School of Management and Marketing

Platform Design and Electronic Word-of-Mouth Adaptability: A Construal Level Perspective

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* – updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Office, Approval Number # HRE2021-0648.

Signature 

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Abstract

The proliferation of online platforms for consumers to share product information has led to a revolutionary power shift—from marketer-generated content (such as advertisements) to *consumer-generated content* (such as online reviews). The prevailing view in the literature is that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication is beyond managerial control. However, is the uncontrollability assumption valid in all forms of eWOM? This thesis suggests that, contrary to popular beliefs, managers could affect eWOM content (in terms of eWOM favourability), through specific platform design features.

Drawing on the construal level theory, this thesis examines how two platform design features (structural complexity and length requirement) may impact eWOM favourability. These two design features nicely dovetail with the two key components of review writing (memory retrieval and review creation). Converging evidence from five lab studies and a field study indicates that a structurally complex (vs. structurally simple) design and a high-word-count (vs. low-word-count) design each induce review content lower in eWOM favourability. Theoretically, this research contributes to the bourgeoning eWOM literature by highlighting the significance of review platform design. Managerially, this research offers specific guidance as to how review platforms may be designed to harness the arguably most powerful source of consumer information in the digital era.

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We acknowledge that Curtin University works across hundreds of traditional lands and custodial groups in Australia, and with First Nations people around the globe. We wish to pay our deepest respects to their ancestors and members of their communities, past, present, and to their emerging leaders. Our passion and commitment to work with all Australians and peoples from across the world, including our First Nations peoples are at the core of the work we do, reflective of our institutions' values and commitment to our role as leaders in the Reconciliation space in Australia.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH

When we think about which hotel to stay in, which restaurant to visit, which smartphone to buy, or which doctor to consult, we may visit relevant online review platforms for other consumers' opinions. Undoubtedly, online reviews are today's major form of electronic word of mouth (eWOM). With a wide variety of platform features that are under direct managerial control, it is conceivable that eWOM (in terms of review content and ratings) is subject to managerial influence—through platform design. This idea motivated me to study review platform design in my PhD thesis. Consider the following contrasts between major platforms in terms of mandatory questions and length requirement:

Mandatory questions

Review platforms require reviewers to answer consumption-related questions that differ in number. Some platforms ask reviewers to answer many consumption-related questions. For example, *TripAdvisor* requires reviewers (1) to answer a series of questions about product attributes, such as whether the reviewed restaurant offers free Wi-Fi, and (2) to provide judgments on a number of quality dimensions such as service and atmosphere. Likewise, *Mouthshut.com* requires reviewers to rate different aspects of consumption experience such as customer service and staff courtesy. In contrast, some platforms ask reviewers to answer few consumption-related questions. For instance, *Yelp* provides a text box for reviewers to write a verbal review and asks them to provide a numerical rating.

Length requirements

Many review platforms impose review length requirements, such as a lower word or character limit. For instance, *HomeStars* imposes a lower limit of 100 characters, *Reevoo* a lower limit of 40 characters, *ResellerRatings* a lower limit of 25 characters, and *Productreview.com.au* a lower limit of 10 words. These platforms require reviewers to use at least a certain number of characters or words. On the other hand, some platforms impose an upper limit. For example, *MangoPlate* reviewers are instructed to write a review with a maximum of 100 characters.

Despite the variety of platform designs, their impacts have not been systematically investigated and "the electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) literature clearly lags behind the evolutions on these globally accessible review platforms" (Chan, Zhang, & Yang, 2022, p. 2699). As Chan et al. aptly point out, platform design is an underexplored yet timely topic for "advancing consumer welfare and business intelligence in the digital age" (p. 2712).

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

With the growing popularity of the Internet, a major change in WOM communication from the oral to the digital form became apparent in the late 1990s. Marketing scholars then alluded to new eWOM research opportunities in the interactions of consumers in cyberspace such as "online discussion platforms" (Hagel, 1999, p. 57, 58, 65) and "virtual [communities] of consumption" (Kozinets, 1999, p. 253). Since the beginning of the 21st century, marketing scholars have increasingly extended traditional WOM research to the digital realm. In their seminal research, Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, and Gremler (2004) report consumer motivations for

engaging in eWOM communication. Godes and Mayzlin's (2004) pioneering work expands the realm of eWOM literature by unlocking the potential of eWOM data. Godes and Mayzlin demonstrate that online conversation data offer a valuable source to measure eWOM behaviour. Extending this work, Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) show that online review data are useful for predicting product sales.

Today, online review platforms have become a ubiquitous form of eWOM communication, covering a wide range of products and services as diverse as medical service (e.g., *Zocdoc*), tertiary education (e.g., *College Confidential*), and hospitality (e.g., *Yelp*). Consumers around the world frequent these platforms to exchange product opinions and experiences. According to Zhou (2023), 95% of consumers read online reviews before making purchases, and 49% trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.

Clearly, online reviews are of great value to companies. Given the importance of online reviews, many companies use financial incentives to induce favourable reviews (Woolley & Sharif, 2021). Nonetheless, financial incentives are not only costly but they may backfire because such incentives may create doubt as to the appropriateness of the eWOM behaviour and may therefore decrease both motivation and the actual behaviour (Dose, Walsh, Beatty, & Elsner, 2019).

A natural question is: Is there any cost-free and easily manageable way to induce reviews high in favourability (thereafter eWOM favourability). If so, how? In my literature research, I found that construal level theory (CLT; Trope & Liberman, 2010) has interesting implications for this issue. According to CLT, as psychological distance increases (decreases), people tend to adopt a higher-level, concrete (lower-level, abstract) construal. Moreover, a high-level (low-level) construal is associated with the use of positive (negative) information (e.g., Eyal, Liberman, Trope, & Walther, 2004), which suggests that a high-level (low-level) construal induces reviewers to craft positive (negative) review content.

The literature also suggests that some review platform features could affect reviewers' psychological distance from their consumption experience. They are (1) structural complexity (which refers to the number of questions posed to reviewers (Bettman, Johnson, & Payne, 1990) and (2) length requirement. I posit that by shifting psychological distance and therefore construal level, structural complexity and length requirement may elevate or suppress eWOM favourability. In short, I draw on CLT (Trope & Liberman, 2010) to study the influence of the said platform design features on eWOM favourability.

An extensive literature search suggests that CLT (Trope & Liberman, 2010) has emerged as a theoretical foundation in some major eWOM studies (e.g., Aerts, Smiths, & Verlegh, 2017a; Huang, Burtch, Hong, & Polman, 2016; Quach, Septianto, Thaichon, & Chiew, 2021; Zhao & Xie, 2011). However, none of the extant work has addressed how construal level interacts with the review writing process—one of the research objectives in this thesis. This thesis not only draws on but adds to CLT, extending the realm of the theory to the cognitive dimension of review writing.

1.2 SCOPE OF RESEARCH

This thesis examines how the two aforementioned design features (structural complexity and length requirement) may impact eWOM favourability from the prism of CLT (Trope & Liberman, 2010). These two platform design features also nicely dovetail with the two components of the review writing process (memory retrieval and review creation).

Most prior researchers have examined the consequences of eWOM content on eWOM readers, such as perceived review helpfulness (e.g., Mafael, 2019) review persuasiveness (e.g., Maiberger, Schindler, & Koschate-Fischer 2024), product attitude (Kronrod, & Danziger, 2013), product evaluation (Hamilton, Vohs, & McGill, 2014), and purchase intention (Allard, Dunn, & White, 2020). In contrast, the current thesis does not study eWOM effects, but rather address a (managerially controllable) antecedent of eWOM content—namely, review platform design. Simply put, the effect of eWOM content on readers' response is beyond the scope of this thesis.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

The rest of this thesis is organised as follows. Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature germane to the thesis. Specifically, the first part of this chapter mainly reviews a major stream of eWOM literature—namely, eWOM generation. On the other hand, as CLT serves as the theoretical base for the thesis, the second part of the chapter briefly reviews the CLT literature. Chapter 3 explicates the conceptual framework on which my research is based and culminates in a set of hypotheses. The following five chapters (Chapters 4-8) report empirical studies designed to test the hypotheses. In the concluding chapter, the implications and possible extensions of the current research are discussed.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

With the eWOM research blossoming in the last two decades, eWOM insights have accumulated in different directions. Some eWOM scholars take the firm's perspective by, for example, exploring the moderating role of firm strategies in driving eWOM effect on firm revenue (e.g., Fradkin & Holtz, 2023). Other eWOM researchers take the methodological perspective by, for instance, developing machine-learning approaches (e.g., Wang, He, Curry, & Ryoo, 2021) and comparing the effectiveness of different machine learning approaches (e.g., Alantari, Currim, Deng, & Singh, 2022) for sentiment analysis of consumer reviews. Overall, however, the bulk of the existing eWOM research takes the consumer's perspective, providing insights into (1) what leads consumers to talk about certain products, brands, and topics (eWOM generation; Chen & Berger, 2013; Lisjak, Bonezzi & Rucker, 2021; Olson & Ahluwalia, 2021), and (2) how eWOM recipients are affected by eWOM information (eWOM effectiveness; e.g., Chan & Cui, 2011; Maiberger et al., 2024; Varga & Albuquerque, 2023).

Since this thesis examines how platform design may affect eWOM content, the first part of this chapter briefly introduces and critically reviews the literature on eWOM generation. The second part of this chapter covers CLT literature that has informed the development of the theoretical framework in this thesis. In the last part of this chapter, research gaps are identified and research objectives of this thesis are proposed.

2.2 RESEARCH ON EWOM GENERATION

Research on eWOM generation goes back two decades (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) and is garnering growing interest (e.g., Jung, Ryu, Han, & Cho, 2023). In the early years, research emphasized sender characteristics or the "why" factors that predict the intention to share eWOM messages, such as eWOM motivations—the focus of Hennig-Thurau et al.'s seminal study. Recent work has turned its attention to factors that predict "what" the senders will share (i.e., eWOM content). The factors affecting eWOM generation (including eWOM motivation and eWOM content) are grouped into five categories—senders characteristics, product or content characteristics, recipient characteristics, context characteristics and seller characteristics. In what follows, prior research on such factors is reviewed. Table 1, shown on pp. 14-16, positions the current research relative to the related prior research.

2.2.1 Sender characteristics

The first set of variables that affect eWOM generation pertains to senders themselves. Such variables may be divided into three categories: (1) their motivations, (2) individual differences and their interactions with the focal product or company. In an online survey, Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) discover four key factors leading to eWOM sharing: consumers' desire for social interaction, their desire for economic incentives, their concern for other consumers, and the potential to enhance their own self-worth. In a subsequent review article, Berger (2014) delineates five major motivations for eWOM sharing: impression management, emotion regulation, information exchange, social bonding, and persuasion.

Motivations can impact what senders share. For instance, consumers with a persuasion motive may be more selective in information sharing and may add their own

interpretation to the eWOM message (Melumad, Meyer, & Kim, 2021). Interestingly, apart from message content, motivations can also affect eWOM channels. For instance, when consumers are motivated to persuade, they tend to post positive messages in general forums and negative messages in brand-specific forums; in contrast, when consumers are motivated to affiliate, they prefer to post on a forum where they perceive the audience as similar to them (Chen & Kirmani, 2015).

Individual differences can also influence whether and what consumers say. For example, consumers high- (vs. low-) in need for uniqueness are less willing to generate favourable eWOM for publicly consumed products, but need for uniqueness does not decrease intention to generate favourable eWOM for privately consumed products (Cheema & Kaikati, 2010). Financially constrained consumers are less likely to share eWOM than those who are not financially constrained (Paley, Tully, & Sharma, 2019). More (vs. less) religious consumers engage in less favourable eWOM communication (Casidy, Duhachek, Singh, & Tamaddoni, 2021). Senders with more expertise write reviews with (1) more implicit endorsement (e.g., "I like it"; Packard & Berger, 2017), (2) less extremity (Nguyen, Wang, Li, & Cotte, 2021), and (3) less intense emotion (Rocklage, Rucker, & Nordgren, 2021). Finally, senders who chronically want the best possible outcome (i.e., maximisers) would share favourable eWOM messages about their unsatisfactory experience as they seek to enhance their standing relative to others (Olson & Ahluwalia, 2021).

Moreover, consumers' intention to spread eWOM and their eWOM content are affected by their interactions with the focal product or company, including (1) product satisfaction (e.g., Brown, Barry, Dacin, & Gunst, 2005; Grégoire & Fisher, 2008); (2) commitment to and identification with the company (Brown et al., 2005); and (3) loyalty to the company, trust in the company, and perceived quality and value of the product (de Matos & Rossi, 2008).

2.2.2 Product/ content characteristics

The second set of variables that affect eWOM generation pertains to product or content characteristics. Such variables can affect whether and how much consumers spread eWOM. For example, product originality is positively associated with the amount of eWOM (Moldovan, Goldenberg, & Chattopadhyay 2011). Interesting products get more eWOM than mundane ones (Berger & Iyengar, 2013). Content that evokes high-arousal emotions (e.g., anger) is more viral than content that evokes low-arousal emotions (e.g., sadness; Berger & Milkman, 2012). Moderate controversy stimulates discussion because it makes the discussion more interesting; nevertheless, any additional controversy discourages discussion (Chen & Berger, 2013). To the extent that content reflects well on themselves, consumers are more likely to talk if the focal content is happening in the future (vs. the past; Weingarten & Berger, 2017). Valence of consumption experience also affects eWOM sharing. Specifically, consumers with positive (vs. neutral) attitudes toward their consumption experience are more likely to share their opinions, while those with negative attitudes do not show a similar tendency (Hydock, Chen, & Carlon, 2020). Hydock et al. demonstrate that the latter result is driven by two counteracting mechanisms: a desire to vent increases sharing but an aversion to criticize deters sharing.

Secondly, product or content characteristics also influence eWOM content. For instance, consumers tend to explain their reactions for hedonic products (e.g., I liked

this spa because…); in contrast, they tend to illustrate their actions for utilitarian products (e.g., I chose this drill because…; Moore, 2015). Moore further demonstrates that consumers believe eWOM recipients will find explained reactions (actions) more helpful for hedonic (utilitarian) products. As another example, consumers tend to share favourable eWOM content about anthropomorphised products because they apply a norm that speaking positively of other people creates a more likeable impression of speakers by appearing to be more polite (Chen, Sengupta, & Hong, 2022).

2.2.3 Recipient characteristics

The third set of variables that affect eWOM generation pertains to recipient variables. For instance, when communicating with distant others such as strangers (close others, such as a friends), senders are motivated to self-enhance (to protect the recipient), which increases the tendency to share (1) positive (negative) information (Chen, 2017; Dubois, Rucker, & Galinsky, 2016) and (2) self-general (self-autobiographical) memory (Chen, 2017). [1] Further, audience size affects what consumers share. Specifically, when communicating with a large (small) group of people, consumers prefer to share self-presentational (useful) content, because of a focus on the self (others; Barasch & Berger, 2014).

2.2.4 Context characteristics

The fourth set of characteristics that affect eWOM generation concerns the context, or when and where eWOM takes place. These variables include external environmental factors (e.g., weather), marketplace factors (e.g., laws and regulations) and medium-related factors (e.g., review devices).

For example, consumers are more likely to (a) share eWOM messages in more (versus less) crowded environments where more (versus less) people congregate (Consiglio, De Angelis, & Costabile, 2018) and (b) share eWOM messages about products that are cued or triggered more frequently by the surrounding environment (Berger & Schwartz, 2011). Bad weather increases review provision and reduces rating scores for past consumption experiences (Brandes & Dover, 2022). A legal requirement for restaurants to post nutrition information increases the proportion of health-related content in online reviews (Puranam, Narayan, & Kadiyali, 2017). The competitive environment—in terms of geographic density (number of similar firms in an area), product agglomeration (degree of product overlap in an area), and temporal agglomeration (degree of consumption timing overlap)—influences the volume of online reviews (Liu, Steenkamp, & Zhang, 2018). Where and when consumers choose to share can impact their messages as well. Specifically, consumers are more likely to craft favourable reviews when they share their consumption experience about a geographically distant (rather than proximate) restaurant and after a lengthy delay (rather than immediately; Huang et al., 2016).

Not surprisingly, prior eWOM messages can affect subsequent eWOM behaviour. Specifically, existing positive ratings increase posting incidence, whereas negative ratings discourage consumers from posting (Moe & Schweidel, 2012). Prior negative eWOM content also leads consumers to adjust their opinion favourability downward

[1] Self-general memory captures general knowledge about the self such as personality, preferences, and traits (Robinson & Swanson, 1990). In contrast, self-autobiographical memory captures personal events normally lasting less than one day (William & Broadnet, 1986).

(Schlosser, 2005). Recently, Park, Shin and Xie (2021) demonstrate that a positive (negative) first review for a product can have long-term positive (negative) effects on the product's rating valence and volume.

Channel-related factors also affect eWOM content. For instance, consumers using smartphones (vs. computers) write (1) briefer and more emotional content (Melumad, Inman, & Phan, 2019) and (2) more affective, more concrete and less extreme content (Ransbotham, Lurie, & Liu, 2019). Compared to speaking (which typically happens offline), writing (which typically occurs online) leads consumers to (1) discuss more interesting products and brands (Berger & Iyengar, 2013) and (2) express less emotional attitudes (Berger, Rocklage, & Packard, 2022). Berger and colleagues theorise that such phenomena occur because writing (vs, speaking) offers more time to deliberate about what to say, thus increasing self-enhancement and reducing emotionality.

2.2.5 Seller characteristics

The final set of variables that influence eWOM generation is under sellers' direct control: marketing communications, review reminders, responses to reviews, incentive offers, and platform features. First, as a form of marketing communication, advertising increases (1) eWOM volume for both the brand advertised and the program in which the advertisement airs (e.g., Fossen & Schweidel, 2017) and (2) message favourability (Tirunillai & Tellis, 2017). The positive impacts of advertising on eWOM are greater for late (vs. early) reviewers (Lambrecht, Tucker, & Wiertz, 2018). Likewise, sellers can increase consumers' intention to share eWOM (1) by crafting specific content, such as the use of certain rhetorical styles (Villarroel Ordenes, Grewal, Ludwig, Ruyter, Mahr, & Wetzels, 2019) and (2) targeting consumers whose interests fit the message (Zhang, Moe, & Schweidel, 2017).

Second, sellers can influence consumers' intention to write reviews via review reminders. Review reminders are sent to consumers who have used a product but have not yet posted a review. The effect depends on reminder delivery timing. Specifically, immediate reminders reduce the likelihood of review postings (relative to no reminder), because the reactance induced by violation of freedom due to such immediate reminders outweighs the benefit of memory recall; in contrast, delayed reminders increase the chance of review postings, since the benefit of memory recall of review writing due to such delayed reminders surpasses the reactance (Jung, et al., 2023). One point regarding the research of Jung and colleagues is worth mentioning. Their research points out an important aspect of the review writing process. Specifically, Jung et al. emphasize that review writing involves memory recall of the consumption experience and that memory of consumption experience may fade over time, which diminishes the ability to write a vivid review.

Third, sellers can affect consumers by responding to their reviews. Seller responses to online reviews can (1) stimulate reviewing activity in general (e.g., Chevalier, Dover, & Mayzlin, 2018) but (2) discourage females' likelihood of writing reviews (Proserpio, Troncoso, & Valsesia, 2021) and (3) increase the length and negativity of eWOM content (e.g., Proserpio & Zervas, 2017).

Fourth, incentives can increase or decrease consumers' review intention, depending on the nature of (1) incentives, (2) products and (3) tie strength. Specifically, incentives that are less (vs. more) contingent on consumers' eWOM sharing behaviour

can indeed be more effective at fostering eWOM (Lisjak et al., 2021). Referral rewards increase (decrease) customers' referral likelihood (1) for less (more) innovative products (Dose, Walsh, Beatty, & Elsner, 2019) and (2) particularly for weak ties and for weak brands (Ryu & Feick, 2007). Incentives can also affect eWOM content. For instance, incentivised (vs. unincentivised) reviews contain a greater proportion of positive relative to negative emotion, provided that the pertinent incentives are associated with review writing (Woolley & Sharif, 2021). Woolley and Sharif propose and show that such incentives cause the positive affect to transform the review-writing experience, making review writing more enjoyable and hence review content more favourable.

Finally, one recent scholarly work addresses the impact of review platform design by exploring the role of questions and answers (Q&As) in shaping review ratings (Banerjee, Dellarocas, & Zervas, 2021). Typically, questions are asked prior to purchase and focus on clarification of product attributes, and answers provide fit-specific information in a largely sentiment-free manner. Banerjee et al. find that Q&As mitigate product fit uncertainty, leading to better matches between products and consumers and greater post-purchase satisfaction, and therefore higher review ratings.

2.2.6 Summary of eWOM generation research

The above literature review suggests that research on eWOM generation can be divided into three major eras. The first era is the 2000s, when scholars focused on reviewer/sender characteristics, such as eWOM motivation, as the major factors influencing eWOM generation. The second era is the first half the 2010s. In this era, eWOM scholars demonstrated that eWOM communication is an adaptive process in which reviewers could adapt eWOM content to various different factors, including eWOM recipients, environmental and marketplace factors, and channel-related factors. However, the factors investigated in this era are largely beyond managerial control. This parallels the conventional wisdom that WOM communication is beyond managerial control (Arndt, 1967).

The third era started halfway through the 2010s. Expanding the second era's research on eWOM adaptability, eWOM scholars in the third era have examined how eWOM content may be adaptable to marketers' strategies and tactics, such as advertising and incentive provision. These strategies and tactics may be costly, however. A question that naturally follows is: How might the easily manageable (and nearly costless) platform features influence eWOM behaviour? For instance, can platform design induce consumers to write more favourable reviews? Very little work has been done on this topic, with one notable exception being Banerjee et al.'s (2021) research on how Q&As lead consumers to give higher review ratings. While informative, Banerjee and colleagues (2021) do not further examine the effect of Q&As on review texts. Moreover, Q&As improve decision making (and consumption experience) by providing consumers with useful product information in the prepurchase stage. What if consumption experience is held constant? Could platform design per se affect eWOM favourability (in terms of both numerical ratings and review texts)? This intriguing research question has guided the development of the present thesis.

TABLE 1: EWOM Generation: Summary of Empirical Findings

Authors	Independent variables	Outcome variables
Sender characteristics		
Melumad et al. (2021)	Persuasion motive	EWOM content (amount of (a) factual detail *vs.* (b) expression of personal opinion)
Chen and Kirmani (2015)	Persuasion motive	Choice of EWOM channels (general forum *vs*. brand-specific forum)
Cheema and Kaikati (2010)	Need for uniqueness	EWOM content (favourability)
Paley et al. (2019)	Financial constraints	EWOM intention
Casidy et al. (2021)	Religious belief	EWOM content (favourability)
Packard and Berger (2017)	Expertise	EWOM content (extremity)
Nguyen et al. (2021)	Expertise	EWOM content (implicit endorsement)
Olson and Ahluwalia (2021)	Maximiser (tendency to attain the best possible outcome)	EWOM content (favourability)
Brown et al. (2005)	(1) Product satisfaction (2) Commitment to and identification with the company	Positive eWOM intention
Grégoire & Fisher (2008)	Perceived betrayal	Negative eWOM behaviour
de Matos and Rossi (2008)	(1) Loyalty to the company (2) Trust in the company (3) Perceived quality and value of the product	EWOM behaviour
Product/ content characteristics		
Moldovan et al. (2011)	Product originality	EWOM volume
Berger and Iyengar (2013)	Product interestingness	EWOM volume
Berger and Milkman (2012)	Content arousal	EWOM volume
Chen and Berger, (2013)	Content controversy	EWOM volume
Weingarten and Berger (2017)	Temporal location of content (content that is happening in the future *vs.* the past)	EWOM intention
Hydock et al. (2020)	Valence of consumption experience	EWOM intention
Moore (2015)	Product type (utilitarian *vs.* hedonic)	EWOM content (explanation of action [e.g., I liked this spa because…] *vs.* reaction [e.g., I chose this drill because…])
Chen et al. (2023)	Product anthropomorphism	EWOM content (favourability)
Recipient characteristics		
Chen (2017);	Tie strength	(1) EWOM content (favourability) (2) EWOM content (Self-general *vs.* self-autobiographical)

TABLE 1 (*continued*)

Authors	Independent variables	Outcome variables
Recipient characteristics (continued)		
Dubois et al. (2016)	Tie strength	EWOM content (favourability)
Barasch and Berger (2014)	Audience size	EWOM content (self-presentational *vs.* useful)
Context characteristics		
Consiglio et al. (2018)	Crowdedness	EWOM intention
Berger and Schwartz (2011)	Environmental cue	EWOM intention
Brandes and Dover (2022)	Weather	EWOM content (favourability)
Puranam et al. (2017)	Legal requirement	EWOM content (amount of health-related content)
Liu et al. (2018)	(1) Geographic density (2) Product agglomeration (3) Temporal agglomeration	EWOM volume
Huang et al. (2016)	(1) Spatial distance from consumption experience (2) Temporal distance from consumption experience	EWOM content (favourability)
Moe and Schweidel (2012)	Favourability of prior reviews	EWOM volume
Schlosser (2005)	Favourability of prior reviews	EWOM content (favourability)
Park et al. (2021)	Favourability of the first review	(1) EWOM volume (2) EWOM content (favourability)
Melumad et al. (2019)	Device used for writing review (smartphone *vs.* computer)	(1) EWOM content (review length) (2) EWOM content (review emotionality)
Ransbotham et al. (2019)	Device used for writing review (smartphone *vs.* computer)	(1) EWOM content (affect) (2) EWOM content (language concreteness) (3) EWOM content (extremity)
Berger and Iyengar (2013)	Expression modality (speaking vs. writing)	(1) EWOM content (interestingness)
Berger et al. (2022)	Expression modality (speaking vs. writing)	(1) EWOM content (emotionality)
Seller characteristics		
Fossen and Schweidel (2017)	Advertising	EWOM volume
Tirunillai and Tellis (2017)	Advertising	EWOM content (favourability)
Lambrecht et al. (2018)	Advertising	EWOM behaviour (number of retweets)
Villarroel et al. (2019)	Promotion content (e.g., use of certain rhetorical styles)	EWOM intention
Zhang et al. (2017)	Message fit with consumer interest	EWOM intention
Chevalier et al. (2018)	Response to review	EWOM volume

TABLE 1 (*continued*)

Authors	Independent variables	Outcome variables
Seller characteristics (continued)		
Jung, et al. (2023)	Delivery timing of review reminder (immediate *vs.* delayed)	EWOM volume
Proserpio et al. (2021)	Response to review	(1) Females' likelihood of writing reviews
Proserpio and Zervas (2017)	Response to review	(2) EWOM content (review length) (3) EWOM content (review emotionality)
Chevalier et al. (2018)	Response to review	EWOM volume
Proserpio and Zervas (2017)	Response to review	(4) EWOM content (review length) (5) EWOM content (review emotionality)
Lisjak et al. (2021)	Degree to which an incentive is more (*vs.* less) contingent on consumers' eWOM sharing behaviour	EWOM volume
Dose et al. (2019); Ryu and Feick (2007)	Referral reward	EWOM behaviour (referral likelihood)
Woolley and Sharif (2021)	Incentive	EWOM content (favourability)
Banerjee et al. (2021)	Review platform design: provision of questions and answers (Q&As)	EWOM content (favourability)
The current research	Review platform design: (1) Structural complexity (2) Length requirement	EWOM content (favourability)

EWOM favourability

As the most salient eWOM dimension (Chen & Yuan, 2020), eWOM favourability is defined as how positively or negatively a product-related attitude or belief is expressed in eWOM content (Moore & Lafreniere, 2020). Favourable eWOM has been shown to enhance revenues for beauty products (Moe & Trusov, 2011), movies (Liu, 2006), restaurants (Godes & Mayzlin, 2009; Packard & Berger, 2017), etc. Given the practical value of favourable eWOM, it is important to identify factors that shape eWOM favourability.

As pointed out in the above literature review, previous researchers have identified a number of antecedents for eWOM favourability, including (1) sender characteristics—need for uniqueness (Cheema & Kaikati, 2010), religion (Casidy et al., 2021) and maximising goal (or a goal of attaining the best possible outcome (Olson & Ahluwalia, 2021); (2) customer interaction with the focal product or company—product satisfaction (e.g., Brown et al., 2005), commitment to and identification with the company (Brown et al., 2005), and loyalty to the company, trust in the company, and perceived quality and value of the product (de Matos & Rossi, 2008); (3) product

or content characteristics—product anthropomorphism (Chen et al., 2022); (4) recipient characteristics—tie strength (Chen, 2017; Dubois et al., 2016); (5) context characteristics—weather (Brandes & Dover, 2022), geographical and temporal distance (Huang et al., 2016) and prior eWOM content (Park et al., 2021; Schlosser, 2005); and (6) seller characteristics or tactics—advertising (Tirunillai & Tellis, 2017), response to online reviews (Proserpio & Zervas, 2017) and incentives to review (Woolley & Sharif, 2021). Yet, the literature hardly offers any specific guidance for platform design as far as eWOM favourability is concerned. In this regard, the present thesis offers much theoretical value by charting a new course in eWOM research that highlights the relevance of managerial influence in the online review process.

Recently, Woolley and Sharif (2021) have demonstrated that incentives can make review writing more enjoyable and review content more favourable. Their research points to the importance of managing the review writing process. But the review writing process is essentially a "black box" in the eWOM literature. The only pertinent scholarly work is Jung et al.'s (2023) research. Jung and colleagues argue that review writing involves memory retrieval of the consumption experience, which may fade over time. This thesis builds on Jung et al.'s logic to conceptualize a review writing process that is susceptible to managerial influence. Specifically, drawing on CLT, this thesis argues that platform managers can, via managerially controllable platform design, influence two key components of the review writing process—memory retrieval and review creation. The CLT literature is briefly discussed in the following sub-section.

2.3 CONSTRUAL LEVEL THEORY (CLT)

Rooted in action identification theory (Vallacher & Wegner, 1989), the Construal Level Theory (CLT; Trope & Liberman, 2003, 2010) posits that people construct mental representations of targets that vary in the degree of abstraction. In general, high-level construals are abstract and capture the essence or gist of objects and events. Conversely, low-level construals are concrete and emphasise detailed features of objects and events. For instance, consider the following two descriptions of a person's job. "I work in the education sector" and "I work as a marketing lecturer at Curtin University". In the former case, the job is described abstractly or at a high construal level. In the latter case, the job is described concretely or at a low construal level. These two descriptions illustrate that people may construct mental representations of the same target in different degrees of abstraction.

Central to CLT is the idea of psychological distance. Psychological distance refers to "a subjective experience that something is close or far away from the self, here, and now" (Trope & Liberman, 2010, p. 440). Psychological distance encompasses temporal, spatial, probabilistic and social distances (Liberman & Trope, 2014). According to CLT, psychological distance from the target is a major determinant of the level at which people construe objects and events. People tend to construe a target object or event at a lower-level construal if it is physically closer (spatial distance), is happening in the near future (temporal distance), is closely related to the self (social distance), or is real rather than hypothetical (probabilistic distance). For instance, when planning what to pack for a holiday one day before departure, a consumer is likely to consider specific items (e.g., toothbrush). In contrast, when thinking about what to pack for the same holiday several months beforehand, the same consumer is likely to think in general terms (e.g., toiletries).

Over the last two decades, a vast amount of empirical evidence has accumulated in support of this elegantly simple theory (e.g., Chandran & Menon, 2004; Fujita, Henderson, Eng, Trope, & Liberman, 2006; Labroo & Patrick, 2009; Liberman, Sagristano, & Trope, 2002; Liberman & Trope, 2008; Thomas & Tsai, 2012; Todorov, Goren, & Trope, 2007; Trope & Liberman, 2003, 2010; Trope, Liberman & Wakslak, 2007). This rich body of scholarly work has significantly furthered our knowledge regarding the conditions under which people are likely to engage in high- versus low-level construal, such as power (Smith & Trope, 2006), colour imagery (Lee, Deng, Unnava, & Fujita, 2014), regulatory focus (Lee, Keller, & Sternthal, 2010), mood (Gasper & Clore, 2002) and self-view (Spassova & Lee, 2013), and previous research has covered the different dimensions of psychological distance.

