide information that helps users reach their existing goals (Kruglanski et al.,

2002). Second, if a brand publishes entertaining or visually appealing advertisements, customers can develop positive brand attitudes by associating the pleasant advertising experience with the brand (Gibson, 2008).

This brand attitude, however, may also depend on the timely relevance of the benefit to the user (Humphrey Jr et al., 2017). For this reason, we believe that customers first need to find an ad relevant and valuable before they develop a positive brand attitude. The assessment of a brand is influenced by the extent to which customers find products valuable in relation to the cost (Buil et al., 2008). Social proof can thus help customers make this value assessment to then form an opinion on the brand.

#### *2.4 Advertising value*

The purpose of advertising is to inform customers while also helping them build an emotional connection with the brand (Meenaghan, 1995). Informative and entertaining advertisements can lead to improved brand attitudes (Jung et al., 2011). The information and entertainment value derived from advertising can shape the perceived benefit of the brand in the mind of the consumer, leading to favorable brand attitudes (Wilkie, 1986). We thus propose advertising value by Ducoffe (1995) as an appropriate construct to measure the perceived benefit of advertisements. Advertising value is a subjective measure of how useful an advertisement is to consumers (Ducoffe, 1995). We thus pose our first hypothesis:

H1: Higher levels of advertising value positively influence brand attitudes.

In the original model by Ducoffe (1995), advertising value was calculated as a composite of informativeness and entertainment, minus irritation. Credibility was added to the model by Brackett and Carr (2001) while irritation was found to be an unsound predictor of advertising value and was thus removed (Dao et al., 2014; Murillo et al., 2016). While advertising value has been found to positively influence attitudes towards advertising (Hamouda, 2018) and consumer purchase behavior, no explicit empirical evidence is found on its direct effects on brand attitudes.

*Informativeness* is the degree to which advertising can inform customers about product information (Ducoffe, 1996). Informativeness is reportedly the most influential component of advertising value (Hamouda, 2018). According to Schlosser et al., (1999), the main purpose of advertising is to provide information to customers regarding products and services so that they are well informed to then make the best possible purchase decision.

*Entertainment* refers to the level of pleasure and enjoyment derived by customers from an advertisement (Zhou & Bao, 2002). While entertainment is often associated with humorous content, it can also be provided by more emotional-inducing content that provokes an emotion (Hoeken & Ouden, 2021). Building on the uses & gratifications theory in mass communications research, advertising entertainment can fulfill the needs of escapism, enjoyment, and diversion among viewers (McQuail, 1983). Several studies find a positive correlation between advertising entertainment and advertising value (cf. Hamouda, 2018). Furthermore, the persuasive effect of advertising entertainment is increased when viewers are not necessarily in pursuit of specific goals or information while viewing the advertisement (Jung et al., 2011).

*Credibility* is the extent to which customers perceive that claims made by advertising are truthful and believable (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). According to Tseng and Fogg (1999), users evaluate credibility by assessing multiple context-specific dimensions simultaneously, summarized by the key components of trustworthiness and expertise. In the context of social proof, these could include the visual aesthetics of the stimulus material (Alsudani & Casey, 2009; Lowry et al., 2014) or the expertise of the messenger (Flanagin et al., 2014).

Social proof has the power to induce affective, attitudinal, and behavioural changes within consumers if it is perceived to originate from a credible source (Carr & Hayes, 2015; Ong, 2011). If consumers view the advertising as credible and trustworthy, they are more likely to form a favorable opinion about online advertising (Azeem & Haq, 2012). More specifically, if consumers are convinced that they perceive a particular review to be credible, then they are likely to be persuaded by that particular review. In a study by Cheung et al. (2009), consumers who perceive the reviews as truthful, logical, and believable express a higher desire to buy from the brand online.

Advertising value captures value through multiple dimensions as value is derived through cognitive meaning or affective meaning (Murillo et al., 2016). The same comparison has been drawn using various synonyms, eg. functional vs hedonic (Chitturi et al., 2007), practical vs symbolic, rational vs emotional (Pang et al., 2009), and so on. The core idea is that advertising can appeal to reason, to emotions, or both – and thus provide value in different ways. People who view ads as interesting and useful are not likely to avoid them but will avoid ads that appear excessive (Speck & Elliott, 1997).

Informativeness and entertainment are significant determinants of advertising value (Dao et al., 2014; Ducoffe, 1995; Murillo et al., 2016). The extent of value derived from

information or entertainment can depend on gender characteristics, the advertising medium, and the relevance of the product being advertised (Brackett & Carr, 2001; Ducoffe & Curlo, 2000). For example, newspaper advertisements are considered the most informative, while television advertisements are cited as the most entertaining (Ducoffe & Curlo, 2000; Speck & Elliott, 1997). Additionally, the effects of advertising informativeness and entertainment on content community websites are stronger than those on social networking sites (Dao et al., 2014).

Despite informativeness and entertainment being two significant predictors of advertising value, it is unlikely they are processed by consumers in the same way. Ducoffe (1995) puts forward that advertising is typically processed passively through a peripheral route, but increased relevance of the advertisement can increase central processing. In other words, it may be possible that entertainment is processed more through the peripheral route while informativeness through the central route (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). These are not mutually exclusive and more research is required to determine if a relationship exists between advertising value dimensions and processing routes. Whether more informative or entertaining, consumers will favor advertising they find more valuable (Ducoffe, 1995). As the marketing landscape is increasingly moving towards smaller audience segments with more specific needs who gather around specific communication channels, these audiences increasingly expect advertising that interests them (Ducoffe & Curlo, 2000).

## *2.5 Advertising involvement*

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) by Petty and Cacioppo (1986) posits that humans process information through two routes, depending on their motivations and abilities. If a person is motivated and able to assess information presented to them, they will do so critically using the central route to determine its value. Without this motivation or ability, the peripheral route instead is activated, where the person will rely on heuristics or mental shortcuts to process and judge the information. The authors have previously noted that personal relevance is indeed a strong determinant towards a person's choice to think and subsequently form an opinion on a product or issue (Petty et al., 1983).

Ducoffe and Curlo (2000) find that humans evaluate ads in categories relative to past experiences before deciding whether or not to allocate attention to an ad, increasing involvement when an ad is unique or relevant. Advertising involvement thus refers to the degree to which a subject bridges a stimulus with their own experiences (Spielman & Richard, 2013). Individuals may experience involvement in different ways, from message

involvement, media involvement, and creative involvement (Spielmann & Richard, 2013). This is a result of an interplay between different messaging, advertising mediums, and visual cues in advertising campaigns with different cues activating the central and peripheral routes while the viewer is processing the advert (Scholten, 1996; Spielmann & Richard, 2013). According to the social judgment theory (SJT) by Sherif and Hovland (1961), involvement experienced by a consumer can then influence their attitude. Increased advertising involvement further leads to positive advertising value (Zeng et al., 2009) and positive brand attitudes (Muehling & Laczniak, 1988; Spielmann & Richard, 2013). In line with Petty et al. (1983), we reinforce the notion that users need to be involved with an advertisement in one way or the other to extract meaningful value from it. Therefore, we pose advertising involvement as a control variable with a positive effect on advertising value.

## *2.6. Social Proof Reputation Systems*

Gupta et al., (2003) define reputation systems as mechanisms used to track reputation scores within a network. According to Resnick et al. (2000), reputation systems “collect, distribute, and aggregate feedback about participants’ past behavior” (p.46). Infusing the definition of social proof by Cialdini (2001), social proof reputation systems can be defined as any means of communicating popularity, relevance, or quality through social influence. Without the use of such systems, buyers may find it difficult to distinguish the quality of products between brands (Gupta et al., 2003; Resnick et al., 2000). Reputation systems thus aggregate feedback into a public history with a seller which can then build trust, shape opinion, and set expectations for future potential buyers (Resnick et al., 2000).

These reputation systems provide a space for individuals to be influenced by the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of customers who have gone before them. These inputs can then be used to assess the costs and benefits of engaging into a relationship with a brand. By thinking and acting in accordance with others, individuals can achieve safety and security, love and belonging, and subsequently, self-esteem needs as outlined by Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (Maslow, 1943). Social proof thus serves to provide information and credibility with the goal of influencing user behavior and attitudes (Ismagilova et al., 2020). We theorize that it is from this informativeness and credibility that consumers derive advertising value from social proof reputation systems. In this section, the potential persuasive power of ratings, testimonials, and purchase numbers will be discussed.

### *2.6.1 Ratings*

Ratings are a common feature on landing pages for goods and services transacted over the internet (Flanagin et al., 2014). Ratings are defined as a measure of quality or popularity on a scale (Flanagin et al., 2014). Ratings consist of two elements: valence (the score on the scale) and volume (the number of ratings)(Floyd et al., 2014). As product ratings increase, consumers likewise increasingly associate the product with higher quality (Flanagin et al., 2011). Second to recommendations from friends and family, consumer ratings were the second most trusted source of information about a brand, proving more effective than branded websites (Nielsen, 2012).

Research into the effects of ratings has yielded different results. Positive rating valence has been found to positively correlate with credibility (Pentina et al., 2018), brand attitudes (Flanagin et al., 2011), and sales revenues (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Flanagin et al., 2014; Yang et al., 2016). Intuitively, any increases in negative ratings do significant harm relative to benefits gained from increases in positive ratings (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). Some argue that some negative ratings are actually beneficial, however, as much research finds that two-sided ratings with positive and negative valence exert higher credibility than single-sided ratings (cf. Kamins et al., 1989). Additional information provided by negative ratings can help buyers build a more comprehensive opinion of the product (Ghose & Ipeirotis, 2011). Liu (2006) and Duan et al., (2008) find that rating valence does not have a significant effect on box office sales, while rating volume does. Amblee and Bui (2011) draw the same conclusions for sales of digital products. In a study on hotel booking consideration, Gavilan et al., (2018) find that rating volume influences trust when the rating valence is good. If the rating valence is low, however, the rating volume has no effect on trustworthiness. Ren and Nickerson (2019) propose that the effectiveness of ratings valence and volume depend on the product, explaining the mixed results from previous research. They find online rating volume to be more important for hedonic products while online rating valence is more impactful for utilitarian products (Ren & Nickerson, 2019).

Thanks to the internet, customers are overloaded with information, as the high volume of eWOM messages from an array of sources can make it hard to assess credible information (Maslowska et al., 2016). With the breadth of information available, consumers need to be able to make quick assessments to evaluate the quality of a product in their purchase journey (Maslowska et al., 2016; Resnick et al., 2000). Ratings, therefore, serve as accessible indicators of product quality and customer experiences (Simonson, 2015). Ratings



are often processed using heuristics, using peripheral cues to make value assessments, and prove especially useful when customers experience information overload or are in low-risk situations (Maslowska et al., 2016). When evaluating products for purchase, many customers often resort to the first few reviews and the overall rating of the product or service in their decision making process (Lo & Yao, 2019). As customers derive benefits from ratings in their decision making process, we put forward the following hypothesis:

H2: The use of Ratings will have a positive effect on advertising value.

### *2.6.2 Testimonials*

Testimonials are comments or endorsements provided by customers to share their experience with a brand with other members of the target audience of the brand (Farrukh et al., 2020; Spillinger & Parush, 2012). Testimonials lack a quantifiable valence element and can serve as a complement or alternative to ratings (Ling et al., 2014). Reviews are synonymous with testimonials (Flanagin et al., 2011) but sometimes can also refer to the combined use of ratings or testimonials (cf. Venkatesakumar et al., 2020). Testimonials include elaborations of a customer's personal experiences that cannot be communicated simply in a valence rating system (Pavlou & Dimoka, 2006). According to Leeflang et al., (2014), customers read at least four reviews before making a purchase.

