

## **How do personality characteristics and review features impact persuasion effectiveness**

Student Name: Wei Xu

Student Number: 598664

Supervisor: Dr. Niels Vink

Master Media Studies - Media & Business

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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## **Abstract**

E-commerce is growing rapidly in recent years due to the development of the Internet and the impact of the epidemic. E-commerce platform like Amazon is estimated to expand continuously in the following years. Online product review is one form of digital word of mouth that can be more influential than marketers when customers make purchase decisions. Internet consumers usually spend time and read reviews before making a purchase decision.

Previous studies have found a variety of review features that influence consumer evaluation including rating, equivocality and uncertainty, expertise, and argumentation. Customers' WOM evaluation processes are also influenced by customers' personalities, for example, the need for involvement and level of ambiguity tolerance.

However, few studies have examined the interaction effects of review features and personality characteristics. Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to examine the persuasive effects of review features and personality characteristics. The focus of this study is on the corresponding interaction effects of agreeableness and conscientiousness personality in the Big Five model and the level of reviewer agreement and level of detail.

To answer the research question "*How do personality characteristics and review features impact persuasion effectiveness?*", the research built a 2 (level of reviewer agreement and level of detail) by 2 (agreeableness and conscientiousness) online experiment using a survey to determine the perceived review credibility of customers. Manipulation was successful as participants responded differently to reviews of different levels of detail and review agreement. Results show that level of detail and level of reviewer agreement have significant positive effects on consumers' perceived review credibility. Comparing customers with different personality traits, unfriendly customers are more affected by highly agreed reviews than friendly individuals, and organized customers and careless customers are more affected when the review contains lots of detailed information.

**Keywords: digital word of mouth; individual differences; big five; credibility**

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## **1. Introduction**

### 1.1 Topic background

More and more customers are purchasing online nowadays. The overall value of e-commerce trade has climbed from 1.34 trillion US dollars in 2014 to 4.21 trillion US dollars in 2020 (Statista, 2020). WOM is the interpersonal communication about products and services between customers (Arndt, 1967). The scenario of information sharing has altered, allowing customers to share product-related information with others in a variety of online venues. This transformation came about as a result of the emergence of the most recent technology (Majali & Bohari, 2016). According to research, almost 90% of shoppers check internet reviews before making a purchase choice (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Digital word of mouth (digital WOM) is now one of the most influential sources for customers to make their purchase decisions in the digital age (Arndt, 1967). Reviews from consumers are more influential than marketers' generated messages (Chiou & Cheng, 2003). Therefore, it is important for the marketer to make good use of digital WOM to persuade their potential customers better. There are different platforms for online reviews nowadays like product review websites (e.g., consumer review.com), retailers' websites (e.g., amazon.com), brands' websites (e.g., forums.us.dell.com), personal blogs, message boards, and social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace).

Consumers use online product reviews to help them make decisions about which products to buy. A previous study provided an integrative framework with five fundamental components to assess the effects of digital WOM communication. Communicators, stimuli, receivers, responses, and contextual factors are the five basic components (Cheung & Thadani, 2012).

Researchers examined the effect of review features on customers' perceptions of the credibility of online digital WOM. Previous studies have examined a variety of factors that influence digital WOM credibility, including rating, equivocality and uncertainty, expertise, and argumentation. Research has also found that factors like review valence, agreement, and level of detail have different effects on different types of products (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2013).

Customers' WOM processes are also influenced by receivers' personalities. For example, the level of personality similarities between two social media users has a positive and statistically significant influence on the chance of a future purchase from a recipient of a WOM message after exposure to the sender's WOM message (Adamopoulos et al., 2018). Recent studies also analyzed the impact of persuasion effects of individual differences in

ambiguity tolerance and involvement. They found that online review was more persuasive for individuals with high involvement and low ambiguity tolerance (Wang & Wang, 2010). This is because people with low ambiguity tolerance want to reduce the discomfort of uncertainty by evaluating review, thus reducing decision uncertainty. People with high involvement are more nervous about the post-purchase consumer evaluation process, and they care more about the product, so review is more compelling to them (Wang & Wang, 2010).

## 1.2 Research question

After learning the background of the topic, this study posed the following research questions:

*RQ: How do personality characteristics and review features impact persuasion effectiveness?*

Sub-questions:

- a. What is the relation between review features, such as level of reviewer agreement and level of detail in review, and perceived review credibility?
- b. Is there an interaction between personality characteristics and review features on perceived review credibility?

## 1.3 Societal relevance

Due to a growing threat from old physical retail companies that have migrated to the web, online retailers like Amazon are losing market share because customers are losing trust in their privacy and security regulations as well as the security of online transactions. (Benedicktus et al., 2010). E-commerce platforms have advantages in promoting products to the big market. Researchers have suggested them compete against other platforms by offering personalized products and services (Kaptein & Parvinen, 2015).

This study can help e-commerce platforms to understand their target customers better. The retail website can filter the reviews of a certain product to persuade the target customers of this product better. The study shows that customers with different personalities are seeking different information when making their purchase decision, so retailers can satisfy their customers' needs in a more personalized way and therefore improve sales. Consumers get personalized information from the website, saving time and energy in manually filtering reviews. Customers can make shopping decisions more easily while having a better shopping experience.

#### 1.4 Scientific relevance

Previous research has studied the relationship between digital word-of-mouth features and customers' purchase intentions. The level of detail in a review has a positive effect on digital review credibility (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2013). Some conflicts remain regarding the impact of the level of reviewer agreement on the perceived review credibility of the review. This study investigates the relationship between review agreement and perceived review credibility.

The different persuasion effect on agreeable and conscientious individuals was studied in many research studies. Agreeableness was found to have a strong and effective influence on perceived usefulness and behavioral intention (Tapanainen et al., 2021). In contrast, conscientiousness was not found to have a significant impact on review evaluation and purchase intention (Tapanainen et al., 2021). The contribution of this study is that it studies the interaction effect between personality characteristics and review features on the perceived review credibility. This study can show the difference in persuasion effect between agreeable/non-agreeable on detailed and general reviews and conscientious/unconscientious on reviews with different levels of reviewer agreement. As a result, the future study can further explore the interaction effect of personality characteristics and review features.

#### 1.5 Structure of the study

In this section, the structure of this research is described. The research tries to answer the research question mentioned above using a quantitative methods approach. Hence, the remainder of this paper is divided into five sections that all contribute to answering the research question mentioned above while addressing relevant topics and aspects that contribute to the study's credibility. This paper first introduces the background of the topics and brings up research questions and societal and scientific relevance in the introduction section. Following the introduction, the researcher summarizes the relevant previous literature and brings up the hypothesis in the theoretical framework chapter. Later, the research method of this study is discussed. The sampling methods, experiment design, and reliability check are introduced and discussed in the method section. After the methods section, the results of the data are presented. The final chapter is the discussion and conclusion, where the results of the study are discussed to answer the research questions and draw conclusions about the interaction effects of review features and personality

characteristics on perceived review credibility. This chapter also describes the practical and theoretical implications and limitations, as well as suggestions for further research.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Digital word-of-mouth**

Traditional word-of-mouth (WOM) is a form of marketing communication that is driven by consumers and in which the sender is unaffected by marketer (Brown et al., 2007). According to traditional communications theory, WOM is considered to have a strong impact on behavior, particularly on customers' information seeking, evaluation, and final decision making (Silverman, 2011). This is because it contains information about product functionality as well as the social and psychological effects of purchasing a product (Brown et al., 2007). Traditional WOM is usually exchanged in a private talk. Traditional WOM information is shared in a synchronous way amongst small groups of people (Dellarocas, 2003). People exchange information with others who are also present at that same time and place, and others who are not present are not able to get the information anyway (Brown et al., 2007). WOM has the ability to convert lower-order cognition and emotion into higher-order cognition and action when it's spread offline and then results in committed activities (Bristol, 1990). Since traditional WOM comes from a sender who is already known to the information receiver, the consumers have previously established that both the sender and the digital WOM can be trusted (Cheung & Thadani, 2012).

The rapid evolution of the Internet has dramatically changed the traditional word-of-mouth communication environment. A new type of communication called digital WOM has emerged and gained a lot of attention in recent years (Cheung & Lee, 2012). In the area of WOM marketing, digital WOM refers to any good or bad reviews made by potential, present, or former users about a product or brand, which are made accessible to a range of persons and organizations over the Internet (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Digital WOM communication was pushed to a variety of new virtual contexts, and WOM communication's impact on purchasing decisions was further extended. Customers are now capable to give and exchange information about products online using various tools like blogs, discussion forums, review websites, and online shopping sites (Cheung & Lee, 2012).

Digital WOM communications, unlike traditional WOM, have remarkable scalability and speed of spread. Digital WOM communications involve the simultaneous exchange of information in multiple directions using a synchronous format (Hung & Li, 2007). However, all communicators don't need to be present for the information to be exchanged simultaneously when it is in the form of digital WOM (Karakaya & Ganim Barnes, 2010). The online dialogue as well as the more solicited type of information differentiate digital WOM from traditional WOM (De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008). Furthermore, digital WOM appears

mostly between strangers and therefore is often anonymous (Lee & Youn, 2009). As a result, customers consider digital WOM to be more dependable, credible, and trustworthy than firm-initiated communications.

## 2.2 Review credibility and purchase intention

Digital review credibility is the perceived degree to which a digital review provides accurate and truthful information (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Review credibility can help people develop higher-order beliefs and cognitive processes. Through many exchanges, a single digital review can be disseminated and reach a large number of prospective consumers (Lau & Ng, 2001). Interpersonal communication can provide and access consumption-related information that can have an impact on individuals' decision-making (Brown et al., 2007). The receiver's perception of the message's credibility is an important early step in the message persuasion process (Wathen & Burkell, 2002). This impacts how much a person accepts and implements the provided information. Cheung and Thadani (2012) claimed that digital review credibility is positively associated with digital review adoption. Adoption of digital review is linked to purchase intention (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Intentions illustrate how much someone is willing to try or how much work they intend to put in to complete specific tasks (Sheeran, 2002). The intention to acquire a certain product is referred to as purchase intention (in the case of restaurants refers to the intention to visit). As a result, it represents the likelihood of a buyer purchasing the goods. If a reader believes the received review is credible, they will be more likely to adopt the digital reviews and use them to make purchasing decisions (Nabi & Hendriks, 2003).