In addition, CLT has been used to explain different effects of psychological distance and construal level in the domain of social psychology and consumer behaviour, including (1) judgment (e.g., Henderson & Wakslak, 2010; Lo, Tsarenko, & Tojib, 2019; Maglio, & Trope, 2011), (2) preference (e.g., Amit, Wakslak, & Trope, 2013; Sagristano, Trope, & Liberman, 2002; Yan, Sengupta, & Hong, 2016), (3) performance (e.g., Gasper & Clore, 2002; Krüger, Fiedler, Koch, & Alves, 2014; Lee, Fujita, Deng, & Unnava, 2017; Lee et al., 2010; Liberman et al., 2002; Orvell, Ayduk, Moser, Gelman, & Kross, 2019), (4) evaluation of (a) information at hand (e.g., Han, Duhachek & Agrawal, 2016; Kim & Nan, 2019; Kim, Rao, & Lee, 2009; Nenkov, 2012; Pounders, Lee, & Mackert, 2015; White, MacDonnell, & Dahl, 2011; Zhao & Xie, 2011) and (b) past events (e.g., Huang et al., 2016; Pizzi, Marzocchi, Orsingher, & Zammit, 2015), and (5) representation of (a) information at hand (e.g., Chandran & Menon, 2004), (b) future events (e.g., Liberman et al., 2002; Liberman & Trope, 1998; Spassova & Lee, 2013; Trope & Liberman, 2000, 2003) and (c) past events (i.e., memory; e.g., Semin & Smith, 1999).

Of particular relevance to this thesis are (1) the literature on the interaction between (a) construal level and (b) retrieval and representation of past events and (2) the extant eWOM research that employs CLT. In what follows, both sets of literature are briefly introduced and critically reviewed.

2.3.1 CLT in relation to memory representation, judgment and evaluation

In the early years, CLT scholars explored the interplay between construal level and language use in descriptions of past events. For instance, in their Study 1, Semin and Smith (1999) found that distant events (that happened at least a year ago) are described with abstract language and recent events (that happened no more than two weeks ago) are described with concrete language.

Over the past decade or so, researchers have started investigating the interaction between (1) construal level and (2) judgment and evaluation of past events. In their series of experiments, Kyung, Menon and Trope (2010) show that past events recalled at a low-construal (vs. high-construal) level are felt subjectively closer. Kyung, Menon and Trope (2014) further show that this phenomenon is moderated by people knowledge. Specifically, people with less knowledge feel closer to the events when recalling them at a low-construal (vs. high-construal) level. In a consumer context, Pizzi et al. (2015) show that consumers adopt a high-level perspective when evaluating a service that occurred in the distant past but adopt a low-level perspective when evaluating the same service that occurred in the near past. In other words, concrete attributes weigh more in

the evaluation of a near-past than a distant-past service experience. In their large-scale field study of more than 160,000 online restaurant reviews, Huang et al. (2016) find evidence that consumers tend to craft favourable reviews when they share their consumption experience about a geographically distant (rather than proximate) restaurant after a lengthy delay (rather than immediately). Huang et al.'s analysis of verbatim review content further reveals that this tendency is driven by a high construal level.

Notably, a handful of CLT researchers have delved into the role of construal level in memory retrieval. In particular, Wyer, Perfect and Phal (2010) find that greater psychological distance shifts construal level to a higher level, thereby improving face recognition and increasing retrieval of abstract features. In their meta-analysis of 15 experiments involving more than 1,200 participants, Wyer, Hollins and Pahl (2022) find that construal level has (1) a medium, negative effect on the amount of detail recalled and (2) a medium, positive effect on the amount of abstract information recalled.

In short, the CLT literature has explored the relationship between (1) construal level and (2) representation, judgment and evaluation of past events. While previous research has demonstrated the impact of construal level on memory retrieval and representation of such memory, little is known about the impact of memory retrieval and representation on construal level and evaluation of past events. For instance, given that retrieval cues facilitate memory retrieval (Frankland, Josselyn & Köhler, 2019; Tulving & Pearlstone, 1966), would construal level also be affected? This is an interesting and relevant question in the online review context, since retrieval cues in various forms are at the disposal of platform managers.

Apart from memory retrieval, platform managers can also actively manage the review creation process. For instance, the imposition of different length requirements would lead reviewers to create eWOM content in different degrees of detail. This clearly affects reviewers' representation of past consumption experience (and possibly their construal level)? All in all, CLT sheds new light on the online review process and points to specific research directions (regarding the retrieval of consumption experience and also the creation of a review text by reviewers).

2.3.2 CLT in eWOM research

Some of the prior eWOM research has employed CLT as the primary theory. For instance, drawing on CLT, Aerts et al. (2017a) examine how language abstraction in reviews is influenced by acts of language abstraction in prior reviews and find that language abstraction can be contiguous. The finding suggests that the construal level of prior reviewers is positively correlated with that of subsequent reviewers. On the basis of CLT, Quach et al. (2021) examine the effect of mixed emotions in advertising on eWOM and the moderating role of the narrative person. Their results reveal that a mixed emotional appeal is more effective than pure happiness in spreading positive eWOM when a third (vs. first) person narration is used. Quach and colleagues argue that a high-level construal (by virtue of a third person narration) leads people to focus on positive facets of the advertisement, such as happiness (as opposed to sadness). Huang et al. (2016) show that consumers are more likely to craft favourable reviews when they share their consumption experience about a geographically distant (rather than proximate) restaurant and after a lengthy delay (rather than immediately). The authors reason that when they review their consumption experience about a geographically distant

restaurant and/ or after a lengthy delay, they adopt a high-level construal and hence are more likely to contemplate positive aspects of their consumption experience. Zhao and Xie (2011) examine the interplay of social and temporal distance on consumers' response to eWOM, and they show that eWOM messages from close others are more influential in shifting near-future preferences than those from distant others, whereas eWOM messages from distant others are more influential than those from close others in shifting distant-future preferences. The authors attribute this phenomenon to construal fit; such that eWOM messages are effective in changing their preferences when the construal levels associated with both social and temporal distance are congruent (i.e., both are at a high level or both are at a low level).

The extant eWOM research reviewed above suggests that (a) construal level as manifested by language concreteness is contiguous among reviewers (Aerts et al., 2017a) and (b) a third (as opposed to first) person narration (Quach et al., 2021), physical distance and temporal distance (Huang et al., 2016), and social distance and temporal distance (Zhao & Xie, 2011) induce people to adopt a high-level construal and thus affect eWOM behaviour or response to eWOM. While informative, the extant research does not consider the review writing process from the perspective of CLT. To shed light on this void, this thesis (a) proposes that a review process consists of two key components: memory retrieval and review creation, and (b) explores how (platform-induced) construal level interacts with each component. As such, the thesis adds to both the eWOM literature and the CLT literature.

2.4 RESEARCH GAPS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the literature review, four research gaps (RGs) are identified.

RG1: There is a need to understand how review platform design characteristics influence eWOM favourability.

RG2: There is hardly any useful guidance for the design of review platforms.

RG3: There is a need to conceptualize the online review process (i.e., how reviewers generate online reviews).

RG4: There is a need to understand the role of online review generation (through its impacts on memory retrieval and review creation) in construal level.

Based on the above gaps, the research objectives of this thesis (ROs) are highlighted below:

RO1: To investigate the influence of review platform design characteristics (specifically structural complexity and length requirement) on eWOM favourability as measured by review rating and verbatim positivity (addressing RG1);

RO2: To offer practical guidance to managers looking to understand and harness eWOM on review platforms (addressing RG2);

RO3: To propose a theory-based review writing process (addressing RG3);

RO4: To investigate how the proposed review writing process (by virtue of memory retrieval and review creation) impacts construal level (arguably subject to managerial influence; addressing RG4).

CHAPTER 3
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVLOPMENT

3.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapters 1 and 2 have laid the foundation for conceptualising eWOM communication as an adaptive and manageable phenomenon. In this chapter, a conceptual framework is formally proposed. Drawing on the literature on CLT and eWOM adaptability, this framework views eWOM generation as a cognitive process (that involves both memory retrieval and review creation) subject to the influence of platform design. The two platform features examined in this thesis—structural complexity and length requirement—exert their respective influence on memory retrieval and review creation, as will be explicated below.

The impact of platform design on eWOM behaviour (more specifically, eWOM favourability) is conceptualised based on CLT. The rationale is that a platform design feature may affect the degree to which reviewers feel psychologically distant from their consumption experience, thereby affecting reviewers' construal level in the review writing process and hence eWOM favourability.

3.2 THE REVIEW WRITING PROCESS: MEMORY RETRIEVAL AND REVIEW CREATION

Several theoretical models identify memory retrieval and text creation as the major components of review writing. For instance, in his dual-process model of writing, Galbraith (2009) suggests that writing involves two distinct cognitive systems—the knowledge-retrieval system and the knowledge-constituting system. The former concerns "the retrieval of knowledge from long-term memory" (p. 21) and the latter "synthesises content activated by the knowledge-retrieval process into explicit connected sentences" (p. 23). In other words, Galbraith's dual-process model identifies memory retrieval and text creation as two major components of writing. Extending Galbraith's dual-process model to the online review context, this thesis posits that (a) the review-writing process involves the retrieval of consumption experience (memory retrieval) and the creation of review texts and corresponding ratings (review creation), and (b) managers can affect reviewers' memory retrieval and review creation through platform design.

Survey research suggests that questionnaire design can influence memory retrieval. For instance, Zaller and Feldman (1992) demonstrate that the stop-and-think probes require people to think about different elements of a question and that survey questions with such probes could induce people to retrieve a wider range of memories than they normally would. Other researchers (e.g., Ottati, Riggle, Wyer, Schwarz, & Kuklinski, 1989; Strack & Martin, 1987; Strack, Martin, & Schwarz, 1988; Tourangeau & Rasinski, 1988) demonstrate that questions that occur at one point in a survey may activate concepts that are used as a basis for responses to later questions. Prior eWOM research also suggests that consumers generate more eWOM when they are "cued" more frequently (Berger & Schwartz, 2011). It is conceivable that answering questions about quality dimensions (e.g., price level, service) may trigger reviewers to recall specific aspects of consumption experience. In other words, review platforms may provide retrieval cues to guide reviewers' memory retrieval.

Notably, review writing is not factual reporting of a consumption experience.

According to Redeker (1984), written communication is asynchronous and thus allows more time for message crafting and deliberation (as compared to oral communication). Rettie (2009) further argues that this asynchrony empowers word choice. With many review platforms giving clear-cut writing instructions (e.g., upper or lower word limit), reviewers would have to craft a concise or elaborate message accordingly. Hence, the creation of a review is subject to the influence of length requirement and likely other platform design features. In the following sub-section, two focal independent variables examined in this thesis—structural complexity and length requirement—are delineated.

3.3 TWO DISTINGUISHING REVIEW PLATFORM FEATURES: STRUCTURAL COMPLEXITY AND LENGTH REQUIREMENT

Structural complexity is a major distinguishing feature of review platforms. The review task may be structurally simple (structurally complex), requiring reviewers to answer few (many) questions about the reviewed products and services. For example, *Yelp* is structurally simple and only provides a text box for review writing. In contrast, *TripAdvisor* is structurally complex and requires reviewers to answer a series of questions about hotel attributes and assess a number of quality dimensions. For all practical purposes, the questions asked in a review task are instrumental in facilitating memory retrieval in much the same way as retrieval cues (Frankland et al., 2019; Tulving & Pearlstone, 1966).

Apart from structural complexity, most review platforms also impose specific length requirements. For instance, *MangoPlate* imposes an upper word limit, while *HomeStars* imposes a lower word limit. In the case of an upper word limit, reviewers are instructed to write a review with at most a certain number of words/characters. So reviewers would tend to generate brief review content. In the case of a lower word limit, reviewers are instructed to write a review with at least a certain number of words/characters. In this case, reviewers are likely to generate more lengthy and detailed review content. As a result of the length constraint, reviewers may present their retrieved consumption experience in brief, general terms or in elaborate detail. Sections 3.4 and 3.5 lay the foundation for two sets of hypotheses, one concerning memory retrieval (by virtue of structural complexity) and review creation (by virtue of length requirement).

3.4 HYPOTHESES CONCERNING MEMORY RETRIEVAL (H1 – H2)

In this thesis, I posit that review platforms with structurally complex (vs. structurally simple) review tasks are expected to induce lower eWOM favourability. The rationale is twofold. First, as discussed above, questions about product attributes are instrumental in facilitating memory retrieval in much the same way as retrieval cues (e.g., Frankland et al., 2019). By answering many (vs. few) questions about specific product attributes, reviewers are more likely to recall many perceptual and sensory details of their consumption experience, including sights, sounds, tastes, and smells, which heighten the vividness of the consumption experience (Chandran & Menon, 2004) and make the experience psychologically closer (Mrkva, Travers, & Van Boven 2018). According to CLT (Trope & Liberman, 2010), as psychological distance decreases (increases), people tend to rely on a lower-level, concrete (higher-level, abstract) construal. Second, by answering different questions about specific product attributes, reviewers are more likely to recall subordinate categories of consumption

experience (e.g., food taste, cleanliness). According to CLT (Trope & Liberman, 2010), high- (vs. low-) level construals are associated with superordinate- (vs. subordinate-) categories, respectively. Thus, it follows that a structurally complex (vs. structurally simple) review task will lead reviewers to adopt a lower-level construal.

Several studies on CLT have found that a low-level (high-level) construal is associated with the use of negative (positive) information. The rationale is twofold. First, CLT holds that people with a low-level construal focus on subordinate features, while those with a high-level construal focus on superordinate features (Trope et al., 2007). In judgment and decision making, negative information is subordinate to positive information, because the importance of negative information depends on whether positive information is present more than whether negative information is present (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Take medical service as an example. A patient would consider the potential side effects (negative information) of a medical treatment only when the treatment has health benefits (positive information). If the treatment has no benefit, the potential side effects are irrelevant to deciding whether to receive the treatment. Given that negative information is subordinate to positive information, it should weigh more heavily on judgement when construal level is low (vs. high) (see Eyal, Liberman, Trope, & Walther, 2004; Herzog, Hansen, & Wanke, 2007; Williams, Stein, & Galguera, 2014). Second, as Trope and Liberman articulate in their seminal work, a high-level construal prompts people to focus on the end state (goal) of an action, while a low-level construal induces people to consider the means used to reach a goal. As previously mentioned, the means used to achieve a goal are generally viewed as less desirable than the goal (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Custers & Aarts, 2005). To illustrate, restricted eating (a means) is less desirable than weight loss (a goal) for most people. Given the higher negativity of a means than a goal, a low-level (vs. high-level) construal are more likely to lead to a focus on negative information.

As previously argued, a structurally complex (vs. structurally simple) review task is more likely to lead reviewers to adopt a lower-level construal. Given that a lower-level construal makes negative information more salient and that a typical consumption experience contains at least some negative aspects, a lower-level construal should lead reviewers to recall more negative aspects of their consumption experience and generate review content that is lower in eWOM favourability. These effects and mediating mechanisms are summarized in the following hypotheses.

H1: A structurally complex (vs. simple) review task induces a pattern of eWOM behavior that is lower in eWOM favourability.

H2: The effect predicted in H1 is mediated by construal level. Specifically, a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task leads to a lower construal level, which in turn leads to lower eWOM favourability.

3.5 HYPOTHESES CONCERNING REVIEW CREATION (H3 – H4)

In this thesis, I further postulate that review platforms requiring a long (vs. short) review are expected to induce lower eWOM favourability. First, with a long (vs. short) length requirement mandating a more lengthy review, reviewers are more likely to write a review that contains rich perceptual and sensory details of their consumption experience (Aerts, Smits, & Verlegh, 2017b). Such details heighten the perceived

vividness of the consumption experience (Chandran & Menon, 2004), which in turn makes the experience psychologically closer (D'Argembeau & Linden, 2004). According to a series of robust findings (e.g., Liberman & Trope, 1998), a long (vs. short) length requirement that reduces psychological distance should lead reviewers to adopt a lower-level, more concrete construal.

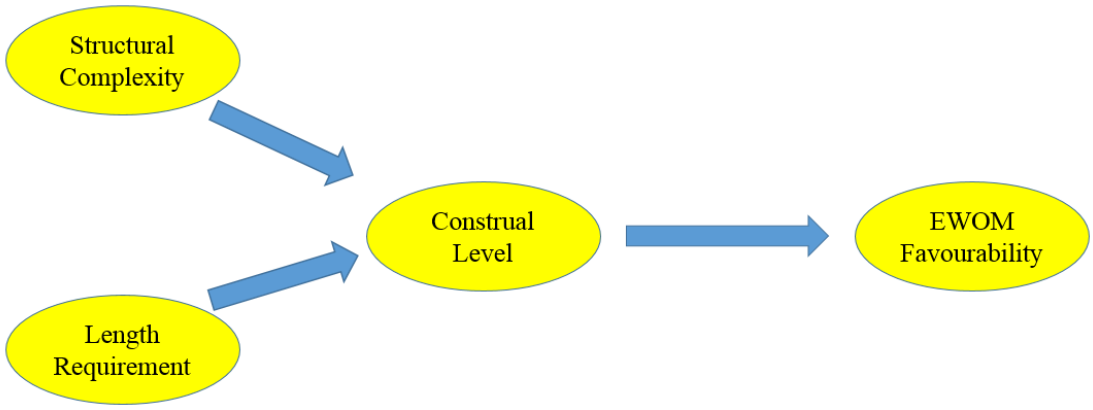
Second, longer reviews often include more product details, and more contextual information about when, where, and how the product was consumed (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). To the extent that low-level construals are more contextualised (Liberman & Trope, 1998; Yan, Sengupta, & Hong, 2016), a long (vs. short) length requirement should lead reviewers to adopt a lower-level, more concrete construal. In summary, since a lower-level construal makes negative information more salient in the mind and a typical consumption experience contains at least some negative aspects, a long (vs. short) length requirement should lead reviewers to generate review content that is lower in eWOM favourability. These predictions are stated formally in the following hypotheses.

H3: A long (vs. short) length requirement induces a pattern of eWOM behaviour that is lower in eWOM favourability.

H4: The effect predicted in H3 is mediated by construal level. Specifically, a long (vs. short) length requirement leads to a lower construal level, which in turn leads to lower eWOM favourability.

Altogether, this thesis tests four hypotheses that are encapsulated in the conceptual model in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: The Conceptual Model



CHAPTER 4
OVERVIEW OF EMPIRICAL STUDIES

As a synthesis, the predictions are that a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task and a long (vs. short) length requirement each lead reviewers to write reviews lower in eWOM favourability. Moreover, situationally induced changes in construal level are expected to be the mediating mechanisms.

A multimethod approach was used to examine the hypotheses listed in Chapter 3. Reported in Chapter 5, the first empirical study package (Studies 1 through 3) aimed to test the basic effects of platform design features on eWOM favourability. Study 1 examined the effect of structural complexity on eWOM favourability. Study 2 tested the joint effects of structural complexity and length requirement on eWOM favourability. Study 3 replicated the first two studies' findings and strengthened internal validity in a more controlled setting.

Reported in Chapter 6, the second empirical study package (Studies 4 and 5) aimed to (1) further demonstrate the effects of structural complexity and length requirement and (2) illuminate the role of construal level through both mediation (Study 4) and moderation (Study 5) analysis. To account for a potential confound, temporal proximity of the reviewed consumption experience was controlled for in Study 4 (see Huang et al., 2016). As in Studies 1 – 3, mood state was also controlled for in Studies 4 and 5 (see Gorn, Goldberg, & Basu, 1993).

The third empirical study package, or Study 6, is reported in Chapter 7. Using real-world review data, the study tested for the generalizability of the controlled experimental results regarding the negative effect of structural complexity on eWOM favourability.

Table 2 summarises the six studies and their findings. To determine the robustness of the hypothesised effects across studies, a single-paper meta-analysis (SPM) was performed following McShane and Böckenholt (2017). SPM results are reported in Chapter 8.

TABLE 2: Empirical summary

Study	Design	Purpose(s)	Main Findings
1	• Study 1 was a 2-cell (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) between-subjects design. • Participants shared their real prior consumption experience in a campus restaurant. Their reviews were measured and analysed in terms of eWOM favourability (as in all other studies).	• By assessing reviews of consumers' real prior consumption experience, Study 1 aimed to test H1, which pertains to the effect of structural complexity on eWOM favourability.	H1 was supported.
2	• Study 2 was a (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) between-subjects design. • Participants shared their real prior consumption experience in a campus restaurant.	• By assessing reviews of consumers' real prior consumption experience, Study 2 aimed to jointly test H1 and H3, which pertains to the effect of length requirement on eWOM favourability.	H1 and H3 were supported.
3	• Study 3 was a 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) between-subjects design. • Participants watched a 7-minute YouTube video clip about the travel experience on an airline and then shared their second-hand reviews of the airline.	• By "standardizing" the consumption experience, Study 3 aimed to replicate the results of Study 2 in a controlled setting high in internal validity.	H1 and H3 were supported.
4	• Study 4 was a 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) between-subjects design. • Research participants shared their real prior consumption experience at *McDonald's*. • Apart from eWOM favourability, participants' construal level was measured.	• By assessing reviews of consumers' real prior consumption experience, Study 4 replicated previous findings supporting H1 and H3. • Though mediation analysis, Study 4 aimed to test H2 and H4, both of which pertain to construal level as the process mechanism for H1 and H3.	H1 to H4 were supported.
5	• Study 5 was a 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) x 2 (construal level: low vs. high) between-subjects design. • Participants shared their real prior consumption experience at *McDonald's*. • Unlike Study 4, participants' construal level was manipulated rather than measured.	• By assessing reviews of consumers' real prior consumption experience, Study 5 replicated previous findings supporting H1 and H3. • Though moderation analysis, Study 5 aimed to test H2 and H4, both of which pertain to construal level as the process mechanism for H1 and H3.	H1 to H4 were supported.
6	• Study 6 was a field study of naturalistic reviews scraped from two major online review platforms, *Yelp* and *Tripadvisor*.	• Using real-world secondary data, Study 6 aimed to test for the effect of structural complexity on eWOM favourability in a naturalistic setting.	H1 was supported.

CHAPTER 5
EMPIRICAL STUDY PACKAGE ONE—TESTING THE BASIC EFFECTS

5.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The first empirical study package is composed of three experimental studies to test the hypothesised effects of platform design on eWOM favourability. Study 1 was designed to test H1, which states that a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task leads to a pattern of eWOM behavior that is lower in eWOM favourability. Extending Study 1, Study 2 simultaneously tested H1 and H3. H3 states that a long (vs. short) length requirement leads to a pattern of eWOM behavior that is lower in eWOM favourability. The first two studies assessed reviews of consumers' real prior consumption experiences, attesting to the robustness of the hypothesised effects. Putting an emphasis on internal validity, Study 3 held the consumption experience of the reviewed product constant (Woolley & Sharif, 2021).

5.2 STUDY 1

5.2.1 Participants and procedure

One-hundred and fifty undergraduates from a Hong Kong university (60 % female; mean age = 20) participated in the study in exchange for extra course credit. The study was carried out in a web-based online environment, and all stimuli and measurement items were presented in English. The participants were asked to write a review of their recent dining experience in a campus restaurant. They were randomly assigned to conditions in a two-cell (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) between-subjects design.

Structural complexity was manipulated with the number of questions in the review task. In the structurally complex condition, participants answered five questions regarding different dimensions of a recent dining experience (food taste, food variety, service, hygiene, and décor) before writing a review and rating the overall dining experience on a 10-point scale. In the structurally simple condition, participants only wrote a review and gave a review rating of their dining experience.

After completing the review task, participants responded to a measure of mood (on a scale from -5 to +5, with -5 being very unpleasant and +5 being very pleasant) and answered a few demographic questions. They were subsequently thanked and debriefed. Ten participants (a) did not identify the focal restaurant they were required to review or (b) wrote gibberish in the text box, leaving 140 for further analysis.

5.2.2 Manipulation check

A manipulation check for structural complexity was performed in a pretest with 62 participants from the same population. On a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree), participants responded to the following items: (1) "The above review task consists of many sub-tasks;" and (2) "The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience along a number of dimensions." The two items were averaged to form a measure of structural complexity ($r = .87$). Confirming the manipulation, participants in the structurally complex condition ($M_{complex} = 5.22, SD = 1.13$) perceived the review task as more complex than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 3.17, SD = 1.29; \mathrm{t}(60) = -6.64, \mathrm{p} < .001$).

5.2.3 Results

Review rating

Consistent with H1, participants in the structurally complex condition reported lower review rating ($M_{complex} = 4.73, SD = 2.31$) than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 6.13, SD = 2.69; t(138) = 3.33, p < .001$) with an effect size of .558 and a statistical power of 94.9%.

Review text

Review text was run through the Evaluative Lexicon (EL; Rocklage, Rucker, & Nordgren, 2018) to obtain a verbatim positivity score for each review. Since EL generated missing values for some participants, the values were replaced by the cell mean (Tsikriktsis, 2005). Consistent with the prediction in H1, participants in the structurally complex condition had lower verbatim positivity ($M_{complex} = 4.03, SD = 1.91$) than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 5.62, SD = 1.92; t(138) = 4.92, p < .001$) with an effect size of .83 and a statistical power of 99.9%.

Ancillary analyses

As ancillary analyses, a series of ANCOVAs showed that the aforementioned results pertaining to the negative effect of structural complexity on eWOM favourability persisted after controlling for mood. For details, see appendix 1A.

5.2.4 Discussion

Study 1 provides empirical support for the hypothesis that a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task is conductive to less favourable eWOM. Structural complexity impacts memory retrieval, which is only part of the review-writing process. To demonstrate the influence of platform design on the whole review-writing process, Study 2 was conducted to simultaneously examine the effects of structural complexity (which impacts memory retrieval) and length requirement (which impacts review creation) on eWOM favourability. In other words, Study 2 aimed to test H1 and H3.

5.3 STUDY 2

5.3.1 Participants and procedure

One-hundred and seventy undergraduates from a Hong Kong university (64% female; mean age = 20) participated in the study in exchange for extra course credit. The study was carried out in a web-based online environment, and all stimuli and measurement items were presented in English. The participants were asked to write a review of their recent dining experience in a campus restaurant. They were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) between-subjects design.

Structural complexity was manipulated in the same way as in Study 1. As for length requirement, the median (25.0) and average (30.16) word count of the reviews written by participants in Study 1 were used as benchmarks. Based on these benchmarks, participants in Study 2 were required to write a review using either 5 to 10 words (short-length condition) or at least 40 words (long-length condition).

As in Study 1, participants wrote a review and gave a review rating (on a 10-point scale) of their dining experience. Then they responded to a measure of mood and

answered a few demographic questions. They were subsequently thanked and debriefed. Eighteen participants (a) did not identify the focal restaurant they were required to review or (b) wrote gibberish in the text box, leaving 152 for further analysis.

5.3.2 Manipulation checks

Manipulation checks were conducted in a pretest with 98 participants from the same population. On a 7-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 7= strongly agree), participants responded to the following items: (1) "The above review task consists of many sub-tasks;" (2) "The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience along a number of dimensions;" (3) "The above review task requires you to write a short review (reverse-coded);" and (4) "The above review task requires you to write a long review." The first two items were averaged to form a measure of structural complexity($r = .71$), with a higher score indicating a higher degree of perceived structural complexity. The last two were averaged to a measure of length requirement $(r = .69)$, with a higher score indicating a higher degree of perceived length requirement.

A 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) by 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) ANOVA on perceived structural complexity only revealed a main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,94) = 15.06, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .138$) with an effect size of .4 and a statistical power of 97.5%. As expected, participants in the structurally complex condition ($M_{complex} = 4.97, SD = 0.91$) perceived the review task as more complex than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 4.14, SD = 1.19$), with higher score indicating higher degree of perceived structural complexity. Neither a main effect of length requirement [$F(1,94) = 1.64, p > .20, \eta_p^2 = .02$] nor an interactive effect of structural complexity and length requirement [$F(1,94) = 1.34, p > .20, \eta_p^2 = .01$] was significant. These results indicate that the structural complexity manipulation only impacted structural complexity perceptions (but not length requirement perceptions).

On the other hand, a 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) ANOVA on perceived length requirement only revealed a main effect of length requirement ($F(1,94) = 12.483, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .117$) with an effect size of 0.36 and a statistical power of 94.6%. As expected, participants in the long-length condition ($M_{long} = 2.88, SD = 0.98$) were more likely to think that they were required to write a long review than those in the short-length condition ($M_{short} = 2.21, SD = 0.86$), with higher score indicating higher degree of perceived length requirement. Neither a main effect of structural complexity [$F(1,94) = 1.31, p > .20, \eta_p^2 = .01$] nor an interactive effect of structural complexity and length requirement [$F(1,94) = 2.38, p > .10, , \eta_p^2 = .03$] was significant. These results indicate that the length requirement manipulation only impacted length requirement perceptions (but not structural complexity perceptions).

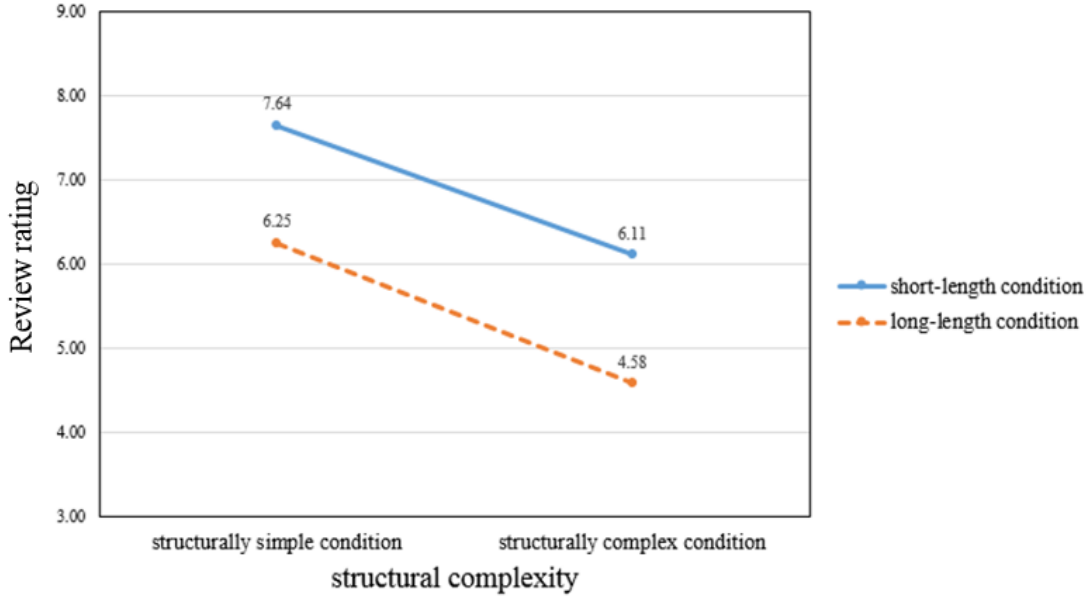
5.3.3 Results

Review rating

A 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) by 2 (length requirement: long vs. short) ANOVA on review rating yielded a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,148) = 26.863, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .154$) with an effect size of .43 and

a statistical power of 99.9%. Consistent with H1, participants in the structurally complex condition reported lower review ratings ($M_{complex} = 5.35; SD = 2.15$) than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 7.01; SD = 1.89$). The analysis also yielded a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,148) = 22.391, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .131$) with an effect size of .39 and a statistical power of 99.7%. In line with H3, participants in the long-length condition reported lower review ratings ($M_{long} = 5.42; SD = 2.08$) than those in the short-length condition ($M_{short} = 6.95; SD = 2.01$). The structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant ($F < 1$). In other words, there was no interactive effect of structural complexity and length requirement on review rating. Figure 2 visualises the data pattern.

