THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Online Customer Experience in an Emerging e-Retailing Market

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Marketing in the University of Hull

by

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ABSTRACT

Although customer experience has attracted significant attention in marketing theorizing for over three decades, research has barely progressed beyond the traditional conceptualizations of the concept. Specifically, research on multichannel retailing experience is scarce and fragmented despite previous calls to investigate how customer experience can be optimized at different channels. Additionally, although eWOM is fast supplanting traditional WOM as a determinant of consumer behavior whilst Internet platforms have been declared the future fronts for successful customer relationship management, previous studies rarely examined how consumers process and integrate multiple online reviews especially dissatisfied eWOM. Extrapolating from the foregoing, the following research question is posed: "How can online retailers exploit the link between previous shopping experiences and perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) to enhance consumer-firm relationship quality?"

To answer the above research question, an experience-perception-attitude model was built on the foundations of two social cognitive psychology theories (i.e. the schema theory and the elaboration likelihood model (ELM)) and consequently tested through four scenario-based experiments mapped out into one pilot study and two main studies. The pilot study and study 1 utilized a 2 × 2 between-subject factorial design while study 2 employed 2 × 2 × 2 between-subject factorial design. Data was generated from undergraduate and postgraduate students recruited from two universities located in southern Nigeria. Exploratory factor analysis, partial least squares structural equation modelling procedure, independent sample *t*-test, Chi-square, one-way analysis of variance, and multivariate analysis of variance were the analytical techniques utilized.

Five major contributions are made. First, the thesis developed and tested a unique experience-perception-attitude model from the perspective of two social cognitive psychology theories. The experience-perception-attitude model not only portrayed the multi-channel character of online customer experience but also advanced Verhoef *et al.*'s (2009) holistic and dynamic model of customer experience by demonstrating how consumer-firm relationship quality can be enhanced through a simultaneous consideration of shopping experiences emanating from both company website and social media site. Second, the thesis extends the context-specific nature of customer experience by

demonstrating that emotional experience is the most important driver of PCoNERs in a recession-ridden emerging e-retailing market. Third, the study advances the eWOM literature and ELM by drawing on the ELM to demonstrate that PCoNERs have negative effect on consumer-firm relationship quality; while also demonstrating that the effects of the two thresholds of elaboration (i.e. review source credibility and review frequency) become infinitesimal if consumers are exposed to reviews with consistent valence. Fourth, the thesis adds to the experimental design technique utilized by channel integration researchers and previous panel data-based studies by drawing on the netnographic research approach to utilize naturalistic narratives as experimental scenarios. Finally, the findings offer an evidence-based guide on how e-retailers can practically engage in the systematic management of customer clues. The findings will also assist all categories of e-retailers determine the strategic position to pursue based on their resources and capabilities.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the memory of my late brother Mr. Izogo Edwin for the roles he played during the emergent years of my scholarship. Mr. Izogo Edwin was such an unassuming young man with profound sense of philanthropy and hospitality. In the absence of my father who died when I was 8 years, he took over the fatherly role and funded my education until I graduated from the university. He died 2 years after my graduation. Although he is late, I still love him dearly and will never forget the fundamental role he played in my upbringing. I also dedicate this work to my lovely wife, Izogo Lucy Nonyelum and my lovely daughter, Izogo Esther Adanna for their patience and consistent support throughout the period that my PhD studies lasted. My wife and my daughter were at times denied some basic fatherly care but they never 'crucified' me for that. Instead, they showed me the greatest understanding and support that man has ever known. I love my family and will never forget the sacrifices they made and how immensely they supported me.

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on several occasions also inspired me and shaped the way I thought about writing up a PhD thesis in general.

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PUBLICATIONS

Journal Publications

Izogo, E.E., Jayawardhena, C. & Kalu, A.O. Examining customers' experience with the Nigerian Bank Verification Number (BVN) policy from the perspective of a dual-lens theory (Accepted for publication in *International Journal of Emerging Markets*).

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Izogo, E.E. & Jayawardhena, C. Online shopping experience in an emerging e-retailing market: Towards a conceptual model (Under review in *Journal of Consumer Behavior*).

Conference Proceedings

Izogo, E.E. & Jayawardhena, C. (2016) Netnography of online shopping experience dimensions in an emerging e-retailing market. *Academy of International Business Sub-Saharan Africa Chapter Conference*. Lagos, 17–19 August 2016.

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CHAPTER ONE
BACKGROUND TO THE THESIS

1.0 Introduction

This chapter sets the context of the research by first, creating a research background and discussing the research problem. The rationale behind contextualizing the research within an emerging market is thereafter discussed. The chapter further draws on the research problem to generate the research question and evolve specific research objectives. Subsequently, the research methodology, summary of findings, and research contributions are briefly discussed. The chapter concludes with an outline of the thesis' entire structure.

1.1 Research Background and Problem Discussion

Having been declared the key driver of competitive advantage for organizations (Klaus, 2015; Pine & Gilmore, 1999), the understanding of customer experience has become a critical subject amongst academics and practitioners (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). Though customer experience was discussed in the 1930s and 1950s (see Parsons, 1934 in Klaus, 2014; and Abbott, 1955 in Klaus, 2014 respectively), the most formalized emphatic spark of the construct in the mainstream marketing literature appeared in the early 1980s when Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) theoretically portrayed consumers as emotional beings who are capable of organizing consumption experiences into some set of feelings, fun and fantasies and called for the development of measures of consumption experience. Appreciating the quintessence of this appeal, subsequent studies (e.g. Mathwick *et al*., 2001; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001; Babin *et al*., 1994) developed measures of the components of consumption experience. These efforts later culminated into the conceptualization of customer experience as shopping enjoyment (see Song *et al*., 2007; Hart *et al*., 2007) and shopping entertainment (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Babin, *et al*., 1994; Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980). Verhoef *et al*. (2009) also examined customer experience from the holistic viewpoint through a seasoned review of the extant literature and proposed a conceptual model of its determinants and dynamics while also advancing several investigative directions for further research.

Particularly, online customer experience (OCE) has prompted lively academic discussions (see Bilgihan *et al*., 2015; Rose *et al*., 2012; Nambisan & Watt, 2011; Lemke *et al*., 2011).

Such growing body of systematic response may be traceable to Verhoef *et al.*'s (2009) reasoning that delivering services through technology-enabled systems has become an integral part of shopping because of the growing importance of technology in consumer-firm interactions; thus, its impact on customer experience deserve critical examination. Badrinarayanan *et al.* (2012 in Frasquet *et al.*, 2015) equally argued that whilst online shopping behavior is driven by consumers' perceptions of both traditional and online channels, research on multichannel retailing is scarce and fragmented. Although OCE has consequently seen enormous research outputs, Klaus (2014) contends that research has not progressed farther than the traditional conceptualizations of the concept. More recently, Homburg *et al.* (2017) contended that customer experience management is insufficiently understood despite its extensive discussion.

Consequently, calls for more research has been made. Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) argued that digital experiences on social media platforms and mobile devices will be a fruitful area of research for years to come. Since full comprehension of the domain of customer experience can only be gained through a deep understanding of all direct and indirect customer-firm interactions (Frasquet *et al.*, 2015; Bolton *et al.*, 2014), McColl-Kennedy *et al.* (2015) specifically called on future researchers to investigate how customer experiences can be optimized at various customer touchpoints. Additionally, through an in-depth review of the literature, Verhoef *et al.* (2009) posed the following queries: "How do customers' initial perceptions of a retail brand influence subsequent customer experience? Are there asymmetric effects for positive and negative perceptions?", Despite this prevailing gap in the literature, an interesting investigation that has not previously taken place is the examination of the simultaneous effects of prior positive and negative experience of online consumers with firms' websites on consumers' perception of firm-related negative information posted on the social media by fellow consumers. Additionally, virtually nothing is known about the interaction effect of experience type (positive vs. negative) and shopper type (novice vs. experienced) on consumer perception of negative information posted on social media.

Not only has it been argued that customers evaluate alternative market offerings through theirs or other customers' experiences (Edward & Sahadev, 2011), Boyer and Hult (2006) also noted that new and repeat consumers are likely to be substantially different due to extreme disparities in shopping methods. Given that multichannel online retailers still perform abysmally (Badrinarayanan *et al.*, 2012 in Frasquet *et al.*, 2015) in an era when it is obligatory for organizations to tell consistent, cohesive, and compelling story of their services across channels (Berry *et al.*, 2006), studying how consumer perception of the activities within a particular channel (e.g. social media) is influenced by experiences gleaned from another channel (e.g. website) will offer a systematic insight into purposeful and systematic customer clues' management. This reasoning is consistent with the thoughts that customer experience is holistic (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009) and emanate from various touchpoints (Berry *et al.*, 2006).

Another area that has received little attention bothers on how consumers process and integrate multiple online reviews (Kim & Lee, 2015). This is so despite the clear emphasis on the importance of customer experience reviews in previous research (see Eisingerich *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, although it has long been established that WOM communications shape the attitudes and behaviors of consumers (Brown & Reingen, 1987), research on dissatisfied WOM customers' behavior within the online context is scarce (Boo & Kim, 2013). To the author's best knowledge, previous research also failed to address how review source credibility interact with review quantity/frequency to influence consumer-firm relationship quality from the perspective of the elaboration likelihood model (ELM). Instead, online consumer reviews research focused mainly on the effects of review quantity and quality (e.g. Lee *et al.*, 2008), review helpfulness/information credibility and its drivers (e.g. Baek *et al.*, 2012) and consumer evaluation of negative reviews and its influence on purchase intention (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). Studies that adopted the information-processing perspective demonstrate that negative information weigh greater than equally extreme positive information (Pan & Chiou, 2011). Ajzen and Fishbein (1980 in Park & Lee, 2009) argued likewise that the formulation of purchase intentions is a function of consumers' perception of the opinions of important 'others'. Thus, investigating how review source credibility and review frequency interact to affect consumer-firm relationship quality is useful at least in two key directions. First, examining the interaction effects of review source credibility and review frequency on relationship quality from the perspective of ELM will contribute to the eWOM literature because such rendition offers the latitude to integrate the psychology and the information science perspective. From the managerial viewpoint also, such scholarly scrutiny will help firms especially online retailers to better manage consumer-firm relationships and attenuate the consequences of negative eWOM because firms have lost control over the kind of information that their customers share online. This view is supported by the reasoning that eWOM is fast supplanting traditional WOM as a determinant of consumer behavior whilst the Internet platforms have been declared the future fronts for successful customer relationship management (Eisingerich *et al.*, 2015).

Taken together, the foregoing discussions point out the need to develop and test an experience-perception-attitude framework that tracks OCE on two customer touchpoints (i.e. website and social media site) and its consequent effect on consumer-firm relationship quality. Reconstructing OCE initiatives in this manner from the viewpoints of dual social psychology theories offers the author the leeway to lend his voice to the growing body of consumption experience literature that calls for the holistic portrayal of customer experience and management of various customer touchpoints (see Juttner *et al.*, 2013; Lemke *et al.*, 2011; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009; Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Goodwin *et al.*, 1996). Given also that emerging markets shoppers differ from their developed markets counterparts on several grounds, it is also possible to compare and juxtapose findings from an emerging market with research findings from more mature markets.

1.2 Emerging e-Retailing Market as the Research Context: The Rationale

This section paves the way to enact the research question by further reinforcing the research gap from a contextual viewpoint. With rising population, rapid urbanization, upsurge in technology adoption, and liberalization of markets and adoption of market orientation, three-quarters of growth in the world's GDP is touted to continue to emanate from emerging markets at least in the next 15 years (Molino *et al.*, 2015). Specifically, with a median age of 18.6 and almost half of the entire population under 20 years; rising urbanization, and structural modernizations in major cities (Phillips Consulting, 2014), it might not be brilliant to underestimate the market potential for e-retailers in Nigeria especially because Internet penetration is on the rise. Accordingly, significant opportunities abound for multinationals in emerging markets. However, multinationals can only thrive in emerging markets if they reinvent their business model (Eyring *et al.*, 2011). Mukherjee *et al.* (2014) also queried the generalizability of retailing theories developed in matured markets because these theories underplay the environmental cues like demand structures and culture in emerging markets. Thus, reinventing business model is necessary because emerging and developed markets differ significantly in many fronts. For instance, emerging markets consumers are more price-sensitive (Narang, 2011 in Narang & Trivedi, 2016). In Asia for instance, while the average incomes of the middle class are on the rise, per capita income is still less when compared with consumers in developed economies (Narang & Trivedi, 2016). Molino *et al.* (2015) also argued that although digitalization has taken hold in emerging markets, selling products in such markets especially those within Africa can be difficult because of other infrastructural inadequacies such as poor transport systems and road networks. It therefore makes sense to argue that delivering seamless customer experience as is evident in many developed markets such as Europe and US is nearly impossible to replicate in emerging markets or where possible, may require a completely new approach.

Apart from disparities in economic indices such as incomes and infrastructural inadequacies in emerging markets compared to developed markets, when it comes to responding to service clues orchestrated by online retailers, discrepancies are also evident. According to Atsmon *et al.* (2012), although technology is fostering customer engagement everywhere, there tends to be obvious disparities in the level of experiences with brands and products in both developed and emerging markets in favor of the former. Similarly, familiarizing online shoppers in emerging markets with products and services may require more digital infrastructures because they are less informed than developed countries' shoppers (Narang & Trivedi, 2016). In contrast, Atsmon *et al.* (2012) argued that the three factors that take on greater importance in emerging markets compared to developed markets in the consumer decision journey are the initial brand consideration set, word of mouth (WOM), and in-store experience. Compared to developed markets, WOM plays greater role in emerging markets because first-time buyers with shorter history of brand familiarity dominate whilst a higher proportion of the consumers are influenced to make purchase decisions based on in-store experience.

Drawing on the foregoing, emerging markets online shoppers are generally less experienced in online purchases than their counterparts in developed markets. According to Marceux (2015), even though millennials hold overlapping values across the globe, digitalized differences exist between millennials situated in emerging markets and their developed markets' counterparts in three key areas: i) emphasis placed on 'value for money', ii) diverse consumer relationships with digital products, and iii) trust in online transactions. The above three factors are more pronounced in developed markets than in emerging markets such that developed market millennials are more exposed to more diverse consumer-brand relationships due to available infrastructure (e.g. Internet), place greater emphasis on 'value for money', and are much likely to trust online transactions than emerging markets millennials. In Nigeria for instance, 50% of Internet users deploy the medium to access product information; 32% use it to compare prices while 31% use it for product reviews (Ayemoba, 2016). However, a Nielson's global survey indicates that the greatest barrier to online shopping in Nigeria is customers' inability to physically inspect products before purchase which is attributed to product quality uncertainty whilst 76% prefer 'pay on delivery' over card payments due to lack of trust (Ayemoba, 2016). With these market realities, it can be intuitively argued that the way Nigerian online shoppers (i.e. an emerging market) process service clues orchestrated by online retailers and its subsequent effect on perception and consumer-firm relationships may differ from developed markets. While this reasoning sound valid on the surface, it may be spurious to hold without an in depth empirical scrutiny. Why?

Despite the recessionary trend that the Nigerian economy has been undergoing for some time now, Ayemoba (2016) noted that e-commerce experience has become the new retail reality because the online retail purchases in Nigeria have skyrocketed above global purchasing rates in several categories due to penetration of mobile devices. Additionally, the consciousness of Nigerian consumers about shopping experiences has improved because they now demand more convenient modern shopping experiences (Fiorini *et al.*, 2013). Regrettably, such poor shopping experiences as poor-quality products, poor services, mismatched deliveries and so on (Awodipe, 2016) indicate that the shopping experiences delivered by Nigerian e-retailers are far from seamless. Although the rising number of Nigerian retail shops has engendered competition, over 50% of online shoppers have encountered negative experiences such as slow websites, poor product description in the websites, non-arrival of order or delivery delay and so on (Phillips Consulting, 2014). Nonetheless, the effect of negative experiences is well noted. Moris (2014) accordingly stated that IBM's digital customer experience report indicate that more than two-third of shoppers that had a negative customer experience left the website or visited a competitor. Additionally, a global Consumer Pulse Research conducted by Accenture in 2013 indicate that dissatisfied customers seek alternative service providers at an alarming rate whilst over 50% of US consumers are said to have switched firms because of poor experiences (Wollan, 2014). It is assumed that Nigerian e-retailers are insufficiently guided because of shortage of systematic evidence. Thus, they have neither effectively integrated fascinating customer experience strategies into their marketing scheme of policies nor made a strong business case for customer experience. Given also that the behavior of Nigerian consumers is rarely understood (Izogo, 2015a), it is important to systematically investigate how firms can mitigate negative experiences because of its negative outcomes outlined above.

1.3 Research Question and Specific Research Objectives

Within the rapidly growing literature of customer experience, little attention is paid to how customer experiences can be optimized at various customer touchpoints (McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2015) and its consequent impact on consumer perception and relationship quality. Yet, it has been noted that full comprehension of the domain of customer experience must start with a deep understanding of every direct and indirect customer-firm interactions (Frasquet *et al.*, 2015; Bolton *et al.*, 2014). Additionally, in today's multichannel retailing environment, experience in one channel (e.g. company's website) can influence experience in other channels (e.g. social media) (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). Social media has also been recognized as a key platform through which consumer-firm relationship quality can be enhanced. Drawing on well-grounded theoretical viewpoints to propose and test an experience-perception-attitude model implicitly portended in the foregoing discussions will not only advance extant understanding of the holistic nature of customer experience, it will also offer firms especially online retailers insights on how customer experiences can be managed across various customer touchpoints. Thus, the following research question is proposed:

> *How can online retailers exploit the link between shopping experiences gleaned from a company's website and perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) posted on the social media to enhance consumer-firm relationship quality?*

To facilitate the examination of the above stated research question, specific research objectives were developed. They include:

1. To examine the impact of the individual dimensions of online customer experience on consumers' PCoNERs posted on social media;
2. To investigate how shoppers' previous experience type (positive vs. negative) and length of shopping experience (experienced vs. novice) interact to impact PCoNERs;
3. To examine the impact of PCoNERs posted on social media on consumer-firm relationship quality;
4. To investigate how review source credibility (high vs. low) interact with review frequency (high vs. low) to influence consumer-firm relationship quality.

1.5 Research Methodology

Drawing on the objective-positivist philosophical stance which is at the heart of the deductive approach, an experimental research design was employed to investigate the research objectives. In total, four experiments mapped out into a pilot study and 2 main studies were conducted. The pilot study which combined two experiments was used to: a) test the quality of manipulations of the experimental conditions for the two differently-styled experiments; b) subject the measures of online customer experience (OCE) to purification, reduction and summarization; and c) examine the validity and reliability of the measurement scales.

In the pilot study, each of the two experiments adopted a 2×2 between-subject factorial design. The experiments were scenario-based. Out of the 160 subjects that participated, 122 (76.25%) valid responses were extracted. After subjecting the retrieved data to series of screening tests, the quality of experimental manipulation and experimental realism were tested through a one-way independent ANOVA. Additionally, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to purify, reduce and summarize the measures of OCE and PCoNERs used in pilot experiment 1. The validity and reliability of the measurement scales were examined through a partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) technique. Nomological validity was assessed with a correlation technique.

Study 1 was also scenario-based and adopted a 2 × 2 between-subject factorial design. A total of 420 subjects participated in this experiment. 378 (90%) responses were valid for final analysis after series of manual screening. The 378 valid cases were subjected to further preliminary data screening tests aimed at ascertaining the accuracy and suitability of the data for subsequent analyses and dealing with missing data, multicollinearity, outliers, data normality, and non-response bias and common method variance (CMV). Like the pilot study, one-way independent ANOVA was utilized to examine the quality of the experimental manipulation and experimental realism after subjecting data to the above preliminary screening tests. Thereafter, a PLS-SEM technique was utilized to confirm the psychometric properties of the measurement scale and test some of the hypothesized links. Finally, two-way independent ANOVA was used to examine the main effects of experience type and shopper type as well as the interaction effect of the two variables on PCoNERs.

Study 2 which was also scenario-based utilized a 2 × 2 × 2 between-subject factorial design. Out of the 400 subjects that participated in this study, 95% (i.e. 380 cases) were valid for final analyses after manual screening. Further preliminary screening tests aimed at detecting and resolving data entry accuracy and missing data, outliers, data normality, and non-response bias and CMV indicated that the 380 cases were valid for final analyses. Independent sample *t*-tests and chi-square test were utilized to examine the quality of experimental manipulations. A PLS-SEM procedure was thereafter utilized to confirm the psychometric properties of the measurement scale and test some of the hypothesized paths. Additionally, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was employed to examine the main effects of experience type, review source credibility, review frequency and the interaction effects on the three dimensions of relationship quality (i.e. relationship trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment). Overall, all data analyses were completed with the SPSS version 23.0 software and the SmartPLS 2.0 M3 software.

1.6 Summary of Findings

Emotional experience emerged as the most significant predictor of perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) whilst PCoNERs also has a significant negative effect on consumer-firm relationship quality. The findings also demonstrate that previous negative experience and previous positive experience affect PCoNERs asymmetrically. Furthermore, findings indicate that review frequency and consumer-firm relationship quality are inversely related such that consumer-firm relationship quality attenuates as review frequency increases. Finally, the main effect of experience type on consumer-firm relationship quality was significant and so also is the interaction effects of experience type and review frequency on consumer-firm relationship quality but the size of the interaction effect was too marginal to warrant managerial attention.

1.7 Research Contributions

This study makes five key contributions. First, the study offers original revelatory insights (Corley & Gioia, 2011) to the experiential consumption literature by developing and testing an experience-perception-attitude model. Drawing on evident gaps from the literature, it was established that the way consumers process and integrate multiple reviews has received little research attention (Kim & Lee, 2015) whilst the effect of previous customer experience on PCoNERs is yet to be categorically established. Thus, necessitating the development and validation of an experience-perception-attitude model that was examined in this study. The model not only portrays the multi-channel nature of OCE from the perspective of two social cognitive psychology theories (i.e. the schema theory and elaboration likelihood model), but also advances the retail customer experience literature and extend Verhoef *et al.*'s (2009) holistic and dynamic model of customer experience by demonstrating how consumer-firm relationship quality can be enhanced through a simultaneous consideration of shopping experiences emanating from both company website and social media site. Second, the study incrementally (Corley & Gioia, 2011) advances the context-specific character of customer experience by demonstrating that shoppers' previous emotional experience(s) is/are the most influential driver of PCoNERs in an emerging online retailing market. Third, research on negative eWOM customers' behavior is scarce (Boo & Kim, 2013). Specifically, previous studies did not address the effect of PCoNERs and how review source credibility interacts with review quantity to influence relationship quality from the perspective of ELM. This study advanced the eWOM literature and ELM by drawing on the ELM to demonstrate that PCoNERs have negative effect on consumer-firm relationship quality. The study also shows that review frequency affects consumer-firm relationship quality such that consumer-firm relationship quality attenuates as review frequency increases. By simultaneously demonstrating the abovementioned effects in situations of previous positive experience vs. previous negative experience, this study stokes up a unique reasoning and responded to previous calls to ascertain whether positive and negative perceptions induce asymmetric effects (see Meuter *et al.*, 2013; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009); thereby, incrementally advancing extant literature (Corley & Gioia, 2011).

Methodologically, the experimental design technique utilized by channel integration researchers and previous panel data-based studies were extended by drawing on the netnographic research approach to utilize naturalistic narratives as experimental scenarios. Finally, by investigating how experiences perceived from a company's website affect consumers' perception of a negative eWOM posted on the Facebook and the consequent effect of the latter on relationship quality, an evidence-based guide on how systematic management of customer clues can enable e-retailers to improve consumer-firm relationship quality was provided. Thus, this study is of practical relevance to e-retailers (Corley & Gioia, 2011). Additionally, by pointing out the similarities and distinctions between customer experience and its associated concepts, not only was the probable misconceptions that would have trailed these concepts to the understanding of practitioners illuminated, a practical guide on how these concepts should be holistically viewed was also advanced. By so doing, the boundaries between more traditional drivers of marketing outcomes such as service quality and more recent concepts such as customer experience, customer engagement, and value co-creation were implicitly drawn. Such rendition is a good guide for firms on the level of strategic position to pursue depending on their resources and capabilities. Summarily, apart from the above five key contributions, other theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions are also outlined and expansively discussed in chapter nine.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists nine chapters (see Figure 1.1). This chapter presented the research context in great depth. The chapter first discussed the research background and thereafter justified why an emerging e-retailing market was selected as the research context. The above background set the stage for the development of the research question and objectives. Subsequently, the methodology employed and the research findings were summarized. The chapter concluded with a summary of the research contributions.

Chapter two to four set the context for the discussion of the theoretical foundation, formulation of the conceptual model and research hypotheses based on the research question and objectives. Specifically, chapter two reviews literature relating to online customer experience (OCE) in-depth to set a stage for the realization of objectives one and two while chapter three sets the conceptual background for the realization of objectives one and two while also providing an initial enlightening theoretical background for the realization of objectives three and four. Chapter four completes the context setting for the realization of objectives three and four that began in chapter three. The chapter sets out with a detailed review of the concept of relationships and relationship quality and concludes with the theoretical basis for how relationship quality should be operationalized.

Chapter five builds on the discussions set out in chapter two to chapter four to situate the research question and objectives on the appropriate theoretical foundations. Thereafter, the chapter draws on the theoretical foundations and the OCE literature to propose a testable conceptual model. The chapter concludes with the formulation of testable research hypotheses based on the evident gaps identified in chapter two, chapter three and the theoretical foundations.

Chapter six examines the method adopted to resolve the research question and achieve the research objectives. The chapter discussed five key issues. First, an overview of the research philosophy and research approach are discussed. Thereafter, the research design, the rationale behind the chosen research design, and the implementation of the chosen research design are outlined. Third, measures of the research constructs are evolved. Fourth, the sampling procedure and the study sample are discussed. Finally, the procedures for data analyses are examined in detail. Chapter seven presents the results of data analysis. The chapter is divided into three parts. First, the data that emerged from the pilot study are analyzed and the results presented. The second part analyzes and presents the results of the data collected for study 1. Finally, the data that emerged from study 2 are analyzed and the results presented.

Chapter eight discusses the research findings generated in chapter seven and key issues inferred from the review of relevant literatures. Chapter nine sets out with a discussion of the theoretical contributions drawn from the research findings and the methodological contributions thereafter. The managerial contributions/implications are subsequently discussed. The chapter concludes with an outline of the study limitations and future research directions.

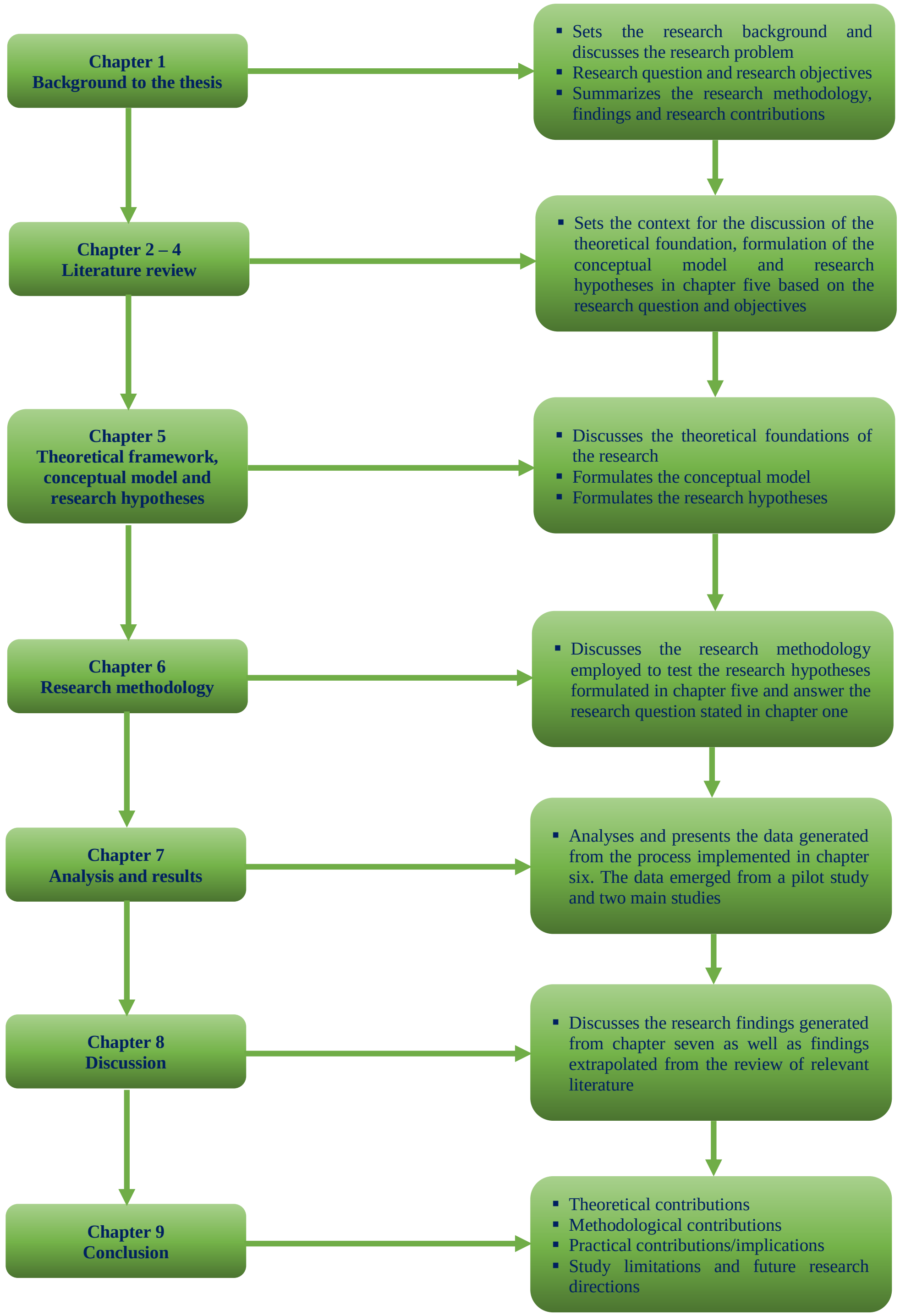

Figure 1.1 Visual Structure of the Thesis

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT OF CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter aims at reviewing relevant literature relating to online customer experience (OCE) to set a stage for the realization of objectives one and two. The chapter is divided into two major parts. The first part which dwells on the conceptualization of customer experience sets out with evolving a working definition of OCE from an in-depth review of previous definitions/descriptions of customer experience. This paves the way to enact the changing role of consumers brought about by the concept of customer experience and the factors that necessitated the emergence of customer experience. The associated concepts of customer experience are subsequently discussed, and a conceptual framework developed to this end. The first part of the chapter ends with an in-depth review of the antecedents and perspectives of OCE. The chapter concludes with the second part which critically reviews literature related to the measurement of OCE and evolves operational definition for each of the dimensions of OCE.

2.1 Online Customer Experience (OCE) Defined

A universally accepted definition of customer experience is absent because literature is replete with a plethora of definitions/descriptions. Within the services marketing literature alone, customer experience was variedly described with such terms as consumption experience (Holbrook & Hirschmann, 1982), service experience (Berry *et al.*, 2002; Carbone & Haeckel, 1994), marketing experiences (Gilmore & Pine, 2002), commercial experience (Lilja *et al.*, 2010; Poulsson & Kale, 2004), brand experience (Brakus *et al.*, 2009), and experience quality (Juttner *et al.*, 2013; Chang & Horng, 2010). In the online retailing context, customer experience was also variously described with terms like online consumer experience (Li *et al.*, 2001 in Liao & Keng, 2013), Internet experience (Nysveen & Pedersen, 2004), web experience (Constantinides, 2002 in Constantinides *et al.*, 2010), online shopping experience (Chen *et al.*, 2009), and online customer service experience (Klaus, 2013). Total customer experience (Mascarenhas *et al.*, 2006) and 'perfect' customer experience (Frow & Payne, 2007) are also terms used to define/describe customer experience. With these nomenclatural differences, a universally accepted definition of customer experience as alluded to earlier, is obviously difficult to come by. The confusion created by these numerous vocabularies is well acknowledged in the literature, often leading to ambiguous application of the concept (Palmer, 2010). Klaus (2015) argued that scholars are less unified on how customer experience should be precisely defined. Thus, gaining better understanding of the meaning of customer experience appears to be a clear starting point for a study of the construct's discipline.

As a point of departure therefore, 30 definitions/descriptions of customer experience were assembled from the literature and subjected to in-depth scrutiny. It was found that in attempt to define/describe customer experience, writers pointed out certain important elements which can be referred to as the features of customer experience. This resulted in the identification of twelve (12) distinct features (F) used to define/describe the concept. Given that common features that define customer experiences can aid its analysis (Mascarenhas *et al.*, 2006) whilst features capture experiences (Min & Park, 2012); attempting an analysis of the meaning of customer experience through its recognized features is a fruitful endeavor. A distillation of the 12 features identified from the literature is captured in Table 2.1. As Table 2.1 indicates, when consumers interact with external stimuli (F1) orchestrated by marketers or fellow consumers at different customer touchpoints (F2), they perceive service performances (F3) which stimulate dynamic (F4) internal subjective response (F5) and behaviors (F6). When the perceived services performances (F3) are engaging (F7), memorable (F8), and extraordinary (F9), consumers willingly pay (F10) for them because they are valuable. This logic applies whether the customer is offline or online. Additionally, since it is difficult to dissemble these experiences, it is holistically (F11) perceived (Gentile *et al.*, 2007) even though it is multidimensional (F12) in nature. This might be why Schmitt (1999) emphasized the creation of holistic experience as the goal of experiential marketing. Customer experience as a product of consumer interactions with external stimuli, experience as service performance, its existence at multiple touchpoints and multidimensional nature are the features that were widely mentioned by scholars whilst its dynamic character, extraordinary nature, and worth paying for are features of the construct that were sparingly mentioned.

Author(s)	Definition/Description	Features (F) of Customer Experience											
		F1: Product of consumer interactions with external stimuli	F2: Touchpoints/clues	F3: Perceived service performance	F4: Dynamic	F5: Internal subjective response	F6: Behavioral response	F7: Engaging/ compelling	F8: Memorable	F9: Extraordinary	F10: Worth paying for	F11: Holistic	F12: Multidimensional
Holbrook and Hirschmann (1982: 132)	Consumption experience is "directed toward the pursuit of fantasies, feelings, and fun"					√		√		√			√
Novak *et al*. (2000: 22)	OCE is "a cognitive state experienced during navigation"	√		√		√		√		√			
Carbone and Haeckel (1994) and Berry *et al*. (2002)	Service experience is expressed as a composition of clues comprising both functional and emotional attributes	√	√			√						√	√
Li *et al*. (2001 in Liao and Keng, 2013: 1850)	OCE is the "psychological and emotional states that consumers undergo while interacting with online products"	√				√							√
Gilmore and Pine (2002: 5)	Marketing experiences refer to creating "absorbing avenues – real or virtual places – where customers can try out offerings, as they immerse themselves in the experience"	√	√	√				√					
Robinette *et al*. (2002: 60).	Customer experience is "the collection of points at which companies and consumers exchange sensory stimuli, information, and emotion"	√	√			√							√
Constantinides (2002 in Constantinides *et al*., 2010: 192).	Web experience is "the consumer's whole perception about the online company [...] resulting from his/her exposure to a combination of virtual marketing tools . . . under the marketer's direct control, likely to influence the buying behavior of the online consumer"	√				√	√					√	
Shaw and Ivens (2002: 6).	"Customer experience is a blend of a company's physical performance and the emotions evoked, intuitively measured against customer expectations across all moments of contact"	√	√	√		√						√	√

Poulsson and Kale (2004: 270)	Commercial experience is "an engaging act of co-creation between a provider and a consumer wherein the consumer perceives value in the encounter and in the subsequent memory of that encounter"	√		√				√	√				
Nysveen and Pedersen (2004: 138)	"Internet experience is defined […] as such general experience with websites"	√		√								√	
Edvardsson *et al*. (2005 in Åkesson *et al*., 2014: 678).	"Customer experience refers to the outcome of a service process in a specific context in the service organization, including the use of an SST"		√	√									
Mascarenhas *et al*. (2006: 399)	Total customer experience is "a totally positive, engaging, enduring, and socially fulfilling physical and emotional customer experience across all major levels of one's consumption chain and one that is brought about by a distinct market offering that calls for active interaction between consumers and providers"	√	√	√		√		√				√	√
Frow and Payne (2007: 90)	'Perfect' customer experience refers to "consistently achieving a five out of five score on customer satisfaction"			√									
Meyer and Schwager (2007: 118-119)	"Customer experience is the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company. Direct contact generally occurs in the process of purchase, use, and service and is usually initiated by the customer. Indirect contact most often involves unplanned encounters with representations of a company's products, services, or brands and takes the form of word-of-mouth recommendations or criticisms, advertising, news reports, reviews and so forth"	√	√	√		√	√					√	√
Gentile *et al*. (2007: 397)	"The Customer Experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or part of its organization, which provoke a reaction (LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Shaw and Ivens, 2005). This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial physical and spiritual) (LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Schmitt, 1999). Its evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer's expectations and the stimuli coming from the interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touch-points (LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Shaw and Ivens, 2005)"	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√			√
Brakus *et al*. (2009: 53)	Brand experience is the "subjective, internal consumer responses (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments"	√				√	√						√

Chen *et al*. (2009: 53)	Online shopping experience refers to "an individual's perception of the level of his/her past experiences shopping on-line, in terms of his/her frequency of on-line shopping"	√		√									
Grewal *et al*. (2009: 1)	"Customer experience includes every point of contact at which the customer interacts with the business, product, or service"	√	√										
Ojiako and Maguire (2009: 183)	Customer experience is "an articulation of the personal interaction, experiences, memories and opportunities that an organization provides existing and potential customers that substantially exceed their expectation to a degree that a lifelong relationship is established between the customer and the service provider. Usually, such experiences can be assessed from various perspectives, including products, services, care, functionality, applicability and ease of use, reliability, advertising, and packaging"	√		√			√		√				√
Verhoef *et al*. (2009: 32-33)	"Customer experience construct is holistic in nature and involves the customer's cognitive, affective, emotional, social and physical responses to the retailer. This experience is created not only by those elements which the retailer can control (e.g., service interface, retail atmosphere, assortment, price), but also by elements that are outside of the retailer's control (e.g., influence of others, purpose of shopping). […] customer experience encompasses the *total* experience, including the search, purchase, consumption, and after-sale phases of the experience, and may involve multiple retail channels. […] current customer experience at time *t* is affected by past customer experiences at time *t*−1".	√	√	√	√	√	√	√				√	√
Biedenbach and Marell (2010: 450)	"The customer experience construct refers […] to the experience of different members of a decision-making unit, who are directly involved in the choice of the service provider, and had a direct experience with the company's employees providing the service"	√	√	√									
Lilja *et al*. (2010: 289)	Commercial experience is "a memorable event that the customer is willing to pay for"	√							√		√		
Chang and Horng (2010: 2405)	Experience quality is the "customers' emotional judgment about their entire experiences, which include customers themselves and their interactions with physical surroundings, service providers, other customers, and customers' companions"	√	√	√		√							√

Walter *et al.* (2010: 238-239)	Customer experience is defined "as the customer's direct and indirect experience of the service process, the organization, the facilities and how the customer interacts with the service firm's representatives and other customers. These in turn create the customer's cognitive, emotional and behavioral responses and leave the customer with memories about the experience. Further, a customer experience is seen as occurring in a commercial context, and is therefore regarded as being shaped and offered by a service company, which has a commercial purpose"	√	√	√		√	√		√		√		√
Stone (2011: 234)	Customer experience "is the customer's response – personal, rational, emotional and even spiritual – to contacts with a company… [and] is created not just by things retailers control (for example, service interface, retail atmosphere, assortment, price), but also by things outside their control (for example, influence of others, purpose of shopping)"	√	√			√				√			√
Ismail *et al.* (2011: 208)	Customer experience refers to the "emotions provoked, sensations felt, knowledge gained and skills acquired through active involvement with the firm pre, during and post consumption"	√	√	√		√		√					√
Sheng and Teo (2012)	Customer experience corresponds to different moments of contacts or touch-points with a product or service	√	√										
Juttner *et al.* (2013: 738)	Experience quality is "the perceived excellence or superiority of the holistic encounter"	√		√								√	
Klaus (2013: 445)	Online customer service experience **"**is the customers' mental perception of interactions with a company's value proposition online. These mental perceptions in turn drive a set of outcomes, namely benefits, emotions, judgments (including perceived value) and intentions"	√		√		√	√						√
Bolton *et al.* (2014: 225)	Customer experience refers to "all interactions with the focal firm, including its servicescape, employees and potentially other customers (Lovelock, 1994), through face-to-face, electronic and other channels. These are all the "little things" experienced in moments in time and space"	√	√	√									√

Table 2.1 Features of Customer Experience Embedded in Previous Definitions/Descriptions of the Concept

As apparent from Table 2.1, two key things merit elaboration. First, a wide range of the features of customer experience (for instance, F1, F2, F3, F5, F6, and F7) support the notion that experience is co-created as emphasized in the service-dominant logic of marketing (see Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). Thus, consumers are no longer passive receptors of value only; they actively co-create their own experiences by processing firms' value propositions through interacting with clues orchestrated by firms (e.g. websites) or artefacts created by other consumers (e.g. reviews). Customer experience therefore results from clues under firms' control and clues that cannot be directly controlled by firms. Through interacting with external stimuli, value-in-use also termed experience realized (Walter *et al.*, 2010) ensue. It is also widely argued that experience results from customers' interactions with website stimuli (Hoffman & Novak, 2009; Skadberg & Kimmel, 2004; Huang, 2003; Novak *et al.*, 2003; Hoffman & Novak, 1996). To be more meaningful, the contrived facilitators of interactions (e.g. websites) must be engaging. Interactions also influence how a service is experienced (Åkesson *et al.*, 2014). Therefore, definitions of customer experience that fail to emphasize value co-creation is certainly incomprehensive because firms' success largely depends on their ability to effectively and interactively engage customers in each phase of the purchase cycle.

Second, a variety of the identified features (e.g. F1, F2, F3, F4, F10 and so on) also support the process and outcome views of customer experience (Klaus, 2014). Fawcett *et al.* (2014) argued that customers' preconceived expectations have a super imposing influence on the way customers process experience cues and evaluate satisfaction arising from their exposure to those experiential cues. Thus, dissembling experience is difficult even though it is multidimensional (F12) because it is holistically perceived (F11). The polarization of the features of customer experience into process and outcome elements is consistent with the functional and technical dimensions of service quality proposed by Grönroos' (1982) and Schmitt and Zarantonello's (2013) classification of the definitions of customer experience into either ongoing perceptions, feelings, and direct observations or the past experiences that the consumers accumulated over time. The process and outcome views also strongly align with value co-creation because not only is co-creation about interacting with the service process (Åkesson *et al.*, 2014), but as argued by Grönroos (2008), value-in-use (i.e. experience) is realized during consumption whilst Saarijarvi *et al.* (2013) noted that value-in-use eventually actualizes after purchase. Thus, definitions of customer experience must emphasize the services clues that customers process and the result of such clue processing activities. Drawing on the foregoing specifically the 12 features that characterize customer experience, the following definition of the construct was put forward as the basis of this research:

> Online customer experience is the internal and subjective responses that ensues when customers actively co-create value by processing external stimuli orchestrated by marketers through a variety of its online channels (such as company websites, online communities, blogs, chat rooms, social networking sites such as Facebook and so on). This experience, reflective of service performances is holistic, multidimensional, and should be perceived as memorable, engaging and can either be worth paying for or not.

The explicit emphasis of willingness to pay in the above definition is unique because it draws a line between definitions of customer experience that leads to a commercial end and those that do not.

2.2 Customer Plus Experience Equals Customer Experience: The Emerging New Customers' Role that this Conceptual Amalgamation Suggests

According to Berry *et al*. (2002: 88), "customers always have an experience – good, bad or indifferent – whenever they purchase a product or service from a company". Thus, irrespective of how differently 'customer' and 'experience' as separate concepts were described in the past, services science research has recognized the need to use the two terms together as a single concept. Hence, the term "customer experience". In the context of customer experience, customers are variedly perceived. For instance, customers are perceived as "guest", "actor" (Lusch, 2011), "consumer", "participant", "user" or "co-creator" (Bolton *et al*., 2014). A contemporary way to think about this "is that customer experiences are not solely delivered by organizations for customers" (McColl-Kennedy *et al*., 2015: 430). Instead, the value perceived by the individuals involved and the experience itself are interwoven (Helkkula *et al*., 2012) and difficult to disassemble because of its holistic nature (Verhoef *et al*., 2009; Goodwin *et al*., 1996). Customer experience is internal and subjective (Meyer & Schwager, 2007), subject to contextual interpretations, and emerges whether or not an organization chooses to recognize and influence the experience (Vargo & Lusch, 2008 in McColl-Kennedy *et al*., 2015). Therefore, customer experience comprises both controllable and uncontrollable elements (McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2015; Åkesson *et al.*, 2014; Meyer & Schwager, 2007).

The conventional conceptualization of customer experience in the services marketing literature from the moment of truth and service blueprinting perspectives has therefore been challenged because such approach is unidirectional and perceives customers as passive receptors of value (McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2015; Klaus, 2013). A broader view of customer experience that recognizes the construct as dynamic and multi-actor-centric has therefore been suggested (McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2015).

Long before the advent of the service marketing era, the traditional focus on consumers as rational choice makers rooted in microeconomic and classical decision theory which later evolved into a focus on irrational buying needs perspective and even further to a focus on the informational processing model were all challenged (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) because these perspectives neglect important consumption phenomena (Sheth, 1979). Consumers were thus, perceived as emotional beings capable of phenomenologically organizing consumption episodes into some set of feelings, fun, and fantasies (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Hence, the recent emphasis on consumers as co-creators of value (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). With customers taking on greater roles in the service production process (McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2015), consumers' thoughts and behaviors are being shaped in epistemologically individualistic and collectivistic ways informed mainly by varying versions of teleoaffective structures (Holttinen, 2014). Firms have no choice, but to respond to this changing nature of customers' role by creating avenues that support and facilitate customers' experience co-creation activities. After all, Gilmore and Pine (2002) and Berry *et al.* (2006) admonished marketers to orchestrate avenues in the real or virtual places that will enable customers try out their offerings and engage themselves in the experience. In the section that immediately follows, the factors that gave rise to the recent emphasis on customer experience are considered.

2.3 Why the Unprecedented Shift to Customer Experience?

The factors that triggered the unprecedented shift from the traditional models of marketing to customer experience is well noted in the literature. Uncovering these factors will not only provide partial insights into the construct's evolution, it will also set an implicit enlightening background into its nature, likely behavior, and how to approach its study in a more comprehensive, yet, concise or parsimonious way. The factors were categorized into three groups to make a better sense of them. Table 2.2 shows the sub-elements of the three groups of factors and the authors that front them. Although the factors and its sub-elements are interconnected, it can be argued that the technology-related and market-related factors are responsible for the shifts in firms' orientation that consequently lead to the firm-related factors (see also Figure 2.1). Thus, these factors are subsumed as a continuum.

Factors	Sub-Elements	References
Technology-related factors	▪ Advancements in information technology ▪ Dramatic increase in commoditization ▪ Shift from static to dynamic and interactive e-commerce websites ▪ Reduction in timescales from innovation to imitation ▪ Communications and entertainment ubiquity	Dawes and Rowley (1998), Schmitt (1999), Pine and Gilmore (1999), Shaw and Ivens (2002), Ding *et al*. (2010), Klaus (2013)
Market-related factors	▪ Competition ▪ Rising societal affluence ▪ Demise of mass markets ▪ Brand supremacy ▪ Falling effects of traditional marketing communications ▪ Increasing importance of intangible attributes ▪ The dramatic loss in the abilities of traditional strategies such as price, features, quality and service to differentiate brands ▪ Progression of economic value from commodities to goods to services and then to experiences. ▪ Emergence of more demanding and less forgiving customers	Schmitt (1999), Pine and Gilmore (1999), Gilmore and Pine (2002), Shaw and Ivens (2002), Carbone and Haeckel (1994), Ojiako and Maguire (2009), Biedenbach and Marell (2010), Maklan and Klaus (2011), Klaus (2015)
Firm-related factors	▪ Shift from product-centric to customer-centric approaches ▪ Awareness of the benefits of well implemented customer experience management strategies, ▪ Reluctance of many businesses to use the World Wide Web, ▪ The need to achieve distinctive advantage	Gilmore and Pine (2002), Shaw and Ivens (2002), Gentile *et al*. (2007), Tynan and McKechnie (2009), Garg *et al*. (2010), Bolton *et al*. (2014), Klaus (2015)

Table 2.2 Factors that Necessitated the Emergence of Customer Experience

The growing and lasting interest in customer experience is due mainly to the current challenges that face marketing practitioners (Tynan & McKechnie, 2009) such as difficulty in differentiating products and services in the marketplace (Carbone & Haeckel, 1994), awareness of the importance of customer experience in consumer advocacy development (Allen *et al*., 2005 in Tynan & McKechnie, 2009), and the need to achieve distinctive advantage (Gentile *et al*., 2007). Accordingly, Maklan and Klaus (2011) argued that the new market realities stimulated by advances in technology especially the

Internet has been responsible for firms' reactions, shift in orientation and crave for competitive advantage. Additionally, Shaw and Ivens (2002) argued that American Customer Satisfaction Index shows that the pace and growth of the customer experience tsunami is a function of customers' demands on companies to improve customer experience. All companies will be affected by the customer experience tsunami because customers switch to companies that deliver great customer experiences; thus, experience has become the new competitive differentiator for companies (Shaw & Ivens, 2002). Recently, Pine and Gilmore (2017) also acknowledged this view by affirming that what consumers of today want is experiences. Also, the need to seek for new ways of creating differentiated market offerings was triggered by the increasing importance of intangible attributes (Mudambi *et al.*, 1997 in Biedenbach & Marell, 2010).

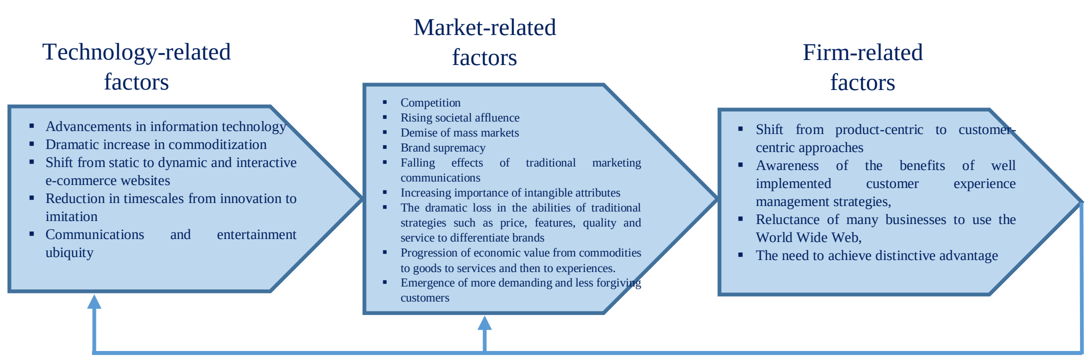

Figure 2.1 Layering of the Factors that Necessitated the Emergence of Customer Experience

Given that co-creation is strongly fostered by interactions (Bolton *et al.*, 2014; Vargo & Lusch, 2004; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004) whilst advancements in information technology resulted in the shift from static to dynamic and interactive e-commerce websites (Klaus, 2013), the changing role of customers as co-creators of their own experiences is responsible for the emergence of more demanding and less forgiving customers, which is consequently reshaping the need to, and how firms react to these changing market realities. The significant drop in the effectiveness of traditional marketing communications as well as price and quality-based competition, demise of mass markets, increasing importance of intangible attributes may all be traced back to customers' emerging new role due to technology dynamics. Additionally, brand supremacy is a by-product of advancements in information technology (Schmitt, 1999). Maklan and Klaus (2011) also noted that the Internet is the major force driving the shift from database-oriented to collaborative relationships.

The origin of customer experience is traceable to the dramatic increase in commoditization that characterize various products and markets with the Internet acting as the major tool driving this shift (Shaw & Ivens, 2002). According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), the Internet is the greatest force of commoditization that man has ever known. The Internet is also responsible for the shift from static to dynamic e-commerce websites and has also weakened the timescales from innovation to imitation of products and services. Tynan and McKechnie (2009) noted that marketers need to innovate before they can attract competitive advantage whilst customers value pleasure more than functional benefits all because the environment has become highly competitive especially with the availability of technology. Pine and Gilmore (1999) are also of the view that technology powers numerous experiences whilst competition compels firms to seek for new ways to differentiate themselves in the market. Customer experiences initiatives are driven by the realization that service provision measured solely on traditional approaches such as product quality and price is no longer sustainable in a highly competitive business environment (Ojiako & Maguire, 2009; Mascarenhas *et al.*, 2006).

Summarily, these dynamics suggest two key things. First, a paradigm shift has occurred in the marketing literature away from the traditional measures of marketing outcomes such as price, quality, delivery, features, traditional marketing communications and so on. Secondly, customer experience has become the standard business model to compete and achieve market differentiation in today's highly dynamic business environment occasioned by technology and market-related factors which are jointly causing a dramatic reorientation in the way firms react. Ian McAllister, former Chairman and Managing Director of Ford Motor Company Ltd noted: "in the 1980s quality was a differentiator. In the 1990s, I think brand was a differentiator. My own view is that for the 2000s, the customer experience will be the differentiator" (Shaw and Ivens, 2002: 2). Customers are very unlikely to pay a premium price or remain loyal for just a mere little disparity in already high quality given that such disparities may go unnoticed (Bolton *et al.*, 2014). Thus, competing solely based on traditional strategies like price and quality is obviously no longer sustainable because according to Klaus (2015), it has become imperative for all organizations to manage customer experience because it is currently the new silver bullet for organizational success worldwide.

2.4 Distinguishing Customer Experience from Associated Concepts

Though there could conceivably be more concepts associated with customer experience, this section focuses on distinguishing customer experience from customer engagement, service quality, and co-creation for three reasons. First, some notable definitions of customer experience (see Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Hoffman & Novak, 1996) suggest that customer experience and customer engagement are interchangeable. Yet, scholarly descriptions of the concepts show that this is rarely the case. Second, although compared to service quality, customer experience research is still at its infancy stage (Johnston & Kong, 2011), previous research (see Bolton *et al.*, 2014) argued that both concepts stem from similar motivations. Such thought suggests that customer experience seems to be an old wine in a new bottle. Although Shaw and Ivens (2002) noted that customer experience supplanted service quality, the two concepts have not been clearly distinguished from each other till date. Finally, while researchers link the approaches of co-creation to customer experience, the connection between the two is sometimes vague (Klaus & Maklan, 2011). Thus, clarifying this connection is expedient.

2.4.1 Customer experience versus customer engagement

Although customer experience has been variedly conceptualized, the conceptualization of customer engagement is more contentious because it is not only often confused with such terms as participation, involvement, and relationship quality; distinguishing it from customer experience is equally tricky and difficult. Considering that Pine and Gilmore (1999) stated that staging experiences is about engaging customers in a personal way whilst Hoffman and Novak (1996) defined online customer experience (OCE) as the complete engagement with and immersion in an activity; the complexity of this distinction becomes more glaring because these definitions suggest that the two concepts mean the same thing. Bilgihan *et al.* (2015) also stated that interaction, participation, immersion, and engagement have all become important constructs of online services but they failed to explicate how these constructs differ. Drawing on the foregoing, the web seems to be the single most influential tool that may have made customer experience difficult to distinguish from customer engagement. Thus, a good starting point for differentiating the two concepts is to note the differences between traditional shopping and OCE.