## 2.3 Review features

### 2.3.1 Level of detail

Recent research suggests that customers evaluate not just the scores but also the textual component of reviews and that consumers' opinions of the credibility of information included in online consumer reviews are connected to the written section of reviews. According to Jiménez and Mendoza (2013), the level of detail in a review relates to the degree to which the reviewer in the review gives descriptions regarding the product being reviewed. According to prior research, reviews that provide precise details regarding the product or that relate the tale of the writer's experience with the product are more compelling than general reviews since the proposal becomes more instructive in the former case (Dholakia & Sternthal, 1977; Herr et al., 1991). Customers are more likely to place their faith in reviews that are comprehensive

since this demonstrates that the author is familiar with the service or product being reviewed (Bansal & Voyer, 2000; Sternthal et al., 1978). As a consequence of this, information that is particular about product qualities or that tells stories about how the product was used is more believable and compelling in online product reviews than general reviews that leave out details.

Based on the literature above, this research proposes H1 below:

*H1: High level of perceived review agreement leads to a high level of perceived review credibility.*

### 2.3.2 Reviewer agreement

Consumers base their decisions on the commonly held knowledge of the population as a whole because they believe it to be more reliable. Reviewer agreement refers to the degree to which several reviewers appear to concur with one another. According to recent research conducted in online settings, consumer purchase intentions are linked to reviewer agreement (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2013). The agreement increases the credibility of information, while disagreement decreases it (Gershoff et al., 2007). Benedicktus et al. (2010) find that customers are more likely to choose a product that has received positive feedback from the majority of their previous customers. According to Zhu and Zhang (2010), the fact that a large majority of reviews are positive has an impact on consumers' intentions to make a purchase since the information is regarded to be credible and trustworthy when there is perceived agreement among reviewers. Nonetheless, a number of studies have shown that the reviewer agreement has little influence on the perceived review credibility of a search product (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2013).

Based on the literature above, this research proposes H2 below:

*H2: High level of perceived detail in reviews leads to a high level of perceived review credibility.*

### 2.3.3 Review sidedness

The one-sidedness of the digital word-of-mouth communication evaluation relates to whether or not the message contains both positive and negative opinions (Luo et al., 2015). Either the good or negative features of a product or service are communicated in a communication that is only one-sided. A two-sided message, on the other hand, brings attention to aspects of the positive and the negative of the product or service (Cheung et al., 2009).

Two-sided messages are more credible to digital WOM users who use their cognitive abilities to evaluate online reviews than one-sided comments (Luo et al., 2014). Receiving information from both sides would improve the quality of the information and make it more comprehensive. For example, research has indicated that two-sided product recommendation is more convincing than one-sided product information recommendation (Pechmann, 1992). Two-sided information, according to the inoculation theory (Etgar & Goodwin, 1982) and the attribution theory (Crowley & Hoyer, 1994), lowers the information receiver's level of skepticism and, as a result, raises the level of the information's credibility (Belch, 1981). According to the findings of Kamins and Marks, greater information sidedness results in a decrease in the number of counterarguments and in the extent to which sources are derogated, which in turn boosts information credibility (Kamins & Marks, 1988). This effect is even more obvious in digital WOM communication because the reviews are shared by various reviewers who do not know each other.

#### 2.3.4 Product types

Studies have found that customers evaluate products differently based on the type of product. The search/experience paradigm has proven to be particularly useful for both explaining online shopping behavior (e.g., Jiang & Benbasat, 2007; Rosa & Malter, 2003) and for understanding how consumers evaluate online product reviews. Although several product classification paradigms could potentially be relevant in understanding review helpfulness, the search/experience paradigm has proven to be particularly useful (e.g., Moe & Trusov, 2011, Pan & Zhang, 2011, Willemsen et al., 2011).

The degree to which potential buyers are able to have hands-on experience with a product before making a purchase is what differentiates "search" products from "experience" products (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). In addition, Weathers et al. (2007) classified things according to whether or not it was essential to utilize one's senses to judge quality in addition to reading information on the product. Despite the fact that many items include a combination of search and experience characteristics, the classification of goods as either search or experience products continues to be useful and is widely accepted (Huang et al., 2009). Experience products, such as recreational services, are characterized by intangible features that cannot be known before purchase and for which performance assessments can be confirmed only by (sensory) experience or consumption. Search products, such as electronics, are items that can be accurately assessed prior to purchase since they are defined by tangible and practical features for which valid information can be gained before product usage (Willemsen et al.,

2011). On the other hand, experience goods, such as recreational services, are products that can be accurately evaluated after purchase (Willemsen et al., 2011).

Studies found that the level of detail in a review has a positive effect on perceived review credibility. However, this effect is more obvious on search products than on experience products (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2013). The level of reviewer agreement also has been proved to have a positive effect on perceived review credibility, and this effect is more obvious on experience products than search products (Jiménez & Mendoza, 2013).

## 2.4 Personality traits

### 2.4.1 Big five personality

People's interactions, behaviors, and feelings are all heavily influenced by personality, which is also tied to people's preferences and what they are passionate about (Youyou, Kosinski & Stillwell, 2015).

Depending on their personalities, individuals have varied methods of analyzing digital WOM. Previous study has revealed personality differences in persuasive effectiveness. Digital WOM is more compelling for persons with a high level of engagement and poor tolerance for ambiguity (Wang, & Wang, 2010). According to the congruence hypothesis, aligning communications to the personalities of receivers is supposed to stimulate self-referential processing and enhance the persuasive power of messages. According to research on consumer behavior, a person's personality can predict their product selection and brand preference (Malhotra, 1988). Since the advent of the Internet, personality characteristics have been studied as predictors of online behavior (Caliskan, 2019).

Personality is the consistent action of an individual that shows throughout time with more or less steady internal elements and in similar surroundings (Child, 1968). McCrae and Costa (1989) described personality as a person's behaviors in diverse settings and interaction processes, influenced by their emotions, motives, and experiences, and exhibiting continuity.

Several personality frameworks are utilized in psychology to explain individual variations. The Big Five model of Costa and McCrae (1990) is widely applied in the trait theory of personality-related research. This model helps differentiate and measures an individual's level of extraversion, which is the extent to which individuals are outgoing and socially active and seek communication with others; agreeableness, which is the extent to which people are collaborative and compassionate toward others (Winter et al., 2021). Conscientiousness, which is characterized by self-discipline, high efficiency, and a desire for scheduled rather than unexpected events; neuroticism, which is the degree to which

individuals are prone to face negative and uncomfortable emotions; and openness to experience, which (Winter et al., 2021). Many marketers and academics find the Big 5 model and its elements valuable for the same reason psychologists do: it may assist in integrating data on a number of attributes researched in isolation and is a good heuristic for assessing the emotional experience of customers (Orth et al., 2010). In this study, the dimensions of the Big Five personality characteristics are deemed possibly useful for understanding the inclination to engage in relationship marketing.

#### 2.4.2 Personality characteristics

This research limits the investigation to the two traits of agreeableness and conscientiousness. Comparing the big five personality traits and the factors, agreeableness and conscientiousness are more relevant with factors reviewer agreement and level of detail. Therefore, these two characteristics and two factors may be correlated, respectively. The following paragraphs review the literature about agreeableness and conscientiousness and present hypotheses regarding the effects between agreeableness and level of reviewer agreement and conscientiousness and level of detail on perceived review credibility.

Agreeableness and level of reviewer agreement:

Agreeableness relates to an individual's behavior in social interactions (Mondak, 2010). Individuals who are agreeable are more likely to prioritize interpersonal interactions (Caliskan, 2019). Individuals who score high scores on this personality attribute are kind, empathetic, cooperative, helpful, and sympathetic. In contrast, those that score poorly on this characteristic are nasty, arrogant, insistent, and argumentative (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The association between agreeableness and trusting easily and assuming the best of people (McCrae & Costa, 2003).

Additionally, agreeableness plays a vital part in the emotional regulation of an individual. Individuals who are agreeable tend to acquire attitudes consistent with their personality, i.e., more favorable reactions (Moskowitz & Coté, 1995). In contrast, antagonistic individuals exert less effort to regulate negative effects and hence receive fewer pleasant consequences (Diener & Seligman, 2002; Haas et al., 2007). In the context of resolving mixed emotions, this would mean that pleasant individual prefer to accentuate the good feelings, while antagonistic persons lean more towards the negative.

Personality traits may moderate the relationship between digital WOM and impulse purchasing because agreeableness personals are frequently exposed to the internet and social media because they are outgoing, talkative, open-minded, and appreciative, and are therefore

positively associated with impulse purchasing (Husnain et al., 2016). Therefore, a high agreeableness score will intensify the association between digital WOM and impulsive purchasing. Moreover, if an individual has a low agreeableness score, the association between digital WOM and impulse buying is weakened.

Due to agreeable individuals' positive receptivity, they are satisfied with their information-seeking patterns, which also encourages them to adopt and use the information for decision-making. Agreeable people have receptive and agreeable qualities and are less self-centered; such people are highly enthusiastic about information search (Al-Samarraie et al., 2017; Heinström, 2005). The high degree of reviewer agreement may be more convincing to agreeable persons, who tend to agree with and adopt the perspective of others.