FIGURE 2:
Review rating as a function of structural complexity and length requirement (Study 2)



Review text

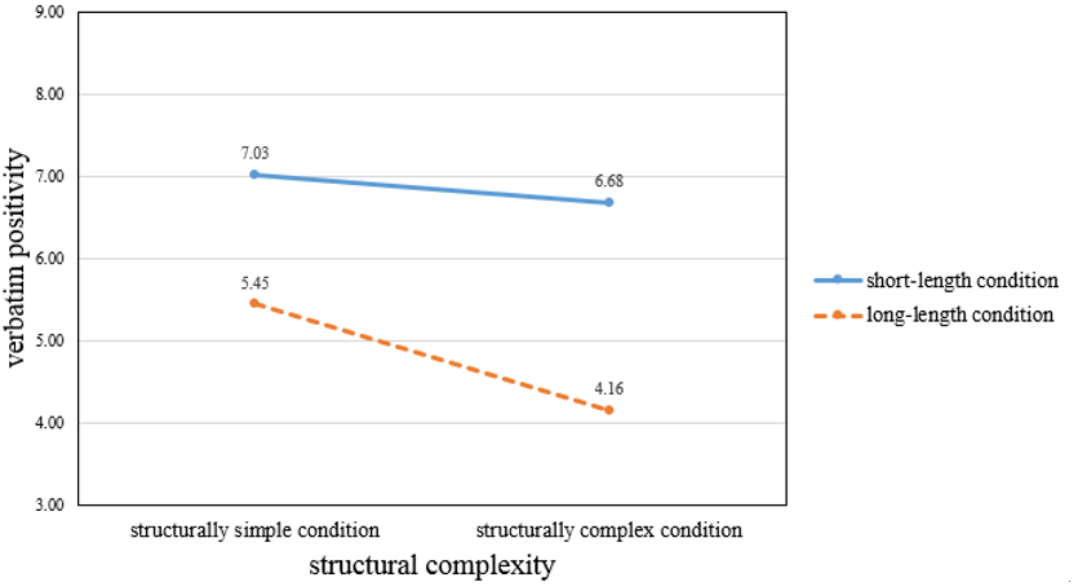
As in Study 1, review text was run through the Evaluative Lexicon (EL; Rocklage et al., 2018) to obtain a verbatim positivity score for each review. The missing values generated by EL were replaced by the cell mean (Tsikriktsis, 2005). A 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) by 2 (length requirement: long vs. short) ANOVA on verbatim positivity score yielded a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,148) = 8.577, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .055$) with an effect size of .24 and a statistical power of 84.0%. In support of H1, participants in the structurally complex condition showed lower verbatim positivity ($M_{complex} = 5.42; SD = 2.21$) than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 6.32; SD = 1.8$). The analysis also yielded a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,148) = 53.501, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .266$)with an effect size of .602 and a statistical power of 100%. In line with H3, participants in the long-length condition showed lower verbatim positivity ($M_{long} = 4.8; SD = 2.16$) than those in the short-length condition ($M_{short} = 6.87; SD = 1.32$). The structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant [$F(1,148) = 2.838, p > .05, , \eta_p^2 = .019$] with an effect size of .14 and a statistical power of 39.9%. In other words, there was no interactive effect of structural

complexity and length requirement on verbatim positivity. Figure 3 visualises the data pattern.

Ancillary analyses

As ancillary analyses, a series of ANCOVAs showed that the aforementioned results pertaining to the negative effects of structural complexity and length requirement on eWOM favourability persisted after controlling for mood. For details, see appendix 1B.

FIGURE 3: Verbatim positivity as a function of structural complexity and length requirement (Study 2)



5.3.4 Discussion

Study 2 provides empirical support for the hypotheses (H1 and H3) that structural complexity and length requirement each affect eWOM favourability. Together, the first two studies assessed reviews of consumers' real prior consumption experiences, attesting to the robustness of the hypothesised effects. While these empirical results are encouraging, one could wonder whether they could, by chance, have been driven by consumers' real experiences rather than the platform design features of interest. To directly test the causal impact of structural complexity and length requirement, the next study held the quality of the reviewed product constant (Woolley & Sharif, 2021).

5.4 STUDY 3

5.4.1 Participants and procedure

One hundred and thirty-eight undergraduates from a Hong Kong university (64% female; mean age = 20) participated in the study in exchange for extra course credit. The study was carried out in a web-based online environment, and all stimuli and measurement items were presented in English. Before random assignment, participants learned that they would watch and review a 7-minute YouTube video clip pertaining to Hong Kong Airlines (a local airline), and that their review would help future consumers make purchase decisions. They were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long)

between-subjects design. Structural complexity and length requirement were manipulated in the same way as in Study 2. As in previous studies, participants wrote a review and rated their dining experience (on a 10-point scale) before they responded to (a) manipulation check items and (b) mood items. Afterwards, they answered a few demographic questions. They were subsequently thanked and debriefed. Fifteen participants (a) did not identify the focal airline they were required to review or (b) wrote gibberish in the text box, leaving 123 for further analysis.

5.4.2 Manipulation Checks

A 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) by 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) ANOVA on perceived structural complexity[2] only revealed a main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,119) = 5.546, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .045$) with an effect size of .65 and a statistical power of 66.5%[3]. As expected, participants in the structurally complex condition ($M_{complex} = 4.56, SD = 0.82$) perceived the review task as more complex than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 4.15, SD = 1.05$), with a higher score indicating a higher degree of perceived structural complexity. . Neither a main effect of length requirement [$F(1,119) = .19, p > .60, \eta_p^2 = .001$] nor an interactive effect of structural complexity and length requirement [$F(1,119) = 2.04, p > .10, \eta_p^2 = .02$] was significant. These results indicate that the structural complexity manipulation only impacted structural complexity perceptions (but not length requirement perceptions).

On the other hand, a 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) ANOVA on perceived length requirement[4] only revealed a main effect of length requirement ($F(1,119) = 6.759, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .054$) with an effect size of .24 and a statistical power of 74.8%[5]. As expected, participants in the long-length condition ($M_{long} = 3, SD = 0.91$) were more likely to think that they were required to write a long review than those in the short-length condition ($M_{short} = 2.56, SD = 0.98$), with a higher score indicating a higher degree of perceived length requirement. Neither a main effect of structural complexity [$F(1,119) = .187, p > .60, \eta_p^2 = .002$] nor an interactive effect of structural complexity and length requirement [$F(1,119) = .28, p > .50, , \eta_p^2 = .002$] was significant. These results indicate that the length requirement manipulation only impacted length requirement perceptions (but not structural complexity perceptions).

5.4.3 Main Tests

Review rating

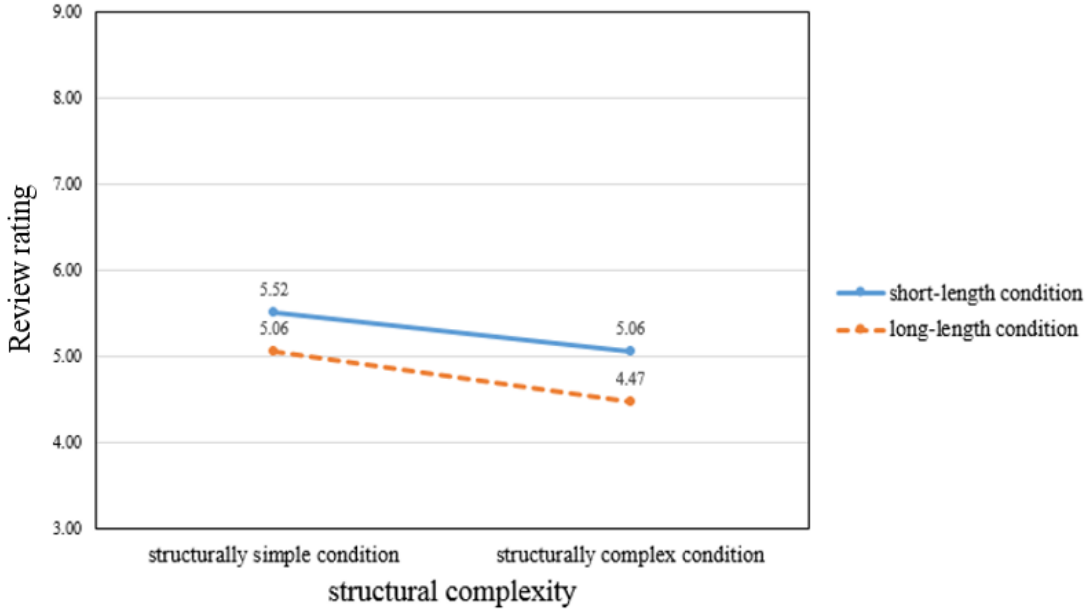
A 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) by 2 (length requirement: long vs. short) ANOVA on review rating yielded a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,119) = 4.362, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .035$) with an effect size of .19 and a statistical power of 54.4%[6]. Consistent with H1, participants in the structurally

[2] The same measure of **perceived structural complexity** was used as in previous studies.
[3] This statistical power was lower than the recommended 80% power. To obtain that statistical power, a sample size of about 180 would be needed.
[4] The same measure of **perceived word count requirement** was used as in previous studies.
[5] This statistical power was lower than the recommended 80% power. To obtain that statistical power, a sample size of about 140 would be needed.
[6] This statistical power was lower than the recommended 80% power. To obtain that statistical power, a sample size of about 220 would be needed.

complex condition reported lower review ratings ($M_{complex} = 4.77; SD = 1.45$) than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 5.29; SD = 1.36$). The analysis also yielded a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,119) = 4.362, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .035$) with an effect size of .19 and a statistical power of 54.4%.[7] In line with H3, participants in the long-length condition reported lower review ratings ($M_{long} = 4.77; SD = 1.45$) than those in the short-length condition ($M_{short} = 5.29; SD = 1.36$). The structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant ($F < 1$). In other words, there was no interactive effect of structural complexity and length requirement on review rating. Figure 4 visualises the data pattern.

FIGURE 4:

Review rating as a function of structural complexity and length requirement (Study 3)



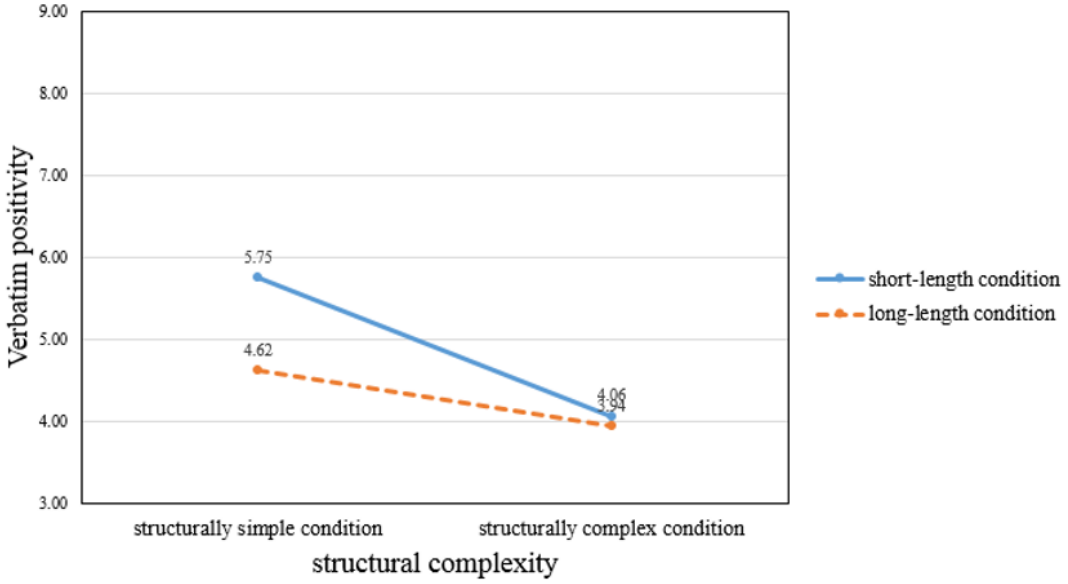
Review text

As in previous studies, review text was run through the Evaluative Lexicon (EL; Rocklage et al., 2018) to obtain a verbatim positivity score for each review. The missing values generated by EL were replaced by the cell mean (Tsikriktsis, 2005). A 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) by 2 (length requirement: long vs. short) ANOVA on verbatim positivity yielded a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,119) = 20.715, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .148$) with an effect size of .42 and a statistical power of 99.5%. Consistent with H1a, participants in the structurally complex condition had lower verbatim positivity ($M_{complex} = 4; SD = 1.19$) than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 5.19; SD = 1.74$). The analysis also yielded a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,119) = 5.845, p < 0.05, \eta_p^2 = .047$)with an effect size of .22 and a statistical power of 68.5%. In line with H2a, participants in the long-length condition showed lower verbatim positivity ($M_{long} = 4.28; SD = 1.69$) than those in the short-length condition ($M_{short} = 4.91; SD = 1.45$). The structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant [$F(1,119) = 3.723, p > .05, , \eta_p^2 = .03$] with an effect size of .18 and a

[7] This statistical power was lower than the recommended 80% power. To obtain that statistical power, a sample size of about 140 would be needed.

statistical power of 49%. In other words, there was no interactive effect of structural complexity and length requirement on verbatim positivity. Figure 5 visualises the data pattern.

FIGURE 5: Verbatim positivity as a function of structural complexity and length requirement (Study 3)



Ancillary analyses

As ancillary analyses, a series of ANCOVAs showed that the aforementioned results pertaining to the negative effects of structural complexity and length requirement on eWOM favourability persisted after controlling for mood. For details, see appendix 1C.

5.4.4 Discussion

Holding the reviewed product constant, Study 3 again confirmed the causal impact of structural complexity and length requirement on eWOM favourability. The highly controlled set-up greatly strengthened the internal validity of the study as compared to previous ones.

5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The first empirical study package established a pattern of the influence of platform design features (structural complexity and length requirement) on eWOM favourability. Specifically, consistent with H1 and H3, the study package provided support for the predictions that (1) a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task and (2) a long (vs. short) length requirement each lead to eWOM behaviour that is lower in eWOM favourability. While illuminating, this study package did not provide evidence for construal level as the hypothesised psychological mechanism underlying the findings. The second empirical study package, reported in the next chapter, offered triangulating support for the proposed mechanism underlying the effects observed in the first empirical study package.

CHAPTER 6
EMPIRICAL STUDIES PACKAGE TWO— TESTING THE MEDIATION MECHANISM

6.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The second empirical study package is composed of two experimental studies to illustrate the psychological mechanism underlying the observed effects in the previous studies. Through mediation (Study 4) and moderation (Study 5) analyses, these studies offered triangulating evidence for the mediating role of construal level in regulating consumers' eWOM behaviour.

6.2 STUDY 4

6.2.1 Participants and procedure

A total of one hundred and sixty Prolific workers (42% female; mean age = 34) participated in the study in exchange for a small monetary reward. All stimuli and measurement items were presented in English. The participants were asked to write a review of their recent dining experience at *McDonald's*. They were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) between-subjects design.

Structural complexity and length requirement were manipulated in the same way as in Study 2. Also, as in previous studies, participants wrote a review and gave a review rating (on a 10-point scale) of their dining experience. Then they responded to (a) manipulation check items, (b) construal level items, (c) mood items, and (d) an item on how long ago the dining experience occurred. Afterwards, they answered a few demographic questions. They were subsequently thanked and debriefed. The manipulation check items were identical to those used in Study 2 pretest.

The Behavioral Identification Form (BIF: Vallacher & Wegner 1989), a 25-item questionnaire, was used to measure participants' construal levels. Each item asked the participants to indicate what an action (e.g., locking a door) meant to them by choosing one of two options corresponding to either a high-level representation (e.g., securing the house) or a low-level representation (e.g., putting a key in the lock). Each answer was coded as 1 if participants chose the high-level construal representation or 0 if they chose the low-level construal representation. The responses to the 25 questions were summed up for each participant, yielding a BIF score. Higher BIF scores indicate higher construal levels.

Nine participants (a) did not identify the focal restaurant (*McDonald's*) they were required to review, (b) reported that they did not visit the restaurant in the past year, or (c) wrote gibberish or non-English in the text box, leaving 151 for further analysis.

6.2.2 Manipulation checks

A 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) by 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) ANOVA on perceived structural complexity only revealed a main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,147) = 20.838, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .124$) with an effect size of .54 and a statistical power of 100%. As expected, participants in the structurally complex condition ($M_{complex} = 4.46, SD = 1.29$) perceived the review task as more complex than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 3.41, SD = 1.5$), with a higher score indicating a higher degree of perceived structural complexity. Neither a main effect of length requirement [$F(1,147) = 1.21, p > .20, \eta_p^2 = .08$] nor

an interactive effect of structural complexity and length requirement [$F(1,147) = 2.80, p > .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$] was significant. These results indicate that the structural complexity manipulation only impacted structural complexity perceptions (but not length requirement perceptions).

On the other hand, a 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) ANOVA on perceived length requirement[8] only revealed a main effect of length requirement ($F(1,147) = 73.56, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .334$) with an effect size of $.71$ and a statistical power of 100%. As expected, participants in the long-length condition ($M_{long} = 3.05, SD = 1.61$) were more likely to think that they were required to write a long review than those in the short-length condition ($M_{short} = 1.44, SD = 0.52$), with a higher score indicating a higher degree of perceived length requirement. Neither a main effect of structural complexity [$F(1,147) = 3.20, p > .05, \eta_p^2 = .02$] nor an interactive effect of structural complexity and length requirement [$F(1,147) = 2.28, p > .10, , \eta_p^2 = .02$] was significant. These results indicate that the length requirement manipulation only impacted length requirement perceptions (but not structural complexity perceptions).

6.2.3 Tests for the basic effects

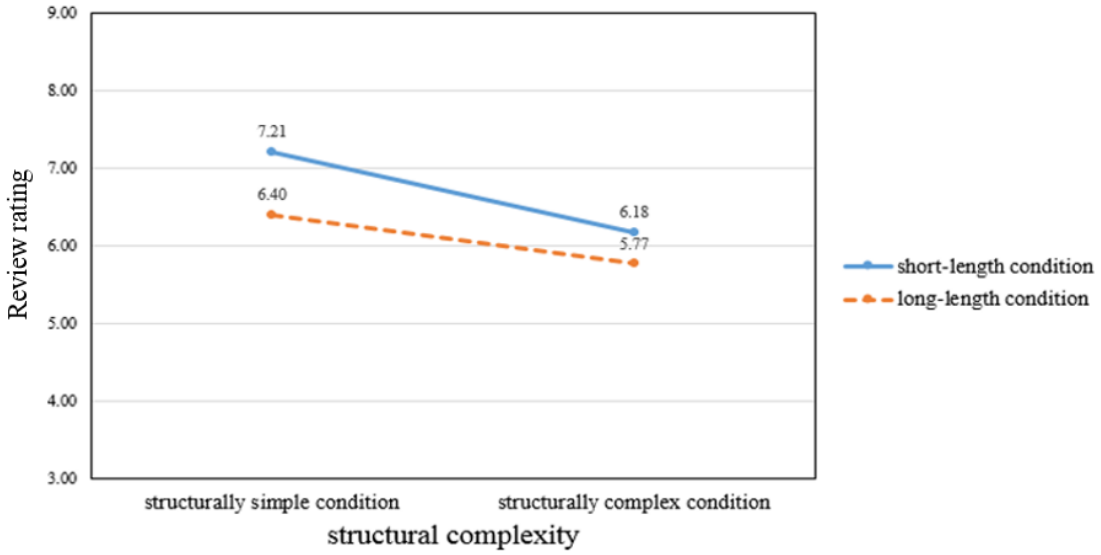
Review rating

A 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) x 2 (length requirement: long vs. short) ANOVA on review rating yielded a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,147) = 7.912, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = .051$) with an effect size of $.23$ and a statistical power of 80.8%. Consistent with H1, participants in the structurally complex condition reported lower review ratings ($M_{complex} = 5.97; SD = 1.83$) than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 6.82; SD = 1.81$). The analysis also yielded a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,147) = 4.318, p < 0.05, \eta_p^2 = .029$) with an effect size of $.17$ and a statistical power of 56%.[9] In line with H3, participants in the long-length condition reported lower review ratings ($M_{long} = 6.07; SD = 1.89$) than those in the short-length condition ($M_{short} = 6.7; SD = 1.79$). The structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant ($F < 1$). In other words, there was no interactive effect of structural complexity and length requirement on review rating. Figure 6 visualises the data pattern.

[8] **Perceived word count requirement** is based on the following two items, measured on a 7-point Likert-scale, with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 7 being "strongly agree". (1) The above review task required you to write a short review (reverse-coded); (2) The above review task required you to write a long review.

[9] This statistical power was lower than the recommended 80% power. To obtain that statistical power, a sample size of about 270 would be needed.

FIGURE 6:
Review rating as a function of structural complexity and length requirement (Study 4)

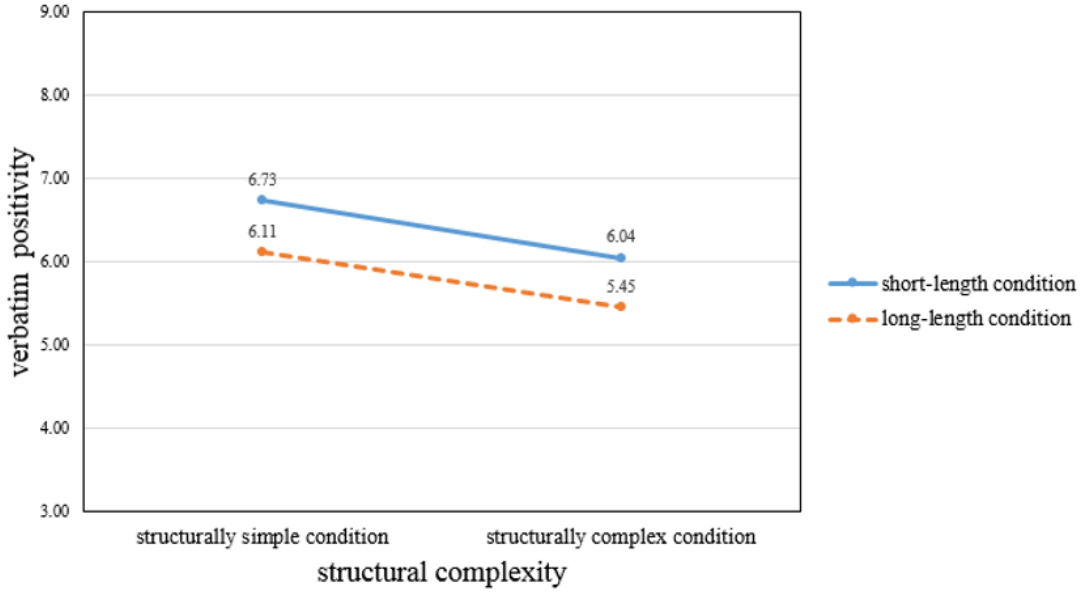


Review text

As in previous studies, review text was run through the Evaluative Lexicon (EL; Rocklage et al., 2018) to obtain a verbatim positivity score for each review. The missing values generated by EL were replaced by the cell mean (Tsikriktsis, 2005). A 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) by 2 (length requirement: long vs. short) ANOVA on verbatim positivity yielded a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,147) = 6.833, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .044$) with an effect size of .22 and a statistical power of 94%. Consistent with H1, participants in the structurally complex condition had lower verbatim positivity ($M_{complex} = 5.74; SD = 1.57$) than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 6.44; SD = 1.63$). The analysis also yielded a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,147) = 5.5, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .036$) with an effect size of .19 and a statistical power of 65.5%.[10] In line with H3, participants in the long-length condition showed lower verbatim positivity ($M_{long} = 5.76; SD = 1.78$) than those in the short-length condition ($M_{short} = 6.39; SD = 1.43$). The structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant ($F < 1$). In other words, there was no interactive effect of structural complexity and length requirement on verbatim positivity. Figure 7 visualises the data pattern.

[10] This statistical power was lower than the recommended 80% power. To obtain that statistical power, a sample size of about 220 would be needed.

FIGURE 7: Verbatim positivity as a function of structural complexity and length requirement (Study 4)



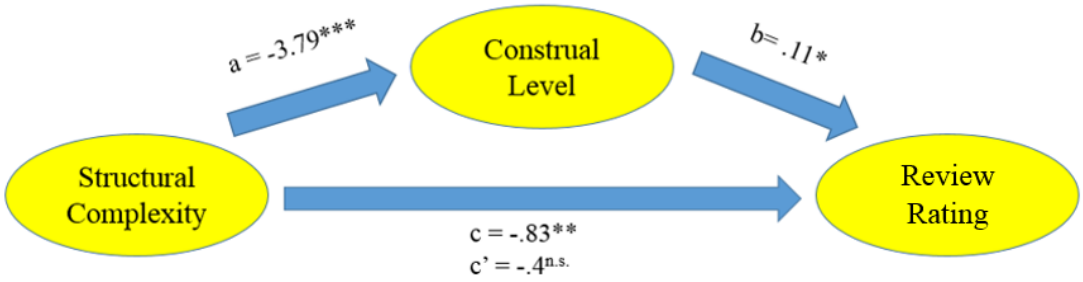
Ancillary analyses

As ancillary analyses, a series of ANCOVAs showed that the aforementioned results pertaining to the negative effects of structural complexity and length requirement on eWOM favourability persisted after controlling for temporal proximity. For details, see appendix 1D.

6.2.4 Mediation tests for the effect of structural complexity on review rating

To assess the mediating role of construal level in driving the effect of structural complexity on review rating, a mediation analysis was conducted with 5,000 bootstrapped samples as advocated by Preacher and Hayes (2008). Using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2017, model 4), structural complexity (structurally simple = 1, structurally complex = 2) was put as the independent variable, construal level as the mediator, review rating as the dependent variable, and length requirement (long-length = 1, short-length = 0) as a covariate. As shown in Figure 8, a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task decreased participants' construal level ($b = -3.79, t = -5.04, p < .001$), which in turn decreased review rating ($b = 0.11, t = 3.72, p < .001$). The indirect effect of structural complexity on review rating through construal level was significant (indirect effect = -0.4327, 95% CI -0.7540 to -0.1673, based on 5,000 resamples). Moreover, the direct effect of structural complexity on review rating ($b = -0.83, t = -2.83, p < .01$) became insignificant after accounting for construal level ($b = -0.4, t = -1.31, p > .10$). These results suggest that the effect of structural complexity on review rating was fully mediated by construal level. Figure 8 visualises the detailed results of the mediation model. Besides, based on Monte Carlo analyses (5,000 replications; Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017), the statistical power of obtaining this mediation effect at $n = 151$ was 86%.

FIGURE 8:
Indirect effect of structural complexity on review rating through construal level



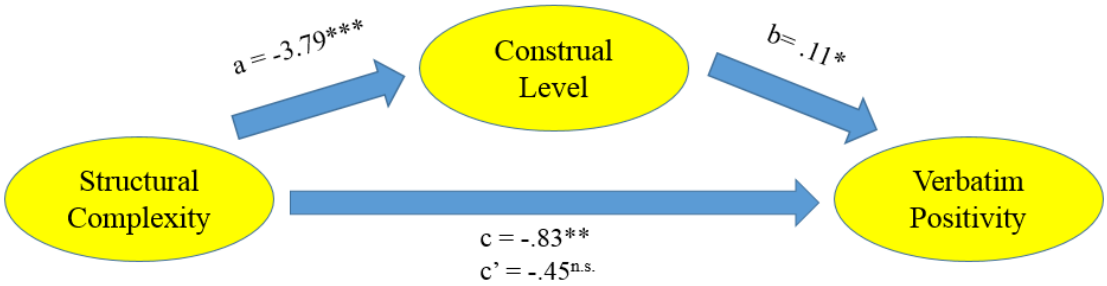
*Note: The effect of structural complexity on review rating is mediated by construal level (indirect effect = -.4327, 95% CI -.7540 to -.1673, based on 5,000 resamples). The Figure shows unstandardized regression coefficients. Length requirement (as a dummy variable) was included as a covariate in the mediation model. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, n.s.p >.05.*

6.2.5 Mediation tests for the effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity

To assess the mediating role of construal level in driving the effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity, a mediation analysis was conducted with 5,000 bootstrapped samples as advocated by Preacher and Hayes (2008). Using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2017, model 4), structural complexity (structurally simple = 1, structurally complex = 2) was put as the independent variable, construal level as the mediator, verbatim positivity as the dependent variable, and length requirement (long-length = 1, short-length = 0) as a covariate. As shown in Figure 9, a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task decreased participants' construal level ($b = -3.79, t = -5.04, p < .001$), which in turn decreased verbatim positivity ($b = 0.11, t = 2.11, p < .05$). The indirect effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity through construal level was significant (indirect effect = -0.2219, 95% CI -0.4842 to -0.0276, based on 5,000 resamples). Moreover, the direct effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity ($b = -0.83, t = -2.62, p < .01$) became insignificant after accounting for construal level ($b = -0.45, t = -1.65, p > .10$). These results suggest that the effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity was fully mediated by construal level. Figure 9 visualises the detailed results of the mediation model. Besides, based on Monte Carlo analyses (5,000 replications; Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017), the statistical power of obtaining this mediation effect at $n = 151$ was 42%.[11]

[11] This statistical power was lower than the recommended 80% power. To obtain that statistical power, a sample size of about 400 would be needed.

FIGURE 9:
Indirect effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity through construal level

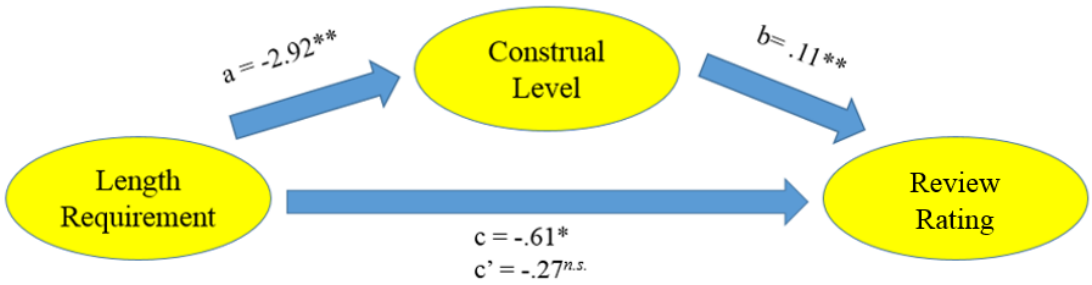


*Note: The effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity is mediated by construal level (indirect effect = -.2219, 95% CI -.4842 to -.0276, based on 5,000 resamples). The Figure shows unstandardized regression coefficients. Length requirement (as a dummy variable) was included as a covariate in the mediation model. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, n.s.p >.05.*

6.2.6 Mediation tests for the effect of length requirement on review rating

To assess the mediating role of construal level in driving the effect of length requirement on review rating, a mediation analysis was conducted with 5,000 bootstrapped samples as advocated by Preacher and Hayes (2008). Using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2017, model 4), length requirement (short-length = 1, long-length = 2) was put as the independent variable, construal level as the mediator, review rating as the dependent variable, and structural complexity (structurally complex = 1, structurally simple = 0) as a covariate. As shown in Figure 10, a long-length (vs. short-length) requirement decreased participants' construal level ($b = -2.92, t = -3.88, p < .01$), which in turn increased review rating ($b = 0.11, t = 3.72, p < .01$). The indirect effect of length requirement on review rating through construal level was significant (indirect effect = -0.3335, 95% CI -0.6072 to -0.1095, based on 5,000 resamples). Moreover, the direct effect of length requirement on review rating ($b = -0.61, t = -2.07, p < .05$) became insignificant after accounting for construal level ($b = -0.27, t = -0.92, p > .30$). These results suggest that the effect of length requirement on review rating was fully mediated by construal level. Figure 10 visualises the detailed results of the mediation model. Besides, based on Monte Carlo analyses (5,000 replications; Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017), the statistical power of obtaining this mediation effect at $n = 151$ was 94%.