While each of the features of customer experience identified in section 2.1 apply regardless of whether offline or online context is in focus, distinguishing between online and offline experience will provide a clearer basis for distinguishing customer experience from its associated concepts including customer engagement. Rose *et al.* (2011) presented a clear comparison of offline and online customer contexts which shows that the two platforms differ in four key areas: personal contact, information provision, time of interactions and brand presentation. Personal contact is intensive in face-to-face situations but non-existent online; information provision is very rich online compared to offline; online shoppers can make purchases 24/7 irrespective of location but face-to-face shopping presents time and location constraints; and online brand presentation is achieved through audio-visuals but in offline context, brand presentation is embedded in concrete cues such as staff, buildings, facilities and so on (Rose *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, research shows that when compared with in-store shopping, online shopping a) lacks tangible clues that trigger trust such as buildings, personnel, facilities and so on; b) provides lesser control over consumer data; c) does not allow consumers to physically evaluate products as consumers rely only on the senses of sight and sound; and d) has low entry and exit barriers for online retailers (Cyr *et al.*, 2007; Alba *et al.*, 1997 in Childers *et al.*, 2001). A thorough examination of the above distinctions points to the fact that offline customer experience is oriented more towards personalization while OCE is much more oriented towards customization. It also shows that co-creation is much more pronounced online than offline. Finally, online context offers more latitude to engage customers than offline context.

The virtual marketplace offers a platform for online shoppers and online firms to co-create experiences (Rose *et al.*, 2012). Yet, when customers are engaged, their role in the service/product development process becomes prominent (Hoyer *et al.*, 2010) which consequently provides greater avenue to co-create experiences. Brodie *et al.* (2011: 253) therefore argued “that the conceptual roots of [customer engagement] may be explained by drawing on theory addressing interactive experience and value co-creation within marketing relationships”. Thus, both constructs involve value co-creation and interactions and portray customers as active co-creators of experiences rather than passive receptors of value. Considering these dynamics, the web is the greatest streamlining force that enhances value co-creation. This viewpoint is strongly reinforced in the 'service-dominant (S-D) logic' of marketing (see Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). To determine whether a clear distinction between customer experience and customer engagement exists, how various academics defined customer engagement alongside the working definition of OCE proposed in section 2.1 is considered.

According to Van Doorn *et al.* (2010: 254), customer engagement refers to "customers' behavioral manifestations that have a brand- or firm-focus, beyond purchase, resulting from motivational drivers" and include a wide range of behaviors such as word of mouth activity, recommendations, helping other customers and so on. The above definition emphasizes the outcome component of customer engagement. Peterson (2007 in Brodie *et al.*, 2011: 267) described consumer engagement in the online context as "an estimate of the degree and depth of visitor interaction on the site, measured against a clearly defined set of goals. Each organization's version of engagement will be unique". Mollen and Wilson (2010: 5) defined brand engagement as "the cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship with the brand as personified by the website or other computer-mediated entities designed to communicate brand value". Additionally, "consumer engagement in a virtual brand community involves specific interactive experiences between consumers and the brand, and/or other members of the community… Consumer engagement is a multidimensional concept comprising cognitive, emotional, and/or behavioral dimensions, and plays a critical role in the process of relational exchange where other relational concepts are engagement antecedents and/or consequences in iterative engagement processes within the brand community" (Brodie *et al.*, 2013: 107). Not only does the above definitions of customer engagement reflect the process through which it occurs, the definitions also point out the multi-faceted character of the concept.

Engagement has equally been defined as both an act and a state. According to Jacques *et al.* (1995 in O'Brien, 2010), engagement is an act that involves users emotionally. Alternatively, engagement may be described as an act that ensues from interactive and customers' experiences co-creation activities (Vargo & Lusch, 2010 in Brodie *et al.*, 2011). The construct has also been defined as "the state of being in gear and interacting with a system (Hutchins *et al.*, 1986)" (O'Brien, 2010: 345). In these lights, customer engagement can be conceived as primarily concerned with the process that underlies the formation and development of customer-brand relationships and the mechanisms that drive loyalty. Such process and it underlying frameworks preoccupy the concept of customer experience because experience is built when customers engage with a company's brand and until the right experience is created and nurtured, you cannot be sure of loyalty (Ramaswamy, 2008; Shaw & Ivens, 2002).

A closer look at the above definitions indicate that the boundaries between customer experience and customer engagement blur incredibly to the extent that it becomes difficult to differentiate the two. Generally, the two concepts share several similarities such as consisting of both process and outcome components, reflecting value co-creation, driven by goals, exhibiting context-specific and unique character, and comprising cognitive, emotional and behavioral dimensions.

Conversely, customer engagement encapsulates prior and post-purchase behaviors. Bolton *et al.* (2014) stated that even though customer engagement results into valuable consumer-firm and customer-to-customer interactions, it typically comprises of non-purchasing behaviors. Yet, customer experience subsists at pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase phases of the consumer buying cycle. It therefore appears that customer engagement is more concerned with iterative pre and post-purchase customer behaviors while customer experience dynamically spans, prior, during and post-purchase attitudes and behaviors. Thus, customer engagement activities are an incomprehensive tale of buyer behavior because as Ferguson *et al.* (2010) additionally noted, assessment of value is formed based on total service experience prior, during, and after service encounter. Further, customer experience also includes the sensory and social dimensions. Thus, it is more encompassing in terms of dimensionality than customer engagement. Summarily, since there is a consensus that customer engagement includes experimental, cognitive (Laurel, 1993 in O'Brien, 2010), behavioral (Brodie *et al.*, 2013), affective (Jones, 2005 in O'Brien, 2010), sensual, and spatiotemporal (O'Brien, 2010) dimensions, it is clearly situated within the frameworks of user experience (e.g. Threads of Experience) (Wright *et al.*, 2003 in O'Brien, 2010). This further suggests that customer experience ensue from customer engagement. Whilst this position is consistent with Lilja *et al.* (2010) and Bolton *et al.* (2014), Brodie *et al.* (2011: 258) put forward an opposing view. They submitted that customer engagement "reflects a psychological state, which occurs by virtue of interactive customer experiences with a focal agent/object within specific service relationships". It should be noted however, that experience can occur without engagement. In contrast, it is impossible for customers to be engaged in series of interactions with the firm or its product/services without experience resulting in the process. Thus, customer engagement is better conceptualized as the antecedent of customer engagement than otherwise. However, this position is not considered definitive.

2.4.2 Customer experience versus service quality

Customer experience and service quality are similar in several respects. First, the distinction between process and outcome elements of customer experience (Klaus, 2014) is strongly consistent with the functional and technical dimensions of service quality proposed by Grönroos (1982) and the process and outcome perspectives of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; 1988). The interactional dimension of service quality (Grönroos, 1982) and the dramaturgical framework for services developed by Grove and Fisk (1983) also coincides with the social context/dimension of experience even though social context as currently emphasized in the customer experience literature is broader in scope. Secondly, Berry *et al.* (2006) argued that the value that services customers perceive is firms' performances; thus, customer experience reflects the firm's service performances. Products whether tangible or intangible, perform services through creating experiences that is of value to customers (Ferguson *et al.*, 2010). Berry and Carbone (2007) used performances and services interchangeably because service organizations create value through performances. Similarly, Johnston and Clark (2005) argued that service quality is a combination of customers' experience and their perception of the service experience. Additionally, the information that consumers share about their previous experiences typically reflect product performance (Bickart & Schindler, 2001) and performance as can be seen in the foregoing is same as quality of the offer whether it is a product or a service. This reasoning is consistent with the SERVPERF measure of service quality (see Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Still on similarities, Andersson and Mossberg's (2004) investigation of dining experience as a multidimensional construct and the SERVQUAL approach are alike because the authors simultaneously explored ideal and actual experience. Given that the two perspectives of the service logic of marketing (i.e. the logic of consumption and the logic of service production) (Grönroos, 2008) corroborates the S-D logic of marketing (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008), perceived value is the central concept that sums up the similarities between customer experience and service quality.

However, writers have put forward assertions that suggest that customer experience and service quality are two distinct constructs. For instance, Högström *et al.* (2010) stated that the quality of an experience and the experience itself are created through distinct dimensions and processes. Additionally, while service quality is widely operationalized based on a single episode, customer experience is a cumulative effect of numerous encounters across firms' orchestrated channels (Maklan & Klaus, 2011). Stamboulis and Skayannis (2003) are of the view that the roles which context, content change and infrastructure play in experience creation differ from their roles in service creation. As opposed to services, the infrastructure that support experiences creation includes technical and organizational solutions and extends to the activators of experiences such as logistics for example (Högström *et al.*, 2010). "While a service is the process or activity, the customer's experience is their personal interpretation of the service process and their interaction and involvement with it during their journey or flow through a series of touchpoints, and how those things make the customers feel" (Johnston & Kong, 2011: 8).

In terms of dimensionality and the role that customers play in the service production and experience creation, it has also been shown that the two concepts differ. Service quality (SERVQUAL) recognizes customers as passive receptors of value and fails to explicitly account for customer-to-customer interactions (Walter *et al.*, 2010; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009) even though service interactions have been declared one of the most important aspects of services (Schneider & White, 2004). One likely explanation for this shortfall might be because SERVQUAL was developed in contexts (i.e. insurance and appliance repair) where customer-to-customer interactions rarely subsist. Conversely, co-creation and social context are at the epicenter of customer experience. Additionally, SERVQUAL does not account for the customers' emotional outcomes in any event (LaTour & Carbone, 2014). Experiences also differ from service quality because SERVQUAL (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985, 1988), the most widely supported and used model of service quality dimensions neither reflect memorability of events, nor does its dimensions reflect emotional experiences (Lilja *et al.*, 2010).

In terms of directionality of the relationship between the two concepts, although contending and confounding views (see Nambisan & Watt, 2011 and Walter *et al.*, 2010 respectively) abound, evidences suggest that service quality precedes customer experience. Value added services according to Voss (2000) involve proactively aiding customer experiences. Knutson and Beck (2003) argued that service quality is an input to the real-time experience. Pine and Gilmore (1999: 10) stated that: "experiences occur whenever a company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as props to engage the individual". Customer experience is also most likely to be influenced by perceived service quality (Ismail *et al.*, 2011). Thus, service quality is very likely to lead to customer experience. Overall, despite views suggesting similarities between customer experience and service quality with perceived value summarizing these similar views, customers' role in experience creation differ from their role in service production and customer experience has more encompassing dimensions than service quality whilst the former is the consequence of the latter.

2.4.3 Customer experience versus value co-creation

It is relatively difficult to detach value from experiences. Value is created and perceived when people interact with one another or with an object like a self-service machine; thus, it is contextual, personal, and resides in resource integration and value co-creation processes (Åkesson *et al.*, 2014). Value co-creation occurs when consumers and firms collaboratively create value through interacting with one another (Grönroos, 2012 in Blasco-Arcas *et al.*, 2014). Thus, customer experience is the result of customers' integration and value co-creation efforts (Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Meyer & Schwager, 2007). Åkesson *et al.* (2014) argued that experience drivers are not only dynamic and rooted in value co-creation, but they explicitly influence customer experience formation. Firms opt for co-creation because it leads to better customer experiences (Klaus & Maklan, 2012; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Additionally, Verleye (2015) argued that customers who engage in co-creation are motivated by expected benefits and previous research suggests that pleasurable experiences, cognitive benefits, social benefits, and personal benefits are the benefits that consumers who co-create in virtual environments expect. Hence, just like service quality, value-co-creation is also an antecedent of customer experience. In addition to the above stated, this view is tenable because whereas value co-creation is process-oriented as it is an act, customer experience reflects process and outcome perspectives because it is both an act and a state. According to Åkesson *et al.* (2014), co-creation deals in interacting with a service process and such activities like finding information on a company's website or scanning products at the checkout counter. Thus, such conceptual amalgamation like co-creation experience as used by Verleye (2015) and Blasco-Arcas *et al.* (2014) is limited to the process-oriented view because it does not take the outcome view of customer experience into account.

When operant resources (skills and knowledge about how to do things) interact with other operant resources or on operand resources (goods and physical resources), co-creation is the undoubtable outcome (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). This, consequently leads to customer experience also described as value-in-use or value-in-context (Walter *et al.*, 2010). In an attempt to decode who creates and who co-creates value, Grönroos (2008) posit that service providers can become co-creators of value with their customers if they accept customers as creators of value when consuming a service as implied in the foundational concept of value-in-use and consequently expand their market offerings to include firm-customer interactions. This proposal clearly indicates that firms subscribing to value co-creation can at most offer value propositions that customers can actively use to co-create their own value through interacting with product or service (Walter *et al.*, 2010).

Although conceptually appealing and very relevant to current marketing tenets, the idea of co-creation has been called into question. Klaus (2015) argued that co-creation fails to account for the social context or customer-to-customer interactions even though the influence of customer-to-customer interactions on an individual customer's experiences is well recognized in the literature (see Blasco-Arcas *et al.*, 2014; Klaus, 2013; Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Grove & Fisk, 1997). After all, individual experiences and group experiences happen in entirely different ways (Klaus, 2015). The social context idea contends that customer experience depends on the customer, other customers, and the firm providing the service. Thus, another feature distinguishing customer experience from value co-creation is that co-creation fails to account for the influence of other customers in an individual customer's experiences whereas customer experience accounts for this element. This is a bit surprising given the huge emphasis placed on interactions in co-creation activities.

Irrespective of the above clear discrepancies, it is obvious that customer experience and value co-creation are similar in several ways. First, the framing of customer experiences and value co-creation is facilitated by service systems (Åkesson *et al.,* 2014). Thus, both concepts are activated by similar motivations/stimuli. Secondly, when exchange partners participate in a creation network, value creation ensues (Ding & Tseng, 2015) while value lies in human experiences (Ramaswamy, 2011 in Blasco-Arcas *et al*., 2014). According to Vargo and Lusch (2004 in Åkesson *et al*., 2014: 679), "Customer value is experience driven, co-created, and context-dependent". Value co-creation is interactive and experiential in nature (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). Holbrook (2006) noted that values are embedded in activities and interactions and is subjectively experienced by customers while Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) further argued that value does not solely reside in products and services but is now centered in the experiences of consumers. Grönroos (2008) also submitted that value-in-use is a realized value created during consumption; thus, customer value is an outcome of consumption whilst consumption is experiential. Accordingly, because value is co-created whilst customer experience results in value perception, value is the central theme that links co-creation and customer experience together like a Siamese twins. Summarily, customer experience and co-creation are both governed by perceived value despite the scope and the dimensional differences between the two concepts.

2.4.4 Toward a conceptual framework of customer experience and associated concepts

Figure 2.2 at a glance, maps out how customer experience and its associated constructs relates to each other. The framework was gleaned based on the evidences drawn from sections 2.4.1 to 2.4.3. Figure 2.2 emphasizes that in their search for value, customers engage with firms' products and services, explore services of firms and process its performances, go through experience clues orchestrated by marketers, and contribute to creating same value for themselves. Value is therefore the central factor that hold service quality, customer engagement, customer experience, and value co-creation together. This thought draws from the reasoning that the value that consumers process is strictly linked to these concepts (Helkkula *et al*., 2012). The cardinal point of distinction amongst these constructs is the perspective taken to process value and the components of value covered. As already argued in sections 2.4.1 to 2.4.3, customer experience is more encompassing in terms of dimensionality than customer engagement, service quality, and value co-creation. Additionally, customer experience – offline or online – is strongly linked to the concept of perceived value just as customer engagement, service quality, and value co-creation. But unlike service quality whose tenet is unidirectional (Klaus, 2015), customer experience is co-created. Furthermore, unlike co-creation, customer experience also emphasizes the influence of the social context (Klaus, 2015) conceptualized as relational experience in this thesis. Furthermore, customer experience reflects the customers' full purchase journey, but customer engagement is limited to pre and post-purchase phases of the consumers' buying cycle. In the paragraph that immediately follows, the foregoing disparities were ignored. Instead, the links modelled in Figure 2.2 are summarized.

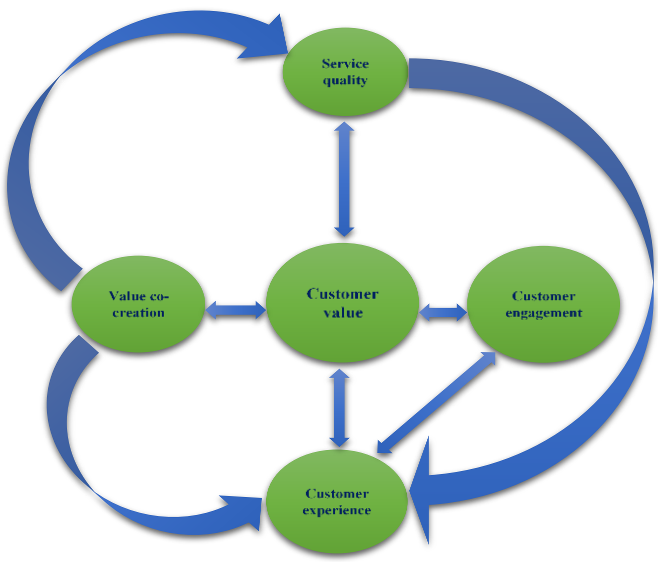

Figure 2.2 Links Between Customer Experience and its Associated Constructs

Previously, it was argued that service quality and customer experience are related to the extent that each construct reflect service performances (see Berry & Carbone, 2007; Berry *et al.*, 2006). To some extent, both constructs should stem from similar motivations. Together with the above, since the service logic holds that customers create value by consuming services (Grönroos, 2008) whilst value co-creation results when consumers use or consume the goods and services that they acquired (Levitt, 1974 in Grönroos, 2008), it appears logical to argue that value co-creation leads to service quality. Based on intuition also, it makes sense to argue that service quality stems mainly from the evaluation of the entire value co-creation activities. This reasoning is tenable to the extent that the S-D logic of marketing views service production and delivery and value co-creation as interconnected activities (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). Thus, as demonstrated in Figure 2.2, value co-creation is a determinant of service quality. Based on previous discussions also (see section 2.4.2 and section 2.4.3), service quality and value co-creation are drivers/determinants of customer experience. Additionally, the directionality of the link between customer engagement and customer experience is not yet definitive. Empirical examination of this and other links modelled in Figure 2.2 is beyond the scope of this thesis. The future research implications for the model illustrated in Figure 2.2 will be further discussed in chapter nine.

So far, the definition of online customer experience (OCE) based on in depth scrutiny of previous definitions/descriptions of the concept have been discussed. The changing role of consumers attributable to the emergence of customer experience and other factors that triggered customer experience and how customer experience is associated with similar concepts have also been discussed. The sections that follow is devoted to deepening the understanding of OCE. We set off with an evaluation of its antecedents.

2.5 Antecedents of Online Customer Experience (OCE)

Although the antecedents of OCE are not the central focus of this work, its discussion is plausible because it is difficult to gain a complete understanding of the nature and dimensions of a cause without understanding what is 'causing the cause'. McGinnis *et al.* (2008) argued that understanding the drivers of experience is a necessary input for enhancing customer experience. It should be noted that all the drivers of customer experience are marketing stimuli which are also inputs into the process whether the experience is offline or online. Thus, offering the right marketing stimuli can be likened to creating the right avenue for customers to co-create their own experiences. However, online shopping experience is a more complex topic than offline shopping experience (Constantinides *et al.*, 2010) because online shoppers are not just shoppers but information technology users (Cho & Park, 2001). Bilgihan *et al.* (2015) specifically argued that brick-and-mortar approaches to commerce is not applicable in online service contexts. Rose *et al.* (2012) also elaborated the distinction between online shopping and offline shopping. On that account, it is expected that the drivers of customer experience will vary depending on whether the context involved is online or offline.

Ismail *et al.* (2011) conducted a literature review that explored the antecedents of customer experience. The paper identified seven antecedents of customer experience including brand name, price, advertising, employees, servicescape, core service, and WOM. These drivers are mainly applicable to offline context. Through a systematic review of the business-to-consumer online consumer literature, Rose *et al.* (2011) developed a conceptual framework of the antecedents and consequences of OCE that identified 9 antecedents of customer experience (i.e. information processing, perceived ease-of-use, perceived usefulness, perceived benefits, perceived control, skill, trust propensity; perceived risk, and enjoyment). Thus, reinventing the wheel is obviously needless. Therefore, the aim here is to integrate offline and OCE research and point out areas of similarities and differences by reviewing post-2011 studies in line with the studies of Ismail *et al.* (2011) and Rose *et al.* (2011). The two research streams are also subjected to further scrutiny by exploring the antecedents of customer experience evolved qualitatively and the antecedents of customer experience empirically validated in quantitative studies.

Table 2.3 indicates that studies emerged mainly from Europe, Asia and US; adopted more of quantitative than qualitative approaches; and were situated more within the online context. Most of the drivers of customer experience found were dominantly cognitive and to some extent relational/social, but emotional in few of the cases. This is surprising given the increasing attention paid to the role of emotions in consumption experience (see Deng & Tseng, 2015; Adhikari, 2015; Berry *et al.*, 2002; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Amongst the drivers of customer experience uncovered, only few were entirely new. The entirely new drivers were mostly uncovered in studies situated within the online context whilst the drivers varied across contexts. Many were exactly or somewhat related to the previously identified drivers of the construct. Few key points that warrant further emphasis are discussed in the paragraphs below.

Author(s)	**Context**	**Method**	**Validated Antecedents/Drivers**	**Status of the Validated Antecedent (Old/New)**	**Dimensions of Customer Experience that the Antecedent(s) Drive**
Kuppelwieser and Finsterwalder (2011)	Offline: Customers of rafting company and customers of an indoor soccer company	Quantitative: Survey, 273 respondents, CFA	Psychological safety	Although somewhat related to perceived risk as in Rose *et al*. 2012), this is a new antecedent	Relational/social experience
Su (2011)	Offline: Guests of Taiwanese ethnic restaurants	Quantitative: Survey, 322 respondents, Factor, correlation, and hierarchical regression analysis	Service innovation	This is a new antecedent	Customer experience
Hsu and Tsou (2011)	Online: Users of blogs in Taiwan	Quantitative: Online survey, 468 respondents, PLS-SEM	Information credibility	Although related to trust propensity as in Rose *et al*. 2012), this is a new antecedent	Customer experience
Rose *et al*. (2012)	Online: Online shoppers situated in Europe and USA	Quantitative: Online survey, 220 respondents, PLS-SEM technique	Telepresence, challenge, ease-of-use, control and perceived benefits	All antecedents were covered in Rose *et al*. (2011)	Cognitive and affective
Juttner *et al*. (2013)	Offline: Hotel and restaurant guests	Qualitative: telephone interviews, 25 hotel guests and 20 restaurant guests, sequential incident laddering technique	Personal values (comfortable life and social recognition)	These antecedents are new as none of them were found by either Ismail *et al*. (2011) or Rose *et al*. (2011)	Cognitive and emotional
Wen (2013)	Online: Leisure travelers registered with an online travel agency in the US who shop for travel products online	Quantitative: Online survey, 538 valid cases were analyzed through CFA	Perception of convenience and perception of value	Perception of convenience and perception of value are all related to perceived benefits as in Rose *et al*. (2011)	Consumer purchase experiences
Papagiannidis *et al*. (2013)	Online: Undergraduate students from an Italian university	Quantitative: experiment, 150 subjects, PLS-SEM	Graphic vividness, 3D authenticity, control, and color vividness	Control is same as in Rose *et al*. (2011) while 3D authenticity is similar to trust propensity as in Rose *et al*. (2011). Graphic vividness and color vividness are the online equivalents of servicescape as in Ismail *et al*. (2011)	Hedonic value, utilitarian value, and simulated experience
Klaus (2013)	The interviewees were recruited from the UK, USA and Sweden	Qualitative: An in-depth interview following the soft laddering approach	Trust, value for money, context familiarity, usability,	Specifically, social presence is new, context familiarity and product presence are similar to servicescape as in Ismail *et*	Functionality factors and psychological factors

		and scrutinized via emerging consensus technique. 62 interviewees recruited from the UK, USA and Sweden	communication, social presence, product presence, and interactivity	*al*. (2011). All other antecedents align with Rose *et al*. (2011)	
Dennis *et al*. (2013)	Offline: Departmental store shoppers in London, UK	Quantitative: Field experiment, 437 subjects, ANOVA	Digital signage	This is a new antecedent although it relates to advertising as in Ismail *et al*. (2011) but wider in scope because it incorporates entertainment features	Affective experiences
Kim *et al*. (2013)	Online: Experienced shoppers recruited from two large private universities	Quantitative: Experiment, 94 subjects, ANOVA, PLS-SEM	Shopping enjoyment	As in Rose *et al*. (2011)	Flow experience
Zhou (2013)	Online: Users of mobile TV in China	Quantitative: Survey, 230 respondents, CFA	Perceived ease of use, access speed, and content quality	As in Rose *et al*. (2011) and Ismail *et al*. (2011)	Flow experience
Blasco-Arcas *et al*. (2014)	Online: Experienced Internet and e-commerce users recruited from a European university	Quantitative: experiment, 332 subjects, CFA	Coproduction and customer-to-customer interactions	These are new antecedents	Co-creation experience
Srivastava and Kaul (2014)	Offline: Customers of four leading Indian departmental stores	Quantitative: Mall-intercept survey, 840 respondents, EFA and CFA	Convenience and social interactions	Convenience is part of perceived benefits as in Rose *et al*. (2011) but social interactions is a new antecedent	Customer experience
Lim (2014)	Online: Malaysian online group buyers	Quantitative: Mall-intercept survey, 458 respondents, CFA	Arousal, time distortion, challenge, skill, interactivity (speed), and control	Only arousal and time distortion are new antecedents. Others are as in Rose *et al*. (2011)	Hedonic and utilitarian online shopping experience
Chahal and Dutta (2014)	Offline: Literature review	Literature review	1) Core: Service quality, 2) supportive: Access, choice, representation, information and redress, 3) Contextual: Past experience, level of perceived risk, distress, preference and personality, and 4) Socio-characteristics: Socio-economic status and associated groups such as relatives, friends and acquaintances	Distress, redress, personality, Socio-economic status, influence of others like relatives, friends etc are new antecedents. Others are as in Rose *et al*. (2011) and Ismil *et al*. (2011)	Sensory, Cognitive, Affective, Physical, and Relational/social

Mosteller *et al.* (2014)	Online: Students from a Southeastern urban US university	Quantitative: Experiment, 299 subjects, PLS-SEM	Perceptual fluency	Although similar to information processing and perceived ease of use as in Rose *et al.* (2011), it is a new antecedent	Cognitive effort and positive affect
Wu *et al.* (2014)	Online: Experienced browsers or online shoppers of travel websites in Taiwan	Quantitative: Online survey, 616 respondents, CFA	Reliability, attractiveness, and interactivity	Reliability is similar to trust propensity as in Rose *et al.* (2011). Interactivity is as in Rose *et al.* (2011) also. Attractiveness is a new antecedent	Utilitarian value and flow experience
Lee and Jeong (2014)	Online: Users planning and booking hotels through hotel's website	Quantitative: Self-administered online survey, 332 respondents, CFA	Self-image congruity, brand congruity, and value congruity	All antecedents are new	Online brand experiences
Åkesson *et al.* (2014)	Online-offline: IKEA customers in Sweden	Qualitative: 60 interviews were conducted following an experience-based event technique	1) Informational drivers: being inspired, obtaining information, and accessing or evaluating alternatives, 2) Relational drivers: reliable in use, convenient, and self-controlling, 3) Organizational drivers: service orientation, problem-solving activity, accessibility and availability, and lack of trust, and 4) technological drivers: perceived capacity, ease of use, and flexibility	The informational relational and technological drivers are well covered in Rose *et al.* (2011). Problem-solving activities relates to information processing as in Rose *et al.* (2011). Accessibility and availability relates to perceived benefits also as in Rose *et al.* (2011). Service orientation is the only new antecedent here	Not applicable
Zhang *et al.* (2014)	Online: Users of two Chinese social media sites (i.e. Renren and SinaWeibo)	Quantitative: Online survey, 1009 respondents, CFA	Perceived interactivity, perceived personalization, and perceived sociability	Perceived sociability is a new antecedent. Perceive personalization is also a new antecedent but is related to perceived benefits as in Rose *et al.* (2011). Perceived interactivity is also as in Rose *et al.* (2011)	Social support, social presence, and flow
Chen (2015)	Offline: Lodgers of bed and breakfast in Taiwan	Quantitative: Survey, 216 respondents, CFA	Store atmosphere	Similar to servicescape as in Ismail *et al.* (2011)	Customer experience
Martin *et al.* (2015)	Online: Online consumers of a large Australian grocery multi-channel e-retailer	Quantitative: Online survey, 555 respondents, PLS-SEM	Telepresence, control, perceived benefits, aesthetics	All as in Rose *et al.* (2011)	Cognitive and emotional
Visinescu *et al.* (2015)	Online: Students recruited from a large public university	Quantitative: Experiment, 310 subjects, PLS-SEM	Heightened enjoyment, curiosity, temporal disassociation, focused immersion	Curiosity and temporal disassociation are new antecedents. Others are well covered in Rose *et al.* (2011)	Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use

Table 2.3 Post-2011 Antecedents of Customer Experience Identified in Previous Research

Online replicas of offline drivers of customer experience abound in previous research. For instance, graphic vividness and color vividness found by Papagiannidis *et al*. (2013) and telepresence (Rose *et al*., 2012) are virtual alternatives of store atmospherics (Chen, 2015) and are therefore similar to Bitner's (1992) conceptual portrayal of servicescape. Thus, although offline and OCE may stem from different motivations, drivers of experience in one channel can inform the drivers of experience in another channel. Offline and online experiences interact which makes the expectations of one very susceptible to the experience of the other (Stone, 2011). Thus, consumers can utilize experiences gained in one channel to anticipate experiences derivable from other channels from the same firm or even another firm. Thus, studying how experience in one service channel or touchpoint shapes experiences at other channels is a viable avenue for further research especially as it is noted within academic and practitioner literature (see Gentile *et al*., 2007; Wyner, 2003) that all customer touchpoints are not equal. Yet, delivering consistent customer experiences across channels is vital (Frow & Payne, 2007; Mosley, 2007; Berry *et al*., 2006).

The most widely cited driver(s) or antecedent(s) of customer experience is related to the social context. Such terms like social recognition, social presence, customer-to-customer interactions, social interactions, and coproduction all emphasize the influence of the social context. Thus, apart from terminology differences, not too many new drivers of customer experience were identified in post-2011 studies. However, there are some confounds in the drivers of customer experience uncovered. While Klaus and Maklan (2011) identified enjoyment as a dimension of customer experience in the sports tourism context, Kim *et al*. (2013) analyzed the construct as a driver of flow experience. Methodological differences unfortunately do not reconcile this contrasting evidences. Additionally, social context is widely recognized as a dimension of customer experience in both online (see Mohd-Any *et al*., 2015; Zhang *et al*., 2014; Trevinal & Stenger, 2014; Klaus, 2013) and offline contexts (see Walls, 2013; Klaus & Maklan, 2011; Gentile *et al*., 2007; Schmitt, 1999) as well as in studies that conducted literature review (Chahal & Dutta, 2014; Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013; Verhoef *et al*., 2009). Even psychological safety tested as the antecedent of customer experience (Kuppelwieser & Finsterwalder, 2011) was found by Rageh *et al*. (2013) as a dimension of customer experience. While arousal was identified as a driver of online group shopping experience (Lim, 2014), Wu *et al*. (2008)

conceptualized and tested it as a dimension of emotional response. Additionally, having established that ambience, design and social features enhance arousal (Grewal *et al.*, 2009), arousal is therefore, a dimension of customer experience. The inconsistency continues. One possible explanation for these confounds may be traced back to the dynamic and context-specific nature of customer experience (see Lemke *et al.*, 2011; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). The proposal of redress (i.e. remedial action for service failure across a service system) and previous experience (Chahal & Dutta, 2014) as the drivers of customer experience sheds light on this reasoning. However, it is obvious from the foregoing that academics need to be clearer as to what the dimensions of experience entails as distinct from the drivers of experience. Such rendition will provide a superior understanding of the field of customer experience especially its constituent elements and aid systematic progression of empirical research.

Additionally, extant literature that integrates the relational, behavioral, and sensory dimensions of customer experience are few. Rose *et al.*'s (2011) categorization of experiential states into cognitive and affective dimensions clearly supports this trend. Klaus' (2013) classification of dimensions of customer experience into psychological and functionality factors and Lim's (2014) distinction between hedonic and utilitarian shopping experience all correspond to the cognitive and emotional dimensions of customer experience. This might have also partly accounted for the confounds pointed out above. However, old and recent studies (see section 2.6.2) indicate that the polarization of customer experience into cognitive and emotional dimensions is incomprehensive. Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) argued that the consensus in the literature supports the conceptualization of experiences as a multidimensional construct comprising sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, social/relational dimensions. This shortfall in the above studies suggests two key things. First, expanded dimensions of customer experience such as Schmitt's (1999) and Pine and Gilmore (1999) are yet to be adequately validated across contexts. Thus, more studies validating this framework especially within the online context(s) are required particularly given that some drivers of customer experience are effective in both online and offline contexts whilst some can be adapted from one channel to another. After all, real integration of online and offline channels is a practice that will lead to beneficial ends for organizations even though it is rare to find (Herhausen *et al.*, 2015). Trevinal and Stenger (2014) found that offline decision aids are a dimension of the social dimension of online shopping experience. Finally, the assessment of customer experience across channels is a long overdue research avenue especially as literature (see Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Wyner, 2003) suggested that customer channels are not equally important irrespective of the demand that the delivery of customer experience across channel should be consistent (Frow & Payne, 2007; Berry *et al.*, 2006).

2.6 Perspectives of Online Customer Experience (OCE)

Three related but varying perspectives of the dimensions of OCE can be identified in the literature. They include: i) the flow perspective; ii) the cognitive and/versus emotional perspective; and iii) the multidimensional perspective.

2.6.1 The flow perspective

One strand of research on customer experience conceptualized it as a "flow experience" and argued that flow experience is a way of facilitating compelling online experience which in turn, leads to the achievement of online marketing objectives (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). The conceptual model suggested that success-conscious online marketers should facilitate "flow", a situation where the e-shopper will be so engaged and immersed in the computer-mediated interactions that he/she loses consciousness of time and the happenings in his/her immediate surrounding. Flow experience is therefore similar to escapist experience described by Pine and Gilmore (1999). For customers to be completely immersed in the shopping activity, the website must be interactive and capable of delivering optimal shopping experiences (Gao & Bai, 2014). Thus, flow experience results from customers' interactions with website stimuli (Hoffman & Novak, 2009; Skadberg & Kimmel, 2004; Novak *et al.*, 2003; Hoffman & Novak, 1996).

In three streams of OCE research (see Novak *et al.*, 2003; Novak *et al.*, 2000; Hoffman & Novak, 1996), flow experience was expanded and validated. Although Hoffman and Novak (2009) reviewed literatures on flow experience and classified most previous measures of the construct into unidimensional or multidimensional measures, most acclaimed multidimensional measures were higher-order constructs at best. The issues with this will be returned to shortly. The issues notwithstanding, flow experience has become an appropriate and important construct used to explain the behavior of consumers in computer-mediated environments till date (Teng *et al.*, 2012); thus, prompting numerous studies to apply it in a broad range of online shopping contexts (e.g. Ding *et al.*, 2010; Bridges & Florsheim, 2008). Consistent with Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), Novak *et al.* (2003) distinguished between shopping as instrumental task and an act worth undertaking. Novak *et al.*'s distinction relates to Babin *et al.*'s (1994) and Wolfinbarger and Gilly's (2001) categorization of the shopping process as either 'work' or 'play'. The distinction is also consistent with the classification of shopping behavior into compulsive shopping (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989) and impulse buying (Rook, 1987). More interestingly, the goal-directed and experiential grouping of consumer shopping behavior are perfectly consistent with the conceptualization of consumer attitudes as comprising both hedonic and utilitarian dimensions (see Babin *et al.*, 1994; Batra & Ahtola, 1990) as well as the cognitive-affective dimensions (Rose *et al.*, 2012; 2011) and psychological-functionality factors (Klaus, 2013) portrayal of OCE.

Although research shows that flow experience lead to positive affective responses (Chen, 2006), positive perceptions and attitudes toward a website (Huang, 2003; Agarwal & Karahanna, 2000), exploratory behavior (Skadberg & Kimmel, 2004), and revisit and re-patronage intentions (Siekpe, 2005; Wu & Chang, 2005) in the online service context, this approach of OCE conceptualization has several drawbacks. First, flow experience has proved an elusive construct to consistently measure because it is intuitive (Hoffman & Novak, 2009) and has therefore been variedly operationalized (Choi *et al.*, 2007). Such varied operationalization of the construct strongly hinders the systematic progression of empirical research (Hoffman & Novak, 2009). Although Hoffman and Novak's (2009) proposed derived approach takes care of some of the measurement shortfalls of flow experience, it muddles the distinctions between the antecedents and the outcomes of flow and thus, creates definitional issues. The definitional issue is further worsened by the fact that the dimensions of flow experience are same constructs that Rose *et al.* (2011) identified as the activators of two experiential states (i.e. cognitive and affective). What constitute flow experience is categorically unclear in previous research because what are mostly obtainable in the acclaimed multidimensional conceptualization of the construct are high-order measures (see Novak *et al.*, 2000). Even more problematic is the use of a unidimensional overall measure of experience (see Choi *et al.*, 2007; Novak *et al.*, 2000) because such conceptualization cannot capture the complexity of customer experience. For being escapist in nature, the flow experience perspective is more unidimensional than multidimensional. Finally, flow experience is dominantly cognitive and fails to capture the social and behavioral dimensions of shopping experience. Consequently, it falls short a framework that can comprehensively capture the dimensions of OCE.

2.6.2 The cognitive and/versus emotional perspective

The second perspective of customer experience dimensions' literature suggests that in addition to the information processing perspective or the classical decision-making theory which is solely cognitive, current research has recognized psychosomatic factors that influence consumer behavior. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982: 132) were the first to emphasize the influence of psychosomatic factors when they noted that consumption experience is "directed toward the pursuit of fantasies, feelings, and fun". This viewpoint contrasts the information processing paradigm which claims that consumers are rational choice makers. Shopping experiences are entertaining when they are pleasurable and full of fun and can therefore, be likened to leisure experiences which are characterized by intrinsic satisfaction, perceived freedom and involvement (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Entertaining shopping experiences are enjoyable because it provides hedonic benefits to shoppers (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Babin *et al.*, 1994). These classic postulations are what later incarnated into hedonic and utilitarian shopping value with its measures first developed by Babin *et al.* (1994). It is well supported within e-commerce, marketing, and retailing literature that utilitarian and hedonic motivations are key drivers of online shopping (see for instance Bridges & Florsheim, 2008; Arnold & Reynolds, 2003).

The categorization of customer experience along utilitarian and hedonic dimensions respectively aligns with the assemblage of shopping into instrumental task and an act worth undertaking for its own sake (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Hoffman & Novak, 1996). But as opposed to Hoffman and Novak (1996, 2003) which is dominantly cognitive, this classification scheme is a more balanced view. It also aligns with the recent grouping of customer experience into cognitive and affective dimensions (see Mosteller *et al.*, 2014; Rose *et al.*, 2012) and Shaw and Ivens' (2002) contention that the two major dimensions of customer experience are the physical and emotional attributes of a market offering. Others employed the term utilitarian and hedonic experience (e.g. Lim, 2014), utilitarian and hedonic value (e.g. Papagiannidis *et al.*, 2013; Overby & Lee, 2006) which respectively corresponds to cognitive and affective experiences. Klaus' (2013) classification of psychological and functionality factors of online customer service experience is also in tandem with this perspective. While utilitarian/instrumental and task/functionality factors are cognitive, hedonic/affective/psychological factors are emotional in nature.

Although the classification of customer experience into the above two broad dimensions supports the outcomes of Rose *et al.*'s (2012) systematic literature review which suggest that there is consensus around cognitive and emotional dimensions of OCE, this approach is limited in a number of ways. First, while customer experience has been noted to be a co-created value (see Verhoef *et al.*, 2009; Vargo & Lusch, 2008), this classification scheme fails to recognize the active role of the customer. Additionally, customer-to-customer interactions cues is what fosters the creation of social value in commercial relationships and the development of shared experiences (Edvardsson *et al.*, 2011) whilst co-creation experience is an interaction process in which the resulting value is influenced by the social environment (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). Yet, the polarization of customer experience into cognitive and emotional dimensions does not take the role of the social context into account. The most encompassing perspective of customer experience dimensions is hereafter discussed.

2.6.3 The multidimensional perspective

The third and perhaps the most elaborate conceptualization of OCE is the multidimensional approach. Complementarily, much work on customer experience dimensions is premised on the multidimensional view. Mathwick *et al.* (2001) developed an experiential value scale spanning four dimensions (aesthetics, playfulness, customer "return on investment" (CROI) and service excellence) in the context of Internet and shopping catalogue. Playfulness is determined by the shopper's volition to engage in the shopping activity due to the enjoyable and escapist pleasure that arises from it. It is argued that active volition is the distinguishing factor between playfulness and aesthetics because it elevates the shoppers from passive receptors of aesthetic appeals to active co-producers of value (Mathwick *et al.* 2001). CROI results from the shopper's active assessment of the resources (financial, psychological, temporal and behavioral) invested in the exchange and the benefits derived which are interpreted in terms of economic utility (e.g. affordability) and efficiency (e.g. convenience). Service excellence is reactive and relates to the customer's perception of the company's capacity to deliver the promised service to customer's satisfaction as well as the degree of professionalism displayed by the firm. Thus, it represents the benchmark upon which quality judgement subsists. To summarize, the playfulness and aesthetics dimensions are intrinsic while the service excellence and CROI dimensions as reflected in Mathwick *et al.*'s (2001) quadrant are extrinsic. Thus, Mathwick *et al.*'s (2001) model is an extended understanding of the utilitarian and hedonic experiences perspective because intrinsic value as employed here is hedonic while extrinsic value is utilitarian. Unlike other researchers (for e.g. Novak *et al.* 2003; Babin *et al.* 1994), Mathwick *et al.* (2001) recognize that all the dimensions are experiential. Additionally, Mathwick *et al.*'s (2001) value typologies recognize the co-creation role of customers. Thus, recent research (see Shobeiri *et al.*, 2015) added empirical validity to this body of work.

Similar but slightly different propositions abound in the literature (see Trevinal and Stenger, 2014; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). Most notably, Verhoef *et al.* (2009) proposed the determinants of customer experience which include four dimensions: cognitive, social, affective, and physical experience through a seasoned literature review. Verhoef *et al.*'s (2009) conceptualization not only emphasized the co-creation role of customers but also recognized the effect of customer-to-customer interactions and by implication, the elements within the control of firms and those outside their control. The only known shortfall with Verhoef *et al.*'s (2009) conceptual portrayal is that it was not empirically tested. Pine and Gilmore (1999) proposed four experiential realms – entertainment, educational, esthetic, and escapist experiences that lie in absorption-immersion and active-passive participation continuum, illustrating customers' degree of participation and environmental relationships with the staged experiential events. The four experiential realms comingle to form encounters that are unique and personal to the customer (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Customers passively absorb entertainment experiences through their senses; absorb and participate in creating educational experiences by actively engaging their mind and/or body; escapist experiences are memorable and actively involves the customer; esthetic experiences are immersing but customers play a passive role in its creation (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

The multidimensional view is also supported by practitioners. According to Berry *et al.* (2006), firms must design and compose three kinds of clues (i.e. functional, mechanic and humanic clues) if they seek to stay competitive. Functional clues are cognitive and embody the reliability and competence of the service while mechanic clues relate to the aspect of the experience that appeals to the consumers' senses. Unlike mechanic clues that are emitted by things, humanic clues are emitted by people but the boundary between the two clues is narrow because they are both emotional and accounts for the firm's commitment towards understanding and meeting the needs and wants of the customers (Berry *et al.*, 2002). Thus, Berry *et al.*'s (2002) approach perceive customers as detectives who are capable of processing and organizing service experience clues into a set of feelings. Meyer and Schwager (2007) used the term "customer corridor" to depict all the touchpoints that the customer experiences and extensively discussed how firms can monitor past, present and potential customer patterns in a closed-loop process. The views of practitioners not only support the holistic character of customer experience but also indicate that dimensions of customer experience are multidimensional as demonstrated in previous research (see Trevinal & Stenger, 2014; Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). In a critical analysis of literatures on customer experience dimensions, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) argued that the consensus in the literature supports the conceptualization of customer experience as a multidimensional construct comprising sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, social/relational dimensions. This reasoning is consistent with the five experiential modules (SENSE, THINK, FEEL, ACT and RELATE) proposed by Schmitt (1999) adopted in this thesis.

Author/ Year	Methodology	Dimensions of Customer Experience
Andersson and Mossberg (2004)	**Quantitative:** A Contingent Valuation Method was used to assess the monetary value of experience (i.e. willingness to pay) and the relative importance of dining experience dimensions. 310 customers of 14 restaurants in a Swedish city participated.	Food, service, fine cuisine, restaurant interior, good company and other customers were the dimensions of dining experience explored. Food and fine cuisine are important during launch while restaurant interior, service, other guests, and good company were more important to triggering customers' willingness to pay during evening dining.
Demangeot and Broderick (2006)	**Qualitative:** A combination of think-alouds and in-depth interview were employed to generate the requisite data. 19 post-graduate and doctoral students at a British Business School judgmentally recruited participated. The research context was an online bookstore.	The analysis produced four dimensions: context familiarity, product presence, visual impact and site-user understanding.
Han and Back (2007)	**Quantitative and adapted Richins' (1997) consumption Emotion Set:** 80 undergraduate students participated in a pilot study aimed at determining the appropriateness and reducing the length of the Consumption Emotion Set (CES) scale. A factor analysis of the pilot data produced nine emotion descriptors and 38 items. In the main study, a total of 450 graduate students at a Midwestern university conference participated. 248 responses were valid for final analysis. EFA was employed on the data generated from the lodging industry.	Seven emotional factors of lodging experience include: Peacefulness, upset, romantic love, shame, excitement, surprise, and worrisome. All except worrisome were key determinants of satisfaction. The reliability status of the seven factors were excellent.
Gentile *et al.* (2007)	**Mixed:** Research was carried out in two phases. First, analysis of secondary and direct interviews was conducted to understand the marketing strategies of organization. Second, a survey questionnaire was utilized to analyze the most relevant dimension of customer experience for each product. A non-random sample of nearly 200 units accounting for 2368 units were generated from an offline context involving well-known successful products. The data was factor analyzed.	Six dimensions of customer experience include sensorial, emotional, cognitive, pragmatic, lifestyle, and relational.
Jeong *et al.* (2009)	**Quantitative and adapted Pine and Gilmore's (1999) four experiential realms:** An experimental study was conducted in the context of online shop. The experiment involved students recruited from a large Midwestern university in the US. Out of 230 questionnaires administered, 196 were usable. A CFA through AMOS was conducted on the data.	The four experiential realms except educational experiences were positively and significantly related to consumer emotions.
Constantinides *et al.* (2010)	**Quantitative:** The subjects of the study were students recruited from two universities both from Spain and The Netherlands. Subjects completed an online survey after a virtual realistic shopping activities in a computer laboratory setting was stimulated. 204 undergraduate Spanish students and 85 undergraduate, PhD and postdoctoral students from The Netherlands participated. A binomial logistic regression analysis was conducted.	Usability, interactivity, trust, aesthetics, and marketing mix
Hsu and Tsou (2011)	**Quantitative and adapted Schmitt's (1999) experiential dimensions:** After an initial pre-test of the instrument with 10 Taiwanese undergraduate students who have blogging experience, an online survey of blog users produced 468 valid responses. PLS-SEM was employed.	The relationship between customer experience and purchase intention was significant and positive. Although the dimensions of customer experience were aggregated to form a composite construct, the authors included detailed measures for each of the five dimensions of experience
Klaus and Maklan (2011)	**Qualitative:** The longitudinal study utilized in-depth interviews following the soft laddering technique. 89 interviews were conducted in the sports tourism context in three streams during the adult camp week. The interviews were recorded with a portable recording device. Nvivo 8.0 facilitated the transcription and coding of the narratives.	Hedonic enjoyment, personal progression, surreal feelings, efficiency, and social interactions were the five dimensions of sports tourism customer experience that emerged from the study.

Rageh *et al.* (2013)	**Qualitative:** The netnography method was employed. 85 valid experiential reviews extracted from 889 customer reviews posted by Egyptian Luxurious Resort-Hotels' guests formed the final database.	Comfort, educational, hedonic, novelty, recognition, relational, safety, and beauty experiences
Trevinal and Stenger (2014)	**Qualitative:** The study was exploratory in nature. Four focus group interviews were conducted with a sample of 31 online shoppers drawn from France. Two focus group interviews were conducted with consumers within the age bracket of 31-63 while the remaining two focus group interviews had undergraduate students as its constituents. This helped to socially and culturally situate the online shoppers. Each of these focus group interviews were video recorded.	Online shopping experience is conceptualized as a construct comprising the physical (time distortion, time pressure, time management, aesthetics, and sensations and felling created by ergonomics), ideological (hedonic and utilitarian, political issues and trust), pragmatic (online patronage routines and tactics), and social dimensions (socialization, offline decision aids).
Shobeiri *et al.* (2015)	**Quantitative and adopted Mathwick *et al.*'s (2001) experiential value typologies:** Undergraduate and graduate students were conveniently recruited from a North-Eastern university to participate in an online survey. EFA and linear regression analysis were employed.	Except customer return on investment, other experiential values had a significant positive effect on site attitude.
Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015)	**Quantitative:** A mail survey was conducted. Out of the 3000 experienced users of travel websites recruited from Experian UK, 175 usable questionnaires were retrieved. CFA was conducted.	Authors drew on literature to propose six value dimensions: utilitarian value, emotional value, social value, perceived control and freedom, value for money, and user's cognitive effort. The analysis led to the merging of utilitarian value and perceived control

Table 2.4 Studies adopting the Multidimensional Perspective of Customer Experience

Table 2.4 captures previous studies that support the multidimensional view of customer experience and studies that adapted previous conceptualizations of the dimensions of customer experience. Quantitative studies that adapted previously validated dimensions of customer experience across contexts are few. Further, the dimensions of customer experience evolved through qualitative techniques fit into the exiting frameworks of customer experience dimensions. However, the validation of these framework across contexts is highly limited. This is not scholarly appealing because as Klaus (2015) notes, companies are insufficiently guided on how to incorporate these multiple dimensions into their customer experience management scheme of policies; thus, the role that certain attributes/dimensions of customer experience especially rational and emotional attributes play in influencing customer purchase decision in different contexts deserve to be illuminated to the benefit of practitioners. Complementarily, Schmitt and Zarantonello (2013) specifically stated that in addition to examining the effect of aggregate experience, it is also important to assess how individual elements of experience affect certain marketing outcome variables. To further this/these line of thought(s), Schmitt's (1999) experiential modules was adapted to the online shopping context. In the sub sections that follow, each of the experiential module and why it is important to be included as a dimension of OCE is discussed. The section concludes with a summary of the nature of OCE.

2.6.3.1 Sense module/sensory experience

The objective of sense marketing is to appeal to the senses by creating sensory experiences through the five senses of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell (Schmitt, 1999). Since the stimulation of sensory experiences affect the senses (Gentile *et al.*, 2007), it fulfils customers' need for estheticism (Xu & Chan, 2010), sensuality (Xu *et al.*, 2012) and more elaborately, arouses excitement, aesthetical pleasure, sense of beauty and satisfaction (Gentile *et al.*, 2007). The cyberspace offers rich avenues to routinize previous mundane consumption activities that were formerly physical and characterized by humdrum processes and hurried rush (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Within the online shopping context, two of the customer senses are relevant: sight and sound. Website characteristics such as web design appeal to the sense of sight while videos appeal to the senses of both sight and sound. Hsu and Tsou (2011) provided a supporting empirical evidence. Firms can exploit the power of sense tools such as aesthetics and excitement to achieve product and company differentiation, motivate customers and add value to products (Schmitt, 1999). Jeong *et al.* (2009) posit that aesthetic experience appealed most to consumers' emotions and as such, suggest its importance in designing a website for apparel products.

Sensory appeals are strategic and creates a lasting impression in the consumers' minds and as Schmitt (1999: 61) puts it: "the ideal sense approach provides an underlying concept that is clearly detectable but appears always fresh and new". The interactive features of websites which is widely recognized as an activator of telepresence (see Hoffman & Novak, 2009; Demangeot & Broderick, 2006; Novak *et al.*, 2000; Hoffman & Novak, 1996) is an essential driver of sensory appeal (Cho, 2011) and is shown to be influenced by the presence and behavior of other customers (Lehtinen & Lehtinen, 1991). Because interactive design features of websites are entertaining (Bilgihan *et al.*, 2015; Kim & Stoel, 2004; Childers *et al.*, 2001) and leads to enjoyable experience due to its immersing nature (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), it can also directly activate sensory experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Since enjoyable experiences are immersing due to its ability to act on the senses (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), it can trigger an escapist state. Thus, sensory experience is an important dimension of experience for online marketers especially for products that enhances the ability of online retailers to establish telepresence (Cho, 2011).

2.6.3.2 Feel module/emotional experience

Feel marketing appeals to the innermost feelings and emotions of customers, with the objective of creating affective experiences that range from slightly positive moods linked to a brand to strong emotions of joy and pride (Schmitt, 1999). Gentile *et al.* (2007) noted that emotional experience involves the customer's affective system which activates moods, feelings and emotions. Emotional experience aims at creating an affective relation with a company, and its products or services (Gentile *et al.*, 2007). Failure to deliver on emotional promises creates a huge credibility query in the minds of the customers who will likely feel that they have been deceived (Norton & Pine, 2009). Irrespective of how mundane a product or service is, the service encounter offers an opportunity for the organization to engage customers emotionally (Berry & Carbone, 2007). But feel will only work if the marketer comprehends the context-specific stimuli that can trigger emotions and the consumer's willingness to engage in perspective-taking and empathy due to cultural peculiarities (Schmitt, 1999).

Since, emotional experience activates moods, feelings and emotions; like sensory experience, fun-driven and entertaining features which make shopping events enjoyable can appeal to customers' emotional responses. This intertwinement reflects the holistic character of customer experience as noted by Verhoef *et al.* (2009) and Lemke *et al.* (2011). Kim and Forsythe (2008) stated that OCE can be enhanced through the entertainment value created by the interactive and customer involving features of virtual try-on. Since several evidences support shopping as an entertaining activity (e.g. Babin, *et al.*, 1994; Bellenger & Korgaonkar, 1980), many retailers continually seek new ways through which customers can be entertained (Jones, 1999) because entertainment possesses emotional appeals that result in positive outcomes such as increased time spent in the store, increased unplanned buying, and increased liking for the store (Sherman *et al.*, 1997; Babin *et al.*, 1994) and an important source of competitive advantage (Norton & Pine, 2009; Berry, 1996). Reiterating the importance of emotional experience, LaTour and Carbone (2014) argued that whilst consumers may not exactly recollect the experience they initially reported to remember, emotional experience clues are elements of experiences that consumers claimed stick in their memories.