Based on the literature above, this research proposes H3 below:

*H3: Agreeable individuals perceive higher review credibility than non-agreeable individuals when the level of reviewer agreement is high.*

Conscientiousness and level of detail:

A conscientious individual is seen as responsible, organized, trustworthy, self-disciplined, scheduled, cautious, and goal-oriented (Caliskan, 2019). High scorers on this dimension are much more focused on the achievement of job tasks (Barrick & Mount, 2001), are more likely to engage well with others (Ekinici & Dawes, 2009), and desire to build serious relationships (Turkyilmaz et al., 2015). Moreover, conscientiousness refers to the practice of making plans in preparation and pondering before action (McCrae & Costa, 2003) and displays a desire to become more knowledgeable (Mondak, 2010). The need for further knowledge is connected to the amount of specificity in evaluations. Individuals with a higher level of conscientiousness may pay greater attention to the review's specifics in order to assess its reliability.

This dimension is characterized by a strong drive to speak the truth and share authentic experiences with others. When a person has a high conscientiousness score, they are often detail-oriented and organized. According to Silvera, Lavack, and Kropp, those with significant impulsive buying inclinations are less conscientious. Low self-esteem, despair, and anxiety tend to behave as compulsive purchasers, but conscientiousness is adversely associated with it. Conscientious individuals are highly motivated to speak the truth and share true experiences. Therefore, a high neuroticism and conscientiousness score will diminish the link between digital WOM and impulsive purchasing.

Both digital WOM and impulsive purchasing are adversely connected with conscientiousness. Individuals with a high level of conscientiousness are often cautious, with

a strong will and precise goals (Brown et al., 2002). Individuals with a high level of conscientiousness are often organized and attentive to details. This suggests that individuals with a high level of conscientiousness are skeptical of network messaging and will thus not make hasty purchases (Husnain et al., 2016).

A structured, self-disciplined, cautious, and goal-oriented individual is considered conscientious (Caliskan, 2019). Conscientious people could be very conservative in adopting information from social networks. People with this personality may be more cautious in receiving information and more hesitant in making decisions based on information on social networks (Tapanainen et al., 2021). Detailed reviews should be able to reduce the pressure on this kind of people to decide whether the information is useful or not, resulting in a higher level of perceived review credibility.

Based on the literature above, this research proposes H4 below:

*H4: Conscientious individuals perceive higher review credibility than unconscientious individuals when the level of detail is high.*

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Choice of research method**

In order to answer the research question and test the hypotheses, a two-by-two experiment was chosen to study the relationship between variables. Quantitative research methods usually use a deductive approach, in which the researcher goes from a theoretical foundation that implies an expected pattern to evaluating whether or not that pattern actually exists (Babbie, 2007). The experiment method was chosen because it allows the researcher to stimulate participants and observe the reaction in order to investigate the relationship between variables while keeping the other variables constant. An online survey was used to conduct the experiment in this research because it is a time and cost-effective approach.

Questionnaires are widely used in the field of social research for understanding various social issues and phenomena (Bulmer, 2004). It allows the researcher to reach a wide range of individuals that satisfy the research's sample criteria. Each participant was exposed to different conditions with reviews with high/low level of detail and high/low level of reviewer agreement to investigate the relationship between two independent variables, personality traits, reviews features, and the dependent variable, perceived review credibility. This research used a 2 (high level of reviewer agreement and low level of reviewer agreement) by 2 (high level of detailed and low level of detailed) between-subject online experiment to examine if review features have an impact on customers' perceived review credibility. Phone (search product) and restaurant (experience product) were both used in this study to reduce the possible impact of product type, and each respondent evaluate two reviews, a review of phone and a review of restaurant.

#### **3.2 Stimulus material**

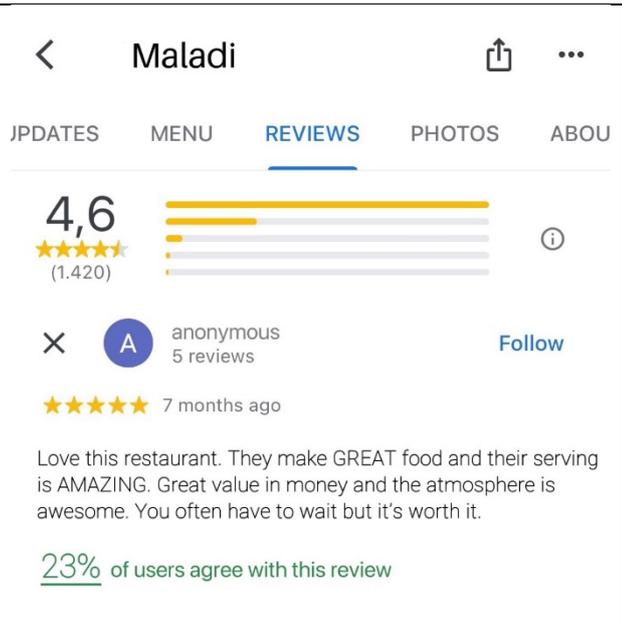
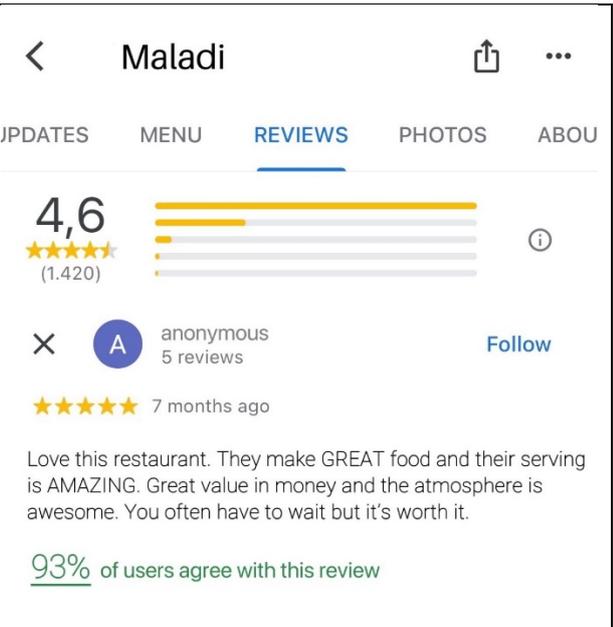
Reviews are based on the literature and also from real reviews on the independent online review website (google map, [www.iens.nl](http://www.iens.nl)). The stimulus materials were retouched on the basis of reviews from Amazon and Google Map. Amazon was chosen as the e-commerce marketplace's representative platform as it is the world's largest online marketplace (Statista, 2016). Google Map has services in more than 250 countries and territories and has 154.4 million monthly users. The restaurant stimulation material used the Google Map review layout to help participants to be in the situation, and the phone stimulation material used the Amazon product review layout to help participants feel familiar with the online e-commerce marketplace. To reduce the impact of previously developed sentiments regarding the products, a fictional phone and restaurant were constructed for this study. All reviews left out

the price of the product and product image and included a section of the review agreement to meet the experiment's needs. Brand information was also excluded from the review to prevent possible influence. To reduce any confound, the duration of the reviews was maintained consistently, and all of the evaluations were positive but double-sided. Double-sided positive reviews were chosen due to their positive influence on credibility (Schlosser, 2011). The stimulus materials are shown below in table 1 and 2.

**Table 1**

*Stimulus materials for restaurant*

|                 |      | Level of reviewer agreement |            |
|-----------------|------|-----------------------------|------------|
|                 |      | Low level                   | High level |
| Level of detail | High |                             |            |

|     |   |  |
|-----|---|--|
| Low |  |  |
|-----|---|--|

**Table 2**

*Stimulus materials for phone*

|                 |      | Level of reviewer agreement  |  |
|-----------------|------|--|--|
|                 |      | Low level  | High level   |
| Level of detail | High | <p><b>Customer reviews</b></p> <p>★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5 <a href="#">Write a review</a></p> <p>3,203 global ratings</p> <p> anonymous</p> <p>★★★★★ <b>Verified Purchase</b></p> <p>Size Name: 128 GB   Colour Name: Black</p> <p>It's wonderful for snapping shots at night with the phone. I don't even notice it in my pocket because of its size. It's convenient for messaging friends and checking the web, just hope there are more colors available, now they only have black and white phones.</p> <p><u>23%</u> of users agree with this review</p> | <p><b>Customer reviews</b></p> <p>★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5 <a href="#">Write a review</a></p> <p>3,203 global ratings</p> <p> anonymous</p> <p>★★★★★ <b>Verified Purchase</b></p> <p>Size Name: 128 GB   Colour Name: Black</p> <p>It's wonderful for snapping shots at night with the phone. I don't even notice it in my pocket because of its size. It's convenient for messaging friends and checking the web, just hope there are more colors available, now they only have black and white phones.</p> <p><u>93%</u> of users agree with this review</p> |

|     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| Low | <p><b>Customer reviews</b></p> <p>★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5 <a href="#">Write a review</a></p> <p>3,203 global ratings</p> <p> <b>anonymous</b></p> <p>★★★★☆ <b>Verified Purchase</b></p> <p>Size Name: 128 GB   Colour Name: Black</p> <p>This phone always capture the BEST photos. The size is AMAZING. It's quite convenient for messaging and browsing the internet, just hope there are more colors available, now they only have black and white phone.</p> <p><u>23%</u> of users agree with this review</p> | <p><b>Customer reviews</b></p> <p>★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5 <a href="#">Write a review</a></p> <p>3,203 global ratings</p> <p> <b>anonymous</b></p> <p>★★★★☆ <b>Verified Purchase</b></p> <p>Size Name: 128 GB   Colour Name: Black</p> <p>This phone always capture the BEST photos. The size is AMAZING. It's quite convenient for messaging and browsing the internet, just hope there are more colors available, now they only have black and white phone.</p> <p><u>93%</u> of users agree with this review</p> |
|-----|--|---|

### 3.3 Procedure

This paragraph will discuss the procedure of the experiment in order to make sure other studies can replicate this study. The study's intent was to acquire an international sample. Hence the survey experiment was conducted in English. The experiment was designed and conducted online so participants could participate on their phones or computer. The survey was also integrated into Qualtrics survey software and distributed anonymously through a survey link and QR code. Participants were told that the purpose of this study was to investigate how they make purchase decisions online. The final data was collected over a period of 17 days, from April 28th to May 14th.