FIGURE 10:
Indirect effect of length requirement on review rating through construal level

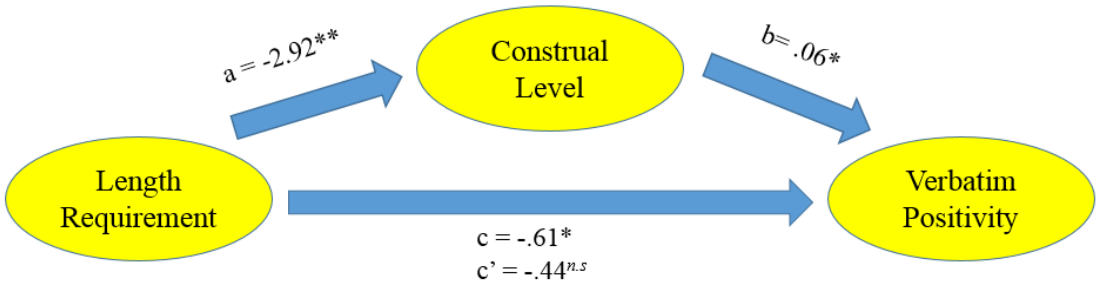


*Note: The effect of length requirement on review rating is mediated by construal level (indirect effect = -.3335, 95% CI -.6072 to -.1095, based on 5,000 resamples). The Figure shows unstandardized regression coefficients. Structural complexity (as a dummy variable) was included as a covariate in the mediation model. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, n.s.p >.05.*

6.2.7 Mediation tests for the effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity

To assess the mediating role of construal level in driving the effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity, a mediation analysis was conducted with 5,000 bootstrapped samples as advocated by Preacher and Hayes (2008). Using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2017, model 4), length requirement (short-length = 1, long-length = 2) was put as the independent variable, construal level as the mediator, verbatim positivity as the dependent variable, and structural complexity (structurally complex = 1, structurally simple = 0) as a covariate. As shown in Figure 11, a long-length (vs. short-length) requirement decreased participants' construal level ($b = -2.92\,, t = -3.88, p < .01$), which in turn increased verbatim positivity ($b = 0.06, t = 2.11, p < .05$). The indirect effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity through construal level was significant (indirect effect = −0.171, 95% CI −0.3469 to −0.0186, based on 5,000 resamples). Moreover, the direct effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity ($b = -0.61, t = -2.35, p < .05$) became insignificant after accounting for construal level ($b = -0.44\,, t = -1.63\,, p > .10$). These results suggested that the effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity was fully mediated by construal level. Figure 11 visualises the detailed results of the mediation model. Besides, based on Monte Carlo analyses (5,000 replications; Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017), the statistical power of obtaining this mediation effect at $n = 151$ was 54%.[12]

FIGURE 11: Indirect effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity through construal level



*Note: The effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity is mediated by construal level (indirect effect = -.171, 95% CI -.3469 to -.0186, based on 5,000 resamples). The Figure shows unstandardized regression coefficients. Structural complexity (as a dummy variable) was included as a covariate in the mediation model. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, n.s.p >.05.*

6.2.8 Mood as an alternative mechanism

One could be concerned that the empirical results presented above were somehow driven by reviewers' mood. To test this potential alternative mechanism, a series of supplementary analyses were performed using PROCESS Model 4, which mirrored the previous mediation analyses with the addition of mood as a mediator.[13] There was no process evidence for mood, as the 95% confidence intervals for the indirect effects all included 0. The results for construal level replicated what were reported in 6.1.4 through 6.1.7 in sign and significance. For details, see appendix 1D. Simply put, the proposed mechanism significantly and consistently drove the hypothesised effects.

[12] This statistical power was lower than the recommended 80% power. To obtain that statistical power, a sample size of about 290 would be needed.

[13] Mood was measured on a scale from -5 to +5, with -5 being very unpleasant and +5 being very pleasant.

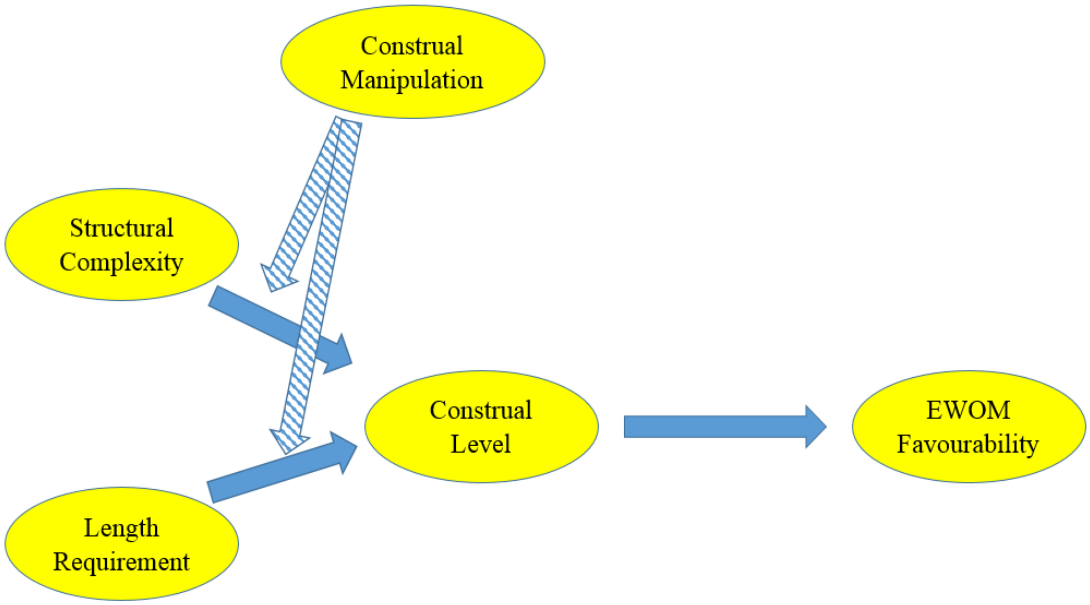
6.2.9 Discussion

Study 4 extended the findings of the previous studies and demonstrated the psychological process underlying the effects of platform design. First, as predicted in H1 and H3, structural complexity and length requirement each lead consumers to write reviews lower in favourability. These effects held up regardless of temporal proximity (see appendix 1D for details). Second, as expected in H2 and H4, construal level is the psychological mechanism driving these effects. Specifically, a higher degree of structural complexity and a longer length requirement lead reviewers to adopt a lower-level construal, which in turn, leads to lower eWOM favourability.

6.3 STUDY 5

In addition to Study 4's mediation-based evidence, Study 5 offered moderation-based evidence, thereby enhancing confidence in the proposed psychological process (Spencer, Zanna, & Fong, 2005). Specifically, Study 5 aimed to test the underlying mechanism by simultaneously manipulating (a) platform design (structural complexity and length requirement) and (b) construal level. If construal level explains the influence of the platform design features, then exogenously altering construal level should mitigate that influence, such that regardless of review platform design, online reviews are lower in favourability in the low- (vs. high-) construal level condition. In other words, when construal level is manipulated through other means, the effects of review platform design on eWOM behaviour observed in the previous studies may be nullified or even reversed. Study 5 aimed to demonstrate a reversal of the previous findings. Figure 12 visualises the model that was examined in Study 5.

FIGURE 12: The Study 5 Model



6.3.1 Participants and procedure

A total of two-hundred and forty-nine Prolific workers (51% female; mean age = 27) participated in the study in exchange for a small monetary reward. All stimuli and measurement items were presented in English. The participants were asked to write a review of their recent dining experience at *McDonald's*. They were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (construal level: low vs. high) x 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) between-subjects design. This

study manipulated construal level by asking participants to indicate either why (high-level construal) or how (low-level construal) they would improve and maintain physical health (Freitas, Gollwitzer, & Trope, 2004). The review-writing task was identical to that of Study 4. Five participants (a) did not identify the focal restaurant (*McDonald's*) they were required to review, (b) reported that they did not visit the restaurant in the past year, or (c) wrote gibberish or non-English in the text box, leaving 244 for further analysis.

6.3.2 Manipulation checks

A 2 (construal level: low vs. high) x 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) ANOVA on perceived structural complexity only revealed a main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,236) = 24.689, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = .095$). As expected, participants in the structurally complex condition ($M_{complex} = 4.74, SD = 1.3$) perceived the review task as more complex than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 3.89, SD = 1.34$), with a higher score indicating a degree of perceived structural complexity. All other effects ($Fs < 3$) were not significant. In other words, the structural complexity manipulation only impacted structural complexity perceptions (but not length requirement perceptions or construal level).

Besides, a 2 (construal level: low vs. high) x 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) ANOVA on perceived length requirement only revealed a main effect of length requirement ($F(1,236) = 39.301, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .143$). As expected, participants in the long-length condition ($M_{long} = 2.64, SD = 1.32$) were more likely to think that they were required to write a long review than those in the short-length condition ($M_{short} = 1.76, SD = 0.85$), with a higher score indicating a higher degree of perceived length requirement. All other effects ($Fs < 3$) were not significant. In other words, the length requirement manipulation only impacted length requirement perceptions (but not structural complexity perceptions or construal level).

In addition, a manipulation check of construal level was conducted. A 2 (construal level: low vs. high) x 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) ANOVA on participants' BIF scores only revealed a main effect of construal level ($F(1,236) = 47.767, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .168$). As expected, participants in the high-level construal condition had higher BIF scores ($M_{high} = 16.66, SD = 5.14$) than did those in the low-level construal condition ($M_{low} = 12.55, SD = 4.1$). All other effects ($Fs < 4$) were not significant. In other words, the construal level manipulation only impacted construal level (but not structural complexity or length requirement perceptions).

6.3.3 Main tests

Review rating

Recall the prediction that online reviews are lower in favourability in the low-level (vs. high-level) construal condition, regardless of review platform design. This prediction was examined in a 2 (construal level: low vs. high) x 2 (structural complexity: simple vs. complex) x 2 (length requirement: short vs. long) ANOVA on (a) review rating and (b) verbatim positivity. First, in contrast to the findings of Study 4 but in line with the CLT explanation, there was no longer any effect of structural

complexity ($F < 1$) nor any effect of length requirement ($F < 1$) on review rating. Instead, as predicted, there was a significant effect of construal level on review rating ($F(1,236) = 14.012, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .056$) with an effect size estimate of $\widehat{\omega}_p^2 = .244$ and a statistical power of 96.6%. Specifically, participants in the low-level construal condition had lower review ratings ($M_{low} = 6.08; SD = 2.16$) than those in the high-level construal condition ($M_{high} = 7.08; SD = 1.95$).

Moreover, construal level did not interact with structural complexity ($F < 1$) or length requirement ($F < 1$) on review rating, indicating that the effect of construal level on review rating held steady regardless of platform design conditions [(a) structurally simple task ($M_{low,simple} = 5.97\ vs. M_{high,simple} = 7.1$), (b) structurally complex task ($M_{low,complex} = 6.19\ vs. M_{high,complex} = 7.05$) , (c) short-length requirement ($M_{low,short} = 5.94\ vs. M_{high,short} = 7$) , and (d) long-length requirement ($M_{low,long} = 6.23\ vs. M_{high,long} = 7.15$)]. Furthermore, there was no three-way interaction between construal level, structural complexity and length requirement ($F < 1$) on review rating, again indicating that the effect of construal level on review rating held steady across platform design conditions [(a) structurally simple, short-length task ($M_{low,simple,short} = 5.94\ vs. M_{high,simple,short} = 6.97$) , (b) structurally simple, long-length task ($M_{low,simple,long} = 6\ vs. M_{high,simple,long} = 7.23$) , (c) structurally complex, short-length task ($M_{low,complex,short} = 5.94\ vs. M_{high,complex,short} = 7.03$), and (d) structurally complex, long-length task ($M_{low,complex,long} = 6.45\ vs. M_{high,complex,long} = 7.07$)]

Review text

As in previous studies, review text was run through the Evaluative Lexicon (EL; Rocklage et al., 2018) to obtain a verbatim positivity score for each review. The missing values of verbatim positivity score were replaced by the mean on the subgroup of which the participant was a member (Tsikriktsis, 2005). In contrast to the finding of Study 4 but in line with the CLT explanation, there was no longer any effect of structural complexity ($F < 1$) nor any effect of length requirement ($F < 1$) on verbatim positivity. Instead, there was a significant effect of construal level on verbatim positivity ($F(1,236) = 13.989, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .056$) with an effect size estimate of $\widehat{\omega}_p^2 = .244$ and a statistical power of 96.6%. Specifically, participants in the low-level construal condition had lower verbatim positivity ($M_{low} = 5.78; SD = 1.77$) than those in the high-level construal condition ($M_{high} = 6.57; SD = 1.5$).

Moreover, construal level did not interact with structural complexity ($F < 1$) or length requirement ($F(1,236) = 3.018, p = 0.08, \eta_p^2 = 0.13$) on verbatim positivity, indicating that the effect of construal level on verbatim positivity held steady across platform design conditions [(a) structurally simple task ($M_{low,simple} = 5.76\ vs. M_{high,simple} = 6.42$) , (b) structurally complex task ($M_{low,complex} = 5.79\ vs. M_{high,complex} = 6.72$) , (c) short-length requirement ($M_{low,short} = 5.59\ vs. M_{high,short} = 6.75$) , and (d) long-length requirement ($M_{low,long} = 6.0\ vs. M_{high,long} = 6.39$)]. Furthermore, there was no three-way interaction between construal level, structural complexity and length requirement ($F(1,236) = 1.584, p > .2, \eta_p^2 = .007$) on verbatim positivity, again indicating that the effect of construal level on verbatim positivity held steady across platform design conditions [(a) structurally

simple, short-length task ($M_{low,simple,short} = 5.67\ vs.\ M_{high,simple,short} = 6.43$), (b) structurally simple, long-length task ($M_{low,simple,long} = 5.85\ vs.\ M_{high,simple,long} = 6.41$), (c) structurally complex, short-length task ($M_{low,complex,short} = 5.5\ vs.\ M_{high,complex,short} = 7.05$), and (d) structurally complex, long-length task ($M_{low,complex,long} = 6.08\ vs.\ M_{high,complex,long} = 6.36$)].

6.3.4 Discussion

Study 5 provides further evidence for the CLT explanation of the influence of platform design. As studies 1 to 3 collectively affirmed, structural complexity and length requirement each lead to a pattern of eWOM behaviour that is lower in eWOM favourability. Study 5 shows that changes in construal level are responsible for the changes in eWOM favourability, with exogenously manipulated construal levels mitigating the influence of platform design. In fact, direct manipulation of construal level has been found to prevail over indirect manipulation of construal level (through platform design).

6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

On the one hand, the second empirical study package affirmed that the influence of platform design on eWOM favourability held up regardless of temporal proximity. On the other hand, it offered process evidence that the effects of (1) structural complexity and (2) length requirement on eWOM favourability are mediated by construal level. Specifically, a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task leads reviewers to adopt a lower-level construal, which in turn leads to a lower degree of eWOM favourability; a long (vs. short) length requirement leads reviewers to adopt a lower-level construal, which in turn leads to a lower degree of eWOM favourability. Appendix 3 contains the questionnaires (including stimuli and measures) used in all experimental studies.

All the empirical studies reported thus far are lab experiments. While lab experiments provide a high level of internal validity with “all-other-things-being-equal” setups, their external validity could be suspect. A field study, reported in the next chapter, addressed this issue by exploring the real-world impact of platform design.

CHAPTER 7
EMPIRICAL STUDY PACKAGE THREE—
FINDING THE EFFECTS IN THE FIELD

7.1 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Using real-world secondary data, the third empirical study package (Study 6) tested for the generalizability of the prior experimental results regarding the negative effect of structural complexity on eWOM favourability. Chapter 7 therefore presents a field study of naturalistic reviews scraped from two major online review platforms, *Yelp* and *Tripadvisor*. The two platforms have distinct features amenable to testing the structural complexity effects.

7.2 SAMPLING

7.2.1 Sampling frame

First, in the context of review writing, a structurally complex (simple) review task requires reviewers to answer many (few) questions about specific product attributes. The two platforms differ significantly in this regard. Specifically, *Tripadvisor* reviewers are required to answer a series of questions about dining experience, such as "when did you go?," "who did you go with?," and "what were you here for?," and to also rate a number of quality dimensions before writing a review. In contrast, *Yelp* simply provides a single textbox for reviewers to share their dining experience. By definition, *TripAdvisor's* (*Yelp's*) review task is structurally complex (simple). Hence, the contrast between naturalistic reviews on these two platforms serves as a natural proxy for the effect of structural complexity. Given the CLT rationale, *Tripadvisor* (vs. *Yelp*) reviews should be lower in eWOM favourability. Second, *Tripadvisor* and *Yelp* have a common review category, "restaurant," with many common category members. Comparisons of common category members can minimize the influence of possible extraneous variables.

7.2.2 Sampling strategy

Restaurants with both *Tripadvisor* and *Yelp* reviews constituted the sampling frame. Following prior research (Huang et al., 2016; Liu & Park, 2015), a set of restaurants in different locales was selected in order to reduce geographic bias. So the sample included restaurants located in New York, London, Hong Kong and Sydney. Following Reich and Maglio (2020), 16 was set to be the maximum number of restaurants to be scraped from both review platforms within a reasonable time frame. The sampled reviews included a random set of 16 restaurants located in the four cities. All reviews of the selected restaurants were scraped, starting in November 2007 until the time of scraping (October 31, 2022). Reviews in languages other than English were excluded because of the difficulties of interlingual comparison in automated text analysis (Van Laer, Escalas, Ludwig, & Van Den Hende, 2019). This procedure resulted in a total of 24,698 reviews for further analysis (8,985 *Yelp* reviews and 15,713 *Tripadvisor* reviews).

The average review rating in the sample was positive (M = 4.17 of 5 stars), with 9.2% of the reviews being mostly negative (1 or 2 stars), 10.7% being roughly neutral (3 stars), and 80.1% being mostly positive (4 or 5 stars). The disproportionate number of positive reviews in the sample was on a par with the rating distributions on major review platforms (Chen & Lurie, 2013).

A panel was constructed, with each observation capturing a textual review and a

rating, the review date, the identity and characteristics of the reviewer, as well as the reviewed restaurant. The data set incorporated repeated observations across reviewers (who might have written reviews on multiple restaurants), time and restaurants.

7.3 KEY MEASURES OF EWOM FAVOURABILITY

7.3.1 Review rating

Review rating was operationalized as the star rating of the review. More stars indicate higher eWOM favourability. This variable took on positive integer values between 1 and 5.

7.3.2 Review text

As in the previous studies, verbatim reviews were run through the Evaluative Lexicon (EL; Rocklage et al., 2018) to obtain verbatim positivity scores as a measure of eWOM favourability. Any missing values were replaced by the cell mean of the focal restaurant on a review platform (Tsikriktsis, 2005).

7.4 CONTROL VARIABLES

7.4.1 Review-level controls

There were a total of four review-level controls. The first control was review length, measured by the number of words in the online review text. Review length is relevant to eWOM favourability because previous researchers have shown that long reviews are likely to be more negative than short ones (Sridhar & Srinivasan, 2012).

The second review-level control was a dummy variable denoting whether a review contains pictures. The binary variable was set to 1 when a review contained pictures and 0 otherwise. Pictorial content is relevant to eWOM favourability. For instance, if a review contains supporting pictures, the reviewer might refrain from elaboration, which could affect eWOM favourability (in review text and rating) to some degree.

The third review-level control was a binary variable denoting whether a review contains temporal proximity cues (Chen & Lurie, 2013). These cues are words or phrases indicating that the review was written on the day of consumption (e.g., today, tonight, just got back). Following Chen and Lurie, the binary variable was set to 1 when a review contained such cues and 0 otherwise. Temporal proximity cues, which indicate a brief duration between dining and review writing, point to a lower construal level that might adversely impact eWOM favourability.

The last review-level control was a binary variable denoting whether a review contained cultural distance cues. These cues are words or phrases indicating a foreign dining experience (e.g., foreign, tourist, travel, abroad). The binary variable was set to 1 when a review contained such cues and 0 otherwise. Cultural distance cues, which indicate cross-cultural dining experience, point to a higher construal level that might positively impact eWOM favourability.

7.4.2 Reviewer-level controls

There were three reviewer-level controls. The first one was the number of friends a reviewer had on the focal platform (*Yelp* or *Tripadvisor*). This variable is relevant to

eWOM favourability because the eWOM literature suggests a higher tendency for reviewers with more friends to write negative reviews (Chen, 2017).

The second reviewer-level control was the number of reviews a reviewer had posted on the focal platform. This variable is relevant because the eWOM literature suggests a high tendency for reviewers with more expertise to write negative reviews (Chen, 2017; Schlosser, 2005).

A reviewer's average star rating was also controlled for against all reviews posted on the focal platform. This was done to control for individual differences in opinion and expression (Goes, Lin, & Yeung, 2014).

7.4.3 Restaurant-level controls

There were three restaurant-level controls. The first one was city, a vector of dummy variables reflecting the city in which the reviewed restaurant was located. The second was dining style, a vector of binary variables reflecting the dining style of the reviewed restaurant. Lastly, following Huang et al. (2016), restaurant quality, which clearly impacts eWOM favourability, was controlled for using a restaurant's average rating as a proxy.

7.4.4 Time, reviewer and restaurant fixed effects

Following the recommendation of Wooldridges (2002), the analysis also controlled for the fixed effects of time, reviewer, and restaurant. Following Huang et al. (2016), the time effect was captured via the "review month" variable, a vector of dummy indicators reflecting the year and month in which a review was submitted. Similarly, the reviewer fixed effect was captured via a vector of dummy variables reflecting the reviewer who submitted a review, whereas the restaurant fixed effect was captured via a vector of dummy variables reflecting the focal restaurant in a review.

7.5 ANALYSIS STRATEGY

Given a large number of controls, ANCOVA could have been used. Though fairly common, the use of ANCOVA for nonexperimental research (such as this field study) is controversial (Vogt & Johnson, 2011). In fact, it is more appropriate to conduct econometric analysis on nonexperimental data (Wooldridge, 2015). Hence, the following econometric models were developed to capture a series of control variables and the three-way (time, reviewers and restaurants) fixed effects.

$$Review\ rating_{ijt} = \beta * Platform_{ijt} + Control_{ijt} + \sum_I \delta_i + \sum_J \lambda_j * R_j + \sum_T \tau_t * M_t + \varepsilon_{ijt} \quad \text{Eq. 1}$$

$$Verbatim\ positivity\ score_{ijt} = \beta * Platform_{ijt} + Control_{ijt} + \sum_I \delta_i + \sum_J \lambda_j * R_j + \sum_T \tau_t * M_t + \varepsilon_{ijt} \quad \text{Eq. 2}$$

In all the above equations, subscript *i* indexes consumers, *j* indexes restaurants, and *t* indexes time. *Platform* is a binary variable indicating where a review appeared, with 1 being *Yelp* and 2 being *Tripadvisor*. *Control* represents the set of control variables. In addition, δ_i represents a vector of consumer fixed effects, R_j is a vector of restaurant fixed effects, and M_t is a vector of time fixed effects.

7.6 RESULTS

7.6.1 Descriptive statistics for regression variables

Descriptive statistics for the interval-scaled variables can be found in Tables 3 and 4. Table 3 presents descriptive statistics of the mean, standard deviation and skewness, whereas Table 4 presents a correlation matrix of the interval-scaled variables.

TABLE 3: Mean, standard deviation and skewness of the interval-scaled variables

	Mean	S. D.	*Skewness*
1. Review rating	4.17	1.096	-1.431
2.Verbatim review favorability	6.7154	1.5035	-1.808
3. Review length (number of words)	98.49	83.783	2.481
4. No. of reviews a reviewer submitted	128.61	328.47	12.346
5. No. of friends a reviewer has	58.44	218.155	10.481
6. Reviewer Average Rating	4.0582	0.6096	-1.639
7. Restaurant Average Rating	4.238	0.3131	-0.778

TABLE 4: Correlation matrix of the interval-scaled variables

	1	2.	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
1. Review Rating Favorability	1						
2.Verbatim Review Favorability	0.699	1					
3. Review length (number of words)	-0.199	-0.209	1				
4. No. of reviews a reviewer submitted	0	0.007	0.132	1			
5. No. of friends a reviewer has	0.019	0.002	0.175	0.425	1		
6. Reviewer Average Rating	0.507	0.388	-0.12	-0.043	-0.032	1	
7. Restaurant Average Rating	0.239	0.235	-0.076	-0.013	0.012	0.13	1

As Table 3 indicates, all interval-scaled variables (except restaurant average rating) were highly skewed (skewness $\geq |1|$). Hence, log transformations of the pertinent variables were used for regression analysis.[14] Also, as Table 4 shows, all of the correlations between independent variables (review length, number of reviews submitted, number of friends, reviewer average rating and restaurant average rating) were below 0.6, suggesting that multicollinearity should not be an issue.

7.6.2 Empirical results for regression models

Tables 5 and 6 present the regression results for the natural log transformations of review rating (results in Table 4) and verbatim review favourability (results in Table 4) respectively. In support of the prediction, the models revealed that reviewers authored less favourable reviews on *Tripadvisor* than on *Yelp*. The results demonstrated that structural complexity (as a result of platform design) is (a) negatively related to eWOM favourability, in terms of both review rating and verbatim review favourability.

[14] For "number of friends" variable, because some of the raw values were zero and the log of zero is undefined, we took the log of (the raw score + 1) to retain all the values.

TABLE 5: Regression models to predict log form of review rating

DV= review rating (in log form)

	Coefficient
IV: Platform (1 = *Yelp*, 2 = *Tripadvisor*)	**-.024** (.004)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length (in log form)	-.084** (.003)
Pictures	.007 (.005)
Temporal proximity	-.043** (.007)
Social distance	-.009 (.005)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends (in log form)	.009** (.002)
No. of reviews written (in log form)	.017** (.002)
Reviewer average rating (in log form)	.957** (.011)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	.041** (.013)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	.02 (.06)
R-squared	.427
N	24,698

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

TABLE 6:

Regression models to predict log form of verbatim review favourability

DV= verbatim review favourability (in log form)

	Coefficient
IV: Platform (1 = *Yelp*, 2 = *Tripadvisor*)	**-.025** (.004)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length (in log form)	-.061** (.003)
Pictures	.007 (.005)
Temporal proximity	-.033** (.007)
Social distance	.0 (.005)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends (in log form)	8.584E-5 (.002)
No. of reviews written (in log form)	–.017** (.001)
Reviewer average rating (in log form)	.624** (.011)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	.019 (.012)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	.497** (.057)
R-squared	.314
N	24,698

* $p < .05$, ** $p <. 01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

7.7 ROBUSTNESS TESTS

7.7.1 Robustness test 1: variant forms of variables

While the results were consistent with the CLT explanation, one might wonder whether they were somehow driven by the modeling approach used (Cascio Rizzo, Berger, De Angelis, & Pozharliev, 2023). In particular, one could argue that the encouraging results were driven by the log transformations of the dependent variables and/ or the independent variables. To address this issue, the regressions for eWOM favourability were re-run with (a) the original data for the dependent variables and the log-transformed data for the independent variables (results in Tables 7 and 8), and (b) the original data for the dependent variables and the independent variables (results in Tables 9 and 10). Essentially the same results were obtained.

TABLE 7: Regression models to predict review rating (with log-transformed IVs)
DV= review rating

	(2) Full Model
IV: Platform (1 = *Yelp*, 2 = *Tripadvisor*)	**-.123** (.028)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length (in log form)	-.585** (.021)
Pictures	.043 (.036)
Temporal proximity	-.228** (.05)
Social distance	-.009 (.035)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends (in log form)	.078** (.012)
No. of reviews written (in log form)	.034** (.01)
Reviewer average rating (in log form)	5.877** (.073)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	.296** (.085)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	.646 (.396)
R-squared	.409
N	24,698

* $p < .05$, ** $p <. 01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

TABLE 8: Regression models to predict verbatim review favourability (with log-transformed IVs)

DV= verbatim review favourability

	(2) Full Model
IV: Platform (1 = *Yelp*, 2 = *Tripadvisor*)	**-.19** (.041)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length (in log form)	-.977** (.03)
Pictures	.086 (.052)
Temporal proximity	-.335** (.072)
Social distance	-.006 (.051)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends (in log form)	.255 (.207)
No. of reviews written (in log form)	.127** (.015)
Reviewer average rating (in log form)	6.07** (.106)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	.243* (.123)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	4.091**(.575)
R-squared	.338
N	24,698

* $p < .05$, ** $p <. 01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

TABLE 9: Regression models to predict review rating (with original IVs)

DV= review rating

	Coefficient
IV: Platform (1 = *Yelp*, 2 = *Tripadvisor*)	**-.274** (.024)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length	-.002** (.0)
Pictures	.043 (.036)
Temporal proximity	-.243** (.05)
Social distance	-.017 (.035)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends	.0** (.0)
No. of reviews written	.0** (.0)
Reviewer average rating	.866** (.01)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	.286** (.084)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	.12 (.393)
R-squared	.413
N	24,698

* $p < .05$, ** $p <. 01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

TABLE 10: Regression models to predict verbatim review favourability (with original IVs)

DV= verbatim review favourability

	Coefficient
IV: Platform (1 = *Yelp*, 2 = *Tripadvisor*)	**-.307** (.036)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length	-.003**(.0)
Pictures	.071 (.052)
Temporal proximity	-.383** (.073)
Social distance	-.029 (.052)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends	7.245E-6 (.0)
No. of reviews written	.0** (.006)
Reviewer average rating	.885** (.015)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	.237 (.124)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	3.019**(.577)
R-squared	.326
N	24,698

* $p < .05$, ** $p <. 01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

7.7.2 Robustness test 2: propensity score matching

Even though the field study has econometrically identified the structural complexity effects using the three-way fixed effects approach, it is possible that some unobserved factors might influence both the choice of review platform and eWOM favourability. For instance, consumers with friends and/or high expertise are likely to write negative reviews (Chen, 2017) and might choose to share their consumption experience on *Tripadvisor* that imposes a structurally complex review task (rather than *Yelp* that imposes a structurally simple review task). This could explain the negative association between structural complexity and eWOM favourability. This situation would constitute selection bias. To address this potential selection issue, Propensity Score Matching (PSM; Abadie & Imbens, 2006; Dehejia & Wahba, 2002; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991) was employed.

PSM is a quasi-experimental approach that tests a causal treatment effect by controlling for the covariates that could affect the probability of participants receiving the treatment – i.e., sources of selection (Angrist & Pischke, 2008). The objective of the field study was to identify a sample of *Yelp* reviews that was extremely similar in observable reviewer characteristics, and thus comparable to, a sample of *Tripadvisor* reviews. By matching reviews directly, this procedure reduces "sample selection bias in non-experimental settings" (Dehejia & Wahba, 2002, p. 151). Doing so would allow

for differences in the "treatment effect" (in this case, eWOM favourability) to be attributed to the focal variable (in this case, structural complexity due to platform) rather than any other variables.

To that end, a nearest neighbour matching algorithm was used to perform the matching process, based on two observable reviewer characteristics shown to be of central importance for eWOM favourability in the literature—reviewers' friends and expertise (Chen, 2017). For matching purposes, two dummy variables were created. The first dummy variable was whether a reviewer has friends (1 = one or more friends and 0 otherwise). The second one was whether a reviewer has authored 50 or more reviews,[15] and based on the policy of *Tripadvisor* and *Yelp*, this variable could serve as a proxy for reviewer expertise. Following Austin's (2011) recommendation, a matching threshold was specified – i.e., a maximum deviation in propensity (caliper distance = 0.01), to improve the precision of the matching process. The procedure resulted in 5,174 matched reviews, leaving a reduced sample of 10,348 reviews.

Descriptive statistics for regression variables in the PSM dataset

Table 11 and 12 report descriptive statistics for the interval-scaled variables entering the regression model. Specifically, Table 11 presents descriptive statistics of the mean, standard deviation and skewness, whereas Table 12 presents a correlation matrix of the interval-scaled variables.

TABLE 11: Mean, standard deviation and skewness of the interval-scaled variables for the PSM dataset

	Mean	S. D.	*Skewness*
1. Review rating	4.2	1.053	-1.462
2.Verbatim review favorability	6.756	1.4122	-1.836
3. Review length (number of words)	101.42	87.228	2.374
4. No. of reviews a reviewer submitted	194.07	454.023	9.696
5. No. of friends a reviewer has	77.19	277.715	9.288
6. Reviewer Average Rating	4.0378	0.5853	-1.459
7. Restaurant Average Rating	4.246	0.3005	-0.74

TABLE 12: Correlation matrix of the interval-scaled variables for the PSM dataset

	1	2.	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
1. Review rating favorability	1						
2.Verbatim review favorability	0.657	1					
3. Review length (number of words)	-0.176	-0.208	1				
4. No. of reviews a reviewer submitted	-0.013	-0.014	0.144	1			
5. No. of friends a reviewer has	0.019	-0.025	0.201	0.44	1		
6. Reviewer Average Rating	0.461	0.338	-0.108	-0.045	-0.033	1	
7. Restaurant Average Rating	0.228	0.224	-0.083	-0.041	-0.011	0.086	1

[15] On Tripadvisor, a reviewer is classified as a top contributor if he or she has authored more than 50 reviews. On *Yelp*, getting the elite status partly depends on whether a *Yelper* could write as many as 40-50 high-quality reviews. Based on the policies, reviewers who produced 50 reviews or more were classified as having high expertise.