Research into the use of testimonials highlights their potential to impact credibility and improve the persuasive power of advertising on purchases (Hollenbeck et al., 2019; Van Hoye & Lievens, 2007). Positive testimonials can help sellers earn trust among buyers, subsequently allowing them to stand out and justify price premiums (Pavlou & Dimoka, 2006). In an experiment by Spillinger and Parush (2012), customers exposed to a website with testimonials indicated a significantly higher intent to purchase products compared to customers who did not see any testimonials. This effect was greater observed for more expensive products. As testimonials embody rich information, they can be considered powerful, relevant, and influential sources of information. Consumers claim to actually prefer these eWOM messages because they provide additional information that is usually not provided by the companies on public channels (Yang & Mai, 2010). Testimonials have been successfully used to influence destination image and travel intentions (Ayeh et al., 2013; Farrukh et al., 2020; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012).

The effectiveness of testimonials can vary by context but can be strengthened by trustworthiness and homophily (Ayeh et al., 2013; Ismagilova et al., 2020). Homophily is

described as the extent to which one perceives others to be similar to them (Chih et al., 2020). Research finds that testimonials that come from authors with similar characteristics as the viewer have been found to be more persuasive (Babić Rosario et al., 2016). The source characteristics and trustworthiness of the messenger also impact the extent to which testimonials are valuable for consumers (Chih et al., 2020; Ismagilova et al., 2020).

Two studies by Braverman (2008) and Van Hoyer and Lievens (2007) compare the use of testimonials to company provided messages, the first in the context of inciting healthy behavior and the latter in recruitment marketing. They find that testimonials are more effective for low-involvement respondents, as high involvement respondents find information from the company more trustworthy. Even so, the role of customer endorsements can add information and credibility to further foster positive attitudes towards a product or brand (Chih et al., 2020).

However, customers first look for the quality and credibility of reviews when making purchase decisions (Lee & Youn, 2009) as reviews can be fake, biased, or come from untrustworthy sources (Zhang & Barnes, 2019). As companies are aware of the importance of reputation systems, they may invite friends and family to write reviews or create fake reviews that paint the company in a positive light (Amblee & Bui, 2011). These insights suggest that testimonials involve a greater degree of central processing.

The persuasion effect of testimonials can be explained through attribution theory (Heider, 1958; Kelley, 1973). Attribution theory is widely cited in research on eWOM to attempt to explain how viewers of testimonials make causal inferences as to why the author of the testimonial takes a specific position or exhibits a certain behavior (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018b; Lee & Youn, 2009). In some cases, viewers can attribute a positive testimonial to a really good product but also could be critical as to why a person wrote a testimonial in the first place, for example, in exchange for an incentive (Lee & Youn, 2009). As Heider (1958) writes, humans rely on common sense and naïve psychology to try to make sense of the world they live in. If viewers find testimonials to be credible, they may form positive judgments about the brand (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018b). As testimonials have the potential to provide useful elaborated information and signal credibility, we present hypothesis 3.

H3: The use of Testimonials will have a positive effect on advertising value.

### *2.6.3 Purchase Numbers*

Businesses face two challenges with ratings and testimonials as 1) not all customers

leave feedback and opinions, and even if they do, 2) these reviews can be subjective. Businesses have the option to display an additional objective social proof tactic – displaying the number of purchases. This concept refers to the number of times a product or service has been purchased – a number that can far outnumber the volume of reviews while providing a heuristic indication of quality or popularity (Das et al., 2021). The greater the number sold, the more a brand is perceived to be trustworthy, popular, or in demand (Swamynathan et al., 2010). This information can still provide useful information to a customer to aid in their purchase decision. This tactic is still under-researched and underutilized in practice, which makes it interesting to add to our study. One potential pitfall, though, is the question of credibility as purchase numbers displayed can be easily manipulated. If a person is skeptical about the information provided, they may question the motives of the messenger (Mohr et al., 1998). Ambiguous claims in advertising can lead to distrust (Darke & Ritchie, 2007), reducing the likelihood of successful persuasion (Friestad & Wright, 1994). As purchase numbers have the potential to provide information regarding the popularity or demand of a product, we present hypotheses 4.

H4: The use of Purchase Numbers will have a positive effect on advertising value.

#### *2.6.4 Interaction Effects*

In our model, we expect advertising value to positively influence brand attitudes (H1). We hypothesize that ratings (H2), Testimonials (H3), and Purchase Numbers (H4) to all have a positive effect on advertising value as they provide useful information to customers and can signal credibility of a product or brand. Testimonials, in particular, embody rich qualitative information that ratings or purchase numbers cannot provide. As testimonials have been proven to be effective among low-involvement audiences and have had success with influencing travel intentions, we propose hypothesis 5:

H5: Testimonials have a stronger positive effect on advertising value than either ratings or purchase numbers.

With this hypothesized effect in mind, we also believe that testimonials will be a strong predictor of the interaction effects with ratings and with purchase numbers on advertising value, resulting in the hypotheses:

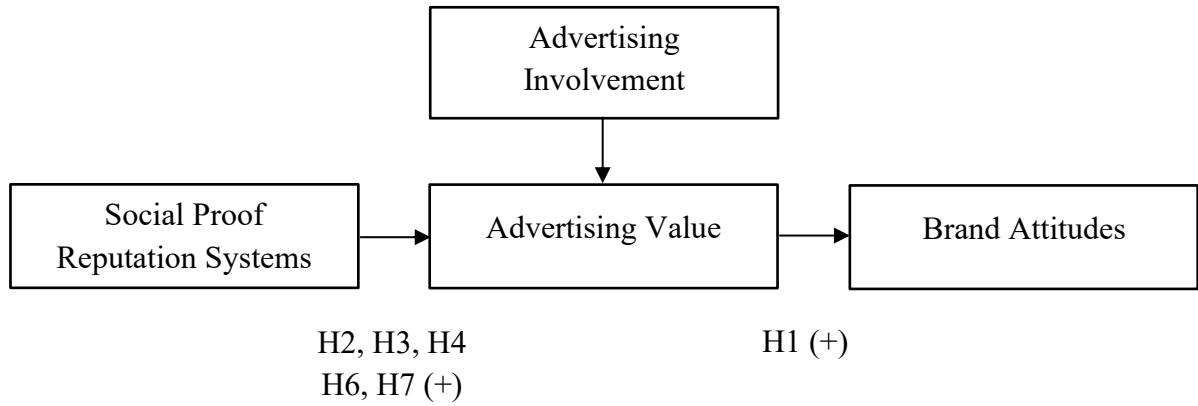
H6: The interaction of Testimonials and Ratings will positively interact in their effect on advertising value, and

H7: The interaction of Testimonials and Purchase Numbers will positively interact in their effect on advertising value.

The conceptual framework of this research is summarized in the following figure:

**Figure 1**

Conceptual Framework



## CHAPTER 3: METHODS

### *3.1 Study Design*

An experimental survey will be set up using Qualtrics and distributed over digital communication channels through direct messaging or public posts on social media. The use of an experiment allows for the testing of differences between respondents exposed to different experimental groups (Babbie, 2009). The experimental survey was built and distributed using Qualtrics as the platform can automatically assign respondents to the different experimental conditions. This way, we can easily compare differences between how respondents in each experimental condition perceive the outcome variables relative to the respective social proof reputation systems.

As we are investigating which social proof reputation system is more effective in fostering a positive brand attitude, an advertisement will be designed with similar content to common advertisements found within the sector. To reduce any bias from brand familiarity, a fictional name (Wanderlust Trips) and logo were generated. To reduce biases from individual preferences, the advertisement featured a sunny beach background (Amante Ibiza, 2022) with the headline “Discover Sunny Europe” and the subheading “Holiday packages in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, & more.” The bottom of the advertisement featured a white bar with the logo on the left and a yellow “Book now” button on the right. The involving the image, headline, subheading, logo, and social proof reputation system(s) were consistently displayed consistently, using the same visual layout across all the advertisements.

Eight different advertisements were generated to serve as stimulus material: one to serve as a control, three with 1 form of social proof, three interaction conditions each with 2 forms of social proof (eg. ratings x testimonials), and one condition with all 3 forms of social proof. With the exception of the control group, the social proof reputation system(s) was displayed underneath the subheading in each condition. The eight designs are displayed in Appendix A. Participants of the experimental survey were then randomly exposed to one of the conditions in the between-subjects design. The eight experimental conditions and included social proof reputation systems are summarized in the following table:

**Table 1**  
Survey Experimental Conditions

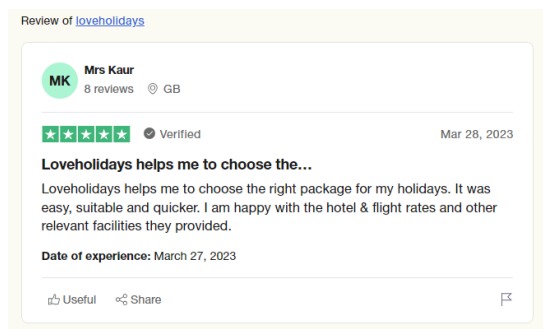
Condition	Ratings (R)	Testimonials (T)	Purchase Numbers (PN)
1 – Control	No	No	No
2 – R	Yes	No	No
3 – T	No	Yes	No
4 – PN	No	No	Yes
5 - R x T	Yes	Yes	No
6 - R x PN	Yes	No	Yes
7 - T x PN	No	Yes	Yes
8 - R x T x PN	Yes	Yes	Yes

To test the effectiveness of ratings, testimonials, and purchase numbers on advertising value, we will use existing literature to maximize the potential informativeness and credibility of each of the social proof reputation systems. The limitations of this, however, will be a reduction in validity if real world products cannot exhibit comparable social proof metrics to their customers.

**Ratings:** According to Flanagin et al., (2011), ratings have a sort of “ceiling effect” where differences in ratings on the higher end of the scale have negligible effects on perceived product quality. Maslowska et al. (2016) places 4.2 - 4.5 stars as the range with the highest likelihood of purchase. For our experiment, the ads in the rating conditions will feature a rating scale with a valence of 4.4 stars. While there is mixed evidence on the value of ratings volume, we will include it as Blal and Sturman (2014) find that rating volume can benefit lesser established brands.

**Testimonials:** Vana and Lambrecht (2021) and Park et al., (2021) find that displaying a 5-star review first can improve purchases. For our paper, we use an elaborated 5 star review for an existing company, pictured in Figure 2. We isolated the text comment and adapted it slightly for conciseness. The comment used is as follows: "It was easy and quick. I am happy with the hotel & flight rates and other relevant facilities they provided.”

**Figure 2**  
Original Testimonial



In an attempt to increase source credibility and homophily with the testimonial author and the respondents as recommended by Ayeh et al. (2013) and Ismagilova et al. (2020), we featured a testimonial from an author whose demographic profile reflects the average qualities of our target sample in terms. These choices were made to attempt to increase relevance and respondent identification with the testimonial and author, which, if successful, should improve the persuasive power.

**Purchase Numbers:** In the study by Das et al. (2021), they find no significant difference in purchase intentions for “390 bought” vs “3900 bought” conditions. This suggests that a threshold exists for an acceptable number of purchases. As there is a significant difference between “390 bought” and the previous tested interval of “39 bought,” the threshold lies somewhere between these two points. Furthermore, since a small fraction of customers leave ratings and even less testimonials, there must be a significant difference between the ratings volume and purchase numbers metrics.

**Rating Volume & Purchase Numbers:** As there is mixed evidence on the threshold of acceptable rating volumes (cf. Davey, 2022; Fishcer, 2022), we will include a safe 390 as the volume of reviews in the ratings conditions and 1773 as the number of purchases in the purchase numbers conditions, based on a 22% purchase-ratings benchmark ratio (Deane, 2022). The use of a non-rounded number is beneficial as Schindler and Yalch (2006) shows precise numbers to be more believable than rounded numbers.

### *3.2 Sample*

For this paper, a minimum sample size of 240 participants is required (8 groups x 30 respondents each)(Janssen & Verboord, 2022). The sample will consist of young adults, between the ages of 18 and 35 years old. These adults must be citizens of a country within the European Union or European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA), or residents of a country within the Schengen area.