The survey consisted of four parts. First, participants were asked to sign the consent form.

Then, participants were shown a short cover story to help them imagine they were shopping online to buy a new phone or try a new restaurant. Participants were then shown reviews about a fictional phone or restaurant, and product descriptions were identical except for the content of the review. Each participant was assigned to two of eight conditions at random. They were first randomly assigned to one of two products, the phone or the restaurant, and were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions, after which participants were assigned to the other product and were again randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. The conditions were randomly assigned using Qualtrics software.

In the next part, participants were asked to evaluate the reviews on a five-point scale based on their purchase intention, perceived review credibility, how detailed they felt the reviews were, and to verify the perceived level of reviewer agreement with the review. At the end of this part, participants' recent experiences in online shopping were recorded.

In the last section, participants' personality was measured, and their purchase habit and personal information like age, gender, education level, and nationality were collected. Lastly, the researcher thanked the participants for their participation, and the code for [surveyswap.io](https://www.surveymonkey.com) and [surveycircle.com](https://www.surveycircle.com) was presented.

The survey can be found in Appendix A.

### 3.4 Sample

#### 3.4.1 Sample methods

The sampling method for this research is non-probability sampling. For web-based surveys, non-probability sampling is generally a good option. The researcher can reach every suitable respondent who presents online shopping using an online survey. Convenience sampling and snowball sampling were adopted in this study. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling that selects participants who are easily available and meet certain criteria (Taherdoost, 2016). It is the least expensive, least time-consuming, and most convenient sampling method (Taherdoost, 2016). There are no strict conditionalities for the population studied in this paper, as the topic of this study is applicable to almost all populations, regardless of age, gender, nationality, or educational background. Convenient samples may appear to be correct in terms of demographic information, but they may be heavily biased (Cooke, 2017). Snowball sampling was also conducted in which the researcher asked participants to share the survey to ask for more participants in the study. Participants will be recruited through social media platforms with the help of groups. More specifically, the researcher distributed the survey link via Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, and personal network. Participants were asked to fill in the survey and share it with their friends if possible. In addition, the survey was also distributed on survey exchange websites [surveyswap.io](https://www.surveymonkey.com) and [survey circle.com](https://www.surveycircle.com). The reason for using the SurveySwap.io platform is that respondents fill out the surveys voluntarily, and they are not paid in any way for doing so. Respondents volunteered to answer the questionnaire, and they were not compensated monetarily for completing the survey, making their responses more reliable. About 70 participants were recruited on these websites.

#### 3.4.2 Sample size

The total amount of people who participated in the survey was 277, and about 76% of them completed the survey, which means 211 people completed the survey online. During the data cleaning process, respondents were excluded from further analysis because they didn't

answer the text question about their nationality correctly, as they entered some garbled in the text box or because they claimed to be under 18 years old. Other respondents were excluded because they chose the same answer for all the questions. After data cleaning, 133 respondents' data were recorded for further analysis.

### 3.4.3 Demographics

Participants were asked about their demographics, including age, gender, educational level, and nationality. These questions were designed to appear at the end of the survey as it could motivate participants to finish the last part of the questionnaire (Babbie, 2007). First, participants were asked to choose the age range they belong to: under 18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55, and above. Participants under 18 were then excluded from the experiment. Then, participants were asked to fill out their gender by choosing from male, female, non-binary/third gender, and prefer not to say. As this study doesn't have strict conditions for populations, all of the participants who answered the question were included in the experiment. Thirdly, participants were asked to choose their educational level from less than high school, high school, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and doctorate. Finally, an open question about nationality was asked, and participants had to fill in their nationality.

In the final sample, 52 respondents were male (39.1%), 74 were female (55.6%), 5 were non-binary/third gender (3.8%) and 2 preferred not to say (1.5%). 87 respondents are aged between 18-24 (65.4%), and 38 respondents are aged between 25 and 34 (28.6%), 5 are aged between 35 and 44 (3.8%) and 3 are aged between 45 and 54 (2.3%). No respondents are aged older than 54. Furthermore, 70 respondents have a bachelor degree (52.6%), 42 respondents have a master degree (31.6%), 17 of 133 respondents have high school degree (12.8%) and 3 respondents are doctors (2.3%), only 1 respondent did not complete high school education. The study intended to approach to an international group of respondents. Respondents in this study come from 30 countries. 48 respondents were born in China (36.3%), 20 respondents were born in Malaysia (15.0%), 12 respondents are Dutch (9.0%) and 7 are British (5.3%).

### 3.4.4 Distribution of respondents in experimental conditions

Below in table 3 is the overview of the distribution of participants across the experimental conditions. Although the conditions were equally distributed, the distribution of the conditions used for final data analysis was unequal.

**Table 3***Distribution of conditions*

| Product type         | High level of reviewer agreement |            | Low level of reviewer agreement |            | Total |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------|------------|-------|
|                      | Phone                            | Restaurant | Phone                           | Restaurant |       |
| High level of detail | 31                               | 39         | 32                              | 36         | 138   |
| Low level of detail  | 36                               | 30         | 30                              | 32         | 128   |
| (Total)              | 57                               | 69         | 62                              | 68         |       |
| Total                | 126                              |            | 130                             |            | 266   |

### 3.5 Operationalization and measurements

This section will discuss the operationalization and measurements of the variables used in order to study the effect of agreeableness and conscientiousness personality traits and the level of detail and agreement in reviews on customers' perceived review credibility. Additionally, manipulation check and demographics will be discussed. The results are shown in Table 3.

#### 3.5.1 Agreeableness and conscientiousness

The independent variable in this study is the agreeableness and conscientiousness personality in the Big 5 Personality. A Mini-IPIP presented by Donnellan et al., (2006) was used to measure participants' personality traits. The mini-IPIP is a short form of broad personality traits and is more suitable for this research because of the limited patience or attention span of research participants. It is a useful tool for researchers who need a very short assessment of the Big Five. The 20-item Mini-IPIP is nearly as good as the longer 50-item IPIP-FFM parent instrument in terms of both reliability and validity (Donnellan, Oswald, Baird & Lucas, 2006). This study adopted the items that measure agreeableness and conscientiousness personality traits. Participants were asked to identify how accurate the statements described them on a 5-point Likert scale that contains "very inaccurate", "somewhat inaccurate", "neither inaccurate nor accurate", "somewhat accurate", and "very accurate". For + keyed items, the response "Very Inaccurate" is assigned a value of 1, "Moderately Inaccurate" a value of 2, "Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate" a 3, "Moderately

Accurate" a 4, and "Very Accurate" a value of 5. For - keyed items, the response "Very Inaccurate" is assigned a value of 5, "Moderately Inaccurate" a value of 4, "Neither Inaccurate nor Accurate" a 3, "Moderately Accurate" a 2, and "Very Accurate" a value of 1. Average scores were calculated, and participants were labeled as agreeable individuals (3.5-5.0) or non-agreeable individuals (0.0-1.5), conscientious individuals (3.5-5.0), or unconscientious individuals (0.0-1.5).

Some items of the scale were adjusted from the original scale in order to fit the purpose of this study. Therefore, factor analysis and reliability tests were conducted to investigate if the adapted scales were reliable and suitable for this research. The agreeableness scale of perceived value was reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.65$ ) and could not be improved by removing items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) value of the agreeableness scale was 0.58, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The four items formed a two-dimensional scale as two components were found with an Eigenvalue above 1. The two factors found were named sympathetic and friendly. Overall, the mean of the perceived value was 3.57, and the SD was 0.73. The results are shown in Table 3.

The conscientious scale of perceived value was not reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.50$ ), and the items were entered into exploratory factor analysis using Principal Components extraction with Direct Oblimin. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) value of the conscientious scale was 0.56, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The four items formed a two-dimensional scale as two components were found with an Eigenvalue above 1. The two factors found were named organized and careful. The results are shown in Table 3.

### 3.5.2 Perceived review credibility

The dependent variable, perceived review credibility, was measured in a three-item 5-point scale based on Cheung et al. (2009). Participants were asked to identify to what extent they agree with the following statement from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree: "I think this review is factual", "I think this review is accurate", "I think this review is credible". Some items of the scale were adjusted from the original scale in order to fit the purpose of this study. Therefore, factor analysis and reliability tests were conducted to investigate if the adapted scales were reliable and suitable for this research. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) value was 0.69, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.001$ ). The four items formed a one-dimensional scale as one component was found with an Eigenvalue above 1 (Eigenvalue of 2.25). Moreover, in the Scree plot, a clear bend was noticed right after the component. All three items had a positive correlation with the component and had a factor loading of at least 0.82. The scale of perceived value was reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .83$ )

and could not be improved by removing items. Overall, the mean of the perceived value was 3.37, and the SD was 0.84. The results are shown in Table 3.

### 3.5.3 Purchase intention

Another scale was used in this study to measure purchase intention. A four-item scale developed by Coyle and Thorson (2001) was used to measure the purchase intention of participants after reading the reviews. Participants were asked to interpret to what extent they agree with the following statements on a five-point Likert scale from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. Some items of the scale were adjusted from the original scale in order to fit the purpose of this study. Therefore, factor analysis and reliability tests were conducted to investigate if the adapted scales were reliable and suitable for this research. The KMO was 0.74, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < .001$ ). The four items formed a one-dimensional scale as one component was found with an Eigenvalue above 1 (Eigenvalue of 2.64). Moreover, in the Scree plot, a clear bend could be noticed right after the component. All three items had a positive correlation with the 36 components and had a factor loading of at least 0.684. The scale of purchase intention is reliable (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .82$ ) and could not be improved by removing items. Overall, the mean purchase intention was 3.41, and the SD was 0.86. The results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Description of factors*

| Factor                       | Cronbach | Factor analysis | Mean | Standard Deviation |
|------------------------------|----------|-----------------|------|--------------------|
| Agreeableness                | .72      | Friendly        | 3.26 | 1.01               |
|                              | .66      | Sympathetic     | 3.89 | 0.81               |
| Conscientiousness            | .64      | Careful         | 3.19 | 1.07               |
|                              | .62      | Organized       | 3.51 | 0.79               |
| Perceived review credibility | .83      | One factor      | 3.37 | 0.84               |
| Purchase intention           | .82      | One factor      | 3.41 | 0.86               |

### 3.5.4 Manipulation check

Manipulate check was included to test if the participants identified the level of detail and level of reviewer agreement in the materials. This is important because the perceived level of detail and level of reviewer agreement could affect the perceived review credibility.