Shopping experiences are entertaining when they are pleasurable and full of fun and can therefore be likened to leisure experiences which are characterized by intrinsic satisfaction, involvement and perceived freedom (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Drawing on yet another stream of online shopping research (see Huang, 2006; Shang *et al.*, 2005; Childers *et al.*, 2001; Davis *et al.*, 1992), an entertaining shopping activity is also an intrinsic motivator because it provides hedonic benefits. Thus, to say that online shoppers shop for its own sake (Novak *et al.*, 2003, Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) is to recognize that in many shopping occasions, customers are interested in purchasing fun and enjoyment (Jones, 1999; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Since a good deal of fun and enjoyment are derivable from shopping in a company's website (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015), fun and enjoyment are important emotional aspects in the context of online services as noted in previous research (see Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Excitement/enjoyment was also found as one of the six dimensions of consumption emotion set (Han & Back, 2007) whilst Xu and Chan (2010) define feel experience as consumers' discernments of fun and pleasure. Since failure to deliver on emotional promises results to negative consequences (Norton & Pine, 2009), emotional experience is therefore an important dimension of OCE.

2.6.3.3 Think module/cognitive experience

The objective of think marketing is to create cognitive and problem-solving experience that creatively engages the customers and appeals to their intellect (Schmitt, 1999). Xu and Chan (2010) noted that cognitive experience satisfies shoppers' desire to seek for opportunities that will broaden their knowledge and enable them to learn new things. It is therefore connected with thinking or conscious mental processes, in which case, the proposed market offering requires the consumers to utilize their creativity or engage in problem-solving (Gentile *et al.*, 2007). Through intrigue, surprise, and provocation, cognitive experience targets customers' convergent and divergent thoughts with the aim of emitting cognitive appeals (Schmitt, 1999).

According to Andersson and Mossberg (2004), cognitive drivers of experience only help consumers attain a comfort zone by acting to overcome negative hedonic tone. Thus, it focuses on getting functional jobs done for customers (Norton & Pine, 2009). Though cognitive experience is basic because of its mundane character, for being emphasized in several previous studies as a major dimension of customer experience (see Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013; Rose *et al.*, 2012; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009) suggests that it is an indispensable element of OCE. Even though consumers are increasingly recognized as emotional beings lately (see Rose *et al.*, 2012; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), at no time was the rational decision-making perspective expelled or even deemphasized. All that was added are fresh perspectives. The classical decision theory that perceives consumers as rational beings is still valid. In fact, recent research (e.g. Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015) found that e-value formation is fundamentally driven by cognitive effort whilst Smith and Sivakumar (2004) noted that cognitive appraisal leads to emotional response.

2.6.3.4 Act module/behavioral experience

Act marketing targets consumers' physical experiences and reveals alternative ways of doing things, alternative lifestyles and interactions with the objective of enriching consumers' lives (Schmitt, 1999). It therefore combines the pragmatic and lifestyle elements of customer experience proposed by Gentile *et al.* (2007). Gentile *et al.* (2007)

further argued that pragmatic experience is not exhausted by the concept of usability, but stresses the practical act of doing something while lifestyle experience results from the affirmation of a person's belief and system of values. According to Xu and Chan (2010), act experience reflects consumers' personal bonds with a company or its brand that assist them to cultivate individual actions and lifestyles. Behavioral change approaches that are rationally-oriented (for instance, theories of reasoned actions) are just one out of the canon of theories that lead to behavioral change; thus, services marketing scholars are increasingly recognizing that lifestyle changes and behaviors are driven more by motivational, inspirational, and emotional factors (Schmitt, 1999). According to Andersson and Mossberg (2004), the economic view of consumers as rational choice makers only captures how much and at what price that consumers consume but fails to have much of an answer to why consumers buy. Since the behavioral experience addresses this gap, it is therefore an important dimension of the overall OCE.

2.6.3.5 Relate module/relational experience

Consumer value is active if consumers are creators or co-creators of the experience and reactive if the object of consumption does something to consumers and their role in the experience creation is passive (Demangeot & Broderick, 2006). The interactive features of websites are assumed to account for consumers' active participation in experience creation (Shih, 1998) or co-creation (Demangeot & Broderick, 2006). These features help foster relational/social experience (Chahal & Dutta, 2014), inter-customer context (Kuppelwieser & Finsterwalder, 2011), other customers' influences (Grove & Fisk, 1997), social aspects of entertaining shopping experiences (Jones, 1999), social value experiences (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015; Sheth *et al.*, 1991), or what is widely described as customer-to-customer interactions experiences (Blasco-Arcas *et al.*, 2014; Srivastava & Kaul, 2014). Consistent with the theory of consumption values, social value is one of the values that consumers can experience (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). In this thesis, relational experience was employed to describe this dimension of OCE because it reflects the social context (Klaus, 2015) and aligns perfectly with the relational viewpoint emphasized in the service logic of marketing (Grönroos, 2008) and the S-D logic of marketing (Edvardsson *et al.*, 2011; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008) and has therefore proved a popular construct in online (see Chahal & Dutta, 2014; Kim *et al.*, 2013) and offline (see Chahal & Dutta, 2015; Rageh *et al.*, 2013; Gentile *et al.*,2007; Schmitt, 1999) customer experience literature. It is also similar to the assumptions of the social impact theory which holds that the mere presence of another person or group of persons can influence a person; with most studies that applied this theory focusing on the influence of social presence (Latané, 1981). Well-designed websites establish certain degree of social or relational shopping experience (Kim *et al.*, 2013). Thus, it is relational in nature. For creating avenues that allow social networks and interrelationships amongst customers to thrive, relate experiences stimulate a sense of belonging to the community and the society (Xu & Chan, 2010).

Customer experience literature referred to relational experiences as "social presence". Social presence is defined as ''the extent to which a medium allows users to experience others as being psychologically present'' (Gefen & Straub, 2003: 11). A more recent and broad conceptualization of social presence was provided by Hwang and Park (2007) who defined it from the perspective of the computer-mediated-communications environments as a sense of "being together" with another in the same location and time, and it comprises three dimensions: sense of self-presence, sense of co-presence, and sense of identification. Once a virtual identification is established, a sense of social presence and group interactions in the activity system are facilitated (Gerhard *et al.*, 2004) because the social cues it provides is vital for enhancing social ties among members of the virtual community (Koh & Kim, 2003-2004). Self-presence is augmented by a sense of copresence which involves the feeling that another person somewhere is present in the community (Heeter, 1992). Hwang and Park's (2007) conceptualization of social presence is consistent with the concept of relational experience as described by Gentile *et al.* (2007) because both concepts are dominantly governed by social cues.

By introducing social cues as an element of physical environment, Baker (1987 in Brocato *et al.*, 2012) is acknowledged as the proponent of the roles of other customers in a service environment. Lehtinen and Lehtinen (1991) argued that the influence of other customers' presence and behaviors in an individual customer's experience may far outweigh the influence of service personnel. This might be why literature supports the view that recruiting the right kind of customers is seen to be as important as recruiting the right personnel (Brocato *et al.*, 2012). When the views of customers are similar, customer-to-customer interactions become more meaningful and encouraged (Brocato *et al.*, 2012) whilst customers will be more susceptible to participate in service production (Silpakit &

Fisk in Brocato *et al.*, 2012). Thus, social benefit is a key competitive differentiator (Norton & Pine, 2009) because it resonates from relational experience.

Relational marketing contains elements of sense, feel, think and act marketing but it goes further to emphasize customer-to-customer interactions and acts to relate consumers to a broader social system (Schmitt, 1999). Gentile *et al.* (2007) identified three relational elements: absent or superficial, connected to collecting practices and profound experiences. Klaus (2013: 450) stated that relational experience "is important for marketers because it indicates the strong influence of other online members in the customer's decision process". Relational experience should be well managed because it is an external uncontrollable element of customer experience. Thus, firms must pay attention to social network sites and other websites that cater to the needs of customers. In the online context, relational experience can be elicited by social cues/clues like photographs, speech, texts, personalized greetings, human audios and human videos, and consumer reviews. However, the influence of relational experiences is inconsistent across a range of previous studies reviewed. For instance, Gentile *et al.* (2007) found that the values associated with the relational dimension of customer experience were low and did not reveal any sensible variation across the product classes tested. Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015) conceptualized relational experience as social value and demonstrated that social value experiences do not contribute to overall e-value. The thesis of this research furthers this ongoing research stream by examining the relative importance of the dimensions of customer experience on perceived credibility of negative experience reviews.

2.6.4 Summary of the multidimensional perspective of customer experience

As customers think, sense, feel, act, and relate with website features (Schmitt, 1999), they directly participate in service creation and consequently co-create service experiences (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). These aspects of customer experience are consistent with the doctrine of 'unity in diversity' because they are difficult to disassemble and strictly interwoven. This reasoning contrasts Sheth *et al.*'s (1991: 12) view that the dimensions of value are independent and "relate additively and contribute incrementally to choice". As already discerned from the discussion of the individual dimensions of OCE, most of the dimensions of customer experience are activated by same website features. For instance, customers feel a sense of pleasure or joy when their experiences constitute a sensory appeal (Andersson & Mossberg, 2004). Sweeney and Soutar (2001) argued that emotional and cognitive response can stem from the single act of purchasing an attractive carpet. Additionally, interactive features of websites activate sensory appeal, emotions, relational experiences, and behavioral changes.

However, although it is vital to examine customer experience holistically through aggregate measures, examining specific dimensions of OCE is vital because certain elements of experience are more influential than others (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013) in certain contexts. According to Norton and Pine (2009), while cognitive attributes get functional jobs done for the customers and help them attain a comfort zone, it is emotional and social jobs done for customers that attract competitive advantage. Similarly, Adhikari (2015) found that subjective attributes are more influential than objective attributes. Piyathasanan *et al.* (2014-2015) found that perceptions of economic value contribute more to real-world loyalty than perceptions of social value, but in the virtual world, reverse evidence was detected in which perceptions of social value contribute more to loyalty in the virtual world than perceptions of economic value. In the hypotheses development section, this discussion was expanded and specific hypotheses to this end were formulated. But in the section that immediately follows, how each of the adopted dimension of OCE was measured in previous research was discussed to build a strong theoretical base for how each of these dimensions are operationalized in this study.

2.7 Measurement of Online Customer Experience (OCE)

The importance of customer experience measurement is widely noted by academics and practitioners. According to Klaus (2015), only what get measured gets managed. To improve experience, some elusive variables need to be manipulated and customer experience can only be optimized if its dimensions are linked to specific business outcomes (Wyner, 2003). Additionally, it is extremely important to factor contingent measures of customer experience (e.g. presence of other customers in the environment) into the measurement of customer experience because of the context-specific nature of the construct (Wyner, 2003). Unfortunately, 45% of leading-edge companies “find tying customer experience investments to business outcomes very difficult” (Harvard Business Review, 2014). Maklan and Klaus (2011) noted that scholars and practitioners are less unified on the measure of customer experience due to the dominance of the quality mantra which is limited to assess organizations' offerings. Measuring OCE in a comprehensive, yet, parsimonious way has therefore become important.

Although measures of customer experience were developed and validated within the context of tourism (see for instance Hosany *et al.*, 2015), studies that developed and validated either customer value or customer experience scale within the retailing context were selected because this study is situated in the e-retailing context. Table 2.5 captures notable customer value and customer experience scales. Table 2.5 indicates that literature originally focused on developing measures of perceived value while more recent scales developed and validated measures of customer experience. In exception of terminology differences, both perceived value and customer experience scales are similar in terms of dimensions and to some extent, the measures. For instance, online aesthetics and online hedonic elements identified by Garg *et al.* (2014) is similar to playfulness and aesthetics dimensions of value (Mathwick *et al.*, 2001), emotional value (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) and hedonic value (Babin *et al.*, 1994) and the idea that customers can shop for its own sake (Holbrook, 1994 in Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Garg *et al.*'s (2014) functional elements of customer experience also aligns perfectly with utilitarian value (Babin *et al.*, 1994), quality/performance value (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001) and service excellence (Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Additionally, Brocato *et al.*'s (2012) OCP scale and presence of other customers and customer interaction identified by Garg *et al.* (2014) are consistent with the social value construct (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001).

Author	Context	Initial Construct(s)	Initial Constructs vs the Five Experiential Modules	Method	Results
Babin *et al.* (1994)	Regional shopping malls	Hedonic value and utilitarian value	Since literature supports the view that hedonic value is an embodiment of pleasure/enjoyment, excitement, captivation, escapism, and spontaneity (see Nambisan & Watt, 2011; Babin *et al.*, 1994), it encapsulates sensory and emotional experience. Utilitarian experience aligns with cognitive experience because according to Sheth *et al.* (1991 in Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015), it is same as functional or cognitive value which results when a task is effectively fulfilled whilst Childers *et al.* (2001) relates it to timely and efficient service delivery.	Acclaimed process of scale development was followed. Stage 1 data collection involved 125 undergraduate students at a Midwestern university. Stage 2 data collection yielded 404 valid responses. EFA, CFA, and ANOVA were conducted.	A 15-item personal value scale (PSV) emerged under two dimensions. The corresponding validated measures for each dimension is as follows: hedonic value= 11; and utilitarian value= 4.
Sweeney and Soutar (2001)	Australian Retail store context	Quality/performance, price/value for money, social value and emotional value	Quality and price are tested as sub-factors of functional value. They align with cognitive experience. Social value aligns with relational experience while emotional value aligns with emotional experience.	Acclaimed process of scale development was followed. Stage 1 data collection involved third year or postgraduate students from three Australian universities. 273 students participated in the first stream while 130 participated in the retest. Stage 2 data collection yielded 303 valid responses. Stage 3 of data collection yielded a total valid sample of 636. EFA and CFA, and stepwise regression were conducted.	A 19-item PERVAL scale emerged under four dimensions. The corresponding validated measures of each dimension are: Quality – 6; Emotional value – 5; Price – 4; Social value – 4.
Mathwick *et al.* (2001)	The Internet and catalogue retailing shopping contexts	Playfulness, aesthetics, customer return on investment, and service excellence	For containing intrinsic enjoyment and escapism, playfulness aligns neatly with emotional experience; aesthetics is a type of sensory experience because it appeals to the sense of sight; for comprising economic value and efficiency, customer return on investment aligns perfectly with cognitive experience and to a little extent with behavioral experience; and service excellence aligns with Gentile *et al.*'s (2007) pragmatic experience and more broadly with cognitive experience.	Acclaimed process of scale development was followed. The catalogue and Internet shoppers' contexts surveys respectively yielded 302 and 213 valid questionnaires. A CFA was used to complete the analysis of scale's validity and reliability and hierarchical structural test.	An experiential value scale (EVS) comprising 19-item measures emerged. The EVS reflects the benefits that shoppers derive from their perception of playfulness (intrinsic enjoyment and escapism are higher order factors), aesthetics (visual appeal and entertainment are higher order factors), customer return on investment (economic value and efficiency are higher order factors), and service excellence. Validated measures of each constructs are as follows: Intrinsic enjoyment – 2; Escapism – 3; Visual appeal – 3; Entertainment – 3; Economic value – 3; Efficiency – 3; Service excellence – 2

Brocato *et al.* (2012)	The OCP scale was validated in a retail clothing context.	Similarity, physical appearance, and suitable behavior	Other customer perception (OCP) as conceptualized and measured in this research align perfectly with the relational element of experience. Thus, the three dimensions of OCP are elements of relational experience.	Acclaimed process of scale development was followed. Four studies were conducted. 275, 224, 339, and 88 valid responses were respectively utilized for the four studies. EFA and CFA were conducted.	An 'Other Customer Perception' (OCP) scale comprising 13-item measures under three dimensions emerged. Validated measures of each constructs are as follows: Similarity – 5; Physical appearance – 4; Suitable behavior – 4.
Bagdare and Jain (2013)	Customers of retail stores in India	Joy, mood, leisure, and distinctive	Joy (fun and pleasure are entertaining elements of joy of shopping), mood (related to feelings), and leisure (associated with symbolic value, entertaining and delightful experiences) are elements of emotional experience. Distinctive is unclassified because authors failed to present a clear definition of the concept. But from the measures used, it also relates to emotional experience.	Acclaimed process of scale development was followed. The first sample involved 150 retail customers. The second study involved 676 valid responses obtained from customers to retail stores. EFA and CFA were conducted.	A 12-item retail customer experience scale emerged under four (4) dimensions. The corresponding validated measures of each dimension are: Joy – 3; Mood – 3; Leisure – 3; Distinctive – 3.
Klaus *et al.* (2013)	The retail banking context in Italy	Brand experience, service (provider) experience, and post-purchase experience	The way these three dimensions of customer experience was operationalized indicate that they are elements of cognitive experience.	Acclaimed process of scale development was followed. 346 valid cases generated from online survey posted to a randomized sample of retail bank customers. EFA and CFA were conducted.	A 12-item customer experience quality (EXQ) scale emerged under three (3) dimensions. The corresponding validated measures of each dimension is as follows: Brand experience – 4; Service (provider) experience – 5; Post purchase experience – 3.
Garg *et al.* (2014)	Retail banking sector in India	Servicescape, core service, customization, value addition, convenience, marketing mix, employees, speed, service process, customer interaction, presence of other customers, online aesthetics, online hedonic elements, online functional elements	Online functional elements, speed, convenience, core service, and customization are elements of cognitive experience. Value addition, online aesthetics, and online hedonic elements are elements of emotional experience and sensory experience. Service process, employees, and marketing mix partially reflect behavioral experience while servicescape partially emotional experience and relational experience. Presence of other customers and customer interaction are elements of relational experience	Acclaimed process of scale development was followed. A valid sample of 203 doctoral and postgraduate students were used for scale refinement. 624 bank customers were used for further scale refinement. Finally, a valid sample of 348 bank customers were used for scale validation. EFA, CFA, and ANOVA were conducted.	A 41-item retail banking experiences scale emerged under fourteen (14) dimensions. The corresponding validated measures of each dimension are: Convenience – 3; Servicescape – 3; Employees – 3; Online functional elements – 3; Presence of other customer – 3; Online aesthetics – 4; Customization – 3; Value addition – 3; Speed – 3; Core service – 3; Marketing mix – 3; Service process – 3; Online hedonic elements – 2; Customer interaction – 2.
Chahal and Dutta (2015)	Indian retail banking sector	Sensory, cognitive, behavioral, affective and relational	These dimensions are same with those adapted in this thesis because it was adopted from Schmitt (1999).	Acclaimed process of scale development was followed. 180 valid questionnaires emerged from a systematic random sample generated from four selected localities in Jammu city. EFA and CFA was conducted.	A 17-item customer experience scale emerged under three dimensions. The corresponding validated measures of each dimension is as follows: Core Experience (CAB i.e. cognitive, affective and behavioral) – 11; relational experience – 4; sensory experience – 2.

Table 2.5 Previous Value and Customer Experience Scales

However, most of the previous customer experience scales are limited in several respects. First, most of the acclaimed multidimensional measures of customer experience are at best unidimensional. For instance, Klaus *et al.*'s (2013) acclaimed multidimensional scale of customer experience is at best unidimensional because the three dimensions of experience uncovered are dominantly cognitive. Additionally, the major weakness of Bagdare and Jain's (2013) scale is that although it appeared multi-dimensional on the surface as the authors claim, it is unidimensional because it solely measured emotional experience. Emotional experience is just an aspect of a whole range of elements that make up customer experience. Additionally, although peace of mind (see Maklan & Klaus, 2011) is emotional in nature, some of its measures (e.g. convenience, process ease, familiarity) are cognitive in nature. This not only creates confound in the measures, it also suggests that the measure is dominantly cognitive and consequently unidimensional. Admittedly also, Brocato *et al.*'s (2012) scale is comprehensive and parsimonious, but in the context of customer experience, it is unidimensional as it covers only the relational dimension of customer experience.

Additionally, the customer experience scales captured in Table 2.5 are also fraught with definitional issues. For instance, Garg *et al.* (2014) generated several overlapping dimensions of retail customer experience that confounds the determinants of customer experience and its dimensions; thus, creating definitional issues. Yet, others found confounding results by arguing that affective, emotional and behavioral experiences are one dimension of customer experience (see Chahal & Dutta, 2015) despite several studies alluding to the reasoning that these concepts are distinct but related dimensions of customer experience (see Verhoef *et al.*, 2009; Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Schmitt, 1999).

Overall however, save for Mathwick *et al.* (2001), all the value and customer experience scales captured in Table 2.5 were developed and validated within the context of offline retail stores and may likely prevent rigorous application within the online context. Although it was argued that the dimensions of customer experience are applicable in both online and offline contexts elsewhere in this thesis, since features that characterize offline and online contexts differ, same measures may not apply. Even Mathwick *et al.*'s (2001) experiential value scale is not applicable for our purpose in this thesis because a great deal of difference exists between the uncovered dimensions of value and the dimensions of OCE adopted for this thesis. Summarily, given that most previous value and customer experience scales were developed and validated in offline retail contexts, rigorous application of these measures in the online retailing context may not be without limitations. Thus, measurement of OCE should be rethought.

2.8 Rethinking the Measurement of Online Customer Experience (OCE)

Various measures of the five dimensions of OCE adopted for this thesis (see section 2.6.3) abound in the literature. Table 2.6 captures the terminologies employed to describe the dimensions of OCE, number of measures used to capture the construct and the sources of the adopted/adapted measures. Although effort was made to succinctly delineate the measured dimensions of OCE into the dimensions of OCE adopted in this thesis, the classification scheme captured in Table 2.6 are not clear-cut as some are overlapping. For instance, perceived ease of use (see Cyr *et al.*, 2007; Shang *et al.*, 2005; Childers *et al.*, 2001) is both cognitive and behavioral in nature. Hedonic value is also broadly used to capture both sensory and emotional experiences (see Overby & Lee, 2006) whilst aesthetics activate sensory appeals and emotions. This might not be disassociated from the holistic nature of customer experience which causes some of its dimensions to stem from similar motivations. Additionally, dimensions of OCE were measured with multiple indicators. The reviewed studies were solely quantitative and employed experimental and survey design techniques because similar technique was utilized in this thesis. Whilst customer experience has been conceptualized and measured in a wide range of retail contexts, this section is restricted to the online retailing context for two reasons. First, the thesis has the contextualization of online retailing at its epicenter. So, for the sake of simplicity and apt focus, the reviewed studies were limited to the online retailing context. Second, measures of the adopted dimensions of OCE can be better gleaned from previous researches with similar aims or at least developed by drawing on similar previous studies. Additionally, the constructs of flow experience were excluded because of the chronicle of issues associated with its operationalization (see section 2.6.1).

Dimensions of Online Customer Experience	**Author(s)**	**Terminology Used**	**Measures and Design**	**Sources of Measures**
Sensory experience	Wu *et al.* (2008)	Color	This was a manipulated variable. Experiment.	Not applicable
	Wu *et al.* (2008)	Music	This was a manipulated variable. Experiment.	Not applicable
	Constantinides *et al.* (2010)	Aesthetics	4 scale items. Survey.	Source not stated
	O'Brien (2010)	Aesthetics	5 scale items. Online survey.	O'Brien and Toms (2010)
	Hsu and Tsou (2011)	Sense	3 scale items. Survey.	Schmitt (1999a, 1999b)
Emotional experience	Childers *et al.* (2001)	Intrinsic enjoyment	4 scale items. Experiment.	Davis (1989)
	Shang *et al.* (2005)	Cognitive absorption	14 scale items. Survey.	Agarwal and Karahanna (2000)
	Overby and Lee (2006)	Hedonic value	4 scale items. Survey.	Babin and Darden (1995); Catalog Coalition (1993); Hirschman (1986); Maddox (1982); Unger and Kernan (1983); Zeithaml (1988)
	Cyr *et al.* (2007)	Perceived enjoyment	4 scale items. Experiment.	Hassanein and Head (2006)
	Song *et al.* (2007)	Shopping enjoyment	6 scale items. Experiment.	McQuarrie and Munson (1986)
	Davis *et al.* (2008)	Pleasure	3 scale items. Experiment.	Mehrabian and Russell (1974)
	Davis *et al.* (2008)	Arousal	6 scale items. Experiment.	Mehrabian and Russell (1974)
	Kim and Forsythe (2008)	Perceived entertainment value of Virtual Try-on (Perceived enjoyment)	Authors didn't specify the number of items used. Survey.	Davis *et al.* (1992)
	Wu *et al.* (2008)	Pleasure	6 scale items. Experiment.	Mehrabian and Russell (1974)
	Wu *et al.* (2008)	Arousal	6 scale items. Experiment.	Mehrabian and Russell (1974)
	Close and Kukar-Kinney (2010)	Entertainment purpose	4 scale items. Online survey.	Two pilot studies.
	Lee *et al.* (2010)	Affective experience (shopping enjoyment)	6 scale items. Experiment.	Childers *et al.* (2001).
	Chang (2011)	Shopping pleasure	3 scale items. Experiment.	Van der Heijden (2004)
	Hsu and Tsou (2011)	Feel	3 scale items. Survey.	Schmitt (1999a, 1999b)
	Nambisan and Watt (2011)	Hedonic experience	11 scale items. Survey.	Voss *et al.* (2003); Mathwick *et al.* (2001)
	Rose *et al.* (2012)	Affective experience	8 scale items. Online survey.	Havlena and Holbrook (1986); Novak *et al.* (2000)
	Kim *et al.* (2013)	Shopping enjoyment	4 scale items. Experiment.	Zhu *et al.* (2006)
	Lim (2014)	Hedonic online shopping experience	3 scale items. Survey.	Babin *et al.* (1994); Bridges and Florsheim (2008); Gupta and Kim (2009); Jones *et al.* (2006)
	Mosteller *et al.* (2014)	Positive affect	2 scale items. Experiment.	Source not stated.
	Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015)	Emotional value	4 scale items. Survey.	Agarwal and Karahanna (2000)
	Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015)	Perceived control and freedom	4 scale items. Survey.	Kleijnen *et al.* (2007)
Cognitive experience	Childers *et al.* (2001)	Perceived usefulness	3 scale items. Experiment.	Davis (1989)
	Childers *et al.* (2001)	Perceived ease-of-use	3 scale items. Experiment.	Davis (1989)

	Nysveen and Pedersen (2004)	Perceived usefulness	6 scale items. Experiment.	Davis (1989)
	Nysveen and Pedersen (2004)	Perceived ease of use	6 scale items. Experiment.	Davis (1989)
	Shang *et al.* (2005)	Perceived usefulness	6 scale items. Survey.	Davis (1989)
	Shang *et al.* (2005)	Perceived ease of use	12 scale items. Survey.	Davis (1989)
	Overby and Lee (2006)	Utilitarian value	4 scale items. Survey.	Babin and Darden (1995); Catalog Coalition (1993); Hirschman (1986); Maddox (1982); Unger and Kernan (1983); Zeithaml (1988)
	Cyr *et al.* (2007)	Perceived ease of use	5 scale items. Experiment.	Hassanein and Head (2006)
	Cyr *et al.* (2007)	Perceived usefulness	4 scale items. Experiment.	Hassanein and Head (2006)
	Kim and Forsythe (2008)	Perceived usefulness of Virtual Try-on	Authors didn't specify the number of items used. Survey.	Davis (1989)
	Kim and Forsythe (2008)	Perceived ease of use of Virtual Try-on	Authors didn't specify the number of items used. Survey.	Davis (1989)
	Constantinides *et al.* (2010)	Usability	7 scale items. Survey.	Source not stated
	Lee *et al.* (2010)	Cognitive experience (perceived risk)	3 scale items. Experiment.	McQuarrie and Munson (1986)
	O'Brien (2010)	Perceived usability	7 scale items. Online survey.	O'Brien and Toms (2010)
	Yoon (2010)	Ease of use	3 scale items. Survey.	Yoon and Kim (2009)
	Yoon (2010)	Transaction speed	3 scale items. Survey.	Aladwani and Palvia (2002); Yoon and Kim (2009)
	Yoon (2010)	Design	3 scale items. Survey.	Aladwani and Palvia (2002); Yoon and Kim (2009)
	Yoon (2010)	Information content	4 scale items. Survey.	Aladwani and Palvia (2002); Yoon and Kim (2009)
	Chang (2011)	Ease of navigation	4 scale items. Experiment.	Van der Heijden (2004)
	Chang (2011)	Perceived product variety	2 scale items. Experiment.	Pilot study
	Hsu and Tsou (2011)	Think	3 scale items. Survey.	Schmitt (1999a, 1999b)
	Nambisan and Watt (2011)	Usability experience	6 scale items were used to measure this construct but 3 items were dropped after EFA. Survey.	Brooke (1996); Tullis and Stetson (2004); Chin *et al.* (1988); Lewis (1995)
	Rose *et al.* (2012)	Cognitive experience	1 scale item. Online survey.	Novak *et al.* (2000)
	Jai *et al.* (2013)	Perceived risk	2 scale items. Experiment.	Pan and Zinkhan (2006)
	Lim (2014)	Utilitarian online shopping experience	3 scale items. Survey.	Babin *et al.* (1994); Bridges and Florsheim (2008); Gupta and Kim (2009); Jones *et al.* (2006)
	Mosteller *et al.* (2014)	Cognitive effort	3 scale items. Experiment.	Hong *et al.* (2004)
	Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015)	Utilitarian value	5 scale items. Survey.	Sigala (2006)
	Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015)	User's cognitive effort	4 scale items. Survey.	Meuter *et al.* (2005) and Kleijnen *et al.* (2007).
	Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015)	Value for money	3 scale items. Survey.	Sigala (2006)
	Visinescu *et al.* (2015)	Perceived usefulness	3 scale items. Online survey.	Agarwal and Karahanna (2000); Davis (1989)
	Visinescu *et al.* (2015)	Perceived ease of use	3 scale items. Online survey.	Agarwal and Karahanna (2000); Davis (1989)
Behavioral experience	Hsu and Tsou (2011)	Act	3 scale items. Survey.	Schmitt (1999a, 1999b)
	Nambisan and Watt (2011)	Pragmatic experience	7 scale items. Survey.	Voss *et al.* (2003); Mathwick *et al.* (2001)

Relational experience	Shang *et al.* (2005)	Fashion involvement	5 scale items. Survey.	McIntyre and Miller (1992)
	Cyr *et al.* (2007)	Perceived social presence	5 scale items. Experiment.	Gefen and Straub (2003)
	Lee and Park (2009)	Subjective norm	Authors didn't specify the number of items used. Survey.	Fishbein and Azjen (1975)
	Hsu and Tsou (2011)	Relate	3 scale items. Survey.	Schmitt (1999a, 1999b)
	Nambisan and Watt (2011)	Social experience	5 scale items. Survey.	(Gunawardena (1995); Tu (2002); Preece (2000).
	Kim *et al.* (2013)	Co-presence	6 scale items. Experiment.	Biocca *et al.* (2001)
	Blasco-Arcas *et al.* (2014)	Customer to customer interactions	4 scale items. Experiment.	Chakraborty *et al.* (2002); Liu (2003); McMillan and Hwang (2002)
	Blasco-Arcas *et al.* (2014)	Coproduction	6 scale items. Experiment.	Auh *et al.* (2007); Chan *et al.* (2010)
	Zhang *et al.* (2014)	Social support	7 scale items. Online survey.	Liang *et al.* (2011)
	Zhang *et al.* (2014)	Social presence	5 scale items. Online survey.	Qiu and Benbasat (2005); Animesh *et al.* (2011)
	Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015)	Social value	3 scale items. Survey.	Pura (2005); Sigala (2006)

Table 2.6 Online Customer Experience Attributes/Dimensions Investigated by Previous Researchers

Table 2.6 apparently indicates several issues with existing measures. First, one general trend uncovered in the literature is that apart from the reason related to the application of the adapted scale by previous studies, marketing scholars failed to state other real reasons for adapting scales used in previous studies. This is problematic given that Churchill (1979) argued that researchers must be onerous or thorough in delineating what is included in the definition of a construct and what is excluded. In some studies, the sources of the used measures were not stated (see Mosteller *et al.*, 2014; Constantinides *et al.*, 2010) whilst other studies adopted/adapted measures of a specified construct from multiple sources without clearly specifying which measures were adapted/adopted from which source(s) nor the real reasons responsible for such adoption/adaptation (see Lim, 2014; Nambisan Watt, 2011; Overby & Lee, 2006). Worst still, most measures did not emerge from rigorously validated scales. One possible explanation for this may be non-existence of such scales within the online retailing context. Finally, in numerous studies (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015 is a notable exception), the employed measures were not based on in-depth conceptual and operational definitions of the measured construct. All these shortfalls point towards lack of uniformity in the measurement of customer experience as noted by Klaus (2015) and Maklan and Klaus (2011). Although the shortfalls highlighted above suggest the development and validation of a comprehensive and theoretically parsimonious measures of online customer experience (OCE) within the retailing context, scale development is outside the scope of this research. In proposing how OCE is measured in this thesis however, credence is lent to these shortfalls as possible inefficiencies to avoid. After all, a wise man learns from other people's mistakes (Klaus, 2015). The sub-sections below begin laying the theoretical background for how measures of OCE is operationalized in this study.

2.8.1 Sensory experience

As has been noted in section 2.6.3.2, sensory and emotional experience stem from similar motivations especially hedonism. Thus, similar theoretical underpinnings can inform the development of measures of both construct. The construct has been variously described with terms such as hedonic value (Overby & Lee, 2006), visual appeal features (Mathwick *et al.* (2001) and more suitably as entertaining and aesthetic features (Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Sensory experience therefore relates to aesthetic environment (Chahal & Dutta, 2015). In the context of retailing, the visual elements of the retail environment and the entertaining facets of the service performance defines consumers' aesthetic responses (Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Mathwick *et al.* (2001) further argued that visual appeal and entertainment are the two higher order measures of aesthetics. Whereas, visual appeals are activated by the design, beauty and physical attractiveness of the retailing environment, entertaining features reflect the dramatic elements of the hedonic shopping task that appeal to the consumer's senses. Since aesthetic features are entertaining and triggers escapist state (Overby & Lee, 2006) while also offering pleasure for its own sake (Mathwick *et al.*, 2001), any website feature that stimulate the consumer's senses emits aesthetic appeal and is therefore an element of sensory experience. Thus, aesthetic features (Constantinides *et al.*, 2010; O'Brien, 2010) include color and music (Wu *et al.*, 2008), photographs and videos (Hsu & Tsou, 2011) (see Table 2.6). Mathwick *et al.* (2001) argued that in the online retailing context, this dimension is influenced by a combination of color, graphic layout, and photographic quality.

Drawing on the foregoing, sensory experience can be operationally defined as "a component of the Customer Experience whose stimulation affects the senses" (Gentile *et al.*, 2007: 398). Within the online blog context, Hsu and Tsou (2011: 512) more elaborately defined sensory experiences as "appealing to the senses with the objective of creating sensory experiences through sights and sounds, such as photographs or video". Thus, measures of sensory OCE must evaluate how the senses of sight and sound are stimulated by aesthetic features of websites especially photographs and videos. In chapter six, measures of sensory experience were drawn based on Hsu and Tsou's (2011) definition and Schmitt's (1999) and Ding and Tseng's (2015) works.

2.8.2 Emotional experience

Across online shopping experience literature, the two similar facets to characterizing emotional experience is that it results when the online shopper freely engages in a shopping activity which similarly connote that shopping is viewed as an entertaining activity which consumers enjoy engaging in. These two similar perspectives respectively correspond to the perceived control and freedom that characterize shopping (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015) and the idea that consumers shop for its own sake (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) because shopping is an enjoyable activity (Childers *et al.*, 2001; Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). When the shopper is reacting to all the nuances of the shopping experience rather than the simple act of purchase, he/she responds to intrinsic enjoyment (Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Intrinsic enjoyment has been perceived as the extent to which a shopping activity is enjoyable (Kim & Forsythe, 2008). Emotional experience is mostly described with attributes like shopping enjoyment (see Cyr *et al.*, 2007; Song *et al.*, 2007; Childers *et al.*, 2001), hedonic value (Lim, 2014; Overby & Lee, 2006), pleasure and arousal (Chang, 2011;Wu *et al.*, 2008; Davis *et al.*, 2008), and less frequently with emotional value (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015; Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), shopping entertainment (Close & Kukar-Kinney, 2010; Kim & Forsythe, 2008), affective experience (Mosteller *et al.*, 2014; Rose *et al.*, 2012), feel experience (Hsu & Tsou, 2011), perceived control and freedom (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015) (see Table 2.6).

The foregoing generally reflects shopping as an enjoyable activity. Since consumers shop out of their own volition, shopping can therefore be likened to a leisure activity that is pleasurable for its own sake. The leisure-oriented character of shopping implies that it can offer an escape. Overby and Lee (2006) therefore stated that emotional experience is evaluated by ascertaining consumers' overall judgment of benefits and sacrifices such as entertainment and escapism. While "escapism comes from engaging in activities that are absorbing, to the point of offering an escape from the demands of the mundane world" (Song *et al.*, 2007: 555), shopping entertainment/enjoyment symbolizes shopping hedonism (Childers *et al.*, 2001). Thus, the former is narrower in scope than the latter. According to Song *et al.* (2007), previous research shows that escapism, pleasure and arousal are dimensions of shopping enjoyment. Additionally, since shoppers shop for its own sake as noted earlier, shopping can also be likened to a fun-seeking activity. The fun and enjoyment that characterize shopping are elements of the affective system which appeal to consumers' innermost feelings. This thinking informed our operational definition of emotional experience.

Sweeney and Soutar (2001) defined emotional experience as the feelings or affective states that resonates from a product. Mathwick *et al.* (2001) similarly indicated that emotional experience is the resulting affective state such as fun and enjoyment produced by a product or service. Drawing on these two works, the following operational definitions of emotional experience are adopted in this study:

> *Emotional experience* refers to "a component of the Customer Experience which involves one's affective system through the generation of moods, feelings, [and] emotions" (Gentile *et al.*, 2007: 398). In the online blog context, Hsu and Tsou (2011: 512) defined emotional experience as "appealing to consumers' inner feelings and emotions with the objective of creating affective experiences that include positive moods linked to blog participation".

Measures of emotional experience (see chapter six) are based on the above operational definition and the works of Hsu and Tsou (2011) and Schmitt (1999).

2.8.3 Cognitive experience

The cognitive dimension of OCE has been variously conceptualized and operationalized as task instrumentality (Childers *et al.*, 2001; Babin *et al.*,1994; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness rooted in the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), utilitarian value (Overby & Lee, 2006), extrinsic value (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), functional value (Sweneey & Soutar, 2001), usability (Constantinides *et al.*, 2010), ease of navigation (Chang, 2011), cognitive effort (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015; Mosteller *et al.*, 2014), value for money (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015), think experience (Hsu & Tsou, 2011) and so on (see Table 2.6). These numerous measures generally reflect the classical decision theoretical view of consumers as rational choice makers which Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) contrasted with the experiential perspective. However, they can be defused into two major measurement perspectives. The first perspective is the operationalization of cognitive experience as the simplicity with which a given task can be completed. Perceived ease of use, cognitive effort, ease of navigation, and usability experience belong to this family of measurement. According to Davis (1989: 320), perceived ease of use is "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort". Cognitive effort is also described as the complexity associated with using a given website. These definitions reflect the antithesis of complexity.

The second measurement perspective reflects the utility derived from completing a shopping task. Utilitarian, functional and extrinsic value, perceived usefulness, shopping instrumentality, value for money and so on belong to this measurement category. These terms are obviously related and can be used interchangeably. For instance, Childers *et al.* (2001) argued that perceived usefulness of the interactive media is a source of shopping instrumentality which is more utilitarian in nature. Utilitarian value assesses functional benefits and sacrifices (Overby & Lee, 2006) and has therefore been considered an active source of extrinsic value in online shopping (Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Utilitarian value is same as functional or even cognitive value which results when a task is effectively fulfilled (Sheth *et al.*, 1991 in Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015); it strongly relates to timely and efficient service delivery (Childers *et al.*, 2001). It also relates closely to the concept of perceived usefulness rooted in the Technology Acceptance Model (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015). In the retailing context, extrinsic value resonates from shopping tips that are utilitarian in nature (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Mathwick *et al.*'s (2001) portrayal of customer return on investment and service excellence as dimensions of experiential value is also consistent with this perspective. Mathwick *et al.* (2001) described customer return on investment as the returns which the investment of financial, behavioral, temporal, and psychological resources yields while service excellence reflects the marketing entity's ability to serve customers and is therefore the benchmark upon which the assessment of quality is formed. Thus, cognitive dimension of OCE from this measurement viewpoint is utilitarian in nature and includes facets such as value for money, timeliness, convenience, functionality, perceived usefulness and so on.

Summarily, measures of cognitive experience must reflect the above two measurement perspectives. However, it should be noted that the two measurement perspectives reflect consumers' thinking and conscious mental effort as opposed to hedonic orientation. Thus, consumers shop because they want to buy rather than buy because they want to shop. This distinction is important because cognitive experience is more attributed to mundane activities and is therefore consistently captured in all value typologies (see Overby & Lee, 2006; Mathwick *et al.*, 2001; Babin *et al.*, 1994). With conscious mental effort at the center of cognitive experience, the following operational definition of the construct was adopted:

> *Cognitive experience* can be defined as "a component of the Customer Experience connected with thinking or conscious mental processes" (Gentile *et al.*, 2007: 398).

This definition and the works of Hsu and Tsou (2011) and Schmitt (1999) informed the measures of cognitive experience employed in this study (see chapter six).

2.8.4 Behavioral experience

Table 2.6 shows that act (Hsu & Tsou, 2011) and pragmatic experience (Nambisan & Watt, 2011) are the two constructs that formed the basis for measuring behavioral experience. As noted in section 2.8, most measures of cognitive experience are behavioral in nature. For instance, while perceived ease of use is a cognitive experience, it is also behavioral in nature because it relates to the very act of using a system. Pragmatic experience resounds from the very act of doing something and thus, relates very strongly to usability (Nambisan & Watt, 2011; Gentile *et al.*, 2007) and goal-directed behavior (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). This usability cuts across the entire lifecycle of the product that is being used (Gentile *et al.*, 2007). Behavioral experience is also strongly related to the concept of lifestyle and arises when the consumer affirms a system of values and beliefs by adopting a lifestyle and behaviors (Gentile *et al.*, 2007). It occurs when the use of a product results in the consumer associating him/herself with the firm or brand values (Gentile *et al.*, 2007). Thus, measures of behavioral experience must reflect changes in consumers' lifestyles and behaviors arising from the very act of using a product or a system. Thus, behavioral experience is operationally defined as:

> "Enriching individuals' lives by targeting their physical experiences, showing them alternative ways of changing lifestyles and interactions" (Hsu & Tsou, 2011: 512).

The operationalization of behavioral experience (see chapter six) is informed by the above definition and the work of Hsu and Tsou (2011).

2.8.5 Relational experience

Relational experience has been widely operationalized. Table 2.6 indicates that some of the terms employed include involvement (Shang *et al.*, 2005), perceived social presence (Cyr *et al.*, 2007), subjective norm (Lee & Park, 2009), social experience (Nambisan & Watt (2011), customer-to-customer interactions (Blasco-Arcas *et al.*, 2014), social presence (Zhang *et al.*, 2014), social value (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015), relate experience (Hsu & Tsou, 2011) and so on. While it might be tempting to use these terms interchangeably and adopt similar measures, such rendition might amount to the evolvement of problematic measures because some are more encompassing than others in terms of dimensionality. For instance, while social presence only captures the extent to which a customer recognizes the presence of other shoppers (Kim *et al.*, 2013), social value has been argued to resonate from sociability and esteem (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015) whilst subjective norm reflects the perception of pressures exacted on an individual customer by other customers in his/her journey to purchase (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980 in Lee & Park, 2009). Additionally, since social support accomplishes the social needs of customers and motivate them to interact with one another (Zhang *et al.*, 2014), it is also an aspect of relational experience.

However, relational experience is more than the simple act of customers merely interacting with each other. It is also broader than the pressures that other customers exact in an individual customer's shopping experience because such pressures are mere reflection of other customers' opinions. It also cannot be equated with the mere recognition of the presence of other customers in a shopping interface even though Garg *et al.* (2014) contended that presence of other customers in a service setting offers a social milieu to the customer. Although it relates strongly to the concepts of sociability and esteem, measures limited to these two constructs cannot be adjudged comprehensive. To illuminate the dimensionality of relational experience, Brocato *et al.*'s (2012) scale is worthy of note. Brocato *et al.* (2012) developed an "other customer perception" (OCP) scale comprising three dimensions: similarity, physical appearance, and suitable behavior. Similarity reflect the extent to which shoppers using the same shopping interface share similar identity; physical appearance relates to the look of other customers in a service environment; and suitable behavior reflects the extent to which a customer using the same service environment behave aptly. This scale even though developed and validated within an offline shopping context holds a lot of promise for constructing a relational experience scale that can be applied in the online retailing context because it is similar to Hwang and Park's (2007) operationalization of social presence in the computer-mediated environment as comprising sense of self-presence, sense of co-presence, and sense of identification.

The Internet encourages a community of customers who act to influence the purchase decision of one another. For instance, companies like Kodak, General Motors, Amazon, 7-11, Ikea and so on are adequately exploiting the power of blogs to generate customer feedbacks which can form a powerful means of creating superb customer experiences (Hsu & Tsou, 2011). A general view of the measures of relational experience is that it comprises a customer's relationships with self and other customers within a broader social system. To this end, the following operational definition of relational experience was adopted:

> *Relational experience* is the "component of the Customer Experience that involves the person and, beyond, his/her social context, his/her relationship with other people or also with his/her ideal self" (Gentile *et al.*, 2007: 398).

The measures of relational experience captured in chapter six were gleaned from the above definition and the works of Hsu and Tsou (2011) and Gentile *et al.* (2007).

2.9 Summary

In this chapter, a comprehensive overview of the customer experience literature and online customer experience (OCE) literature was provided. First, a working definition of OCE was developed through an in-depth review of the previous definitions/descriptions of OCE. It was also possible to differentiate customer experience from its associated concepts and postulate a conceptual framework to this end. The review not only pointed out that OCE is multidimensional in nature but also provided the need for further research to investigate the effects of the five dimensions of OCE because of its context-specific nature. Since extant measures of the dimensions of OCE were flawed in several respects, remedial steps to avoid mistakes of previous measures were provided. Overall and more importantly, an in-depth review of the antecedents and perspectives of OCE indicated that little is known about multichannel customer experience; thus, gaps were pointed out to this end. In the next chapter, the gap identified in this chapter is consolidated whilst the thesis of multichannel customer experience is furthered by reviewing literature pertaining to how information credibility should be conceptualized and measured.

CHAPTER THREE

INFORMATION CREDIBILITY: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT

3.0 Introduction

In chapter two, two key issues were addressed. They include i) a general overview of the concept of online customer experience (OCE) which paved way to trace the origin of the concept and develop a working definition of OCE, differentiate OCE from its associated concepts, and explore its antecedents and perspectives; and ii) review literature on the measurement of OCE. Together with chapter two, this chapter sets the conceptual background for the realization of objectives one and two while also providing an initial enlightening theoretical background for the realization of objectives three and four. First, a theoretical background for the understanding of perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) is set by i) reviewing literatures on the meaning of information credibility; ii) discussing social media as a source of relationship building and information credibility; iii) enacting the difference between marketer-generated contents and consumer-generated on the one hand, and the difference between positive and negative information on the other hand; and iv) differentiating online consumer reviews from eWOM. Second, an insightful understanding of how PCoNERs should be operationalized is created by integrating the information science literature and the psychology and communication research stream.

3.1 Information Credibility: Definition

Tseng and Fogg (1999 in Qui *et al.*, 2012) defined credibility as the extent to which a piece of information is believed to be valid and true. In the credibility literature, one must be careful not to confuse two things: a) credibility of the message itself; and b) credibility of the message source. While the first perspective belongs to the information science literature, the second perspective (i.e. message source credibility) belongs to the psychology and communication research stream (Metzger & Flanagin, 2013). Our goal here is to integrate the two research streams. Thus, information credibility as used in this chapter and the entire thesis reflects both the credibility of the message in question and the message source credibility. This position is taken because definitions of credibility from both perspectives are very similar. While Sternthal *et al.* (1978 in Luo *et al.*, 2013) defined source credibility as information reader's assessment of the trustworthiness and expertise of a message source, Metzger *et al.* (2003 in Li & Suh, 2015) similarly defined message credibility as the believability of the message itself arising from its accuracy or quality. Thus, when a message assumes the characteristics of a human being, it can also be likened to source credibility. Additionally, from the perspective of elaboration likelihood model (ELM), message credibility and source credibility are dimensions of information credibility (Metzger *et al.*, 2003 in Li & Suh, 2015). Finally, from a more neutral stance, Baek *et al.* (2012) conceptualized information credibility as review helpfulness and described it as the degree to which a consumer considers a review helpful in their purchase decision making. With the foregoing in mind, the role of social media in building consumer-firm relationship and information credibility was thereafter reviewed.

3.2 Meaning of Social Media and its Place in Relationship Building and Information Credibility

Ladhari and Michaud (2015: 37) defined social media as "all the Internet platforms which provide users with tools for a multitude of social interaction. These interactions allow for collaborative content creation and sharing and easier exchange of information on various topics of interest, experiences, products and services". The above definition suits our purpose because of its specificity about consumers collaboratively sharing their experiences with companies' products and services in this platform. Thus, every platform through which consumers collaboratively share their product and services experiences is under the purview of social media. Social media therefore comprises a wide range of platforms through which online information can be shared such as "social networking sites (SNSs) (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, and Friendster), creativity works-sharing sites (e.g. YouTube and Flickr), collaborative websites (e.g. Wikipedia) and microblogging sites (e.g. Twitter)" (Mangold & Faulds 2009 in Chu & Kim, 2011: 48).

But of all the social media platforms, SNSs has by far attracted the most attention from academics, practitioners, educators and policy makers probably because with SNSs, consumers can connect with one another and share information, thoughts and opinions on goods and services (Chu & Kim, 2011) whilst the level of self-disclosure and social presence is reportedly high within the SNSs platforms (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media have made access to information much easier (Head, 2007) and it is also reshaping the ways that firms interact and relate with customers (Kim *et al.*, 2015; Tiago *et al.*, 2015). Mangold and Faulds (2009) argued that social media has been recognized as one of the integrated marketing communication tools that firms can use to foster strong customer-firm relationships. Additionally, customers' perception of trust online is a product of social relationships generated through social media (Pan & Chiou, 2011).

To provide compelling online experiences, firms need to continuously and tactically engage the customers. Social media has emerged as the most popular media through which firms behaviorally engage customers and create enduring relationships (Gummerus *et al.*, 2012) despite the initial underestimation of its potential (Woisetschlager *et al.*, 2008). Thus, it appears that Hagel and Armstrong (1997) were quite farsighted when they argued that virtual communities are the Internet Centers that possess the greatest profit potential because it drives information exchange and fosters relationships among consumers about products and services. The nature of consumer-firm relationships has been redefined by the emergence of social media as consumers now share their previous experiences with the company and its brand in this highly viral and powerful medium (Tiago *et al.*, 2015).

Although social media's role in information dissemination is well noted in previous research, Wathen and Burkell (2002) argued that the need to filter information based on some credibility criteria is becoming indispensable because of information overload which implies that consumers are exposed to more information than they can possibly process. The magnitude of consumers' reviews published online has triggered information overload which makes the reliability assessment of online reviews much more difficult for consumers (Baek *et al.*, 2012). Thus, several ways through which the credibility of information especially consumer reviews posted in social media can be determined has been suggested. When reviews are many, the content of each review becomes a relatively more consistent way of assessing the quality of the review (Min & Park, 2012). Kim and Lee (2015) argued that consumers increase the reliability of information provided by other consumers by averaging multiple opinions and discounting outlying information. Similarly, since numerous studies show that the proportion of other customers' opinion can act as the benchmark for purchase decision-making especially as product riskiness increases by each additional increase in negative online opinion/review (Zhu & Zhang, 2010; Lee *et al.*, 2008), assessing the valence of consumer reviews is one of the key ways of screening consumer reviews in the social media. In a more comprehensive proposal, Tiago *et al*. (2015) identified three broad metrics for profiling consumers' reviews: quantity, valence, and attribute. Considering the foregoing, it can be argued that consumers has a way of assessing the credibility of information posted on the social media.

Since consumers out of their own volition, create and share brand-related information on social networks where friends, relatives and other acquaintances are also visible, SNSs is therefore an ultimate vehicle for eWOM (Vollmer & Precourt, 2008). There is need for marketing academics to explore how brands can be influenced by contents generated in social network sites (Hoffman & Novak, 2009). In this thesis, the focal SNS is Facebook. The choice of Facebook is based on the reasoning provided by Ladhari and Michaud (2015) that Facebook offers wide opportunities in terms of page creation, opinion posting or opinion evaluation, popularity and inclusion of Web 2.0 features that facilitate more collaboration and information sharing among users. Additionally, given that Facebook forms a network of friends, comments generated in this platform is often more credible than those generated in other platforms (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015). Chu and Kim (2011) stated that SNS users can help their social connections with product-related information when they share product information and purchase experiences.

3.3 Marketer Versus Consumer-Generated Content/Information

There tends to be a general agreement amongst scholars that consumers perceive information from fellow consumers more credible than information provided by marketers. Mackay and Lowrey (2011) established that non-journalist blog was perceived more credible than journalist blog and online newspaper by media consumers. Information presented in online forums may be perceived more credible than marketer-generated information because the authors of the former are co-consumers who are assessed as not having any vested intention to manipulate the reader (Bickart & Schindler, 2001). Park *et al*. (2007) pointed out three broad differences between product information provided by sellers and consumer reviews. First, since sellers emphasize product strengths and hide product weaknesses while consumers present a balanced view of these two sides of every product from the user point of view, consumer-generated information is perceived to be more credible than seller generated product information. Second, consumer-generated content is more consumer-oriented than seller-generated product information. Finally, consumer information is created in a standard format, but consumer-generated comment is not because it can be a subjective information consisting of emotional expressions or an objective information like marketer-generated contents.

Apart from message source, the role which the communication medium plays have been emphasized. Accordingly, Karakaya and Barnes (2010: 449) stated that "customer reviews on a company website may not be credible as the ones in a social network site such as Facebook because the company has the option of being selective on what is posted on their sites". Research also shows that the information generated through social media platforms are more credible, trustworthy, unbiased and reliable than information generated by sources under firms' control (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015). Liang and Corkindale (2016) demonstrated that eWOM is more influential than price advertised by marketers. Summarily, consumer-generated information/contents have become prominent. According to Litvin *et al.* (2008), the faceless online reviewers are increasingly becoming opinion leaders of online communities of hospitality and tourists' firms; thus, negative reviews posted by customers in online communities can negatively affect the company's image. The medium through which these contents are generated and the nature of the influence of the generated information should therefore be subjected to more scrutiny especially as Wathen and Burkell (2002) noted that consumers are exposed to more information than they can usefully process whilst Ladhari and Michaud (2015) argued that social media – the main source of consumer-generated contents – is very likely to become the future of consumer eWOM.