Citizens of EU and EFTA countries include the 27 EU members states and the 4 EFTA countries of Switzerland, Lichtenstein, Norway, and Iceland (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023). Residents of the Schengen area include people who live in any of the EFTA countries or any of the European Union countries except Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, and Romania (Ministerie van Algemene Zaken, 2023). These criteria were chosen as citizens or residents within the EFTA can travel to other EFTA countries relatively cheaply without the need for a visa, increasing the relevance of the advertisements as compared to a non-EFTA resident who may have the paperwork and price barriers to visit the advertised

destinations (cf. Song et al., 2016). These visa requirements could be a costly barrier that could negatively impact attitudes and behavioral intention. Furthermore, while several other countries may have visa-free travel agreements with the Schengen area, it is a tedious task to decide which countries to include or exclude from our sample criteria as other unknown or unpredictable factors can influence their travel decisions.

### *3.3 Procedure*

Before starting the experiment, the participants will be briefed about the general aims of the survey, informed that their responses will be anonymously collected, and that participation is voluntary. They can then consent to participate. Next, they will be asked 2 or 3 screening questions to determine if they fit the sampling profile: 1) Age, 2) Are they a citizen of any of the EU or EFTA countries, and 3) If they are not a citizen of an EU/EFTA country, they will be asked if they are currently a residence permit holder for one of the Schengen countries. A residence permit was defined as “as a document or card which indicates your right to live, study, and/or work in a foreign country.” Participants who are not 18-35 years old or do not meet the citizenship or residence criteria were directed to a thank you screen and excluded from the survey.

If a participant does meet the criteria, they will be informed that they will be exposed to an advertisement, followed by a few questions. After being exposed to the stimulus, they will be asked to indicate their advertising involvement, advertising value, and their brand attitudes. The participants were then provided a space to optionally leave additional comments, critiques, or impressions about the advertisement they saw, both positive and negative. At the end of the survey, the participant was thanked and debriefed.

### *3.4 Measurements*

**Advertising involvement:** Advertising involvement will be measured with a 20-item scale with sub-measures for message involvement ( $\alpha = .96$ ), media involvement ( $\alpha = .94$ ), and creative involvement ( $\alpha = .87$ ). Example items include “When looking at the ad, you find what is advertised to be relevant” for message involvement and “When thinking of the ad, did you find yourself doing any of the following: Taking note of the visual aspects of the ad” for creative involvement. The items were adapted for improved readability and reduced redundancy. This overall advertising involvement scale by Spielmann and Richard (2013) has a high reliability with a Cronbach’s Alpha of .88. Participants can indicate their extent of agreement with each item on 5-point Likert scales from “Not at all” to “Very much.”



**Advertising value:** An adapted version of Ducoffe (1996) by Dao et al. (2014) will be used to measure advertising value. The scale has 12 items to measure informativeness, advertising value, entertainment, and credibility ( $\alpha = .87$ ). Participants can indicate responses on a 7-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Example items include “This This advertisement is a good source of product information” (informativeness) and “Advertisements are interesting” (entertainment). These items were further adapted for improved readability and reduced redundancy.

**Brand attitudes:** To measure brand attitudes, we use a 5 item scale ( $\alpha = .97$ ) by Spears and Singh (2004). Participants will be asked to rate their attitude towards the brand on a 7 point semantic scale for items such as “unappealing/appealing,” or “unpleasant/pleasant.”

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Data was cleaned, prepared, and analyzed using the software IBM SPSS. Data cleaning consisted of removing responses that did not meet the nationality, residence, or age criteria and responses that were incomplete.

A condition variable was created and each response was assigned a number from 1-8 based on the condition to which the respondent was exposed. For example, a respondent who viewed the R x T x PN condition was assigned an “8” for the condition variable. Unfortunately, it was discovered that some participants finished the survey despite not seeing any of the experimental conditions, perhaps due to a bug with Qualtrics. These participants were also excluded from the analysis.

From here, three dummy variables were created for ratings, testimonials, and purchase numbers. Each dummy variable was coded with a “1” if that condition displayed the respective social proof reputation system (eg. A 1 was coded for both ratings and testimonials in condition 5 – the ratings x testimonials condition). New variables were computed to provide overall scores for advertising involvement, advertising value, and attitudes toward the brand.

In this chapter, the demographic profile of the respondents will be described, followed by the reliability and principal components analyses. Any correlations will be presented in a descriptives table. Lastly, the hypotheses will be tested.

### *4.1. Sample characteristics*

A total of 435 responses were recorded. However, after data cleaning, 316 valid responses were deemed eligible for data analysis. Participants hailed from countries all over the European Union and European Free Trade Association, with the exception of Liechtenstein from which no responses were recorded. Not surprisingly, no responses were collected from the microstates of Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, nor the Vatican City. With regards to gender, 69.6% of the respondents were female ( $n=220$ ) while only 93 respondents were male (29.4%), and 3 identified as non-binary or third gender (0.9%). The mean age of the participants was 23.45 years old ( $SD=2.93$ ). The majority of the respondents (85.8%) held a passport from an EU or EFTA country, while the rest (14.2%) held residence permits to live or work in one of these countries. Most of the respondents were highly educated with 146 pursuing or holding a Master’s degree (46.2%) and 145 with a Bachelor’s degree (45.9%). Only 16 respondents (5.1%) were educated to a secondary or high school level. Survey participants were randomly assigned to one of the eight conditions. The minimum

number of respondents in a condition is 36 in the Purchase Numbers condition while the maximum number of respondents is 42 in the Testimonials condition. All 8 conditions have more respondents than the acceptable 30-respondent threshold. The sample characteristics can be observed in table 2 and the full list of respondents per country can be observed in Appendix C.

**Table 2**  
Sample characteristics table

Characteristic	Frequency in sample	Percentage of sample
Gender		
Male	93	29.4
Female	220	69.6
Non-binary/third gender	3	0.9
Age		
18-21	70	22.0
22-25	190	60.0
26-29	43	14.0
30-35	13	4.0
Nationality		
EU / EFTA Passport holders	271	85.8
Non-EU / EFTA Residence Permit holders	45	14.2
Level of education		
Secondary school / high school	16	5.1
Vocational degree after high school	4	1.3
Bachelor's degree	145	45.9
Master's degree	146	46.2
PhD, MBA, or other equivalent	3	0.9
Other	2	0.6
Experimental group		
Control	41	13.0
Ratings (R)	41	13.0
Testimonials (T)	42	13.3
Purchase Numbers (PN)	36	11.4
R x T	42	13.3
R x PN	37	11.7
T x PN	38	12.0
R x T x PN	39	12.3

#### 4.2 Principal Components Analysis and Reliability Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted for all three scales using Principal Components extraction. Varimax rotation was used for the advertising involvement and advertising value scales. Distinct components for each scale were extracted based on eigenvalues of 1.0. Scale items were then loaded onto these factors to indicate the correlation between each item with the factor. Factor loadings below 0.40 were suppressed. A reliability analysis was also conducted for the three scales used in this research.

The factor analysis for the advertising involvement scale resulted in 3 components,

each item corresponding to the subscales of message involvement, medium involvement, and creative involvement. The  $KMO = .86$ ,  $\chi^2 (N = 316, 171) = 2637.90$ ,  $p < .001$ . The resultant model explains 57.2% of the variance in advertising involvement. The reliability analysis for the advertising involvement scale and its three sub-scales also exhibit high internal reliability with a Chronbach's  $\alpha = .86$  for the overall scale. The subcomponents of message involvement ( $\alpha = .89$ ) and medium involvement ( $\alpha = .86$ ) also exhibit high internal reliability, while creative involvement shows a moderate level of internal reliability with  $\alpha = .77$ . This suggests that respondents exhibited greater variability in their in creative involvement compared to message and medium involvement.

Similarly, a factor analysis for advertising value revealed three components with items corresponding to informativeness, entertainment, and credibility. Two items from the informativeness component did also show correlation with the entertainment component, but were categorized in the informativeness component due to higher correlations. For this scale, The  $KMO = .88$ ,  $\chi^2 (N = 316, 66) = 2255.05$ ,  $p < .001$  with the model explaining 71.7% of the variance in advertising value. The scale for advertising value exhibited a Chronbach's alpha of .91 indicating a strong internal consistency. Lastly, the factor analysis for the attitudes towards the brand scale revealed a  $KMO = .90$ ,  $\chi^2 (N = 316, 10) = 1020.87$ ,  $p < .001$ . One component was found which explains 74.3% of the variance within the model. The attitude towards the brand scale also exhibits a high internal reliability ( $\alpha = .91$ ). From these analyses, we found no need to delete items from either of the scales. The alphas for all three scales far exceed the satisfactory minimum required alpha of .70. Therefore, it can be said the scales used in this research have high levels of internal reliability. A full table with the scales, factor loadings, and their reliability alphas are summarized in Appendix B.

### 4.3 Descriptive statistics and correlations

In this section, the correlations, means, and standard deviations of the variables are exhibited. Means and standard deviations are displayed for the reputation systems as well as the variables advertising involvement, advertising value, and attitudes towards the brand. Descriptive statistics and correlations are summarized in table 3.

The results suggest that participants found the advertisement to be moderately relevant to them as the advertising involvement score hovers around the middle of the 5-point scale ( $M = 2.96$ ,  $SD = 0.56$ ). Participants also seemed to derive a moderate level of advertising value from the advertisements,  $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 1.03$  on a 7-point scale. Participants generally showed a slightly positive attitude towards the brand,  $M = 4.52$ ,  $SD =$

1.16, on a 7-point scale.

The correlations between the three scales are significant: Advertising involvement is moderately correlated with advertising value ( $r=.62, p < .001$ ) and attitudes towards the brand ( $r=.55, p < .001$ ). Advertising value is strongly correlated with attitudes towards the brand ( $r=.70, p < .001$ ). Ratings was the only independent condition that exhibited significant correlations with all scale variables with  $r=.15, p=.006$  for advertising involvement,  $r=.15, p=.007$  for advertising value, and  $r=.13, p=.020$  for attitudes towards the brand. Purchase numbers did exhibit a significant correlation with brand attitudes  $r=.12, p=.028$  but not with advertising value  $p=.058$ .

**Table 3**

Descriptive statistics and correlations ( $n = 316$ )

	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean	SD
1. Advertising Involvement	-						2.96	0.56
2. Advertising Value	.62*	-					4.04	1.03
3. Attitude towards the Brand	.55*	.70*	-				4.52	1.16
4. Ratings (R)	.15*	.15*	.13*	-			0.50	0.50
5. Testimonials (T)	.02	.05	-.03	.00	-		0.51	0.50
6. Purchase Numbers (PN)	.10	.11	.12*	.01	.01	-	0.47	0.50

Note. \* $p \leq .05$ , (2-tailed).

#### 4.4 Testing the Hypotheses

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test if there are any significant differences between the eight experimental conditions on advertising value. We predicted that ratings (H2), testimonials (H3), and purchase numbers (H4) will have a positive effect on advertising value. Out of these three systems, we predicted testimonials to have the strongest effect on advertising value (H5). We also hypothesized that the interactions of testimonials and ratings (H6) and testimonials and purchase numbers (H7) will positively affect advertising value. Advertising involvement, the control variable theorized to affect advertising value, was included as a covariate in this analysis. In SPSS, a full factorial model was used with the coded dummy variables as fixed factors to compare main effects and interaction effects within the same analysis. The results of the ANOVA are summarized in table 4.