Participants were all asked to identify the level of detail of the review they just read from 1- not detailed at all to 5 very detailed, and then the level of reviewer agreement from 1- very low to 5-very high. The result of the manipulation check will be discussed in the next section.

Participants' familiarity with online phone shopping and restaurant evaluation were also recorded. This is significant because individuals who purchased a phone or tried a restaurant after reading online reviews may have a better grasp of the assessment of review. Therefore, all participants were asked to answer if they had bought a phone/ try a restaurant online recently with yes or no.

### 3.6 Data analysis

The data was exported from Qualtrics after the deadline of the experiment. The text data and the numerical data were both also exported to csv. file for further analysis. After comparing the text data and numerical data exported directly from Qualtrics, the researcher found the answers of purchase intention were counted as 14 to 18 instead of 1-5, and the answers of gender were counted as 5 to 8 instead of 1-4. Therefore, the numerical data results of purchase intention and gender were corrected to 1-5 by subtracting 13 and subtracting 4, respectively. The recent online purchase experience was counted as 21 (no) and 22 (yes) and was corrected to 1 and 2 by subtracting 20.

Then, the data were prepared for analysis. The researcher removed variables like duration, date, language, etc. A new variable was created to identify the groups of the experiment, '1', phone review with the high level of detail and high level of agreement, '2', phone review with the high level of detail and low level of agreement, '3', phone review with the low level of detail and high level of agreement, '4', phone review with the low level of detail and low level of agreement, '5', restaurant with the high level of detail and high level of agreement, '6', restaurant review with the high level of detail and low level of agreement, '7', restaurant review with the low level of detail and high level of agreement, '8', restaurant review with the low level of detail and low level of agreement.

Two-way ANOVA was used to analyze the data and test the hypothesis because it suits the need of this study. Two-way ANOVA can study the main effects between perceived level of detail and level of reviewer agreement, and perceived review credibility. At the same time, test the interaction effect of two independent variables at the same time.



## 4. Results

### 4.1 Manipulate check

Perceived level of detail and level of reviewer agreement were measured to see if participants were able to recognize the different level of detail and review agreement in the reviews they saw. The manipulate check showed that participants responded significantly differently to the manipulate check. The significance between the detailed review group (M=3.77, SD=0.80) and not detailed review group (M=2.49, SD=0.85) was significant. A chi-square test confirmed that the manipulation of perceived level of detailed was successful,  $\chi^2(4, N=266) = 24.40, p < .001$ . The significance between the highly agreed review group (M=3.82, SD=0.93) and low level of agreement review group (M=2.61, SD=0.84) was significant. The result of manipulate check of perceived level of reviewer agreement is  $\chi^2(4, N=266) = 86.97, p < .001$ . Results are shown in table 5.

**Table 5**

*Review features description*

| Review features                        | Mean | Standard deviation | N   |
|--|------|--------------------|-----|
| Perceived level of detail:             | 3.14 | 1.042              | 266 |
| High level of detail                   | 3.77 | 0.80               | 138 |
| Low level of detail                    | 2.49 | 0.85               | 128 |
| Perceived level of reviewer agreement: | 3.22 | 1.074              | 266 |
| High level of reviewer agreement       | 3.82 | 0.93               | 126 |
| Low level of reviewer agreement        | 2.61 | 0.84               | 130 |

### 4.2 Review features and perceived review credibility

An ANOVA was conducted with review features (level of reviewer agreement and level of detail) and personality characteristics (friendly, sympathetic; careful, organized) as dependent variables and perceived review credibility as independent variable. In this section, the H1 and H2 will be tested.

The result of the two-way ANOVA shows that there's a significant main effect for perceived level of reviewer agreement on perceived review credibility,  $F(4,133) = 4.74, p = 0.001$ . Participants that read review with high reviewer agreement significantly perceived higher review credibility ( $M = 3.57, SD = 0.85$ ) than participants who read low agreement review ( $M = 3.18, SD = 0.80$ ). Therefore, H1 was accepted, meaning that high level of perceived reviewer agreement leads to high level of review credibility.

The result of the two-way ANOVA shows that there's a significant main effect for perceived level of detail on perceived review credibility,  $F(4,133) = 5.57, p = 0.000$ . Participants that read detailed review significantly perceived higher review credibility ( $M = 3.60, SD = 0.81$ ) than participants who read general review ( $M = 3.13, SD = 0.81$ ). Therefore, H2 was accepted, meaning that high level of perceived detail leads to high level of review credibility. Results are shown in table 6.

**Table 6**

*Compare mean and standard deviation of review features*

|                                    | level of detailed |                       |                  |                       | level of agreement |                       |                  |                       |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
|                                    | high              |                       | low              |                       | high               |                       | low              |                       |
|                                    | Standard<br>Mean  | Standard<br>Deviation | Standard<br>Mean | Standard<br>Deviation | Standard<br>Mean   | Standard<br>Deviation | Standard<br>Mean | Standard<br>Deviation |
| perceived<br>review<br>credibility | 3.60              | 0.81                  | 3.13             | 0.81                  | 3.57               | 0.85                  | 3.18             | 0.80                  |

#### 4.3 Personality characteristics and perceived review credibility

In addition to the hypotheses, the results also found that the careful personality also have significant main effect on perceived review credibility,  $F(8,133) = 2.15, p = 0.036$ . Careless participants significantly perceived higher review credibility ( $M = 3.43, SD = 0.82$ ) than careful participants ( $M = 3.35, SD = 0.85$ ). Therefore, the careless personality has positive effect on the level of perceived review credibility. Results are shown in table 7.

**Table 7**

*Compare mean and standard deviation of careful*

|                                 | careful  |           |          |           |
|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|                                 | low      |           | high     |           |
|                                 | Standard |           | Standard |           |
|                                 | Mean     | Deviation | Mean     | Deviation |
| perceived review<br>credibility | 3.43     | 0.82      | 3.35     | 0.85      |

#### 4.4 Interaction effects

This study hypothesized agreeable individuals perceive higher review credibility than non-agreeable individuals when the level of reviewer agreement is high (H3), and conscientious individuals perceive higher review credibility than unconscientious individuals when the level of detail is high (H4). Factors of agreeableness and conscientiousness found in previous analysis (friendly, sympathetic, careful and organized) were used in ANOVA analysis.

##### 4.4.1 Agreeableness: friendly and sympathetic

The result of the two-way ANOVA (table 10) shows that there's not a significant interaction effect for perceived level of reviewer agreement and sympathetic personality on perceived review credibility. However, the result shows that there's a significant interaction effect for perceived level of reviewer agreement and friendly personality on perceived review credibility,  $F(26,133) = 1.70, p = 0.028$ . Participants who is not friendly perceived higher review credibility ( $M = 3.72$ ) than friendly participants ( $M = 3.53$ ) when read reviews with high reviewer agreement. Therefore, H3 was rejected. However, the study found that friendly individuals perceive lower review credibility than unfriendly individuals when the level of reviewer agreement is high. Results are shown in table 8.

**Table 8**

*Compare means of friendly*

|                                    |                       |      | friendly |      |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------|----------|------|
|                                    |                       |      | low      | high |
|                                    |                       |      | Mean     | Mean |
| perceived<br>review<br>credibility | level of<br>agreement | high | 3.72     | 3.53 |
|                                    |                       | low  | 3.49     | 3.09 |

#### 4.4.2 Conscientiousness: careful and organized

The result of the two-way ANOVA (table 10) shows that there's a significant interaction effect for perceived level of detail and careful personality on perceived review credibility,  $F(23,133) = 2.04, p = 0.007$ . Participants who is careless perceived higher review credibility ( $M = 3.66$ ) than careful participants ( $M = 3.59$ ) when they read detailed review.

The result also shows that there's a significant interaction effect for perceived level of detail and organized personality on perceived review credibility,  $F(19,133) = 1.78, p = 0.032$ . Participants who is organized perceived higher review credibility ( $M = 3.61$ ) than unorganized participants ( $M = 3.58$ ) when they read detailed review. Therefore, H4 was rejected. However, the study found that careful individuals perceive lower review credibility when the level of detail is high, and organized individuals perceive higher review credibility when the level of detail is high. Results are shown in table 9.