3.4 Positive Versus Negative Information

The information processing perspective visualizes consumers as rational decision makers whose choices are influenced by rational judgement of the consumption phenomena (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), but evidences suggest that the nature of this effect is a function of the nature and framing of the available information. Consistent with the information-seeking process, negative feelings correlate with uncertainty (Litman, 2010 in Fang, 2014). Since Berry and Parasuraman (1991 in Kim *et al.*, 2015) argued that negative reviews are pointers to service failure or customer dissatisfactions; it can be counteractively argued that positive reviews are pointers to customer satisfaction. Thus, while negative information trigger negative outcomes, positive information should induce the opposite effect. Accordingly, Ladhari and Michaud (2015) argued that positive WOM enhances purchase likelihood while negative WOM creates the opposite effect. Generally, literature supports the view that negative information is more diagnostic than positive information. Theoretical grounding of this submission is elaborated in section 5.1.5.

3.5 eWOM Versus Online Consumer Reviews: Any Difference?

To understand the point(s) of distinction between eWOM and online consumer reviews, it is pertinent to first, consider the meaning of eWOM. According to Boo and Kim (2013: 28), "eWOM is defined as positive or negative statements made about a product or service that are widely available via the Internet". But a more experiential definition of eWOM maintains that eWOM is "all informal communications directed at consumers through Internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers" (Litvin *et al.*, 2008: 461). A cursory look at the above definitions reveals several features that characterize eWOM. They include i) it is a consumer-generated content about products and services; ii) it is experiential because it can report consumer's previous positive or negative experiences with products and services; and iii) it is posted in an Internet platform. Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004) touch upon each of the above facets and further noted that virtually every category of customer can be involved in eWOM. Ideally, their definition of eWOM is more encompassing than any of the above definitions of eWOM. Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004: 39) defined eWOM as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet". These communications are found in chat rooms, online communities, social media, blogs, newsgroups, Internet forums and so on.

Drawing on the meaning of eWOM and previous research (see Kim *et al.*, 2015; Baek *et al.*, 2012; Jalilvand *et al.*, 2011), it can be argued that consumer reviews are a component of eWOM. This reasoning is supported by Lee *et al.* (2008) who argued that online consumer reviews are a form of eWOM. Since literature (see Chu & Kim, 2011) identified three classes of eWOM: opinion-seeking, opinion-giving, and opinion-passing whereas Tiago *et al.* (2015) included a fourth component called opinion content while Jalilvand *et al.* (2011) stated that online consumer review is a type of eWOM that involves positive or negative remarks that consumers make about products and services; online consumer reviews belongs more tightly to the opinion content category and more loosely to the opinion-giving category. Online consumer reviews are helpful for purchase decision making because it provides other consumers with indirect product experiences (Park *et al.*, 2007). The differences between eWOM and online consumer reviews notwithstanding, Ladhari and Michaud's (2015) approach and Zhu and Zhang's (2010) reasoning that online consumer reviews are a good proxy for overall WOM were adopted. The two constructs were therefore used interchangeably.

Online consumer reviews have indisputably become an area of online consumer behavior that deserve to be monitored and managed because Kim *et al.* (2015); Baek *et al.* (2012); and Zhu and Zhang (2010) noted that it is a relevant influencer of consumers' purchase decision making. Thus, it is becoming mandatory that firms should respond to online reviews especially negatively framed ones because it can damage a firm's reputation when ignored (Kim *et al.*, 2015). Min and Park (2012) argued that online consumer reviews are influential because they represent typical expressions of opinions or even emotions about products which makes it a true reflection of existing customers' previous experiences. Consumers may prefer to use online reviews to make purchase decisions rather than information provided by sellers because the former is a replica of indirect product experiences (Baek *et al.*, 2012; Park & Lee, 2008). Since Kim *et al.* (2015) argued that limited research examined the influence of online reviews on firms' performance, examining the influence of perceived credibility of negative experience reviews on relationship quality is an insightful way of advancing the extant literature.

3.6 Online Consumer Reviews as a Source of Indirect Negative Experience

Negative experience reviews are unfavorable consumer experiences vented by customers who want to discourage other customers from purchasing a product (Mauri & Minazzi, 2013). Thus, negative online reviews are driven by product or service failures encountered in the form of negative experiences. Within the context of online retailing, sources of negative information include negative reviews posted in a company's virtual community site or social media. Consumers exposed to negative reviews of a product can assess such product as a poor-quality product (Lee *et al.*, 2008). Generally, negatively framed messages are touted to be more effective than positively framed messages in conditions where consumer decision-making is driven by message content (Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990).

The foregoing notwithstanding, Kim and Lee (2015) argued that little is known about how consumers process and integrate multiple online reviews. Research on online consumer reviews focus mainly on the effects of review quantity and quality (e.g. Lee *et al.*, 2008), review helpfulness/information credibility and factors that drive it (Baek *et al.*, 2012), and the importance that consumers place on negative reviews and how they shape purchase intention (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). Whereas, Hoffman and Novak (2009) argued that consumers, especially younger ones are more likely to rely on "collective wisdom" to make purchase decisions especially if the reputation of eWOM generators within a social network is trustworthy; to date, virtually nothing is known about how multichannel experiences correlate. Specifically, no study has explored how customers' website experiences affect their perception of other customers' experiential reviews on the social media (e.g. Facebook). This study will explore this evident gap by drawing on the schema theory to formulate and test unique hypotheses.

3.7 Measurement of Perceived Credibility of Negative Experience Reviews (PCoNERs)

Credibility as a construct has been variedly measured in the literature. Extant evidence shows that the construct has multidimensional attributes. Luo *et al.* (2013) differentiated between recommendation source credibility and recommendation credibility. Flanagin and Metzger (2003) identified and measured three facets of credibility including the credibility of website sponsor, message credibility, and source credibility. Li and Suh (2015) identified medium credibility and message credibility and tested these two broad constructs as determinants of information credibility. Similarly, Moran and Muzellec (2014) distinguished source credibility and message credibility as two separate dimensions of credibility with sub-dimensions and consequently conceptualized the two constructs as antecedents of eWOM credibility. Reichelt *et al.* (2014) identified expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity as the three dimensions of eWOM credibility. Other more complex polarizations abound (see Fang, 2014; Cheung *et al.*, 2009). However, from a broader viewpoint, research on psychology and communication focused on message source credibility while the information science literature focused on information credibility which reflects information believability rather than credibility of the message source (Metzger & Flanagin, 2013). The latter view is based on the reasoning that credibility is not a characteristic embedded in a source, but an evaluation made by users themselves (Johnson & Kaye, 2009) while the former view takes the opposite perspective. However, it is too early to take sides because despite the apparent appeal of both views, none is sacrosanct since the perspective adopted is a function of the context. Cheung *et al.* (2009) argued that some attributes of the source can be difficult to evaluate in the computer-mediated communication environment that is dominated by the exchange of textual messages. A comprehensive account of previous measures is therefore needed to appropriately situate the measures of credibility to be adapted in this research.

In the literature, direct measures of PCoNERs do not exist. But related measures abound. One of the most prominent of such related measures is measures of source credibility. Another is measures of information credibility. In this section, the psychology, the communication, and the information science literature were integrated to develop measures of PCoNERs through exploring previous measures of source credibility and information credibility. Operationally, information credibility is defined as the extent to which an information is believable (Li & Suh, 2015). In contrast, source credibility has been variously defined. For instance, Berlo *et al.* (1969 in Ohanian, 1990) defined source credibility as comprising dimensions such as qualification, safety, and dynamism. McCroskey (1966 in Ohanian, 1990) identified other dimensions of source credibility to include authoritativeness and character while Kelman and Hovland (1953 in Klebba & Unger, 1983) argued that the three most identified dimensions of source credibility in the literature include trustworthiness, expertise and likability. Typical measures of both source credibility and information credibility appears to have similar indicators, but the perspectives are what differ. Ohanian (1990) developed a scale that measures three aspects of celebrity endorser (i.e. perceived expertise, perceived trustworthiness, and perceived attractiveness). While Ohanian's (1990) article appears remarkable, it was published prior to the era when the Internet became a key driver of business transactions. Our aim in this section therefore, is to review measures of credibility that post-date 1990 to see if it differs from older measures. By integrating the two views pointed out early, effort is made to lay a strong theoretical background for appropriate measures of PCoNERs.

Table 3.1 summarizes these two research streams. The studies captured in the table were contextualized within the computer-mediated communication environment. As is apparent from the table, although some measures emerged from a combination of sources that predates and postdates 1990 (see Johnson & Kaye, 2009; Flanagin & Metzger, 2003), majority emerged from sources that postdate 1990 (see for instance Reichelt *et al.*, 2014; Fang, 2014; Luo *et al.*, 2013; Qiu *et al.*, 2012). This supports Cheung *et al.*'s (2009) reasoning that the nature of the computer-mediated communication environment will make some attributes of credibility in the real world (e.g. attractiveness) difficult to evaluate in the online environment. Thus, Ohanian's (1990) scale may not be suited for the online context. Apart from trustworthiness, and expertise that scantily appeared in the studies captured in Table 3.1, perceived attractiveness was not included in the measures of credibility that postdate 1990. The rationale behind this might not be disassociated from the reasoning that the computer-mediated communication environment is dominated by the exchange of textual communications (Cheung *et al.*, 2009).

As shown in Table 3.1, trustworthiness, credibility, reliability, factual, accuracy, believability, and reputation are the key indicators that run through most previous measures of both source credibility and information credibility. Factual and accuracy are synonymous and can be used interchangeably. Reliability, believability and credibility are also synonymous and can be used interchangeably. Thus, credible/reliable, accuracy, and trustworthy should be selected as key indicators of PCoNERs. Three key reasons account for this decision. First, since PCoNERs as used in this study focuses on both review source and review frequency, its operationalization should be consistent with the psychology and communication and the information science perspectives. Metzger and Flanagin (2013) argued that the determinants of credibility online may stem from the assessor's evaluations of the information source, the message itself, or a combination of both. Thus, typical measures should not only reflect the credibility of the source, but should also capture the credibility invoked by the nature and frequency of the message itself. Since the selected measurement indicators reflect these two perspectives, they can be declared appropriate. Secondly, in previous measures of eWOM credibility (see Fang, 2014; Luo *et al.*, 2013; Qiu *et al.*, 2012; Cheung *et al.*, 2009), these three indicators were captured. Finally, the above three indicators appear in some form in all the categorizations captured in Table 3.1.

Author(s)	**Context**	**Dimensions Measured**	**Number of Items**	**Source(s) of Measures/Scale Type**
Flanagin and Metzger (2003)	Internet usage	Website sponsor credibility with credibility, integrity, reputation, and trustworthiness as measurement pointers	5 items	Not stated/7-point scale
		Message credibility with believability, accuracy, trustworthiness, bias and information completeness as measurement pointers	5 items	Austin and Dong (1994); Carter and Greenberg (1965); Flanagin and Metzger (2000); Gaziano (1988); Rimmer and Weaver (1987); West (1994)/7-point scale
		Source credibility with trustworthiness, believability, reliability, authoritativeness, honesty, and biasness as measurement pointers	6 items	Berlo *et al.* (1970); Leathers (1992); McCroskey (1966); McCroskey and Jenson (1975)/7-pointscale
Freeman and Spyridakis (2004)	Online health information site	Article credibility with accurate, biased, credible, expert, and trustworthy as measurement pointers	5 items	Not specified
		Author credibility with accurate, biased, credible, expert, and trustworthy as measurement pointers	5 items	Not specified
Johnson and Kaye (2009)	Five components of the Internet (i.e. issue oriented sites, online candidate sites, blogs, electronic lists/bulletin boards, chat room/instant messaging	Credibility of online sources with believability, fairness, accuracy, and depth of information as measurement pointers	Not specified	Gaziano and McGrath (1986); Johnson and Kaye (2000, 2002, 2004)
Cheung *et al.* (2009)	Online discussion forum	Source credibility with reputable and trustworthy as measurement pointers	4 items	Not specified
		Perceived eWOM review credibility with factual, accurate, and credible as measurement pointers	3 items	Not specified
Qiu *et al.* (2012)	Online review website	Perceived review credibility with trustworthiness, reliability, and credibility as measurement pointers	3 items	Cheung *et al.* (2009)/bipolar scale format
Luo *et al.* (2013)	Online consumer discussion forum	Recommendation source credibility with reputation, trustworthiness and reliability as measurement pointers	5 Items	Zhang and Watts (2003)/Likert type format
		Credibility of online comments with believable, factual, credible, and trustworthy as measurement pointers	4 items	Smith and Vogt (1995)/Likert type format

Fang (2014)	Facebook	Source expertise with knowledgeable, expert, experience, and capable as measurement pointers	4 items	McCroskey *et al.* (2006)/7-point Likert type scale
		Perceived credibility of eWOM reviews with factual, accurate, and credible as measurement pointers	3 items	Cheung *et al.* (2009)/7-point Likert type scale
Reichelt *et al.* (2014)	Online users	Expertise with knowledge and experience as measurement pointers	4 items	Feick and Higie (1992)
		Trustworthiness with trustworthy, honesty, dependable, and sincerity as measurement pointers	4 items	Feick and Higie (1992)
		Similarity	3 items	Feick and Higie (1992)
Li and Suh (2015)	Facebook	Medium credibility comprising three sub-factors: i) medium dependency, ii) interactivity, and ii) medium transparency	Medium dependency – 6 items; Interactivity – 4 items; Medium transparency – 3 items	Medium dependency (Ball-Rokeach, 1998; Patwardhan & Ramaprasad, 2005) Interactivity (Scoble & Israel, 2006); Medium transparency (Butler, 1991; Gabarro, 1978; Mishra, 1996)
		Message credibility comprising two sub-factors: i) argument strength; and ii) information quality	Argument strength – 4 items; Information quality – 4 items	Argument strength (Petty & Morris, 1983); Information quality (Kahn *et al.*, 2002)
		Information credibility with believable, factual, credible, and trustworthy as key measurement pointers	4 items	Mackay and Lowrey (2011)

Table 3.1 Previous Measures of Credibility

Additionally, since some studies employed reverse-coded items (see Freeman & Spyridakis, 2004; Flanagin & Metzger, 2003), bias was included as a reverse-coded indicator of PCoNERs. In an investigation of perceived credibility of information obtained from the Internet, Flanagin and Metzger (2000) stated that the most consistent dimensions of media credibility include believability, accuracy, trustworthiness, bias, and completeness of information. Thus, bias is a good indicator of PCoNERs. Summarily, the indicators of PCoNERs employed in this study are consistent with Freeman and Spyridakis (2004) who pointed out accurate, biased, credible, expert, and trustworthy as the measurement indicators of both message and source credibility. ‘Expert’ was excluded because it is inconsistent with the aim of this study and difficult to evaluate in the context of social media. Thus, as reported in chapter six, the adapted measures of PCoNERs reflect the above four aspects.

3.8 Summary

This chapter continued the discussion of the necessity for further research on multichannel customer experience by establishing through literature, the need for the influence of online consumer reviews to be further examined. The chapter presented a comprehensive theoretical portrayal of PCoNERs through an in-depth review of the credibility of eWOM literature. The chapter concluded by giving directions on the measurement pointers of PCoNERs through a rigorous integration of the information science literature and the psychology and communication research stream. The next chapter completes the stage setting for the realization of objectives three and four through a comprehensive overview of how relationship quality should be conceptualized and measured.

CHAPTER FOUR

RELATIONSHIP QUALITY: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT

1.0 Introduction

This chapter completes the context setting for the realization of objectives three and four that began in the previous chapter. In the previous chapter, a case for further examination of the influence of online consumer reviews was made through an in-depth review of the information credibility literature. This chapter furthers that thesis by reviewing literatures on the concept of relationship quality and its dimensions. The review starts with a detailed explanation of the concept of relationships and relationship quality and concludes with theoretical basis for how relationship quality should be operationalized.

4.1 The Concept of Relationships

Relationships is diverse in nature. According to Moliner *et al.* (2007a), within the industrial business context alone, relationships can take different forms including informal cooperation, joint ventures, management contracts, or alliances. Dwyer *et al.* (1987: 11) succinctly stated that, “ongoing buyer-seller relationships take many different forms”. Relationship quality (RQ) has also been identified as one of the four forms of quality that customers encounter (Gummesson, 1987 in Naudé & Buttle, 2000). The conceptualization of relationships also spans such themes as the nature of repeated episodes between individuals and personal bonds that arise when interactions between two or more individuals are interdependent in nature and characterized by emotional intimacy (Blocker *et al.*, 2012). Liljander and Strandvik (1995 in Wong & Sohal, 2002) therefore described relationship as a fundamental characteristic of business dealings created through series of episodes which makes it untenable for a relationship to exist without at least a minimum of two encounters between the parties involved. From the marketing viewpoint, Morgan and Hunt (1994) concisely defined relationships as series of transactions characterized by mutually shared relationships. Thus, firms that wish to build their businesses around existing customers or attract and keep promising potential customers must look beyond single transactions, and instead, foster mutual beneficial relationships with customers.

Since relationships have become an indispensable aspect of business transactions, it is necessary to point out how it should be evolved and maintained. According to Barnes

(1997 in Wong & Sohal, 2002), the only time a relationship can be said to exist is when the involved parties are mutually aware that a relationship of special status exists. Thus, the beginning of relationship evolution is when mutual consent between the relating parties is present. Mutual consent is important because not all customers of a firm wants close relationships with the firm (Shekhar & Gupta, 2008) whilst the relationship orientation of customers vary (De Canniere *et al.*, 2010). Mende *et al.* (2013) similarly argued that whereas most firms clamor to establish customer-firm relationships, not all the customers possess the tendency to build close commercial relationships with firms. More specifically, some customers are averse to the relationship-building efforts of organizations (Godfrey *et al.*, 2011 in Mende *et al.*, 2013). Thus, firms should allocate resources to customers who are responsive to relationships (Palmatier, 2008 in Mende *et al.*, 2013), and resources allocation must focus on profitable customers (Mende *et al.*, 2013). Mutual bond can only set in when the ongoing interactions between the customer and the firm is satisfactory to both parties (Izogo, 2016c). Mende *et al.* (2013) illustrated how attachment styles can be utilized to predict customers' tendency to engage in a close relationship with firms. Dwyer *et al.* (1987) proposed five phases through which relationships evolve to include awareness, exploration, expansion, commitment and dissolution. This 5-step relationship development process is more applicable in business-to-business context where mutual reciprocity and more formalized contractual arrangements are predominant. Its application in the context of business-to-consumer may therefore be limited.

Grönroos (1990) submitted that three chronological interrelated steps characterize customer relationship formation and implementation: 1) using promises to trigger relationships, 2) sustaining an already initiated relationship through promise fulfillment and, 3) enhancing existing relationships through making new promises based on formerly fulfilled promises. While Grönroos' (1990) steps are relevant in the business-to-consumer context especially managing relationships across customer touchpoints, one of the most cited frameworks of relationship formation and enhancement was developed by Beatty *et al.* (1996) in the context of retailing (see Figure 4.1). As Figure 4.1 indicates, the customer orientation of top management and employees and customers' crave to maintain close relationship with the firm are the factors that drive relationship formation. The above factors in turn, drive the formation of relationship that is fostered through augmented personal service and team work. Thereafter, long-term relationship is enhanced through trust, friendship and service functionality. The end results of this entire process are a mutually beneficial customer-firm relationship.

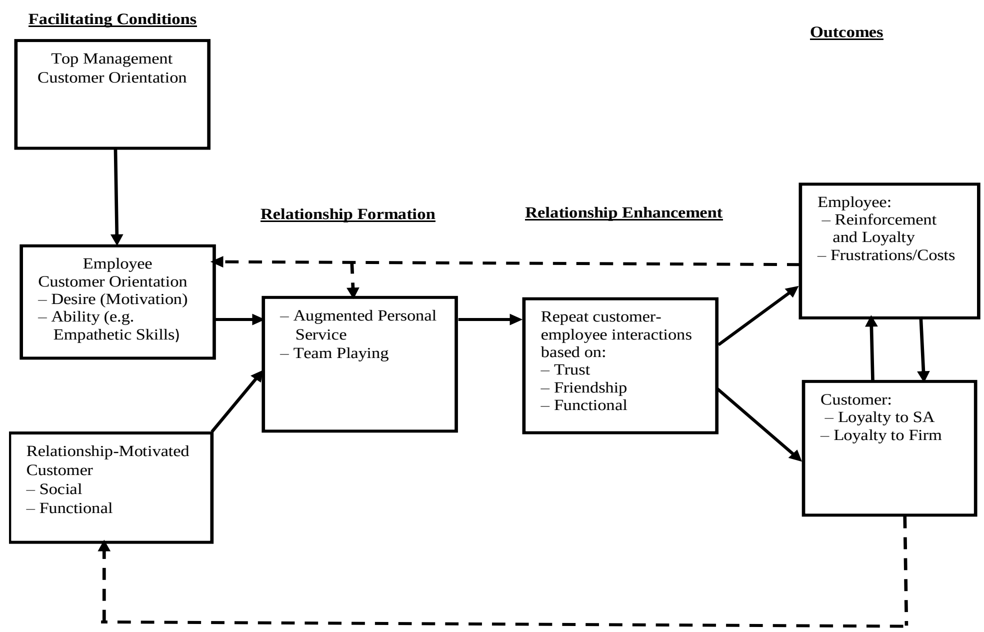

Figure 4.1 Relationship Formation/Enhancement Model in Retailing
Source: Beatty *et al.* (1996: 230)

4.2 Meaning and Nature of Relationship Quality (RQ)

The concept of RQ appeared in the mainstream marketing literature in the late 1980s and early 1990s with Dwyer *et al*. (1987) being the first scholars to study the concept in the domain of business-to-business while Crosby *et al*. (1990) pioneered its scrutiny in the field of business-to-consumer. Although the conceptualization of RQ and its structural nature lack consensus (Su *et al*., 2008; Cheng *et al*., 2008; Shabbir *et al*., 2007) especially within the domain of business-to-business (Athanasopoulou, 2009), there are useful contributions from many scholars that can offer insights into the meaning and nature of the construct. Fundamentally, Gummesson (1987 in Moliner *et al*., 2007b) argued that RQ is the consumer-firm interaction quality which can also be interpreted in terms of accumulated value. These interactions assume several facets: it can be between the buyer and a) the seller's contact person; b) the seller's systems, machines and routines; c) the seller's physical environment; and d) it can be amongst buyers (Gummesson, 1987). Whichever interaction situation that surfaces is an opportunity for the creation of favorable 'moments of truth' which prompts repeat purchases and consumer referrals (Gummesson, 1987). Dwyer *et al.* (1987) drew on the perspective of modern contract law to explicate that relationships transpire over time which necessitates transactions to be viewed in terms of their histories and future anticipations. In a more marketing-related analogy and explicit value-laden viewpoint, Dwyer *et al.* (1987) draw on Thibaut and Kelly's (1959) exchange theory to argue that the quality of a relationship is ascertained by comparing the costs and benefits of a relationship with a given supplier to alternative offerings.

Contemporaries of Gummesson (1987) and Dwyer *et al.* (1987) extended the concept of value in relationships by amplifying the embodiments and the dynamic nature of RQ. For instance, Garbarino and Johnson (1999 in Izogo, 2016a) stated that RQ reflects the overall assessment of the strength of a relationship. Thus, RQ capture the entire principles of relationship marketing (Jap *et al.*, 1999 in Izogo, 2016a). Similarly, RQ is also the "degree of appropriateness of a relationship to fulfill the needs of the customer associated with the relationship" (Henning-Thurau & Klee, 1997: 751 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b) while Moliner *et al.* (2007a) argued that RQ reflects the overall valuation that parties into a relationship make of such relationship. High RQ is therefore an indication of the customer's trust and confidence in the future performances of the service provider (Sun, 2010 in Izogo, 2016a; Dwyer *et al.*, 1987). From an explicit dynamic viewpoint, a leading Scandinivian marketing scholar, Grönroos (2007: 91), defined RQ as "the dynamics of long-term quality formation in on-going customer relationships". The dynamic nature of RQ is traceable to the fact that as the relationship continues, the perception that customers have about quality develop and change over time (Shabbir *et al.*, 2007). Additionally, as a dynamic construct, RQ focuses on the intangible aspects of an ongoing interactions rather than one-off encounters (Roberts *et al.*, 2003). Such dynamism is what makes RQ subjective in nature with interpretations of the construct subject to individual differences (Moliner *et al.*, 2007b). What is central from the foregoing definitions of RQ is that firms try to relate with their customers not on discrete transactional basis (see Dwyer *et al.*, 1987 for more explanations), but to maximize the lifetime value accruable from customers by getting the customers to make series of purchases through continuous superior value proposition and promise fulfilment. With the foregoing enlightening background, the sections that immediately follows commences a more in-depth understanding of the concept by uncovering the range of diverse elements that are recognized as the dimensions of RQ.

4.3 Dimensions of Relationship Quality (RQ)

The dimensions of RQ are diverse. Henning-Thurau *et al.* (2002) argued that the different components of RQ explicate the absolute nature of relationships between the concerned parties. The relative permanence of that view has been established by the theoretical developments it has fostered. RQ has been widely conceptualized as a construct that comprises several dimensions such as minimal opportunism (Dwyer *et al.*, 1987; Dwyer & Oh, 1987), cooperation (Su *et al.*, 2008; Fynes *et al.*, 2005; Keating *et al.*, 2003), service quality (Shabbir *et al.*, 2007), dependence (Fynes *et al.*, 2005; Ganesan, 1994), power (Naudé & Buttle, 2000), social bonds (Lang & Colgate, 2003), conflict (Roberts *et al.*, 2003; Lang & Colgate, 2003), communication (Su *et al.*, 2008; Fynes *et al.*, 2005; Keating *et al.*, 2003), needs fulfilment (Naudé & Buttle, 2000), relationship benefits (Shabbir *et al.*, 2007), adaptation (Su *et al.*, 2008; Fynes *et al.*, 2005) and so on. Table 4.1 shows the dimensions of RQ identified or adopted in previous research. Based on the studies captured in Table 4.1, three important caveats are emphasized here.

First, at the initial stage of the field's theoretical development, studies within the business-to-business domain dominated with most of these researches contextualized within the United States. These studies also lacked consensus regarding the dimensions of RQ. It was only in the early 1990s that RQ began to be discussed within the business-to-consumer sector (see Crosby *et al.*, 1990). Secondly, very few of these studies were qualitative (e.g. Shabbir *et al.*, 2007; Naudé & Buttle, 2000) whereas the rest were predominantly quantitative. Thus, efforts at theory testing were much more pronounced than efforts at theory development. Finally, especially within the context of business-to-consumer, there is clearly a consensus around three dimensions of RQ: a) trust, b) satisfaction, and c) commitment (see Mende *et al.*, 2013; Vesel & Zabkar, 2010; De Cannie`re *et al.*, 2010; Beatson *et al.*, 2008; Moliner *et al.*, 2007a, 2007b; De Wulf *et al.*, 2003; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Crosby *et al.*, 1990). Although Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2002) tested only two dimensions of RQ (i.e. satisfaction and commitment), they

Author/year	Research aim, context and unit of analysis	Dimensions of relationship quality identified or adopted
Dwyer *et al.* (1987)	To outline a framework for developing buyer-seller relationships by drawing on several theoretical perspectives	**Identified**: trust, commitment, and minimal opportunism
Dwyer and Oh (1987)	Examined the effect of munificence on channel internal workings from the resource dependence viewpoint with a sample of automobile dealers selected from the U.S.	**Identified**: satisfaction, minimal opportunism, and trust
Crosby *et al.* (1990)	Tested a model that examined the nature, consequences, and antecedents of RQ in the context of business-to-consumer with a sample of U.S. insurance customers	**Adopted**: trust and satisfaction
Ganesan (1994)	Examined the antecedents of long-range orientation in an ongoing retailer-supplier channel relationship with a sample of retail buyers and their suppliers	**Adopted**: mutual dependence and mutual trust
Bejou *et al.* (1996)	Investigated the important factors of RQ with a sample of adult household customers of financial services recruited from southeastern cities in the U.S.	**Adopted**: trust and satisfaction
Garbarino and Johnson (1999)	Examined the roles played by satisfaction, trust and commitment in customer relationships with a sample of U.S. theater company customers	**Adopted**: satisfaction, trust, and commitment
Naudé and Buttle (2000)	Explored what managers believed a good relationship to be in the context of business-to-business with a sample of 40 middle executive managers attending a management development course	**Identified**: trust, power, supply chain integration, needs fulfilment, and profit
Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2002)	Tested a model that integrates relational benefits and RQ with customers of three service categories recruited from the U.S.	**Adopted**: satisfaction and trust
Lang and Colgate (2003)	Investigated the effect of IT in a relationship marketing context using a sample of New Zealand online banking customers.	**Adopted**: trust, satisfaction, commitment, social bonds, and conflict
Keating *et al.* (2003)	Investigated the possibility of customers distinguishing service quality and RQ using a sample of Australian Internet users.	**Adopted**: trust, effort, value, understanding, cooperation, liking, and communication
De Wulf *et al.* (2003)	Critically reassessed and extended De Wulf *et al.*'s (2001) framework using a sample of large Belgian apparel retailing customers	**Adopted**: relationship satisfaction, trust, and relationship commitment
Roberts *et al.* (2003)	Developed and tested a RQ scale using a sample of customers of different services	**Adopted**: trust, satisfaction, commitment, and affective conflict
Fynes *et al.* (2005)	Examined the effect of supply chain RQ on quality performance with electronics manufacturing companies in Ireland.	**Adopted**: communication, co-operation, commitment, trust, adaptation, and interdependence.
Lin and Ding (2005)	Examined the mediating role of RQ using a sample of Taiwanese customers of Internet service providers.	**Adopted**: satisfaction and trust
Li *et al.* (2006)	Tested a model that examined how users stick with a Website through a process of developing relationship with it using a sample of students who are experienced in Website usage	**Adopted**: satisfaction, trust, and commitment
Shabbir *et al.* (2007)	Developed a conceptual model that illustrates the antecedents and consequences of donor-perceived RQ through a qualitative study involving donors	**Identified**: relationship benefits, service quality, trust, satisfaction, and commitment
Moliner *et al.* (2007a)	Examined customers' attitude formation towards suppliers with a sample of Spanish tile manufacturing and tourist agencies' customers	**Adopted**: satisfaction, trust, and commitment
Moliner *et al.* (2007b)	Examined the influence of post purchase perceived value on RQ with a sample of Spanish tourist agency users	**Adopted**: satisfaction, trust, and commitment
Macintosh (2007)	Examined the links between RQ and its antecedents and consequences using a sample of business travelers recruited from the employees of a Canadian university	**Adopted**: trust and satisfaction
Cheng *et al.* (2008)	Developed a model that investigated the antecedents of airline RQ using a sample of Taiwanese domestic airline passengers	**Adopted**: trust and satisfaction
Su *et al.* (2008)	Focused on the influence of RQ on cooperative strategy with a sample of manufacturing companies drawn from West China	**Adopted**: trust, communication, cooperation, atmosphere, and adaptation
Beatson *et al.* (2008)	Examined RQ as a multidimensional metaconstruct using a sample of business and leisure travelers	**Adopted**: relationship satisfaction, relationship trust, and relationship commitment
Rajaobelina and Bergeron (2009)	Investigated the determinants and outcomes of relationship in the Canadian financial services industry with a sample of financial advisors and clients.	**Adopted**: satisfaction and trust
Liang and Chen (2009)	Developed and tested a model that examines the impact of website quality on customer relationship performance using a sample of Taiwanese online customers.	**Adopted**: customer satisfaction and customer trust
De Cannie`re *et al.* (2010)	Investigated the impact of RQ on purchase intention with a sample of customers of Belgian apparel retailer	**Adopted**: trust, commitment, and satisfaction

Chung and Shin (2010)	Investigated the impact of RQ dimensions on eWOM using a sample of Korean online shoppers	**Adopted**: customer satisfaction, e-trust, and e-commitment
Vesel and Zabkar (2010)	Provided theoretical and empirical evidences for the inclusion of calculative and emotional commitment as dimensions of RQ using a sample of retail club loyalty members drawn from a Central European country	**Adopted**: trust, satisfaction, calculative commitment, and emotional commitment
Liu *et al.* (2011)	Examined the effect of RQ and switching barriers on customer loyalty with a sample of Taiwanese mobile phone users	**Adopted**: satisfaction and trust
Liang *et al.* (2011)	Investigated the effect of social support and RQ on user's intention to participate in a social commerce in the future with a sample of microblog users recruited from Taiwan	**Adopted**: trust, satisfaction, and commitment
Chu and Wang (2012)	Examined the drivers of RQ and its effect on Chinese logistics outsourcing performance with a sample of logistics outsourcing firms drawn from the database of China Federation of Logistics and Purchasing	**Adopted**: Benevolence trust, capability trust, commitment, and satisfaction
Mende *et al.* (2013)	Investigated how relationship-specific attachment styles predict customer preferences for close relationships within the North American business-to-consumer insurance context	**Adopted**: satisfaction, trust, and affective commitment
Izogo (2016a)	Reported the results of an empirical study that tested two different models of RQ using a sample of experienced bank customers in Nigeria	**Adopted**: trust and satisfaction

Table 4.1 Dimensions of Relationship Quality (RQ)

stressed that there is a consensus that RQ is a metaconstruct comprising trust, satisfaction, and commitment. This implies that the choice of the two dimensions selected were based on relevance to the integrative model that they postulated. According to Crosby *et al.* (1990), these three dimensions of RQ (i.e. satisfaction, trust, and relationship commitment) are attitudinal constructs which consumers find difficult to dissemble even though they may appear conceptually distinct. Moliner *et al.* (2007b) further noted that the dimensions of RQ are interrelated. What distinguishes quality relationships from non-quality relationships is that the former exists when the levels of trust, satisfaction, and commitment are high (Dwyer & Oh, 1987). RQ therefore reflects high levels of trusting disposition, satisfaction and commitment of parties to a relationship. It is therefore very unlikely that a customer who is not satisfied with the services received from the firm, lacks confidence in the firm's services, and is unwilling to sustain the relationship will have a good relationship with such a firm. These three most identified dimensions of RQ (i.e. trust, satisfaction, and commitment) have also been successfully applied in the online shopping context (see Liang *et al.*, 2011; Chung & Shin, 2010; Li *et al.*, 2006; Lang & Colgate, 2003). This study therefore adopted trust, satisfaction, and commitment as the dimensions of RQ. Consistent with Beatson *et al.* (2008) and De Wulf *et al.* (2003), the adopted dimensions of RQ were preferably and respectively termed relationship trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment. In the subsections that immediately follow, the conceptualization and operationalization of each of the adopted dimensions of RQ are discussed.

4.3.1 Relationship trust

Trust is present "when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity" (Morgan & Hunt, 1994: 23). According to Holmes and Rempel (1989: 199 in Tax *et al.*, 1998: 199) "trust is strengthened if partners are responsive in ways that acknowledge an individual's particular needs and affirm their sense of worth". Holmes (1991 in Tax *et al.*, 1998) also argued that trust develops through previous interactions in previous similar situations. Trust therefore manifests where opportunistic acts are not anticipated by parties in an exchange relationship. Trust brings about feelings of security and mitigated uncertainty while also enthroning a supportive environment (Naudé & Buttle, 2000). Within the context of retailing, De Wulf *et al.* (2001: 36) defined trust as "consumer's confidence in a retailer's reliability and integrity". Trust is considered a critical component for the development of marketing relationships (Tax *et al.*, 1998) because it is the basis upon which relationship commitment subsists (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Extant literature used a variety of terms such as integrity, honesty, reliability, competence, fairness, cooperation, confidence, credibility, predictability, dependability, truthfulness, benevolence and so on to characterize trust. The construct is therefore multidimensional in nature. Thus, conceptual analysis of trust starts by identifying its multi-faceted character (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Two dimensions of trust (affective and cognitive trust) are mostly discussed in previous research. Lewis and Weigert's (1985) sociological conceptualization of trust as a deep assumption underwriting social order revealed both emotional and cognitive components. Poppo *et al.* (2008) built on the literature to frame trust as a construct that emerges from either the shadows of the past (i.e. prior history) or shadows of the future (i.e. expectations of continuity). Poppo *et al.*'s (2008) perspective is partially consistent with the groundedness viewpoint described by Yamagishi (2011) because the driving force behind trust development is reciprocal investments. Vesel and Zabkar (2010) identified credibility and benevolence which respectively correspond to the affective and cognitive components of trust.

The conceptualization of trust in the RQ domain ties strongly to the conceptualization of trust in the fields of sociology, psychology, and interorganizational relationships. For instance, Moliner *et al.*'s (2007a, 2007b) categorization of relationship trust into honesty and benevolence components is in tandem with existing conceptualizations in other fields. Geyskens and Steenkamp (1995 in Naudé & Buttle, 2000) also hold a similar view. Additionally, credibility and benevolence are widely cited as the two dimensions of relationship trust by previous RQ researchers (see Vesel & Zabkar, 2010; Rajaobelina & Bergeron, 2009; Roberts *et al.*, 2003; Doney & Cannon, 1997 in Liang & Chen, 2009; Ganesan, 1994). Credibility is cognitive in nature and reflects one party's belief in the other party's expertise to effectively and reliably perform the requisite task while benevolence is emotional in nature and refers to interests in the welfare, motives, and intentions of the exchange partner (Vesel & Zabkar, 2010; Ganesan, 1994). Thus, the most common way to evoke trusting disposition is to act in a manner that leaves the other party in the relationship with no doubt about your interest in his/her own interest.

One perspective that is rarely integrated into RQ research is the context-specific relevance of trust. In a meta-analytic investigation of the trust literature, Swan *et al.* (1999) identified three common grounds that previous conceptualizations of trust covered. These include competence which is cognitive; benevolence which is affective; and situational trust which derives from the riskiness of trusting the relationship partner. The importance of trust increases as the risk of parties to the relationship to be trustworthy increases (Swan *et al.*, 1999). Within the context of online retailing, the importance of trust is also elevated because of the highly uncertain nature of online shopping (Pavlou, 2003 in Liang & Chen, 2009). Given the faceless nature of online shopping, online retailers need to dissipate greater efforts at securing customers' trust than offline retailers. Thus, Swan *et al.*'s (1999) broad conceptualization is the most expanded and apt for conceptualizing trust in this study.

Drawing on the foregoing, trust has both cognitive and emotional aspects. Consequently, Garbarino and Johnson's (1999) measures of trust are dominantly cognitive. Additionally, Izogo (2016a) therefore extended the measurement of trust within the context of financial services by introducing a measure of the riskiness of trusting disposition. This aligns perfectly with context-relevant trust element emphasized by Swan *et al.* (1999). As argued elsewhere in this section, online shopping is faceless in nature and increases the degree of uncertainty. Thus, riskiness measure of relationship trust within the online retailing context is important especially in a nascent online shopping environment like Nigeria. Building on the above perspectives, measures of relationship trust ought to reflect three things: i) reliability and trustworthiness which are cognitive in nature; ii) customers' welfare which is emotional in nature; and iii) security which reflects riskiness of online transactions. As reported in chapter six, the adapted measures of relationship trust reflect the above three aspects.

4.3.2 Relationship satisfaction

In line with the disconfirmation of expectation paradigm, Moliner *et al.* (2007b: 198) defined satisfaction as "a comparison between the results of the different transactions carried out and prior expectations". But Oliver (1997 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b) contended that this definition fails to reflect the psychological aspect of satisfaction because of its dominant focus on what the firm does. Oliver (1997, 1999 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b: 197) therefore noted that 'satisfaction is defined as pleasurable fulfillment'. Like Oliver (1997, 1999 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b), relationship satisfaction is described as consumer's affective state that ensues from the consumer's overall evaluation of the consumer-retailer relationships (Crosby *et al.*, 1990). The above two definitions by Oliver (1997, 1999 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b) and Crosby *et al.* (1990) imply a sense of needs, desire, or goal fulfilment that consumption of a product or service brings. Succinctly put, satisfaction is the goal attained through consumption of products and services (Oliver, 1997 in Vesel & Zabkar, 2010). Such goal fulfilment/attainment ought to be pleasurable for it to be adjudged satisfactory. Moliner *et al.* (2007b) therefore argued that satisfaction implies comparing consumption outcomes against some standard measures of pleasure or displeasure (Moliner *et al.*, 2007b). The implicit proposal is that satisfaction has cognitive and affective components (Bigné & Andreu, 2004 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b). The cognitive component is defined by the act of comparing service performance against expectations while the affective component of satisfaction aligns more closely to the feelings of pleasure. Geyskens *et al.*'s (1999 in Rajaobelina & Bergeron, 2009) polarization of relationship satisfaction into economic and non-economic facets respectively align with the cognitive and affective/psychological components of relationship satisfaction.

Relationship satisfaction has also been viewed from the cumulative and transaction-specific perspective (Roberts *et al.*, 2003). According to Oliver (1997 in Liang & Chen, 2009), at the transaction-specific satisfaction level, information provided is only diagnostic of specific product or service encounters but at the cumulative satisfaction level, the information provided is a true diagnosis of the customers' current or previous service encounters. Like Roberts *et al*. (2003), De Wulf *et al*. (2003) defined relationship satisfaction as the affective state of being that arises when a customer appraises his/her overall relationship with a retailer. The cumulative viewpoint of relationship satisfaction is also supported and extended by Crosby *et al*. (1990) who argued that relationship satisfaction is an overall measure of a customer's quality evaluation of all previous interactions with a firm and its products and services which shape the customer's future interactions with the firm. Since quality can be functional or process-based (Grönroos, 1982), it is argued that the polarization of satisfaction into the affective and cognitive elements are implied in Crosby *et al*.'s (1990) definition of satisfaction. It is submitted that relationship satisfaction has affective and cognitive elements which are measured at either the cumulative level or transaction-specific level. This study captures both facets of relationship satisfaction by manipulating experiences at both transaction-specific and cumulative levels in the experimental scenarios to ascertain how these levels of satisfaction (i.e. shopper type) interact with experience type to affect consumer perception.

Building on the weight of the above evidence, the viewpoint taken is consistent with Sanzo *et al*. (2003 in Rajaobelina & Bergeron, 2009) who argued that measures of satisfaction must reflect the economic and non-economic aspects of the construct. This measurement perspective was adopted by Rajaobelina and Bergeron (2009) and more recently by Izogo (2016a) within the financial services industry. The categorization of measures of relationship satisfaction into economic and non-economic aspects is strongly and respectively in tandem with the cognitive and affective components of the construct identified by Bigné and Andreu (2004 in Moliner *et al*., 2007b). Measures of relationship satisfaction reported in chapter six were therefore, a typical reflection of the cognitive and the affective aspects of the construct and were also consistent with the measures of satisfaction proposed by Crosby and Cowles (1986).

4.3.3 Relationship commitment

Relationship commitment owes its definitional origin to the fields of sociology and psychology (Izogo, 2016b). Sociological view of commitment connotes the social factors that constrain an individual to consistently behave in a certain way while the psychological perspective define commitment as cognitions that impasse to a certain behavioral disposition (Pritchard *et al.*, 1999 in Izogo, 2016b). Thus, relationship commitment from the sociological viewpoint is driven by external factors while internal mechanisms drive commitment from the psychological viewpoint. The conceptualization of relationship in the business field owes a lot to these initial thoughts.

From the business viewpoint, a relationship commitment is said to exist if a party to the relationship considers the relationship worth sustaining indefinitely through making maximum effort because of the importance that the party attach to it (Dwyer *et al.*, 1987 and Gundlach *et al.*, 1995 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The essence of relationship commitment is driven by long-term orientation where consumers sacrifice short-term for long-term benefits (Dwyer *et al.*, 1987 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b). Morgan and Hunt (1994) therefore defined relationship commitment as the enduring desire of exchange partners to maintain a relationship and according to Dwyer *et al.* (1987), it is considered the highest level of relational bond. It makes academic sense at this point to argue that the above definitions of relationship commitment emphasize the need to sustain an already existing relationship (Izogo, 2017). From the structural perspective, Geyskens *et al.* (1996 in Izogo, 2017: 22) defined commitment "as a consumer's conviction to maintain (rather than terminate) a relationship that might produce functional and emotional benefits". The different thought that was explicitly emphasized in the above definition is the reflection of the multidimensional nature of relationship commitment.

The conceptualization of relationship commitment first appeared in the organizational behavior literature with consensus tilting towards two broad components: affective and continuance or calculative commitment (see Allen & Meyer, 1990 and Gundlach *et al.*, 1995 in Izogo, 2016b). According to Moliner *et al.* (2007b), calculative commitment is also termed cognitive commitment. Thus, continuance commitment, calculative commitment, and cognitive commitment mean the same thing and can be used interchangeably. The polarization of relationship commitment into the affective and the cognitive components is widely adopted in numerous relationship quality articles (e.g. Izogo, 2017; Moliner *et al.*, 2007a, 2007b; Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

Allen and Meyer (1990: 2 in Izogo, 2016b) described affective commitment as the, "affective/emotional attachment to the organization such that the strongly committed individual identifies with, is involved in, and enjoys membership in the organization".

Thus, affective commitment resonates from an individual's desire to remain in a relationship because of the positive feelings such as belonging and respect for the other party associated with the relationship (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Affective commitment is also the predisposition to continue stable transactions over the long-term by utilizing social bonds and familiar relations with a firm (Geyskens *et al.*, 1996 in Izogo, 2017). Drawing on the above definitions, affective commitment in online shopping is contextualized as the e-shopper's emotional attachment to, and identification with the e-retailer.

According to Izogo (2016b), calculative commitment in contrast, relates more to side bets, switching costs and scarcity of alternatives. Yamagishi (2011) argued that emotional bonding is not the only reason for commitment relationship, rather, commitment relationship also exists when two exchange partners refuse to defect a relationship irrespective of the tempting presence of more profitable offers from outside and whatever the reason for such resistance may be. Within the context of online shop therefore, calculative commitment is viewed from the perspective that absence of better alternatives or even otherwise can make e-shoppers stick to one e-retailer. Calculative commitment is economically-induced and is of two kinds: positive and negative (Moliner *et al.*, 2007b). Negative calculative commitment is a situation whereby a party into a relationship maintains it because of the cost associated with abandoning the relationship (Young & Denize, 1997 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b). Negative calculative commitment is not sustainable because it is quickly terminated as soon as alternative(s) surface(s) (Rusbult, 1980 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b). In contrast, positive calculative commitment is based on cognitive value (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b) and is associated with commitment to a relationship because of the economic benefits derivable (Moliner *et al.*, 2007b).

Previous research argue that some components of commitment are not relevant in some contexts. For instance, Rafiq *et al.* (2013) contended that in the online shopping context, normative commitment is irrelevant due to the absence of human contact while calculative commitment is irrelevant because of the presence of numerous alternatives, and low investments and switching costs. Although normative commitment is excluded in the present study based on the lack of human contact argument, calculative commitment was retained because of the peculiar nature of the Nigerian online shopping context. Additionally, although low switching and investment costs characterize online shopping, this is not always the case. “From a rational [viewpoint], it pays to stay in committed relations insofar as opportunities to get better deals do not exist outside the relations” (Yamagishi & Yamagishi, 1994: 136). This assertion provides a great deal of insights on the nature of online shopping in Nigeria. First, very few e-retailers operate in Nigeria. Second, there is no much difference in the operational modalities of the few existing players. As such, many shoppers may likely decide to passively continue patronizing a single online shop due to absence of better alternatives irrespective of the existent of low switching and investment costs. In this study therefore, the affective and calculative components of commitment are considered.

Within the context of social commerce, Liang *et al.* (2011) operationally defined relationship commitment as the extent to which a user is willing to maintain the relationship with the Website. What is central in this definition is the willingness to maintain a relationship indefinitely, a reasoning that is traceable to Dwyer *et al.*’s (1987) consideration of relationship commitment as the highest level of relational bond. Literature supports the view that consumers’ willingness to maintain a relationship stem from two kinds of motivations. First, consumers may be motivated to maintain a relationship if their feelings about the relationship is positive. Such feelings are what give rise to a sense of belonging and social bonding. When commitment stem from this motivation, it is visualized from the affective viewpoint (Izogo, 2017; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In contrast, when relationship commitment stem from such things like absence or shortage of alternatives, side bets, and switching costs, it is termed calculative/continuance/cognitive commitment all of which are economically-induced (Izogo, 2016b; Moliner *et al.*, 2007b). Drawing on the above perspectives, affective and calculative/continuance/cognitive commitment are the two aspects of commitment that its measures should capture. In chapter six, 3 measures of commitment which reflect the above two aspects of the construct and how they were scaled were captured.

4.4 Summary

This chapter brought an end to the context setting for the realization of objectives three and four. The chapter examined how relationships are evolved and maintained. Through a rigorous review of the literature, it was argued that the central tenet of RQ is that firms should try to relate with their customers not on discrete transactional basis (see Dwyer *et* *al.*, 1987), but to maximize the lifetime value accruable from customers by getting the customers to make series of purchases through continuous superior value proposition and promise fulfilment. The chapter also explored the dimensions of RQ and established that RQ is a construct consisting three different but interrelated dimensions including trust, satisfaction and commitment. The next chapter seeks to deepen the understanding of the research constructs by i) exploring the theoretical foundations; ii) outlining the conceptual model; and iii) evolving tested hypotheses based on the theoretical foundations and the gaps identified in previous chapters.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

1.0 Introduction

Building on the discussions set out in chapter two to chapter four, this chapter begins by further situating the research question and the research objectives on the appropriate theoretical foundations. Thereafter, the chapter draws on the theoretical foundations and the online customer experience (OCE) literature to propose a testable conceptual model. The chapter concludes with the formulation of testable research hypotheses based on the evident gaps identified in chapter two, chapter three and the theoretical foundations outlined in this chapter.

5.1 Theoretical Framework

5.1.1 The concept of schema: origin, perspectives and application

Although the schema concept is traceable to the works of Plato and Aristotle (Marshall, 1995 in McVee *et al.*, 2005), Kant (1929 in McVee *et al.*, 2005) was the first scholar to visualize schemas as organized mental structures that influence how individuals see and interpret the world around them. Bartlett (1932/1995 in McVee *et al.*, 2005) subsequently conducted an experiment that explored schemas as cultural construct that resides in the human memory. Bartlett (1932: 201 in Brewer & Nakamura, 1984) defined a schema as "an active organization of past reactions, or of past experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well-adapted organic response". The above definition of schema embeds two properties which include: a) it is organized; and b) schemas are composed of old knowledge (Brewer & Nakamura, 1984). More recently, Aronson *et al.* (2010: 85) defined "schemas [as] mental structures people use to organize their knowledge about the social world around themes or subjects and that influence the information that people notice, think about, and remember". This definition is rooted in Kant's thinking wherein he argued that "a schema stood between or mediated the external world and internal mental structures; a schema was a lens that both shaped and was shaped by experience" (McVee *et al.*, 2005: 535). It also corroborates Bartlett's definition and explication of schema as a concept that reflect old knowledge composed in the form of unconscious mental processes; with the past operating as an organized mass rather than discrete group of components each of which preserves its character (Bartlett, 1932 in Brewer & Nakamura, 1984).

Although it appears on the surface that Bartlett's original conceptualization of schema was restricted mainly to in-the-head phenomena, Bartlett's work was far broader in scope. It comprises of functional properties that define the nature of adaptations that characterize individuals and their physical and social setting rather than stored mental structures that aid the interpretation of experience (McVee *et al.*, 2005). This reasoning was reinforced by the contemporaries of Bartlett. For instance, Dewey and Bentley's (1949 in McVee *et al.*, 2005) idea of transactionalism that morphed into theories of psychology and literacy strongly reflects Bartlett's original construction of schema because it not only emphasized mutually constituted relationships but also reflects the interfusion between individuals and the social, cultural and natural components that characterize human activities and relationships. Additionally, Piaget's (1952 in McVee *et al.*, 2005) structural theory of how cognition originates and develops is strongly rooted in the concept of schema. By interpreting development as a continual dialectic resulting in the person assimilating new experiences that are consistent with extant schemas or changing schemas to suite extant experience (McVee *et al.*, 2005), Piaget captured the embodied nature of schema while also sharing the individualistic bias of cognitive scientists. What is central in previous conceptions of schema are that sense making is a product of interaction between existing knowledge and new knowledge in perception. It changes and can be recreated when existing mental structures interact with current information/stimuli.

In the field of services science and retailing, schemas were applied to understand consumer behavior. For instance, Åkesson *et al.* (2014) applied schemas to classify and analyze the drivers of customer experience. The authors identified four categories of schemas: informational, relational, organizational, and technological. Because schemas create and re-create specific behaviors (Högström & Tronvoll, 2012), it stipulates how customers and other actors are expected to carry out various activities and interactions (Åkesson *et al.*, 2014). Since schemas are grounded in values which are embedded in the surrounding society (Åkesson *et al.*, 2014), it is expected that "at a higher level, a schema can guide customers about the proper behavior in interacting with other customers and service personnel" (Åkesson *et al.*, 2014: 681). Within the context of retailing, Puccinelli *et al.*

(2009) noted that schemas may likely be the foremost storage mechanism for long-term memory about retail. Yim *et al.* (2007 in Puccinelli *et al.*, 2009) found that a positive evaluation of service options is more likely to ensue if the focal service is congruent with self-schema. It is therefore argued that a superior knowledge of customer service experiences can be gained by understanding schema and how it informs and shapes consumer experiences. Yet, Edvardsson *et al.* (2011) contended that schemas are yet to be fully explicated in terms of what drives customer experiences. Åkesson *et al.* (2014) also argued that schemas are uncontrollable components of customer experience but it is often neglected in service research. This is surprising because "customers are social actors and their behaviors are shaped not only by their needs and wants but also by schemas" (Åkesson *et al.*, 2014: 678). In the section that follows, it was swiftly noted that the schema concept was what morphed into the schema theory. A case for the utility of the schema theory in explaining cross or multichannel experiences was also made.

5.1.2 The schema theory

The concept of schema discussed above was what evolved into the schema theory. Drawing on the explications already provided in section 5.1.1, the schema theory is a social cognitive psychology theory. Interestingly, the schema theory has become the most cited work by scholars working in the cognitive era (Saito, 1996 in McVee *et al.*, 2005). As early as 1781, Kant (1781/1963 in Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983) noted that new information will only be meaningful if the individual can relate it to what he/she already knows. Till date the schema theory remains a clear demonstration of Kant's original thought (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983).

The role of background knowledge was what Bartlett and his contemporaries formalized into the schema theory (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983). Through series of experiments, Bartlett (1932 in McVee *et al.*, 2005) elaborated schema as cultural constructs in the memory. Culture as used here suggests that schema is not a stored kind of knowledge structures from which interpretation of experiences ensues because of the non-uniformity of the human mind; rather, it constitutes functional properties that define the nature of interactions between individuals and their environments – physical and social – (Middleton & Crook, 1996 in McVee *et al.*, 2005). Thus, schema is dynamic in nature.

This might be why Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) argued that available information only provides directions for individuals to reclaim or reenact meaning from previous knowledge. Bartlett (1932 in Brewer & Nakamura, 1984) despite noting that schemas are unique mental structures clearly recognized the holistic nature of schemas when he argued that rather than operate as a group of components each of which maintains its peculiar nature, schemas operate as a unitary mass wherein the past operates as an organized mass.