As Table 11 indicates, all interval-scaled variables (except restaurant average rating) were highly skewed (skewness $\geq |1|$). Hence, log transformations of the pertinent variables were used for regression analysis.[16] Also, as Table 12 shows, all of the correlations between independent variables (review length, number of reviews submitted, number of friends, reviewer average rating and restaurant average rating) were below 0.6, suggesting that multicollinearity should not be an issue.

Empirical results for regression models used in conjunction with PSM

As detailed in Tables 13 and 14, the key findings that reviewers authored less favourable reviews on *Tripadvisor* than on *Yelp* were replicated using regression in conjunction with PSM. The results indicate that structural complexity (due to platform) was negatively related to eWOM favourability, in terms of both numerical ratings and verbatim data.

TABLE 13: Regression models used in conjunction with PSM to predict the log form of review rating

DV= review rating (in log form)

	Coefficient
IV: Platform (1 = Yelp, 2 = Tripadvisor)	**-.021** (.005)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length (in log form)	-.076** (.005)
Pictures	.009 (.006)
Temporal proximity	-.021 (.012)
Social distance	-.007 (.008)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends (in log form)	.011** (.003)
No. of reviews written (in log form)	.013* (.003)
Reviewer average rating (in log form)	.918** (.019)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	.048** (.017)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	-.043 (.08)
R-squared	.444
N	10,348

* $p < .05$, ** $p <. 01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

[16] For the "number of friends" variable, because some of the raw values were zero and the log of zero is undefined, the log of the raw score + 1 was taken to retain all the data.

TABLE 14: Regression models used in conjunction with PSM to predict the log form of verbatim review favourability

DV= verbatim review favourability (in log form)

	Coefficient
IV: Platform (1 = Yelp, 2 = Tripadvisor)	**-.023** (.005)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length (in log form)	-.059** (.004)
Pictures	–.011 (.006)
Temporal proximity	-.011 (.011)
Social distance	.003 (.007)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends (in log form)	.255 (.207)
No. of reviews written (in log form)	–.001 (.006)
Reviewer average rating (in log form)	.541** (.017)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	.024 ** (.016)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	.507** (.073)
R-squared	.354
N	10,348

* $p < .05$, ** $p <. 01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

7.8 ANCILLARY ANALYSES

In this field study using online reviews of *Yelp* and *Tripadvisor*, length requirement was not formally examined. Although *Tripadvisor* requires reviewers to write reviews with a minimum of 100 characters, *Yelp* does not impose any length requirement. But to provide crude field evidence on the impact of length requirement on eWOM favourability, two simple regressions were run, one for review rating and the other for verbatim review favourability.

First, log-transformed review ratings were regressed on log-transformed review length, platform and their interaction. Of focal interest was the result that revealed a negative effect of log-transformed review length on log-transformed review rating (b = -.095, $p < .001$). Second, a parallel analysis was conducted for log-transformed verbatim review favourability. The result revealed a negative effect of log-transformed review length on log-transformed verbatim review favourability (b = -.070, $p < .001$). Together, the two sets of regressions showed that review length was negatively related to eWOM favourability. This might be construed as crude evidence that a long (vs. short) length requirement leads to a pattern of eWOM behaviour that is lower in eWOM favourability.

7.9 DISCUSSION

This field study tested H1 (and to some extent H3) using real-world eWOM data. Consistent with H1, the study provided support for the prediction that a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task leads to eWOM behaviour that is lower in eWOM favourability. This result was robust to a variety of controls and model specifications. For instance, with temporal proximity (i.e., time lag between the review task and the consumption experience) controlled for, participants still crafted less favourable reviews when performing a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task. In other words, the negative effect of structural complexity on eWOM favourability held up, regardless of temporal proximity. Overall, in over 24,000 restaurant reviews, the pattern of eWOM favourability was consistent with the findings observed in the controlled experiments reported in Chapters 5 and 6. The fact that the same pattern emerged in both experimental and naturalistic settings attests to the robustness of the hypothesized influence of platform design on eWOM favourability.

A caveat is worth noting. Apart from structural complexity, *Yelp* and *Tripadvisor* also differ in other aspects of relevance to eWOM favourability. For instance, on *Yelp*, one guideline for Yelpers is to be "passionate and personal." In contrast, on *Tripadvisor*, reviewers are reminded to keep reviews relevant and helpful (Chan et al., 2022). *Yelp's* advice of being passionate might encourage reviewers to write reviews higher in favourability, while *Tripadvisor's* advice of being helpful might direct reviewers to highlight problem areas of their consumption experience and result in reviews lower in eWOM favourability.

In addition, *Tripadvisor* has recently launched some social networking functions to increase the social presence of the review audience. As a result, reviewers might feel psychologically closer to review readers while crafting reviews. The resulting lower construal level could thus dampen eWOM favourability on *Tripadvisor*. On the other hand, *Yelp* provides direct incentives for *Yelpers* to write reviews, such as organising parties for those who have submitted a large number of reviews (Luca, 2016). According to Woolley and Sharif (2021), the practice of incentivising reviews may lead reviewers to write reviews high in favourability.

Further, *Yelp* is primarily geared towards local businesses, while *Tripadvisor* is geared towards travel-related businesses such as hotels and tourist attractions. Conceivably, *Tripadvisor* reviewers might be more experienced than *Yelp*'s counterparts. Thus, one might argue that given a high tendency for reviewers with more expertise to write negative reviews (Chen, 2017; Schlosser, 2005), *Tripadvisor*'s (vs. *Yelp*'s) reviews would be lower in terms of eWOM favourability.

Finally, *Yelp* employs a review filter that sometimes hides or prioritizes certain reviews (Quora, 2024). Moreover, *Yelp* allows reviewers to change their reviews, which opens the door for review modifications at the urging of the reviewed restaurants (Chevalier et al., 2018). On the other hand, *TripAdvisor* is known for its transparent approach to reviews, making it difficult for businesses to manipulate reviews (Quora, 2024). Hence, compared to eWOM on *Tripadvisor*, eWOM on *Yelp* could be inflated. Given these platform-wide differences between *Yelp* and *Tripadvisor* (other than structural complexity), the findings of the field study should be interpreted with caution.

CHAPTER 8
SINGLE-PAPER META-ANALYSIS (SPM)

In total, this thesis reported one field study and five experimental studies. Collectively, these studies assessed the effect of structural complexity and length requirement on eWOM favourability. To see how robust the results were, a single-paper meta-analysis (SPM; McShane & Böckenholt, 2017) was performed on four of the experimental studies (studies 1 through 4). Study 5 was excluded as it manipulated not only platform design (IVs) but also construal level (mediator). Because of this set-up, the effects of the platform design features on eWOM favourability were expected to be nullified or even reserved. Moreover, following prior research (e.g., Grewal & Stephen, 2019), Study 6 was excluded from SPM as this was not an experimental study.

An SPM of the four studies shows that compared to those in the structurally simple condition, participants in the structurally complex condition gave lower review ratings (effect = -1.0701, 95% CI = [-1.6011, -.5391]). As shown in Figure 13, the SPM estimates of the four studies did not overlap zero, indicating statistical significance. Likewise, the SPM shows that across the four studies, participants in the structurally simple (vs. complex) condition wrote less favourable verbatim review content (effect = -1.0831, 95% CI = [-1.4581, -.7080]). As shown in Figure 14, the SPM estimates of the four studies did not overlap zero, again indicating statistical significance. Together, the SPM results provide strong support for the hypothesis that a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task induces lower eWOM favourability.

As far as length requirement is concerned, an SPM of three studies (studies 1 through 3) shows that compared to those in the short-length condition, participants in the long-length condition gave lower review ratings (effect = -0.8683, 95% CI = [-1.4771, -.2594]). As shown in Figure 15, the SPM estimates of the three studies did not overlap zero, indicating statistical significance. Likewise, the SPM shows that across the three studies, participants in the long-length (vs. short-length) condition wrote less favourable verbatim review content (effect = -1.0703, 95% CI = [-2.0491, -.09145]). As shown in Figure 16, the SPM estimates of the three studies did not overlap zero, again indicating statistical significance. Together, the SPM results provide strong support for the hypothesis that a long-length (vs. short-length) review task induces lower eWOM favourability.

FIGURE 13: SPM for contrast estimate of structurally simple versus complex, in terms of review rating

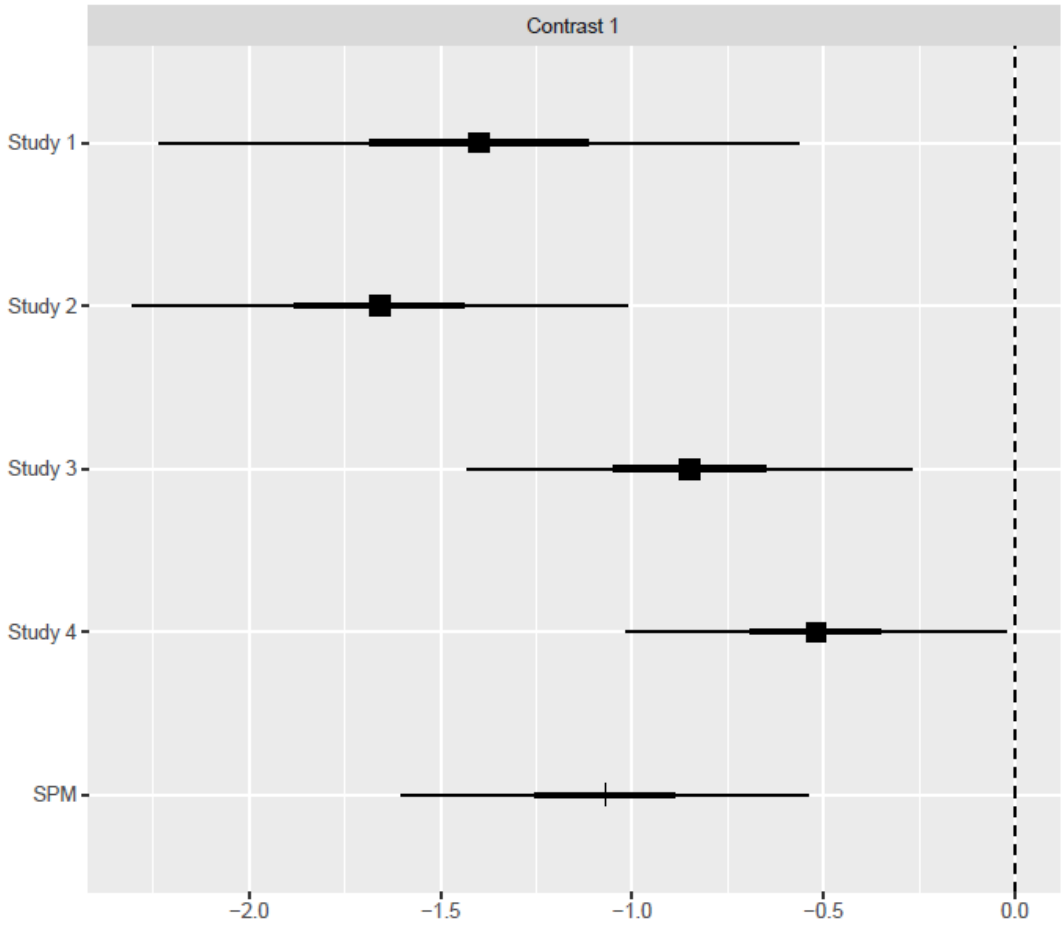


FIGURE 14: SPM for contrast estimate of structurally simple versus complex, in terms of verbatim positivity

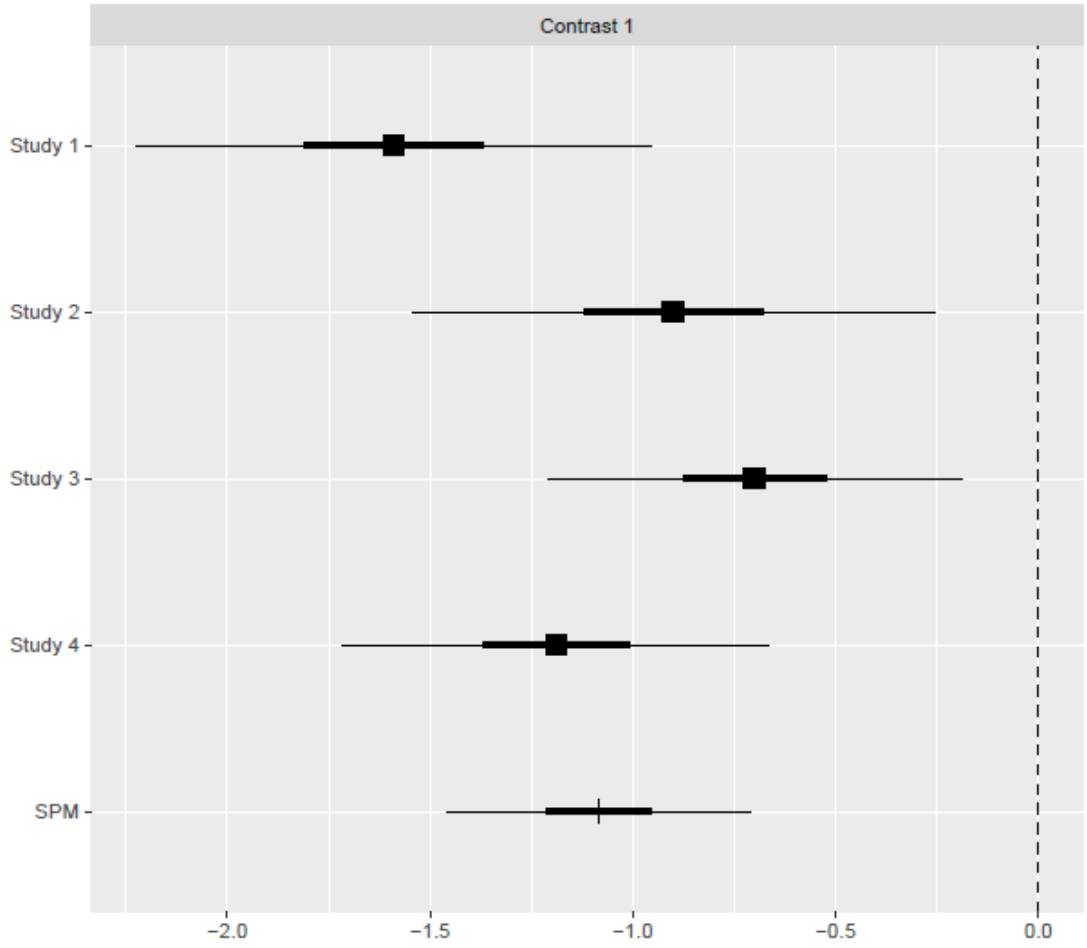


FIGURE 15: SPM for contrast estimate of short-length versus long-length, in terms of review rating

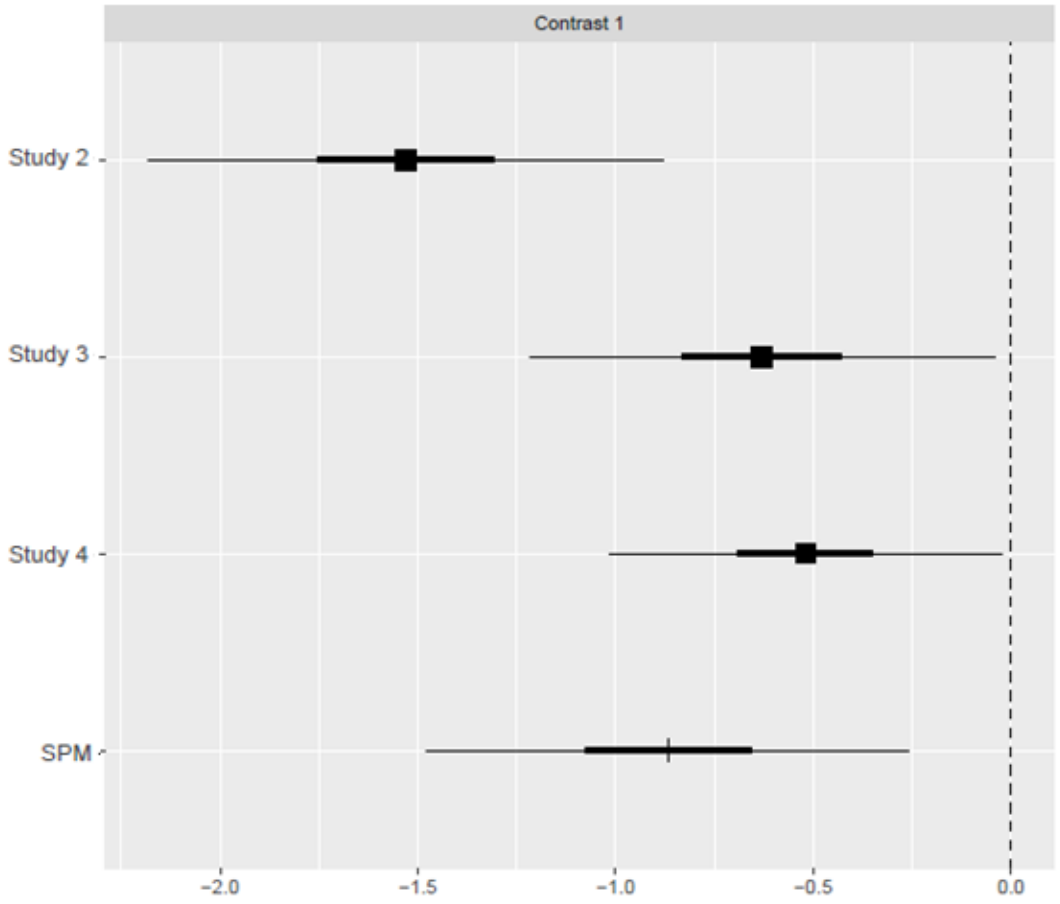
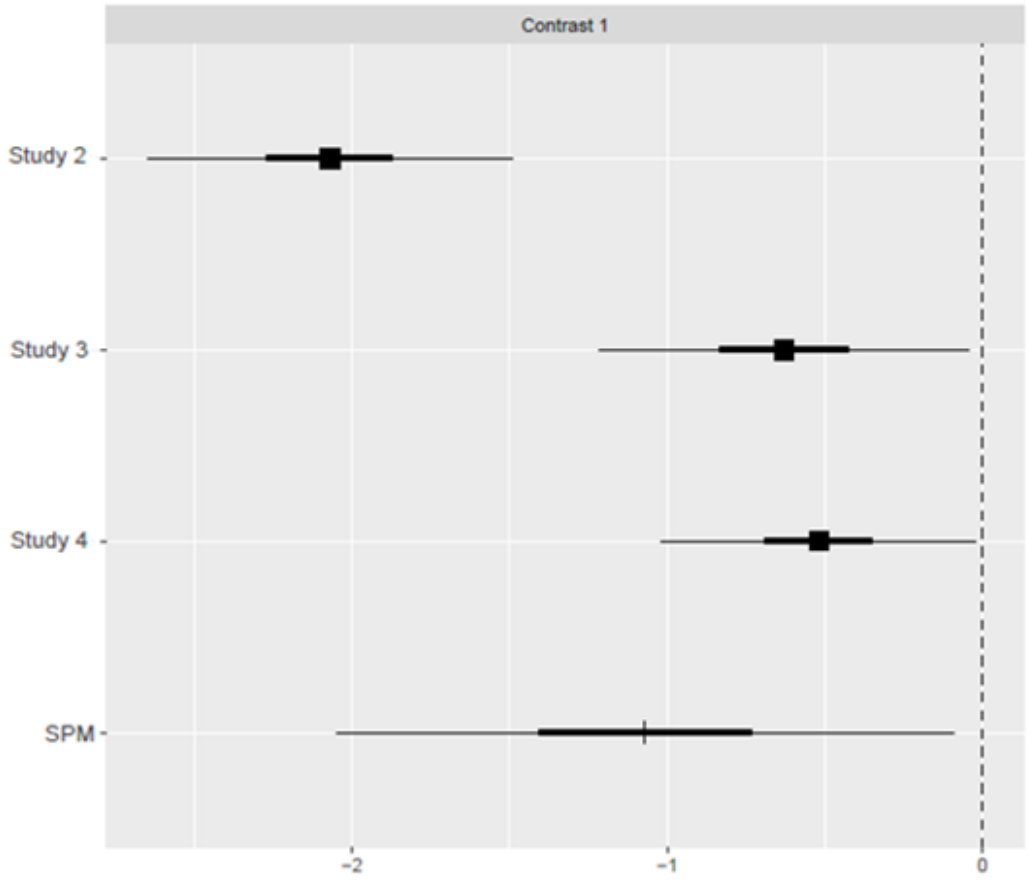


FIGURE 16: SPM for contrast estimate of short-length versus long-length, in terms of verbatim positivity



CHAPTER 9
IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND EXTENTSIONS

With the proliferation of online review platforms, eWOM has become an indispensable part of daily life for 21st century consumers. Since Hennig-Thurau et al.'s (2004) seminal work, the vast body of eWOM research has generated much insight into eWOM behavior. But while it is clear that eWOM is both frequent and important, less is known about how review platform design might contribute to eWOM behavior. This question is theoretically and substantively important, given the vast variety of different platform design features.

Six studies, including five experimental studies and one field study, investigated the impacts of two platform design features—structural complexity and length requirement. These features have been found to exert their respective influence on the two major components of the online review process, namely, memory retrieval and review creation. First, consistent with the hypotheses, a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task and a long (vs. short) length requirement each lead reviewers to write reviews lower in eWOM favourability (Studies 1 through 6). These effects held up regardless of mood (Studies 1 through 3) and temporal proximity (Studies 4 and 6). Second, in line with the proposed theoretical rationale, construal level is the psychological mechanism mediating these effects. Specifically, a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task and a long (vs. short) length requirement lead to a lower-level construal, which in turn leads reviewers to craft reviews lower in eWOM favourability. The mediating mechanism was demonstrated with both mediation (Study 4) and moderation (Study 5) analysis.

9.1 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1.1 Implications for eWOM literature

This thesis contributes to the eWOM literature in several notable ways. Firstly, it expands the emerging research on eWOM adaptability (e.g., Barasch & Berger, 2014; Chen, 2017; Melumad, Inman & Phan, 2019) by documenting that eWOM content is adaptable to review platform design characteristics. A recent *Journal of Marketing* article argues that "different [online] platforms facilitate different types of communication" (Hamilton, Ferraro, Haws, & Mukhopadhyay, 2021, p. 84). This thesis extends Hamilton et al.'s argument by highlighting the fact that platform managers may facilitate more favourable or less favourable eWOM communication with different platform features. As a recent *Journal of Consumer Research* article aptly points out, "given the prevalence and influence of consumer [e]WOM, it is critical to identify factors that influence the positivity of such communication" (Chen et al., 2023, p. 17). This thesis adds to the eWOM literature by documenting novel eWOM favourability effects that are driven by common platform features (structural complexity and length requirement).

Secondly, this thesis also contributes to the literature on review platform design. The majority of prior research on review platform design has focused on understanding the consequences of platform design on review readers, such as platform trust (Beck, Wuyts, & Jap, in press), product evaluation (Mousavi, Singh, Chatterjee, & Masters, in press), purchase decision (Fisher, Newman, & Dhar, 2018; Vana & Lambrecht, 2021) and product preference (Jia, Wan, & Zheng, 2023). This thesis, in contrast, reveals the effects of platform design on reviewers (review content). In their recent *Journal of*

Marketing Research article, Beck et al. argue that review content is "outside the platform's control, although the platform can shape, filter, and police it to some degree" (p. 2). This thesis enriches Beck et al.'s view by demonstrating a wider and more powerful influence of review platform design on eWOM favourability. By investigating how platform design may influence eWOM content, this thesis responds to Chan et al.'s (2022) call for more research into the implications of platform design. According to Chan, Yang, and Zeng (2022), platform design could facilitate high-quality review generation, which "simultaneously promote(s) buyer welfare (by virtue of deepened product knowledge), seller welfare (by virtue of sharpened business intelligence), and platform welfare (by virtue of enhanced platform reputation)" (p. 215).

Thirdly, this thesis proposes an integrated, yet parsimonious model of review writing process. Much of the extant research elucidates how contextual factors may affect review writing and review content (e.g., Woolley & Sharif, 2021), but there is little conceptualization regarding the review writing process. Addressing this theoretical void, this thesis proposes that review writing involves two major components—memory retrieval and review creation. Future research may build on this first step to a systematic conceptualization of the review writing process and shed further light on the conceptual void.

As pointed out in the literature review, very little scholarly attention has been paid to whether and how platform design may impact review favourability. One notable exception is Banerjee et al.'s (2021) research on the positive effect of Q&As on review ratings. Thus, it is instructive to compare the current work with Banerjee et al.'s (2021) research. Banerjee et al. posit that Q&As provide consumers with useful product information in the prepurchase stage and facilitate decision making, leading to higher product ratings.

The current research goes beyond Banerjee et al. (2021) in two notable ways. First, while their research suggests that platform design can help reviewers make better purchase decisions and report higher product ratings. The current work reveals the post-purchase influence of platform design on eWOM favourability—with decision quality and consumption experience held constant. Second, while Banerjee et al. mainly focus on product ratings, the current research covers both product ratings and review texts, making for a more comprehensive conclusion on the impact of platform design on eWOM generation.

9.1.2 Implications for CLT literature

The present work not only draws from CLT but adds to this literature in three different ways. Firstly, the CLT literature has investigated the influence of construal level on the retrieval (Wyer et al., 2022; Wyer et al., 2010) and representation (Semin & Smith, 1999) of past events. This thesis, in contrast, explores the impact of retrieval and representation on construal level—a relatively rare perspective in the plethora of research stemming from CLT. In particular, this thesis conceptualises the review writing process as consisting of (1) memory retrieval of consumption experience and (2) generation of review texts and corresponding ratings, and identifies how construal level comes to bear on each of the two components. This conceptualisation thus lays the groundwork for future investigations of the precise role of construal level in the review writing process.

Secondly, this is the first research to show that platform design features can be important antecedent variables that affect construal level. It adds to a growing literature on factors that impact construal level, such as black-and-white versus colour imagery (Lee et al., 2014), confidence (Wan & Rucker, 2013), darkness (Steidle, Werth, & Hanke, 2011), fluency (Alter & Oppenheimer 2008), measurement unit size (Maglio & Trope, 2011), mood (e.g., Labroo & Patrick, 2009), novelty (Forster, Liberman, & Shapira, 2009), regulatory resource depletion (e.g., Agrawal & Wan, 2009), temperature (Ijzerman & Semin, 2010), and visual perspective (Libby, Shaeffer, & Eibach, 2009). Understanding the antecedents to construal level is important because of the central role played by construal level in consumer information processing, judgment and decision making (Trope et al., 2007).

Thirdly, this thesis might also contribute to the development of new experimental methodologies for manipulating construal level. Building on the present work, future research seeking to manipulate construal level may likewise employ (a) structurally simple versus structurally complex writing tasks and (b) long versus short writing tasks to manipulate construal level. In particular, the results of Study 5 show that performing a structurally simple (complex) writing task and/ or a short (long) writing task led participants to construe events and objects at a higher (lower) level. These tasks should fit in the toolbox of future researchers seeking to investigate the role of construal level in consumer judgment and decision making.

9.1.3 Managerial implications

The findings reported in this thesis have clear implications for review platform managers. Given the benefits of favourable eWOM, more and more companies employ costly incentives and tactics to encourage favourable reviews (Berger et al., 2022; Woolley & Sharif, 2021). However, the field appears largely unaware of the power of platform design in shaping eWOM behaviour. This thesis suggests that review platforms not only provide a channel for consumers to voice their opinions but also have the power to harness eWOM behaviour. In particular, it informs marketers on how to enhance review favourability through platform design.

This research provides actionable insights for review platform managers to design more effective review platforms. Specifically, to induce favourable review content, platform managers should impose (1) a structurally simple review task and/ or (2) a short length requirement. Simply put, platform managers should (a) simplify the review task by avoiding detailed review content solicitation and (b) impose an upper word limit that instructs reviewers to generate shorter review content. These are valuable insights since most marketers find it a daunting challenge to try to harness and leverage the ubiquitous eWOM (Liousas, 2018). By pointing out ways to induce eWOM content high in favourability, this thesis offers practical advice to managers looking to maximize the value of eWOM.

Through the prism of CLT, this thesis suggests that review platform features could affect reviewers' psychological distance from their consumption episodes and hence their construal level, which elevates or suppresses eWOM favourability. Using this knowledge, platform managers may implement other platform features accordingly. For instance, previous research has shown that black-and-white imagery (colour imagery) is associated with high-level construal (low-level construal; Lee et al., 2014). To induce reviewers to craft reviews high in favourability, platform managers could

design a review platform with a black-and-white or pale background (as opposed to a colour-rich background).

A cursory survey of review platforms reveals that some platforms are structurally complex. For instance, *Viewpoints* provides prospective reviewers with a valenced summary of prior reviews (pros and cons), and urges them to write about both the pros and cons of the target product. By making an effort to recall both strengths and weaknesses of the target product, reviewers on this platform may recall many aspects of their consumption experience. According to this thesis, *Viewpoints* reviewers may tend to write less favourable reviews (other things being equal). In other words, a seemingly harmless feature to encourage the mention of pros and cons could end up having unintended negative consequences. Today, with review platforms appearing in different shapes and forms, the issue of optimal platform design is clearly an important issue worthy of managerial attention for all players in this evolving industry.

9.2 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Several limitations in this thesis points to avenues for further research, as discussed below.

9.2.1 Other platform design features and other eWOM dimensions

Firstly, this thesis investigates whether and how two review platform design features (structural complexity and length requirement) influence eWOM favourability. Future scholars may investigate whether and how the said features may affect other dimensions of eWOM content such as eWOM certainty. For instance, greater perceived information certainty has been found to boost persuasiveness (Karmarkar & Tormala, 2010; Packard, Berger, & Boghrati, 2023) and consumer engagement (e.g., like, comment, and share; Pezzuti, Leonhardt, & Warren, 2021).

To provide some initial evidence, the data in five of the six studies in this thesis were reanalysed to explore the relationship between eWOM certainty and (a) structural complexity and (b) length requirement.[17] The results suggest that a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task is associated with higher eWOM certainty in most of the studies (studies 1, 2, 3 and 6), while a long (vs. short) length requirement is associated with higher eWOM certainty in Study 4. For details, see appendix 2.

These studies were not designed to test the causal impacts of structural complexity and length requirement on eWOM certainty, so these initial findings should be interpreted with caution. They do, however, seem to indicate that structural complexity has a stronger effect on eWOM certainty than does length requirement. In retrospect, the difference is in line with Schwarz's (1998) argument that certainty judgments depend on both the ease of recall and the actual amount recalled. Since structural complexity was manipulated as the number of questions about product attributes, it should be instrumental in facilitating recall and increasing the number of recalled attributes, thereby positively affecting certainty judgements. In contrast, since length requirement apparently is not related to recall in any obvious way, it is not surprising that its observed effect on eWOM certainty was weak. Future research may explore

[17] Study 5's data were not analysed here as this study not only manipulated platform design (IVs) but construal level (mediator). The latter manipulation likely altered the "natural" influence of platform design on eWOM certainty.

whether this conjecture holds true.

Secondly, this thesis only considers the impacts of two review platform design features (structural complexity and length requirement). Future scholars may investigate the influence of other platform design features on eWOM favourability. For instance, some major review platforms such as *ProductReview.com.au* urge reviewers to "[use] professional language," "be objective," and "include product identifying information," whereas other review platforms such as *MakeupAlley* encourage reviewers to "put the 'you' in your review [which] is what makes MakeupAlley so special!" Could these review guidelines have any effect on eWOM favourability?

When reviewers create self-focused eWOM content, they adopt a first-person perspective. Rice (2010) suggests that when taking a first-person perspective, reviewers recall more image-eliciting details of their consumption experience. Such details enhance the vividness of the consumption experience (Chandran & Menon, 2004), which makes the experience psychologically close (D'Argembeau & Linden, 2004). Conversely, when reviewers create objective eWOM content, they adopt a third-person perspective. Thomas and Tsai (2012) suggest that when taking a third-person perspective, reviewers may be less likely to recall image-eliciting details of their consumption experience. The experience is therefore rendered psychologically distant. On the basis of the well-established reciprocal effects of psychological distance on construal level (Liberman & Trope, 1998), the respective guidelines are expected to have opposite effects on construal level. By virtue of the robust findings reported in this thesis, these contrasting review guidelines point to another interesting avenue for research on how platform design impacts eWOM favourability.