**Table 9**

*Compare means of careful and organized*

|                                    |                         |      | careful |      | organized |      |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|------|---------|------|-----------|------|
|                                    |                         |      | low     | high | low       | high |
|                                    |                         |      | Mean    | Mean | Mean      | Mean |
| perceived<br>review<br>credibility | level<br>of<br>detailed | high | 3.66    | 3.59 | 3.58      | 3.61 |
|                                    |                         | low  | 3.24    | 3.09 | 3.17      | 3.13 |

**Table 10**

*Results of the two-way analysis of variance (N = 266)*

Dependent Variable: Perceived review credibility

| Source             | Type III Sum<br>of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig. |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
| Corrected<br>Model | 137.799 <sup>a</sup>       | 132 | 1.044       | 2.729   | .000 |
| Intercept          | 185.915                    | 1   | 185.915     | 485.936 | .000 |

|  |          |     |       |       |      |
|--|----------|-----|-------|-------|------|
| perceived level<br>of detail                               | 8.521    | 4   | 2.130 | 5.568 | .000 |
| perceived level<br>of review<br>agreement                  | 7.246    | 4   | 1.812 | 4.735 | .001 |
| sympathetic *<br>perceived level<br>of review<br>agreement | 10.789   | 21  | .514  | 1.343 | .160 |
| friendly *<br>perceived level<br>of review<br>agreement    | 16.898   | 26  | .650  | 1.699 | .028 |
| organized *<br>perceived level<br>of detail                | 12.924   | 19  | .680  | 1.778 | .032 |
| careful *<br>perceived level<br>of detail                  | 17.910   | 23  | .779  | 2.035 | .007 |
| careful  | 6.573    | 8   | .822  | 2.148 | .036 |
| organized  | 2.498    | 7   | .357  | .933  | .483 |
| sympathetic  | 4.481    | 7   | .640  | 1.673 | .121 |
| friendly   | 5.946    | 8   | .743  | 1.943 | .059 |
| Error  | 50.885   | 133 | .383  |       |      |
| Total  | 3215.778 | 266 |       |       |      |
| Corrected Total  | 188.683  | 265 |       |       |      |

a. R Squared = .730 (Adjusted R Squared = .463)

#### 4.5 Purchase intention

Due to the significant result of the interaction effect, follow-up tests were performed to further explore this relationship with purchase intention. That is, if agreeable individuals have higher purchase intention than non-agreeable individuals when the level of reviewer

agreement is high, and if conscientious individuals have higher purchase intention than unconscientious individuals when the perceived level of detail is high.

An ANOVA was conducted with review features (level of reviewer agreement and level of detail) and personality characteristics (friendly, sympathetic; careful, organized) as dependent variables and purchase intention as independent variable.

The result of the two-way ANOVA (table 12) only shows that there's a significant main effect for perceived level of detail on purchase intention,  $F(4,133) = 3.09, p = 0.018$ . Participants that read detailed review have higher purchase intention ( $M = 3.57, SD = 0.83$ ) than participants who read general review ( $M = 3.24, SD = 0.87$ ). The results are showed in table 11.

**Table 11**

*Compare mean and standard deviation of careful*

|    | level of detail |           |          |           |
|----|-----------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|    | high            |           | low      |           |
|    | Standard        |           | Standard |           |
|    | Mean            | Deviation | Mean     | Deviation |
| PI | 3.57            | 0.83      | 3.24     | 0.87      |

**Table 12**

*Results of the two-way analysis of variance (N = 266)*

Dependent Variable: Purchase intention

| Source                    | Type III Sum         |     |             |         |      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|-----|-------------|---------|------|
|                           | of Squares           | df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig. |
| Corrected Model           | 133.333 <sup>a</sup> | 132 | 1.010       | 2.113   | .000 |
| Intercept                 | 153.249              | 1   | 153.249     | 320.640 | .000 |
| perceived level of detail | 3.718                | 4   | .929        | 1.945   | .107 |

|                 |          |     |       |       |      |
|-----------------|----------|-----|-------|-------|------|
| perceived level |          |     |       |       |      |
| of review       | 5.909    | 4   | 1.477 | 3.091 | .018 |
| agreement       |          |     |       |       |      |
| perceived level |          |     |       |       |      |
| of detail *     | 14.739   | 19  | .776  | 1.623 | .059 |
| organized       |          |     |       |       |      |
| perceived level |          |     |       |       |      |
| of detail *     | 15.118   | 23  | .657  | 1.375 | .134 |
| careful         |          |     |       |       |      |
| perceived level |          |     |       |       |      |
| of review       |          |     |       |       |      |
| agreement *     | 12.522   | 21  | .596  | 1.248 | .223 |
| sympathetic     |          |     |       |       |      |
| perceived level |          |     |       |       |      |
| of review       |          |     |       |       |      |
| agreement *     | 16.883   | 26  | .649  | 1.359 | .134 |
| friendly        |          |     |       |       |      |
| careful         | 4.047    | 8   | .506  | 1.058 | .396 |
| organized       | 3.441    | 7   | .492  | 1.029 | .414 |
| sympathetic     | 6.803    | 7   | .972  | 2.033 | .055 |
| friendly        | 5.452    | 8   | .682  | 1.426 | .191 |
| Error           | 63.567   | 133 | .478  |       |      |
| Total           | 3282.750 | 266 |       |       |      |
| Corrected Total | 196.900  | 265 |       |       |      |

a. R Squared = .677 (Adjusted R Squared = .357)

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

This research has empirically examined the interaction effect of personality characteristics (agreeableness and conscientiousness) and review features (level of reviewer agreement and level of detail) on perceived review credibility. The study also investigated the possible impact of review agreement and level of detail on perceived review credibility. The research not only contributed to the research community but also provided recommendations for retailer marketing strategies.

To answer the question of this study "*How personality factors and review features affect persuasion effectiveness?*", researcher created a two-by-two (level of reviewer agreement and degree of detail) online experiment utilizing a questionnaire to measure consumers' perceived review credibility. Manipulation was successful because participants responded differently to reviews of variable levels of detail and agreement. The findings suggest that the level of detail and level of agreement among reviewers have a significant positive effect on consumers' perceived review credibility. Comparing customers with different personality characteristics, unfriendly customers are more impacted by highly agreed reviews than non-agreeable customers, and organized customers and careless customers are more impacted when the review gives a lot of detailed information.

### 5.1 Discussion of main findings

#### 5.1.1 Review features on perceived review credibility

The first key finding in this research is the positive effect of the level of detail on perceived review credibility. The research proved that the perceived level of detail is positively related to perceived review credibility. This result is consistent with the results from previous research. The explanation of why a detailed review has a better persuasion effect is that customers need detailed review to reduce the uncertainty and ambiguity when making purchase decisions. Therefore, they tend to look for and believe reviews with a detailed personal story or product information, as these reviews usually come from an experienced and trustworthy previous buyer. Tolerating uncomfortable sensations of ambiguity and uncertainty is referred to as tolerance for ambiguity (Wang & Wang, 2012). Previous studies linked ambiguity tolerance to the processing of information and new product adoption. When purchasing novel items, buyers experience unsettling sensations of doubt. They look for product information in order to reduce their uncertainty and make an informed buying decision. A detailed review helps convince clients more successfully since it reduces their discomfort with ambiguity and doubt.

This research also found a significant positive relationship between the perceived level of reviewer agreement and perceived review credibility. Previous studies have controversial findings regarding whether there is a direct positive relationship between the reviewer agreement and perceived review credibility. Although many studies found a high level of reviewer agreement leads to a high level of purchase intention (Benedicktus et al., 2010), Jiménez and Mendoza discovered that the reviewer agreement only had a direct and positive influence on purchase intention but not on the perceived review credibility of reviews. Based on the previous research, this research studied and found that level of reviewer agreement does have a positive effect on perceived review credibility, as well as purchase intention. The argument for why highly agreed reviews has a greater persuading impact is because highly agreed evaluations can establish product credibility. Customers rely on the majority of product reviews when forming judgments (Sreejesh & Anusree, 2016). The literature demonstrates strong evidence that the number of "likes", "helpfulness votes," or "star ratings" impacts customers' evaluations of a product or service (Benedicktus et al., 2010; Zhu & Zhang, 2010). Therefore, the endorsement of others for an opinion can diminish customers' uncertainty (Louviere & Meyer, 1981), leading to greater perceived review credibility and purchase intention.

#### 5.1.2 Interaction effect of personality characteristics and review features.

This study also found interaction effects of friendly and level of reviewer agreement on perceived review credibility. Unfriendly individuals perceive higher credibility than friendly individuals when the level of reviewer agreement is high. This study is the first to directly examine the effectiveness of friendly personality with a high level of agreement review. An explanation of this effect could be that friendly individuals are skeptical about highly agreed-upon reviews. A large proportion of participants had recently purchased a phone or looked up restaurant reviews online, so consumers were familiar with website behaviors such as purchasing fake reviews, which could have influenced the participants' evaluation criteria. Unfriendly individuals are less interested in others and therefore less susceptible to skepticism, and therefore more likely to perceive higher review credibility.

The interaction effects between conscientiousness and level of detail in the review were also found in this research. This study is the first to directly examine the effectiveness of organized and careful personality with a high level of detail review. Organized individuals perceive higher review credibility than unorganized individuals when the level of detail is high. When exposed to detailed new knowledge, organized individuals prefer to make their

evaluation decisions more quickly than unorganized individuals. Organized individuals may find that well-organized, informative reviews meet their need for organization and help them evaluate the review and product more efficiently.

Careless individuals perceive higher review credibility than careful individuals when the level of detail is high. This impact may be due to the fact that careful individuals are more cautious than their careless peers when exposed to detailed reviews and require further information to remove their ambiguity and establish trust before taking action.

## 5.2 Managerial and Practical Implications

This study again demonstrates the positive effect of the level of reviewer agreement and level of detail on perceived review credibility. In addition, this study also innovatively explored the interaction effects of friendly personality and level of reviewer agreement, and careful and organized personality and level of detail in review on perceived review credibility and purchase intention. It was found that unfriendly individuals are more likely to be persuaded when exposed to reviews with a high level of reviewer agreement. At the same time, careless people and organized people are more likely to be persuaded by the details in the review.

From a practical point of view, the research in this paper has implications for many e-commerce websites and platforms. This research highlights the usefulness of integrating reviewer agreement indicators in online product reviews. However, many influential websites currently do not have the "like", "agree", or "found useful" features in their review sections. This study's findings support that review agreement is important in influencing consumers' evaluation of review and their purchase intentions. Therefore, online shopping platforms and review platforms should consider adding this function to their platforms in order to help users make purchase decisions more efficiently and to improve the persuasive effect of their platforms.