The schema theory makes two broad assumptions: the structural and the processing assumptions. The structural assumption reflects the organized mental structures comprising of old knowledge and holds that when exposed to a phenomenon, the individual abstracts schema (i.e. generic cognitive representation) in his/her mind (Bartlett, 1932 in Brewer & Nakamura, 1984). Thus, conventionalized knowledge is a product of previous exposure(s) to some specific phenomena. McVee *et al.* (2005) stated that one of the striking utilities of the schema theory is that it provides the basis for linking up the interpretation of current information with previous or background knowledge. Similarly, the processing assumption of the schema theory recognize the active nature of schema by supposing that individuals enact meanings when new information interacts with old information represented in the schema (Bartlett, 1932 in Brewer & Nakamura, 1984). Although consumer perceptions and practices are produced and reproduced from socially shared and undisputed beliefs due to previous experiences (Holttinen, 2014), the recognition of the active nature of the schema process indicates that schemas are not always unconscious mental processes. Bartlett (1935 in Brewer & Nakamura, 1984) argued that the phenomenologically experienced representations which individuals extract from insentient standard schemas reflect consciousness which is a function of specific recall. Such active mechanism readily reconciles the functioning of memory that is based on unconscious mental structures with personalized images that individuals phenomenally experience. In chapter six of this thesis, the manipulated experimental scenarios that acts to put subjects in different moods was presented. The reasoning behind this is that "consumers having different histories, different knowledge, and different mental states possess their own versions of teleoaffective structures (Schatzki 2003). Therefore, understandings, rules, and teleoaffective structures capture the influence of both the individualistic conditions of consumers as well as collectivist social structures on consumer thought and behavior" (Holttinen, 2014: 574). Thus, according to Brewer and

Nakamura (1984), generalized mental structures actively integrates external or incoming episodic information.

More recent theorizations of schema tend to reflect an integration of both the structural and processing assumptions of the schema theory. For instance, Bandura (2001) believes that the schema theory adopts an agentic viewpoint to self-development, adaptation and change. This personal agency functions within a broader network of sociostructural influences because social systems drive human functioning (Bandura, 2005). Thus, personal agency and social structure are inseparable. As humans continue to interact with their social systems, with space and time, they generalize about the characteristics or attributes of the objects/stimuli they interact with based on their personal experiences (Leyens & Dardenne, 1996). Subsequent information is then filtered, integrated, and organized based on the generalizations that the individual holds about the object (Alba & Hasher, 1983), translating into what Anderson (1983) referred to as schema. Through schemas, people can quickly form impressions about the world around them (Aronson *et al.*, 2010). Thus, schemas and the inference process are intertwined because people infer when faced with limited or no information (Leyens & Dardenne, 1996). Given that individuals base the judgment of the unknown on information gained from available cue as reflected in the inference theory (Brocato *et al.*, 2012), virtually any person can assess a given information and make good sense of it regardless of whether the individual is familiar with the described incident or not.

The schema theory has been widely applied by scholars working in the fields of reading and language arts (McVee *et al.*, 2005), advertising (see Miller & Brannon, 2015; Wheeler *et al.*, 2005), and retailing (see Puccinelli *et al.*, 2009). Application in the field of customer experience has rather been rare to find. Save for Åkesson *et al.* (2014) who utilized the schema perspective to do a qualitative classification and analysis of customer experience drivers, previous customer experience research was anchored mainly on the TAM theory (see Visinescu *et al.*, 2015; Kim & Forsythe, 2008; Shang *et al.*, 2005; Nysveen & Pedersen, 2004; Childers *et al.*, 2001), flow theory (e.g. Lim, 2014; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Ding *et al.*, 2011; Nusair & Parsa, 2011; Novak *et al.*, 2000), stimulus-organism-response framework (Mosteller *et al.*, 2014; Rose *et al.*, 2012; Jeong *et al.*, 2009; Mathwick & Rigdon, 2004), congruity theory (Lee & Jeong, 2014), goal theory (Lemke *et al.*, 2011), and so on. However, none of these theories can provide a better explanation of cross-channel customer experience than the schema theory. Moreover, most of these theories especially flow is static and fails to account for the dynamic component of experience. But the schema theory as emphasized before is insightful in understanding how accumulated mental structures influence people's thoughts and evaluation of current information and events.

Since firms no longer have absolute control over their customers especially the kinds of information that customers spread online about companies, investigating cross-channel impacts of customer experiences is key and can be explained by the schema theory. Accordingly, "the main source of customers' information for evaluation of alternatives is theirs or others experience" (Edward & Sahadev, 2011: 331). Thus, customers' previous experiences with a company or its products and services can influence the customers' perception of available information especially across different retail channels. Yet, as noted elsewhere in this thesis, studies (e.g. Åkesson *et al.*, 2014; Edvardsson *et al.*, 2011) indicate that the understanding of customer experience from the perspective of the schema theory is often neglected in services research. But it is well rooted in extant customer experience research that previous experience influences consumer choice (Sensoy *et al.*, 2007), brand perception and future behavior (Klaus & Maklan, 2012), purchase intention (Soopramanien, 2011), perception of competitors (Sawyer, 1997), while simultaneously enhancing satisfaction with the retailer and reducing satisfaction with the retailer's competitors (Kumar, 2005). In this study, the schema theory was applied to demonstrate that a customer's website purchase experience will impact his or her perception of negative experience reviews posted in the social media by other customers. Verhoef *et al.* (2009) proposed a dynamic model of customer experience that posits that current experience at time t is influenced by experience at time $t-1$. Schemas "facilitate understanding of the relationship between old and new information, and of how past experience predisposes an individual to behave in certain ways rather than others" (Palmer, 2010: 203). The conceptual model outlined in section 5.1.3 and the research hypotheses were evolved based on the foregoing theoretical tenets.

5.1.3 Previous experience and consumer perception

Consistent with the views of the staunch proponents of the schema theory on the effect of background knowledge on consumers' perception of current information, cultivation theorists argue that repeated exposure to a piece of information leads to distorted perceptions (Meng *et al.*, 2015). Such distortions can alter previous experience while previous experience can trigger mixed perceptions depending on whether it is negative or positive. According to Smith and Sivakumar (2004), shoppers are more likely to return to a given website if they are highly self-confident and feel more assured about previous purchase decisions.

However, while the link between customer prior knowledge and perception should constitute an interesting area of research in the marketing field, most previous scholarly attempts made to investigate the consequences of customer experience focused mainly on the direct relationships between customer experience and satisfaction (Martin *et al.*, 2015; Rose *et al.*, 2012), trust (Rose *et al.*, 2012), attitude towards Virtual Try-on use (Kim & Forsythe, 2008), product attitudes (Richard & Habibi, 2016), attitude towards the online retailer (Lee *et al.*, 2010), Internet retailer preference (Overby & Lee, 2006), purchase intention (Richard & Habibi, 2016; Blasco-Arcas *et al.*, 2014; Song *et al.*, 2007), repurchase intentions (Hart *et al.*, 2007), social commerce intention (Zhang *et al.*, 2014), willingness to patronize (Hsu & Tsou, 2011; Song *et al.*, 2007), word-of-mouth communication (Klaus, 2013; Lemke *et al.*, 2011), customer loyalty (Cyr *et al.*, 2007; Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Berry & Carbone, 2007), willingness to pay premium price (Adhikari, 2015), and company profitability (Klaus, 2014; Lywood *et al.*, 2009).

Author/year	Context studied	Predictor variable(s)	Outcome variable(s)	Findings
Childers *et al.* (2001)	Online retail/shopping	Usefulness, ease of use, enjoyment	Attitude	Usefulness, ease of use, and enjoyment are significant positive predictors of attitude. This relationship is moderated by website features (i.e. hedonic and utilitarian features)
Corbitt *et al.* (2003)	Online retail/shopping	User's web experience	Perceived trust and participation in e-commerce	There is a strong positive relationship between user's web experience and e-commerce participation. The more experienced Internet users tend to purchase more from the Web. They also tend to have a higher level of trust in e-commerce
Shang *et al.* (2005)	Online retail/shopping	Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, fashion involvement	Online shopping	Perceived ease of use and fashion enjoyment have significant positive effect on online shopping while perceived usefulness was insignificantly related to online shopping
Overby and Lee (2006)	Online retail/shopping	Utilitarian value, hedonic value	Preference	Both value dimensions have a significant positive effect on preference but the effect of utilitarian value was more pronounced than the effect of hedonic value. The relationship is moderated by shopping frequency
Jin and Park (2006)	Online retail/shopping	Website design, order fulfilment, communication, merchandising, security/privacy, promotion	Trust, satisfaction	Order fulfilment, merchandising, security/privacy and promotion are positive significant predictors of trust while website design and communication were not. Order fulfilment, merchandising and security/privacy were positive and significant predictors of satisfaction while communication, website design and promotion were not. The online store attributes-trust link was partially moderated by online purchase experience
Wu and Chang (2007)	Online retail/shopping	Online shopping experience	Evaluation-based satisfaction, emotion-based satisfaction	Online shopping experience is a significant positive predictor of evaluation-based satisfaction and emotion-based satisfaction
Cyr *et al.* (2007)	Online retail/shopping	Enjoyment, perceived usefulness, perceived social presence	e-loyalty	Enjoyment and perceived usefulness are significant direct positive predictor of e-loyalty. Perceived social presence indirectly predicted e-loyalty through trust, perceived usefulness and enjoyment. Additionally, gender moderated the links within the model
Hart *et al.* (2007)	Regional shopping center	Shopping enjoyment experiences	Intention to repatronize	Shopping experience enjoyment significantly influences repatronage intentions. Additionally, the relationship between shopping experience enjoyment and repatronage intentions was stronger for men than women
Song *et al.* (2007)	Online retail/shopping	Shopping enjoyment	Willingness to purchase, willingness to patronize	Shopping enjoyment directly predicted willingness to purchase and indirectly predicted willingness to patronize through willingness to purchase
Kim and Forsythe (2008)	Virtual Try-on	Perceived usefulness of Virtual Try-on, perceived ease of use of Virtual Try-on, perceived entertainment value of Virtual Try-on	Attitude towards using Virtual Try-on	Perceived usefulness and perceived entertainment are strong predictors of attitude towards using Virtual Try-on for both men and women.
Davis *et al.* (2008)	Online retail/shopping	Pleasure	Satisfaction, avoid/approach (i.e. behavioral intention)	Pleasure has a significant positive effect on satisfaction and approach/avoid

Bridges and Florsheim (2008)	Internet users	Online experience comprising utilitarian and hedonic components	e-purchasing	Utilitarian and hedonic components of flow experience predicted e-purchasing.
Wu *et al*. (2008)	Online gift shop	Arousal, pleasure	Approach-avoidance (i.e. behavioral intention)	Pleasure and arousal have significant positive effect on behavioral intention
Jeong *et al*. (2009)	Online retail/shopping	Entertainment experience, aesthetic experience, educational experience, escapist experience, pleasure, arousal	Intention to patronize the website	Both pleasure and arousal were positively related to website patronage intention. Additionally, entertainment and aesthetic experiences had direct effects on website patronage intention while educational and escapist experiences were not
Lywood *et al*. (2009)	Call centers	Customer experience measured with six components: opening salutation, putting on hold, preparing for the call, offering further assistance, number of calls, empathy and call process	Profitability	Customer experience had a statistically significant influence on profitability
Ding *et al*. (2010)	Online financial services	Flow experience	Satisfaction	Flow experience predicted satisfaction
Constantinides *et al*. (2010)	Online retail/shopping	Web experience factors	e-vendor choice	Web experience factors positively predicted e-vendor choice but the relationships differed across the two countries studied
Hernández *et al*. (2010)	Online retail/shopping	Perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness	Attitude towards e-commerce	Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use positively predicted attitude towards e-commerce
Lee *et al*. (2010)	Online retail/shopping	Shopping enjoyment, perceived risk	Attitude toward an online retailer	Shopping enjoyment positively affects attitude toward the online retailer while perceived risk negatively affects attitude towards the online retailer
Ding *et al*. (2011)	Online financial (i.e. e-brokerage) services	Flow experience	Behavioral intention	The effect of flow experience on behavioral intention is significant and positive
Hsu and Tsou (2011)	Online blog context	Customer experience	Purchase intention	The relationship between customer experience and purchase intention was significant and positive. The relationship is moderated by involvement such that purchase intention was stronger for highly involved than lowly involved customers
Nambisan and Watt (2011)	Online product communities	Pragmatic experience, hedonic experience, sociability experience, usability experience	Attitude towards product, attitude towards company, service quality	Pragmatic experience, hedonic experience, and sociability experience have significant positive effect on attitude towards product, attitude towards company, and service quality. The effect of usability experience on attitude towards product was positive and significant but insignificant for attitude towards company, and service quality
Rose *et al*. (2012)	Online retail	Cognitive experiential state, affective experiential state	Satisfaction, trust	Cognitive and affective experiential states were directly related to satisfaction but indirectly related to trust through satisfaction.

Kuo and Wu (2012)	Online retail/shopping	Positive emotion, negative emotion	Post-recovery satisfaction	Positive emotion is positively and significantly related to post-recovery satisfaction. Negative emotion is negatively and significantly related to post-recovery satisfaction
Kim *et al.* (2013)	Collaborative online shopping	Flow experience	Intention to use collaborative online shopping websites	Flow experience increases intention to use collaborative online shopping websites
Papagiannidis *et al.* (2013)	Virtual store	Enjoyment	Satisfaction	Enjoyment is a significant predictor of satisfaction
Wen (2013)	Online travel services	Consumer purchase experience	Purchase intentions	Consumer purchase experience has a significant positive effect on purchase intentions
Zhou (2013)	Mobile TV users	Perceived ease of use, flow experience, perceived usefulness	Usage intention	Perceived ease of use, flow experience, and perceived usefulness have significant positive effect on usage intention
Wu *et al.* (2014)	Online retail/ shopping	Utilitarian value, flow experience	Attitude towards the website, purchase intention from the website	Utilitarian value and flow experience were significant positive predictors of attitude towards website. Also, utilitarian value has a significant positive effect on purchase intention but flow experience does not exert a significant positive effect on purchase intention
Lim (2014)	Online group buying	Utilitarian online shopping experience (OSE), hedonic OSE	Online group buying intention	Hedonic and utilitarian OSE have significant positive effect on online group buying intention
Lee and Jeong (2014)	Online retail/shopping	Online brand experience	Trust, satisfaction	Online brand experience is positively related to brand trust and satisfaction
Mosteller *et al.* (2014)	Virtual shopping	Cognitive effort, positive affect	Choice satisfaction	Cognitive effort is negatively related to choice satisfaction. Positive affect is positively related to choice satisfaction
Zhang *et al.* (2014)	Social networking	Social support, social presence, flow experience	Social commerce intention	Social support, social presence, and flow experience are significant predictors of social commerce intention
Blasco-Arcas *et al.* (2014)	Online retail/shopping	Co-creation experience	Purchase intention	Co-creation experience exerts a significant positive effect on purchase intention
Scarpi *et al.* (2014)	Online and offline shopping contexts	Utilitarianism, hedonism	Price consciousness, intentional loyalty, WOM intention	Utilitarian and hedonic shopping orientations were positively related to price consciousness, intentional loyalty and WOM intention. The relationships were moderated by shopping context (i.e. offline and online)
Piyathasanan *et al.* (2014-2015)	Second Life	Economic value, social value	Loyalty in virtual world, loyalty in real world	Economic value and social value have a significant positive effect on loyalty in virtual world and loyalty in real world
Martin *et al.* (2015)	Online retail	Affective experiential state, cognitive experiential state	Perceived risk, trust, satisfaction	Affective and cognitive experiential states predict perceived risk, trust, and satisfaction. The effect was moderated by shopping frequency

Shobeiri *et al.* (2015)	Online retail	Perceived aesthetics, perceived playfulness, customer return on investment, service excellence	Consumer website attitudes	Perceived aesthetics, perceived playfulness, and service excellence were significant predictors of consumer website attitudes. Site type (i.e. goods or services site) moderated these relationships.
Bilgihan *et al.* (2015)	Online hotel booking services	Flow experience	Brand equity, trust, e-loyalty	Flow experience directly predicted brand equity and trust but its effect on e-loyalty was not significant.
Visinescu *et al.* (2015)	Online book store	Heightened enjoyment, curiosity, temporal dissociation, focused immersion, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use	Intention to buy online	Heightened enjoyment, curiosity, temporal dissociation, focused immersion, perceived usefulness, and perceived ease of use positively influence intention to buy online. The confirmed links/relationships were moderated by usage experience.
Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015)	Travel website	Customer perceived value (e-Value)	Customer satisfaction, behavioral intentions	Customer perceived value (e-value) has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions
Adhikari (2015)	Domestic tourists who visited upscale restaurants	Subjective and objective attributes	Willingness to pay premium price	Subjective and objective attributes of experience affect willingness to pay premium price, but the former play a vital role in increasing consumers' willingness to pay a price premium and affect revenue generation more positively than the latter
Richard and Habibi (2016)	Online retail/shopping	Website atmospherics (i.e. informativeness, effectiveness, and entertainment)	Website attitudes, product attitudes, purchase intention	Website atmospherics such as informativeness, effectiveness, and entertainment are significant predictors of website attitudes, product attitudes, and purchase intention
Chen *et al.* (2016)	Tourism vacation	Control recovery experience, detachment recovery experience, mastery recovery experience, and relaxation recovery experience	Life satisfaction	The impact of the four recovery experience components on life satisfaction were all statistically significant

Table 5.1 Consequences of Customer Experience

Table 5.1 summarizes the findings of previous quantitative studies on the consequences of customer experience. Sifted and reported in the table are the results of previous studies that hypothesized or modelled any form of direct effect of customer experience on any outcome variable. Whether the predictor variable(s) or outcome variable(s) is/are mediators was unimportant because the consequences of customer experience in the context of online retailing was the focus. Except Klaus (2014) and Lywood *et al.* (2009), the studies reported in Table 5.1 were all conducted within the context of online shopping. Certain gaps which abounds in the literature are discussed in the paragraphs below.

First, it was shown that the associated attributes of cognitive (see Adhikari, 2015; Piyathasanan *et al.*, 2014-2015; Rose *et al.*, 2012; Bridges & Florsheim, 2008; Cyr *et al.*, 2007; Childers *et al.*, 2001), emotional (see Chen *et al.*, 2016; Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015; Lim, 2014; Nambisan & Watt, 2011; Jeong *et al.*, 2009; Kim & Forsythe, 2008; Childers *et al.*, 2001), behavioral (see Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015; Nambisan & Watt, 2011; Kim & Forsythe, 2008; Shang *et al.*, 2005; Childers *et al.*, 2001), sensory (see, Richard & Habibi, 2016; Shobeiri *et al.*, 2015; Jeong *et al.*, 2009; Kim & Forsythe, 2008; Childers *et al.*, 2001), and relational (see Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015; Piyathasanan *et al.*, 2014-2015; Zhang *et al.*, 2014; Nambisan & Watt, 2011; Cyr *et al.*, 2007) experiences were related to a number of attitudinal and behavioral outcomes as well as financial performance. Thus, studies that linked customer experience to consumer perception is either non-existent or scarce. Additionally, no study clearly linked previous experience to consumer perception. Thus, previous studies focused mainly on investigating the effect of customer experience on consumer attitude, behavior and firm financial performance. The investigation of the effect of previous experience on perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) is a void that should be filled. The justification partly stems from the schema theory that holds that perception is a function of background knowledge. Klaus and Maklan (2012) intuitively argued that brand perception and future customer behavior which consequently lead to company profitability are influenced by recalled previous customer experiences. The need to investigate the experience-perception link is further confirmed by the fact that customer experience was modelled as a mediator in a wide range of previous studies (see for example, Rose *et al.*, 2012; Jeong *et al.*, 2009; Hart *et al.*, 2007; Corbitt *et al.*, 2003). The widely affirmed moderating role of usage experience (see Visinescu *et al.*, 2015; Martin *et al.*, 2015; Jin & Park, 2006; Overby & Lee, 2006) also sheds light on the influence of previous experience on consumer perception. Additionally, customer experience is holistic (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009) and emanate from various touchpoints (Berry *et al.*, 2006). Consequently, it will be difficult to understand how experience leads to profitability without exploring the nature of experiences across various customer touchpoint/channels. Finally, since it has become important for organizations to tell consistent, cohesive, and compelling story of their services across channels (Berry *et al.*, 2006), studying how consumer perception of the activities within a given channel (e.g. social media) is influenced by experience gleaned from another channel (e.g. website) will offer a systematic insight into purposeful and systematic customer clue management. Previous consumer experience has been linked to several useful managerial initiatives. Customers' bad experiences with competing firms are a double-edge sword that can swing either positively or negatively against an organization. According to Sawyer (1997), irrespective of how sterling a company's reputation is, customers may resist purchases due to previous bad experiences with competing brands. Such induced experiences might inevitably shape consumer perception of information provided by fellow customers. Sawyer (1997: 85) illustrated as follows:

> "if your lawyer during your divorce didn't seem to care but still charged you a hefty fee, this will have colored your feelings about lawyers and may leave you hesitant to deal with them in the future, no matter how pedestrian the reason. The same is true if a roofer has done work on your home and your roof subsequently leaks. This will lead you to develop a whole set of beliefs about roofing contractors, even though you may have only dealt with one, and will leave you a skeptic about their future services. Likewise, if you take your car in for servicing and the mechanic creates more problems than he or she solves, you will join the ranks of those who view all auto mechanics as shady characters, to be avoided at all costs".

In a more rigorous study that employed field and lab controlled experiment to examine the impact of process improvement on shared customers' waiting experiences; Kumar (2005) found that service process improvement initiatives that reduces waiting time enhance customers' satisfaction with the focal retailer and simultaneously reduces customers' satisfaction with the retailer's competitors. Thus, an experience with one single supplier can be extrapolated to all suppliers. Because of such high stake on organizational performance, it is reemphasized that there is need to examine the previous customer experience-consumer perception link in the context of online shop.

Second, the relationship between customer experience and consumer attitude and behavior has been shown to be moderated by gender (Hart *et al.*, 2007; Cyr *et al.*, 2007), online purchase experience (Jin & Park, 2006), shopping frequency (Martin *et al.*, 2015; Overby & Lee, 2006), Internet experience (Corbitt *et al.*, 2003), website features (Childers *et al.*, 2001), involvement (Hsu & Tsou, 2011), shopping context (i.e. online and offline context Scarpi *et al.*, 2014), site type (i.e. goods or services site Shobeiri *et al.*, 2015), and country (Constantinides *et al.*, 2010). This research stream fits into the situational and consumer moderators of customer experience creation model proposed by Verhoef *et al.* (2009). Since the link between customer experience, and consumer attitude and behavior is shown to be moderated by contingent and consumer factors, the link between previous online customer experience and PCoNERs posted by other shoppers in the social media is likely to be moderated by situational and consumer factors. In this study, how two consumer factors (experience type and shopper type) interact to influence consumer perception are considered.

5.1.4 Elaboration likelihood model (ELM)

Attempts made to comprehend contemporary persuasion theories and articulate the multiple processes through which variables influence attitudinal change include the elaboration likelihood model (ELM; Petty & Briñol, 2012; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986 all in Petty & Briñol, 2015), the uni-model (Kruglanski, 2012; Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999 all in Petty & Briñol, 2015), Yale's model (Janis & Hovland, 1959 in Cheung *et al.*, 2009), heuristic systematic model (HSM, Chaiken & Ledgerwood, 2012; Chaiken *et al.*, 1989 all in Petty & Briñol, 2015), and the dual-process theory (Deutsch & Gerrard, 1955 in Cheung *et al.*, 2009). This study employed the ELM because for the sake of specificity, the assumptions implied in the ELM were found very relevant for our purpose. The dual-process theory is much more concerned with the normative and informational drivers of persuasiveness. The informational and normative factors respectively reflect message content and social aggregation. Although message content includes factors like source credibility for instance, and partly aligns with the assumption of the ELM, normative factors (e.g. recommendation rating) lies outside our concern in this study. Additionally, the scope of the Yale's model is beyond this thesis as well because it includes the message audience. While the HSM is similar to the ELM in the sense that it invokes two routes, the HSM as Cheung *et al.* (2009) observed, is concerned more with the merits of a message and the short-cut cues for evaluating a message whereas the ELM is concerned with environmental cues and careful message scrutiny. This thesis follows the theoretical lens of Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) ELM to determine the influence of PCoNERs on relationship quality.

The ELM is a social cognitive psychology theory that was developed by Petty and Cacioppo in the 1980s. The theory describes how persuasive communications can effectively lead to attitude formation and change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). ELM posits "a model explaining two ways in which persuasive communications can cause attitude change: centrally, when people are motivated and have the ability to pay attention to the arguments in the communication, and peripherally, when people do not pay attention to the arguments but are instead swayed by surface characteristics (e.g. who gave the speech)" (Aronson *et al.*, 2010: 217). The central route belongs to the high thinking conditions (i.e. high elaboration threshold) while the peripheral route belongs to low thinking conditions (i.e. low elaboration threshold). People that take the central route belong to the high elaboration condition while people that take the peripheral route fall within the low elaboration condition (Crisp & Turner, 2007). Message recipients make use of the peripheral route when they rely on the process that embody persuasion while they make use of the central route when their persuasion draws from critical thinking and evaluation of the message's argument (Stroebe & Jonas, 1996). Literature supports the view that centrally-induced persuasions are more enduring than peripherally-induced persuasions (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

The above assumptions of the ELM were found very relevant for our purpose in this study because Tiago *et al.* (2015) argued that the nature of consumer-firm relationships has been redefined by the emergence of social media as consumers now share their experiences with the company and its brand in this highly viral and powerful medium. In this new era of word of mouth facilitated even much more by digital channels, information about companies spread very quickly. Thus, firms are not only at the mercy of their customers, their performance can be positively or negatively affected depending on whether customers buy deeply into the experiences shared by other customers. The tendency exist that consumers make more informed purchase decisions based on the information shared on review sites by consumers who have had experience with the company or its products/services (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). Thus, online customer reviews have emerged as one of the most influential archetypes of the customers' voice and it possesses the ability to influence the purchase decisions of online consumers. Previous research with similar aim (e.g. Li & Suh, 2015; Baek *et al.*, 2012; Luo *et al.*, 2013; Lee *et al.*, 2008; Freeman & Spyridakis, 2004) applied the ELM, but this study extends the application of this theory to the context of a social media site (i.e. Facebook) and tracks the role of previous consumption experience in situations of consistent negative online reviews. The ELM is clearly relevant for our purpose here because it is an insightful theory for understanding the fundamental processes that underlie communication effectiveness and consequent attitude change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Additionally, the high end of elaboration shows how individuals assess information based on previous knowledge while the low end of the elaboration continuum reveals the role played by supporting information but both ends of the elaboration continuum trigger attitude change (Petty & Wegener, 1999).

5.1.5 Consumer perception and relationship quality

Consumer perception of eWOM and its outcomes is well noted in the literature (see for instance Kim & Lee, 2015; Cantallops & Salvi, 2014; Park & Lee, 2009; Hennig-Thurau, *et al.*, 2004). Cantallops and Salvi (2014) conducted a systematic literature review of the influence of eWOM in the hotel industry. Two lines of research was identified from the review. They include i) the factors that drive review generation and ii) the impact of eWOM. Since this study is concerned with outcomes of eWOM from the consumers' perspective, findings reported are consistent with this viewpoint. Cantallops and Salvi (2014) found that the impacts of eWOM from the consumer perspective include book intention, loyalty, risk reduction, product acceptance, hotel/brand awareness, hotel comparison, decision making process, and perceived trustworthiness/credibility. Generally, literature supports the view that eWOM influences firm reputation (Mattila & Mount, 2003), company image (Litvin *et al.*, 2008), brand or firm awareness (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), website popularity (Zhang *et al.*, 2010), purchase intention (Tsao *et al.*, 2015; Robins & Holmes, 2008; Park *et al.*, 2007; Bailey, 2005), customer retention (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), sales volume (Ye *et al.*, 2009; Clemons, 2008; Davis & Khazanchi, 2008; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006), and overall firm performance (Kim *et al.*, 2015). The above indicate that studies that investigated the effect of eWOM on the dimensions of relationship quality is relatively scarce. Thus, based on the foregoing research stream, it is theorized that the perceptual state of consumers arising from exposure to online reviews published by other consumers will influence consumer-firm relationship quality.

From the perspective of the ELM and several corroborating theories, the relationship between perception (i.e. PCoNERs) and relationship quality can further be strengthened. Drawing on the ELM for instance, consumer perception of online reviews posted by customers who have previously experienced the products or services can shape the customer-firm relationship quality especially if the customer is consistently exposed to negative reviews. Insights can further be drawn from the notion of subjective norm reflected in the theory of reasoned action. Ajzen and Fishbein (1980 in Park & Lee, 2009) argued that the formulation of purchase intentions is a function of consumers' perception of the opinions of important 'others'. Additionally, Krugman (1972 in Tsao *et al.*, 2015) averred that consumers consistently exposed to a given information can facilitate the individual's understanding of the object or subject matter to which they are exposed. Krugman (1972 in Tsao *et al.*, 2015) reinforced that the first, second, and third exposure respectively trigger interest and curiosity, construct perception around the object, and instils evaluative capacity and formulate purchase decision. Tsao *et al.* (2015) elaborated Krugma's (1972) consensus and exposure theory by arguing that exposure to reviews with consistent valence influence consumer intention.

Of exciting interest in the eWOM literature is the notion that negative eWOM is far more effective than positive eWOM (Park & Lee, 2009; Lee *et al.*, 2008; Solomon *et al.*, 2006; Gruen *et al.*, 2006; Herr *et al.*, 1991; Mizerski, 1982). In other fields such as advertising (see Klebba & Unger, 1983) and organizational behavior (see Kanar *et al.*, 2010), it has been shown that negative information exerts stronger influence on behavior than positive information. More recent empirical studies (Tsao *et al.*, 2015 is a notable exception) allude to the fact that this reasoning is still valid till date. For instance, Cheung and Lee (2008) and Park and Lee (2009) established that consumers perceive negatively framed eWOM to be more credible than eWOM that is positively framed.

Explanations for the superior influence of negative over positive information is well noted in previous research. Weinburger *et al*. (1981 in Klebba & Unger, 1983) utilized the attribution theory to explain why the effect of negative information surpasses that of positive information. They argued that people are more exposed to positive than negative information; this makes negative information to distinctively stand out more than positive information and consequently causes the former to attract more attention than the latter. Possible explanation can also be drawn from the negativity effects theory which posits that it is easier for consumers to perceive negative than positive information (Parke & Lee, 2009; Kanouse & Hanson, 1972 in Baek *et al*., 2012) probably because negative information is more diagnostic for decision-making purposes than positive information (Lee *et al*., 2008). Soroka (2015) further presents an evolutionary-biological evidence of why negative information weighs more than positive information. He argued that evidences from a published article indicate that from the evolutionary stance, the potential benefits of negative information far surpass the benefits of positive information while the biological explanation suggests that when compared with positive news contents, negative news contents are more likely to activate arousal and attentiveness. The dominance of the effect of negative over positive information might also be traceable to the fact that negative emotions and negative goals are strongly related for negative WOM, such that the content of what is communicated to others is influenced by these goals (Wetzer *et al*., 2007). Boo and Kim (2013) therefore posit that negative emotions arising from negative goals are stronger than positive goals (e.g. entertaining experiences).

However, alternative explanations for why the dominance of the effects of negative information in the negative-positive information duality effects will not always be superior to the effects of positive information has also surfaced. Dailey (2004) demonstrated that the effect of negative information can be eased by positive prior experience such as flow experience. Sundaram *et al*. (1998) also argued that negative experience and negative emotions are associated; thus, dissatisfied customers who have prior eWOM experience reduce negative emotions by engaging in negative eWOM. Tsao *et al*. (2015) found that positive reviews induce greater intentions to book hotels than negative reviews when consumers are exposed to six reviews which reflects high review quantity.

The role that source credibility plays has also been emphasized (Ko *et al.*, 2005). Fang (2014) found that credibility of eWOM reviews leads to eWOM adoption. Ladhari and Michaud (2015) found that greater number of positive comments leads to greater intention to book a hotel online but the nature of the positive-negative comments effect on intention, attitude and perception is influenced by trust. Kim and Lee (2015) also found that consensus and sequence moderate the effect of eWOM on attitude towards the company. Additionally, negative online reviews are likely to have a weak effect on consumers who are already familiar with the services of the firm in question especially if they are few (Tiago *et al.*, 2015). In contrast, consistent negative reviews can rain disaster on the firm concerned (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). Thus, while few number of negative reviews is innocuous and tolerable to customers, it becomes more harmful as the frequency increases.

The foregoing points to the influence of moderators and the need for further research to focus more on interaction effects. Additionally, previous studies focused mainly on the effect of either positive or negative information (see for instance Meuter *et al.*, 2013). In view of this, Meuter *et al.* (2013) suggested that future research should determine whether positive and negative information elicit similar pattern of effects on behavior. Although Verhoef and his associates specifically queried: “Are there asymmetric effects for positive and negative perceptions?” as early as in 2009, no study has investigated the simultaneous effects of prior positive and negative experience on consumers’ perception. From the managerial viewpoint, firms need to understand the effects of negative eWOM because negative eWOM is the most recognized way that online shoppers express their dissatisfactory experiences (Boo & Kim, 2013) whilst managing consumer reviews has been emphasized as an important task because complaint management enhances customer-firm relationships for all kinds of firms (Strauss & Hill, 2001). Additionally, although it has been long established that WOM communications shape the attitudes and behaviors of consumers (Brown & Reingen, 1987), research on dissatisfied WOM customers’ behavior within the online context is scarce (Boo & Kim, 2013). Previous research also failed to address how review source credibility interact with review quantity to influence relationship quality from the perspective of ELM. Drawing on previous studies indicating that consumer reviews wield enormous influence on consumer purchase decisions (e.g. Kim & Lee, 2015; Cantallops & Salvi, 2014; Hennig-Thurau, *et al.*, 2004), it is therefore theorized that the enhancement of the quality of consumer-firm relationships will depend on consumer perception of online reviews.

5.2 Conceptual Model

Drawing on the schema theory (Bartlett, 1932 in Brewer & Nakamura, 1984), the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) (Petty & Briñol, 2015; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), and the broad range of literatures reviewed (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009 is a very notable example), an experience-perception-attitude model of consumption experience is proposed (see Figure 5.1). The model tracks consumers' experiences across two touchpoints/channels and its consequent effect on relationship quality. It postulates that consumers' previous online shopping experience(s) will influence how credibly they will perceive a negative online review(s) posted in the social media by other consumers. The model further postulates that the perceptual state of consumers that arises from exposure to negative experience review(s) posted by other consumers will influence the consumer-firm relationship quality. To ascertain the explanatory efficacy of the individual dimensions of online customer experience (OCE), the five dimensions of OCE were linked to PCoNERs. To successfully adapt the schema theory to the online shopping context, two variables were isolated for examination: a) OCE manipulated based on experience level (i.e. experienced vs novice) and experience type (i.e. positive vs negative experience), and b) PCoNERs. This theorization is supported by the reasoning that experience at time *t* is a function of experience at time *t-1* (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). To successfully adapt the ELM, two conditions that capture message sender's attributes, message validity and message usefulness: a) review source credibility and b) frequency of negative experience reviews as well as relationship quality as a dependent variable were isolated.

Also included in the conceptual model are some interaction effects. Drawing on the context-specific and subjective nature of customer experience (Lemke *et al.*, 2011; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009; Gentile *et al.*, 2007), the research model demonstrates that shopper type interacts with experience type to facilitate PCoNERs. Based on the ELM, it is theorized that review source credibility interacts with review frequency to influence relationship quality.

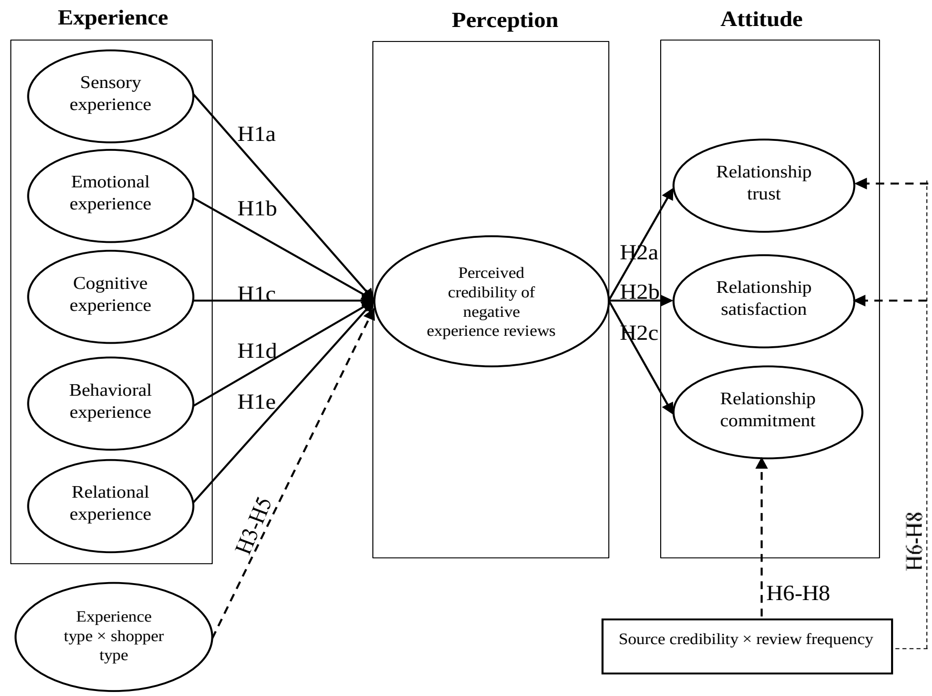

Figure 5.1 Experience-Perception-Attitude Model of Online Customer Experience

5.3 Hypotheses Development

5.3.1 Previous customer experience and Perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs)

Customer experience is the foundation for organizational success because it drives customers' behavior (Gentile *et al.*, 2007). But as noted in section 5.1.2, studies that categorically established the effect of previous OCE on consumer perception especially PCoNERs is absent in the literature. However, the consequences of previous purchase experience are well noted in the literature. For instance, Wan *et al.* (2012) found that previous purchase experiences influence consumers' quality evaluation whilst Giudicati *et al.* (2013) argued that it is widely reported in previous consumer behavior studies that information gained from previous experiences strongly influence the choices that individual consumers make. Shoppers who had positive feelings during their interactions with a website are also more likely to engage in a repeat purchase behavior (Smith & Sivakumar, 2004). Smith and Sivakumar (2004) further noted that shoppers are more likely to return to a given store or site if they are highly self-confident and feel more assured about previous purchase decisions. Cho (2011) found that previous experience with online and other direct channel purchases of sensory goods has a significant positive effect on attitudes. Drawing on this premise and the outcomes of previous customer experience on consumer attitude and behavior, the five dimensions of previous OCE will likely affect consumers' PCoNERs posted by other consumers and the strength of impact will vary across each of the previous OCE dimension.

The above theorization is, in more specific terms, supported by studies on the individual dimensions of customer experience. For instance, Childers *et al.*'s (2001) attitudinal model of online shopping based mainly on technology acceptance research and models of web behavior support the differential importance of immersive, hedonic aspects of the new media and utilitarian motivations. Adhikari (2015) found that emotional attributes play a more prominent role in increasing consumers' willingness to pay premium price and affect revenue generation more than cognitive or objective attributes. Cognitive drivers of experience only help consumers attain a comfort zone by acting to overcome negative hedonic tone but customer clues that activate pleasurable responses is more important in explaining customers' positive feelings or hedonism that trigger more involvement (Andersson & Mossberg, 2004). Pine and Gilmore (1999, 1998) similarly argued that it is far more beneficial to relate with customers on the affective or emotional level. It has also been noted that the sensory and emotional elements of the total experience influence consumer preference more than tangible attributes (Zaltman, 2003). Conversely, Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015) found that e-value formation is fundamentally driven by cognitive effort and utilitarian value/control, and to a lesser extent by the perception of emotional value and value for money.

The influence of social experience is also well noted in previous research. For instance, supported by ICT developments, the influence of other customers has been considered as a key driver of consumer behavior (Blasco-Arcas *et al.*, 2014). Customer-to-customer interactions cues foster the creation of social value in commercial relationships and the development of shared experiences (Edvardsson *et al.*, 2011). Customer-to-customer interactions cues facilitate interpersonal communications and consequently trigger quality customer-to-customer relationships and customer-firm relationships (Blasco-Arcas *et al.*, 2014). Giudicati *et al.* (2013) found that the effect of socialization experience on customer retention is substantial. The service-dominant logic perspective also holds that co-creation experience is an interaction process in which the resulting value is influenced by the social environment (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). On the contrary however, Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015) found that social value experiences do not contribute to e-value.

Irrespective of mixed results found in previous research, the prominence of emotional components over more utilitarian components of consumption experience appears to have been the most widely supported position in the literature. Consequently, it can be argued that since consumers deploy previous consumption experiences as decision-making heuristics (Smith & Sivakumar, 2004) whilst Nysveen and Pedersen (2004) stated that previous online shopping research indicated that previous experience facilitates the understanding of consumer perceptions, it is logical to claim that past shopping experiences can inform consumers' mediation or negation of the credibility of experience reviews posted by other consumers. This postulation is strengthened by Holttinen's (2014) reasoning that consumers' perceptions are a function of previous experiences that shapes socially shared and unquestioned beliefs. To this end, the following is hypothesized:

H1: Consumers' previous OCE – a) sensory experience; b) emotional experience; c) cognitive experience; d) behavioral experience; and e) relational experience will negatively affect PCoNERs. Further, the effect of emotional dimension of OCE will be greater than the effect of other dimensions of OCE.

5.3.2 Perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) and relationship quality

Consumer reviews are a good avenue through which previous consumers share their unique experiences (Tsao *et al.*, 2015). Thus, the idea that consumer reviews constitute a powerful influential source that shapes the behavior and choices of consumers in many ways is strongly supported within literature (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). Accessing other customers' recommendations has been declared a vital part of consumers purchase process (Lee *et al.*, 2008) because Tiago *et al.* (2015) stated that online shoppers can utilize online reviews to construct their expectations and create new comments that inform the purchase decision of other consumers. Generally, previous research show that online consumer reviews increase firm awareness (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), influence consumer's choice of a service provider (Sensoy *et al.*, 2007), purchase intention (Tsao *et al.*, 2015; Robins & Holmes, 2008), and overall firm performance (Kim *et al.*, 2015). The effect of eWOM is also supported by several intuitive arguments. Hajli (2014) argued that other customers' recommendations build trust and mitigate perceived risk. Positive reviews emanating from Facebook friends is an informal third-party endorsement that can enhance consumer trust (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015). According to Litvin *et al.* (2004), recommendations of others (e.g., relatives, friends, and so on) is an influential source of information that guides restaurant selection process. However, even though this theme has been intensively investigated for nearly a decade (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015), little is still known about how consumers process and integrate multiple online reviews (Kim & Lee, 2015) especially negative comments (Cantallops & Salvi, 2014).

Generally speaking, negative eWOM is the most recognized means through which online shoppers express their dissatisfactory experiences (Boo & Kim, 2013). Since negative reviews are pointers to service failure or customer dissatisfaction (Berry & Parasuraman, 1991 in Kim *et al.*, 2015), consumers exposed to negative reviews of a product can assess such product as a poor-quality product (Lee *et al.*, 2008). Such quality assessment can consequently affect the consumer-firm relationship quality although this reasoning is yet to receive adequate research attention except for some intuitive-based opinions. Mattila and Mount (2003) argued that negative eWOM has a snowball effect on a hotel firms' reputation because shared bad experiences can easily go viral. Negative reviews posted by customers in online communities can negatively affect the company's image (Litvin *et al.*, 2008). Ladhari and Michaud (2015) argued that irrespective of whether negative comments are extreme or moderate, they have a negative influence on attitude towards a brand. Singh and Wilkes (1996) and Kim *et al.* (2003) claim that customers develop complaining attitude based on their learned previous complaining experiences. Thus, attitude is a function of previously perceived experiences. Consumers that have no previous experiences can utilize the online reviews published by other consumers as surrogates. Some empirical works also support the influence of eWOM on attitude. For instance, Chiou and Cheng (2003 in Ladhari & Michaud, 2015) found that product evaluation and attitude is negatively affected by negative reviews while Vermeulen and Seegers (2009) indicated that negative review triggers negative attitudinal change. Based on the premise of the above previous research domiciled mainly within the hotel context and linking back to the tenets of the ELM also, it follows that PCoNERs can influence relationship quality especially when the consumer is exposed to reviews with consistent valence. Thus, the following is hypothesized:

H2 PCoNERs will negatively influence a) relationship trust; b) relationship satisfaction; and c) relationship commitment

5.3.3 Experience type versus shopper type

Experience type as employed here is thought of in terms of positive vs. negative previous experience(s). In line with Dagger and O'Brien (2010) and Smith and Sivakumar (2004), shopper type is used to depict novice and experienced shoppers/customers which is a typical reflection of shopping frequency. According to Boyer and Hult (2006), online shoppers become more experienced as their purchase/shopping frequency increases. This section makes a case for the main effects of experience type and shopper type and how both could possibly interact to shape consumer perception on the one hand and propose hypotheses in these directions on the other hand.

Berry *et al.* (2002) noted that whenever customers encounter a firm or its products and services through any of its channels, the take-away impression will either be a good or a bad experience. Some of these service experiences are memorable whether favorable or unfavorable (Åkesson *et al.*, 2014). A memorable experience is highly personalized, immersing, leads to escapism (Hoch, 2002 in Mascarenhas *et al.*, 2006; Pine & Gilmore, 1999) and can result from processing customer clues (Demangeot & Broderick, 2006) such as service systems (e.g. Facebook page and other self-service technologies) provided by the firm (Åkesson *et al.*, 2014). Since memorable experiences trigger emotional response (Lilja *et al.*, 2010), realization of value proposition and attraction of value from the consumers (Åkesson *et al.*, 2014), and cultivate customer loyalty (Schmitt, 1999), it therefore seems reasonable to argue that previous experience can possibly influence consumer perception depending on whether it is positive or negative because Nysveen and Pedersen (2004) argued that previous experience can inform our understanding of consumer perception in the online shopping context. Honeycutt (2005 in Nambisan & Watt, 2011) stated that online product communities dominated by negative interactions will have a negative influence on sociability experience of members. Thus, previous negative experience will likely have a negative effect on consumer perception while previous positive experience will likely induce the opposite effect. This assertion is also supported by the reasoning that self-schema and service experience are positively related (Yim *et al.*, 2007 in Puccinelli *et al.*, 2009). The following hypothesis is therefore proposed:

H3 PCoNERs will differ by experience type (i.e. positive vs. negative experience). Specifically, PCoNERs will be stronger for customers who had a negative experience than those who had a positive experience

The role of shopping frequency in online shopping behavior is also well noted in the pathological Internet usage and online shopping literature. Hsee (1996 in Dagger & O'Brien, 2010) found that the knowledge structures upon which novice and experienced shoppers base their evaluations differ. Additionally, Liang and Huang (1998 in Nysveen & Pedersen, 2004) established that the considerations made by experienced online customers differed from those of novice online customers. Evidences equally show that shopping experience shape shopping goals. Evans *et al.* (2001 in Overby & Lee, 2006) found that experienced Internet users were more likely to participate in virtual communities for informational reasons, whereas novices were more likely to participate for social interaction. Although not universal, greater consensus in the literature suggest that shopping frequency moderate the effect of consumption experience on attitude and behavior. Internet shopping experiences differ from one consumer to another. New and repeat purchasers of grocery products are likely to be substantially different due to extreme disparities in shopping methods (Boyer & Hult, 2006). According to Matzler *et al.* (2015), more experience breeds higher levels of expectations. Novice shoppers are therefore, more likely to have lower expectations than experienced shoppers. Thus, Dagger and O'Brien (2010) found that novice shoppers perceive a negative effect of special treatment benefits on trust because customers perceive this as familiarity beyond expectations while experienced shoppers perceive a positive effect between social benefits and trust, satisfaction and commitment. As shoppers move from novice to experienced shoppers, the effect of special treatment benefits move from negative to positive. Drawing on the foregoing, it can be theorized that consumer perception of negative experience reviews will be more credible from the perspective of experienced shoppers than novice shoppers. Thus, the following is hypothesized:

H4 PCoNERs will differ by shopper type (i.e. experienced shopper vs. novice shopper). Specifically, PCoNERs will be stronger for experienced shoppers than novice shoppers

Since customers are those who undergo the experiences stimulated by the firm (Hoch, 2002 in Mascarenhas *et al.*, 2006), the unique subjective interpretation they assign to negative experience reviews posted by other customers might originate from the nature and frequency of their previous experiences. Online shoppers are often uncertain about what to expect during their first few orders from an e-retailer, but as they place successive orders which results in accumulated experience their comfort level with online purchases increases (Boyer & Hult, 2006). Accordingly, online shoppers who have previously had series of negative experiences are more likely to assess negative experience reviews more credible than shoppers who have previously had series of positive experiences. But on the one hand, studies that adopted the information-processing perspective demonstrate that negative information weigh greater than equally extreme positive information (Pan & Chiou, 2011). Conversely, even when experienced and novice shoppers base their perceptions on a set of product/services attributes that are alike, they weigh those attributes differently (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987 in Dagger & O'Brien, 2010). However, the nature of the differential weighting of negative and positive information is also very likely to depend on whether a novice or an experienced customer is involved. The explanations for this might likely lie in the reasoning that novice shoppers base their assessment on attributes that are easy to understand, previous service experiences with competing firms and exposures to marketing communication information and are therefore less able to understand the implications and importance of an information (Alba & Hutchinson, 1987 in Dagger & O'Brien, 2010). According to Bruner and Kumar (2000 in Nysveen & Pedersen, 2004), websites that novice Internet users find difficult to navigate may be easy to navigate by experienced Internet users. Nysveen and Pedersen (2004) also found that highly experienced Internet customers perceived static websites as easy to use and more useful than customers with low general Internet experience. Thus, shoppers' evaluation of experience clues differs depending on the nature and level of shoppers' experience.

Drawing on the foregoing and given also that customers gain the information they require to assess a relationship experience as the experience increases (Dagger & O'Brien, 2010) whilst it becomes easier to make mental registration of the frequency at which certain incidents occurs than the content of those incidents (Lin *et al.*, 2011), novice shoppers are more likely to attribute greater weight to both positive and negative previous experience(s) than experienced shoppers. Thus, the following is hypothesized:

H5 The interaction effect of experience type and shopper type on perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) will be significant. Specifically, PCoNERs will be greater under both positive previous experience condition and negative previous experience condition for novice shoppers compared to experienced shoppers.

5.3.4 Review source credibility, review frequency and relationship quality

According to Mauri and Minazzi (2013), review source credibility is interpreted in terms of the confidence and assurance of the message's source. Consumers of online information mitigate message uncertainty and enhance credibility decisions by relying on opinion leaders, experts, and information arbiters' views (Metzger & Flanagin, 2013). Ladhari and Michaud (2015) argued that the influence of online reviews on well-known hotel is less pronounced than for less-known hotels. Thus, information from more credible sources are more likely to generate greater effects than information from less credible sources. In contrast, it can be argued that review source credibility will be a docile factor in situations where online reviews are consistently negative across sources. This reasoning is supported by several theoretical evidences. For instance, Baek *et al.* (2012) argued that the effect of online reviews varies depending on content. When consumer decision-making is driven by message content, the effect induced by messages emanate from message disparity (Maheswaran & Meyers-Levy, 1990). Thus, when available messages are consistent, the sources of those messages might induce little or no effect. Additionally, Hogarth and Einhorn (1992 in Tsao *et al.*, 2015) argued that when opinion sources are inconsistent, consumers' uncertainty increases and this can undermine the stability of consumer attitude. This implies that consumers will perceive greater certainty and their attitudes will remain stable irrespective of source when review valence is consistent. Drawing on the foregoing, it is hypothesized that:

H6 The main effect of review source credibility on a) relationship trust, b) relationship satisfaction, and c) relationship commitment will be insignificant under situation of consistent review valence

Additionally, recent views reinforced the influence of review frequency. Lee *et al*. (2008 in Ladhari & Michaud, 2015) demonstrated that negative attitude of consumers results from high frequency of negative consumer reviews. Zhu and Zhang (2010) also found that review frequency significantly influences online games sales. Additionally, negative online reviews are likely to have a weak effect on consumers who are already familiar with the services of the firm in question especially if they are few (Tiago *et al*., 2015) but consistent negative reviews can tarnish firm's reputation (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). Thus, while few number of negative reviews is innocuous and tolerable, it becomes more harmful as the frequency increases. In contrast, Ladhari and Michaud (2015) found that more number of positive comments (i.e. comments frequency or quantity) leads to greater intention to book a hotel online. Previous research also noted that greater number of online reviews with consistent valence induce larger eWOM effects (Tsao *et al*., 2015). The consensus in the literature is that consistent negative reviews induce negative effects whilst reviews are poised to have greater effects when they are many in number. In line with the consistency and frequency research stream, the following is hypothesized:

H7 The main effect of review frequency on a) relationship trust, b) relationship satisfaction, and c) relationship commitment will be significant. Specifically, the effect will be stronger for high review frequency than low review frequency

Furthermore, as time passes, it becomes easier to make mental registration of the frequency at which certain incidents occur than the content of those incidents (Lin *et al*., 2011). Consistency of occurrence of negative experiences which in this case, is a proxy for review frequency is therefore more pronounced in the consumers' memory than the contents of those experiences. According to Petty and Cacioppo (1984 in Lee *et al*., 2008), when involvement is low, the arguments of a message becomes a docile factor as the number of arguments in that message increases. This might be attributed to the theoretical thought that people seek to sustain the consistency between their moods and associated evaluative assessments (Gardner, 1985 in Jones *et al*., 2006). Drawing on the above reasoning, it can be argued that consumers can activate low involvement mode when the valence of reviews is consistent. When the low involvement mode is activated due to consistency in reviews valence, the effect of the message source is automatically lowered. Thus, contrary to the tenets of ELM that distinguishes between two routes through which message persuasion occur, the differing effect of those two routes may become infinitesimal if messages have consistent valence irrespective of source. Since less positive reviews corresponds to frequency (Zhu & Zhang, 2010), review frequency can still have a pronounced effect in a situation whereby reviews have consistent valence as hypothesized above (i.e. H7). However, the interaction effect of review source credibility and reviews frequency on relationships quality is likely to be unpronounced in situation of consistent negative reviews considering the weight of evidence supporting the weakening effect of message consistency. Specifically, under situation of consistent negative reviews, the effect of review source credibility and review frequency will be weakened to a negligible extent irrespective of whether review source credibility and review frequency are at the high or low thresholds. To this end, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H8 The interaction effect of review source credibility and review frequency on a) relationship trust, b) relationship satisfaction, and c) relationship commitment is likely to be insignificant in situations where online reviews have consistent valence

5.4 Summary

In this chapter, the gaps established in chapter two and chapter three were further strengthened in line with the research question by rooting the research objectives in the appropriate theoretical foundations. The chapter demonstrated that despite the inadequate explication of schemas in terms of what drives customer experience (Edvardsson *et al*., 2011), a superior knowledge of customer experience can be gained by understanding schema and how it informs and shapes consumer experiences. Additionally, the chapter showed that consistent with previous studies that investigated the influence of eWOM, it is plausible to theorize that perceived credibility of negative experience reviews can influence consumer-firm relationship quality. Building on the foregoing, an experience-perception-attitude model of online customer experience that tracks shopping experience across two touchpoints/channels was proposed. Thereafter, testable research hypotheses were developed in line with the initially stated research objectives. The next chapter therefore, discusses the method adopted to realize the research objectives before proceeding to empirically verify the conceptual model proposed in this chapter.