**Table 4**  
ANOVA Results

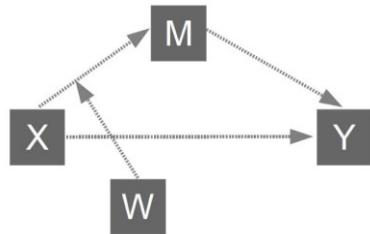
Source	Mean Square	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta_p^2$
Advertising Involvement	117.09	1	177.82	0.000	0.37
Intercept	6.33	1	9.62	0.002	0.03
Ratings (R)	1.16	1	1.76	0.186	0.01
Testimonials (T)	0.36	1	0.55	0.461	0.00
Purchase Numbers (PN)	0.75	1	1.14	0.286	0.00
R x T	1.37	1	2.09	0.149	0.01
R x PN	0.12	1	0.18	0.668	0.00
T x PN	0.03	1	0.05	0.831	0.00
R x T x PN	0.41	1	0.63	0.430	0.00

From the ANOVA, the results show a significant main effect of advertising involvement on advertising value,  $F(1) = 177.82$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = 0.37$ . The intercept is also significant,  $F(1) = 9.62$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = 0.03$ . Neither the ratings, testimonials, nor purchase numbers were statistically significant: ratings  $p = .19$ , testimonials  $p = .46$ , purchase numbers  $p = .29$ . As a result, H2, H3, and H4 are not supported. As the testimonials were not significant and exhibited the furthest  $p$ -value from significance among the three systems, we also cannot support H5. Consequentially, none of the interaction effects were significant either, with the R x T interaction condition  $p = .15$  and the T x PN interaction condition  $p = .83$ . Thus, we reject H6 and H7 as well.

#### 4.5 Testing the Full Model

As most of the hypotheses were mainly focused on the effects of the social proof reputation systems on advertising value, we are also curious to observe if there are any indirect effects on brand attitude observed within the overall model. To test the overall model, we made use of the Hayes process macro. The Hayes (2013) Process is a macro add-on available for SPSS which simplifies the process of mediation and moderation analyses. Using this macro, we can replicate the full model to better demonstrate the relationships between the social proof reputation systems as the independent variables and their impact on brand attitudes through their hypothesized effect on advertising value (H1). We ran the Hayes process three times using a moderated mediation analysis (Model 7), each time with one of the coded dummy variables as the independent variable while the other two dummy variables serve as the covariates. Brand attitudes is the dependent variable while advertising value is chosen as the mediator. Advertising involvement was designated as the moderator affecting advertising value. The model is visualized in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**  
Hayes Process Model 7



The results of the mediation analysis and any observed indirect and direct effects are presented in table 5.

**Table 5**  
Moderated Mediation Analysis

Model	Advertising Value (AD_V)			Brand Attitudes (BA)		
	Coeff	SE	<i>p</i>	Coeff.	SE	<i>p</i>
Constant	1.03	.32	.002	1.32	.19	.000
R (X <sub>1</sub> )	-.77	.50	.125	.06	.09	.539
T (X <sub>2</sub> )	.06	.09	.522	-.13	.09	.154
PN (X <sub>3</sub> )	.10	.09	.295	.11	.09	.222
AD_I (W)	.97	.11	.000			
R x AD_I	.30	.17	.071			
T x AD_I	.26	.16	.307			
PN x AD_I	.32	.09	.052			
AD_V (M)				.79	.05	.000

<i>Summary of Overall Models</i>						
Outcome Variable	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>MSE</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Advertising Value	.39	.65	40.01	5	310	.000
Brand Attitudes	.50	.68	78.35	4	311	.000

<i>Index of Moderated Mediation</i>				
Model	<i>Index</i>	<i>BootSE</i>	<i>BootLLCI</i>	<i>BootULCI</i>
Ratings (X <sub>1</sub> )	.24	.13	-.02	.50
Testimonials (X <sub>2</sub> )	.20	.09	-.04	.45
Purchase Numbers (X <sub>3</sub> )	.25	.12	.01	.49

<i>Advertising Involvement as a Mediator between Reputation Systems and Advertising Value</i>			
Model	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> -Change	<i>F</i> (1, 310)	<i>p</i>
R x AD_I	.0064	3.28	.071
T x AD_I	.0050	2.55	.111
PN x AD_I	.0074	3.79	.052

<i>Direct effect of Reputation Systems on Brand Attitudes</i>				
Model	<i>Effect</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Ratings	.06	.09	.62	.539
Testimonials	-.13	.09	-1.43	.154
Purchase Numbers	.11	.09	1.22	.222

First, we see that advertising value is a significant predictor of brand attitudes,  $\beta = .79$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The overall effect of advertising value on brand attitudes is significant,  $F(4, 311) = 78.35$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .50$ . Hypothesis 1 is thus supported. These results further show that the combined effect of the social proof reputation systems and advertising involvement have a significant effect on advertising value,  $F(5, 310) = 40.01$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $R^2 = .39$ . The overall model found that none of the social proof reputations have a significant direct effect on brand attitudes. Neither of them were also found to be significant predictors of advertising value. However, after a deeper dive by enabling the Johnson-Neyman significance region, it was found that ratings and purchase numbers did have a significant predictive effect on advertising value above a certain threshold of advertising involvement. This threshold was 3.25 for ratings and 3.33 for purchase numbers. The effect of testimonials advertising value never reached significance at any advertising involvement level. This may explain why the overall effect of social proof reputation systems on advertising value is insignificant as advertising involvement scores above the respective thresholds were only observed by 33.9% of respondents exposed to ratings and 26.2% of respondents exposed to purchase numbers. The Johnson-Neyman output further observes that as advertising involvement increases, the effect of ratings and purchase numbers on advertising value is increasingly significant.

Lastly, as none of the social proof reputation systems had a significant effect on brand attitudes, we would like to examine the extent to which advertising involvement has an effect on brand attitudes through its effect on advertising value. Another Hayes (2013) Process analysis was run, this time as simple mediation analysis using Model 4, depicted in Figure 4. Advertising involvement was designated as the independent variable, the three social proof conditions assigned as covariates, and brand attitudes as the dependent variable.

**Figure 4**  
Hayes Process Model 4



The results of the simple mediation analysis testing the effect of advertising involvement on brand attitudes through advertising value is summarized in Table 6.



**Table 6**  
Simple Mediation Analysis

Model	Advertising Value (AD_V)			Brand Attitudes (BA)		
	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	.66	.25	.009	.71	.25	.005
AD_I (X)	1.10	.08	.000	.39	.10	.000
R	.07	.09	.427	.03	.09	.769
T	.11	.09	.218	-.13	.09	.168
PN	.09	.09	.310	.10	.09	.292
AD_V (M)				.66	.06	.000

<i>Summary of Overall Models</i>						
Outcome Variable	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>MSE</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df1</i>	<i>df2</i>	<i>p</i>
Advertising Value	.39	.66	48.83	4	311	.000
Brand Attitudes	.52	.65	68.24	5	310	.000

<i>Indirect and Direct Effects of Advertising Involvement on Brand Attitudes</i>							
Model	Indirect				Direct		
	<i>Effect</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>
AD_I	.72	.09	.55	.59	.39	.10	.000

The effect of advertising involvement on brand attitudes is strong and significant,  $F(5, 310) = 68.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $R^2 = .52$ . The direct effects and indirect effects through advertising value were also significant, Direct *effect* = .39,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < .001$  while indirect *effect* = .72,  $SE = .09$  *BootLLCI* = 0.55, *BootULCI* = 0.59. While advertising involvement was found to be a significant predictor of brand attitudes ( $\beta = .39$ ,  $SE = .10$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), the predictive power of advertising value on brand attitudes is far stronger ( $\beta = .66$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

## CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

In this section, the main findings will be discussed, with theoretical and practical implications drawn from academic literature together with insights from comments left by respondents. The limitations of this study and recommendations for future research are also discussed.

### *5.1 Summary of main findings*

In this paper, we tested the effects of three social proof reputation systems – ratings, testimonials, and purchase numbers – on brand attitudes through advertising value. Advertising value itself was thought to be influenced by advertising involvement. The purpose of this research was to contribute insights to improve tourism marketing and advertising efforts in a pan-European setting. The results show that advertising involvement is the most significant predictor of advertising value and thus, brand attitudes. Hypothesis 1 was thus confirmed. Ratings and purchase numbers were found to have a significant effect on advertising value only when advertising involvement was high. The effect of testimonials on advertising value was insignificant across all levels of advertising involvement. None of the interactions between the three social proof reputation systems had a significant overall effect on advertising value either. The remaining 6 hypotheses (H2 – H6) were rejected.

### *5.2 Theoretical implications*

This study contributes insights as to how different social proof reputation systems play a role in tourism advertising. While much of the existing literature covers the role of these reputation systems on other communication mediums, their role in social media advertising was an area yet relatively unexplored (Chu & Kim, 2018). We aimed to understand the role of social proof when displayed as the first contact point between a brand and a potential consumer. At this stage of the customer journey, we consider brand attitudes a more relevant measure than purchase intention (Klein et al., 2020). Planning a holiday may require time and financial commitment and audiences cannot be expected to be ready to purchase without prior research solely because of an advertisement.

We find that social proof reputation systems do not have a significant effect on advertising value at lower levels of advertising involvement. Possible explanations include a lack of attention from audiences (Hadija et al., 2012), lack of relevance (Petty et al., 1983; Speck & Elliott, 1997), or user skepticism (Mohr et al., 1998). Some respondents expressed doubt as to whether they could trust the claims as they were made by the advertiser and

cannot guarantee their truthfulness. At higher levels of involvement, ratings and purchase numbers do have an effect on advertising. It may be possible that these respondents find the advertising entertaining and/or informative and subsequently derive additional information and/or credibility from these ratings or purchase numbers (Yoo & MacInnis, 2005). Das et al. (2021) and Huang et al., (2020) suggest that these systems might work better with audiences who exhibit lower levels of perceived risk. In the current literature, perceived risk and involvement have an interesting relationship as higher perceived risk can increase involvement but higher involvement can decrease perceived risk (Chang & Wu, 2012). It is possible that at high involvements, the perceived risk was mitigated by the ratings and purchase numbers, thus leading to a positive effect on advertising value. The insignificant effect of testimonials suggests that audiences did not derive any meaningful value from the advertised testimonial or that the testimonial was ineffective at reducing perceived risk, regardless of involvement level (Chang & Wu, 2012). The overall findings suggest that audiences first need to find advertisements to be relevant and/or low in risk before they can derive any meaningful value from the heuristic reputation systems, as suggested by Humphrey Jr et al., (2017). This conclusion was also found by Miniard et al., (1992).

Second, our research raises the question as to whether social media advertising is an appropriate platform to build trust among new audiences. It is vital for customers and business success that trust is established and expectations are met online (Flanagin et al., 2011). Nevertheless, digital marketing allows users to communicate trust across different channels in tandem throughout the customer journey (Voorhees et al., 2017). Previous research has found positive effects of all three social proof reputation systems on purchase intention (cf. Das et al., 2021; Floyd et al., 2014; Spillinger & Parush, 2012), but most of these were displayed on purchase or booking pages, which are further along the customer journey than social media advertisements (Voorhees et al., 2017). Fogg et al. (2003) find that the visual aesthetics of a website are the key contributor to perceived credibility. Could this be the case for advertisements too?

Our findings suggest that ratings and purchase numbers may work better towards the beginning of the customer journey since users are still in a search phase (Klein et al., 2020). Here, potential customers are still forming consideration sets, and are more open to options. They use ratings and purchase numbers to make quick judgments about product quality and narrow down their consideration set. They may then later turn to testimonials for richer qualitative information to compare options and guide their purchases (Klein et al., 2020). The role of advertising involvement enforces the notion that capturing the user's attention

and establishing relevance may be more important at the first-contact stage than credibility (Ducoffe & Curlo, 2000; Petty et al., 1983; Spielmann & Richard, 2013).

Lastly, our research sets the groundwork for a lens in line with the ELM through which advertising is processed by respondents. If audiences find an advertisement relevant, they may develop the motivation and ability to process it further (Ducoffe & Curlo, 2000; Petty et al., 1983). Through medium, message, and creative involvement, audiences can derive advertising value in the forms of informativeness, entertainment, and credibility (Dao et al., 2014; Spielmann & Richard, 2013). If enough advertising value is derived, these audiences can develop a positive attitude toward the advertised brand (Wilkie, 1986).

### *5.3 Practical implications*

We must be critical about the practical implications of this research. The product was hedonic and the overall quality of the advertisement received substantial criticisms from respondents. These criticisms will be further discussed the limitations. Because of these reasons, the generalizability of our findings may be limited.