In addition, this paper's study of the users with different personality traits provides more ideas for marketing products on online retail sites or review sites. Websites can analyze users' personality traits to customize the reviews they see first for each user or category of users. For highly agreeable reviews, it is more effective to prioritize these reviews to unfriendly customers. Sites can also prioritize detailed reviews to organized consumers to help them evaluate products and reviews more efficiently and make shopping decisions more effectively. Due to the development of technology in recent years, websites have been able to obtain users' personality traits through technology legally. Ninety-nine percent of internet

businesses have databases that capture personal information from site visitors (Taylor, 2004). Moreover, social media networks show the owner's true nature, not their idealized personas (Back et al., 2010). For instance, a neurotic person may be identified by his/her negative postings and the number of furious blogs (Golbeck et al., 2011). An extroverted person may be identified by the number of his/her social media friends (Ross et al., 2009). By helping users filter the reviews that are more helpful to them, websites can reduce the time, energy, and money users spend on decision-making and also increase their willingness to consume. Eventually, it helps websites increase their profitability.

### 5.3 Research limitation and future research

#### 5.3.1 Limitation

Although this research found new and inspiring interaction effects on personalities and review features, there are still some limitations that should be mentioned.

First of all, the nationality distribution of this research is not very diverse, as about half of the participants come from China. This is the result of choosing a convenient sampling method. Considering the research chose Amazon.com and Google Map as the base for developing materials for the experiment. It should be considered that these two platforms are not widely used in China. Therefore, Chinese participants are not as familiar with Amazon.com and Google Map as participants who come from other countries. The demographic issue should be taken into consideration as this could influence the source credibility of the reviews for Chinese participants. This influences the overall perceived review credibility of the reviews and causes a certain bias. The large portion of Chinese participants in this research could lead to some bias, as studies found that Chinese people prefer to choose moderate answers than strong answers. The Chinese are more likely than the Americans to skip questions and choose the midway when answering questions on positive emotions (Lee et al., 2002). Overall, the distribution of the nationality in this study is not satisfactory.

Additionally, this study did not control the possible impact of the prior online purchase experience. Results show that more than 91 participants have bought a phone online recently, and 22 participants have tried a restaurant based on online reviews recently. Receivers' prior knowledge determines the degree of effortful information processing. Customer's prior knowledge of the product or service moderates the relationship between review characteristics and information responses (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Recent purchase

experience could influence participants' evaluation of the review because these participants are more experienced in review evaluation than others.

### 5.3.2 Further research

Deriving from the findings of this study, several suggestions are proposed for future research. First, future research can further explore whether “friendly individuals perceive higher credibility than unfriendly individuals when the level of reviewer agreement is high” is more pronounced when the product is an experience product compared to a search product. The reason for this speculation is that past research has demonstrated that the level of reviewer agreement has a greater effect on experience products than on search products when consumer personality traits are not taken into account. Similarly, future research can further explore whether “organized/careless individuals perceive higher credibility than unconscientiousness individuals when the level of detail is high” is more pronounced when the product is a search product compared to an experience product. The reason for this speculation is that past research has demonstrated that the level of detail has a greater effect on search products when consumer personality traits are not taken into account.

In addition to this, future research could further analyze other personality traits of the Big Five personality model and other review traits such as rating, expertise, and argumentation, review valence. Related research could further explore the differences between various personality traits in other personality models on the assessment of reviews and compare which personality trait has a more significant impact.

### 5.4 Conclusion

Few studies have investigated the interaction effects of personality characteristics and review features, so the purpose of this study was to contribute to this research topic by answering research questions and providing suggestions for practice.

This study confirmed that level of detail and review agreement have significant effects on both perceived review credibility and purchase intention. The interaction of personality characteristics and review features was found to have a significant effect on perceived review credibility. In particular, unfriendly individuals are more likely to be persuaded by reviews that most users agree with or support when the level of detail is the same. In contrast, organized individuals and careless individuals are more likely to be persuaded by detailed reviews when the level of reviewer agreement is the same. These results suggest that online shopping platforms should pay attention to consumers' personality traits when promoting

products and provide personalized review recommendations for consumers. Consumers can have a better shopping experience, and retail sites can use reviews to persuade potential customers more effectively.

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## Appendix

---

### Start of Block: Informed consent form



Hello!

Thank you for taking your time to participate in my study. My name is Wei Xu and I would like to invite you to participate in a research to help me understand how people make purchase decisions. You will be asked to answer some questions after reading two reviews.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means that you accept to participate in a survey. As far as I can tell, there are no risks associated with participating in this research. I will not use your name or other identifying information in the study.

Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

You can always contact me Wei Xu (598664wx@eur.nl) if you have any questions about this study.

By clicking on "yes", you confirm that you are aware of the information above and agree to participate in this survey.

P.S.: This survey contains a completion code for SurveySwap.io

Yes (1)

## End of Block: Informed consent form

---

## Start of Block: Phone detailed high agreement

Imagine you want to buy a new phone, you search for it online and find a nice phone. You're not sure if it's good enough to buy, so you swipe down to see other users' reviews.

---

### Customer reviews

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

[Write a review](#)

3,203 global ratings



anonymous

★★★★☆ Verified Purchase

Size Name: 128 GB | Colour Name: Black

It's wonderful for snapping shots at night with the phone. I don't even notice it in my pocket because of its size. It's convenient for messaging friends and checking the web, just hope there are more colors available, now they only have black and white phones.

[93% of users agree with this review](#)

---

Based on this review, please choose to what extent do you agree with the following statement?

I would like to buy this phone.

- Strongly disagree (14)
  - Somewhat disagree (15)
  - Neither agree nor disagree (16)
  - Somewhat agree (17)
  - Strongly agree (18)
- 

I would like to try this phone.

- Strongly disagree (14)
  - Somewhat disagree (15)
  - Neither agree nor disagree (16)
  - Somewhat agree (17)
  - Strongly agree (18)
-

I will purchase the product the next time I need a phone.

- Strongly disagree (14)
  - Somewhat disagree (15)
  - Neither agree nor disagree (16)
  - Somewhat agree (17)
  - Strongly agree (18)
- 

I would like to recommend this phone to my friends.

- Strongly disagree (14)
  - Somewhat disagree (15)
  - Neither agree nor disagree (16)
  - Somewhat agree (17)
  - Strongly agree (18)
-

I think this review is factual.

- disagree (1)
  - somewhat disagree (2)
  - neither agree or disagree (3)
  - somewhat agree (4)
  - agree (5)
- 

I think this review is accurate.

- disagree (1)
  - somewhat disagree (2)
  - neither agree or disagree (3)
  - somewhat agree (4)
  - agree (5)
-

I think this review is credible.

- disagree (1)
  - somewhat disagree (2)
  - neither agree or disagree (3)
  - somewhat agree (4)
  - agree (5)
- 

How detailed is this review?

- not detailed at all (1)
  - somewhat not detailed (2)
  - neither detailed nor not detailed (3)
  - somewhat detailed (4)
  - very detailed (5)
-

To what extent do you think the reviewers agree with this review?

- very low (1)
  - somewhat low (2)
  - neither high nor low (3)
  - somewhat high (4)
  - very high (5)
- 

Have you bought a phone recently?

- No (21)
- Yes (22)

**End of Block: Phone detailed high agreement**

---

**Start of Block: Phone detailed low agreement**

Imagine you want to buy a new phone, you search for it online and find a nice phone. You're not sure if it's good enough to buy, so you swipe down to see other users' reviews.

---

## Customer reviews

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

[Write a review](#)

3,203 global ratings



anonymous

★★★★★ **Verified Purchase**

Size Name: 128 GB | Colour Name: Black

It's wonderful for snapping shots at night with the phone. I don't even notice it in my pocket because of its size. It's convenient for messaging friends and checking the web, just hope there are more colors available, now they only have black and white phones.

[23%](#) of users agree with this review

---

Based on this review, please choose to what extent do you agree with the following statement?

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To what extent do you think the reviewers agree with this review?

- very low (1)
  - somewhat low (2)
  - neither high or low (3)
  - somewhat high (4)
  - very high (5)
-

Have you bought a phone recently?

No (21)

Yes (22)

**End of Block: Phone detailed low agreement**

---

**Start of Block: Phone not detailed high agreement**

Imagine you want to buy a new phone, you search for it online and find a nice phone. You're not sure if it's good enough to buy, so you swipe down to see other users' reviews.

---

### Customer reviews

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

[Write a review](#)

3,203 global ratings

 anonymous

★★★★★ Verified Purchase

Size Name: 128 GB | Colour Name: Black

This phone always capture the BEST photos. The size is AMAZING. It's quite convenient for messaging and browsing the internet, just hope there are more colors available, now they only have black and white phone.

[93%](#) of users agree with this review

---

Based on this review, please choose to what extent do you agree with the following statement?

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Have you bought a phone recently?

- No (21)
- Yes (22)

**End of Block: Phone not detailed high agreement**

---

**Start of Block: Phone not detailed low agreement**

Imagine you want to buy a new phone, you search for it online and find a nice phone. You're not sure if it's good enough to buy, so you swipe down to see other users' reviews.

---

## Customer reviews

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

[Write a review](#)

3,203 global ratings



anonymous

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23% of users agree with this review

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-

Have you bought a phone recently?

No (21)

Yes (22)

End of Block: Phone not detailed low agreement

---

Start of Block: Restaurant detailed high agreement

Imagine you want to try a new restaurant, you search for it online and find a nice restaurant. You're not sure if it's good enough to go there, so you swipe down to see other people's reviews.

---

< Maladi

UPDATES MENU **REVIEWS** PHOTOS ABOU

4,6  
  
★★★★★  
(1.420)

× anonymous  
5 reviews [Follow](#)

★★★★★ 7 months ago

Love this restaurant. Their food is fresh and tasty, and lovely smiling staff will take care of you. Good balance between quality and value of money, and very nice atmosphere sitting outside. You often have to wait but it's worth it.

93% of users agree with this review

---

Based on this review, please choose to what extent do you agree with the following statement.

I would like to go to this restaurant.

- Strongly disagree (14)
  - Somewhat disagree (15)
  - Neither agree nor disagree (16)
  - Somewhat agree (17)
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I will try this restaurant next time when I want to try a new restaurant.

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- 

Have you tried a new restaurant recently?