CHAPTER SIX
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

6.0 Introduction

Having set out with evident unresolved gaps which gave rise to the research question and four specific research objectives in chapter one and going on to establish the existence of those gaps through a rigorous review of conceptual and theoretical literatures in chapter two to chapter five, this chapter examines the method adopted to resolve the research question and achieve the research objectives. Five key issues will be discussed. First, an overview of the research philosophy and research approach are discussed. Thereafter, the research design, the rationale behind the chosen research design, and the implementation of the chosen research design will be outlined. Third, measures of the research constructs will be evolved. Fourth, the sampling procedure and the study sample is discussed. Finally, the procedures for data analyses will be examined in detail.

6.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy "relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge" (Saunders *et al.*, 2009: 107). According to Waite and Hawker (2009 in Collis & Hussey, 2014), since research philosophy is rooted in the underlying fundamentals of knowledge, reality and existence, it should be the basis upon which research design should subsist. Since research philosophy contains some assumptions of the world which in turn, underpin the research strategy and data collection method(s) to employ (Gill *et al.*, 2010; Saunders *et al.*, 2009), good research designs naturally flow from the appropriate philosophical strands. Thus, business and management researchers need to be conscious of the philosophical commitments that influence their research strategy (Johnson & Clark, 2006). Although practical considerations partly influence the philosophy to adopt, the main influence arises from the researcher's perception of the relationship between knowledge and its development process (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Consistent with this reasoning, research philosophy can be thought of in two different ways – ontology and epistemology – each of which present a different way of thinking about the research process (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Ontology answers the question: what are we studying?

While epistemology answers the question: what is the basis of warranted knowledge about our chosen domain? (Gill *et al.*, 2010).

Two extremely opposing aspects of ontology can be distinguished: objectivism and subjectivism (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Each of the above ontological positions relates to diverse epistemological stances. According to Saunders *et al.* (2009), what constitute an acceptable knowledge in a field of study can be uncovered from either the positivist or the interpretivist philosophical paradigms. Positivism is the idea that an objective truth exists independent of us and can be discovered through systematic inquiry but in contrast to the positivist orthodoxy, interpretivism posits that we create the world and truth is the subjective artefact of social actors (Lee & Lings, 2008). Thus, it is logical to associate ontological objectivism with epistemological positivism and ontological subjectivism to epistemological interpretivism. While positivists test theory(ies) through proposing hypotheses, and subjecting same to statistical tests, interpretivists create theory(ies) through observation.

According to Saunders *et al.* (2009), different research philosophies are different at doing different things. Although some writers fronting the line of thought in research methodology subscribe to the combination of different research philosophies rather than viewing each as stand-alone paradigm (see for instance Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005), the research philosophy to employ is a function of the research question(s) that the researcher seeks to unearth (Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Kent, 2007). Drawing on the foregoing and the assumptions that underlie the different research philosophies, as well as the guiding research question of this study, the objectivist ontology and the positivist epistemological philosophy were adopted. The choice of the positivism research philosophy originates from the reasoning that the online shopping clues orchestrated by online retailers have a reality that is separate from the customers that perceive that reality. Although experiences vary across customers, want fulfilment is the essence of every consumption. Furthermore, in the proposed conceptual model (see chapter five), strong causal relationships were implied. Since Lee and Lings (2008) argued that cause and effect relationships can only be unearthed by assuming that reality is objective and exist independent of social actors, the positivist research philosophy which resonates from ontological objectivism is the most suitable for the thesis of this research. Additionally, positivism research philosophy is the only philosophical paradigm that can measure cross-channel customer experience objectively. Thus, whilst the "complicated-complexes" which underlie social systems can be understood through other paradigms except positivism, a case for the adoption of the objective-positivist's philosophical stance is made based also on the reasoning that this thesis is not interested in deconstructing these "complicated-complexities". The thesis is instead, concerned with testing a causal model by isolating and holding every complexity that is not of interest constant. Even though this approach is criticized by qualitative researchers (Ghobadian & Gallear, 1997), it remains the gold standard against which the evaluation of other research strategies subsists (Gill *et al.*, 2010; Lee & Lings, 2008).

6.2 Research Approach

The research methodology literature (see Bryman & Bell, 2015; Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010; Saunders *et al.*, 2009) recognize two opposing broad research approaches: induction and deduction. In deduction, theory leads to observations/findings while observations/findings lead to theory in induction (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Thus, deduction is "the logical process of deriving a conclusion from a known premise or something known as true [while induction is] the systematic process of establishing a general proposition based on observation or particular facts" (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010: 16).

Considering the foregoing and the thought that different research approaches derive mainly from the different research philosophies, it can be argued that deduction owns more to positivism and induction to interpretivism (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Thus, the deductive research approach is adopted in this study. The adoption of this research approach stems mainly from the nature of our research question and the following features of deduction: a) aims to explain causal relationships; b) develops and tests hypotheses; c) utilizes quantitative data; d) research method can be replicated; and e) aims to generalize findings (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Deduction is the most appropriate because new theoretical insights were developed through deducing hypotheses from existing theories and subjecting the hypotheses to empirical tests to confirm or disconfirm them.

6.3 Research Design

Like professional architects, ambitious researchers develop appropriate research designs for their research projects. A research design provides an overall plan for data collection and the issues underpinning data collection (Saunders *et al.*, 2009), or as Lee and Lings (2008) put it, the several logics underlying data collection and how data relates to theory. In short, research findings can only be worthwhile if they are based on appropriate research design (Field & Hole, 2003). According to Lee and Lings (2008), research design outlines and ties every issue relating to how empirical evidence can be generated to address the research problem and research question(s). Research design focuses on turning research problem into research project (Robson, 2002). Saunders *et al.* (2009) stated that the research design process encompasses research strategies, research choices, and time horizons all of which lead to data collection; thus, it is generally concerned with how the researcher goes about answering the research question(s). Thus, in the sections that follow, the data collection techniques and analytical procedures which will enable us to answer the research questions was derived by drawing on the appropriate research strategy.

6.4 Research Strategy

The research philosophy and approach influence the way a researcher chooses to answer his/her research question which in turn, influences the researcher's choice of research strategy, data collection and analytical procedures as well as the research's time horizon (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Additionally, depending on how the research question is framed, the answers that the researcher seeks can be descriptive, exploratory, explanatory or a combination (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). Broadly classified, these research strategies can either be quantitative or qualitative (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). The logic underlying this schism cannot be disassociated from the polarization between deductive and inductive research approaches which draws from the two major philosophical perspectives.

However, the right choice of research strategy is a function of the research question(s) or objective(s), the extant knowledge base, the resources (time and money) available, and the philosophical foundations of the research (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Deductive research is dominantly quantitative while inductive research is dominantly qualitative (Ghauri & Gronhaug, 2010). Thus, the appropriate research strategy to adopt in this project is arguably the quantitative research strategy. Although extant evidence suggests that no research strategy is superior to the other, experimental research design is widely cited as the gold standard in deductive research and the standard against which every other research strategy is evaluated (Gill *et al.*, 2010; Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Lee & Lings, 2008). Experimental studies are explanatory or causal in nature because it seeks to establish causality between variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Given the nature of our research questions and the strong causal relationships implied in our conceptual model, the experimental research design was adopted in this study. In addition to the above justifications, other reasons account for the choice of the experimental design in this study. First, online shopping is a new trend in Nigeria. Thus, it is difficult to reach online shoppers because the penetration of online shopping is very low. 62 per cent of the respondents that participated in a survey conducted in Nigeria reported that they have never shopped online (Phillips Consulting, 2014). Additionally, "experiential marketing is not bound to one methodological approach; it is eclectic" (Schmitt, 1999: 59); thus, the method to adopt depends on the research question. More specifically, Ismail *et al.* (2011) recommended that as an established research tradition in marketing, quantitative studies can be used to investigate the unknown domain of customer experience especially when a conceptual model developed through an in-depth review of literature is involved. Finally, "every branch of inquiry aimed at reliable general laws concerning empirical subject matter must employ a procedure that, if it is not strictly controlled experimentation, has the essential logic functions of experiment in inquiry" (Nagel, 1961: 452 in Gill *et al.*, 2010). Also, adopting the reasoning that most studies of schema employed an experimental design (McVee *et al.*, 2005), an experiment was conducted in this study to align with previous research. Two experiments were conducted to answer the research question of this study. The section immediately below offers a general overview of the experimental research design and how it was implemented to answer the research question.

6.5 Experimental Research Design

Scientists conduct experiments to answer research questions by either observing phenomena as they naturally occur or by manipulating one variable (called the predictor or independent variable) and studying its effect on another variable of interest (called the dependent variable) (Field & Hole, 2003). An experiment is a type of research design where the researcher manipulates one or more independent variables to study its effects on dependent variable(s) while at the same time controlling for extraneous variables (Kent, 2007; Aaker *et al*., 2005). It is therefore a research design that can be utilized to establish definite "cause and effect" relationships. To isolate causal variables, all alternative explanations must be ruled out or held constant (Field & Hole, 2003). Alternative explanations are ruled out by i) having at least two experimental conditions or groups: one in which the cause is present and another in which the cause is absent, and ii) randomizing the assignment of subjects into groups (Field & Hole, 2003). Through random assignment, subjects are allocated to the experimental conditions in an unbiased manner (Krishnaswamy *et al*., 2006). Additionally, the need to control extraneous factors to obtain accurate/precise measurement of the variables under investigation when a researcher employs an experimental design has been widely underscored (see Kent, 2007; Hair *et al*., 2006; Aaker *et al*., 2005; Field & Hole, 2003). Adequately controlling the effects of extraneous variables allows the researcher to confidently conclude that the observed effect can solely be attributed to systematic rather than random variations (Field & Hole, 2003). Ruling out alternative explanations is just one of the evidence for causal inference. According to Aaker *et al*. (2005) and Churchill, Jr. (2001), condition of concomitant variation (i.e. an evidence where cause and effect are strongly correlated), condition of time order of occurrence (i.e. an evidence where cause precedes an effect), and absence of alternative causal explanations (i.e. an evidence of high internal validity) are three kinds of evidence or condition that substantiate causal inference. In designing the methodological thesis of this research, the above three evidences were accounted for.

Although from a broader viewpoint, experiments are widely classified into laboratory and field experiments (see Kent, 2007; Krishnaswamy *et al*., 2006; Aaker *et al*., 2005; Patzer, 1996), types of experimental designs are not only varied but are also subject of semantic controversy/disparities. For a chronicle of the various types of experimental designs and these semantic controversies, see Kent (2007); Krishnaswamy *et al*. (2006); Aaker *et al*. (2005); Patzer (1996). Each identified design type has its strengths and weaknesses.

However, the experimental design to utilize depends on whether it is possible to conduct a pure experiment, feasibility of within-subjects design, and whether the inclusion of an additional independent variable can be done without much troubles (Field & Hole, 2003). Field and Hole (2003) further noted that simplicity in the design is also a factor to consider.

In this research, a 2 (experience type: positive versus negative) × 2 (shopper type: experienced shopper versus novice shopper) between-subject factorial design was employed in study 1. In study 2, a 2 (experience type: positive versus negative) × 2 (review source credibility: high versus low) × 2 (negative experience review frequency: high versus low) between-subject factorial design was employed. The pilot study that combined study 1 and study 2 also adopted the between-subject factorial design. One key difference is that the manipulation of experience type as captured in study 2 was only introduced after the pilot experiments. Five key reasons informed the use of between-subject factorial experimental design in this study. First, it was possible to conduct a pure experiment. Second, although within-subjects design is more sensitive to experimental manipulations (Field & Hole, 2003), it was not feasible to apply it in this study because the design will make the experiment unduly lengthy and affect subjects' motivation. According to Field and Hole (2003), the quality of obtained data may suffer as participants' motivation wane especially if the experiment is excessively lengthy and tedious. Third, between-subject factorial design helps extend the generality of our research findings at a relatively little extra effort (Field & Hole, 2003). Additionally, factorial designs not only reduce variance, confounds, and bias that are usually large in one-at-a time experimental designs (Krishnaswamy *et al.*, 2006), it is also the most widely used in marketing research because it accommodates multiple variables which is typical of marketing decisions and examines main and interaction effects (Krishnaswamy *et al.*, 2006; Aaker *et al.*, 2005; Field & Hole, 2003; Patzer, 1996). Finally, what was utilized in most previous online customer experience (OCE) studies (e.g. Mosteller *et al.*, 2014; Wu *et al.*, 2008; Kim & Forsythe, 2008) is the between-subject factorial experimental design. Supported by the above five reasons, the way the between-subject factorial design was implemented in the pilot study, study 1, and study 2 are thereafter discussed. The pilot study is like the two main studies in every respect except few adjustments that were made to study 2 after the pilot study. The only major difference was that the pilot study used the same subjects for the two pilot experiments. Thus, in the interest of presentation parsimony, the design, stimuli development and experimental procedures, manipulation checks and experimental realism were only discussed in depth in the pilot study. Similar discussions in study 1 and study 2 drew mainly from the pilot study because as stated before, the pilot experiments and the two main studies were similar in all respects except the differences pointed out earlier.

6.6 Pilot Study

The pilot study was designed to address three issues: a) test the quality of manipulations of the experimental conditions for the two differently-styled experiments; b) subject the measures of OCE to purification, reduction and summarization; and c) examine the validity and reliability of the measurement scales. The design of the pilot study, stimuli development, experimental procedures, manipulation checks and experimental realism as well as the measures taken to control for the effects of common method variance to ensure that a carryover effect were not present in the two experiments due to the use of the same participants are discussed below.

6.6.1 Subjects and design – pilot experiment 1 and pilot experiment 2

The pilot study combined two experiments each of which adopted the between-subject factorial design since data for the two experiments were simultaneously generated from the same subjects. In the first pilot experiment, a 2 (experience type: positive versus negative) × 2 (shopper type: experienced shopper versus novice shopper) between-subject factorial design was employed. In the second pilot experiment, a 2 (review source credibility: high versus low) × 2 (negative experience review frequency: high versus low) between-subject factorial design was employed. Given that *EG* = experimental group; *R* = randomization; *X* = exposure to experimental condition/scenario; *O* = observation; *PE* = positive experience; *NE* = negative experience; *ES* = experienced shopper; *NS* = novice shopper; *HRSC* = high review source credibility; *LRSC* = low review source credibility; *HNERF* = high negative experience review frequency; and *LNERF* = low negative experience review frequency, the design of the two experiments are laid out as follows:

Pilot experiment 1

EG_1	R	X_1 (PE, ES)	O_1	$n = 40$
EG_2	R	X_2 (PE, NS)	O_2	$n = 40$
EG_3	R	X_3 (NE, ES)	O_3	$n = 40$
EG_4	R	X_4 (NE, NS)	O_4	$n = 40$

Pilot experiment 2

EG_1	R	X_1 (HRSC, HNERF)	O_1	$n = 40$
EG_2	R	X_2 (HRSC, LNERF)	O_2	$n = 40$
EG_3	R	X_3 (LRSC, HNERF)	O_3	$n = 40$
EG_4	R	X_4 (LRSC, LNERF)	O_4	$n = 40$

As illustrated above, each of the two experiments comprised four experimental groups that yielded four experimental condition/scenarios capture below:

Four scenarios of pilot experiment 1

Scenario 1: You have been a regular customer of an online retailer called **Osas.com**. You have been buying many things/products that you need from this Internet Company. By your assessment, their website seems good because products are displayed in such a way that it is very easy to find anything that you want. The quality of the pictures of the products in **Osas.com**'s website is also amazing. So, it has always been an exciting experience to shop on **Osas.com**'s website. The prices of products are also reasonable and affordable. Each time you buy a product from **Osas.com**, they deliver it to your doorstep at the shortest possible time. Their products are always worth the price you paid for them. Moreover, all the products you have purchased from **Osas.com** in the past were in good working condition when they delivered it to you.

Scenario 2: In a conversation with **Mr. Donald Okafor**, a friend of yours, regarding some products that you intend to buy, he told you that you can purchase everything you want on the Internet and it will be delivered to your doorstep without you bothering to visit a physical store. So, you decided to give **Donald's** idea a trial. **It was your first time of trying to buy products online.** You decided to shop on the website of an online retailer called **Osas.com**. By your assessment, their website seemed good because products were displayed in such a way that it was very easy to find anything that you want to buy. The quality of the pictures of the products in their website was also amazing. So, it was an exciting experience to shop on **Osas.com's** website. The prices of products were also reasonable and affordable. After the purchase, the company delivered the product to your doorstep at the **shortest time possible**. When the product arrived, it was **worth the price** you paid for it. Moreover, the product was also in **good working condition** when the company delivered it to you. **But remember that this was just your first time of buying something from Osas.com.**

Scenario 3: You have been a regular customer of an online retailer called **Osas.com**. You have been buying many products that you need from this online retailer. By your assessment, **their website is not good** because products are **displayed** in such a way that it is **very difficult to find** what you want to buy. The **quality of the pictures of the products** displayed in their website is also not good by your assessment. So, each time you shop on **Osas.com's** website, it is not always an exciting experience. The prices of products are also expensive but you still decided to continue buying products from them because they have all the products that you need. Each time you purchase an item from them, it takes very long time for the product to arrive and on some occasions up to **2 months**. Their products are not always worth the price you paid for them. Moreover, some of the products you purchased from them in the past were not in good working condition when they were delivered to you.

Scenario 4: In a conversation with **Mr. Donald Okafor**, a friend of yours, regarding some products that you intend to buy, he told you that you can purchase everything you want on the Internet and it will be delivered to your doorstep without you bothering to visit a physical store. So, you decided to give **Donald's** idea a trial. **It was your first time of trying to buy products online.** You decided to shop on the website of an online retailer called **Osas.com**. Their website was not good because products were not well displayed for easy access and the quality of the pictures of the products you viewed on the website was poor. So, nothing was exciting about **Osas.com's** website but you decided to continue with the shopping. Although you managed to find the kind of product that you were looking for, it took you too much time and energy to find it. As you browsed through the website, you also found out that their **prices** were very expensive. Despite all these, you still decided to buy from the company because they have all the products that you need. After purchase, it took very long time (say **2 months**) for the company to deliver the product to you. When the product finally arrived, it was not worth the price you paid. Moreover, some parts of the product were damaged before delivery.

Four scenarios of pilot experiment 2

Scenario 1: *You have been buying products from an online company called* ***Blue gate*** *and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Today, you just logged into* ***Blue Gate's*** *Facebook page and found the following comments from Nigerian popular celebrities about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Basket Mouth (Nigerian Comedian)

Blue Gate is owing me since April. They deceived me and I swiped my ATM on their POS for a wrong product delivered to me. They have retrieved the product and I cannot get my money back. Fraud! Fraud!! Fraud!!!

Mr. Ibu (Nigerian Actor)

I placed an order for a product on Blue Gate, they supplied the wrong item 3 days after I placed the order. I noticed that the product delivered wasn't the right item. I called them immediately and they promised to retrieve the item within 8days but this item was not retrieved after 37days after I wasted a lot of my credit calling them. NOW THE ITEM HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND MY MONEY IS TRAPPED! I know they are not going to refund me because I have called their customer service several times and no one can help me get my money back.

Patience Ozokwor (Nigerian Actress)

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

Scenario 2: *You have been buying products from an online company called* ***Blue gate*** *and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Today, you just logged into* ***Blue Gate's*** *Facebook page and found the following comments from Nigerian popular celebrity about the company. Please read through his comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Mr. Ibu (Nigerian Actor)

I placed an order for a product on Blue Gate, they supplied the wrong item 3 days after I placed the order. I noticed that the product delivered wasn't the right item. I called them immediately and they promised to retrieve the item within 8days but this item was not retrieved after 37days after I wasted a lot of my credit calling them. NOW THE ITEM HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND MY MONEY IS TRAPPED! I know they are not going to refund me because I have called their customer service several times and no one can help me get my money back.

Scenario 3: *You have been buying products from an online company called **Blue gate** and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Today, you just logged into **Blue Gate's** Facebook page and found the following comments from some customers about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Okereke Precious

Blue Gate is owing me since April. They deceived me and I swiped my ATM on their POS for a wrong product delivered to me. They have retrieved the product and I cannot get my money back. Fraud! Fraud!! Fraud!!!

Nweke Ndubisi

I placed an order for a product on Blue Gate, they supplied the wrong item 3 days after I placed the order. I noticed that the product delivered wasn't the right item. I called them immediately and they promised to retrieve the item within 8days but this item was not retrieved after 37days after I wasted a lot of my credit calling them. NOW THE ITEM HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND MY MONEY IS TRAPPED! I know they are not going to refund me because I have called their customer service several times and no one can help me get my money back.

Okafor Miracle

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

Scenario 4: *You have been buying products from an online company called **Blue gate** and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Today, you just logged into **Blue Gate's** Facebook page and found the following comments from another customer about the company. Please read through the comment and answer the questions that follow.*

Nweke Ndubisi

I placed an order for a product on Blue Gate, they supplied the wrong item 3 days after I placed the order. I noticed that the product delivered wasn't the right item. I called them immediately and they promised to retrieve the item within 8days but this item was not retrieved after 37days after I wasted a lot of my credit calling them. NOW THE ITEM HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND MY MONEY IS TRAPPED! I know they are not going to refund me because I have called their customer service several times and no one can help me get my money back.

Subjects were randomly allocated to two experimental scenarios (one from each experiment).

6.6.2 Stimuli development – pilot experiment 1

Consistent with previous notable articles published in *Journal of Retailing* (see Herhausen *et al.*, 2015; Mittal *et al.*, 2008) and *Journal of Consumer Research* (see Wan & Wyer, 2015), a scenario-based experiment was conducted. In line with the design laid out in section 6.6.1, the first scenario is a description of an experienced shopper who had series of positive experiences. The second scenario is a description of a novice shopper who had a positive experience. The third scenario is a description of an experienced shopper who had series of negative experiences. The last scenario is a description of a novice shopper who had a negative experience. The four scenarios captured above were developed and constantly modified between August 2015 and January 2016. In a series of about three supervisee-supervisor meetings, the written descriptions were developed and face-validated with the supervisor. The next level of validation involved 3 Nigerian PhD students in the University of Hull Business School. The PhD students were asked to read and assess the suitability and realistic nature of the described scenarios to the Nigerian online shopping contexts. Finally, a sample of 5 experienced Nigerian online shoppers were approached for the plausibility and suitability of the described scenarios. The results that emerged from the above 3-stage processes were integrated into the scenarios until the final version of it was generated.

Taken together, the four experimental scenarios manipulated based on experience type and shopper type are meant to put subjects in certain moods. Research shows that people's thinking and actions can be influenced by their moods or feelings (Poon, 2001). Positive moods for instance, help people recall positive things stored in their memories because people in a positive state try to sustain it (Berry *et al.*, 2006). Thus, customers are more likely to access memories that are congruent with their current mood (Isen, 1987). In contrast, Berry *et al.* (2006) noted that this pattern is very unlikely to hold for negative moods. Poon (2001) stated that people try to suppress negative moods by avoiding the recall of negative memories. Furthermore, moods or affective states affect the information processing strategy that people adopt (Berry *et al.*, 2006).

6.6.3 Stimuli development – pilot experiment 2

Consistent with previous notable articles published in *Journal of Service Research* (Karande *et al.*, 2007; Mattila & Patterson, 2004; Fullerton, 2003; Smith & Bolton, 1998) and *International Journal of Hospitality Management* (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015; Tsao *et al.*, 2015; Mauri & Minazzi, 2013), a scenario-based experiment was conducted. Review source credibility was manipulated by using the name(s) of popular Nigerian celebrity(ies) and the name(s) of non-celebrity(ies). Thus, review source credibility was delineated into high versus low conditions by attributing high negative experience reviews to a popular Nigerian celebrity(ies) and low negative experience reviews to an unknown/unpopular review writer(s) on Facebook. The three negative experience reviews used were extracted from the Facebook page of a leading Nigerian online retailer to enhance experimental realism. The only adjustments made to the reviews was the varying of the names of posters and the number of reviews included in each experimental condition in accordance with the manipulation criteria.

Review frequency was delineated into high versus low conditions by attributing high reviews frequency to 3 negative experiential reviews and low review frequency to 1 negative experiential review. The use of 3 as a benchmark for high review frequency has strong theoretical backing. For instance, Boyer and Hult (2006) noted that discussions with numerous executives show that it is universally accepted that it takes three to five orders for a customer to be comfortable with a system. Thus, anything below 3 is low in frequency. Krugman (1972 in Tsao *et al.*, 2015) reinforced that the first, second, and third exposure respectively trigger interest and curiosity, construct perception around the object, and instill evaluative capacity and formulate purchase decision. Drawing on these premises, it is logical to argue that a high frequency of negative consumer reviews will lie anywhere from three and above. Another practical reason that led to the utilization of 3 reviews is to prevent the experiment from becoming unnecessarily too lengthy. This helped to combat fatigue which may lead to loss of objectivity in subjects' responses. The three utilized reviews were also consistent in valence. The use of reviews with consistent valence derives mainly from the reasoning that they lead to greater eWOM effects (Tsao *et al.*, 2015). Additionally, from the perspective of the activity theory, possible outcomes are a product of interactions of objects, communities, or subjects that are closely related (Diehl & Prins, 2008 in Piyathasanan *et al.*, 2014-15).

Drawing on the above discussions and the study design, four experimental scenarios emerged (see above). The first scenario reflects a high review source credibility versus high review frequency condition where the three extracted reviews were shown to be posted by three popular Nigeria celebrities. The second scenario reflects a high review source credibility versus low review frequency condition where one review was shown to be posted by one popular Nigerian celebrity. The third scenario reflects a low review source credibility versus high review frequency condition where the three reviews were shown to be posted by three different unknown Facebook users. The fourth scenario reflects a low review source credibility versus low review frequency condition where one review was shown to be posted by an unknown Facebook user.

6.6.4 Experimental procedures – pilot experiment 1 and pilot experiment 2

A pen and paper approach was utilized since the experiments were conducted in a setting outside the lab environment. A booklet (see appendix 2 and 3 for copies) containing the experimental scenarios for the two combined studies and the accompanying survey were developed. To ensure that the administration of the instruments was strictly random, the research instruments were premixed beforehand. Participation in the experiments was voluntary as no incentive were offered to the subjects. The researcher conveniently approached students in their campuses and requested them to participate in the experiments. The subjects who indicated interest were directed to sit down. Participants were briefed about the experiments. The participants were instructed to read the experimental scenarios randomly assigned to them, and thereafter, complete the accompanying surveys. They were also instructed to direct all questions to the researcher if there were things that they misunderstood rather than asking their fellow respondents. Subjects who were still interested in the experiment after these briefings signed off a consent form (see appendix 1) before proceeding with the experiment. After completing the two experiments, the participants were debriefed. The administration of the experiments continued for 18 working days (i.e. 25th April 2016 to 18th May 2016). It took the subjects an average of 25 minutes to complete the experiments.

In total, 160 subjects recruited from a South-Eastern Nigerian university participated in the two pilot experiments. Due to the length of the survey accompanying the experiment and the fact that the experiments were not administered in a lab controlled setting, three major steps were employed to identify and offset the effect of response bias. First, order counterbalancing was used. Second, completed questionnaires were subjected to manual screening. Questionnaires with missing responses or those with obvious and biased responses were eliminated. Finally, given that some questionnaire items were reversed-coded, participants that provided inconsistent responses to these were eliminated. Overall, 122 valid responses accounting for 76.25% emerged while the balance was discounted based on the above three criteria.

6.6.5 Manipulation checks and experimental realism

In the first pilot experiment, the quality of the experimental manipulations was assessed by asking participants to rate their overall satisfaction with the shopping experiences described in each experimental scenario. Three broad indicators of satisfaction adapted from Crosby *et al.* (1990) were asked (see section 6.9). To ascertain whether the manipulation was effective, the perception scores of the aggregate satisfaction measures were compared across the four experimental conditions after assessing the internal consistency of the three measures. As for the second pilot experiment, measures of cognition (see section 6.9) were utilized to test the quality of the experimental manipulation.

To examine experimental realism, three items including: “To what extent do you perceive the shopping incident described above as something that happened to you?”, “To what extent do you think that the shopping incident described above can happen in real life?”, and “To what extent is the whole exercise easy to understand?” were asked. The mean ratings of the measures were used to assess how real the described scenarios were. The above was mainly for the first pilot experiment. For the second pilot experiment, experimental realism was enhanced as mentioned earlier by extracting and utilizing reviews published in the Facebook page of a leading Nigerian online retailer.

6.6.6 Common method variance (CMV)

Order counterbalancing was employed to check the presence or otherwise of CMV and estimate the magnitude of its effects on the analysis of data since the same participants completed the two experiments. Half of the subjects completed the first experiment first followed by the second experiment while the remaining half completed the second experiment first followed by the first experiment. This gave rise to two independent groups. An independent sample *t*-test was employed to assess the perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) in the two experiments and the overall satisfaction measures asked in the first experiment.

6.7 Study 1

6.7.1 Subjects and design

As in the pilot study, this study employed a 2 (experience type: positive versus negative) × 2 (shopper type: experienced shopper versus novice shopper) between-subject factorial design. The design was the same except that each of the four cells had 105 subjects (i.e. $n = 105$). Subjects were randomly allocated to one of the experimental groups. After exposure to one experimental scenario, the variables of interest were measured.

6.7.2 Stimuli development and experimental procedures

The same experimental scenarios developed and utilized in pilot experiment 1 was adopted here because of the robustness of the results of the pilot study. Students were recruited to participate in the experiment by informing some lecturers of business courses in a university located in south-south region of Nigeria to verbally advertise the experiment during their lectures. The choice of the city and the university was because the presence of online retailers in the city is very pronounced despite the emerging nature of online retailing in Nigeria. Thus, it was possible to generate students who have shopped online or who have not shopped online before. Participation in the experiment was voluntary as no incentive were offered to the subjects. A teaching laboratory commonly used for a variety of postgraduate business classes was the setting for stimuli presentation and survey completion. The maximum number of subjects that was accommodated in each experimental section which lasted for an average of 40 minutes was 15. The researcher's computer situated in the front of the teaching laboratory was connected to an LCD projector with 8' x 8' screen. As subjects arrived at the laboratory and checked in, they were instructed to sit quietly. The subjects were informed that they will be participating in a scenario-based online shopping experiment. They were told that the researcher will first illustrate a typical online shopping task by browsing and projecting the website of a leading online retailer on the projector in front of the Lab. Thereafter, they would be given a description of an online shopping experience which they are required to read, imagine that the described incident happened to them, and complete an accompanying questionnaire based on their feelings about the shopping incident described. The subjects were also instructed to direct every question they might have to the researcher. Subjects who were still interested in the experiment after these briefings signed off a consent form (see appendix 1) before proceeding with the experiment.

After these preliminary guidelines, the researcher proceeded to navigate through the Amazon.com website. Subjects were encouraged to ask questions regarding the online shopping navigation as the demonstration proceeded. The whole idea was to expose subjects to how online shopping is conducted in practice, the wide range of products that can be bought online, and the convenience associated with shopping online. After browsing through the Amazon.com website and showing subjects the wide range of online shopping opportunities available for about 15 minutes, a booklet (see appendix 2) containing a described shopping scenario and the accompanying survey were shared to the subjects. To eliminate the effects of previous experiences with existing companies for respondents who have shopped online before, a new company name (Osas.com) was invented for the experiment. The booklets were pre-mixed beforehand to ensure that its administration was randomized. Subjects were told that everybody will leave the lab at the same time. Therefore, there was no need to rush the exercise and end up with spurious responses. The booklet was retrieved 20 minutes after they were administered. The timing was validated in the pilot study. Subjects were debriefed which brought each session to an end. A total of 420 subjects participated in this experiment which lasted for 29 working days (i.e. from 10th June to 14th July 2016). All the questionnaires administered were retrieved. Manipulation checks and experimental realism were same as in pilot experiment 1.

6.7.3 Dependent variable

The dependent variable in this experiment is PCoNERs which was assessed with four measures on a 7-point scale (1 = very strongly disagree, 7 = very strongly agree). The sources of the four measures were discussed in section 6.9.

6.7.4 Independent variables and cognition

The independent variables in this experiment are experience type delineated into positive versus negative and shopper type delineated into novice versus experienced shoppers. With the above as the basis for manipulation, it was also possible to measure dimensions of online customer experience (OCE). As noted in chapter two, OCE comprises five major dimensions which include sensory experience, emotional experience, cognitive experience, behavioral experience, and relational experience. Each of the dimension of OCE was measured on a 7-point scale (see section 6.9). Finally, measures of cognition were adapted from Mittal *et al.* (2008).

6.8 Study 2

6.8.1 Subjects and design

Since the results of the pilot study indicate that the manipulation of the experimental conditions was not successful probably because prior positive experience was all positive, this study employed a 2 (experience type: positive versus negative) × 2 (review source credibility: high versus low) × 2 (frequency of negative experience reviews: high versus low) between-subject factorial design. Source credibility as used here reflect how credible the review source is. Given that *EG* = experimental group; *R* = randomization; *X* = exposure to experimental condition/scenario; *O* = observation; *PE* = positive experience; *NE* = negative experience; *HRSC* = high review source credibility; *LRSC* = low review source credibility; *HNERF* = high negative experience review frequency; and *LNERF* = low negative experience review frequency, the design of the experiment was laid out as follows:

EG_1	R	X_1 (PE, HRSC, HNERF)	O_1	$n = 50$
EG_2	R	X_2 (PE, HRSC, LNERF)	O_2	$n = 50$

EG_3	R	X_3 (PE, LRSC, HNERF)	O_3	$n = 50$
EG_4	R	X_4 (PE, LRSC, LNERF)	O_4	$n = 50$
EG_5	R	X_5 (NE, HRSC, HNERF)	O_5	$n = 50$
EG_6	R	X_6 (NE, HRSC, LNERF)	O_6	$n = 50$
EG_7	R	X_7 (NE, LRSC, HNERF)	O_7	$n = 50$
EG_8	R	X_8 (NE, LRSC, LNERF)	O_8	$n = 50$

As illustrated above, the experiment comprised eight experimental groups that yielded eight experimental scenarios. Except for distinguishing between prior positive experience and prior negative experience, everything else was as in pilot experiment 2. Below are the four prior negative experience short vignettes preceding the four experimental scenarios:

Vignette 1: *You have been buying products from an online company called* ***Blue gate*** *and their service has not been great. They always waste much time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will not refund you your money. Shopping on Blue Gate's website is not always a thing of joy for you and it is also boring. Today, you just logged into* ***Blue Gate's*** *Facebook page and found the following comments from Nigerian celebrities about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Vignette 2: *You have been buying products from an online company called* ***Blue gate*** *and their service has not been great. They always waste much time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will not refund you your money. Shopping on Blue Gate's website is not always a thing of joy for you and it is also boring. Today, you just logged into* ***Blue Gate's*** *Facebook page and found the following comments from a Nigerian celebrity about the company. Please read through the comment and answer the questions that follow.*

Vignette 3: *You have been buying products from an online company called* ***Blue gate*** *and their service has not been great. They always waste much time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will not refund you your money. Shopping on Blue Gate's website is not always a thing of joy for you and it is also boring. But today, you just logged into* ***Blue Gate's*** *Facebook page and found that the comments below were posted by some customers about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Vignette 4: *You have been buying products from an online company called* ***Blue gate*** *and their service has not been great. They always waste much time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will not refund you your money. Shopping on Blue Gate's website is not always a thing of joy for you and it is also boring. But today, you just logged into* ***Blue Gate's*** *Facebook page and found that the comments below were posted by some customers about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow. But today, you just logged into* ***Blue Gate's*** *Facebook page and found that the comments below were posted by another customer about the company. Please read through the comments and answer the questions that follow.*

The reviews that followed each of the above vignettes were same as the ones utilized in pilot experiment 2. Subjects were randomly allocated to one of the experimental groups. After exposure to one experimental scenario, the variables of interest were measured. Each of the eight cells had 50 subjects.

6.8.2 Stimuli development and experimental procedures

The stimuli developed for this study is similar in all respects to the ones utilized in pilot experiment 2 except the inclusion of experience type. Experience type was delineated into two conditions (i.e. previous positive experience versus previous negative experience). Drawing on the study design mapped out above, eight experimental scenarios emerged. The first scenario reflects a high review source credibility versus high review frequency condition where the three extracted reviews were shown to be posted by three popular Nigerian celebrities. The second scenario reflects a high review source credibility versus low review frequency condition where one review was shown to be posted by one popular Nigerian celebrity. The third scenario reflects a low review source credibility versus high review frequency condition where the three reviews were shown to be posted by three different unknown Facebook users. The fourth scenario reflects a low review source credibility versus low review frequency condition where one review was shown to be posted by an unknown Facebook user. While the above first four experimental scenarios were proceeded by short vignette depicting prior positive experience, the remaining four experimental scenarios were exactly laid out as in the first four scenarios except that each of them were preceded by a short vignette depicting prior negative experience.

Students were recruited to participate in the experiment by informing some lecturers of business courses in the case university to verbally advertise the experiment during their lectures. The experimental procedures were the same as in study 1 except that the maximum number of subjects that was accommodated in each experimental section which lasted for an average of 35 minutes was 20. Additionally, subjects were informed that they will be participating in a scenario-based online consumer reviews experiment. They were told that the researcher will first illustrate typical cases of online consumer reviews task by browsing and projecting the consumer reviews posted in a very popular review website on the projector in front of the Lab. Thereafter, they would be given a booklet containing a brief previous shopping experience and online consumer reviews posted by users of

Facebook. They were also told that they are required to read the scenario, imagine that the described incident happened to them, and complete an accompanying questionnaire based on their feelings. Subjects who participated up to this point were asked to complete a consent form (see appendix 1) before proceeding with the experiment.

After browsing through the tripadvisor.com website and showing subjects the wide range of online consumer reviews available for about 10 minutes, the booklet mentioned above was shared to the subjects. To eliminate the effects of previous experiences with existing companies for subjects who are used to online reviews, a new company name (Blue Gate) was invented for the experiment. The booklets (see appendix 4) were pre-mixed beforehand to ensure that its administration was randomized. The booklet was retrieved 20 minutes after they were administered. Subjects were debriefed which brought each session to an end. A total of 400 subjects participated in this experiment that lasted for 28 working days (i.e. from 18th July to 24th August 2016). All the 400 questionnaires were retrieved.

6.8.3 Manipulation checks

The quality of the manipulation of review source credibility was checked based on the Wan and Wyer's (2015) approach by comparing the rating given to celebrities with the rating given to non-celebrities. The following question was asked: "To what extent can you say that the people who posted these comments are popular Nigerian celebrities?" An independent sample *t*-test was employed. The quality of manipulation of review frequency was checked by asking a dichotomous yes/no question and tested with Chi-square. It is worthy of note that the above questions were not included in the pilot study. Thus, they are what distinguish study 2 from pilot experiment 2. The quality of manipulation of prior experience type was assessed by examining cognition across the two groups through an independent sample *t*-test. The use of cognition is strictly based on the reasoning that negative information carries greater weight than extremely positive information (Park & Lee, 2009; Cheung & Lee, 2008; Klebba & Unger, 1983).

6.8.4 Dependent variable

The dependent variable in this experiment is relationship quality which has three components (i.e. relationship trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment) and was respectively measured with four, three, and three items (see section 6.9.) on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = very strongly disagree, 7 = very strongly agree).

6.8.5 Independent variables and cognition

The independent variables in this experiment are experience type delineated into positive versus negative; review source credibility delineated into high versus low; and negative experience review frequency also delineated into high versus low. With review source credibility and review frequency as part of the basis for manipulation, it was also possible to measure PCoNERs. PCoNERs was measured with four items (see section 6.9) on a 7-point scale Likert-type (1 = very strongly disagree, 7 = very strongly agree). Finally, measures of cognition were adapted from Mittal *et al.* (2008).

6.9 Operationalization of Constructs

In section 2.7, it was demonstrated that existing measures of online customer experience (OCE) were limited in some respects. The most serious is that most measures did not emerge from rigorously validated scales nor were they based on an in-depth conceptual definition of the constructs involved. Thus, these shortfalls were mitigated by learning from the mistakes of previous research since the development and validation of new scales lies outside the scope of this study. Measures of the five dimensions of OCE were evolved through rigorous review of the conceptual meanings and facets of each OCE dimension. This derives mainly from Churchill (1979) who argued that researchers must be onerous or thorough in delineating what is included in the definition of a construct and what is excluded. The rigorous conceptual review which gave rise to clear conceptual definitions of the constructs was what informed adaptation of measures of OCE from previous research. In the subsections below, the five dimensions of OCE and other constructs were discussed one after another.

6.9.1 Sensory experience

In section 2.8.1, sensory experience was operationally defined as “appealing to the senses with the objective of creating sensory experiences through sights and sounds, such as photographs or video” (Hsu & Tsou, 2011: 512). Thus, measures of sensory OCE must evaluate how the senses of sight and sound are stimulated by aesthetic features of websites especially photographs and videos. The four measures of sensory experience in the table below was evolved by drawing on the foregoing definition and the works of Ding and Tseng (2015), Hsu and Tsou (2011), and Schmitt (1999).

1. How interesting do you think the shopping experience described above was? 2. How important will quality of pictures of products and the website's beauty be to you in making that purchase? 3. How important will the visual quality of videos demonstrating product features be to you in making that purchase? 4. How important will the clearness and quality of sounds of audio videos demonstrating products features be to you in making that purchase?

Table 6.1 Items of Sensory Experience Scale

All the four items were measured on a 7-point scale. The first item was scaled as follows: 7 = extremely interesting; 6 = very interesting; 5 = slightly interesting; 4 = neither interesting nor uninteresting; 3 = slightly uninteresting; 2 = very uninteresting; 1 = extremely uninteresting. The remaining three items were scaled as follows: 7 = extremely important; 6 = very important; 5 = slightly important; 4 = neither important nor unimportant; 3 = slightly unimportant; 2 = very unimportant; 1 = extremely unimportant. The use of different scale formats and anchors is consistent with its utility in attenuating common method variance (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003).

6.9.2 Emotional experience

In section 2.8.2, the following operational definition of emotional experience was adopted: emotional experience refers to "appealing to consumers' inner feelings and emotions with the objective of creating affective experiences that include positive moods linked to blog participation" (Hsu & Tsou, 2011: 512). Severally, emotional experience has been widely linked to affective processes and its facets include fun (Mathwick *et al.*, 2001) and enjoyment (Kim & Forsythe, 2008; Cyr *et al.*, 2007; Childers *et al.*, 2001); all of which originate from the conceptualization of shopping experience as what results when shoppers engage in a shopping activity for its own sake (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) and the entertainment derivable therefrom (Childers *et al.*, 2001;

Mathwick *et al.*, 2001). Thus, measures of emotional experience must capture the fun and enjoyment associated with the shopping activity as reflected both in the literature and the above definition of the construct. Drawing on the foregoing and the works of Ding and Tseng (2015), Hsu and Tsou (2011), and Schmitt (1999), four measures of emotional experience captured in the table below were evolved.

1. To what extent would you say shopping on Osas.com went in creating positive feelings in you? 2. To what extent would you say that shopping on Osas.com went in putting you in certain mood (e.g. joyous mood)? 3. To what extent would you say shopping on Osas.com went in creating fun-like feelings in you? 4. To what extent can you say that shopping in Osas.com didn't appealed to your inner feelings in anyway (reversed)

Table 6.2 Items of Emotional Experience Scale

All the four items were measured on a 7-point scale that was scaled as follows: 7 = extremely great extent; 6 = very great extent; 5 = slightly great extent; 4 = neither great nor little extent; 3 = slightly little extent; 2 = very little extent; 1 = extremely little extent.

6.9.3 Cognitive experience

The cognitive dimension of OCE has been variously conceptualized and operationalized as task instrumentality (Childers *et al.*, 2001; Babin *et al.*,1994; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness rooted in the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), utilitarian value (Overby & Lee, 2006), extrinsic value (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), functional value (Sweeney & Soutar, 2001), usability (Constantinides *et al.*, 2010), ease of navigation (Chang, 2011), cognitive effort (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015; Mosteller *et al.*, 2014), value for money (Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015), and think experience (Hsu & Tsou, 2011) (see section 2.8.3). These numerous measures generally reflect the classical decision theoretical view of consumers as rational choice makers. Broadly viewed, these measures fall into two measurement perspectives. These include the simplicity with which a given task can be completed and the utility derived from completing a shopping task. Thus, measures of cognitive experience must at least reflect the above two perspectives. Each of the above perspectives reflect consumers' thinking and conscious mental effort. With conscious mental effort at the center of cognitive experience, the construct was operationally defined as "a component of the Customer Experience connected with thinking or conscious mental processes" (Gentile *et al.*, 2007: 398). Summarily, the measures of cognitive experience captured in the table below was derived from three considerations: a) the two measurement perspectives identified above; b) the operational definition of the construct adopted above; and c) the works of Ding and Tseng (2015), Hsu and Tsou (2011), and Schmitt (1999).

1. How helpful was the online shopping activity in stimulating your curiosity/interest in online shopping?
2. How helpful would you say the quality/price relationship was to you in making the purchase in Osas.com?
3. How helpful do you think the ease with which you can shop around/access products in Osas.com website was to you in making the purchase?
4. Overall, how helpful do you think Osas.com was in enabling you solve your purchase problems?

Table 6.3 Items of Cognitive Experience Scale

All the four items were measured on a 7-point scale that was scaled as follows: 7 = extremely helpful; 6 = very helpful; 5 = slightly helpful; 4 = neither helpful nor unhelpful; 3 = slightly unhelpful; 2 = very unhelpful; and 1 = extremely unhelpful.

6.9.4 Behavioral experience

Section 2.8.4 indicates that measures of behavioral experience reflect usability and lifestyles (see Nambisan & Watt, 2011; Gentile *et al.*, 2007). Thus, measures of behavioral experience must reflect changes in consumers' lifestyles and behaviors arising from the very act of using a product or a system. Operationally, behavioral experience is defined as: "enriching individuals' lives by targeting their physical experiences, showing them alternative ways of changing lifestyles and interactions" (Hsu & Tsou, 2011: 512). The measures of behavioral experience captured in the table below is based mainly on the above operational definition which reflect usability and lifestyles and the works of Ding and Tseng (2015) and Hsu and Tsou (2011).

1. How important do you think shopping in Osas.com was in making you think about your lifestyle?
2. How important do you think shopping in Osas.com was in reminding you of the things you are capable of doing?
3. How important would you say shopping in Osas.com from the comfort of your home or office was in enabling you change your lifestyle?
4. Shopping in Osas.com did not make you think about your lifestyle (reversed)
5. Shopping in Osas.com did not remind you of what you are capable of doing (reversed)

Table 6.4 Items of Behavioral Experience Scale

All the five items were measured on a 7-point scale. The first three items were scaled as follows: 7 = extremely important; 6 = very important; 5 = slightly important; 4 = neither important nor unimportant; 3 = slightly unimportant; 2 = very unimportant; 1 = extremely unimportant. The last two items which were reverse-coded were scaled as follows: 7 = very strongly agree; 6 = strongly agree; 5 = slightly agree; 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 2 = strongly disagree; and 1 = very strongly disagree.

6.9.5 Relational experience

In section 2.8.5, relational experience was operationally defined as the "component of the Customer Experience that involves the person and, beyond, his/her social context, his/her relationship with other people or also with his/her ideal self" (Gentile *et al.*, 2007: 398). The adoption of this definition was based on the reasoning that it reflects relational experience as a construct that comprises a customer's relationships with self and other customers within a broader social system as was inferred from Brocato *et al.*'s (2012) influential article on scale development. The measures of relational experience captured in the table below were gleaned from the above definition and the works of Ding and Tseng (2015), Hsu and Tsou (2011) and Gentile *et al.* (2007).

1. How likely are you to share your Osas.com shopping experience with other people (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc.)?
2. To what extent do you think shopping on Osas.com's website makes you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society (i.e. do you think shopping Osas.com will make you feel perceived positively by your peers, family members, colleagues etc?)
3. To what extent does shopping on Osas.com's website make you think about relationships with others (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc)
4. To what extent do you think shopping on Osas.com's website doesn't make you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society (reversed)

Table 6.5 Items of Relational Experience Scale

The four items were measured on a 7-point scale. The first item was scaled as follows: 7 = extremely likely; 6 = very likely; 5 = slightly likely; 4 = neither likely nor unlikely; 3 = slightly unlikely; 2 = very unlikely; 1 = extremely unlikely. The remaining three items were scaled as follows: 7 = extremely great extent; 6 = very great extent; 5 = slightly great extent; 4 = neither great nor little extent; 3 = slightly little extent; 2 = very little extent; 1 = extremely little extent.

6.9.6 Perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs)

In section 3.7, the psychology and the communication literature which were much more aligned with review source credibility, and the information science literature that was more oriented towards message credibility were integrated to evolve measures of PCoNERs. It was argued that credible/reliable, accuracy, and trustworthy were the most reoccurring indicators of PCoNERs which are also common indicators of both source and message credibility. Additionally, consistent with previous studies (see Freeman & Spyridakis, 2004; Flanagin & Metzger, 2003), bias was included as a reverse-coded indicator of the construct. Summarily, PCoNERs as operationalized in this study captures credible/reliable, accurate, trustworthy, and bias as key indicators. Each of these facets of the construct was represented with a single item to generate the measurement items captured in the table below. The measurement items were adopted and modified from Freeman and Spyridakis (2004).

1. I will perceive that information as credible/reliable
2. I will perceive the information as trustworthy
3. I will perceive the information as accurate
4. I will perceive the information as biased

Table 6.6 Modified Items of Freeman and Spyridakis (2004) Credibility Scale

Consistent with previous studies (see Fang, 2014; Cheung *et al.*, 2009; Freeman & Spyridakis, 2004) particularly the view that most previous measures of credibility were scaled in the Likert format (Freeman & Spyridakis, 2004), all the four items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale. The anchors of the scale were as follows: 7 = very strongly agree; 6 = strongly agree; 5 = slightly agree; 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 2 = strongly disagree; 1 = very strongly disagree.

6.9.7 Relationship trust

Varied measures of trust abound (see Mende *et al.*, 2013; De Cannie`re *et al.*, 2010; Macintosh, 2007; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Crosby *et al.*, 1990 in section 4.3.1). The general sense that was made from the variety of extant measures is that trust has cognitive and emotional components. Additionally, through a meta-analysis, Swan *et al.* (1999) demonstrated that measures of trust fall into three levels of abstraction. In addition to the cognitive and emotional components of trust already emphasized in the literature, Swan *et al.*'s (1999) operationalization captures the context-specific aspect of the construct. Thus, measures of the construct must capture the cognitive and emotional facets of the construct and the context-specific attributes such as security of transactions in online retailing. Building on the above perspectives, it can be argued that measures of relationship trust ought to reflect three things: i) reliability and trustworthiness which are cognitive in nature; ii) customers' welfare which is emotional in nature; and iii) security which reflect riskiness of online transactions. Bearing these considerations in mind and the works of Crosby *et al.* (1990) and Ndubisi (2007), the measures of relationship trust captured in the table below were generated.

1. I can still rely upon blue gate to keep to their promises 2. Blue gate is a trustworthy company 3. I still believe that blue gate puts the customers' interests before its own interest 4. I still feel safe to transact businesses with blue gate

Table 6.7 Items of Relationship Trust Adapted from Crosby *et al.* (1990) and Ndubisi (2007)

The first three items were adapted from Crosby *et al.* (1990) while the last item which reflects security of online transactions was adapted from Ndubisi (2007). The four items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale with anchors of 7 = very strongly agree; 6 = strongly agree; 5 = slightly agree; 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 2 = strongly disagree; 1 = very strongly disagree. This scaling approach is well supported in previous research (see Chung & Shin, 2010; De Cannie`re *et al.*, 2010; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999).

6.9.8 Relationship satisfaction

Literature supports the view that measures of satisfaction include the economic and non-economic aspects (see Rajaobelina & Bergeron, 2009; Izogo, 2016a). In section 4.3.2, it was emphatically stated that the categorization of the measures of relationship satisfaction into economic and non-economic aspects is strongly and respectively consistent with the cognitive and affective facets of the construct identified by Bigné and Andreu (2004 in Moliner *et al.*, 2007b). Thus, measures of the construct as captured in the table below reflect these two aspects.

1. Overall, how satisfactory would you say your shopping experience with Osas.com was? 2. Overall, how favorable would you say your shopping experience with Osas.com was? 3. Overall, how pleased would you say your shopping experience with Osas.com was?

Table 6.8 Items of Relationship Satisfaction Adapted from Crosby *et al.* (1990)

The above measures were adapted from Crosby *et al.* (1990). As opposed to the semantic differential scale structured in the bipolar format that dominated previous research (see for instance, Beatson *et al.*, 2008; Macintosh, 2007; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999; Crosby *et al.*, 1990; Crosby & Cowles, 1986), the approach adopted by Mende *et al.* (2013) and Liang *et al.* (2011) was adopted to rate the above three items on a 7-point Likert type scale because such scaling is believed to be easier for respondents to understand.

6.9.9 Relationship commitment

As noted in section 4.3.3, measures of relationship commitment fall into the affective and cognitive aspects with previous research measuring these two facets of the constructs with 3 or 4 items (see Liang *et al.*, 2011; Chung & Shin, 2010; De Wulf *et al.*, 2003; Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2002; Garbarino & Johnson, 1999). This study is consistent with previous research because it adapted 3-item measures that capture the affective and cognitive components of the construct from Morgan and Hunt (1994). The adapted 3-items scale are captured in the table below.

1. My relationship with blue gate is something that I'm still committed to
2. I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with blue gate indefinitely
3. I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with blue gate

Table 6.9 Items of Relationship Commitment Adapted from Morgan and Hunt (1994)

Consistent with the other dimensions of relationship quality (i.e. relationship trust and relationship satisfaction), the above three items were rated on a 7-point Likert type scale because as noted earlier, such scaling is believed to be easier for respondents to understand.

6.9.10 Cognition

Operationally, cognition has been defined as the structuring of relevant situations in meaningfully integrated ways. It also has to do with understanding and making the experiential world reasonable (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). Based on the above operational definition of cognition, the measures of the construct (see Table 6.10) were adapted from Mittal *et al.* (2008). The items were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale with anchors of 7 = very strongly agree; 6 = strongly agree; 5 = slightly agree; 4 = neither agree nor disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 2 = strongly disagree; 1 = very strongly disagree.

1. I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likely chance that I will have to think in-depth about something 2. The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me 3. I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that surely will challenge my thinking ability 4. I only think as hard as I have to think 5. The idea of thinking abstractly is not appealing to me

Table 6.10 Items of Cognition Adopted from Mittal *et al.* (2008)

6.10 Sampling and Sample

Since it is impossible to reach every potential respondent in many behavioral researches, researchers resort to sampling to arrive at a sample which will be generalized across the entire population. This practice is due mainly to the challenge of time limitations, monetary resources involved, and access to the entire population (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). A sample is a subset of the population of interest for which the opinions of individuals are collected for the study variables (Wu & Chen, 2006). Sampling is the process of arriving at this sample. Although sampling techniques are numerous, what is mostly emphasized in the research methodology literature (see Bryman & Bell, 2015; Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Baruch & Holtom, 2008; Field & Hole, 2003) is sample representativeness. The consensus is that results generated from representative sample (i.e. sample that doesn't systematically differ from the population in any meaningful way) is stronger and more valid. But in experimental design studies, what is mostly emphasized over sampling technique is sample size and random assignment of subjects into experimental conditions. Although discussion of sample size is returned to later in this section, it makes sense to note that Field and Hole (2003) urged researchers to ensure that subjects of an experimental study are randomly allocated/assigned to the control and experimental groups. Failure to randomize the allocation of subjects into experimental groups or conditions will lead to uninterpretable results that no amount of statistical ingenuity can remedy/overcome (Field & Hole, 2003).