The practical implications of this paper are quite straightforward. Audiences derive significant value from advertisements only if they are highly involved with the advertisement. Respondents have noted that these advertisements should then be appealing, unique, and sufficiently informative. For practitioners, we suggest experimenting with displaying ratings and purchase numbers on cold advertisements to concisely communicate trust and/or quality. Das et al., (2018) find scarcity-framed social proof (eg. limited supply) may be more effective for promoting hedonic products. Avoid displaying testimonials in cold advertising. Based on previous literature, the use of all three reputation systems is still encouraged on landing pages or booking pages to provide additional informational value and to build credibility.

### *5.4 Limitations and recommendations for future research*

In the design and execution of this study, decisions had to be made due to time and resource constraints which have resulted in several limitations.

The first limitation is a result of the general ambiguity of the content contained within the advertisements. The product itself is described in a general manner, providing respondents with little detailed information about what the package holiday would include. This ambiguity was chosen intentionally in an attempt to reduce biases from pre-existing preferences such as preferred holiday destination(s), accommodation type, mode of

transport, budget, etc. Respondents were not pleased, claiming that there is not enough information from which to develop an opinion about the brand indicating a lack of informativeness to derive advertising value as required by Ducoffe (1995). Respondents further suggested that advertisements about holidays should contain more specific information about destinations, price ranges, and details about what facilities the packages include. The lack of information increased user skepticism as users could not verify the legitimacy of the brand.

Second, only one advertisement design was used, based on other advertisements common to the industry. While some respondents found the advertisement with a warm, sunny beach picture to be appealing, many were in disagreement. Several respondents used keywords such as “bland,” “plain,” “ordinary,” “generic,” and “amateurish” to describe the advertisement they saw. The advertisement did not stand out, even with the social proof reputation systems. Some suggested featuring pictures of people to build an emotional connection and better communicate the hedonic value of the product, especially if they are expensive. This recommendation is backed by findings from Pang et al. (2009), Panda et al. (2013), Guitart and Stremersch (2020), and Tan et al., (2021) who recommend the advertising of hedonic products to appeal more to emotion rather than logic. It is possible that the visuals of the advertisement itself could have affected advertising involvement, drawing attention away from the persuasive power of the social proof reputation systems.

Third, only one testimonial was displayed. Compared to the other two reputation systems used, testimonials are qualitative and can be perceived as more subjective. As we tried to use literature to maximize the persuasive power of all three reputation systems, the chosen testimonial was not sufficient. Respondents found it to be vague, ingenuine, and lacking in specific information. The sentiment is captured by a 25-year-old female Finnish respondent who commented, “It looks amateurish, it is too obvious that the review is not about the place that was pictured - even immediately questioned whether the photo was even of a beach at the places mentioned in the ad. Doesn’t make me want to book anything. Does make me want to go to a beach.”

For all the aforementioned limitations, we recommend more pre-tests to be carried out in future research (Babbie, 2009). While peers were consulted while designing the ad, a formal pre-test was never carried out. Information within the advertisement can be tested for dimensions such as completeness, appeal, and believability in line with respondent expectations. Feedback from pre-tests can be used to improve the uniqueness and appeal of the advertisements, among other factors (Ansari & Riasi, 2016). Lastly, various testimonials

can be compared for authenticity, relevance, and credibility (Cheung et al., 2009; Park et al., 2021; Vana & Lambrecht, 2021). The overall goal of the pre-tests should be to decrease the user skepticism expressed by respondents from information or visuals which could be perceived as vague, irrelevant, or untrustworthy. In doing so, the risks of user skepticism such as ad avoidance can be decreased while the persuasive power of social proof reputation systems can be expected to be more pronounced.

Another suggestion for future research would be to compare the effects of social proof across different mediums at different stages of the customer journey. Some of these mediums could include the seller's own website, a third party blog or forum, or an external review site. New systems can also be introduced from which comparisons can be drawn – for example, the effectiveness of user-generated ratings vs a best seller award (accolades). These insights can provide deeper insights into how reputations influence perceptions at various stages of the customer journey. We expect heuristic systems to work better earlier in the customer journey, while more information-loaded systems such as testimonials may be more effective later in the customer journey (Klein et al., 2020; Voorhees et al., 2017).

Lastly, our study catered to a pan-European audience with respondents from 30 countries. These respondents likely exhibit individual differences and are not homogeneous in terms of prior experiences, traveling preferences, travel propensities, and behaviors (Tsiotsou, 2019). Marketing research suggests significant cultural differences exist between how different European nationals experience quality and that the individual cultures of different European states are becoming increasingly important for marketers to consider (Šerić, 2018). Therefore, when advertising more specific types of travel products, it would benefit the research to either limit the target audience or draw comparisons among different target audiences. Future research could investigate cross-cultural comparisons in responses to different types of social proof, investigating which social proof reputation systems are effective and through which mediums. Older research in purchase decision-making behavior finds significant cultural differences in informational seeking behavior and preferences for online purchases between French and Belgian respondents, despite them being neighboring countries with similar levels of internet penetration, internet subscribers per capita, and technological adoption (Goethals et al., 2009). However, newer research into attitudinal formation and purchase behavior across various European cultures is still needed. Further cross-cultural comparisons can provide insights that allow advertisers to adapt their advertisements appropriately for each geographical market.

## *5.5 Conclusion*

In this study, we investigated to what extent are the social proof reputation systems of ratings, testimonials, and purchase numbers effective in developing positive brand attitudes when displayed in social media advertising. The research was centered around the first point of contact between a travel company offering package trips to the south of Europe and young European audiences as potential customers. The results show that at this stage of the customer journey, the relevance and uniqueness of the advertisement have the greatest effect on advertising value, and thus brand attitudes. Theoretical and practical implications were discussed as well as limitations and recommendations for future research.

## REFERENCES

- Ahn, J., & Back, K. (2018). Beyond gambling: mediating roles of brand experience and attitude. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(10), 3026–3039. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-07-2017-0473>
- Alsudani, F., & Casey, M. (2009). The Effect of Aesthetics on Web Credibility. In *BCS Learning & Development*. British Computer Society. <https://doi.org/10.14236/ewic/hci2009.64>
- Amante Ibiza. (2022, April). *Ibiza-style [Photograph]*. <https://purenatureibiza.com/psookeer/2022/04/amante-ibiza-purenatureibiza2.jpg>
- Amblee, N., & Bui, T. (2011). Harnessing the Influence of Social Proof in Online Shopping: The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Sales of Digital Microproducts. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 16(2), 91–114. <https://doi.org/10.2753/jec1086-4415160205>
- American Marketing Association. (n.d.). *Advertising Archives | American Marketing Association* <https://www.ama.org/topics/advertising/>
- Ansari, A., & Riasi, A. (2016). An Investigation of Factors Affecting Brand Advertising Success and Effectiveness. *International Business Research*, 9(4), 20. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v9n4p20>
- 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>
- Azeem, A., & Haq, Z. U. (2012). Perception towards Internet Advertising: A Study with Reference to Three Different Demographic Groups. *Global Business and Management Research: An International Journal*, 4(1), 28. <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1G1-348310898/perception-towards-internet-advertising-a-study-with>
- Babbie, E. (2009). *The Practice of Social Research* (12th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Babić Rosario, A., De Valck, K., & Sotgiu, F. (2019). 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>
- Babić Rosario, A., Sotgiu, F., De Valck, K., & Bijmolt, T. H. A. (2016). The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth on Sales: A Meta-Analytic Review of Platform, Product, and Metric Factors. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 53(3), 297–318. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmr.14.0380>



- Beneke, J., De Sousa, S., Mbuyu, M., & Wickham, B. (2015). The effect of negative online customer reviews on brand equity and purchase intention of consumer electronics in South Africa. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 26(2), 171–201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09593969.2015.1068828>
- Blal, I., & Sturman, M. C. (2014). The Differential Effects of the Quality and Quantity of Online Reviews on Hotel Room Sales. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 55(4), 365–375. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1938965514533419>
- Brackett, L. K., & Carr, B. D. (2001). Cyberspace Advertising vs. Other Media: Consumer vs. Mature Student Attitudes. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 41(5), 23–32. <https://doi.org/10.2501/jar-41-5-23-32>
- Braverman, J. (2008). Testimonials Versus Informational Persuasive Messages. *Communication Research*, 35(5), 666–694. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650208321785>
- Buil, I., De Chernatony, L., & Martínez, E. (2008). A cross-national validation of the consumer-based brand equity scale. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 17(6), 384–392. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10610420810904121>
- Carr, C. T., & Hayes, R. M. (2015). Social Media: Defining, Developing, and Divining. *Atlantic Journal of Communication*, 23(1), 46–65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15456870.2015.972282>
- Chakraborty, U., & Bhat, S. (2018a). Effect of Credible Reviews on Brand Image: A Mixed Method Approach. *IIM Kozhikode Society & Management Review*, 7(1), 13–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2277975217733873>
- Chakraborty, U., & Bhat, S. (2018b). The Effects of Credible Online Reviews on Brand Equity Dimensions and Its Consequence on Consumer Behavior. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 24(1), 57–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2017.1346541>
- Chang, H. Y., & Chen, S. (2008). The impact of online store environment cues on purchase intention. *Online Information Review*, 32(6), 818–841. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14684520810923953>
- Chang, M., & Wu, W. (2012). Revisiting Perceived Risk in the Context of Online Shopping: An Alternative Perspective of Decision-Making Styles. *Psychology & Marketing*, 29(5), 378–400. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20528>
- Cheng, H. K., Fan, W., Guo, P., Huang, H., & Qiu, L. (2020). Can “Gold Medal” Online Sellers Earn Gold? The Impact of Reputation Badges on Sales. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 37(4), 1099–1127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07421222.2020.1831776>

- Cheung, C. M. K., Lee, M. K. O., & Thadani, D. R. (2009). The impact of positive electronic word-of-mouth on Consumer Online Purchasing Decision. *Visioning and Engineering the Knowledge Society. A Web Science Perspective*, 501–510. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-04754-1\\_51](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-04754-1_51)
- 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>
- Chih, W., Hsu, L., & Ortiz, J. (2020). The antecedents and consequences of the perceived positive eWOM review credibility. *Industrial Management & Data Systems*, 120(6), 1217–1243. <https://doi.org/10.1108/imds-10-2019-0573>
- Chitturi, R., Raghunathan, R., & Mahajan, V. (2007). Form versus Function: How the Intensities of Specific Emotions Evoked in Functional versus Hedonic Trade-Offs Mediate Product Preferences. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44(4), 702–714. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.44.4.702>
- Chu, S. C., & Kim, J. (2018). The current state of knowledge on electronic word-of-mouth in advertising research. *International Journal of Advertising*, 37(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1407061>
- Cialdini, R. B. (2001). Harnessing the Science of Persuasion. *Harvard Business Review*, 79. <https://hbr.org/2001/10/harnessing-the-science-of-persuasion>
- Cialdini, R. B., & Goldstein, N. J. (2004). Social Influence: Compliance and Conformity. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 55(1), 591–621. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.55.090902.142015>
- Dao, W. V., Nhat Hanh Le, A., Ming-Sung Cheng, J., & Chao Chen, D. (2014). Social media advertising value. *International Journal of Advertising*, 33(2), 271–294. <https://doi.org/10.2501/ija-33-2-271-294>
- Darke, P. R., & Ritchie, R. J. B. (2007). The Defensive Consumer: Advertising Deception, Defensive Processing, and Distrust. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 44(1), 114–127. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.44.1.114>
- Das, G., Mukherjee, A., & Smith, R. J. (2018). The Perfect Fit: The Moderating Role of Selling Cues on Hedonic and Utilitarian Product Types. *Journal of Retailing*, 94(2), 203–216. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2017.12.002>
- Das, G., Spence, M. S., & Agarwal, J. (2021). Social selling cues: The dynamics of posting numbers viewed and bought on customers' purchase intentions. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 38(4), 994–1016. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2021.01.001>