9.2.2 Contextual moderators and other possible mechanisms

This research has demonstrated robust effects of structural complexity and length requirement on eWOM favourability. Nonetheless, the current work has not looked at boundary conditions of these effects. Future research may enrich these findings by considering several pertinent moderating variables. Firstly, according to regulatory focus theory (RFT: Higgins, 1998), a promotion- (vs. prevention-) focus causes people to strive to be more positive. In the context of review writing, RFT suggests that promotion-focused (vs. prevention-focused) reviewers tend to write more favourable reviews. Further, consumers from collectivist cultures such as China tend to be chronically prevention-focused, whereas consumers from individualist cultures such as the United States tend to be chronically promotion-focused (Aaker & Lee, 2001). Hence, culture should moderate how platform design impacts eWOM favourability. For instance, since collectivist (individualist) consumers are chronically prevention-focused (promotion-focused) and tend to write less (more) favourable reviews, would the negative impacts of structural complexity and length requirement on eWOM favourability be less pronounced among collectivist (vs. individualist) consumers?

Secondly, the findings in this thesis dovetail well with Jung et al.'s (2023) recent research and suggest a worthwhile extension of their work. As noted by Jung et al., in order to increase the quantity of online reviews, some companies send review reminders to consumers who have used a product but have not yet posted a review. These authors find that a delayed (vs. immediate) review reminder increases review likelihood but has a negligible effect on review content. Integrating Jung et al.'s

findings and the findings of this thesis, it appears that coupling a delayed review reminder with a structurally simple review task may increase review likelihood *and* also review favourability. The rationale is that a structurally simple (vs. complex) review task leads the consumers to adopt a high-level construal and hence write more favourable reviews.

Thirdly, consumers are increasingly relying on their mobile devices to generate eWOM content. Previous research suggests that the medium (smartphone *versus* computer) may moderate the impact of platform design on eWOM favourability. For instance, Melumad, Inman and Pham (2019) show that because of its physical constraints, a smartphone (vs. computer) leads consumers to naturally generate shorter review content. That being the case, it is conceivable that a long (vs. short) review length requirement exerts a stronger influence on eWOM favourability when a smartphone (vs. computer) is used. This is another interesting research direction with high practical significance.

Fourthly, it is possible that some consumers may have immaculate consumption experience (i.e., experience without any negative aspect). In that case, eWOM favourability is conceivably less influenced by construal level. As a result, the impacts of structural complexity and length requirement could be less pronounced among consumers with immaculate (vs. moderate) experience.

Finally, future research may seek to identify other possible routes by which structural complexity and length requirement influence eWOM favourability. While the current research has found good support for the intervening role of construal level, it is conceivable that there are other pertinent mechanisms at work. For instance, answering more (vs. fewer) review questions and/ or crafting a more (vs. less) lengthy review would be more likely to make consumers feel unpleasant. This boredom-induced feeling of unpleasantness (Raffaelli, Mills & Christoff, 2018; van Tilburg & Igou, 2016) may end up suppressing eWOM favourability. Further work along these lines, by articulating underlying processes as well as boundary conditions, has the potential to further enhance theoretical understanding of how platform design both facilitates and shapes eWOM generation.

9.2.3 Construal level and more nuanced eWOM content

This thesis highlights CLT in explaining how eWOM content (specifically eWOM favourability) is generated. Besides product experience (which varies in favourability), consumers also divulge non-product-related self-information in eWOM communication (Chen, 2017). Such information could be self-general memory or specific self-autobiographical memory (Beike, Brandon, & Cole, 2016). Self-general memory captures more stable aspects of the self such as product preferences (Robinson & Swanson, 1990), whereas self-autobiographical memory captures transient personal events (William & Broadbent, 1986). Future research may explore whether and how construal level influences the retrieval and sharing of self-general memory *versus* self-autobiographical memory in eWOM content.

Arguably, a high- (low-) construal level promotes retrieval of self-general (self-autobiographical) memory. The rationale is that a high-level construal facilitates schema-driven processing of information (Eyal, Hoover, Fujita & Nussbaum, 2011), and more reliance on schema leads people to retrieve more schema-consistent

information (Bower, Black, & Turner, 1979; Schank & Abelson, 2013), such as general knowledge about the self; in contrast, a low-level construal facilitates piecemeal processing of information (Eyal et al., 2011), and more reliance on such processing leads people to retrieve specific exemplars, such as specific personal episodes. In short, CLT appears to hold much promise for advancing theoretical understanding of eWOM behaviour, specifically by informing future investigations into aspects of eWOM content other than eWOM favourability.

9.3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while it is clear that eWOM is both frequent and important, there has been little scholarly attention on the influence of review platform design on eWOM behaviour. This thesis captures this neglected role of platform design. The results of six complementary studies have highlighted the relevance of two managerially controllable platform design features to eWOM favourability and also the underlying psychological mechanism. Admittedly, this work has only scratched the surface of the persuasive influence of platform design. But it does point to many possible directions of future research.

One long-held assumption in marketing is that WOM (oral or electronic) as a form of voluntary consumer communication is beyond managerial control (Arndt, 1967; Babić Rosario, de Valck, & Sotgiu, 2020; Litvin, Goildsmith, & Pan, 2008). In this thesis, there is strong evidence that the "uncontrollability" assumption may not hold true for online reviews. Through platform design, managers could influence online review content by intervening the memory retrieval and review creation process. A recent *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* article defines eWOM as "consumer-generated, consumption-generated communication that employs digital tools and is directed primarily to other consumers" (Babić Rosario et al., 2020, p. 427). In light of this thesis, Babić Rosario et al.'s definition could be enriched as "eWOM is consumer-generated, **firm-intervened**, consumption-generated communication that employs digital tools and is directed primarily to other consumers".

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: ANCILLARY ANALYSES CONTROLLING FOR MOOD

To control for the possibility that participants' mood (e.g., Gorn et al., 1993) accounted for variations in eWOM favourability (in terms of review ratings and verbatim favourability scores), a series of ancillary analyses (specifically, ANCOVAs) were conducted for the experimental studies. The details are shown below.

Appendix 1A: Ancillary analyses for Study 1

An ANCOVA was run on review ratings, with structural complexity as an independent variable and mood state as a covariate. Mood state was significant as a covariate ($F(1,136) = 27.979, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .171$) with an effect size of .45 and a statistical power of 99.9%. In spite of this, there was still a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,136) = 10.503, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .072$) with an effect size of .28 and a statistical power of 90.5%.

A parallel ANCOVA was run for verbatim positivity scores. Mood state was significant as a covariate ($F(1,136) = 5.946, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .042$) with an effect size of .21 and a statistical power of 67.8%. In spite of this, there was still a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,136) = 22.316, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .141$) with an effect size of .41 and a statistical power of 99.7%.

Appendix 1B: Ancillary analyses for Study 2

An ANCOVA was run on review ratings, with structural complexity and length requirement as independent variables, and mood as a covariate. Mood state was significant as a covariate ($F(1,147) = 45.834, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .238$) with an effect size of .56 and a statistical power of 99.9%. In spite of this, there was still a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,147) = 30.054, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .17$) with an effect size of .45 and a statistical power of 99.9%. Moreover, there was a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,147) = 22.907, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .135$) with an effect size of .40 and a statistical power of 99.7%. Further, consistent with the main analysis, the structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant ($F < 1$).

A parallel ANCOVA was run for verbatim positivity scores. Mood state was significant as a covariate ($F(1,147) = 8.023, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .052$) with an effect size of .23 and a statistical power of 80.3%. In spite of this, there was still a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,147) = 7.922, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .51$) with an effect size of .23 and a statistical power of 79.9%. Moreover, there was a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,147) = 51.961, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .261$) with an effect size of .59 and a statistical power of 99.9%. Further, consistent with the main analysis, the structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant ($F(1,147) = 1.516, p > .20, , \eta_p^2 = .01$) with an effect size of .10 and a statistical power of 23.1%.

Appendix 1C: Ancillary analyses for Study 3

An ANCOVA was run on review ratings, with structural complexity and length requirement as independent variables, and mood as a covariate. Mood state was

significant as a covariate ($F(1,118) = 17.145, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .127$) with an effect size of .38 and a statistical power of 98.4%. In spite of this, there was still a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,118) = 5.892, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$) with an effect size of .23 and a statistical power of 67.3%. Moreover, there was a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,118) = 4.811, p < 0.05, \eta_p^2 = .039$) with an effect size of .20 and a statistical power of 58.5%. Further, consistent with the main analysis, the structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant ($F < 1$) with an effect size of .045 and a statistical power of 7.2%.

A parallel ANCOVA was run for verbatim positivity scores. Mood state was not significant as a covariate ($F < 1$) with an effect size of .05 and a statistical power of 9.6%. There was still a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,118) = 20.844, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .15$) with an effect size of .42 and a statistical power of 99.5%. Moreover, there was a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,118) = 5.791, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .047$) with an effect size of .22 and a statistical power of 66.5%. Further, consistent with the main analysis, the structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant ($F < 4$) with an effect size of .18 and a statistical power of 47.2%.

Appendix 1D: Ancillary analyses for Study 4

ANCOVAs with temporal proximity as a covariate

Temporal proximity was operationalised as a dummy variable (1 = the reviewed consumption experience occurred 3 or fewer days ago and 0 otherwise). ANCOVA was run on review ratings, with structural complexity and length requirement as independent variables and temporal proximity as a covariate. Temporal proximity was not significant as a covariate ($F < 1$). There was a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,146) = 7.645, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .05$) with an effect size of .23 and a statistical power of 95.0%. Moreover, there was a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,146) = 4.288, p < 0.05, \eta_p^2 = .03$) with an effect size of .17 and a statistical power of 53.9%. Further, consistent with the main analysis, the structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant ($F < 1$).

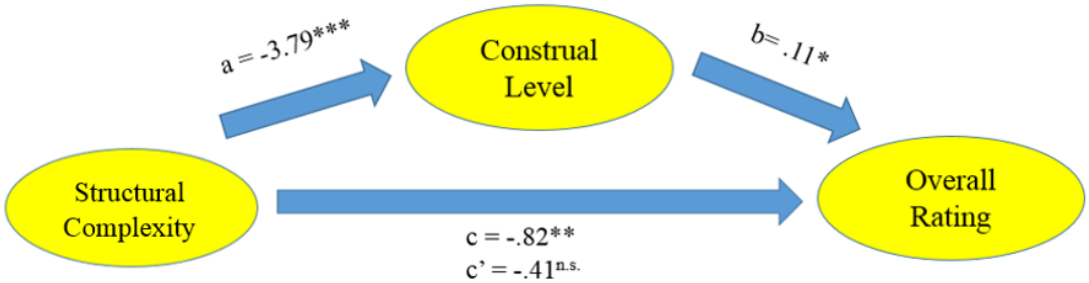
A parallel ANCOVA was run for verbatim positivity scores. Temporal proximity was not significant as a covariate ($F < 1$). There was a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,146) = 6.514, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$) with an effect size of .21 and a statistical power of 71.8%. Moreover, there was a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,146) = 5.475, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .04$) with an effect size of .19 and a statistical power of 64.2%. Further, consistent with the main analysis, the structural complexity x length requirement interaction was not significant ($F < 1$).

Mediation tests for the effect of structural complexity effect on review rating, controlling for mood

Using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2017, model 4), I put structural complexity (structurally simple = 1, structurally complex = 2) as the independent variable, construal level as the mediator, review rating as the dependent variable, and (dummy) length requirement (long-length = 1, short-length = 0) and mood as covariates. As shown in Figure A1, a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task

decreased participants' construal level ($b = -3.78, t = -5.02, p < .001$), which in turn decreased review rating ($b = 0.11, t = 3.59, p < .001$). The indirect effect of structural complexity on review rating through construal level was significant (indirect effect = -0.4143, 95% CI -0.7424 to -0.1577, based on 5,000 resamples). Moreover, the direct effect of structural complexity on review rating ($b = -0.82, t = -2.82, p < .01$) became insignificant after accounting for construal level ($b = -0.41, t = -1.34, p > .10$). These results suggested that the effect of structural complexity on review rating was fully mediated by construal level. Figure A1 visualises the detailed results of the mediation model. Besides, based on Monte Carlo analyses (5,000 replications; Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017), the statistical power of obtaining this mediation effect at $n = 151$ was 86%.

FIGURE A1: Indirect effect of structural complexity on review rating through construal level, controlling for mood



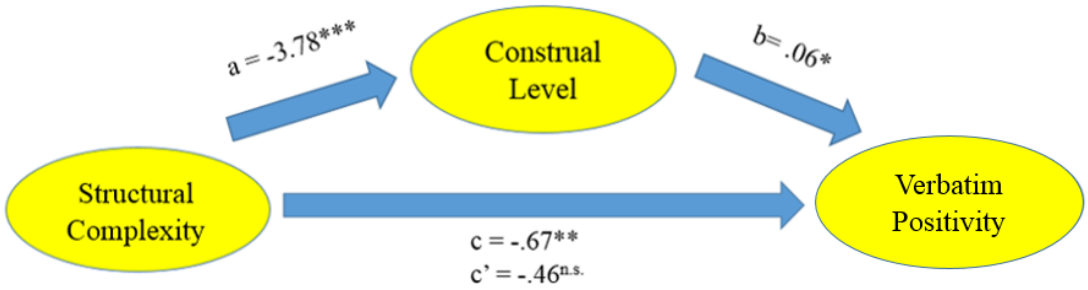
*Note: The effect of structural complexity on review rating is mediated by construal level (indirect effect = -.4143, 95% CI -.7424 to -.1577, based on 5,000 resamples). The Figure shows unstandardized regression coefficients. (Dummy) length requirement was included as a covariate in the mediation model. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, n.s.p >.05.*

Mediation tests for the effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity, controlling for mood

Using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2017, model 4), I put structural complexity (structurally simple = 1, structurally complex = 2) as the independent variable, construal level as the mediator, verbatim positivity score as the dependent variable, and (dummy) length requirement (long-length = 1, short-length = 0) and mood as covariates. As shown in Figure A2, a structurally complex (vs. simple) review task decreased participants' construal level ($b = -3.78, t = -5.02, p < .001$), which in turn decreased verbatim positivity ($b = 0.06, t = 2.02, p < .05$). The indirect effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity through construal level was significant (indirect effect = -0.2124, 95% CI -0.4732 to -0.0200, based on 5,000 resamples). Moreover, the direct effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity ($b = -0.67, t = -2.61, p < .01$) became insignificant after accounting for construal level ($b = -0.46, t = -1.66, p > .10$). These results suggested that the effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity was fully mediated by construal level. Figure 8 visualises the detailed results of the mediation model. Besides, based on Monte Carlo analyses (5,000 replications; Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017), the statistical power of obtaining this mediation effect at $n = 151$ was 42%[18].

[18] This statistical power is lower than the recommended 80% power. To obtain such statistical power, a sample size of about 400 would be needed in this study.

FIGURE A2: Indirect effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity through construal level, controlling for mood

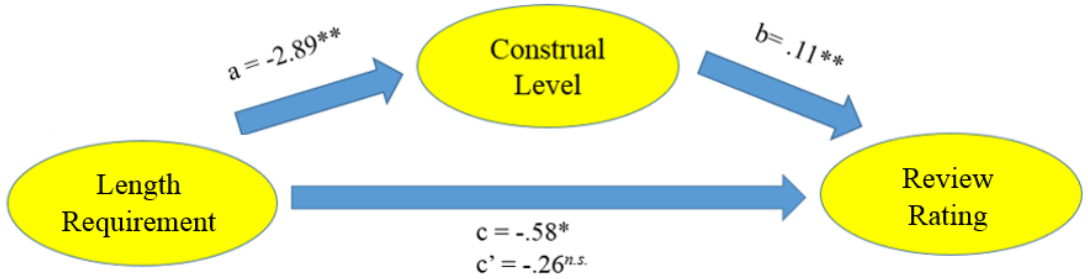


*Note: The effect of structural complexity on verbatim positivity is mediated by construal level (indirect effect = -.2124, 95% CI -.4732 to -.0200, based on 5,000 resamples). The Figure shows unstandardized regression coefficients. (Dummy) length requirement was included as a covariate in the mediation model. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, n.s.p >.05.*

Mediation tests for the effect of length requirement on review rating, controlling for mood

Using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2017, model 4), I put length requirement (short-length = 1, long-length = 2) as the independent variable, construal level as the mediator, review rating as the dependent variable, and (dummy) structural complexity (structurally complex = 1, structurally simple = 0) and mood as covariates. As shown in Figure A3, a long-length (vs. short-length) requirement decreased participants' construal level ($b = -2.89, t = -3.83, p < .001$), which in turn increased review rating ($b = 0.11, t = 3.59, p < .01$). The indirect effect of length requirement on review rating through construal level was significant (indirect effect = -0.3168, 95% CI -0.5892 to -0.0982, based on 5,000 resamples). Moreover, the direct effect of length requirement on review rating ($b = -0.58, t = -2.07, p < .05$) became insignificant after accounting for construal level ($b = -0.26, t = -0.90, p > .30$). These results suggested that the effect of length requirement on review rating was fully mediated by construal level. Figure 9 visualises the detailed results of the mediation model. Besides, based on Monte Carlo analyses (5,000 replications; Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017), the statistical power of obtaining this mediation effect at $n = 151$ was 94%.

FIGURE A3: Indirect effect of length requirement on review rating through construal level, controlling for mood



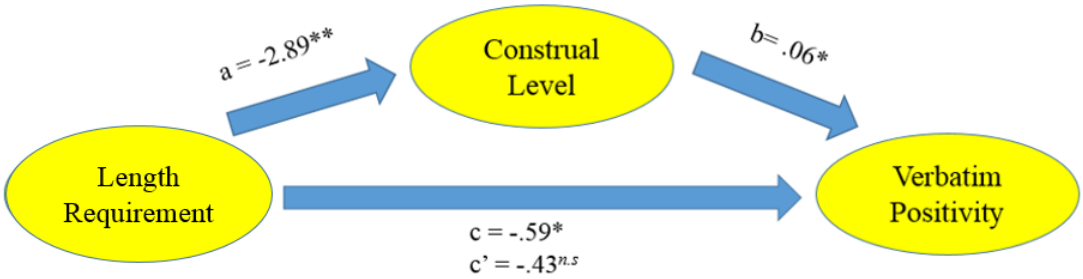
*Note: The effect of length requirement on review rating is mediated by construal level (indirect effect = -.3168, 95% CI -.5892 to -.0982, based on 5,000 resamples). The Figure shows unstandardized regression coefficients. (Dummy) structural complexity was included as a covariate in the mediation model. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, n.s.p >.05.*

Mediation tests for the effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity, controlling for mood

Using the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2017, model 4), I put length

requirement (short-length = 1, long-length = 2) as the independent variable, construal level as the mediator, verbatim certainty as the dependent variable, and (dummy) structural complexity (structurally complex = 1, structurally simple = 0) and mood as covariates. As shown in Figure A4, a long-length (vs. short-length) requirement decreased participants' construal level ($b = -2.89, t = -3.83, p < .001$), which in turn increased verbatim positivity ($b = 0.06, t = 2.02, p < .05$). The indirect effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity through construal level was significant (indirect effect = -0.1624, 95% CI -0.3328 to -0.0196, based on 5,000 resamples). Moreover, the direct effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity ($b = -0.59, t = -2.30, p < .05$) became insignificant after accounting for construal level ($b = -0.43, t = -1.61, p > .10$). These results suggested that the effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity was fully mediated by construal level. Figure 10 visualises the detailed results of the mediation model. Besides, based on Monte Carlo analyses (5,000 replications; Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, 2017), the statistical power of obtaining this mediation effect at $n = 151$ was 54%[19].

FIGURE A4: Indirect effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity through construal level, controlling for mood



*Note: The effect of length requirement on verbatim positivity is mediated by construal level (indirect effect = -.1624, 95% CI -.3328 to -.0196, based on 5,000 resamples). The Figure shows unstandardized regression coefficients. (Dummy) structural complexity was included as a covariate in the mediation model. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001, n.s.p >.05.*

[19] This statistical power is lower than the recommended 80% power. To obtain such statistical power, a sample size of about 170 would be needed in this study.

APPENDIX 2: Relationship between platform design features and eWOM certainty

To explore whether and how structural complexity and length requirement each may affect eWOM certainty, data collected for all the studies (except Study 5) were analysed to detect variations in eWOM certainty across pertinent conditions. Study 5 data were not analysed because the study manipulated construal level along with platform design features.

Study 1 eWOM certainty

Review text was run through the Certainty Lexicon (CL; Rocklage, He, Rucker, & Nordgren, 2023) to obtain the certainty score of each review. Since CL generated missing values for some participants, the values were replaced by the cell mean (Tsikriktsis, 2005). An independent sample t-test revealed that participants in the structurally complex condition had a higher verbatim certainty score ($M_{complex} = 5.75, SD = 0.73$) than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 5.42, SD = 0.76; t(138) = 2.61, p < .01$) with an effect size of .44 and a statistical power of 73.4%.

Study 2 eWOM certainty

As in Study 2, review text was run through the Certainty Lexicon (CL; Rocklage et al., 2023) to obtain the certainty score of each review. The missing values generated by CL were replaced by the cell mean (Tsikriktsis, 2005). A 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) by 2 (length requirement: long vs. short) ANOVA on verbatim certainty score yielded a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,147) = 8.129, p < 0.01, \eta_p^2 = 0.052$) with an effect size of 0.23 and a statistical power of 81.8%. The analysis further revealed that participants in the structurally complex condition reported higher verbatim certainty score ($M_{complex} = 5.98; SD = 0.89$) than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 5.58; SD = 0.76$). The analysis, however, did not yield a significant main effect of length requirement ($F < 1$), nor the structural complexity x length requirement interaction [$F(1,148) = 2.838, p > 0.05, , \eta_p^2 = .019$] with an effect size of .14 and a statistical power of 39.9%.

Study 3 eWOM certainty

As in previous studies, review text was run through the Certainty Lexicon (CL; Rocklage et al., 2023) to obtain the certainty score of each review. The missing values generated by CL were replaced by the cell mean (Tsikriktsis, 2005). A 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) by 2 (length requirement: long vs. short) ANOVA on verbatim certainty score yielded a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F(1,119) = 11.823, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .09$) with an effect size of .31 and a statistical power of 93.3%. The analysis further revealed that participants in the structurally complex condition reported higher verbatim certainty score ($M_{complex} = 5.79; SD = 0.68$) than those in the structurally simple condition ($M_{simple} = 5.36; SD = 0.69$). The analysis, however, did not yield a significant main effect of length requirement ($F < 1$)with an effect size of .032 and a statistical power of 6.40%, nor the structural complexity x length requirement interaction ($F < 1$) .

Study 4 eWOM certainty

As in previous studies, review text was run through the Certainty Lexicon (CL; Rocklage et al., 2023) to obtain the certainty score of each review. The missing values generated by CL were replaced by the cell mean (Tsikriktsis, 2005). A 2 (structural complexity: complex vs. simple) by 2 (length requirement: long vs. short) ANOVA on verbatim certainty score did not yield a significant main effect of structural complexity ($F < 1$) with an effect size of .08 and a statistical power of 15.8%. The analysis, however, did not yield a significant main effect of length requirement ($F(1,147) = 6.279, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .041$)with an effect size of .21 and a statistical power of 71.3%. Further, the structural complexity x length requirement interaction [$F(1,147) = 21.07, p < .001, , \eta_p^2 = .125$] was significant, with an effect size of .378 and a statistical power of 99.6%.

Planned contrasts further revealed that among those who performed a structurally simple review task, verbatim certainty score was higher in the short review length condition ($M_{simple,short} = 6.87; SD = 0.50$) than in the long review length condition ($M_{simple,long} = 6.17; SD = 0.77, p < .001$). On the other hand, among those who performed a structurally complex review task, there was no statistically significant difference between the structurally complex condition ($M_{complex,short} = 6.33, SD = 0.48$) and the structurally simple condition ($M_{complex,long} = 6.53, SD = 0.62, p = 0.11$), in terms of verbatim certainty score.

Study 6 eWOM certainty

For Study 6 (field study), a post-hoc analysis was conducted to explore the effect of structural complexity on eWOM certainty, using naturalistic reviews scraped from two major online review platforms, *Yelp* and *Tripadvisor*.

Key measures of eWOM certainty

Verbatim reviews: As in our previous studies, verbatim reviews were run through the Certainty Lexicon (CL; Rocklage et al., 2023) to obtain the certainty score of each review. Since CL generated missing values for some participants, the values were replaced by the cell mean of the focal restaurant and the review platform (Tsikriktsis, 2005).

Control variables, fixed effects and analysis strategy

All control variables (e.g., review length), fixed effects (e.g., time effect) and analysis strategy (i.e., econometric approaches) used for this post-hoc analysis were the same as those for the main field study. Specifically, we employed the following econometric models, which capture a series of control variables and the three-way (time, reviewers and restaurants) fixed effects.

$$Verbatim\ certainty\ score_{ijt} = \beta * Platform_{ijt} + Control_{ijt} + \sum_I \delta_i + \sum_J \lambda_j * R_j + \sum_T \tau_t * M_t + \varepsilon_{ijt} \quad \text{Eq. P1}$$

In all the above equation, subscript *i* indexes consumers, *j* indexes restaurants, and *t* indexes time. Platform is a binary variable of which platform a review is authored, with 1 being *Yelp* and 2 being *Tripadvisor*. *Control* represents our set of control variables. In addition, δ_i represents a vector of consumer fixed effects, R_j is a vector

of restaurant fixed effects, and M_t is a vector of time fixed effects.

Descriptive statistics for regression variables

We report descriptive statistics for the interval variables entering our regressions in tables A1 and A2. Table A1 presents descriptive statistics of the mean, standard deviation and skewness, whereas Table A2 presents correlation matrix of the interval variables.

TABLE A1: Mean, standard deviation and skewness of the interval variables (for analysis of eWOM certainty)

	Mean	S. D.	*Skewness*
1. Verbatim Review Certainty	6.3696	0.7923	-0.837
2. Review length (in word)	98.49	83.783	2.481
3. No. of reviews a reviewer submitted	128.61	328.47	12.346
4. No. of friends a reviewer has	58.44	218.155	10.481
5. Reviewer Average Rating	4.0582	0.6096	-1.639
6. Restaurant Average Rating	4.238	0.3131	-0.778

TABLE A2:
Correlation matrix of the interval variables (for analysis of eWOM certainty)

	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
1. Verbatim Review Certainty	1					
2. Review length (in word)	-0.105	1				
3. No. of reviews a reviewer submitted	-0.043	0.132	1			
4. No. of friends a reviewer has	-0.035	0.175	0.425	1		
5. Reviewer Average Rating	0.099	-0.12	-0.043	-0.032	1	
6. Restaurant Average Rating	0.086	-0.076	-0.013	0.012	0.13	1

As Table A1 indicates, all interval variables (except verbatim review certainty and restaurant average rating) are highly skewed (skewness $\geq |1|$). Hence, we took the log of the pertinent variables for regression analysis[20]. Also, as Table A2 shows, all of the correlations between independent variables (review length, number of reviews submitted, number of friends, reviewer average rating and restaurant average rating) are below 0.6, suggesting that in running regression models, multicollinearity should not be an issue.

Empirical results for regression models

Table A3 presents our regression results for the verbatim review certainty. In support of our prediction, the models revealed that reviewers authored more certain reviews on *Tripadvisor* than on *Yelp*. The results demonstrated that structural complexity (by virtue of platform) is positively related to eWOM certainty.

[20] For "number of friends" variable, because some of the raw values were zero and the log of zero is undefined, we took the log of (the raw score + 1) to retain all the values.

TABLE A3:

Regression models to predict log form of verbatim review certainty

DV= verbatim review certainty

	Coefficient
IV: Platform (1 = *Yelp*, 2 = *Tripadvisor*)	**.123** (.024)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length (in log form)	-.215** (.018)
Pictures	.038 (.031)
Temporal proximity	.079 (.043)
Social distance	.008 (.031)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends (in log form)	.058** (.01)
No. of reviews written (in log form)	–.083** (.009)
Reviewer average rating (in log form)	.615 (.063)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	-.051 (.073)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	6.526**(.341)
R-squared	.160
N	24,698

* $p < .05$, ** $p <. 01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

Robustness test 1: variant forms of variables

Despite the encouraging results, one might wonder whether they were somehow driven by the modeling approach used (Cascio Rizzo, Berger, De Angelis, & Pozharliev, 2023). In particular, one could argue that the encouraging results were driven by the log transformations of the independent variables. To examine the robustness of the results, we re-ran the regressions with the log-transformed data for the dependent variables and the log-transformed data for the independent variables (results in Table A4), and (b) the regressions with the original data for the dependent variables and the independent variables (results in Table A5). There was no change in the pattern of results.

TABLE A4:

Regression models to predict log form of verbatim review certainty

DV= verbatim review certainty (in log form)

	Coefficient
IV: Platform (1 = *Yelp*, 2 = *Tripadvisor*)	**.009** (.002)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length (in log form)	-.012** (.001)
Pictures	.003 (.002)
Temporal proximity	.005 (.003)
Social distance	.0 (.002)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends (in log form)	.004** (.000)
No. of reviews written (in log form)	-.006** (.000)
Reviewer average rating (in log form)	.045** (.005)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	-.003 (.006)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	.798** (.026)
R-squared	.152
N	24,698

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

TABLE A5:

Regression models to predict verbatim review certainty (with original IVs)

DV= verbatim review certainty (in log form)

	Coefficient
IV: Platform (1 = *Yelp*, 2 = *Tripadvisor*)	**.056** (.021)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length (in log form)	-.001** (.000)
Pictures	.035 (.031)
Temporal proximity	.085* (.043)
Social distance	.003 (.031)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends	.000** (.000)
No. of reviews written	.000** (.000)
Reviewer average rating	.098** (.011)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	-.061 (.073)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	6.238**(.34)
R-squared	.157
N	24,698

* $p < .05$, ** $p <. 01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

Robustness test 2: propensity score matching

Even though the field study econometrically identified the structural complexity effects using the three-way fixed effects approach, it is possible that some unobserved factors might have influenced both platform choice and eWOM certainty. For instance, compared to experienced reviewers, novice reviewers are more likely to write in more certain language (Packard & Berger, 2017) and therefore choose to share their consumption experience on *Tripadvisor* that imposes a structurally complex review task (rather than *Yelp* that imposes a structurally simple review task). This type of selection bias could alternatively explain the positive association between structural complexity and eWOM certainty. As in the main field study, we employed Propensity Score Matching (PSM; Abadie & Imbens, 2006; Dehejia & Wahba, 2002; Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991) to address potential selection issues in the post-hoc analysis.

Specifically, we used a nearest neighbour matching algorithm to perform the matching process, based on two observable reviewer characteristics that might be of great importance to eWOM certainty—reviewers' friends and expertise. For matching purposes, we created two dummy variables. The first dummy variable was whether a reviewer has friends (1 = one or more friends and 0 otherwise). The second one was whether a reviewer had authored 50 or more reviews, and according to the policies of

Tripadvisor and *Yelp*, this was a good proxy for reviewer expertise.[21] Following Austin's (2011) recommendation, we specified a matching threshold – i.e., a maximum deviation in propensity (caliper distance = .01), to improve the precision of the matching process. The procedure resulted in 5,174 matched reviews, or a total sample of 10,348 reviews.

Descriptive statistics for regression variables in the PSM dataset:

We report descriptive statistics for the interval variables entering our regressions in Tables A6 and A7. Table A6 presents descriptive statistics of the mean, standard deviation and skewness, whereas Table A7 presents the correlation matrix of the interval variables.

TABLE A6:
Mean, standard deviation and skewness of the interval variables for the PSM dataset (for analysis of eWOM certainty)

	Mean	S. D.	*Skewness*
1.Verbatim review certainty	6.3299	0.7984	-0.789
2. Review length (in word)	101.42	87.228	2.374
3. No. of reviews a reviewer submitted	194.07	454.023	9.696
4. No. of friends a reviewer has	77.19	277.715	9.288
5. Reviewer Average Rating	4.0378	0.5853	-1.459
6. Restaurant Average Rating	4.246	0.3005	-0.74

TABLE A7: Correlation matrix of the interval variables for the PSM dataset (for analysis of eWOM certainty)

	1	2.	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*
1.Verbatim review certainty	1					
2. Review length (in word)	-0.085	1				
3. No. of reviews a reviewer submitted	-0.036	0.144	1			
4. No. of friends a reviewer has	-0.037	0.201	0.44	1		
5. Reviewer Average Rating	0.092	-0.108	-0.045	-0.033	1	
6. Restaurant Average Rating	0.069	-0.083	-0.041	-0.011	0.086	1

As Table A6 indicates, all interval variables (except verbatim review certainty and restaurant average rating) were highly skewed (skewness $\geq |1|$). Hence, we took the log of the pertinent variables for regression analysis.[22] Also, as Table A7 shows, all of the correlations between independent variables (review length, number of reviews submitted, number of friends, reviewer average rating and restaurant average rating) were below 0.6, suggesting multicollinearity was not an issue.