A convenience sampling technique was adopted in this study by recruiting university students as subjects. While the use of students as surrogates for other populations in marketing studies is popular amongst academics whilst several studies (e.g. Sheth, 1970 in Lamb & Stem, 1980) demonstrated that students' post-purchase evaluations were similar to other populations, Patzer (1996) contended that subjects of convenience samples may differ from the target population which consequently pose threat to external validity. Convenience sample of university students was chosen based on five key reasons. First, Lamb and Stem (1980 in Patzer, 1996) argued that student samples are ideal when i) the findings can be tested with other categories of respondents, ii) student subjects are compatible with the product(s) or context under study, and iii) the research addresses a fundamental marketing question. Patzer (1996) also added that when subjects and target population are similar in terms of the investigated relationships, convenience samples are ideal and acceptable. The findings of this study can be tested across other respondents' categories. The selected context (i.e. online shopping) were neutral to age, gender and income levels. The study also addressed a fundamental marketing research question. To this end, convenience sampling is acceptable. Second, given that this thesis is an academic research piece, according to Patzer (1996), students sample is suitable because the study is concerned with adding basic knowledge to the marketing discipline. Third, randomization helps to rule out the effects of many random/extraneous factors that cannot be directly controlled in experiments. Since subjects of the experiments conducted in this study were randomly assigned to the experimental conditions, this practice introduced probability sampling technique into our sampling approach. The chosen sample is therefore likely to yield a precise estimate of the target population. Fourth, most previous online customer/shopping experience articles (e.g. Visinescu *et al.*, 2015; Mosteller *et al.*, 2014; Blasco-Arcas *et al.*, 2014; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Chen *et al.*, 2009; Davis *et al.*, 2008; Cyr *et al.*, 2007; Childers *et al.*, 2001) that utilized experimental design used a convenience sample of either college or university students. Finally, despite the suspicion that surround the use of students as research subjects arising from their inexperience when compared with adult groups, students as much as adult consumers, are likely to have a range of online shopping experience (Bridges & Florsheim, 2008). Thus, students' participation in this study is suitable.

As was mentioned earlier, part of what is mostly emphasized about sampling and sample in experiments is the size of the sample. The larger the sample, the more representative of the population it becomes (Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Fox *et al.*, 2007; Field & Hole, 2003). Kline (1998) stated that sampling error decreases as the sample gets larger whilst outputs from larger samples are more likely to be statistically significant compared to small samples. Sample size has also been widely linked to statistical power of analysis. The power of a test is the probability that a given test will find an effect assuming that one exists in the population (Field & Hole, 2003). Samples can be used to mitigate Type I and Type II errors (Fox *et al.*, 2007; Hair *et al.*, 2006) whilst Type I is more serious and considered more important to minimize (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). To suppress random error which leads to Type I error, a large sample size is required because as the sample size increases, the statistical power of the analysis is enhanced (Fox *et al.*, 2007). Thus, studies based on large samples are said to be sufficiently powered while studies based on small samples may turn out to be under-powered (Fox *et al.*, 2007; Field & Hole, 2003). 0.80 is widely recommended as the threshold of sufficiently powered test which implies that the study has an 80% probability of detecting an effect if such effect really exist in the population (Field & Hole, 2003; Fox *et al.*, 2007).

While sample size helps to minimize both Type I error and Type II error because of its efficacy in testing for significance and statistical power, both significance and power tests do not reflect how wrong the null hypothesis is (Fox *et al.*, 2007). To ascertain how wrong, the null hypothesis is, the size of the identified effect should be quantified (Fox *et al.*, 2007; Field & Hole, 2003). A measurement of this nature is called *effect size* (Kent, 2007; Field & Hole, 2003). Although several effect size measures have been proposed, Pearson's correlation coefficient is the most commonly used (Kent, 2007; Field, 2001 in Field & Hole, 2003). Correlation coefficient is an appropriate measure of effect size in experimental studies because it is equal to r^2 which is a true reflection of the importance of the experimental effect (Field & Hole, 2003). Based on Cohen (1988 in Field & Hole, 2003) convention, $r = 0.10$ (i.e. an effect that explains 1% of the total variance); $r = 0.30$ (i.e. an effect that explains 9% of the total variance); and $r = 0.50$ (i.e. an effect that explains 25% of the total variance) respectively signify small, medium, and large effect sizes. In this study, in addition to ensuring that Type I and Type II errors are minimized through ensuring that the conducted tests are sufficiently powered, the importance of the experimental effect was also determined by quantifying the effect size of the proposed relationships.

The foregoing notwithstanding, how large a sample is large enough is a difficult question to answer because the sample size required especially in structural equation modelling (SEM)-based analysis is driven by several factors (Kline, 1998). More complex models need larger samples than simple models whilst some SEM estimation procedures need larger samples than others (Kline, 1998). Hair *et al.* (2014) noted that compared with other SEM approaches, PLS-SEM has the capacity to estimate models through small and medium samples. That said, yet to be precisely answered is the question: how large a sample is large enough? Accordingly, Kline (1998) argued that a sample that is <100 cases is considered "small", between 100-200 cases is considered "medium", and >200 cases is considered large although these parameters remain a function of model complexity and type of estimation method employed. While the relationship between sample size and model complexity in SEM refute any consensus, existing guidelines suggest that the ratio of subjects to model parameters of 20:1 is adequate; 10:1 is more realistic whilst the stability of a model estimation based on a ratio less than 5:1 will likely be doubtful (Kline, 1998). With 120 valid cases for the pilot experiments; 384 and 374 valid observations respectively for the two main studies conducted in this thesis, the sample is in accordance with the stipulated benchmarks, reasonably large enough to produce a precise estimate of the target population. After all, Breckler's (1990 in Kline, 1998) survey of 72 papers published in personality and social psychology journals in which SEM of some kind was employed indicate that the median sample size employed in those studies is approximately 198 cases. Additionally, these samples are comparable to samples employed in previous customer experience studies (e.g. Klaus *et al.*, 2013; Brocato *et al.*, 2012; Mathwick *et al.*, 2001; Babin *et al.*, 1994).

6.11 Data Analysis Procedures

6.11.1 Data preparation and screening

The factors that determine which form of data to deal with include the SEM estimation method to employ, the model-fitting program to use, need for economy in data handling, and the nature of data available (Kline, 1998). For SEM estimation method that does not assume that data are normally distributed (e.g. Partial Least Squares SEM), it is more appropriate to input the raw data even though it is more tedious to handle raw data compare to matrix summary of the data (Kline, 1998). Additionally, if the model-fitting program is not capable of handling missing data, it will be better to input matrix summaries of the data especially if such summaries are available and the researcher seeks to replicate the analysis conducted in another study (Kline, 1998). To deal with data entry accuracy, missing data, multicollinearity, outliers, data normality, and response/non-response bias and common method variance appropriately, data were therefore entered in the raw form. In the paragraphs below, the suggested steps of dealing with the above potential issues that can characterize a dataset are laid out.

When entering data into an excel sheet or other data processing computer programs, it is common for data entry errors to occur. Yet, it is critical to ensure that the data entered are free from errors (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Due to the large nature of the data that emerged from the experiments conducted in this study and the extra cost of employing research assistants, data entry errors were checked through basic descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and ranges in line with Kline's (1998) guidelines. With these simple checks, wrongly inputted data were identified and corrected. But prior to this, a preliminary step that was put in place to aid the tracing and correction of wrongly inputted data was serial numbering of all the valid retrieved questionnaires. The questionnaires were in turn correspondingly and serially inputted into excel sheets from where the data were imported to the SPSS and SmartPLS software. Another step taken to achieve data entry accuracy is to invest a lot of time in entering the data and avoid rush.

It has also become important for researchers to inform their readers about missing data, how they went about handling it, and the generalizability effect that missing data can pose to a given piece of research (Kline, 1998). Although intentionally allowed to occur in several occasions, occurrences of missing data are often attributed to factors beyond the researcher's control and can be random or systematic (Kline, 1998). Ambiguities surround the criteria for judging the adequate level of missing data although Cohen and Cohen (1983 in Kline, 1998) argued that 5 % to 10% missing data on a given variable is not harmful. Rubin (1976 in Kline, 1998) submitted that a more important criterion for determining the adequacy of the obtained data is the pattern of the missing data which can be random or systematic as pointed out earlier. Since subjects whose missing data occur at random can differ by chance factor alone from those who have data on a particular variable, data with random missing observations can be generalized while systematic loss of data is the opposite and may not be generalizable to the entire population (Kline, 1998). Thus, dealing with random data loss is far easier than systematic loss of data because Kline (1998) argued that statistical 'fix' for systematic data loss is absent. Kline (1998) suggested five ways through which random data loss can be dealt with. First, missing data can be replaced with estimated scores. Estimated scores can be arrived at in one of three ways which include: i) inputting a sample average for that variable, ii) replacing missing data with a predicted score generated by a regression-based estimate, and iii) pattern matching (i.e. replacing missing data with a score from another case with similar response pattern). Good as these remedies appear, it is only sensible when data loss is low, say <10% (Kline, 1998). The second and third ways of handling missing data as Kline (1998) suggests is listwise or pairwise deletion of cases with missing observations. Depending on the deletion method employed, out-of-bound correlations or multicollinearity are potential issues. The above three measures are employed when using standard statistical techniques such as regression, ANOVA and so on (Kline, 1998). Estimating model across multiple groups (i.e. group without missing data and group with missing data) and maximum likelihood estimation are two SEM-based approaches to handling missing data (Kline, 1998). In a wide range of computer simulation studies, it was concluded that the SEM-based techniques were appropriate when the random data loss was high. Considering that the pattern of data loss in the experiments conducted in this study was random and low (i.e. <10%), only the data imputation measure was utilized. Missing scores were substituted with group mean as suggested by Kline (1998).

Another issue that can impair the accuracy of a model estimation is multicollinearity because it suggests the presence of redundant measures when it is identified as an issue with a given dataset. Multicollinearity reflects a situation where the independent variables are highly correlated (Hair *et al.*, 2006). One way to spot bivariate multicollinearity is by simply inspecting the correlation matrix (Kline, 1998). If correlation between two variables exceed, say 85%, it can be concluded that multicollinearity is an issue and the two variables can be adjudged redundant. To spot multicollinearity at multivariate level, the tolerance value and variance inflation factor (VIF) are the two popular statistics used (Kline, 1998). Multicollinearity is an issue if the tolerance value is less than 10% (Kline, 1998) and if the VIF is greater than 10 (Myers, 1990 in Kline, 1998). Hair *et al.* (2006) added that a VIF of ≥5 is a likely indication of multicollinearity. Thus, VIF of anywhere between 5 and 10 or greater and tolerance values that are less than 0.10 are clear indications of multicollinearity. If two variables are redundant, the problem of multicollinearity can be dealt with by either excluding one of the variables from the analysis or merging the two variables into one composite variable. This study relied on the above two statistics and the stated remedy to detect and deal with multicollinearity if present.

Cases with scores that are extremely different from the rest are labelled potential outliers and can be univariate if the extreme scores are in relation to a single variable and multivariate if a constellation of extreme scores cuts across two or more variables (Kline, 1998). Outliers can cause the mean to be a biased estimate (Field & Hole, 2003). Thus, part of data preparation and screening should include detecting and appropriately dealing with outliers within a given dataset. Hair *et al.* (2010) argued that outliers can be dealt with at either the data cleaning stage or deleted if such action is consistent with the research objectives. Univariate outliers can be detected through Zscores (Elbedweihy, 2014). When the sample is large, observations whose standardized scores exceed ±3.29 (p<0.001) are potential outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007 in Elbedweihy, 2014). Another way that outliers can be detected and dealt with is through box-plots wherein outliers represent observations that fall from the box (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007 in Elbedweihy, 2014). Kline (1998) argued that outliers can be dealt with by checking the accuracy of entry scores and effecting corrections where necessary, dropping the cases from the sample, modifying the scores of outliers to have lesser effect on the analysis or doing nothing. If the sample is large, deleting a handful of observations with outliers may be of trivial concern but deleting many outliers from a small sample may be problematic (Kline, 1998).

Additionally, using mathematical operation to transform scores to obtain a more normal distribution that brings outliers closer to the mean is another way of dealing with outliers (Kline, 1998). Multivariate outliers can be identified and handled through the Mahalanobis distance statistic (Kline, 1998). If the critical value and the Mahalanobis distance for a particular case is significant at $p<0.001$ level, such a case is an outlier. Another statistic that helps detect multivariate outliers is the Cook's distance (Cook, 1977 in Kline, 1998). Thus, since data transformation may not be very helpful in most occasions, Z-scores and Mahalanobis distance statistic were utilized to detect and deal with outliers. Since Kline (1998) suggested that the assessment of cases with outliers for grouped data (for example, data classified into different treatment conditions) should be done for each group, outliers were differently assessed for the each of the four experimental groups in all the studies.

Although the deletion or modification of outliers (or taking adequate remedial care of cases with outliers) can enhance multivariate normality (Kline, 1998), other stringent measures used to determine how normally distributed a data is abound. Like outliers, data can be non-normal at two levels: univariate (which concerns the distributions of individual variables) and multivariate (which concerns the distributions of a constellation of variables) levels (Kline, 1998). The simplest way to check for data normality is to draw some histograms of your data and check the shape of the distribution (Field, 2000 in Field & Hole, 2003; Kline, 1998). The three key issues with histogram are: a) it reflects sample distribution and not the distribution of the population from which the sample was drawn; b) it does not work well with small samples; and c) merely visualizing data distribution captured by histograms is inadequate to tell us the extent to which a distribution should be away from normal to become an issue (Field & Hole, 2003). In short, histogram is a subjective measure. Thus, more objective statistical approaches to assessing whether a data is normally distributed have been advanced. Kline (1998) stated that skewness and Kurtosis indexes can be used to assess univariate normality. Although some statistical programs yield significance tests of skew and kurtosis, these statistics may not be relevant in case of larger samples as very little departures can indicate deviations from normality by yielding significant results (Kline, 1998). Although insufficient interpretation guidelines remain an issue, an alternative way of dealing with this is to interpret the absolute values of skew and kurtosis such that values more than 3.0 are interpreted as extremely skewed while indexes of anywhere between 8.0 and 20.0 are described as extreme case of kurtosis (Kline, 1998). Curran *et al.*'s (1996 in Elbedweihy, 2014) measure is more stringent as they argued that skewness of 2.0 and kurtosis of 7.0 are deemed problematic. A more conservative stance is that kurtosis indexes that are greater than 10.0 is problematic while indexes of 20.0 or over is an extreme case. Other objective tests of normality are Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests because these tests compare the test of scores in the sample to a normally distributed set of scores with the same mean and standard deviation (Field & Hole, 2003). If these tests are significant (i.e. $p<0.05$), the data is not normal and vice versa but one reason the results of these tests are not conclusive is that they depend on the sample size (Field & Hole, 2003). Thus, reporting the test statistics is always necessary. Consistent with the foregoing, data normality was assessed with skewness and kurtosis and with the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests.

6.11.2 Common method variance (CMV)

CMV is widely acknowledged as one of the potential sources of serious bias by behavioral research scholars (Soto-Acosta *et al.*, 2014). According to Podsakoff *et al.* (2003), when data on dependent and independent variables are simultaneously generated by a means of self-report, such data can be prone to the effect of CMV. Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) broadly grouped the methods of dealing with the effects of CMV into procedural and statistical remedies. In this section, the various procedural remedies applied to attenuate the effects of CMV in study 1 and study 2 were discussed. But in chapter seven, the statistical remedies to dealing with CMV in this study were implemented.

In study 1 and study 2, two key procedural steps were used to offset/reduce potential effect of CMV. First, CMV was reduced by ensuring that the scale items were simply and unambiguously worded (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). To realize this, the questionnaire was subjected to series of reviews with my supervisor. Thereafter, three Nigerian PhD students in the University of Hull Business School were contacted to review the questionnaire and make comments on its simplicity and fluency. Additionally, three student subjects were asked to also review the questionnaire based on simplicity and fluency. All the observations retrieved from these reviews were built into the final survey to ensure clarity and unambiguity. Through the above two key steps, vague concepts, complicated syntaxes, amongst other questionnaire items issues were eliminated.

The second procedural remedy applied was in terms of the questionnaire design. Reverse-coded items were employed, and respondents were also informed and assured that there were no right or wrong answers. CMV was also controlled by creating temporal separation between measurement of predictor and dependent variables through introducing short vignettes or instructions between the measurement of predictor and dependent variables. Finally, different response formats such as "very strongly agree vs. very strongly disagree", "extremely great extent vs. extremely little extent" and so on were utilized to measure different constructs within the questionnaire at different points in the survey. Podsakoff *et al*. (2003) noted that this is a good way of measuring proximally or methodologically separated measures. In line with Tourangeau *et al*. (2000 in Podsakoff *et al*., 2003), the use of bipolar numerical scale values (for instance 1 to 7) was also avoided. Verbal labels were provided.

6.11.3 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

According to Krishnaswamy *et al*. (2006), exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a set of analytical procedures that attempts to identify the dimensional structure assumed to exist within a set of multivariate observations. EFA technique in simple terms, combines variables to form new factors or variables (Aaker *et al*., 2005). A factor has been defined as a construct or variable that cannot be directly observed but is rather inferred from input variables or indicators of the factor (Aaker *et al*., 2005). With EFA, original variables can be summarized into uncorrelated factors that are linear combinations of the original variables (Aaker *et al*., 2005). Hair *et al*. (2006) therefore argued that EFA is a multivariate data simplification statistical procedure used to summarize a pool of information embedded in many variables into smaller number of factors. Four sequential steps are involved in any factor analytical procedure: a) preparation of correlation matrix to be inputted into the analytical software; b) factor extraction; c) factor rotation; and d) interpretation of the rotated factor solution (Krishnaswamy *et al*., 2006). Since data was entered in raw form, the first step is irrelevant here. The three remaining steps were discussed in the paragraphs below.

Factor extraction: Factor extraction methods include principal component analysis (PCA), conical factoring, least squares method, image factoring, alpha factoring and so on (Krishnaswamy *et al.*, 2006). SPSS offers six different methods (Kent, 2007). However, depending on the researcher's objective, common factor analysis and PCA are the two broad extraction methods of EFA that can be utilized according to Aaker *et al.* (2005). PCA is more appropriate when the researcher's aim is to summarize large pool of variables into manageable set of factors while common factor analysis is used when the researcher seeks to identify the underlying dimensions of a given variable (Aaker *et al.*, 2005). An imposition of three restrictions guide initial factor extractions (Krishnaswamy *et al.*, 2006; Cooper & Schindler, 2001). They include: a) *p* common factors exist; b) underlying factors are orthogonal; and c) the first factor accounts for the greatest amount of variance followed by the second factor, third factor and so on until the last factor is extracted. However, a PCA extraction method was employed in this study because according to Krishnaswamy *et al.* (2006) and Cooper and Schindler (2001), it is the most widely used. Prior to PCA, suitability tests ought to be conducted. First, sampling adequacy for EFA was verified through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and the Bartlett's (1954) test of sphericity (Izogo, 2015b). According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007 in Izogo, 2015b), EFA is adequate with high values usually from a range of 0.5 to 1.0 but values below these marks are a clear indication that EFA is not appropriate.

Factor rotation: Most initial factor solutions produce uninterpretable results, thus, making the meaningfulness of the resultant factors difficult to comprehend (Krishnaswamy *et al.*, 2006; Cooper & Schindler, 2001). A better factor solution can be obtained by rotating factors through some well-known procedures. Aaker *et al.* (2005) and Cooper and Schindler (2001) contend that varimax (orthogonal rotation) and promax (oblique rotation) are the two most recognized rotation programs in EFA. "In varimax rotation, each factor tends to load high (1 or 1) on a smaller number of variables and low, or very low (close to zero), on other variables, to make interpretation of the resulting factors easier […] In oblique rotation, the factors are rotated for better interpretation, such that the orthogonality is not preserved anymore" (Aaker *et al.*, 2005: 561-563). Although factor rotation cannot improve the fitness between factor structure and data, it acts as a simplification technique (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). While factor rotation can be achieved through either orthogonal or oblique method, orthogonal rotation is utilized in this study because it is the most discussed in research method textbooks (see Kent, 2007; Krishnaswamy *et al.*, 2006; Cooper & Schindler, 2001) and it is equally the most common (Kent, 2007).

Interpretation of the rotated factor solution: An important question in EFA is: how many factors should we extract? According to Krishnaswamy *et al.* (2006) and Cooper and Schindler (2001), this decision is to a large extent, subjectively arrived at. One broadly used criteria is the eigenvalue (Aaker *et al.*, 2005). Eigenvalue of a given factor is a measure of the explanatory power of the factor (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). Aaker *et al.* (2005) stated that as a rule of thumb, factors with eigenvalues greater than or equal to 1.0 are retained because a factor whose eigenvalue is less than 1.0 is not better than a single variable. In addition to underlying theory, the eigenvalue as the factor retention criterion was employed in this study. Thus, only factors with eigenvalue of ≥ 1.0 are retained. Additionally, three criteria informed the retention of items. First, the factor loading must be 0.5 or over. Second, the communality must be 0.5 or over. Third, the loading of the item on its primary factor must be 0.2 away from their loadings on other factors as recommended by Lowry and Gaskin (2014).

6.11.4 Structural equation modelling (SEM)

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) has come under attack from many quarters despite its utility in data reduction, scale purification and summarization. Aaker *et al.* (2005) contended that the greatest shortfall of EFA is that the analytical process is subjective because the determination of number of factors and its interpretation as well as the rotation program to use all comprise subjective judgement of some sort. According to Rigdon (2012), some researchers cautioned that the factors gleaned in EFA are not by any criteria necessarily the equivalences of theoretical concepts. This may have prompted Steiger and Schonemann (1978 in Rigdon, 2012) to argue that factor analysis is both computationally difficult and theoretically problematic. Additionally, Krishnaswamy *et al.* (2006) also argued that EFA does not show whether the factor structure is a good fit for the data. SEM has therefore grown in popularity because of researchers' quest to test complex theories and concepts (Rigdon, 1998 in Hair *et al.*, 2014). Compared to other multivariate analytical techniques like discriminant analysis, factor analysis, and multiple regression, SEM is viewed as far more flexible and rigorous in approach to model estimation (Chin, 1998; Hoyle, 1995). As Chin (1998) specifically noted, SEM integrates the econometric perspective that focuses on prediction with the psychometric viewpoint that model constructs as unobserved or latent variables that can be inferred indirectly through multiple observed measurement indicators also referred to as manifest variables. Similarly, much of the successes of the SEM technique also derive from its capacity to simultaneously assess the measurement of latent constructs and the relationships between these latent constructs (Babin *et al*., 2008 in Hair *et al*., 2014; Chin *et al*., 2003 in Mosteller *et al*., 2014).

Two broad methods of SEM include the covariance-based method (CB-SEM) and the variance-based partial least squares approach (PLS-SEM) (Hair *et al*., 2014). Although CB-SEM is the approach that was initially embraced, PLS-SEM is also an option available to researchers (Hair *et al*., 2014). CB-SEM is suitable for testing theories through examining how best a model can estimate a covariance matrix of a given dataset but the principles of PLS-SEM are like those of multiple regression analysis (Hair *et al*., 2011 in Hair *et al*., 2014). Thus, as Sarstedt *et al*. (2014) similarly noted, CB-SEM is better suited for explanatory-oriented models while PLS-SEM is a more appropriate technique for examining predictive-oriented models. Whereas CB-SEM uses specified set of structural equations to reproduce the theoretical covariance matrix (Hair *et al*., 2011), PLS-SEM technique aims at maximizing the variance of exogenous constructs (Rigdon, 2012; Fornell & Bookstein, 1982 in Hair *et al*., 2014). In contrast, Sarstedt *et al*. (2014) counteractively argued that the PLS-SEM technique possesses the capability to be enhanced to allow for theory testing while retaining its predictive character. While extensive work is ongoing in this area, such enhancement is yet to emerge. One acclaimed weakness of PLS-SEM vis a vis CB-SEM is that PLS-SEM does not have a standard goodness-of-fit statistic (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2013 in Hair *et al*., 2014) because the prediction of endogenous constructs is achieved by using sample data to obtain model parameters (Hair *et al*., 2014); but, CB-SEM has standard goodness-of-fit measures. Conversely, with smaller samples, PLS-SEM achieves greater levels of statistical power and shows better convergence than CB-SEM (Henseler, 2010 in Hair *et al*., 2014) especially if a highly complex model is to be estimated (Hair *et al*., 2014). Compared to CB-SEM technique also, PLS-SEM approach is less stringent when handling nonnormal data due to its ability to transform data in line with the central limit theorem (Cassel *et al*., 1999 in Hair *et al.*, 2014; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2014) although PLS-SEM does not provide an all-end solution to data normality especially in cases where data is highly skewed (Hair *et al.*, 2014).

Given the divergent orientations of CB-SEM and PLS-SEM, researchers ought to think carefully before deciding on the approach that best suits their research purposes (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). Overall, PLS-SEM is deemed the most suitable approach for this study for many reasons. Firstly, considering the complexity of our model and the sample size, PLS-SEM is bound to produce more stable results. Secondly, in comparison to first generation analytical methods (e.g. multiple regression), PLS-SEM tests complex theoretical model simultaneously as opposed to the fragmented approach inherent in regression for instance. Thirdly, measures of online customer experience (OCE) dimensions utilized in this study is yet to be rigorously validated whilst the proposed research model makes a causal claim. Since it is difficult to validate causal model through CB-SEM because of large number of alternative explanations whilst PLS-SEM avoids indeterminacy and can be used for both exploratory and confirmatory studies (Rigdon, 2012; Lowry & Gaskin, 2014), PLS-SEM is the favored SEM technique in this study because it not only allows us to make causal claims, its exploratory nature means that it is useful for validating measures of OCE adopted in this study. Additionally, data failed to meet all the conditions needed to establish normality whilst there were outliers. Moreover, Nunnally (1978) noted that data are rarely normally distributed because scale items are often correlated. In similar vein, Malthouse (2001) argued that seven-point scale seldom produce normally distributed data. Thus, the application of PLS-SEM is justified since it helps suppress standard errors especially when working with non-normal data. Finally, in broad range of previous studies of OCE (e.g. Visinescu *et al.*, 2015; Mosteller *et al.*, 2014; Hsu & Tsou, 2011), PLS-SEM was employed. Specifically, Bagozzi *et al.* (1991 in Mosteller *et al.*, 2014) argued that the use of PLS-SEM over CB-SEM is most adequate when the distribution of an experimental data is asymmetric. In fact, Hair *et al.* (2014) categorically stated that PLS-SEM does not assume a normal distribution.

The evaluation of PLS-SEM is based on three salient steps: a) model specification; b) outer model evaluation; and c) inner model evaluation (Hair *et al.*, 2014). An in-depth discussion of these three salient steps and how they were implemented in this study is captured below.

a) Model specification. According to Hair *et al.* (2014), the model specification phase is concerned with setting-up the inner model and the outer models. While the inner model also known as the structural model lays out the relationships between the constructs of interest, the outer model also known as the measurement model outlines the relationships measurement indicators and their corresponding constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Misspecifying models especially measurement indicators can inflate the Type I and Type II error rates (Petter *et al.*, 2007 in Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). In chapter five, a conceptual framework depicting the hypothesized relationships was presented. Part of this conceptual framework guided our model estimation. The starting point of model specification is to create path models based on theory and logic by distinguishing between exogenous and endogenous constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Exogenous constructs are designated as independent variables while endogenous constructs are designated as dependent variables. In the conceptual model specified in chapter five, the five dimensions of OCE (i.e. sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and relational experience) are the exogenous variables while perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) is the endogenous variable in pilot experiment 1 and study 1. In pilot experiment 2 and study 2, PCoNERs is the exogenous variable while the three dimensions of relationship quality (i.e. relationship trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment) are the endogenous variables.

The next logical step after inner model creation is outer model designation (Hair *et al.*, 2014). In specifying outer models, a decision must be made as to whether single-item or multi-items measures should be used (Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2012 in Hair *et al.*, 2014) and whether the indicators should be reflective or formative (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001 in Hair *et al.*, 2014). The specification of the outer model must be sound because hypothesized relationships can only be valid and reliable when the outer model is rightly specified (Hair *et al.*, 2014). In this study, multi-item scales were used to measure all the latent constructs because a) most marketing related phenomena are multidimensional (Bergkvist & Rossiter, 2007 in Bassi, 2011); b) multi-item scales reduce the potential error in measurement (Churchill, 1979); and c) measuring complex attitudinal constructs with single-item measures is unrealistic (Bassi, 2011). Additionally, measurement indicators were specified as reflective because they are interchangeable. "Reflective indicators constitute a representative set of all possible items within the conceptual domain of a construct (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001) … [which] are interchangeable, highly correlated and capable of being omitted without changing the meaning of the construct" (Hair *et al.*, 2014: 111).

b) Outer model evaluation. After specifying the inner and outer models, the next step is to run the PLS-SEM algorithm and evaluate the measurement model reliability and validity in the outer model (Hair *et al.*, 2014). In evaluating the outer model, three sequential steps are followed. They include i) establishing unidimensionality; ii) assessing constructs' reliability; and iii) establishing construct validity.

i) *Unidimensionality* is established by examining the significant nature of item loadings and the AVE. According to Hosany *et al.* (2015: 486), "An indicator should be significantly associated with the underlying latent variable [whilst] the indicator must represent a single factor (Anderson & Gerbing 1982; Phillips & Bagozzi 1986)". Additionally, the AVE of a latent construct must be 0.5 or greater for the construct to claim unidimensionality (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) while the reflective indicators must load with significant *t*-values on their theoretical constructs (Gefen & Straub, 2005). These benchmarks were adopted for evaluating the unidimensionality of our measurement constructs across the studies conducted.

ii) *Reliability assessment* is the next step to take after establishing a scale's unidimensionality (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). The factor loading of each item must be 50% or over to confirm indicator reliability (Hulland, 1999). Cronbach alpha and composite reliability are often used to establish a scale's reliability but the latter has been championed as a less conservative measure (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) although Cronbach alpha remains the most widely accepted and pervasive (Peter, 1979 in Hosany *et al.*, 2015). In this study, the two reliability indexes were examined. Although what constitutes an adequate reliability coefficient is a function of the measurement situation (Lance *et al.*, 2006 in Hosany *et al.*, 2015), broadly stated, the higher the alpha coefficient, the better or more reliable the scale. Churchill (1979) noted that large alpha coefficient is a strong indication that the reflective indicators of the latent constructs exhibit high covariance or homogeneity and captures the sampling domain adequately. Specifically, the set minimum threshold for establishing reliability with Cronbach's alpha is ≥0.6, whereas it is ≥0.70 for composite reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Nunnally (1978 in Hosany *et al.*, 2015) recommended a minimum acceptable alpha coefficient of 0.70 when the research is at its early stages (for instance scale development) and 0.80 at the basic or applied phase of the research. Overall, the measurement constructs were assessed for both indicator and construct reliability through the above indices.

iii) *Construct validity* is examined in two ways: a) convergent validity; and b) discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Convergent validity is fulfilled if the factor loadings of the measurement indicators are 0.70 or over and the average variance extracted (AVE) is ≥ 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Peng & Lai, 2012; Henseler *et al.*, 2009). What this implies is that the construct explains more than 50% of the indicators' variance. According to Moliner *et al.* (2007b), insofar as the factor loadings exceed 0.5, convergent validity is said to exist. Convergent validity is also established when the reflective indicators of the latent constructs load with significant *t*-values on their theoretical constructs (Gefen & Straub, 2005). Discriminant validity is established if the square root of the AVEs is higher than every correlation pair among the latent constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Peng & Lai, 2012) because Fornell and Larcker (1981) argued that a construct should share more variance with its measures than other constructs for discriminant validity to be established. The second approach for establishing discriminant validity which is more liberal is the cross loading of measurement indicators (Henseler *et al.*, 2009). This criterion generally requires that the loadings of measurement indicators on their primary construct must be higher than their loadings on other constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Lowry and Gaskin (2014) specifically argued that the loadings of an item on the primary factor must be 20% away from its loadings on other factors for such an item to qualify for inclusion. Summarily, construct validity was assessed by examining convergent and discriminant validity through the five criteria stipulated above.

c) Inner model evaluation. Hair *et al.* (2014) argued that examining the inner model is the next logical step after validity and reliability assessment. However, PLS-SEM does not have a standard goodness-of-fit statistic (Henseler & Sarstedt, 2013 in Hair *et al.*, 2014; Rigdon, 2012) because the prediction of endogenous constructs is achieved by using sample data to obtain model parameters (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Thus, overall model quality assessment is ascertained by evaluating a) the coefficient of determination (R^2), b) cross-validated redundancy (Q^2), c) path coefficients, and d) effect size (f^2) (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Prior to examining the inner model based on the above criteria, the data must be examined for potential collinearity issues because the inner model estimates result from sets of regression analyses (Hair *et al.*, 2014). However, model assessment was restricted to the above four criteria because multicollinearity is already discussed in section 6.11.1 of this chapter.

i) *Coefficient of determination (R^2)* is the amount of variation in the dependent variable accounted for by all the independent variables and its measure ranges from 0.00 to 1.00 (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Hair *et al.* (2014) succinctly noted that R^2 is a measure of a model's predictive accuracy. Since R^2 is embraced in several disciplines, a rough rule of thumb holds that 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 correspondingly represent substantial, moderate, and small levels of predictive accuracy (Henseler *et al.*, 2009). Chin (1998b in Peng & Lai, 2012) stated that R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 respectively represent substantial, moderate, and weak levels of predictive accuracy. However, Hair *et al.* (2014) argued that despite its capacity as a measure of model quality, over reliance on R^2 can be problematic because R^2 can increase even if the added predictor is nonsignificant. Thus, other model assessment criteria must be examined especially if the researcher's key aim is not to improve R^2.

ii) *Cross-validated redundancy (Q^2)* assesses the predictive relevance of the inner model by building on the sample re-use technique that omits some aspects of a data matrix, estimate the parameters of the model and predict the aspects of the model omitted using the estimates (Hair *et al.*, 2014). Thus, as Sarstedt *et al.* (2014) argued, Q^2 overcomes the in-sample prediction weakness of R^2 by providing a gauge for out-of-sample prediction. The greater the difference between original and predicted values, the higher the Q^2, and the more relevant the model's predictive accuracy. Specifically, Q^2 value that is greater than zero typically indicates that the path model for that given construct has predictive relevance (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2014). However, Q^2 fails to provide any information on a measurement model's predictive quality (Rigdon, 2014 in Hair *et al.*, 2014; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2014).

iii) *Path coefficients* in PLS-SEM are like standardized beta weights in linear regression analysis. Hair *et al.* (2014) stated that the PLS-SEM analysis produces path coefficients that help the researcher to assess the paths hypothesized between the constructs of the research. Path coefficient values range from -1 to +1 wherein values closer to -1 represent strong negative relationship while values closer to +1 represent strong positive relationships (Hair *et al.*, 2014). The major weakness of path coefficient values is that apart from showing whether a relationship is significant (which is determined through bootstrapping procedure), just as Q^2, they do not put the relevance of such significant relationship into consideration (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Field & Hole, 2003). Thus, it is not a good index for assessing model predictive quality and does not show whether the identified relationship is important enough to warrant managerial attention.

iv) *Effect size (f^2)* is the practice of quantifying the size of an identified effect (Field & Hole, 2003). Thus, it provides insights on whether the effect identified is significant enough to deserve managerial attention because according to Field and Hole (2003), effect size is a standard measure of the magnitude of an observed effect. Although many effect size measures abound in the literature, the most common is the Pearson's correlation coefficient whose values range from 0 (no effect) to 1 (perfect effect). The criteria for interpreting the magnitude of effect sizes has been long noted. Cohen (1988 in Field & Hole, 2003 and Hair *et al.*, 2014) suggested that 0.10, 0.30, and 0.50 respectively reflect small, medium, and large effects. While SPSS automatically generates effect size measures if instructed to do so, same cannot be said of SmartPLS. Since part of our model was examined with the SPSS software and some part with the SmartPLS 2.0 M3 software, how f^2 can be obtained through SmartPLS using a formula was further described. According to Hair *et al.* (2014), the f^2 for a given path in the model is determined by examining the change in R^2 when that path is eliminated from the model. Thus, f^2 can only be ascertained by running two path models (i.e. the model in which the path of interest is included and the model in which the path of interest is eliminated). Hair *et al.* (2014) provided the following formula for calculating f^2:

$$f^2 = \frac{R^2_{included} - R^2_{excluded}}{1 - R^2_{included}}$$

6.11.5 Sample t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Given that model estimation based on SEM techniques does not invalidate the use of first generation analytical techniques (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014), *t*-test and ANOVA are considered in this section. Why and how these techniques were employed in this study to answer our research question is also established. Sample *t*-tests and ANOVA are employed to test for the mean differences across groups. According to Hair *et al.* (2006), *t*-test and ANOVA are the appropriate statistical technique to employ when the independent variable(s) are nonmetric. Nonmetric as used here implies that a variable must have been measured with a nominal scale such as the groups in an experimental design. The only difference between the two tests is that *t*-test is limited to situations where the independent variable has two levels (i.e. two groups) while ANOVA is best suited for situations where the independent variable(s) has three or more levels (Field & Hole, 2003). According to Hair *et al.* (2006), the statistical difference between three or more means can be determined with ANOVA while *t*-test is limited to the difference between two sample means.

t-tests are of many types (see Field & Hole, 2003; Cooper & Schindler, 2001) which are all aimed towards examining group differences. Thus, studies have applied it to test sample representativeness by distinguishing between early and late responders as recommended by Armstrong and Overton (1977) in their suggested time trends extrapolation technique (see for instance Mohd-Any *et al.*, 2015) and so on. In various situations where it was needful to compare two independent samples in this study, independent samples *t*-tests are applied.

As noted before, when the levels of one or more independent variable(s) are three or more as in factorial experiments, ANOVA is best suited for analyzing data that emerges from such design because conducting series of sample *t*-tests inflates the Type I error rate (Field & Hole, 2003; Cooper & Schindler, 2001). ANOVA is therefore an omnibus test (Field & Hole, 2003) that determines whether two or more means differ significantly (Krishnaswamy *et al.*, 2006; Hair *et al.*, 2006). In experimental research designs where subjects are exposed to different experimental scenarios, the emerging data can be analyzed using n-way independent ANOVA or independent multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) (Hair *et al.*, 2006). In line with the foregoing and the nature of our experimental design, one-way independent ANOVA and independent MANOVA were employed to analyze some components of the generated data. Rather than conduct series of independent one-way ANOVAs, MANOVA was preferred in instances of more than one dependent variable in this study because the latter approach helps to guard against erroneous conclusions (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). In all instances where ANOVA or MANOVA were employed, the difference between group means were determined through the F-test at the $p < 0.05$ level of significance (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Finally, when conducting ANOVA, SPSS generates effect size (η^2) and statistical power if instructed to do so. Since effect size measures help to quantify the size of an observed effect whilst statistical power indicates the confidence with which an observed effect can be concluded on, these two indices were employed to further justify the results of the ANOVA and MANOVA tests.

6.12 Summary

In this chapter, the methodology undertaken to answer the research question and realize the research objectives were outlined. The chapter was divided into four parts. First, the context for the choice of experimental research design employed in this study was set by situating the research on the appropriate research philosophy and research approach. Such enlightening background laid the foundation for the discussion of how the experimental research design was implemented in this study. Second, measures of the research constructs were evolved by drawing on the theoretical base outlined in previous chapters. Thereafter, the sampling technique and how the study subjects were recruited were discussed. The chapter concluded with an outline of the data analytical procedures. Chapter seven presents the data analysis and the results.

CHAPTER SEVEN
ANALYSES AND RESULTS

7.0 Introduction

The previous chapter comprehensively outlined the methodology utilized to examine the research question. This chapter is devoted to presenting the results of data analysis. The chapter is divided into three parts. First, the data that emerged from the pilot study is analyzed and the results presented. The second part will analyze and present the results of the data collected for study 1. Finally, the data that emerged from study 2 is analyzed and the results presented.

7.1 Pilot Study

As noted in chapter six, the pilot study was designed to address three main issues: a) to test the quality of manipulations of the experimental conditions for the two differently-styled experiments; b) to subject the measures of online customer experience (OCE) to purification, reduction and summarization; and c) to examine the validity and reliability of the measurement scales. Before examining the above-stated issues separately for each of the two pilot experiments, it is important to generally discuss how data was prepared and screened, and the composition of the sample of the two experiments since the same subjects were concomitantly utilized. Thereafter, measures taken to control the effects of common method variance was discussed to ensure that a carryover effect is not present in the two experiments. Main analysis which examined the three issues highlighted above are subsequently presented separately for each pilot experiment.

7.1.1 Data examination

The responses to the questionnaire items were first coded in an excel sheet and later transformed into the SPSS version 23.0 software. To facilitate the tracing and correction of wrongly inputted data, the 122 valid cases were serially numbered before making a corresponding serial entry into an excel sheet. Prior to data entry, the questionnaire was manually screened for cases that missed vital data or exhibited obvious and biased response patterns. Additionally, subjects that provided inconsistent responses to reverse-coded items were eliminated.

Consistent with the procedures laid out in chapter six, data entry accuracy was assessed in two ways. First, a random selection of 13 cases (i.e. 10% of the total number of observations) were made due to the large nature of the data from the two experiments. The entries in those 13 randomly selected cases were compared for entry accuracy with the corresponding serially numbered hardcopy questionnaires. The essence of this was to detect entry errors that were within range of codes. The result of the entry check was excellent as no errors were detected across the 13 cases examined. The second approach to examining data entry accuracy was the use of mean, standard deviation, and ranges. These basic statistical techniques were aimed at detecting out of range entry errors. The minimum and maximum scores indicate that all scores were within the range of codes for all the variables tested. The range yielded similar outputs. These results are attributable to the sufficient time devoted to data entry. Thus, the analysis could proceed to the next stage.

Additionally, regarding the assessment of multicollinearity, corresponding measures of the predictor variables and the dependent variable in pilot experiment 1 were averaged with the aid of the SPSS transformation tool to form composite measures of the constructs. The VIF of the five predict variables range from 1.257 to 3.147. The Tolerance values also range from 0.318 to 0.796. In line with the criterion set by Hair *et al.* (2006), multicollinearity was not a major source of concern in the first pilot experiment because none of the VIF scores were above 5. Additionally, the tolerance values were well within the minimum limit of acceptability as none of the scores was less than 10%. Since multicollinearity deals with multiple predictors, it made no sense to replicate the same process for the second pilot experiment because only one predictor variable was involved. At this point, data analysis can proceed to the next stage.

Next, z-scores and the Mahalanobis distance statistic were utilized to detect potential outliers. First, the z-scores of the scale items used to measure the independent variables, dependent variables, manipulation checks, and cognition in the two pilot experiments were calculated. Results indicate that majority of the scores were well below 3. In contrast, 4 cases had z-scores that were above ±3.29 ($p < 0.001$) on three scale items measuring sensory experience. To examine the Mahalanobis distance statistic, the three scale items were regressed on perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs). Case 113 and the four cases identified through z-scores had a *p*-value that was less than 0.001.

Although the above results clearly show that the five cases are outliers, we fail to recognize them as unique cases because it is quite normal for subjects to extremely agree or disagree with the above scale items. Thus, following Hair *et al.*'s (2010) recommendations, no cases were eliminated because the observations were typically representative of the population.

Finally, data was inspected for normality by examining the values of skewness and kurtosis. All the scale items that were utilized to measure the independent variable, dependent variable, manipulation checks and cognition for the two experiments were simultaneously assessed. The results indicate that negative and positive values of skewness were respectively in a range of -0.048 to -1.891 and 0.023 to 0.266. Results also indicate that negative and positive values of kurtosis respectively ranged from -0.031 to -1.547 and 0.022 to 3.670. Given the above findings, it can be concluded that the data is normally distributed because the range of skewness and kurtosis values were respectively below 2 and 7. Data was further examined for normality through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests. Both tests of normality for all the items were significant (p = 0.000). Preferably, values of skewness and kurtosis are better indicators of normality than the Kolmogorov- Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests because results can easily become significant when sample is ≥200 (Field, 2005 in Elbedweihy, 2014). However, since our sample is far less than 200 cases, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests and skewness and kurtosis are robust indicators of normality in this study. Thus, data significantly deviate from normality. In sum, the results of the data screening indicate that the 122 extracted valid cases were all retained for further analysis.

7.1.2 Response/non-response bias and common method variance (CMV)

Due to the length of the survey accompanying the experiments and the fact that the experiments we7re not administered in a lab controlled setting; in addition to manual screening, three major steps were employed to identify and offset the effect of response bias. First, the 122 valid responses were randomly split into two and an independent sample *t*-test was utilized to examine non-response bias. This method was employed because it was not easy to distinguish between early and late responders that enables the application of trends extrapolation method (Armstrong & Overton, 1977). PCoNERs were used because participants provided responses to its indicators in both experiments. Results indicate that at 95% confidence interval, the mean differences of the respective groups for the two experiments were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Thus, the sample does not suffer from response bias.

Order counterbalancing was employed to check the presence or otherwise of CMV and estimate the magnitude of its effects on subsequent analysis since the same participants completed the two experiments. Half of the subjects completed the first experiment first followed by the second experiment while the remaining half completed the second experiment first followed by the first experiment. This gave rise to two independent groups. An independent sample *t*-test was employed to assess the PCoNERs in the two experiments and the overall satisfaction measures asked in the first experiment. Results indicate that the two groups didn't differ in terms of their aggregate PCoNERs in the first experiment ($t_{(120,\ 119.911)} = 0.902$, $p = 0.3690$) and the second experiment ($t_{(120,\ 116.397)} = -0.258$, $p = 0.797$). In terms of aggregate satisfaction measure ($t_{(120,\ 119.684)} = 0.348$, $p = 0.729$), significant group differences were also absent. Thus, CMV is not a major source of concern when considering the concomitant use of the same participants for the two pilot experiments.

7.1.3 Sample distribution

Of the 122 usable responses, 82.79% (101 subjects) were undergraduate students while 17.21% (21 subjects) were postgraduate students. The mean and standard deviation of the participants' age are $M_{age} = 23.8$ years, $SD_{age} = 5.5$ respectively. This corresponds to the age of Nigerian online shoppers because a research conducted by Phillips Consulting (2014) indicate that Nigerians who are above 36 years are very unlikely to shop online. 48.4% of these participants were male while 51.6% were female. Over 75% of the participants admitted that they use Facebook at least once every week. Group differences were examined through one-way independent ANOVA. The two participant categories (i.e. undergraduate and postgraduate students) did not vary in terms of their PCoNERs ($F_{(3,\ 118)} = 0.152$, $p = 0.697$) and overall satisfaction ($F_{(3,\ 118)} = 0.149$, $p = 0.700$). Additionally, discrepancies in Facebook usage frequency did not account for a significant difference in the PCoNERs ($F_{(5,\ 116)} = 1.436$, $p = 0.216$) and overall satisfaction ($F_{(5,\ 116)} = 0.105$, $p =$

0.991). These are clear indications that the interpretation of our results was not confounded by discrepancies in subjects' categories and Facebook usage rate.

7.1.4 Pilot study 1

7.1.4.1 Manipulation checks and experimental realism

The quality of the experimental manipulations was assessed by asking participants to rate their overall satisfaction with the shopping experiences described in each experimental scenario/condition. The three indicators of satisfaction utilized demonstrated excellent reliability ($\alpha = 0.949$). The subjects considerably varied in their perception rating across the four experimental conditions (see Figure 7.1). The aggregate score of the three measures was also statistically significant ($F_{(3,\ 118)} = 134.614$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, the experimental manipulation was effective. However, *post hoc* analysis through the Levene's test indicates a violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance ($F_{(3,\ 118)} = 7.429$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, the preliminary examination of the scales' nomological validity were conducted through statistical procedures that are either compatible with non-normal data or do not make parametric assumptions.

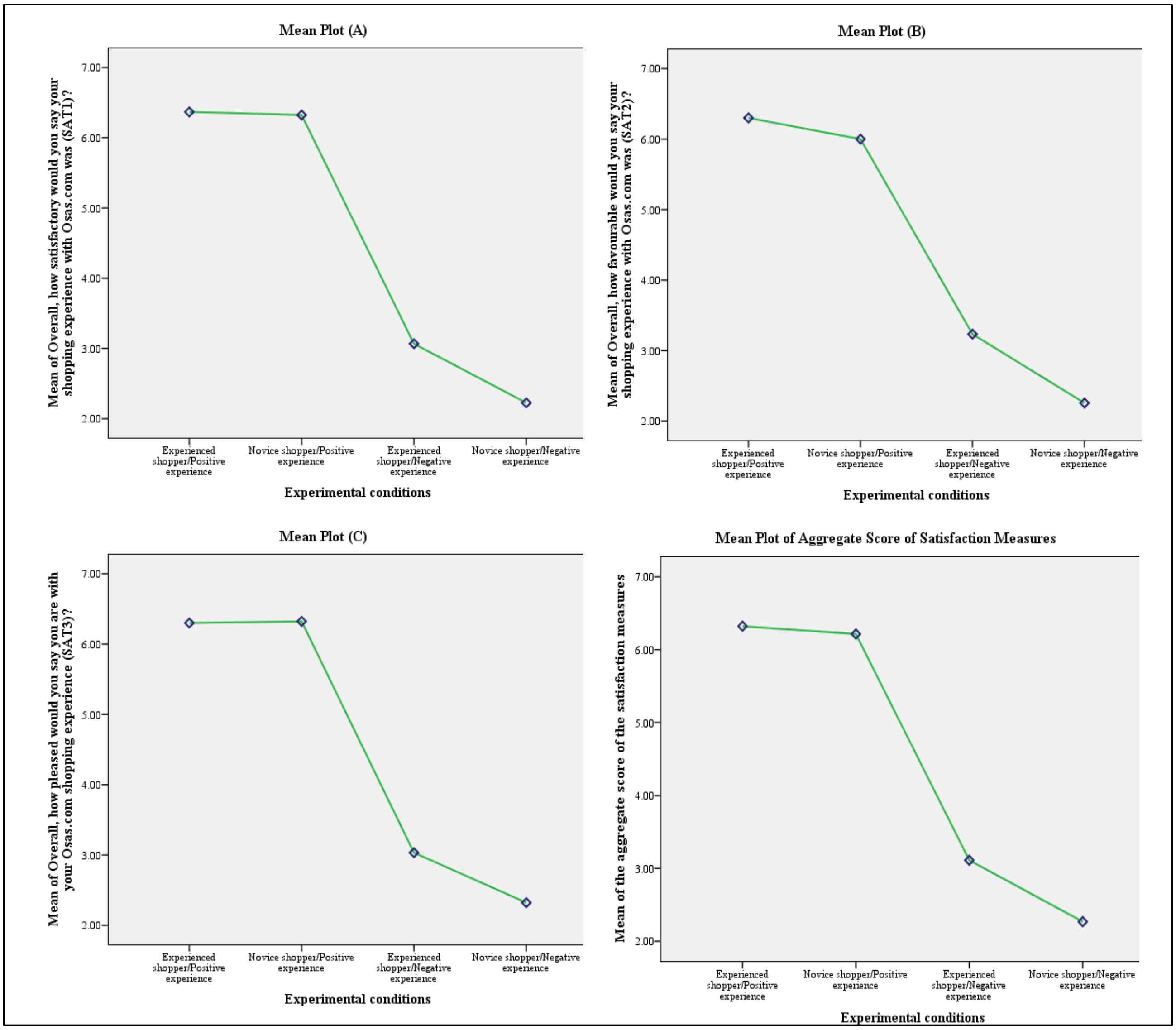

Figure 7.1 Mean Plots of the Three Satisfaction Measures and Aggregate Satisfaction Score

To examine experimental realism, three items including: "To what extent do you perceive the shopping incident described above as something that happened to you?", "To what extent do you think that the shopping incident described above can happen in real life?", and "To what extent is the whole exercise easy to understand?" were asked. The three indicators of realism demonstrated good reliability (α = 0.767). But contrary to expectations, the experienced shopper/positive experience ($M_{\text{experienced shopper/positive experience}}$=5.267; $SD_{\text{experienced shopper/positive experience}}$= 1.564) and novice shopper/positive experience ($M_{\text{novice shopper/positive experience}}$=5.548; $SD_{\text{novice shopper/positive experience}}$= 1.134) groups were higher than the experienced shopper/negative experience ($M_{\text{experienced shopper/negative experience}}$=4.400; $SD_{\text{experienced shopper/negative experience}}$= 1.786) and novice shopper/negative experience ($M_{\text{novice shopper/negative experience}}$=4.613; $SD_{\text{novice shopper/negative experience}}$= 1.603) groups. The *Post hoc test* indicated a statistically significant difference ($F_{(3, 118)}$ = 3.761, p <0.05). However, the mean values indicate that each experimental group perceived the scenarios described as realistic.

7.1.4.2 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

As noted in chapter six, EFA was conducted to purify and summarize the scale. Following the procedure recommended by Hair *et al.* (2006), all the 21 scale items of the five dimensions of OCE adapted from literature and the four indicators of PCoNERs were simultaneously analyzed to enable the process to identify underlying factors. Results show that KMO value was 0.865 which is far beyond the minimum limit of acceptability. The factorability of the correlation matrix was supported and established with the Bartlett's test of sphericity. The outputs indicate that the component extractions were statistically significant ($\chi^2_{(df=300)}$ = 2569.393, p<0.001). Therefore, the use of factor analysis was appropriate.

As noted in chapter six, four criteria informed the retention of items. First, eigenvalue of the factor must be 1 or greater. Second, the factor loading must be 0.5 or over. Third, the communality must be 0.5 or over. Finally, the loading of the item on its primary factor must be 0.2 away from their loadings on other factors as recommended by Lowry and Gaskin (2014). Based on these criteria and the convergence from the Kaiser's criterion, the factor loading after the rotation which converged in 6 iterations shows the reduction of the 25 items to 24 items with evidence of high communality across the scale components (communality ranged from 0.503 – 0.918) (see Table 7.1). One item (i.e. RELEXP1) has a high cross-loading that violated the fourth criterion. Thus, it looks like a candidate for elimination. The analysis resulted in the extraction of five factors which respectively correspond to emotional/cognitive experience, behavioral experience, PCoNERs, sensory experience, and relational experience. The above resultant factor structure accounted for a total variance of 74.151%. The initial eigenvalues of the five factors were all above 1. None of the factor loadings of the items measuring each extracted factor was less than 50%. This clearly shows good indicator reliability (Hulland, 1999).