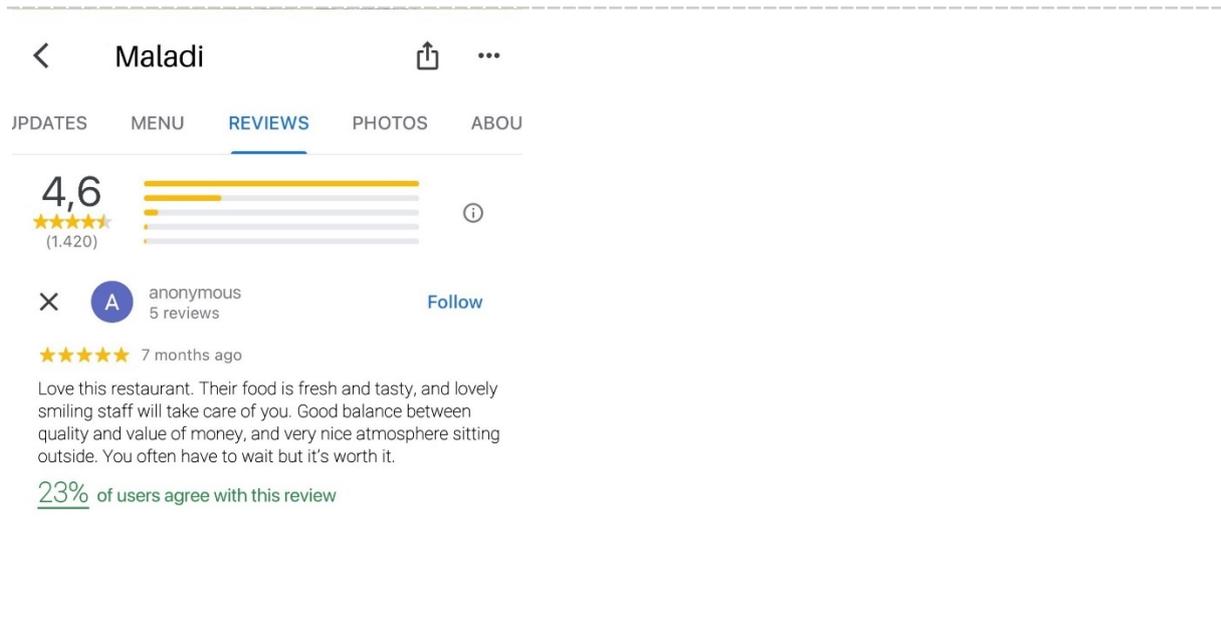
- No (21)
- Yes (22)

**End of Block: Restaurant detailed high agreement**

---

**Start of Block: Restaurant detailed low agreement**

Imagine you want to try a new restaurant, you search for it online and find a nice restaurant. You're not sure if it's good enough to go there, so you swipe down to see other people's reviews.



Based on this review, please choose to what extent do you agree with the following statement.

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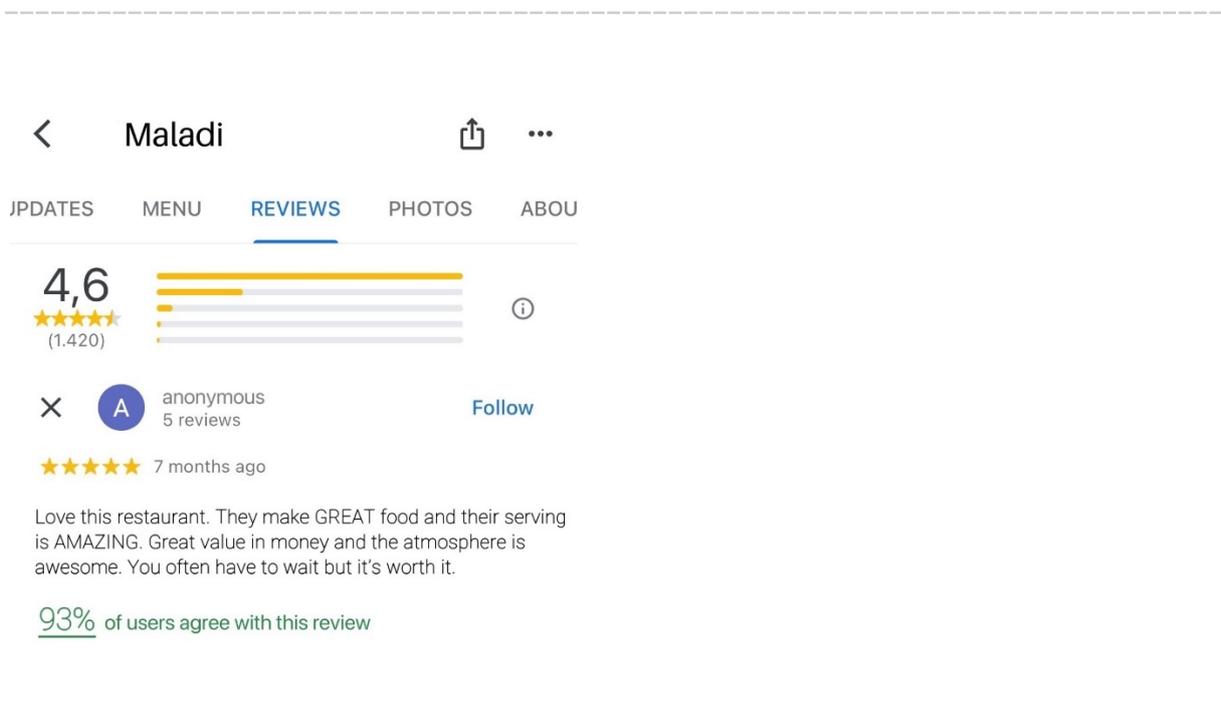
Yes (22)

End of Block: Restaurant detailed low agreement

---

Start of Block: Restaurant not detailed high agreement

Imagine you want to try a new restaurant, you search for it online and find a nice restaurant. You're not sure if it's good enough to go there, so you swipe down to see other people's reviews.



Based on this review, please choose to what extent do you agree with the following statement.

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- 

Have you tried a new restaurant recently?

- No (21)
- Yes (22)

**End of Block: Restaurant not detailed high agreement**

---

**Start of Block: Restaurant not detailed low agreement**

Imagine you want to try a new restaurant, you search for it online and find a nice restaurant. You're not sure if it's good enough to go there, so you swipe down to see other people's reviews.

---

---

< Maladi  

UPDATES MENU **REVIEWS** PHOTOS ABOUT

**4,6**  
  
(1.420)  

  anonymous  
5 reviews [Follow](#)

 7 months ago

Love this restaurant. Their food is fresh and tasty, and lovely smiling staff will take care of you. Good balance between quality and value of money, and very nice atmosphere sitting outside. You often have to wait but it's worth it.

23% of users agree with this review

---

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How detailed is this review?

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What extent do you think the reviewers agree with this review?

- very low (1)
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  - somewhat high (4)
  - very high (5)
-

Have you tried a new restaurant recently?

No (21)

Yes (22)

**End of Block: Restaurant not detailed low agreement**

---

**Start of Block: Personality**

Below are some statement describing people's behaviour, please read carefully and choose how accurately the statement describe you. Please keep in mind to describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in the future.



|  | Very inaccurate<br>(14) | Somewhat inaccurate<br>(15) | Neither inaccurate nor accurate<br>(16) | Somewhat accurate<br>(17) | Very accurate<br>(18) |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sympathize with others' feelings. (1)                      | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>                   | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> |
| Get chores done right away. (2)                            | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>                   | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> |
| Am not interested in other people's problems. (3)          | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>                   | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> |
| Often forget to put things back in their proper place. (4) | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>                   | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> |
| Feel others' emotions. (5)                                 | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>                   | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> |
| Like to be organized. (6)                                  | <input type="radio"/>   | <input type="radio"/>       | <input type="radio"/>                   | <input type="radio"/>     | <input type="radio"/> |

Am not  
really  
interested in  
others. (7)

Make a mess  
of things. (8)

End of Block: Personality

Start of Block: Purchase habit

---

Where do you often look for resources to help you decide whether to buy a new phone?

|  | Never (1)             | Rarely (2)            | Sometimes<br>(3)      | Often (4)             | Always (5)            |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| People around me (friends and family) (1)                    | <input type="radio"/> |
| Affiliated digital WOM (reviews from the retailers) (2)      | <input type="radio"/> |
| Video reviews by non-experts (other users' video online) (3) | <input type="radio"/> |
| Expert suggestion (experts you know in person) (5)           | <input type="radio"/> |
| Social digital WOM (reviews on social media) (6)             | <input type="radio"/> |

Specialized  
WOM  
(reviews on a  
phone review  
website) (7)



Video  
reviews by  
experts  
(experts'  
review video  
online) (8)



Where do you often look for sources to help you decide whether to try a new restaurant?

|  | Never (1)             | Rarely (2)            | Sometimes<br>(3)      | Often (4)             | Always (5)            |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| People around me (friends and family) (1)                        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Affiliated digital WOM (reviews from the restaurants) (2)        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Video reviews by non-experts (other customers' video online) (3) | <input type="radio"/> |
| Expert suggestion (experts you know in person) (5)               | <input type="radio"/> |

Social digital  
WOM  
(reviews on  
social media)  
(6)



Specialized  
WOM  
(reviews on a  
restaurant  
review  
website) (7)



Video  
reviews by  
experts  
(experts'  
review video  
online) (8)



**End of Block: Purchase habit**

**Start of Block: Demographics**

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What is your gender?

- Male (5)
  - Female (6)
  - Non-binary / third gender (7)
  - Prefer not to say (8)
- 

What is your age?

- Under 18 (1)
  - 18 - 24 (2)
  - 25 - 34 (3)
  - 35 - 44 (4)
  - 45 - 54 (5)
  - 55 and above (6)
-

What is your educational level?

- Less than high school (1)
  - High school graduate (2)
  - Bachelor Degree (3)
  - Master Degree (4)
  - Doctorate (5)
- 

What is your nationality?

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**End of Block: Demographics**

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