[21] On Tripadvisor, a reviewer is classified as a top contributor if he or she has authored more than 50 reviews. On *Yelp*, getting the elite status partly depends on whether a *Yelper* could write as many as 40-50 high-quality reviews. Based on the policies, we classified reviewers who produced 50 reviews or more as having high expertise.

[22] For the "number of friends" variable, because some of the raw values were zero and the log of zero is undefined, we took the log of (the raw score + 1) to retain all the data.

Empirical results for regression models used in conjunction with PSM approach:

As detailed in Table A8, using regression in conjunction with the PSM approach, we replicated the key findings that reviewers authored more certain reviews on *Tripadvisor* than on *Yelp*. The results confirmed that structural complexity (by virtue of platform design) is positively related to eWOM certainty.

TABLE A8: Regression models used in conjunction with propensity score matching to predict verbatim review certainty

DV= verbatim review certainty

	Coefficient
IV: Platform (1 = Yelp, 2 = Tripadvisor)	**.116** (.032)**
Controls	
Review-level	
Review length (in log form)	-.141** (.029)
Pictures	.037 (.037)
Temporal proximity	.049 (.073)
Social distance	.019 (.046)
Reviewer-level	
No. of friends (in log form)	.068** (.016)
No. of reviews written (in log form)	–.083** (.015)
Reviewer average rating (in log form)	.587** (.111)
Restaurant-level	
Restaurant average rating	-.081 (.101)
Dining style dummies	Included
City dummies	Included
Time Effects	Included
Reviewer Fixed Effects	Included
Restaurant Fixed Effects	Included
Intercept	6.552**(.477)
R-squared	.22
N	10,348

* $p < .05$, ** $p <. 01$

NOTE. — Standard errors are shown in parentheses. For parsimony, the coefficients for (a) dining style dummies, (b) city dummies, (c) time effects, (d) reviewer fixed effects, and (e) restaurant fixed effects are not reported.

Discussion

A post-hoc analysis using real-world eWOM data revealed that structural complexity strengthens eWOM certainty (besides diminishing eWOM favourability). Whereas the sparse literature on this topic has prevented more definitive theorising, the robust findings about eWOM certainty do point to an interesting direction for future research.

A caveat is worth noting, however. Apart from structural complexity, *Yelp* and *Tripadvisor* differ in other aspects of relevance to eWOM certainty. For instance, *Tripadvisor* has recently launched a couple of social networking functions to increase the social presence of the review audience. As a result, reviewers might feel psychologically closer to review readers while crafting reviews. This may trigger a lower-construal level, thereby magnifying eWOM certainty on *Tripadvisor*. Given the said platform-wide difference between Yelp and Tripadvisor (other than structural complexity), the findings of this post-hoc field study should be interpreted with caution.

APPENDIX 3: Questionnaires used in experimental studies

Appendix 3A: Study 1 Pretest

Study 1 Pretest: Structurally simple condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary.
- You are over 18 years of age.
- You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

As a team of market researchers, we are interested in how consumers share their consumption experience via online review platforms. Please take a moment to recall your recent dining experience at the on-campus canteen in block M. Please write a review of the restaurant in light of this experience.

Please write a review of the restaurant in light of this experience.

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

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	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 1 Pretest: Structurally complex condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.
1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.
By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:
• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

As a team of market researchers, we are interested in how consumers share their consumption experience via online review platforms. Please take a moment to recall your recent dining experience at the on-campus canteen in block M. Please write a review of the restaurant in light of this experience.
Date of dining:

Waiting time:

Spending (HK dollars):

Please rate the taste of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please write a review of the restaurant in light of this experience.

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

-

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Appendix 3B: Study 1

Study 1: Structurally simple condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary.
- You are over 18 years of age.
- You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

As a team of market researchers, we are interested in how consumers share their consumption experience via online review platforms. Please take a moment to recall your recent dining experience at the on-campus canteen in block M. Please write a review of the restaurant in light of this experience.

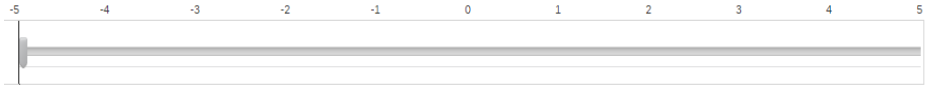
Please write a review of the restaurant in light of this experience.

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Are you currently a HSU student?
O Yes
O No

Which on-campus canteen/ café did you just review?
O Café in block A
O Café in block D
O Canteen in block B
O Canteen in block M

How many times have you eaten food from the on-campus canteen in block M this semester?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------
-

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?

----------Page break----------
We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.
----------End of Study----------

Study 1: Structurally complex condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:

• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

As a team of market researchers, we are interested in how consumers share their consumption experience via online review platforms. Please take a moment to recall your recent dining experience at the on-campus canteen in block M. Please write a review of the restaurant in light of this experience.
Date of dining:

Waiting time:

Spending (HK dollars):

Please rate the taste of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

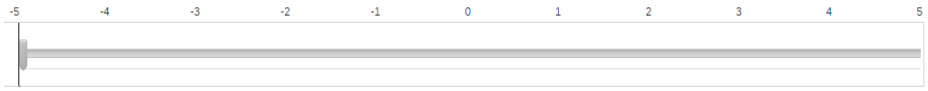
Please write a review of the restaurant in light of this experience.

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Are you currently a HSU student?
O Yes
O No

Which on-campus canteen/ café did you just review?
O Café in block A
O Café in block D
O Canteen in block B
O Canteen in block M

How many times have you eaten food from the on-campus canteen in block M this semester?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

-

Appendix 3C: Study 2 Pretest

Study 2 Pretest: Structurally simple, short length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:

• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at the on-campus café in block A. Please write a review of the café based on this experience.

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 2 Pretest: Structurally simple, long length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.
1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.
By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:
• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at the on-campus café in block A. Please write a review of the café based on this experience.

Your review must contain a minimum of 40 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 2 Pretest: Structurally complex, short length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.
1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.
By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:
• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at the on-campus café in block A. Please write a review of the café based on this experience.

Date of dining:

Waiting time:

Spending (HK dollars):

Please rate the taste of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 2 Pretest: Structurally complex, long length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.
1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.
By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:
• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at the on-campus café in block A. Please write a review of the café based on this experience.

Date of dining:

Waiting time:

Spending (HK dollars):

Please rate the taste of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain a minimum of 40 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Appendix 3D: Study 2

Study 2: Structurally simple, short length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:

• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at the on-campus café in block A. Please write a review of the café based on this experience.

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

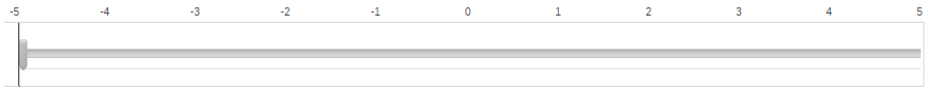
☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

My mood is:

Very unpleasant

Very pleasant



Are you currently a HSU student?
O Yes
O No

Which on-campus canteen/ café did you just review?
O Café in block A
O Café in block D
O Canteen in block B
O Canteen in block M

How many times have you eaten food from the on-campus canteen in block M this semester?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 2: Structurally simple, long length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.
1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.
By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:
• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at the on-campus café in block A. Please write a review of the café based on this experience.

Your review must contain a minimum of 40 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

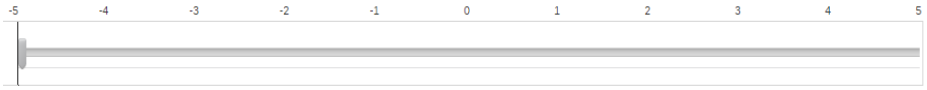
Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Are you currently a HSU student?
O Yes
O No

Which on-campus canteen/ café did you just review?
O Café in block A
O Café in block D
O Canteen in block B
O Canteen in block M

How many times have you eaten food from the on-campus canteen in block M this semester?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 2: Structurally complex, short length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.
1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.
By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:
• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at the on-campus café in block A. Please write a review of the café based on this experience.

Date of dining:

Waiting time:

Spending (HK dollars):

Please rate the taste of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

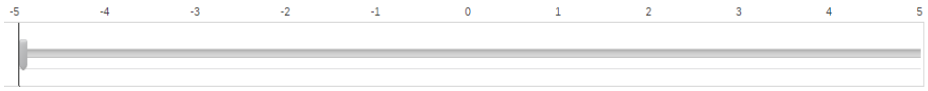
Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Are you currently a HSU student?
O Yes
O No

Which on-campus canteen/ café did you just review?
O Café in block A
O Café in block D
O Canteen in block B
O Canteen in block M

How many times have you eaten food from the on-campus canteen in block M this semester?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

-

Study 2: Structurally complex, long length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.
1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 15-20 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive 1 extra credit for the module BUS2001.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.
By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:
• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at the on-campus café in block A. Please write a review of the café based on this experience.

Date of dining:

Waiting time:

Spending (HK dollars):

Please rate the taste of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain a minimum of 40 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

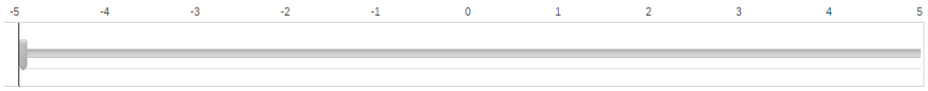
Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes your overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Are you currently a HSU student?
O Yes
O No

Which on-campus canteen/ café did you just review?
O Café in block A
O Café in block D
O Canteen in block B
O Canteen in block M

How many times have you eaten food from the on-campus canteen in block M this semester?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Appendix 3E: Study 3

Study 3: Structurally simple, short length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 20-25 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive HK$50.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:

- Your participation in the study is voluntary.
- You are over 18 years of age.
- You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please **rate and review the consumption experience in the video**[23] that you watched. Your review would help future consumers decide whether or not to patronize Hong Kong Airlines.

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall travel experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

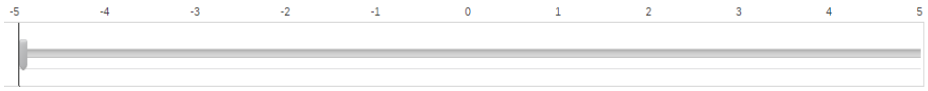
How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

[23] The link to the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJJzW1Id67w

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which airline did you just review?
O Cathay Pacific
O Hong Kong Airlines
O AirAsia
O HK Express

Which type of portable device are you using in this study?
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 3: Structurally simple, long length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.
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2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 20-25 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive HK$50.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.
By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:
• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please **rate and review the consumption experience in the video**[24] that you watched. Your review would help future consumers decide whether or not to patronize Hong Kong Airlines.

Your review must contain a minimum of 40 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall travel experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

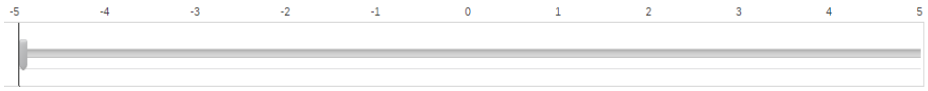
How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

[24] The link to the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJJzW1Id67w

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which airline did you just review?
O Cathay Pacific
O Hong Kong Airlines
O AirAsia
O HK Express

Which type of portable device are you using in this study?
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 3: Structurally complex, short length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.
1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 20-25 minutes.
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8. In return for your participation, you will receive HK$50.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.
By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:
• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please **rate and review the consumption experience in the video**[25] that you watched. Your review would help future consumers decide whether or not to patronize Hong Kong Airlines.

Travel destination:
From:

To:

Please rate the taste of food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of food options.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the airline.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the facilities of the airline.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the airline.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall travel experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

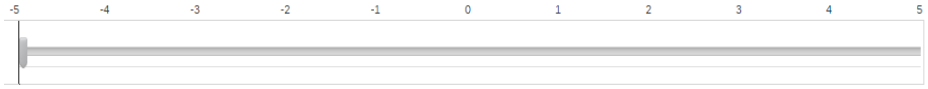
How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

[25] The link to the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJJzW1Id67w

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which airline did you just review?
O Cathay Pacific
O Hong Kong Airlines
O AirAsia
O HK Express

Which type of portable device are you using in this study?
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 3: Structurally complex, long length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.
1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 20-25 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive HK$50.
9. Your participation is completely voluntary.
By clicking the button below, you acknowledge:
• Your participation in the study is voluntary.
• You are over 18 years of age.
• You are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation at any time and for any reason.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please **rate and review the consumption experience in the video**[26] that you watched. Your review would help future consumers decide whether or not to patronize Hong Kong Airlines.

Travel destination:

From: ☐

To: ☐

Please rate the taste of food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of food options.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the airline.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the facilities of the airline.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the airline.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain a minimum of 40 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall travel experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

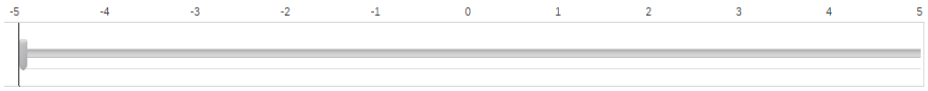
How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

[26] The link to the video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJJzW1Id67w

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which airline did you just review?
O Cathay Pacific
O Hong Kong Airlines
O AirAsia
O HK Express

Which type of portable device are you using in this study?
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Appendix 3F: Study 4

Study 4: Structurally simple, short length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 30 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive £3.
9. Please do this study alone.
10. Your participation is completely voluntary.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at McDonald's. Please write a review of McDonald's based on this experience.

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

Any behavior can be identified in many ways. For example, one person might describe a behavior as "typing a paper," while another might describe the behavior as "pushing keys." Yet another person might describe the behavior as "expressing thoughts." We are interested in your personal preferences for how a number of different behaviors should be described. On the following, you will find several different behaviors listed. After each behavior will be two choices of different ways in which the behavior might be identified. Here is an example:

1. Attending class
a. Sitting in a chair
b. Looking at the blackboard

Your task is to choose the identification, a or b, that best describes the behavior for you. Simply place a check mark in the space besides the identification statement that you pick. Please mark only one alternative for each pair. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers, and we are interested in your personal preferences. Be sure to mark your choice for each behavior. Remember, choose the description that you personally believe is more appropriate in each pair.

Making a list
O Getting organised
O Writing things down

Reading
O Following lines or print
O Gaining knowledge

Washing clothes
O Removing odors from clothes
O Putting clothes into the machine

Paying the rent
O Maintaining a place to live
O Writing a check

Locking a door
O Putting a key in the lock
O Securing the house

Toothbrushing
O Preventing tooth decay
O Moving a brush around in one's mouth

Taking a test
O Answering questions
O Showing one's knowledge

Greeting someone
O Saying hello
O Showing friendliness

Joining the Army
O Helping the Nation's defense
O Signing up

Picking an apple
O Getting something to eat
O Pulling an apple off a branch

Chopping down a tree
O Wielding an axe
O Getting firewood

Measuring a room for carpeting
O Getting ready to remodel
O Using a yardstick

Cleaning the house
O Showing one's cleanliness
O Vacuuming the floor

Paining a room
O Applying brush strokes
O Making the room look fresh

Caring for houseplants
O Watering plants
O Making the room looks nice

Voting
O Influencing the election
O Marking a ballot

Climbing a three
O Getting a good view
O Holding on to branches

Filling out a personality test
O Answering questions
O Revealing what you're like

Resisting temptation
O Saying "no"
O Showing moral courage

Eating
O Getting nutrition
O Chewing and swallowing

Growing a garden
O Planting seeds
O Getting fresh vegetables

Traveling by car
O Following a map
O Seeing countryside

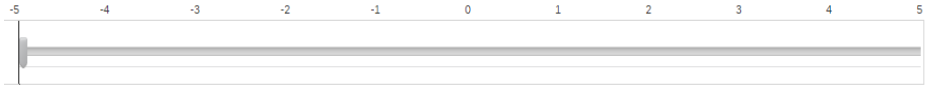
Having a cavity child
O Protecting your teeth
O Going to the dentist

Taking to a child
O Teaching a child something
O Using simple words

Pushing a doorbell
O Moving a finger
O Seeing if someone's home

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which restaurant did you just review?
O McDonald's
O Wendy's
O KFC
O Subway

Which did your reviewed dining experience occur?
O Today
O Yesterday
O Two days ago
O Three days ago
O Around one week ago
O Around two weeks ago
O Around three weeks ago
O Around four or more weeks ago

How many times have you visited the reviewed restaurant in the past year?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

Where do you participate in this study?
O Home
O Office
O Campus
O Others. Please specify:

Which type of device are you using in this study?
O Desktop
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?
O 20 or below
O 21 to 30
O 31 to 40
O 41 to 50
O 51 to 60
O 60 or above

Where in the world are you from?
O Africa
O Asia
O Australia
O Europe
O North America
O South America

----------Page break----------

Please write your prolific ID below:

This is a completion code: C12IDMGF.
Please copy and paste the completion code below, which will serve as an evidence that you completed this study.

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 4: Structurally simple, long length condition

Informed Consent

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5. This study will take approximately 30 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive £3.
9. Please do this study alone.
10. Your participation is completely voluntary.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at McDonald's. Please write a review of McDonald's based on this experience.

Your review must contain a minimum of 40 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

Any behavior can be identified in many ways. For example, one person might describe a behavior as "typing a paper," while another might describe the behavior as "pushing keys." Yet another person might describe the behavior as "expressing thoughts." We are interested in your personal preferences for how a number of different behaviors should be described. On the following, you will find several different behaviors listed. After each behavior will be two choices of different ways in which the behavior might be identified. Here is an example:

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Making a list
O Getting organised
O Writing things down

Reading
O Following lines or print
O Gaining knowledge

Washing clothes
O Removing odors from clothes
O Putting clothes into the machine

Paying the rent
O Maintaining a place to live
O Writing a check

Locking a door
O Putting a key in the lock
O Securing the house

Toothbrushing
O Preventing tooth decay
O Moving a brush around in one's mouth

Taking a test
O Answering questions
O Showing one's knowledge

Greeting someone
O Saying hello
O Showing friendliness

Joining the Army
O Helping the Nation's defense
O Signing up

Picking an apple
O Getting something to eat
O Pulling an apple off a branch

Chopping down a tree
O Wielding an axe
O Getting firewood

Measuring a room for carpeting
O Getting ready to remodel
O Using a yardstick

Cleaning the house
O Showing one's cleanliness
O Vacuuming the floor

Paining a room
O Applying brush strokes
O Making the room look fresh

Caring for houseplants
O Watering plants
O Making the room looks nice

Voting
O Influencing the election
O Marking a ballot

Climbing a three
O Getting a good view
O Holding on to branches

Filling out a personality test
O Answering questions
O Revealing what you're like

Resisting temptation
O Saying "no"
O Showing moral courage

Eating
O Getting nutrition
O Chewing and swallowing

Growing a garden
O Planting seeds
O Getting fresh vegetables

Traveling by car
O Following a map
O Seeing countryside

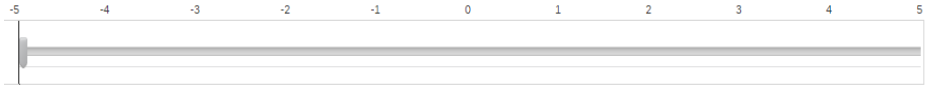
Having a cavity child
O Protecting your teeth
O Going to the dentist

Taking to a child
O Teaching a child something
O Using simple words

Pushing a doorbell
O Moving a finger
O Seeing if someone's home

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which restaurant did you just review?
O McDonald's
O Wendy's
O KFC
O Subway

Which did your reviewed dining experience occur?
O Today
O Yesterday
O Two days ago
O Three days ago
O Around one week ago
O Around two weeks ago
O Around three weeks ago
O Around four or more weeks ago

How many times have you visited the reviewed restaurant in the past year?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

Where do you participate in this study?
O Home
O Office
O Campus
O Others. Please specify:

Which type of device are you using in this study?
O Desktop
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?
O 20 or below
O 21 to 30
O 31 to 40
O 41 to 50
O 51 to 60
O 60 or above

Where in the world are you from?
O Africa
O Asia
O Australia
O Europe
O North America
O South America

----------Page break----------

Please write your prolific ID below:

This is a completion code: C12IDMGF.
Please copy and paste the completion code below, which will serve as an evidence that you completed this study.

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 4: Structurally complex, short length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 30 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive £3.
9. Please do this study alone.
10. Your participation is completely voluntary.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at McDonald's. Please write a review of McDonald's based on this experience.

Date of dining:

Waiting time:

Spending:

Please rate the taste of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

Any behavior can be identified in many ways. For example, one person might describe a behavior as "typing a paper," while another might describe the behavior as "pushing keys." Yet another person might describe the behavior as "expressing thoughts." We are interested in your personal preferences for how a number of different behaviors should be described. On the following, you will find several different behaviors listed. After each behavior will be two choices of different ways in which the behavior might be identified. Here is an example:

1. Attending class
a. Sitting in a chair
b. Looking at the blackboard

Your task is to choose the identification, a or b, that best describes the behavior for you. Simply place a check mark in the space besides the identification statement that you pick. Please mark only one alternative for each pair. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers, and we are interested in your personal preferences. Be sure to mark your choice for each behavior. Remember, choose the description that you personally believe is more appropriate in each pair.

Making a list
O Getting organised
O Writing things down

Reading
O Following lines or print
O Gaining knowledge

Washing clothes
O Removing odors from clothes
O Putting clothes into the machine

Paying the rent
O Maintaining a place to live
O Writing a check

Locking a door
O Putting a key in the lock
O Securing the house

Toothbrushing
O Preventing tooth decay
O Moving a brush around in one's mouth

Taking a test
O Answering questions
O Showing one's knowledge

Greeting someone
O Saying hello
O Showing friendliness

Joining the Army
O Helping the Nation's defense
O Signing up

Picking an apple
O Getting something to eat
O Pulling an apple off a branch

Chopping down a tree
O Wielding an axe
O Getting firewood

Measuring a room for carpeting
O Getting ready to remodel
O Using a yardstick

Cleaning the house
O Showing one's cleanliness
O Vacuuming the floor

Paining a room
O Applying brush strokes
O Making the room look fresh

Caring for houseplants
O Watering plants
O Making the room looks nice

Voting
O Influencing the election
O Marking a ballot

Climbing a three
O Getting a good view
O Holding on to branches

Filling out a personality test
O Answering questions
O Revealing what you're like

Resisting temptation
O Saying "no"
O Showing moral courage

Eating
O Getting nutrition
O Chewing and swallowing

Growing a garden
O Planting seeds
O Getting fresh vegetables

Traveling by car
O Following a map
O Seeing countryside

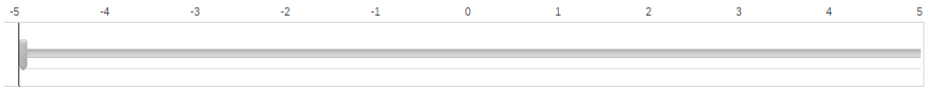
Having a cavity child
O Protecting your teeth
O Going to the dentist

Taking to a child
O Teaching a child something
O Using simple words

Pushing a doorbell
O Moving a finger
O Seeing if someone's home

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which restaurant did you just review?
O McDonald's
O Wendy's
O KFC
O Subway

Which did your reviewed dining experience occur?
O Today
O Yesterday
O Two days ago
O Three days ago
O Around one week ago
O Around two weeks ago
O Around three weeks ago
O Around four or more weeks ago

How many times have you visited the reviewed restaurant in the past year?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

Where do you participate in this study?
O Home
O Office
O Campus
O Others. Please specify:

Which type of device are you using in this study?
O Desktop
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?
O 20 or below
O 21 to 30
O 31 to 40
O 41 to 50
O 51 to 60
O 60 or above

Where in the world are you from?
O Africa
O Asia
O Australia
O Europe
O North America
O South America

----------Page break----------

Please write your prolific ID below:

This is a completion code: C12IDMGF.
Please copy and paste the completion code below, which will serve as an evidence that you completed this study.

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 4: Structurally complex, long length condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 30 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive £3.
9. Please do this study alone.
10. Your participation is completely voluntary.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at McDonald's. Please write a review of McDonald's based on this experience.

Date of dining:

Waiting time:

Spending:

Please rate the taste of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain a minimum of 40 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

Any behavior can be identified in many ways. For example, one person might describe a behavior as "typing a paper," while another might describe the behavior as "pushing keys." Yet another person might describe the behavior as "expressing thoughts." We are interested in your personal preferences for how a number of different behaviors should be described. On the following, you will find several different behaviors listed. After each behavior will be two choices of different ways in which the behavior might be identified. Here is an example:

1. Attending class
a. Sitting in a chair
b. Looking at the blackboard

Your task is to choose the identification, a or b, that best describes the behavior for you. Simply place a check mark in the space besides the identification statement that you pick. Please mark only one alternative for each pair. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers, and we are interested in your personal preferences. Be sure to mark your choice for each behavior. Remember, choose the description that you personally believe is more appropriate in each pair.

Making a list
O Getting organised
O Writing things down

Reading
O Following lines or print
O Gaining knowledge

Washing clothes
O Removing odors from clothes
O Putting clothes into the machine

Paying the rent
O Maintaining a place to live
O Writing a check

Locking a door
O Putting a key in the lock
O Securing the house

Toothbrushing
O Preventing tooth decay
O Moving a brush around in one's mouth

Taking a test
O Answering questions
O Showing one's knowledge

Greeting someone
O Saying hello
O Showing friendliness

Joining the Army
O Helping the Nation's defense
O Signing up

Picking an apple
O Getting something to eat
O Pulling an apple off a branch

Chopping down a tree
O Wielding an axe
O Getting firewood

Measuring a room for carpeting
O Getting ready to remodel
O Using a yardstick

Cleaning the house
O Showing one's cleanliness
O Vacuuming the floor

Paining a room
O Applying brush strokes
O Making the room look fresh

Caring for houseplants
O Watering plants
O Making the room looks nice

Voting
O Influencing the election
O Marking a ballot

Climbing a three
O Getting a good view
O Holding on to branches

Filling out a personality test
O Answering questions
O Revealing what you're like

Resisting temptation
O Saying "no"
O Showing moral courage

Eating
O Getting nutrition
O Chewing and swallowing

Growing a garden
O Planting seeds
O Getting fresh vegetables

Traveling by car
O Following a map
O Seeing countryside

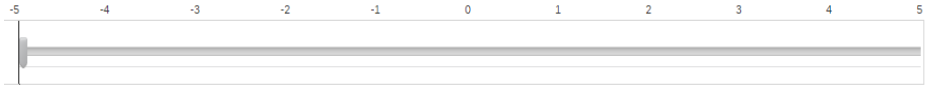
Having a cavity child
O Protecting your teeth
O Going to the dentist

Taking to a child
O Teaching a child something
O Using simple words

Pushing a doorbell
O Moving a finger
O Seeing if someone's home

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which restaurant did you just review?
O McDonald's
O Wendy's
O KFC
O Subway

Which did your reviewed dining experience occur?
O Today
O Yesterday
O Two days ago
O Three days ago
O Around one week ago
O Around two weeks ago
O Around three weeks ago
O Around four or more weeks ago

How many times have you visited the reviewed restaurant in the past year?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

Where do you participate in this study?
O Home
O Office
O Campus
O Others. Please specify:

Which type of device are you using in this study?
O Desktop
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?
O 20 or below
O 21 to 30
O 31 to 40
O 41 to 50
O 51 to 60
O 60 or above

Where in the world are you from?
O Africa
O Asia
O Australia
O Europe
O North America
O South America

----------Page break----------

Please write your prolific ID below:

This is a completion code: C12IDMGF.
Please copy and paste the completion code below, which will serve as an evidence that you completed this study.

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Appendix 3G: Study 5

Study 5: Structurally simple, short length, low construal condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

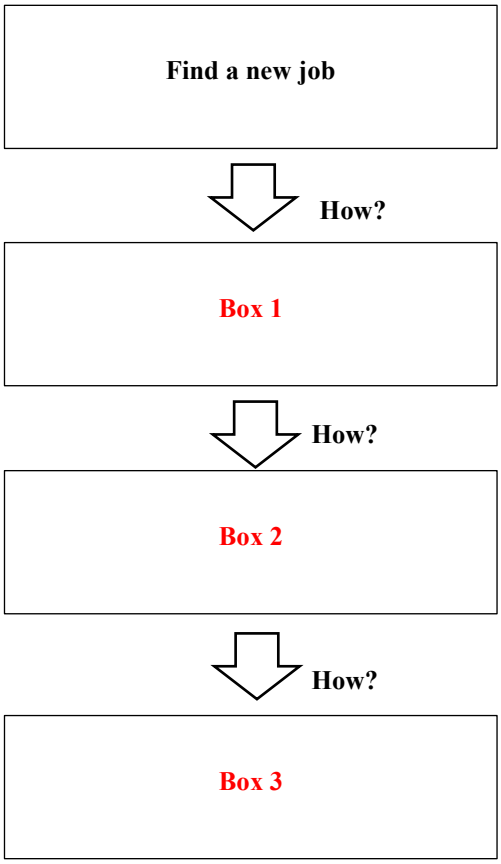
1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 30 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive £3.
9. Please do this study alone.
10. Your participation is completely voluntary.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

For everything we do, there is a process of **how** we do it. Moreover, we often can follow our broad life-goals down to our very specific behaviors. For example, like most people, you probably hope to find happiness in life. How can you do this? Perhaps finding a good job can help. How can you find a good job? Perhaps by earning a degree. How do you earn a degree? By satisfying course requirements. How do you satisfy course requirements? Perhaps by doing assignments and taking exams. Research suggests that engaging in thought exercises like that above, in which one thinks about how one's ultimate life goals can be expressed through specific actions, can improve people's life satisfaction. In this part of study, we are testing such a technique. This thought exercise is intended to focus your attention on **how** you do the things you do.

We invite you to do a similar thought exercise. Please consider the following activity: **"Find a new job."**



Please write the content for box 1 below:

Please write the content for box 2 below:

Please write the content for box 3 below:

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at McDonald's. Please write a review of McDonald's based on this experience.

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

Any behavior can be identified in many ways. For example, one person might describe a behavior as "typing a paper," while another might describe the behavior as "pushing keys." Yet another person might describe the behavior as "expressing thoughts." We are interested in your personal preferences for how a number of different behaviors should be described. On the following, you will find several different behaviors listed. After each behavior will be two choices of different ways in which the behavior might be identified. Here is an example:

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a. Sitting in a chair
b. Looking at the blackboard

Your task is to choose the identification, a or b, that best describes the behavior for you. Simply place a check mark in the space besides the identification statement that you pick. Please mark only one alternative for each pair. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers, and we are interested in your personal preferences. Be sure to mark your choice for each behavior. Remember, choose the description that you personally believe is more appropriate in each pair.