- Davey, L. (2022, February 23). Why Online Reviews Are Essential (and How To Get Them). *Shopify*. <https://www.shopify.com/blog/15359677-why-online-store-owners-should-embrace-online-reviews>
- De Veirman, M., Cauberghe, V., & Hudders, L. (2017). Marketing through Instagram influencers: the impact of number of followers and product divergence on brand attitude. *International Journal of Advertising*, 36(5), 798–828. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2017.1348035>
- Deane, S. (2022, January 5). Over 60 Online Travel Booking Statistics (2022). *Stratos Jet Charters, Inc.* <https://www.stratosjets.com/blog/online-travel-statistics/>
- Duan, W., Gu, B., & Whinston, A. B. (2008). Do online reviews matter? — An empirical investigation of panel data. *Decision Support Systems*, 45(4), 1007–1016. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dss.2008.04.001>
- Ducoffe, R. H. (1995). How Consumers Assess the Value of Advertising. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 17(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.1995.10505022>
- Ducoffe, R. H. (1996). ADVERTISING VALUE AND ADVERTISING ON THE WEB. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 36(5), 21. <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/anonymous?id=GALE%7CA76914157&p=AONE>
- Ducoffe, R. H., & Curlo, E. (2000). Advertising value and advertising processing. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 6(4), 247–262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135272600750036364>
- Farrukh, M., Shahzad, I. A., Sajid, M., Sheikh, M. F., & Alam, I. (2020). Revisiting the intention to travel framework in the perspective of medical tourism: The role of eWord-of-mouth and destination image. *International Journal of Healthcare Management*, 15(1), 28–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20479700.2020.1836733>
- Fischer, A. (2022, October 7). How many reviews do I need for my products? *PowerReviews*. <https://www.powerreviews.com/blog/how-many-product-reviews/>
- Flanagin, A. J., Metzger, M. J., Pure, R. A., Markov, A., & Hartsell, E. (2014). Mitigating risk in ecommerce transactions: perceptions of information credibility and the role of user-generated ratings in product quality and purchase intention. *Electronic Commerce Research*, 14(1), 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10660-014-9139-2>
- Flanagin, A. J., Metzger, M. J., Pure, R., & Markov, A. (2011). User-Generated Ratings and the Evaluation of Credibility and Product Quality in Ecommerce Transactions. *2011 44th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1109/hicss.2011.474>

- Floyd, K., Freling, R., Alhoqail, S., Cho, H. Y., & Freling, T. (2014). How Online Product Reviews Affect Retail Sales: A Meta-analysis. *Journal of Retailing*, 90(2), 217–232.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretai.2014.04.004>
- Fogg, B. J., Soohoo, C., Danielson, D. R., Marable, L., Stanford, J., & Tauber, E. R. (2003). *How do users evaluate the credibility of Web sites?* <https://doi.org/10.1145/997078.997097>
- Forsey, C. (2023, February 14). The Ultimate Guide to Instagram Stories Ads in 2023 [+ New Data]. *Hubspot*. <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/instagram-story-ads>
- Friestad, M., & Wright, P. (1994). The Persuasion Knowledge Model: How People Cope with Persuasion Attempts. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21(1), 1.  
<https://doi.org/10.1086/209380>
- Gavilan, D., Avello, M., & Martinez-Navarro, G. (2018). The influence of online ratings and reviews on hotel booking consideration. *Tourism Management*, 66, 53–61.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2017.10.018>
- Ghose, A., & Ipeiritis, P. G. (2011). Estimating the Helpfulness and Economic Impact of Product Reviews: Mining Text and Reviewer Characteristics. *IEEE Transactions on Knowledge and Data Engineering*, 23(10), 1498–1512. <https://doi.org/10.1109/tkde.2010.188>
- Gibson, B. (2008). Can Evaluative Conditioning Change Attitudes toward Mature Brands? New Evidence from the Implicit Association Test. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35(1), 178–188. <https://doi.org/10.1086/527341>
- Goethals, F., Carugati, A., & Leclercq, A. (2009). Differences in e-commerce behavior between neighboring countries. *ACM Sigmis Database*, 40(4), 88–116.  
<https://doi.org/10.1145/1644953.1644960>
- Guitart, I. A., & Stremersch, S. (2020). The Impact of Informational and Emotional Television Ad Content on Online Search and Sales. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 58(2), 299–320.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022243720962505>
- Gupta, M., Judge, P. D., & Ammar, M. H. (2003). A reputation system for peer-to-peer networks. *NOSSDAV '03: Proceedings of the 13th international workshop on Network and operating systems support for digital audio and video*, 144–152.  
<https://doi.org/10.1145/776322.776346>
- Hadija, Z., Barnes, S. K., & Hair, N. (2012). Why we ignore social networking advertising. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 15(1), 19–32.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13522751211191973>

- Hajro, N., Hjartar, K., Jenkins, P., & Vieira, B. (2022, June 28). *Opportunity knocks for Europe's digital consumer: Digital trends show big gains and new opportunities*. McKinsey & Company. Retrieved April 2, 2023, from <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/mckinsey-digital/our-insights/opportunity-knocks-for-europes-digital-consumer-digital-trends-show-big-gains-and-new-opportunities>
- Hamouda, M. (2018). Understanding social media advertising effect on consumers' responses. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, 31(3), 426–445. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jeim-07-2017-0101>
- Han, M., & Kim, Y. (2016). Why Consumers Hesitate to Shop Online: Perceived Risk and Product Involvement on Taobao.com. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 23(1), 24–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2016.1251530>
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach* (3rd ed.). Guilford Press
- Heider, F. (1958). The psychology of interpersonal relations. *John Wiley & Sons*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10628-000>
- Hoeken, H., & Ouden, H. D. (2021). Sadly and Joyfully Moving Ads: The Influence of Hedonic and Eudaimonic Experiences on the Attitude toward the Ad. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 28(6), 843–868. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2021.2015512>
- Hollenbeck, B., Moorthy, S., & Proserpio, D. (2019). Advertising Strategy in the Presence of Reviews: An Empirical Analysis. *Marketing Science*, 38(5), 793–811. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2019.1180>
- Homans, G. C. (1958). Social Behavior as Exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63(6), 597–606. <https://doi.org/10.1086/222355>
- Huang, H., Liu, S. S., Kandampully, J., & Bujisic, M. (2020). Consumer Responses to Scarcity Appeals in Online Booking. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 80, 102800. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2019.102800>
- Hudson, S., Huang, L., Roth, M., & Madden, T. F. (2016). The influence of social media interactions on consumer–brand relationships: A three-country study of brand perceptions and marketing behaviors. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 33(1), 27–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2015.06.004>
- Humphrey Jr, W. F., Laverie, D. A., & Rinaldo, S. B. (2017). Brand choice via incidental social media exposure. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 11(2), 110–130. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jrim-04-2016-0025>

- Igartua, J. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2021). Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: Concepts, Computations, and Some Common Confusions. *Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 24. <https://doi.org/10.1017/sjp.2021.46>
- Ismagilova, E., Slade, E. L., 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 Services*, 53, 101736. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.01.005>
- Jalilvand, M. R., & Samiei, N. (2012). The impact of electronic word of mouth on a tourism destination choice. *Internet Research*, 22(5), 591–612. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10662241211271563>
- Janssen, S., & Verboord, M. (2022). *Methodological Guidelines Thesis Research* (9th ed.). Department of media and communication. Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication at Erasmus University Rotterdam.
- Jiménez, D., Jiménez, D. L., & Portillo, J. P. V. (2021). The Use of Trust Seals in European and Latin American Commercial Transactions. *Journal of Open Innovation*, 7(2), 150. <https://doi.org/10.3390/joitmc7020150>
- Jung, J. U., Min, K. T., & Kellaris, J. J. (2011). The games people play: How the entertainment value of online ads helps or harms persuasion. *Psychology & Marketing*, 28(7), 661–681. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20406>
- Kahneman, D., Knetsch, J. L., & Thaler, R. H. (1991). Anomalies: The Endowment Effect, Loss Aversion, and Status Quo Bias. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 5(1), 193–206. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.5.1.193>
- Kamins, M. A., Brand, M. J., Hoewe, S. A., & Moe, J. H. (1989). Two-Sided versus One-Sided Celebrity Endorsements: The Impact on Advertising Effectiveness and Credibility. *Journal of Advertising*, 18(2), 4–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1989.10673146>
- Keller, K. L. (1993). Conceptualizing, Measuring, and Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity. *Journal of Marketing*, 57(1), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299305700101>
- Kelley, H. H. (1973). The processes of causal attribution. *American Psychologist*, 28(2), 107–128. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0034225>
- Kelly, L. A., Kerr, G., & Drennan, J. (2010). Avoidance of Advertising in Social Networking Sites. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 10(2), 16–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2010.10722167>
- Kelman, H. C. (1958). Compliance, identification, and internalization three processes of attitude change. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2(1), 51–60. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200275800200106>

- Klein, J., Zhang, Y., Falk, T., Aspara, J., & Luo, X. (2020). Customer journey analyses in digital media: exploring the impact of cross-media exposure on customers' purchase decisions. *Journal of Service Management*, 31(3), 489–508. <https://doi.org/10.1108/josm-11-2018-0360>
- Kruglanski, A. W., Shah, J. Y., Fishbach, A., Friedman, R., Chun, W. J., & Sleeth-Keppler, D. (2002). A theory of goal systems. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* (pp. 331–378). [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0065-2601\(02\)80008-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0065-2601(02)80008-9)
- Kudeshia, C., & Kumar, A. (2017). Social eWOM: does it affect the brand attitude and purchase intention of brands? *Management Research Review*, 40(3), 310–330. <https://doi.org/10.1108/mrr-07-2015-0161>
- Lee, M., Rodgers, S., & Kim, M. (2009). Effects of Valence and Extremity of eWOM on Attitude toward the Brand and Website. *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, 31(2), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2009.10505262>
- Lee, M., & Youn, S. (2009). Electronic word of mouth (eWOM). *International Journal of Advertising*, 28(3), 473–499. <https://doi.org/10.2501/s0265048709200709>
- Leeflang, P. S., Verhoef, P. C., Dahlström, P., & Freundt, T. (2014). Challenges and solutions for marketing in a digital era. *European Management Journal*, 32(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2013.12.001>
- Ling, G., Lyu, M. R., & King, I. (2014). *Ratings meet reviews, a combined approach to recommend*. <https://doi.org/10.1145/2645710.2645728>
- Liu, Y. (2006). Word of Mouth for Movies: Its Dynamics and Impact on Box Office Revenue. *Journal of Marketing*, 70(3), 74–89. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.70.3.74>
- Lo, A., & Yao, S. S. (2019). What makes hotel online reviews credible? *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(1), 41–60. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-10-2017-0671>
- Lowry, P. B., Wilson, D., & Haig, W. (2014). A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words: Source Credibility Theory Applied to Logo and Website Design for Heightened Credibility and Consumer Trust. *International Journal of Human-computer Interaction*, 30(1), 63–93. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2013.839899>
- Luhmann, N. (1979). *Trust and Power* (1st ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- MacKenzie, S. B., & Lutz, R. J. (1989). An Empirical Examination of the Structural Antecedents of Attitude toward the Ad in an Advertising Pretesting Context. *Journal of Marketing*, 53(2), 48. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1251413>

- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/h0054346>
- Maslowska, E., Malthouse, E. C., & Bernritter, S. F. (2016). 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>
- Masoud, E. M. (2013). The Effect of Perceived Risk on Online Shopping in Jordan. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 5(6), 76–87.  
<https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/EJBM/article/view/4689>
- Mattke, J., Müller, L., & Maier, C. (2017). Why do individuals block online ads? An explorative study to explain the use of ad blockers. In *Americas Conference on Information Systems*.  
<http://dblp.uni-trier.de/db/conf/amcis/amcis2017.html#MattkeMM17>
- Mayer, R., Davis, J., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust. *Academy of Management Review*, 20(3), 709. <https://doi.org/10.2307/258792>
- McQuail, D. (1983). *Mass communication theory: An introduction* (1st ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Meenaghan, T. (1995). The role of advertising in brand image development. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 4(4), 23–34. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10610429510097672>
- Metzger, M. J., Flanagin, A. J., Eyal, K., Lemus, D. R., & McCann, R. J. (2003). Credibility for the 21st Century: Integrating Perspectives on Source, Message, and Media Credibility in the Contemporary Media Environment. *Annals of the International Communication Association*, 27(1), 293–335. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23808985.2003.11679029>
- Mohr, L. A., Eroğlu, D., & Ellen, P. S. (1998). The Development and Testing of a Measure of Skepticism Toward Environmental Claims in Marketers' Communications. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 32(1), 30–55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6606.1998.tb00399.x>
- Miniard, P. W., Sirdeshmukh, D., & Innis, D. E. (1992). Peripheral Persuasion and Brand Choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19(2), 226. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209298>
- Ministerie van Algemene Zaken. (2023, January 2). *EU, EEA, EFTA and Schengen Area countries*. European Union | Government.nl. <https://www.government.nl/topics/european-union/eu-eea-efta-and-schengen-area-countries>
- Mohr, L. A., Eroğlu, D., & Ellen, P. S. (1998). The Development and Testing of a Measure of Skepticism Toward Environmental Claims in Marketers' Communications. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 32(1), 30–55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6606.1998.tb00399.x>
- Mrs Kaur. (2023, March 28). *Mrs Kaur gave loveholidays 5 stars*. Trustpilot.  
<https://trstp.lt/KcIckZ0dD>



- Muehling, D. D., & Laczniak, R. N. (1988). Advertising's Immediate and Delayed Influence on Brand Attitudes: Considerations across Message-Involvement Levels. *Journal of Advertising*, 17(4), 23–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1988.10673126>
- Murillo, E., Merino, M., & Núñez, A. (2016). The advertising value of Twitter Ads: a study among Mexican Millennials. *Review of Business Management*, 18(61), 436–456. <https://doi.org/10.7819/rbgn.v18i61.2471>
- Nielsen. (2012). Global Trust in Advertising 2012. In *Nielsen*. <https://www.nielsen.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2019/04/global-trust-in-advertising-2012.pdf>
- Okazaki, S. (2004). How do Japanese consumers perceive wireless ads? A multivariate analysis. *International Journal of Advertising*, 23(4), 429–454. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2004.11072894>
- Ong, B. S. (2011). Online Shopper Reviews: Ramifications for Promotion and Website Utility. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 17(3), 327–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2011.597304>
- Orth, U. R., & Krška, P. (2001). Quality signals in wine marketing: the role of exhibition awards. *The International Food and Agribusiness Management Review*, 4(4), 385–397. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s1096-7508\(02\)00066-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/s1096-7508(02)00066-6)
- Panda, T. K., Panda, T., & Mishra, K. (2013). Does Emotional Appeal Work in Advertising? the Rationality Behind Using Emotional Appeal to Create Favorable Brand Attitude. *IUP Journal of Brand Management*, 10(2), 7. <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-3077185471/does-emotional-appeal-work-in-advertising-the-rationality>
- Pang, J., Keh, H. T., & Peng, S. (2009). Effects of advertising strategy on consumer-brand relationships: A brand love perspective. *Frontiers of Business Research in China*, 3(4). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11782-009-0029-8>
- Park, C. S., MacInnis, D. J., Priester, J. R., Eisingerich, A. B., & Iacobucci, D. (2010). Brand Attachment and Brand Attitude Strength: Conceptual and Empirical Differentiation of Two Critical Brand Equity Drivers. *Journal of Marketing*, 74(6), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.74.6.1>
- Park, S., Shin, W., & Xie, J. (2021). The Fateful First Consumer Review. *Marketing Science*, 40(3), 481–507. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2020.1264>
- Pavlou, P. A., & Dimoka, A. (2006). The Nature and Role of Feedback Text Comments in Online Marketplaces: Implications for Trust Building, Price Premiums, and Seller Differentiation. *Information Systems Research*, 17(4), 392–414. <https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.1060.0106>

- Pentina, I., Bailey, A. A., & Zhang, L. (2018). Exploring effects of source similarity, message valence, and receiver regulatory focus on yelp review persuasiveness and purchase intentions. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 24(2), 125–145.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2015.1005115>
- Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 19, 123–205. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0065-2601\(08\)60214-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0065-2601(08)60214-2)
- Petty, R. E., Cacioppo, J. T., & Schumann, D. W. (1983). Central and Peripheral Routes to Advertising Effectiveness: The Moderating Role of Involvement. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10(2), 135. <https://doi.org/10.1086/208954>
- Phillips, P. S., Zigan, K., Silva, M. M., & Schegg, R. (2015). The interactive effects of online reviews on the determinants of Swiss hotel performance: A neural network analysis. *Tourism Management*, 50, 130–141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2015.01.028>
- Rahman, M. A., Abir, T., Yazdani, D. M. N., Hamid, A. B. A., & Al Mamun, A. (2020). Brand Image, eWOM, Trust and Online Purchase Intention of Digital Products among Malaysian Consumers. *Xi'an Jiaozhu Ke-Ji Daxue Xuebao*, XII(III).  
<https://doi.org/10.37896/jxat12.03/452>
- Regorz, A. (n.d.). PROCESS templates (Vs. 3 and 4). Regorz Statistik. [http://www.regorz-statistik.de/en/process\\_3\\_model\\_templates.html](http://www.regorz-statistik.de/en/process_3_model_templates.html)
- Ren, J., & Nickerson, J. V. (2019). Arousal, valence, and volume: how the influence of online review characteristics differs with respect to utilitarian and hedonic products. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 28(3), 272–290.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0960085x.2018.1524419>
- Resnick, P., Kuwabara, K., Zeckhauser, R. J., & Friedman, E. J. (2000). Reputation systems. *Communications of the ACM*, 43(12), 45–48. <https://doi.org/10.1145/355112.355122>
- Schindler, R. M., & Yalch, R. F. (2006). It Seems Factual, But Is It? Effects of Using Sharp Versus Round Numbers in Advertising Claims. *ACR North American Advances*, 33, 586–590.  
<http://business.camden.rutgers.edu/files/Schindler-Yalch-2006.pdf>
- Schlosser, A. E., Shavitt, S., & Kanfer, A. (1999). Survey of Internet users' attitudes toward Internet advertising. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 13(3), 34–54.  
[https://doi.org/10.1002/\(sici\)1520-6653\(199922\)13:3](https://doi.org/10.1002/(sici)1520-6653(199922)13:3)
- Scholten, M. (1996). Lost and found: The information-processing model of advertising effectiveness. *Journal of Business Research*, 37(2), 97–104. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963\(96\)00058-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0148-2963(96)00058-6)

- Šerić, M. (2018). A cross-cultural study on perceived quality in upscale hotels in Italy and Croatia. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*, 1(4), 340–366. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jhti-02-2018-0013>
- Sherif, M., & Hovland, C. I. (1961). *Social Judgment: Assimilation and Contrast Effects in Communication and Attitude Change*. Yale University.
- Shykolovych, O. (2022). Global Digital Advertising Spend by Industry in 2021. *Improvado*. Retrieved January 7, 2023, from <https://improvado.io/blog/ads-spend-report-by-industry>
- Simonson, I. (2015). Mission (Largely) Accomplished: What’s Next for Consumer BDT-JDM Researchers? *Journal of Marketing Behavior*, 1, 9–35.
- Song, H., Lee, C. K., Reisinger, Y., & Xu, H. L. (2016). The role of visa exemption in Chinese tourists’ decision-making: a model of goal-directed behavior. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 34(5), 666–679. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2016.1223777>
- Spears, N., Singh, S. N. (2004). Measuring Attitude toward the Brand and Purchase Intentions. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, 26(2), 53–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2004.10505164>
- Speck, P. S., & Elliott, M. R. (1997). Predictors of Advertising Avoidance in Print and Broadcast Media. *Journal of Advertising*, 26(3), 61–76. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1997.10673529>
- Spielmann, N., & Richard, M. O. (2013). How captive is your audience? Defining overall advertising involvement. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(4), 499–505. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.12.002>
- Spillinger, A., & Parush, A. (2012). The Impact of Testimonials on Purchase Intentions in a Mock E-commerce Web Site. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, 7(1), 9–10. <https://doi.org/10.4067/s0718-18762012000100005>
- Swamynathan, G., Almeroth, K. C., & Zhao, B. Y. (2010). The design of a reliable reputation system. *Electronic Commerce Research*, 10(3–4), 239–270. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10660-010-9064-y>
- Tan, Y., Geng, S., Katsumata, S., & Xiong, X. (2021). The effects of ad heuristic and systematic cues on consumer brand awareness and purchase intention: Investigating the bias effect of heuristic information processing. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 63, 102696. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102696>
- Tellis, G. J. (2003). *Effective Advertising: Understanding When, How, and Why Advertising Works*. SAGE Publications.

- Terui, N., Ban, M., & Allenby, G. M. (2011). The Effect of Media Advertising on Brand Consideration and Choice. *Marketing Science*, 30(1), 74–91.  
<https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.1100.0590>
- Tham, K. Y., Dastane, O., Johari, Z., & Ismail, N. (2019). Perceived Risk Factors Affecting Consumers' Online Shopping Behaviour. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 6(4), 246–260. <https://doi.org/10.13106/jafeb.2019.vol6.no4.249>
- Tomas, D. (2023, March 17). *What Are Social Media Ads? Examples and Types*. Cyberclick. Retrieved May 13, 2023, from <https://www.cyberclick.net/numericalblogen/what-exactly-are-social-ads-types-and-examples-of-advertising-on-social-media>
- Tseng, S., & Fogg, B. J. (1999). Credibility and computing technology. *Communications of the ACM*, 42(5), 39–44. <https://doi.org/10.1145/301353.301402>
- Tsiotsou, R. H. (2019). Rate my firm: cultural differences in service evaluations. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 33(7), 815–836. <https://doi.org/10.1108/jsm-12-2018-0358>
- Tudoran, A. A. (2019). Why do internet consumers block ads? New evidence from consumer opinion mining and sentiment analysis. *Internet Research*, 29(1), 144–166.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/intr-06-2017-0221>
- Van Hentenryck, P., Abeliuk, A., Berbeglia, F., Maldonado, F., & Berbeglia, G. (2016). Aligning Popularity and Quality in Online Cultural Markets. *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*, 10(1), 398–407.  
<https://doi.org/10.1609/icwsm.v10i1.14720>
- Van Hove, G., & Lievens, F. (2007). Investigating Web-Based Recruitment Sources: Employee testimonials vs word-of-mouth. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 15(4), 372–382. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2389.2007.00396.x>
- Vana, P., & Lambrecht, A. (2021). The Effect of Individual Online Reviews on Purchase Likelihood. *Marketing Science*, 40(4), 708–730. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2020.1278>
- Venkatesakumar, R., Vijayakumar, S., Riasudeen, S., Madhavan, S., & Rajeswari, B. (2020). Distribution characteristics of star ratings in online consumer reviews. *Vilakshan*, 18(2), 156–170. <https://doi.org/10.1108/xjm-10-2020-0171>
- Von Abrams, K. (2022). Western Europe Ad Spending 2022. *Insider Intelligence*.  
<https://www.insiderintelligence.com/content/western-europe-ad-spending-2022>
- Voorhees, C. M., Fombelle, P. W., Grégoire, Y., Bone, S. A., Gustafsson, A., Bijmolt, T. H. A., & Walkowiak, T. (2017). Service encounters, experiences and the customer journey: Defining the field and a call to expand our lens. *Journal of Business Research*, 79, 269–280.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.04.014>