Making a list
O Getting organised
O Writing things down

Reading
O Following lines or print
O Gaining knowledge

Washing clothes
O Removing odors from clothes
O Putting clothes into the machine

Paying the rent
O Maintaining a place to live
O Writing a check

Locking a door
O Putting a key in the lock
O Securing the house

Toothbrushing
O Preventing tooth decay
O Moving a brush around in one's mouth

Taking a test
O Answering questions
O Showing one's knowledge

Greeting someone
O Saying hello
O Showing friendliness

Joining the Army
O Helping the Nation's defense
O Signing up

Picking an apple
O Getting something to eat
O Pulling an apple off a branch

Chopping down a tree
O Wielding an axe
O Getting firewood

Measuring a room for carpeting
O Getting ready to remodel
O Using a yardstick

Cleaning the house
O Showing one's cleanliness
O Vacuuming the floor

Paining a room
O Applying brush strokes
O Making the room look fresh

Caring for houseplants
O Watering plants
O Making the room looks nice

Voting
O Influencing the election
O Marking a ballot

Climbing a three
O Getting a good view
O Holding on to branches

Filling out a personality test
O Answering questions
O Revealing what you're like

Resisting temptation
O Saying "no"
O Showing moral courage

Eating
O Getting nutrition
O Chewing and swallowing

Growing a garden
O Planting seeds
O Getting fresh vegetables

Traveling by car
O Following a map
O Seeing countryside

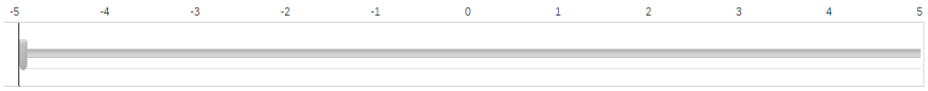
Having a cavity child
O Protecting your teeth
O Going to the dentist

Taking to a child
O Teaching a child something
O Using simple words

Pushing a doorbell
O Moving a finger
O Seeing if someone's home

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which restaurant did you just review?
O McDonald's
O Wendy's
O KFC
O Subway

Which did your reviewed dining experience occur?
O Today
O Yesterday
O Two days ago
O Three days ago
O Around one week ago
O Around two weeks ago
O Around three weeks ago
O Around four or more weeks ago

How many times have you visited the reviewed restaurant in the past year?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

Where do you participate in this study?
O Home
O Office
O Campus
O Others. Please specify:

Which type of device are you using in this study?
O Desktop
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?
O 20 or below
O 21 to 30
O 31 to 40
O 41 to 50
O 51 to 60
O 60 or above

Where in the world are you from?
O Africa
O Asia
O Australia
O Europe
O North America
O South America

----------Page break----------

Please write your prolific ID below:

This is a completion code: C12IDMGF.
Please copy and paste the completion code below, which will serve as an evidence that you completed this study.

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 5: Structurally simple, long length, low construal condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 30 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive £3.
9. Please do this study alone.
10. Your participation is completely voluntary.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

For everything we do, there is a process of **how** we do it. Moreover, we often can follow our broad life-goals down to our very specific behaviors. For example, like most people, you probably hope to find happiness in life. How can you do this? Perhaps finding a good job can help. How can you find a good job? Perhaps by earning a degree. How do you earn a degree? By satisfying course requirements. How do you satisfy course requirements? Perhaps by doing assignments and taking exams. Research suggests that engaging in thought exercises like that above, in which one thinks about how one's ultimate life goals can be expressed through specific actions, can improve people's life satisfaction. In this part of study, we are testing such a technique. This thought exercise is intended to focus your attention on **how** you do the things you do.

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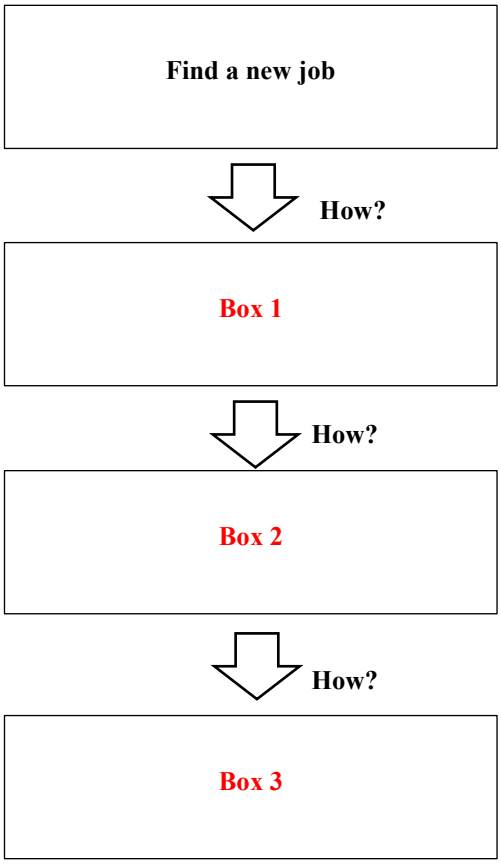

Please write the content for box 1 below:

Please write the content for box 2 below:

Please write the content for box 3 below:

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at McDonald's. Please write a review of McDonald's based on this experience.

Your review must contain a minimum of 40 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

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Making a list
O Getting organised
O Writing things down

Reading
O Following lines or print
O Gaining knowledge

Washing clothes
O Removing odors from clothes
O Putting clothes into the machine

Paying the rent
O Maintaining a place to live
O Writing a check

Locking a door
O Putting a key in the lock
O Securing the house

Toothbrushing
O Preventing tooth decay
O Moving a brush around in one's mouth

Taking a test
O Answering questions
O Showing one's knowledge

Greeting someone
O Saying hello
O Showing friendliness

Joining the Army
O Helping the Nation's defense
O Signing up

Picking an apple
O Getting something to eat
O Pulling an apple off a branch

Chopping down a tree
O Wielding an axe
O Getting firewood

Measuring a room for carpeting
O Getting ready to remodel
O Using a yardstick

Cleaning the house
O Showing one's cleanliness
O Vacuuming the floor

Paining a room
O Applying brush strokes
O Making the room look fresh

Caring for houseplants
O Watering plants
O Making the room looks nice

Voting
O Influencing the election
O Marking a ballot

Climbing a three
O Getting a good view
O Holding on to branches

Filling out a personality test
O Answering questions
O Revealing what you're like

Resisting temptation
O Saying "no"
O Showing moral courage

Eating
O Getting nutrition
O Chewing and swallowing

Growing a garden
O Planting seeds
O Getting fresh vegetables

Traveling by car
O Following a map
O Seeing countryside

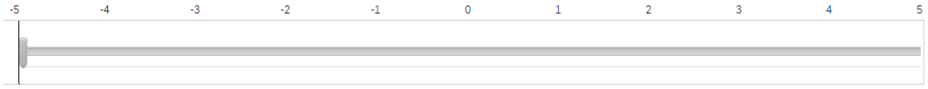
Having a cavity child
O Protecting your teeth
O Going to the dentist

Taking to a child
O Teaching a child something
O Using simple words

Pushing a doorbell
O Moving a finger
O Seeing if someone's home

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which restaurant did you just review?
O McDonald's
O Wendy's
O KFC
O Subway

Which did your reviewed dining experience occur?
O Today
O Yesterday
O Two days ago
O Three days ago
O Around one week ago
O Around two weeks ago
O Around three weeks ago
O Around four or more weeks ago

How many times have you visited the reviewed restaurant in the past year?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

Where do you participate in this study?
O Home
O Office
O Campus
O Others. Please specify:

Which type of device are you using in this study?
O Desktop
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?
O 20 or below
O 21 to 30
O 31 to 40
O 41 to 50
O 51 to 60
O 60 or above

Where in the world are you from?
O Africa
O Asia
O Australia
O Europe
O North America
O South America

----------Page break----------

Please write your prolific ID below:

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----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
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----------End of Study----------

Study 5: Structurally complex, short length, low construal condition

Informed Consent

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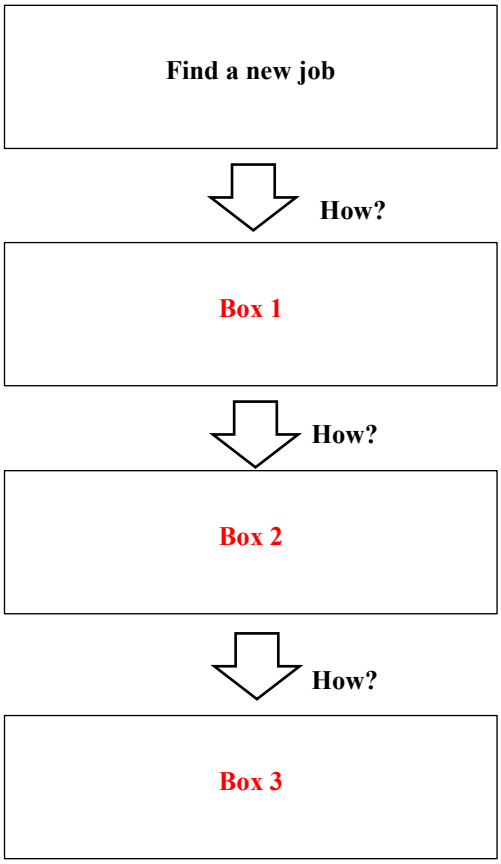
5. This study will take approximately 30 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive £3.
9. Please do this study alone.
10. Your participation is completely voluntary.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

For everything we do, there is a process of **how** we do it. Moreover, we often can follow our broad life-goals down to our very specific behaviors. For example, like most people, you probably hope to find happiness in life. How can you do this? Perhaps finding a good job can help. How can you find a good job? Perhaps by earning a degree. How do you earn a degree? By satisfying course requirements. How do you satisfy course requirements? Perhaps by doing assignments and taking exams. Research suggests that engaging in thought exercises like that above, in which one thinks about how one's ultimate life goals can be expressed through specific actions, can improve people's life satisfaction. In this part of study, we are testing such a technique. This thought exercise is intended to focus your attention on **how** you do the things you do.

We invite you to do a similar thought exercise. Please consider the following activity: "**Find a new job**."



Please write the content for box 1 below:

Please write the content for box 2 below:

Please write the content for box 3 below:

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at McDonald's. Please write a review of McDonald's based on this experience.

Date of dining:

Waiting time:

Spending:

Please rate the taste of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

Any behavior can be identified in many ways. For example, one person might describe a behavior as "typing a paper," while another might describe the behavior as "pushing keys." Yet another person might describe the behavior as "expressing thoughts." We are interested in your personal preferences for how a number of different behaviors should be described. On the following, you will find several different behaviors listed. After each behavior will be two choices of different ways in which the behavior might be identified. Here is an example:

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b. Looking at the blackboard

Your task is to choose the identification, a or b, that best describes the behavior for you. Simply place a check mark in the space besides the identification statement that you pick. Please mark only one alternative for each pair. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers, and we are interested in your personal preferences. Be sure to mark your choice for each behavior. Remember, choose the description that you personally believe is more appropriate in each pair.

Making a list
O Getting organised
O Writing things down

Reading
O Following lines or print
O Gaining knowledge

Washing clothes
O Removing odors from clothes
O Putting clothes into the machine

Paying the rent
O Maintaining a place to live
O Writing a check

Locking a door
O Putting a key in the lock
O Securing the house

Toothbrushing
O Preventing tooth decay
O Moving a brush around in one's mouth

Taking a test
O Answering questions
O Showing one's knowledge

Greeting someone
O Saying hello
O Showing friendliness

Joining the Army
O Helping the Nation's defense
O Signing up

Picking an apple
O Getting something to eat
O Pulling an apple off a branch

Chopping down a tree
O Wielding an axe
O Getting firewood

Measuring a room for carpeting
O Getting ready to remodel
O Using a yardstick

Cleaning the house
O Showing one's cleanliness
O Vacuuming the floor

Paining a room
O Applying brush strokes
O Making the room look fresh

Caring for houseplants
O Watering plants
O Making the room looks nice

Voting
O Influencing the election
O Marking a ballot

Climbing a three
O Getting a good view
O Holding on to branches

Filling out a personality test
O Answering questions
O Revealing what you're like

Resisting temptation
O Saying "no"
O Showing moral courage

Eating
O Getting nutrition
O Chewing and swallowing

Growing a garden
O Planting seeds
O Getting fresh vegetables

Traveling by car
O Following a map
O Seeing countryside

Having a cavity child
O Protecting your teeth
O Going to the dentist

Taking to a child
O Teaching a child something
O Using simple words

Pushing a doorbell
O Moving a finger
O Seeing if someone's home

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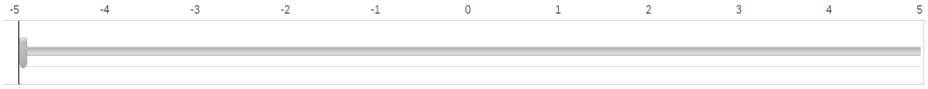
My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which restaurant did you just review?
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O Subway

Which did your reviewed dining experience occur?
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How many times have you visited the reviewed restaurant in the past year?
O 0
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Where do you participate in this study?
O Home
O Office
O Campus
O Others. Please specify:

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O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?
O 20 or below
O 21 to 30
O 31 to 40
O 41 to 50
O 51 to 60
O 60 or above

Where in the world are you from?
O Africa
O Asia
O Australia
O Europe
O North America
O South America

----------Page break----------

Please write your prolific ID below:

This is a completion code: C12IDMGF.
Please copy and paste the completion code below, which will serve as an evidence that you completed this study.

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We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 5: Structurally complex, long length, low construal condition

Informed Consent

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2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
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5. This study will take approximately 30 minutes.
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10. Your participation is completely voluntary.

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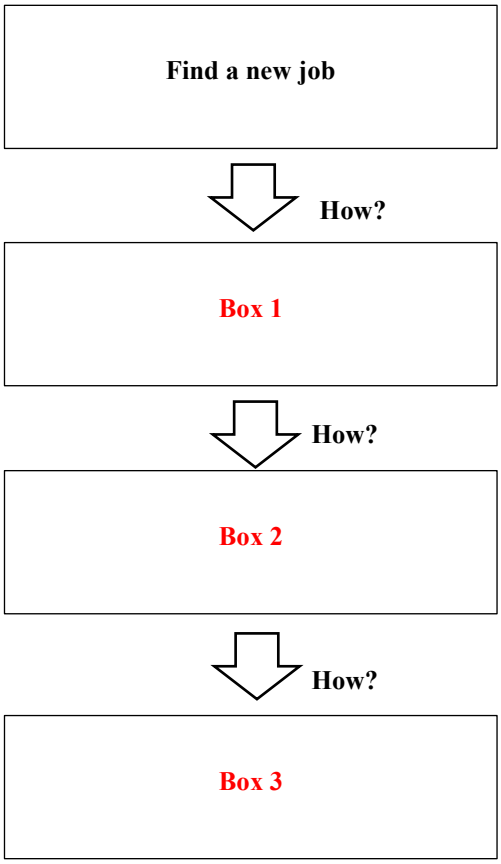

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Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at McDonald's. Please write a review of McDonald's based on this experience.

Date of dining:

Waiting time:

Spending:

Please rate the taste of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain a minimum of 40 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

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Making a list
O Getting organised
O Writing things down

Reading
O Following lines or print
O Gaining knowledge

Washing clothes
O Removing odors from clothes
O Putting clothes into the machine

Paying the rent
O Maintaining a place to live
O Writing a check

Locking a door
O Putting a key in the lock
O Securing the house

Toothbrushing
O Preventing tooth decay
O Moving a brush around in one's mouth

Taking a test
O Answering questions
O Showing one's knowledge

Greeting someone
O Saying hello
O Showing friendliness

Joining the Army
O Helping the Nation's defense
O Signing up

Picking an apple
O Getting something to eat
O Pulling an apple off a branch

Chopping down a tree
O Wielding an axe
O Getting firewood

Measuring a room for carpeting
O Getting ready to remodel
O Using a yardstick

Cleaning the house
O Showing one's cleanliness
O Vacuuming the floor

Paining a room
O Applying brush strokes
O Making the room look fresh

Caring for houseplants
O Watering plants
O Making the room looks nice

Voting
O Influencing the election
O Marking a ballot

Climbing a three
O Getting a good view
O Holding on to branches

Filling out a personality test
O Answering questions
O Revealing what you're like

Resisting temptation
O Saying "no"
O Showing moral courage

Eating
O Getting nutrition
O Chewing and swallowing

Growing a garden
O Planting seeds
O Getting fresh vegetables

Traveling by car
O Following a map
O Seeing countryside

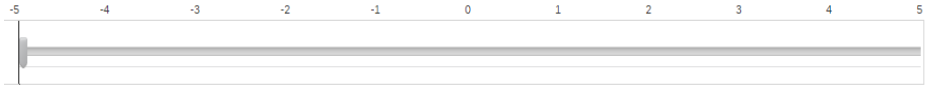
Having a cavity child
O Protecting your teeth
O Going to the dentist

Taking to a child
O Teaching a child something
O Using simple words

Pushing a doorbell
O Moving a finger
O Seeing if someone's home

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which restaurant did you just review?
O McDonald's
O Wendy's
O KFC
O Subway

Which did your reviewed dining experience occur?
O Today
O Yesterday
O Two days ago
O Three days ago
O Around one week ago
O Around two weeks ago
O Around three weeks ago
O Around four or more weeks ago

How many times have you visited the reviewed restaurant in the past year?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

Where do you participate in this study?
O Home
O Office
O Campus
O Others. Please specify:

Which type of device are you using in this study?
O Desktop
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?
O 20 or below
O 21 to 30
O 31 to 40
O 41 to 50
O 51 to 60
O 60 or above

Where in the world are you from?
O Africa
O Asia
O Australia
O Europe
O North America
O South America

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Please write your prolific ID below:

This is a completion code: C12IDMGF.
Please copy and paste the completion code below, which will serve as an evidence that you completed this study.

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We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

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Study 5: Structurally simple, short length, high construal condition

Informed Consent

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For everything we do, there is a reason **why** we do it. Moreover, we often can trace the causes of our behavior back to broad life-goals that we have. For example, you currently are participating in a consumer study. Why are you doing this? Perhaps to earn some money. Why are you earning money? Perhaps because you need to pay your tuition fee and earn a degree. Why earn a degree? Perhaps because you want to find a good job. Why find a good job? Perhaps because you feel that will bring you happiness in life. Research suggests that engaging in thought exercises like that above, in which one thinks about how one actions relates to one's ultimate life goals, can improve people's life satisfaction. In this part of study, we are testing such a technique. This thought exercise is intended to focus your attention on **why** you do the things you do.

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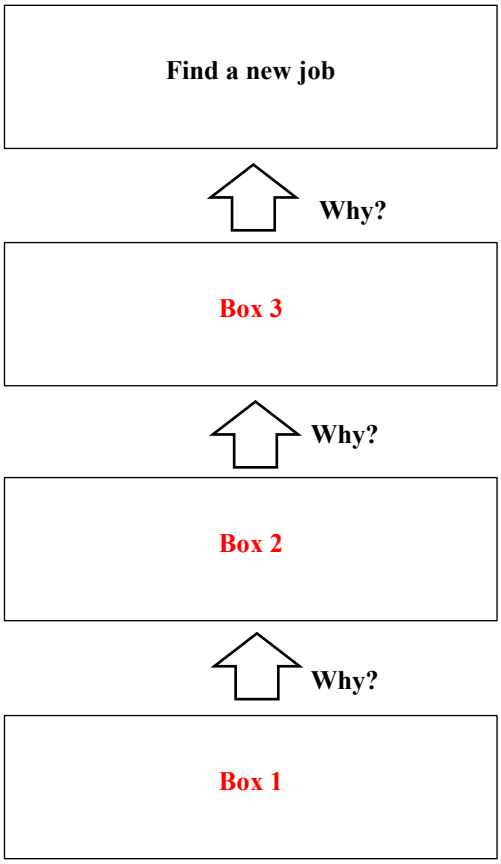

Please write the content for box 1 below:

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Please write the content for box 3 below:

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Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at McDonald's. Please write a review of McDonald's based on this experience.

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

Any behavior can be identified in many ways. For example, one person might describe a behavior as "typing a paper," while another might describe the behavior as "pushing keys." Yet another person might describe the behavior as "expressing thoughts." We are interested in your personal preferences for how a number of different behaviors should be described. On the following, you will find several different behaviors listed. After each behavior will be two choices of different ways in which the behavior might be identified. Here is an example:

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Making a list
O Getting organised
O Writing things down

Reading
O Following lines or print
O Gaining knowledge

Washing clothes
O Removing odors from clothes
O Putting clothes into the machine

Paying the rent
O Maintaining a place to live
O Writing a check

Locking a door
O Putting a key in the lock
O Securing the house

Toothbrushing
O Preventing tooth decay
O Moving a brush around in one's mouth

Taking a test
O Answering questions
O Showing one's knowledge

Greeting someone
O Saying hello
O Showing friendliness

Joining the Army
O Helping the Nation's defense
O Signing up

Picking an apple
O Getting something to eat
O Pulling an apple off a branch

Chopping down a tree
O Wielding an axe
O Getting firewood

Measuring a room for carpeting
O Getting ready to remodel
O Using a yardstick

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O Vacuuming the floor

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O Applying brush strokes
O Making the room look fresh

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O Marking a ballot

Climbing a three
O Getting a good view
O Holding on to branches

Filling out a personality test
O Answering questions
O Revealing what you're like

Resisting temptation
O Saying "no"
O Showing moral courage

Eating
O Getting nutrition
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O Following a map
O Seeing countryside

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O Protecting your teeth
O Going to the dentist

Taking to a child
O Teaching a child something
O Using simple words

Pushing a doorbell
O Moving a finger
O Seeing if someone's home

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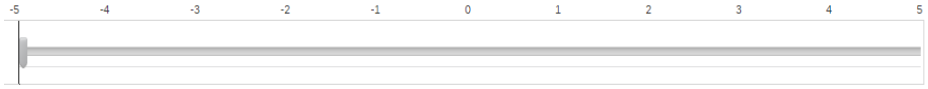

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O Subway

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O Yesterday
O Two days ago
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How many times have you visited the reviewed restaurant in the past year?
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Where do you participate in this study?
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Which type of device are you using in this study?
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O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

----------Page break----------

What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?
O 20 or below
O 21 to 30
O 31 to 40
O 41 to 50
O 51 to 60
O 60 or above

Where in the world are you from?
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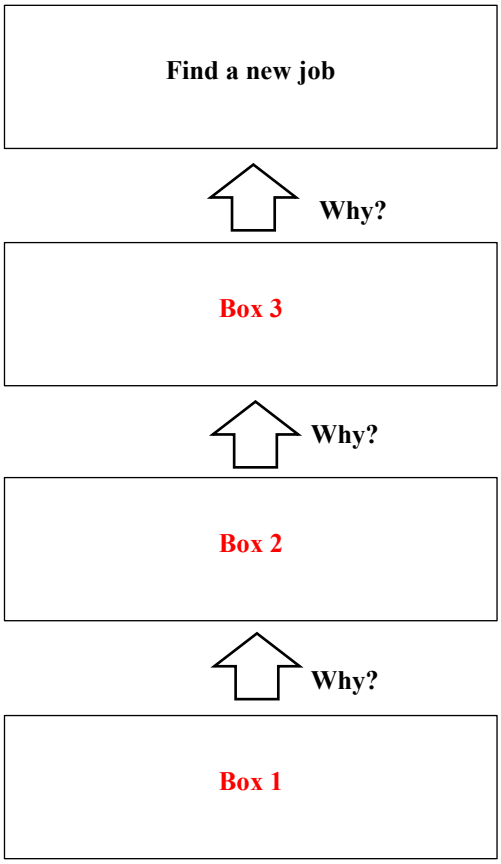

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Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
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O Answering questions
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Joining the Army
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Picking an apple
O Getting something to eat
O Pulling an apple off a branch

Chopping down a tree
O Wielding an axe
O Getting firewood

Measuring a room for carpeting
O Getting ready to remodel
O Using a yardstick

Cleaning the house
O Showing one's cleanliness
O Vacuuming the floor

Paining a room
O Applying brush strokes
O Making the room look fresh

Caring for houseplants
O Watering plants
O Making the room looks nice

Voting
O Influencing the election
O Marking a ballot

Climbing a three
O Getting a good view
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Filling out a personality test
O Answering questions
O Revealing what you're like

Resisting temptation
O Saying "no"
O Showing moral courage

Eating
O Getting nutrition
O Chewing and swallowing

Growing a garden
O Planting seeds
O Getting fresh vegetables

Traveling by car
O Following a map
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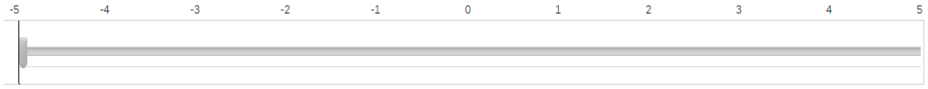
Having a cavity child
O Protecting your teeth
O Going to the dentist

Taking to a child
O Teaching a child something
O Using simple words

Pushing a doorbell
O Moving a finger
O Seeing if someone's home

----------Page break----------

My mood is:
Very unpleasant
Very pleasant



Which restaurant did you just review?
O McDonald's
O Wendy's
O KFC
O Subway

Which did your reviewed dining experience occur?
O Today
O Yesterday
O Two days ago
O Three days ago
O Around one week ago
O Around two weeks ago
O Around three weeks ago
O Around four or more weeks ago

How many times have you visited the reviewed restaurant in the past year?
O 0
O 1-5 times
O 6-10 times
O More than 10 times

----------Page break----------

Where do you participate in this study?
O Home
O Office
O Campus
O Others. Please specify:

Which type of device are you using in this study?
O Desktop
O Smartphone
O Notebook
O Tablet computer
O Others. Please specify:

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What is your gender?
O Male
O Female

What is your age?
O 20 or below
O 21 to 30
O 31 to 40
O 41 to 50
O 51 to 60
O 60 or above

Where in the world are you from?
O Africa
O Asia
O Australia
O Europe
O North America
O South America

----------Page break----------

Please write your prolific ID below:

This is a completion code: C12IDMGF.
Please copy and paste the completion code below, which will serve as an evidence that you completed this study.

----------Page break----------

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

----------End of Study----------

Study 5: Structurally complex, short length, high construal condition

Informed Consent

We are inviting you to participate in an academic, not-for-profit study. This form is designed to give you information about the study.

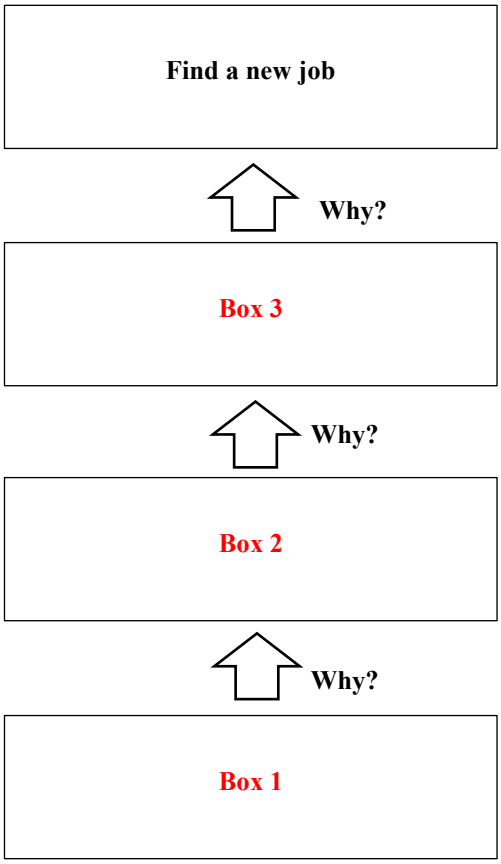
1. The purpose of this study is to examine how people share their consumption experience via online review platforms.
2. You will be asked to give written responses and answer multiple choice questions.
3. We do not anticipate any risks from participating in this research.
4. Your participation will contribute to understanding how people do online reviews.
5. This study will take approximately 30 minutes.
6. The information that you provide will be kept completely confidential.
7. If you have any questions, you may email hungfai.chan@postgrad.curtin.edu.au.
8. In return for your participation, you will receive £3.
9. Please do this study alone.
10. Your participation is completely voluntary.

O I consent. Please begin the study.
O I do not consent. I do not wish to participate in the study.

----------Page break----------

For everything we do, there is a reason **why** we do it. Moreover, we often can trace the causes of our behavior back to broad life-goals that we have. For example, you currently are participating in a consumer study. Why are you doing this? Perhaps to earn some money. Why are you earning money? Perhaps because you need to pay your tuition fee and earn a degree. Why earn a degree? Perhaps because you want to find a good job. Why find a good job? Perhaps because you feel that will bring you happiness in life. Research suggests that engaging in thought exercises like that above, in which one thinks about how one actions relates to one's ultimate life goals, can improve people's life satisfaction. In this part of study, we are testing such a technique. This thought exercise is intended to focus your attention on **why** you do the things you do.

We invite you to do a similar thought exercise. Please consider the following activity: **"Find a new job."**



Please write the content for box 1 below:

Please write the content for box 2 below:

Please write the content for box 3 below:

----------Page break----------

Please take a moment to recall your most recent dining experience at McDonald's. Please write a review of McDonald's based on this experience.

Date of dining:

Waiting time:

Spending:

Please rate the taste of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain 5 to 10 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

----------Page break----------

How do you feel about the following statements? Please indicate your feeling by selecting an appropriate bubble.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neutral	Slightly Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The above review task consists of many sub-tasks.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to evaluate your consumption experience in a great variety of dimensions.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a short review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
The above review task requires you to write a long review.	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

----------Page break----------

Any behavior can be identified in many ways. For example, one person might describe a behavior as "typing a paper," while another might describe the behavior as "pushing keys." Yet another person might describe the behavior as "expressing thoughts." We are interested in your personal preferences for how a number of different behaviors should be described. On the following, you will find several different behaviors listed. After each behavior will be two choices of different ways in which the behavior might be identified. Here is an example:

1. Attending class
a. Sitting in a chair
b. Looking at the blackboard

Your task is to choose the identification, a or b, that best describes the behavior for you. Simply place a check mark in the space besides the identification statement that you pick. Please mark only one alternative for each pair. Of course, there are no right or wrong answers, and we are interested in your personal preferences. Be sure to mark your choice for each behavior. Remember, choose the description that you personally believe is more appropriate in each pair.

Making a list
O Getting organised
O Writing things down

Reading
O Following lines or print
O Gaining knowledge

Washing clothes
O Removing odors from clothes
O Putting clothes into the machine

Paying the rent
O Maintaining a place to live
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Locking a door
O Putting a key in the lock
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Toothbrushing
O Preventing tooth decay
O Moving a brush around in one's mouth

Taking a test
O Answering questions
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O Saying hello
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O Helping the Nation's defense
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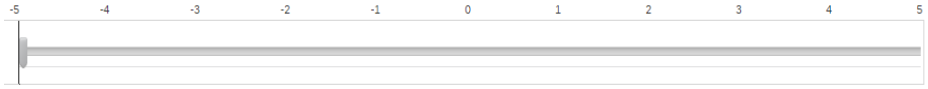

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Study 5: Structurally complex, long length, high construal condition

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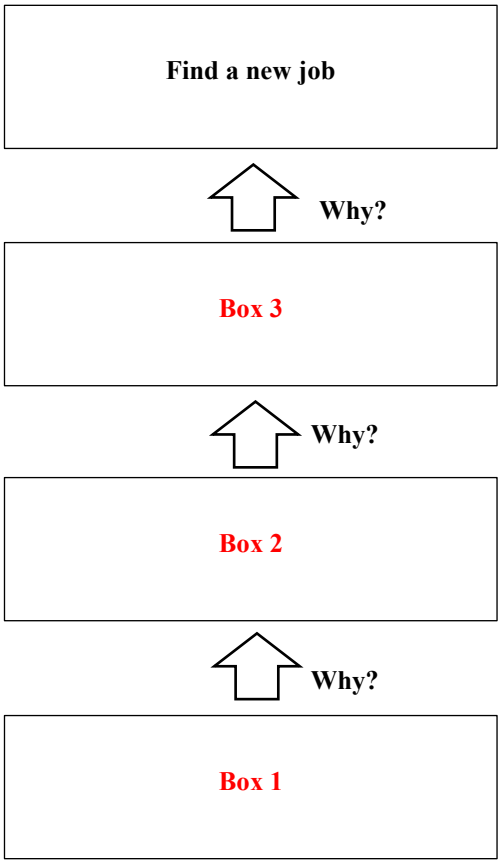

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Please rate the variety of the food.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the service of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the hygiene of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Please rate the décor of the restaurant.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Your review must contain a minimum of 40 words. A word counter (above the text box) will indicate how many words you have written. You will not be able to submit your review unless it meets the word requirement.

Your word count is: 0

Please choose a rating that best describes the overall dining experience.

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

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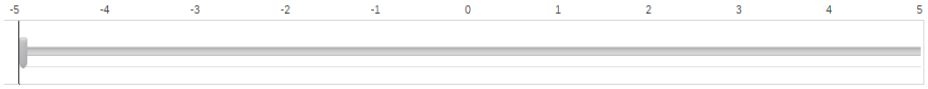

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APPENDIX REFERENCE NOT IN MAIN TEXT

Rocklage, M. D., He, S., Rucker, D. D., & Nordgren, L. F. (2023). Beyond Sentiment: The Value and Measurement of Consumer Certainty in Language. *Journal of Marketing Research*, *60*(5), 870-888.