- Wilkie, W. L. (1986). *Consumer Behavior* (1st ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Yang, J., & Mai, E. (2010). Experiential goods with network externalities effects: An empirical study of online rating system. *Journal of Business Research*, 63(9–10), 1050–1057. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2009.04.029>
- Yang, J., Sarathy, R., & Walsh, S. J. (2016). Do review valence and review volume impact consumers' purchase decisions as assumed? *Nankai Business Review International*, 7(2), 231–257. <https://doi.org/10.1108/nbri-11-2015-0028>
- Yoo, C., & MacInnis, D. J. (2005). The brand attitude formation process of emotional and informational ads. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(10), 1397–1406. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2005.03.011>
- Zeng, F., Huang, L., & Dou, W. (2009). Social Factors in User Perceptions and Responses to Advertising in Online Social Networking Communities. *Journal of Interactive Advertising*, 10(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2009.10722159>
- Zhang, X., & Barnes, C. (2019). The Suspicious Factors in Electronic Word-of-Mouth Communication. *Journal of Marketing Development and Competitiveness*. <https://doi.org/10.33423/jmdc.v13i2.2015>
- Zhou, Z., & Bao, Y. (2002). Users' Attitudes Toward Web Advertising: Effects of Internet Motivation and Internet Ability. *ACR North American Advances*. <https://www.acrwebsite.org/search/view-conference-proceedings.aspx?Id=8560>

## APPENDIX A: STIMULUS MATERIALS

**DISCOVER  
SUNNY EUROPE**  
Holiday packages in Portugal,  
Spain, Italy, Greece, & more

**Wanderlust Trips**  
DISCOVER EUROPE

**BOOK NOW >>**

Condition 1: Control

**DISCOVER  
SUNNY EUROPE**  
Holiday packages in Portugal,  
Spain, Italy, Greece, & more

★★★★★ 4.4 (390)

**Wanderlust Trips**  
DISCOVER EUROPE

**BOOK NOW >>**

Condition 2: Ratings (R)

**DISCOVER  
SUNNY EUROPE**  
Holiday packages in Portugal,  
Spain, Italy, Greece, & more

*"It was easy and quick. I am happy with  
the hotel & flight rates and other relevant  
facilities they provided."*

Alex, 27  
Germany

**Wanderlust Trips**  
DISCOVER EUROPE

**BOOK NOW >>**

Condition 3: Testimonials

**DISCOVER  
SUNNY EUROPE**  
Holiday packages in Portugal,  
Spain, Italy, Greece, & more

1773 people bought a package  
in the last 30 days

**Wanderlust Trips**  
DISCOVER EUROPE

**BOOK NOW >>**

Condition 4: Purchase Numbers (R)

**APPENDIX A: STIMULUS MATERIALS (CONTINUED)**

**DISCOVER SUNNY EUROPE**  
 Holiday packages in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, & more

★★★★☆ 4.4 (390)

*"It was easy and quick. I am happy with the hotel & flight rates and other relevant facilities they provided."*

Alex, 27  
Germany

**Wanderlust Trips**  
DISCOVER EUROPE

**BOOK NOW >>**

Condition 5: R x T

**DISCOVER SUNNY EUROPE**  
 Holiday packages in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, & more

★★★★☆ 4.4 (390)

**1773 people bought a package in the last 30 days**

**Wanderlust Trips**  
DISCOVER EUROPE

**BOOK NOW >>**

Condition 6: R x PN

**DISCOVER SUNNY EUROPE**  
 Holiday packages in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, & more

*"It was easy and quick. I am happy with the hotel & flight rates and other relevant facilities they provided."*

Alex, 27  
Germany

**1773 people bought a package in the last 30 days**

**Wanderlust Trips**  
DISCOVER EUROPE

**BOOK NOW >>**

Condition 7: T x PN

**DISCOVER SUNNY EUROPE**  
 Holiday packages in Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, & more

★★★★☆ 4.4 (390)

*"It was easy and quick. I am happy with the hotel & flight rates and other relevant facilities they provided."*

Alex, 27  
Germany

**1773 people bought a package in the last 30 days**

**Wanderlust Trips**  
DISCOVER EUROPE

**BOOK NOW >>**

Condition 8: R x T x PN

## APPENDIX B: RELIABILITY AND FACTOR ANALYSES

### Measures, factor loadings, and Cronbach alphas

Construct	Items	Factor Loadings
Advertising Involvement*	(1=not at all, 7= very much)	
Message Involvement ( $\alpha = .89$ )	<b>When looking at the ad, you find what is advertised to be:</b> Important Of concern to you Relevant Meaning a lot to you Valuable Beneficial Mattering to you Essential Significant to you	.66 .61 .70 .81 .71 .67 .79 .69 .81
Media Involvement ( $\alpha = .86$ )	<b>When thinking of the ad, did you find yourself doing any of the following?</b> Paying attention to the content Concentrating on the content Thinking about the content Focusing on the content Spending effort looking at the content Carefully reading the content	.76 .83 .71 .82 .69 .73
Creative Involvement ( $\alpha = .77$ )	<b>When thinking of the ad, did you find yourself doing any of the following?</b> Taking note of the visual aspects of the ad Focusing on the colors and/or images of the ad Noting some specific colors or images in the ad Paying close attention to the ad as a piece of art	.78 .85 .73 .66
Advertising Value* ( $\alpha = .91$ )	(1=strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree)	
Informativeness	<b>Please indicate to what extent you disagree or agree to the following statements.</b> 1. This advertisement is a good source of product information 2. This advertisement is a relevant source of product information 3. This advertisement provides timely information	.81 .81 .73
Entertainment	<b>Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the following characteristics relate to the advertisement you just viewed</b> 4. Useful 5. Valuable 6. Important 7. Entertaining 8. Enjoyable 9. Pleasing	.70 .58 .53 .79 .90 .84
Credibility	10. Credible 11. Trustworthy 12. Believable	.84 .87 .86
Brand Attitudes ( $\alpha = .91$ )	<b>Please rate your overall feelings about the brand in the advertisement you just viewed</b> 1. 1= Unappealing / 7=Appealing 2. 1= Bad / 7=Good 3. 1= Unpleasant / 7=Pleasant 4. 1= Unfavorable / 7=Favorable 5. 1= Unlikeable / 7=Likeable	.86 .87 .85 .84 .89

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

\*Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations



**APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT COUNTRY AFFILIATION**

Country	Passport	Residence Permit	Total	Percentage of sample
Andorra	0	0	3	0.0%
Austria	3	0	3	0.9%
Belgium	11	1	12	3.8%
Bulgaria	8	0	8	2.5%
Croatia	5	0	5	1.6%
Cyprus	1	0	1	0.3%
Czech Republic	2	0	2	0.6%
Denmark	3	0	3	0.9%
Estonia	2	0	2	0.6%
Finland	8	0	8	2.5%
France	9	2	11	3.5%
Germany	30	3	33	10.4%
Greece	7	1	8	2.5%
Hungary	2	0	2	0.6%
Iceland	1	0	1	0.3%
Ireland	2	0	2	0.6%
Italy	20	0	20	6.3%
Latvia	7	0	7	2.2%
Liechtenstein	0	0	0	0.0%
Lithuania	4	0	4	1.3%
Luxembourg	2	0	2	0.6%
Malta	2	0	2	0.6%
Monaco	0	0	0	0.0%
Netherlands	77	37	114	36.1%
Norway	3	0	3	0.9%
Poland	10	0	10	3.2%
Portugal	5	0	5	1.6%
Romania	15	0	15	4.7%
San Marino	0	0	0	0.0%
Slovakia	4	0	4	1.3%
Slovenia	2	0	2	0.6%
Spain	22	1	23	7.3%
Sweden	1	0	1	0.3%
Switzerland	3	0	3	0.9%
Vatican City	0	0	0	0.0%
Total	271	45	316	100%

## APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

### Intro

Are you dreaming of a beach holiday this summer? You are invited to participate in a study about tourism advertising. The purpose of this study is to help tourism companies improve their social media advertising to make a positive first impression.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to participate in a survey. **Your responses will be anonymous and no identifying personal information will be collected about you.** There are no risks associated with participating in this research. Any data collected from your responses will be used purely for academic work.

**Your participation is completely voluntary.** You may withdraw your consent or stop your participation at any time. Your participation in this study should take around **7-10 minutes** of your time.

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant, comments or clarifications, or any concerns with this study, you may contact the research author: Dheeraj (DJ) Ramchand, 465541dr@eur.nl; or supervisor: Serge Rijsdijk, srijdijk@rsm.nl.

1 Do you consent to participating in this survey?

I understand the above and agree on participating in this research. (1)

2 Do you own a passport from any of the following countries?

(If you have passports from more than one country on this list, please select the country with which you identify the most)

▼ Austria (1) ... Vatican City (34)

▼ I do not have a residence permit from any of these countries (35)

3 Do you currently have a residence permit in any of the following countries?

*A residence permit is defined as a document or card which indicates your right to live, study, and/or work in a foreign country.*

▼ Austria (1) ... Vatican City (34)

▼ I do not have a residence permit from any of these countries (35)

4 Please indicate your age?

▼ 17 or younger (1) ... 36 or older (20)

## APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (CONTINUED)

5 What is the highest educational level that you have followed? This can either be an education that you completed or one that you are or were previously enrolled in.

- Primary school (1)
- Secondary school / high school (2)
- Vocational degree after high school (3)
- Bachelor's degree (4)
- Master's degree (5)
- PhD, MBA, or other equivalent (6)
- Other, namely (7) \_\_\_\_\_

6 Please indicate your gender

- Male (1)
- Female (2)
- Non-binary / third gender (3)
- Prefer not to say (4)

7 You will be shown an advertisement. **Please pay attention to it.**

Afterward, **you will be asked a few questions** about the advertisement you just saw.

Press next when you're ready.

8 [One of eight experimental conditions is displayed to respondent – See Appendix A]

**APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (CONTINUED)**

**9** In your opinion, from which country is the background picture in the advertisement?  
 (There are no right or wrong answers; You may select multiple options if you aren't sure)

- Portugal (1)
- Spain (2)
- France (3)
- Italy (4)
- Croatia (5)
- Greece (6)
- Other, namely (7)

**10** When looking at the ad, you find what is advertised to be:

	Not at all (1)	Not really (2)	Neutral (3)	Somewhat (4)	Very much (5)
Important (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Of concern to you (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Relevant (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meaning a lot to you (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Valuable (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Beneficial (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mattering to you (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Essential (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Significant to you (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (CONTINUED)**

**11** When thinking of the ad, did you find yourself doing any of the following?

	Not at all (1)	Not really (2)	Neutral (3)	Somewhat (4)	Very much (5)
Paying attention to the content (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concentrating on the content (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thinking about the content (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focusing on the content (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spending effort looking at the content (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Carefully reading the content (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**12** When thinking of the ad, did you find yourself doing any of the following?

	Not at all (1)	Not really (2)	Neutral (3)	Somewhat (4)	Very much (5)
Taking note of the visual aspects of the ad (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Focusing on the colors and/or images of the ad (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Noting some specific colors or images in the ad (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paying close attention to the ad as a piece of art (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (CONTINUED)**

**13** Almost there! Please indicate to what extent you disagree or agree to the following statements.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
This advertisement is a <b>good source of product information</b> (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This advertisement is a <b>relevant source of product information</b> (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This advertisement <b>provides timely information</b> (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (CONTINUED)**

**14** Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the following characteristics relate to the advertisement you just viewed

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly agree (7)
Useful (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Valuable (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Important (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entertaining (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enjoyable (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pleasing (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Credible (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthy (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Believable (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**APPENDIX D: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (CONTINUED)**

**15** Lastly, please rate your overall feelings about the brand in the advertisement you just viewed.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	
Unappealing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Appealing
Bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Good
Unpleasant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Pleasant
Unfavorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Favorable
Unlikeable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Likeable

**16** Do you have any additional comments, critiques, or impressions about the advertisement that you saw? Positive and negative comments are welcome (Optional)

**End of Survey**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, you're awesome! 🌸

This study aims to determine how travel companies can build positive first impressions with new audiences using different types of social proof. This survey showed you one of eight ads. Seven of these ads included one or more social proof tactic(s).

I would appreciate it if you could share this survey with other young people who live within the European Union, Switzerland, Norway, Liechtenstein, or Iceland. Thank you in advance!

Have a wonderful spring & summer! 🌻