While EFA can be employed to uncover the number of underlying factors and reveal the loadings of the reflective indicators, none of these outputs provide an assessment of a measurement scale's unidimensionality (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988) whilst Hunter and Gerbing (1982) specifically noted that EFA is a poor end for constructing unidimensional scales. Yet, the need to demonstrate that variables exhibit unidimensional traits has been previously emphasized as a key assumption of measurement theory (see Gerbing & Anderson 1988; Bagozzi, 1980 in Hosany *et al.*, 2015). Table 7.1 shows that there was some reshuffle in the scale items assignment away from each construct's initially adopted corresponding measures. Additionally, although the clustering of the EMOEXP/COGEXP loadings indicate that emotional attributes had precedence over cognitive attributes as revealed in the literature (see Frow & Payne, 2007; Mosley, 2007), the two constructs are theoretically distinct. Thus, it is perplexing that the two constructs loaded as a single factor. The above outputs and the shortfalls of EFA indicate the need to further validate the measurement scale with confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

Measurement indicators	Component					
	EMOEXP/COGEXP	BEHEXP	PCoNERs	SENEXP	RELEXP	Communalities
To what extent would you say that shopping on Osas.com went in putting you in a certain mood (e.g. joyous mood) (EMOEXP2)?	.878	.119	-.128	.027	.102	0.813
To what extent would you say shopping on Osas.com went in creating positive feelings in you (EMOEXP1)?	.852	.139	-.281	-.008	.064	0.828
To what extent would you say shopping on Osas.com went in creating fun-like feelings in you (EMOEXP3)?	.845	.078	-.266	-.030	.145	0.814
How interesting do you think the shopping experience described above was (SENEXP1)?	.775	.090	-.274	.199	.117	0.737
How helpful would you say the quality/price relationship was to you in making the purchase in Osas.com (COGEXP2)?	.766	.108	-.242	.214	.239	0.760
Overall, how helpful do you think Osas.com was in enabling you solve your purchase problems (COGEXP4)?	.744	.064	-.279	.087	.182	0.676
How helpful do you think the ease with which you can shop around/access products in Osas.com website was to you in making the purchase (COGEXP3)?	.720	.154	-.304	.166	.214	0.708
How helpful was the online shopping activity in stimulating your curiosity/interest in online shopping (COGEXP1)?	.625	.153	-.191	.080	.366	0.590
How likely are you to share your Osas.com shopping experience with other people (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc.) (RELEXP1)?	.575	.096	.009	.406	.187	0.539
To what extent can you say that shopping in Osas.com didn't appealed to your inner feelings in anyway (EMOEXP4)?	.572	.224	-.348	-.070	-.011	0.503
Shopping in Osas.com did not make you think about your lifestyle (BEHEXP4)	.014	.902	-.115	.061	.039	0.832
Shopping in Osas.com did not remind you of what you are capable of doing (BEHEXP5)	-.024	.880	-.037	-.057	.206	0.823
How important do you think shopping in Osas.com was in making you think about your lifestyle (BEHEXP1)?	.235	.832	.043	.178	.048	0.784

How important do you think shopping in Osas.com was in reminding you of the things you are capable of doing (BEHEXP2)?	.182	.809	.112	.067	.221	0.754
How important would you say shopping in Osas.com from the comfort of your home was in enabling you change your lifestyle (BEHEXP3)?	.304	.727	.008	.154	.126	0.661
I will perceive the information as trustworthy (PCoNERs2)	-.277	-.018	.902	.021	-.159	0.916
I will perceive that information as reliable (PCoNERs1)	-.326	.017	.890	-.045	-.128	0.918
I will perceive the information as accurate (PCoNERs3)	-.354	-.027	.815	-.010	-.121	0.805
I will perceive the information as biased (PCoNERs4)	-.376	.080	.758	-.068	-.079	0.734
How important will quality of pictures of products and the website's beauty be to you in making that purchase (SENEXP2)?	.022	.074	.026	.886	.102	0.801
How important will the visual quality of videos demonstrating product features be to you in making that purchase (SENEXP3)?	.074	.114	-.088	.883	.097	0.815
How important will the clearness and quality of sounds of audio videos demonstrating products features be to you in making that purchase (SENEXP4)?	.183	.078	-.009	.798	-.072	0.682
To what extent do you think shopping on Osas.com's website make you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society (i.e. do you think shopping Osas.com will make you feel perceived positively by your peers, family members, colleagues etc?) (RELEXP2)	.395	.228	-.136	.135	.751	0.809
To what extent do you think shopping on Osas.com's website doesn't make you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society (RELEXP4)	.132	.150	-.145	-.042	.727	0.591
To what extent does shopping on Osas.com's website make you think about relationships with others (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc) (RELEXP3)	.348	.286	-.151	.183	.621	0.645

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Table 7.1 Principal Component Analysis: Factor Loadings and Communalities

7.1.4.3 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the measurement scale (pilot study 1)

As noted in chapter six, the PLS-SEM was employed due to its utility with the nature and character of the obtained data. The 25-item scale was subjected to CFA through the SmartPLS 2.0 M3 software (Ringle *et al.*, 2005). The inclusion or elimination of any item from the scale was informed by the three criteria set out in chapter six. The initial CFA on all twenty-five items disclosed a muddled output. The loadings of two items (SENEXP2= 0.4428 and SENEXP4= 0.4868) on their primary factor were all below the set cutoff of 0.5. Thus, revealing poor indicator reliability. SENEXP1 appear to display discriminant validity issues as its loading on the primary factor (0.9511) was less than 20% away from its loading on COGEXP factor (0.7839). The AVE of the SENEXP factor (0.4043) was also less than 0.5 which clearly indicates poor convergent validity. Additionally, COGEXP2 and COGEXP4 appear to have discriminant validity issues because they highly cross-loaded on EMOEXP and SENEXP. These concerns were also identified with EMOEXP2 and EMOEXP3 as the two items highly cross-loaded on the COGEXP factor. Finally, RELEXP1 highly cross-loaded on four factors (EMOEXP= 0.5134, RELEXP= 0.6433, SENEXP= 0.5706, and COGEXP= 0.5216). Due to these validity and reliability issues, the data was subjected to series of iterative CFA.

The reflective indicators of the latent constructs with validity and reliability concerns were iteratively eliminated and the psychometric properties of the measurement scale assessed after each successive step. First, RELEXP1 which pose the highest discriminant validity threat was eliminated and the model reassessed. The AVE of the RELEXP construct increased from 0.5829 to 0.6836 while the AVE of the six latent constructs remain the same. Additionally, the factor loadings also improved from a range of 0.6360–0.8939 to a range of 0.6817–0.9159. These are evidences of improvement in convergent validity and indicator reliability. Second, COGEXP4 was eliminated and the model reassessed. The AVE improved from 0.7716 to 0.8223 while the factor loadings improved from the initial range of 0.8323–0.9273 to a new range of 0.8632–0.9326. However, COGEXP2 still highly cross-loaded on three factors (EMOEXP= 0.7216, SENEXP= 0.7470, COGEXP= 0.9231) while SENEXP1 highly cross loaded on two factors (SENEXP= 0.9510, COGEXP= 0.7746). COGEXP2 was subsequently eliminated and the model reassessed. The elimination of COGEXP2 improved AVE from 0.8223 to 0.8507 while the factor loadings further improved to a range of 0.9061–0.9384 as against 0.8632–0.9326 obtained in the second step. The elimination of COGEXP2 also led to reduction in the cross loading of EMOEXP2 and EMOEXP3. The new cross loading on the COGEXP factor has now dropped by over 10% each; resulting to the loading on the primary factor (EMOEXP) of more than 20% away from the loading on the COGEXP factor. Although the cross loadings have dropped to a level where discriminant validity was no longer a serious issue, there was still convergent validity issue because the AVE (0.4043) was still less than the minimum acceptable threshold. Considering the factor loadings, SENEXP2 which had the lowest factor loading of 0.443 was eliminated. The removal of this item only resulted in an improvement of AVE of the SENEXP factor from 0.443 to 0.4683. Since the factor loading of SENEXP4 was the lowest, it was removed from the analysis. This elimination resulted in an improvement of the AVE of the SENEXP factor from 0.4683 to 0.5814. However, discriminant validity was still a serious issue because SENEXP3 cross loaded on two factors. Just to ensure that the ordering of the elimination of SENEXP2 and SENEXP4 were logical, efficient and effective, SENEXP2 which was first eliminated was inputted back into the model and ran as the fifth iterative step. The AVE dropped back to 0.4426 while the discriminant validity worsened because SENEXP2 highly cross loaded on three factors. After facially re-evaluating all the indicators of SENEXP, it was found that SENEXP1 was somewhat different from the other three items and appeared to be measuring emotional experience rather than sensory experience. The issue with this indicator becomes more complicated considering that the item initially cross-loaded on the COGEXP factor in the second iterative step. It was decided that the four indicators of SENEXP will be reassessed for validity and reliability by iteratively dropping some items starting from SENEXP1 and the model reassessed. Outputs reveal that the AVE was 0.7480 as against 0.4043 when the four indicators were included in the model. This is a strong indication of better convergent validity compared to previous iterative steps. The factor loadings ranged from 0.7853 to 0.9524, an evidence of indicator reliability. Additionally, the remaining items also exhibited excellent discriminant validity. The validity and reliability of the indicators of other factors also remained stable. Thus, the model was accepted at the sixth iterative step. The entire process led to the reduction of the scale items from 25 to 21. Four items (i.e. RELEXP1, COGEXP4, COGEXP2, SENEXP1) were therefore dropped from the scale. Since "reflective indicators constitute a representative set of all possible items within the conceptual domain of a construct (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001) … [whilst] reflective items are interchangeable, highly correlated and capable of being omitted without changing the meaning of the construct" (Hair *et al.*, 2014: 111), dropping these items will unlikely affect the estimation of our model. The results of the unidimensional traits, reliability, and validity of the 21 retained scale items are therefore presented below.

Scale items descriptions	**Standard coefficients**	***t*-value**	**Cronbach's alpha**	**Composite reliability**	**AVE**
Behavioral experience (BEHEXP)			0.9101	0.9203	0.6985
BEHEXP1	0.8644	4.1164**			
BEHEXP2	0.7686	3.3697**			
BEHEXP3	0.8971	3.4654**			
BEHEXP4	0.8580	3.7246**			
BEHEXP5	0.7833	3.2788**			
Cognitive experience (COGEXP)			0.8263	0.9193	0.8507
COGEXP1	0.9061	31.2154**			
COGEXP3	0.9384	78.3525**			
Emotional experience (EMOEXP)			0.9099	0.9377	0.7909
EMOEXP1	0.9521	99.3173**			
EMOEXP2	0.9075	36.3329**			
EMOEXP3	0.9074	55.9134**			
EMOEXP4	0.7812	15.4674**			
Relational experience (RELEXP)			0.7644	0.8646	0.6836
RELEXP2	0.9159	42.4443**			
RELEXP3	0.8643	17.9984**			
RELEXP4	0.6818	6.2656**			
Sensory experience (SENEXP)			0.8507	0.8985	0.7480
SENEXP2	0.7853	3.1112**			
SENEXP3	0.9524	3.9057**			
SENEXP4	0.8488	3.4517**			
Perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs)			0.9385	0.9564	0.8460
PCoNERs1	0.9649	145.2446**			
PCoNERs2	0.9493	44.8397**			
PCoNERs3	0.9019	40.6480**			
PCoNERs4	0.8593	23.4388**			

Note: AVE: Average variance extracted; ** $p < 0.01$

Table 7.2 Construct Measures and their Coefficients, Reliability and AVE (Pilot Experiment 1)

7.1.4.4 Unidimensionality

Table 7.2 presents the outputs of the scale's unidimensional traits and reliability. The *t*-values of the 21 retained reflective indicators and the AVE of the six latent constructs were evaluated. The AVE of a latent construct must be 0.5 or greater for the construct to claim unidimensionality (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) while the reflective indicators must load with significant *t*-values on their theoretical constructs (Gefen & Straub, 2005). All the 21 items loaded with significant *t*-values at $p < 0.01$ significance level. The AVE of the six latent constructs also ranged from 0.6836 to 0.8507. These are indications that the measurement scale is acceptable because it demonstrated good unidimensional traits.

7.1.4.5 Reliability assessment

As noted in chapter six, two broad measures – a) Cronbach alpha and b) composite reliability were measures used to establish the scale's reliability. Table 7.2 indicates that the conditions stipulated in chapter six were respected in all cases except relational experience as Cronbach alpha ranged from 0.7644 to 0.9385 while composite reliability ranged from 0.8646 to 0.9564. These clearly show that the retained reflective indicators of the latent constructs were internally consistent.

Construct	**No. of items before**	**No. of items retained**	**AVE**	**Factors/Components**					
				1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
1. Behavioral experience	5	5	0.6985	**0.8358**					
2. Cognitive experience	4	2	0.8507	0.3630	**0.9223**				
3. Emotional experience	4	4	0.7909	0.3290	0.6838	**0.8893**			
4. Relational Experience	4	3	0.6836	0.4484	0.5708	0.5222	**0.8268**		
5. Sensory experience	4	3	0.7580	0.2442	0.2291	0.1695	0.2578	**0.8706**	
6. Perceived credibility of negative experience reviews	4	4	0.8460	-0.1099	-0.5514	-0.5869	-0.4003	-0.1127	**0.9198**

Note: AVE: Average variance extracted

Table 7.3 Convergent and Discriminant Validity (Pilot Experiment 1)

7.1.4.6 Convergent and discriminant validity

As noted in chapter six, convergent validity is established when: a) the factor coefficients are significant; b) the AVE is ≥0.5; and c) the confirmatory factor coefficients is at least 0.5. Additionally, two major criteria were used to assess discriminant validity: a) the coefficients of the reflective indicators on their primary construct must be 0.2 away from their loadings on other factors (Lowry & Gaskin, 2014); and b) the square root of the AVE must be greater than the highest correlation pair (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Table 7.2 indicates that the factor coefficients ranged from 0.6818 to 0.9649. All the loadings were also significant at $p < 0.01$ level while the AVE ranged from 0.6836 to 0.8507. These are strong indications that the measurement scale demonstrated convergent validity. Additionally, the loadings of the reflective indicators on their primary factors were all 0.2 away from their loadings on other factors. The square root of the AVEs were way beyond the highest correlation pair amongst the six latent constructs (see Table 7.3). Thus, the measurement scale demonstrated discriminant validity.

7.1.4.7 Nomological validity

Examining the relationship between the dimensions of online customer experience (OCE) and the theoretically related variable, perceived credibility provides the latitude for testing nomological validity. Previous studies operationalized perceived credibility as a construct that encompasses a broad range of attributes including trustworthiness, accuracy, perceived reliability, and objectiveness (Hsu & Tsou, 2011; Freeman & Spyridakis, 2004). Theory supports the view that previous experience can influence the perceived credibility of available information (Åkesson *et al.*, 2014; Edward & Sahadev, 2011; Alba & Hasher, 1983). Thus, it is not surprising that previous studies intuitively argued for a relationship between customer experience and customer perception (e.g. Klaus & Maklan, 2012; Hsu & Tsou, 2011).

In line with extant procedures (e.g. Hair *et al.*, 2010) and previous research (e.g. Hosany *et al.*, 2015; Babin *et al.*, 1994) in testing nomological validity, correlation analysis was employed through the SmartPLS software. The relationship between dimensions of OCE and the indicators of the theoretically related variable was examined. The results were largely consistent with theoretical expectations (see Table 7.4). An assessment of correlation coefficients indicates a negative association between the dimensions of OCE and the dependent variable PCoNERs. All the zero-order correlation coefficients of emotional, cognitive, and relational dimensions of OCE and PCoNERs are negative and significant ($p < 0.05$), ranging from –0.319 to –0.546. Additionally, the zero-order correlation coefficient of the sensory and behavioral dimensions of OCE and PCoNERs are negative but insignificant ($p > 0.05$), ranging from –0.010 to –0.111. The identified statistical insignificant negative association may be due to the sample size. The sample will be increased in the main experiment and the statistical power of the test will also be examined to enable us to confidently conclude that the observed effects are true if they indeed exist in the population. Overall, the findings largely lend support to the nomological validity of the measurement scale.

Indicators of perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs)	Sensory experience	Emotional experience	Cognitive experience	Behavioral experience	Relational experience
PCoNERs1: I will perceive that information as reliable	$-.096^{ns}$	$-.539^{**}$	$-.522^{**}$	$-.066^{ns}$	$-.365^{**}$
PCoNERs2: I will perceive the information as trustworthy	$-.035^{ns}$	$-.512^{**}$	$-.480^{**}$	$-.085^{ns}$	$-.388^{**}$
PCoNERs3: I will perceive the information as accurate	$-.070^{ns}$	$-.545^{**}$	$-.525^{**}$	$-.102^{ns}$	$-.375^{**}$
PCoNERs4: I will perceive the information as biased	$-.111^{ns}$	$-.546^{**}$	$-.485^{**}$	$-.010^{ns}$	$-.319^{**}$

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); ns. Not significant.

Table 7.4 Correlation Between the OCE Dimensions and PCoNERs

7.1.5 Pilot study 2

7.1.5.1 Manipulation checks

The quality of the experimental manipulation was examined through assessing review source credibility by employing the a) cognition measures, and b) measures of PCoNERs. Examining the manipulation of review source credibility based on cognition derives mainly from the fact that the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) according to Cheung *et al.* (2009) invokes how levels/depths of processing affect persuasive communication. Thus, assessing the manipulation quality of the experiment based on cognition will expose how cognitive involvement triggers experimental realism. PCoNERs was employed as a complimenting measure to further establish the effectiveness of the experimental manipulation. As mentioned in chapter six, five indicators of cognition were employed. The reliability of these measures was first assessed with SPSS version 23.0 software. The results indicate that the measures met the criteria for establishing internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.701$). Additionally, the Cronbach's alpha for PCoNERs is 0.938. This is also a strong indication of internal consistency. Thus, the corresponding measures of cognition and the measures of PCoNERs were averaged and examined as a composite measure across the four (4) experimental conditions.

Results indicate that the need for cognition was not statistically significant across the experimental conditions ($F_{(3, 118)} = 1.535$, $p= 0.209$). Additionally, the participants in the four experimental conditions didn't vary in terms of PCoNERs ($F_{(3, 118)} = 2.108$, $p= 0.103$). It is therefore concluded that the experimental manipulation was not effective. One possible explanation for this may be traceable to the fact that the manipulation of previous experience was entirely in the positives. In the main experiment therefore, three remedial steps were taken to correct the manipulation error. First, previous experience was delineated into positive versus negative previous experiences. Second, to check participants' perceived levels of review source credibility, two items were asked: a) "To what extent can you say that the person who posted this/these comment(s) is/are a popular Nigerian celebrity(ies)?" and b) "To what extent can you say that the Facebook post is well written?". The two items were measured on a 7-point scale with anchors of "extremely great extent" representing 7 and "extremely little extent" representing 1. Finally, participants' perceived levels of review frequency were further assessed by asking one item on a yes/no dichotomy: "Can you say that the review(s) is/are many in number? Next, the psychometric properties of the measurement scale were assessed through CFA.

7.1.5.1 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the measurement scale (pilot study 2)

7.1.5.1.1 Unidimensionality

Table 7.5 shows the scale's unidimensional attributes and scale reliability. A scale is unidimensional if two conditions are met. "First, an indicator should be significantly associated with the underlying latent variable and, second, the indicator must represent a single factor (Anderson & Gerbing 1982; Phillips & Bagozzi 1986)" (Hosany *et al.*, 2015:

486). In this experiment, the *t*-values of the 14 reflective indicators and the AVE of the six latent constructs were examined. The AVE of a latent construct must be ≥0.5 for the construct to claim unidimensionality (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) while the reflective indicators must load with significant *t*-values on their theoretical constructs (Gefen & Straub, 2005). All the 14 items loaded with significant *t*-values at $p < 0.001$ significance level. The AVE of the four latent constructs also ranged from 0.8002 to 0.9361. These are indications that the measurement scale possesses acceptable unidimensional attributes.

Scale items descriptions	**Standardized coefficients**	***t*-value**	**Cronbach alpha**	**Composite reliability**	**AVE**
Perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs)			0.9372	0.9554	0.8431
PCoNERs1	0.9431	71.737***			
PCoNERs2	0.9564	102.472***			
PCoNERs3	0.9299	41.342***			
PCoNERs4	0.8387	18.190***			
Relationship trust (RELTRU)			0.9176	0.9413	0.8002
RELTRU1	0.8866	21.730***			
RELTRU2	0.9162	41.278***			
RELTRU3	0.8867	17.547***			
RELTRU4	0.8885	43.709***			
Relationship satisfaction (RELSAT)			0.9659	0.9777	0.9361
RELSAT1	0.9740	146.612***			
RELSAT2	0.9687	108.363***			
RELSAT3	0.9598	99.690***			
Relationship commitment (RELCOM)			0.9241	0.9517	0.8678
RELCOM1	0.9396	77.997***			
RELCOM2	0.9320	39.327***			
RELCOM3	0.9229	30.053***			
Note: AVE: Average variance extracted; ***$p < 0.001$					

Table 7.5 Construct Measures and their Coefficients, Reliability and AVE (Pilot Experiment 2)

7.1.5.1.2 Reliability assessment

Consistent with Nunnally (1978 in Hosany *et al.*, 2015), the reliability of the measurement scale was excellent given that Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.9176 to 0.9659 (see Table

7.5). The composite reliabilities of the four latent constructs were also excellent as they ranged from 0.9413 to 0.9777 (see Table 7.5). It is therefore concluded from the above outputs that the indicators of the four latent constructs were internally consistent.

7.1.5.1.3 Convergent and discriminant validity

The criteria utilized in pilot study 1 were employed to assess the scale's convergent and discriminant validity. As shown in Table 7.5, the factor coefficients ranged from 0.8387 to 0.9740. All the coefficients were also significant at $p < 0.001$ level while the AVE ranged from 0.8002 to 0.9361. These are clear indications that the measurement scale demonstrated convergent validity. The square root of the AVEs were greater than the highest correlation pair amongst the four latent constructs (see Table 7.6). Thus, the measurement scale demonstrates discriminant validity despite high cross loadings.

Construct	**Number of items**	**AVE**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Perceived credibility of negative experience reviews	4	0.8431	**0.9182**			
2. Relationship trust	4	0.8002	-0.4756	**0.8945**		
3. Relationship satisfaction	3	0.9361	-0.4839	0.8493	**0.9675**	
4. Relationship commitment	3	0.8678	-0.4534	0.8099	0.7797	**0.9316**

Note: AVE: Average variance extracted; all correlation coefficients are significant at $p < 0.001$ level

Table 7.6 Convergent and Discriminant Validity (Pilot Experiment 2)

7.1.5.1.4 Nomological validity

Examining the relationship between the dimensions of relationship quality and the theoretically related variable perceived credibility offers the latitude for testing nomological validity. Previous operationalization of perceived credibility reveal that the construct encompasses a broad range of attributes including trustworthiness, accuracy, perceived reliability, and objectiveness (Hsu & Tsou, 2011; Freeman & Spyridakis, 2004). Theory supports the view that persuasive communication can effectively lead to attitude formation and change (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). It has therefore been established in several previous studies that perceived credibility and attitudinal constructs such as trust, satisfaction and commitment are associated (see Cantallops & Salvi, 2014). Drawing on the procedures set out by Hair *et al.* (2010) and extant research (e.g. Hosany *et al.*, 2015;

Babin *et al.*, 1994), correlation analysis was used for testing nomological validity. The association between dimensions of relationship quality and the theoretically related variable was examined. As expected, the results were consistent with theoretical expectations (see Table 7.7). An assessment of correlation coefficients indicates a negative association between the dimensions of relationship quality and PCoNERs. All the zero-order correlation coefficients are negative and significant (p< 0.05) and ranges from –0.359 to –0.477. Overall, the findings lend support to the nomological validity of the measurement scale.

Indicators of perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs)	**Relationship trust**	**Relationship satisfaction**	**Relationship commitment**
PCoNERs1: I will perceive that information as credible/reliable	-0.462**	-0.477**	-0.446**
PCoNERs2: I will perceive the information as trustworthy	-0.421**	-0.456**	-0.397**
PCoNERs3: I will perceive the information as accurate	-0.421**	-0.473**	-0.439**
PCoNERs4: I will perceive the information as biased	-0.400**	-0.359**	-0.362**
Note: **Correlation significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)			

Table 7.7 Correlation Between Relationship Quality and PCoNERs

7.2 Study 1

7.2.1 Data examination

As in the pilot study, response bias was identified and offset through two key steps. First, all the retrieved responses were subjected to manual screening. The responses that missed vital data or exhibited obvious and biased patterns in the visual screening of the surveys were eliminated. Second, reversed-coded items were used. Participants that provided inconsistent responses to reverse-coded questions were eliminated. The above two measures resulted in the elimination of 42 cases, leaving only 378 valid cases for further analysis. This corresponds to a valid response rate of 90%. The responses to the questionnaire items were first coded in an excel sheet and later transformed into the SPSS version 23.0 software. Every other preparation checks were as in the pilot study.

Regarding missing data, only 7 observations (i.e. 1.85%) of data was lost on respondents age. Data loss was random in the sense that subjects' scores are not related to the subjects' status on the variable and the scores should also be unrelated to subjects scores on other variables (Kline, 1998). Considering that the pattern of data loss was random and low (i.e., <10%), only the data imputation measure was utilized. Consistent with Kline (1998), missing scores were substituted with group mean. Of the 7 cases of undergraduates that missed data in respect of age, a group mean of 23 years was substituted for each. All other data loss in respect of the scale items were substituted with the average of the measure's related measures. Additionally, data entry accuracy was assessed in two broad ways. First, a random selection of 38 cases (i.e. 10% of the total observations) were made. The entries in those 38 randomly selected cases were compared for entry accuracy with the corresponding serially numbered hardcopy questionnaires. The result of the entry check was excellent as no errors were detected across the 38 cases examined. The second approach to examining data entry accuracy as noted in chapter six was the use of mean, standard deviation, and ranges. These basic statistical techniques were aimed at detecting out of range entry errors. All the variables were inserted into the SPSS version 23.0 software. The minimum and maximum scores indicate that all scores were within the range of codes for all the variables tested. The range yielded similar outputs. Thus, the analysis could proceed to the next stage.

Following the steps stipulated in chapter six regarding the assessment of multicollinearity, corresponding measures of the predictor variables and the dependent variable were averaged with the aid of the SPSS transformation tool to form composite measures of the constructs. The VIF of the five predictor variables range from 1.149 to 2.461. The Tolerance values also range from 0.406 to 0.871. Consistent with Hair *et al.*'s (2006) criterion, multicollinearity was not a major source of concern because none of the VIF scores were above 5. Additionally, the tolerance values were well within the minimum limit of acceptability.

As outlined in chapter six, z-scores and the Mahalanobis distance statistic were utilized to detect potential outliers. First, the z-scores of the scale items used to measure the independent variables, dependent variables, manipulation checks, and cognition were calculated. Results indicate that majority of the scores were well below 3. However, 19 cases had z-scores that were above ±3.29 ($p < 0.001$) on three scale items measuring sensory experience. Thus, the 19 cases appear to be potential candidates for elimination but not until after examining the Mahalanobis distance statistic. Mahalanobis distance statistic was examined by regressing the three scale items on PCoNERs as in the pilot study. Results show that only 12 cases (i.e. case 118, case 194, case 247, case 260, case 269, case 281, case 284, case 290, case 302, case 320, case 359, and case 378) had a *p*-value that was less than 0.001. Although the above results clearly show that the 12 cases are indeed outliers, we fail to recognize them as unique cases because it is quite normal for subjects to extremely agree or disagree with the above scale items. This reasoning is further reinforced by the results of the pilot study which was similar in every respect as in this study. Thus, following Hair *et al.*'s (2010) recommendations, no cases were eliminated because the observations were typically representative of the population.

In accordance with the procedures adopted in the pilot study and the steps laid out in chapter six, data was first inspected for normality by examining the values of skewness and kurtosis. The results of all the utilized measurement items indicate that negative values of skewness were in a range of -0.016 to -2.217. There were no positive values of skewness. Results also indicate that negative and positive values of kurtosis respectively ranged from -0.066 to -1.482 and 0.021 to 5.779. Given the above findings, the data is normally distributed because the range of skewness and kurtosis values were respectively below 3 and 8 recommended by Kline (1998) even though some of the values of skewness were above 2 which Curran *et al.* (1996 in Elbedweihy, 2014) recommended as the maximum acceptable limit. Data was further examined for normality through the Kolmogorov- Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests. Results indicate that both tests of normality for all the items were significant ($p = 0.000$). Preferably, values of skewness and kurtosis are better indicators of normality than the Kolmogorov- Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests because results can easily become significant when sample is 200 or larger (Field, 2005 in Elbedweihy, 2014). Since our sample is far greater than 200 cases, skewness and kurtosis are more robust indicators of normality than the Kolmogorov- Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests in this study. But based on the results obtained regarding these tests, the dataset fails to meet all the conditions for normal distribution. Of note however, is that Nunnally (1978) argued that data rarely exhibit normal distribution because scale items are often correlated whilst Malthouse (2001) specifically noted that data obtained with seven-point scales seldom exhibit normality. The good news however, is that CFA tends to be robust against the violations of data normality

(Gorsuch, 1983). In sum, the results of the data screening indicate that the 378 extracted valid cases were all retained for further analysis.

7.2.2 Sample representativeness and common method variance (CMV)

A common method suggested for assessing sample representativeness is to evaluate non-response bias using the time trends extrapolation method (Armstrong & Overton 1977). To apply this method, it is important to distinguish early from late responders. In this study however, it was difficult to distinguish early from late responders because of the way the experiment was structured, and the data collection method applied. Thus, the 378 valid cases were randomly split into two and an independent sample *t*-test was utilized to examine non-response bias. Results indicate that except for cognitive experience where group differences were significant ($t_{(183)} = 3.441$; $p < 0.05$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.34–1.26$), all other group comparisons across all the study variables were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Thus, the sample was representative because response bias was not a serious source of concern.

In chapter six, the procedural remedies to attenuating CMV were discussed. However, it has been shown that procedural remedies are limited in several respects despite its apparent appeal (see Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Thus, these measures were augmented with statistical remedies. According to Podsakoff *et al.* (2003), one of the most widely used statistical technique for assessing CMV is the Harman's one-factor test. Consistent with this procedure, all variables were factor-analyzed and the unrotated factor solution examined. The single factor that explained 45.97% of the total variance emerged. Since this single factor solution explained less than 50% of the total variance, CMV is not a major source of concern.

7.2.2 Sample distribution and behavior

Out of the 378 usable responses, 47.6% (180 subjects) were undergraduate students while 52.4% (198 subjects) were postgraduate students. The minimum and maximum age of the subjects were 18 years and 55 years respectively. The mean and standard deviation of the subjects' age are M_{age}= 27.7 years, SD_{age}= 6.6 respectively. The skewness and kurtosis values indicate a normal distribution as they respectively equal 1.207 and 1.631. Like the pilot study, 47.4% (i.e. 179) subjects were male while 52.6% were female. 45.2% (171) admitted they have previously shopped online while the balance (54.8% which corresponds to 207 subjects) indicated otherwise. Group differences were examined through one-way independent ANOVA. The essence of this was to see if such differences confounded the interpretation of our results.

First, in terms of participant categories (i.e. undergraduate and postgraduate students), the subjects did not vary in sensory experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 1.868$, $p = 0.173$); cognitive experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 0.341$, $p = 0.560$); emotional experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 0.000$, $p = 0.997$); behavioral experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 2.065$, $p = 0.152$); relational experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 3.437$, $p = 0.065$); and perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) ($F_{(1, 376)} = 0.694$, $p = 0.405$). Findings also indicate that the subjects' age differences did not account for any significant variation in sensory experience ($F_{(30, 347)} = 0.964$, $p = 0.524$); cognitive experience ($F_{(30, 347)} = 0.810$, $p = 0.752$); emotional experience ($F_{(30, 347)} = 0.822$, $p = 0.735$); behavioral experience ($F_{(30, 347)} = 0.523$, $p = 0.983$); relational experience ($F_{(30, 347)} = 0.895$, $p = 0.629$); and PCoNERs ($F_{(30, 347)} = 0.854$, $p = 0.691$). Third, subjects' gender differences did not account for any significant variations in sensory experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 1.777$, $p = 0.183$); cognitive experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 0.022$, $p = 0.883$); emotional experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 0.032$, $p = 0.858$); behavioral experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 0.289$, $p = 0.591$); relational experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 0.006$, $p = 0.938$); and PCoNERs ($F_{(1, 376)} = 0.042$, $p = 0.838$). Finally, in terms of subjects shopping experience, in exception of relational experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 5.715$, $p = 0.017$); and PCoNERs ($F_{(1, 376)} = 7.821$, $p = 0.005$) that indicated significant differences, subjects did not significantly differ in their sensory experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 0.070$, $p = 0.791$); cognitive experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 0.015$, $p = 0.903$); emotional experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 1.017$, $p = 0.314$); and behavioral experience ($F_{(1, 376)} = 3.366$, $p = 0.067$). It is therefore concluded that the interpretation of subsequent results is not confounded by differences in sample characteristics.

7.2.3 Manipulation checks and experimental realism

To assess the quality of the experimental manipulation, subjects were asked to rate their satisfaction level with the experimental treatments. As in the pilot study, three measures of satisfaction were employed. The satisfaction measures demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.968$). Thus, they were averaged to get an aggregate satisfaction score before testing the quality of the experimental manipulation. Findings indicate that OCE manipulation was successful: positive experience treatments were rated more positively and satisfactorily by experienced shoppers ($M_{\text{Experienced shopper}} = 6.23$, $SD = 0.52$, $CI_{95\%} = 6.12–6.33$) and novice shoppers ($M_{\text{novice shopper}} = 6.22$, $SD = 0.53$, $CI_{95\%} = 6.11–6.33$) than negative experience treatments by both experienced shoppers ($M_{\text{Experienced shopper}} = 3.28$, $SD = 1.47$, $CI_{95\%} = 2.97–3.58$) and novice shoppers ($M_{\text{novice shopper}} = 2.45$, $SD = 1.38$, $CI_{95\%} = 2.16–2.73$; $F_{(3, 374)} = 323.40$; $p < 0.001$). Although *post hoc* analysis through the Levene statistic indicate that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was violated ($F_{(3, 374)} = 49.380$, $p < 0.001$), this was not considered a threat to subsequent analysis because measures of satisfaction employed here was only useful for the experimental manipulation. It never formed part of subsequent analysis. Figure 7.2 shows at a glance, the pictorial representation of the rating of aggregate satisfaction score across the four experimental treatments.

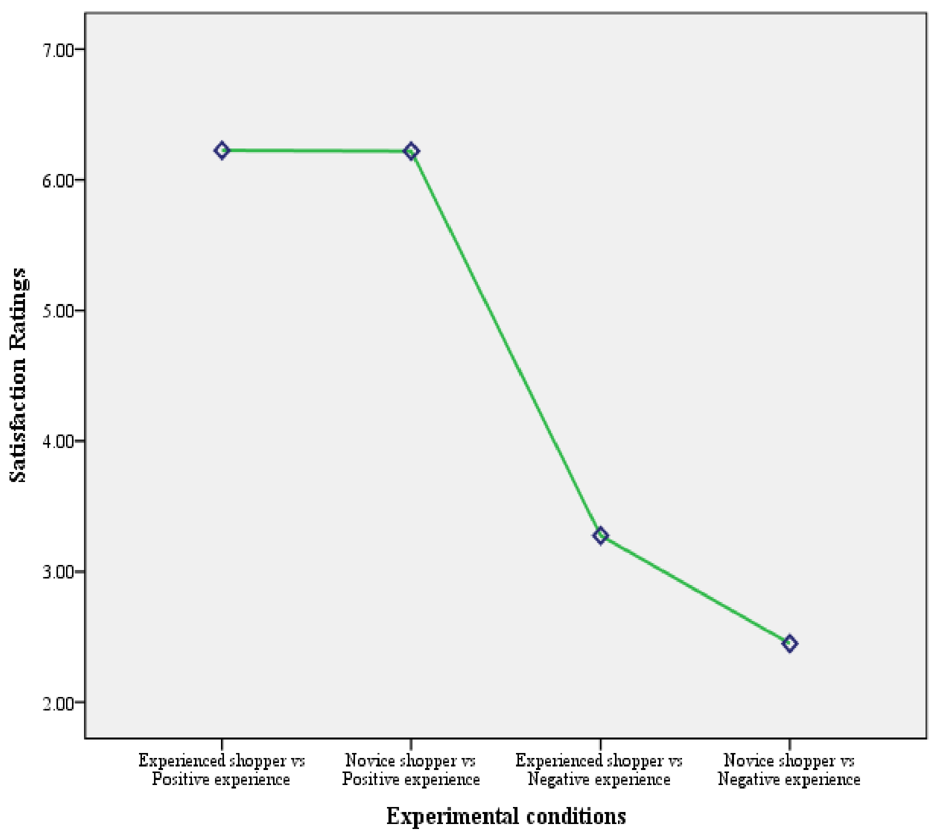

Figure 7.2 Satisfaction Levels Across the Four Experimental Scenarios

As in the pilot study, experimental realism was examined by asking three items including: "To what extent do you perceive the shopping incident described above as something that happened to you?", "To what extent do you think that the shopping incident described above can happen in real life?", and "To what extent is the whole exercise easy to understand?". The three indicators of realism demonstrated good internal consistency (α = 0.779) and were therefore averaged. The mean value of the aggregate measure is M = 5.48. This clearly indicate that the experimental treatments were realistic.

7.2.4 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the measurement scale (study 1)

7.2.4.1 Unidimensionality

As outlined in chapter six, two measures were used to assess scale's unidimensionality: a) *t*-values, and b) AVE. As shown in Table 7.8, the scale demonstrated unidimensionality. First, all the scale items loaded with significant *t*-values ranging from 6.710 to 371.451 which are way beyond 2.56 (i.e. $p < 0.01$). A bootstrapping random resampling technique of 5,000 sub-samples recommended in the literature was used to obtain the *t*-values (Hair *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, the AVEs were well beyond the minimum limit of acceptability as it ranged from 0.8198 to 0.9454.

7.2.4.2 Reliability assessment

As noted in chapter six, two broad measures – a) Cronbach alpha and b) composite reliability – are often used to establish a scale's reliability. In this study, the two reliability indexes were examined. The set minimum threshold for establishing reliability with Cronbach's alpha is 0.6; whereas it is 0.70 or greater for composite reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Nunnally (1978 in Hosany *et al.*, 2015) recommended a minimum acceptable alpha coefficient of 0.70 when the research is at its early stages (for instance scale development) and 0.80 at the basic or applied phase of the research. These conditions were respected in all cases because Cronbach alpha ranged from 0. 8259 to 0.9807 while composite reliability ranged from 0.9193 to 0.9858 (see Table 7.8). Thus, the reflective indicators of the latent constructs were internally consistent.

Scale items descriptions	Standardized Coefficients	*t*-values	Cronbach alpha (*α*)	Composite reliability	AVE
Sensory experience (SENEXP)			0.9453	0.9579	0.8198
SENEXP2	0.8951	8.299***			
SENEXP3	0.9204	9.408***			
SENEXP4	0.8344	6.710***			
Emotional experience (EMOEXP)			0.9807	0.9696	0.8886
EMOEXP1	0.9618	206.671***			
EMOEXP2	0.9449	109.383***			
EMOEXP3	0.9259	97.176***			
EMOEXP4	0.9377	114.835***			
Cognitive experience			0.8259	0.9193	0.8506
COGEXP1	0.9069	60.925***			
COGEXP3	0.9374	132.488***			
Behavioral experience (BEHEXP)			0.9453	0.9579	0.8198
BEHEXP1	0.9170	68.739***			
BEHEXP2	0.9270	87.432***			
BEHEXP3	0.8560	44.830***			
BEHEXP4	0.9134	77.277***			
BEHEXP5	0.9121	65.227***			
Relational experience (RELEXP)			0.9157	0.9472	0.8570
RELEXP2	0.9601	144.135***			
RELEXP3	0.8578	32.968***			
RELEXP4	0.9557	124.572***			
Perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs)			0.9807	0.9858	0.9454
PCoNERs1	0.9744	274.144***			
PCoNERs2	0.9786	371.451***			
PCoNERs3	0.9701	264.144***			
PCoNERs4	0.9662	261.145***			

Note: AVE: Average variance extracted; ***$p < 0.001$

Table 7.8 Construct Measures and their Coefficients, Reliability and AVE (Study 1)

7.2.4.3 Convergent and discriminant validity

In accordance with the criteria set in chapter six, all the standardized factor coefficients were above the 0.5 minimum cut-off as it ranged from 0.8344 to 0.9786 (see Table 7.8). The confirmatory factor coefficients were also significant whilst the AVEs were above the 0.5 cutoff mark. Thus, the scale demonstrates convergent validity. The conditions for establishing discriminant validity were also met because the confirmatory factor coefficients of the reflective indicators on their primary construct were more than 0.2 away from their loadings on other factors for all the measurement indicators. Additionally, the square root of the AVEs were greater than the highest correlation pair (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Fornell & Larcker, 1981) for each construct (see Table 7.9). Hence, the measurement scale is valid.

Construct	Number of items	AVE	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Sensory experience	3	0.8198	**0.9054**					
2. Emotional experience	4	0.8886	0.2494	**0.9427**				
3. Cognitive experience	2	0.8506	0.3314	0.7241	**0.9223**			
4. Behavioral experience	5	0.8198	0.2810	0.5776	0.5114	**0.9054**		
5. Relational experience	3	0.8570	0.1702	0.4890	0.4220	0.5132	**0.9257**	
6. Perceived credibility of negative experience reviews	4	0.9454	-0.1130	-0.5867	-0.4886	-0.3279	-0.2867	**0.9723**

Note: AVE: Average variance extracted; all correlation coefficients are significant at $p < 0.05$ level

Table 7.9 Convergent and Discriminant Validity (Study 1)

7.2.4.4 Structural model

As noted in chapter six, the structural model was examined by assessing the inner model. First, the path coefficients and the coefficient of determination (R^2) were determined. Second, the significance state of the outputs was obtained through a bootstrapping resampling technique of 5,000 sub-samples (Hair *et al.*, 2011). Thereafter, the effect size (f^2) was obtained through the formula stated in chapter six whilst the cross-validated redundancy (Q^2) was also assessed. Table 7.10, indicates that emotional experience (β = -0.488; t = 8.103; $p < 0.001$) and cognitive experience (β = -0.166; t = 3.003; $p < 0.01$) have a significant negative effect on PCoNERs. While emotional experience has a medium effect size (f^2 = 0.146), cognitive experience has a small effect size (f^2 = 0.018). In contrast, sensory experience (β = 0.057; t = 1.437; $p > 0.05$), behavioral experience (β = 0.022; t = 0.474; $p > 0.05$), and relational experience (β = 0.001; t = 0.015; $p > 0.05$) were not significant predictors of PCoNERs. Additionally, except for sensory experience that has a very small effect size, behavioral experience and relational experience have zero effect sizes (i.e. little or no effect). Since $R^2 = 0.350$, the predictive accuracy of our model lies between weak and moderate levels according to the rule of thumb specified by Hair *et al.* (2011). Additionally, the Q^2 for the endogenous construct (i.e. PCoNERs) is 0.317. Based on Hair *et al.*'s (2014) and Sarstedt *et al.*'s (2014) criterion, the predictive relevance of the model is within the recommended limit of acceptability. Finally, a power of 1.0 implies that there is enough statistical power to conclude on the observed effects. The foregoing results therefore permit us to confirm that *H1a-e* is reasonably fulfilled.

Hypothesized path	**Path coefficient**	***t*-value**	f^2
H1a: Sensory experience → PCoNERs	0.057	1.437 ^{ns}	0.005
H1b: Emotional experience → PCoNERs	-0.488	8.103***	0.146
H1c: Cognitive experience → PCoNERs	-0.166	3.003**	0.018
H1d: Behavioral experience → PCoNERs	0.022	0.474 ^{ns}	0.000
H1e: Relational experience → PCoNERs	0.001	0.015 ^{ns}	0.000

Notes: ^{ns}= Not significant; $**p < 0.01$; $***p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.350$; $Q^2 = 0.317$; observed power = 1.0

Table 7.10 Results of Hypothesis 1 (H1)

7.2.5 ANOVA test outputs

Table 7.11 shows the outputs of the two-way independent ANOVA that tested the main and the interaction effects of experience type and shopper type on perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs). Table 7.11 and 7.12 summarizes participants' PCoNERs as a function of experience type and shopper type. The findings indicate a main effect of experience type ($F_{(1, 377)} = 252.75$, $p < 0.001$) (see Figure 7.3 also for a graphical illustration). Shoppers who previously had positive experience(s) perceived negative experience reviews less credible ($M_{\text{Positive experience}} = 3.21$, $SD = 1.78$) than shoppers who previously had negative experience(s) ($M_{\text{Negative experience}} = 5.81$, $SD = 1.35$). The eta-squared ($\eta^2 = 0.40$) indicate that the effect of experience type on PCoNERs lies in between medium and large effect size based on Cohen's convention. With a statistical power of 1.0, the test is sufficiently powered. This indicates that *H3* is supported. In contrast, the main effect of shopper type ($F_{(1, 377)} = 0.99$, $p = 0.32$) and the interaction effect of experience type and shopper type ($F_{(1, 377)} = 0.01$, $p = 0.91$) on PCoNERs (see Figures 7.4 and 7.5 respectively for a graphical representation of the main effect of shopper type and the interaction effect) was not significant. Additionally, zero can act as good enough approximation for the effect sizes of shopper type ($\eta^2 = 0.003$) and the interaction term ($\eta^2 = 0.000$). Thus, shopper type and the interaction effect have effect sizes that are truly not substantive on PCoNERs. Additionally, since the observed power of these effects were less than 0.80, the tests were insufficiently powered to detect any effect assuming that such exists in the population. Thus, there was insufficient evidence to confirm that *H4* and *H5* are supported.

Independent variables	Sum of squares	*F*	*p*-value	η^2	Observed power
Experience type	637.939	255.937	0.000	0.407	1.000
Shopper type	2.332	0.936	0.334	0.003	0.162
Experience type × shopper type	0.003	0.001	0.972	0.000	0.052
Notes: η^2 = Effect size					

Table 7.11 ANOVA Outputs (Study 1)

Shopper type	Positive experience	Negative experience
Experienced shopper	3.13_a (0.16) (2.81–3.44)	5.73_b (0.16) (5.41–6.06)
Novice shopper	3.31_a (0.16) (2.99 – 3.63)	5.88_b (0.17) (5.55–6.20)

Note: The range of values in the parenthesis represent 95% confidence interval. The standard deviations are the decimal values in parentheses. The values with subscripts are the means. Means with different subscripts are significantly different at $p < 0.001$.

Table 7.12 Consumers' PCoNERs with Different Experience Types and Levels

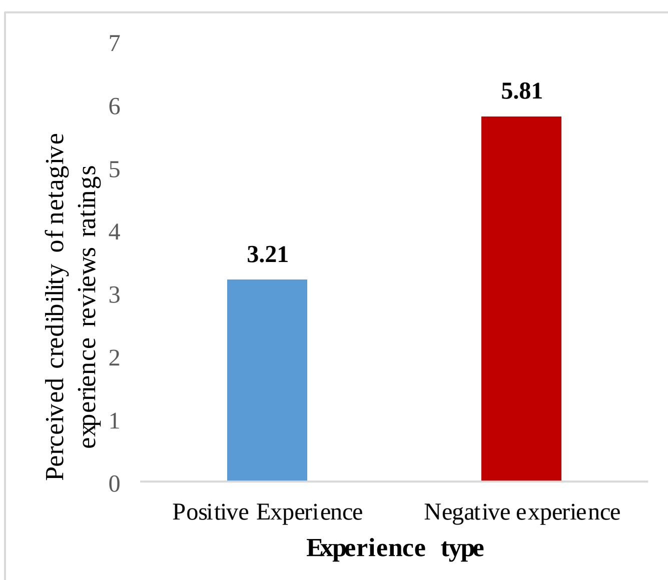

Figure 7.3 PCoNERs as a Function of Experience Type

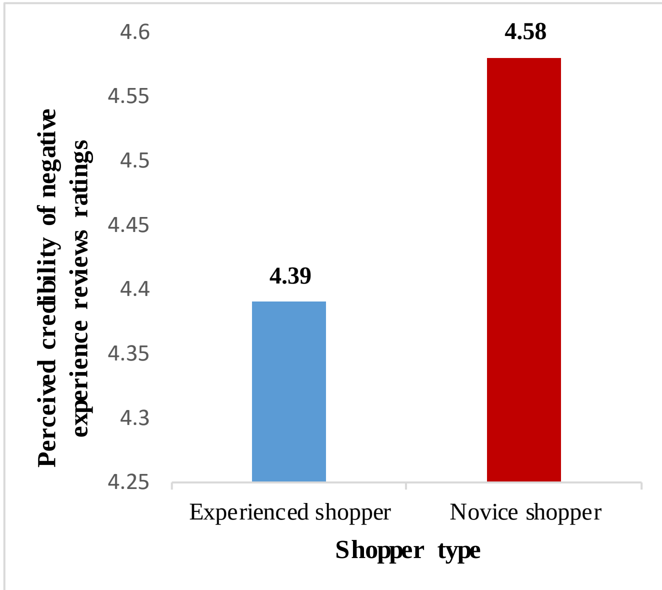

Figure 7.4 PCoNERs as a Function of Shopper Type

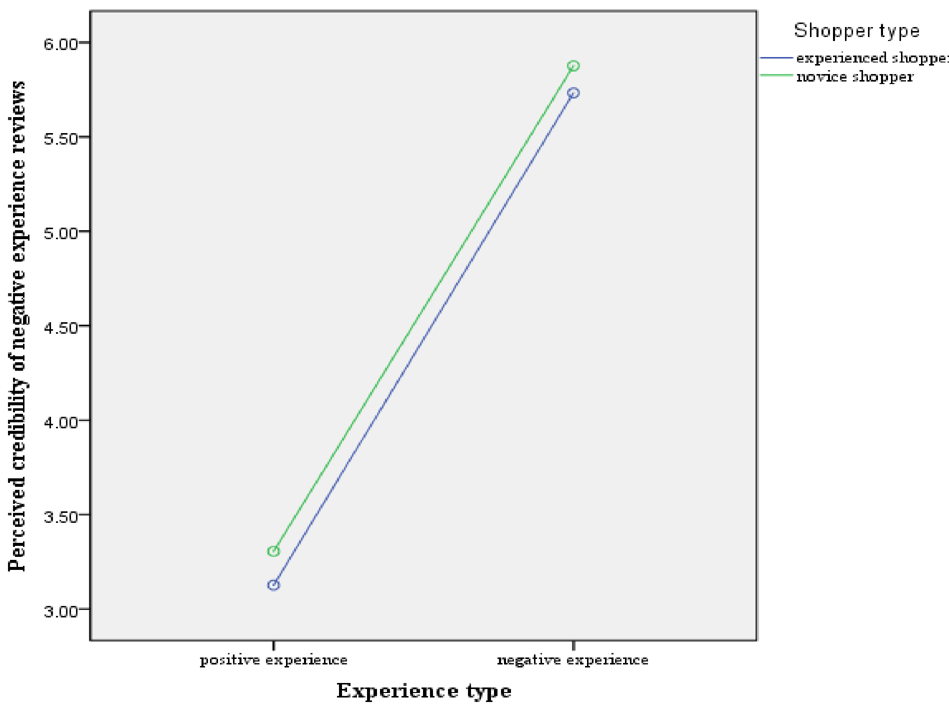

Figure 7.5 Interaction Effect of Shopper Type and Experience Type on PCoNERs

7.3 Study 2

7.3.1 Data examination

As in the pilot study and study 1, response bias was identified and offset through two steps. First, all the retrieved responses were subjected to manual screening. The responses that missed vital data or that exhibited obvious and biased patterns in the visual screening of the surveys were eliminated. Second, reversed-coded items were used. Participants that provided inconsistent responses to reverse-coded questions were eliminated. Like study 1, the above two measures resulted in the elimination of 40 cases, leaving only 380 (95%) valid cases for further analysis. The preparation of these valid cases for further analysis proceeded as in the pilot study and study 1 except that it was undesirable to examine multicollinearity because a single predictor is involved, whereas multicollinearity is only relevant when there are multiple predictors.

Data loss was random in the sense that subjects either failed to indicate their age, gender or Facebook usage frequency. Additionally, the amount of data lost in these variables respectively are 3.16% (i.e. 12 missing observations), 0.79% (i.e. 3 missing observations), and 1.84% (i.e. 7 missing observations). Thus, the pattern of data loss in each variable is not related to the subjects' status on those variables and the scores should also be unrelated to subjects' scores on other variables (Kline, 1998). Consequently, only the data imputation measure was utilized. Consistent with Kline (1998) therefore, missing scores were substituted with group mean. Of the 12 cases that missed data in respect of age, a mean age of approximately 24 years was substituted for each. As for data loss in respect of gender and Facebook usage frequency, imputing group means was meaningless since these variables were measured on nominal scales. Instead, data codes were randomly assigned to each variable.

Data entry accuracy was assessed in two broad ways. First, a random selection of 38 cases (i.e. 10% of the total number of observations) were made. The entries in those 38 randomly selected cases were compared for entry accuracy with the corresponding serially numbered hardcopy questionnaires. The random selection of 38 cases was due to the large nature of the data which makes it cumbersome to manually check every single case. The result of the entry check was excellent as no errors were detected across the 38 cases inspected. Secondly, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values, and ranges were utilized to examine data entry accuracy. These basic statistical techniques were aimed at detecting out of range entry errors. All the variables were inputted into the SPSS version 23.0 software. The minimum and maximum scores indicate that all scores were within the range of codes for all the variables tested. The range yielded similar outputs. These results are attributable to the sufficient time given to the data entry exercise.

Additionally, z-scores and the Mahalanobis distance statistic were utilized to detect potential outliers. Results indicate that apart from some measures of cognition where few observations had z-scores of -2.75, all other variables had z-scores that were way below 2. Thus, going by the ±3.29 criterion, there were no potential outliers. To further assess the presence or otherwise of multivariate outliers, the Mahalanobis distance statistic was also examined. Outputs from the Mahalanobis distance statistic indicate that only four cases (i.e. case 11, case 75, case 245, and case 250) had a *p*-value that was less than 0.001. Although the above results clearly show that the four cases are potential outliers, they were not recognized as unique cases because it is quite normal for subjects to extremely agree or disagree with measures of cognition. Thus, following Hair *et al.*'s (2010) recommendations, no cases were eliminated because the observations were typically representative of the population.

Finally, data was first assessed for normality by examining the values of skewness and kurtosis. The results indicate that the negative and positive values of skewness were respectively in a range of -0.008 – -1.283 and 0.002–0.028. Additionally, the negative and positive values of kurtosis respectively ranged from -0.724 to -1.597 and 0.088 to 0.781. Drawing on the above findings, it is concluded that the data is normally distributed because the range of skewness and kurtosis values were respectively below 3 and 8 recommended by Kline (1998) and 2 which Curran *et al*. (1996 in Elbedweihy, 2014) recommended as the maximum acceptable limit of skewness values. As in the pilot study and study 1, data was further examined for normality through the Kolmogorov- Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests. Both tests of normality for all the items were significant (p = 0.000). Since our sample is far greater than 200 cases, skewness and kurtosis are more robust indicators of normality than the Kolmogorov- Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests in this study. But based on the results obtained regarding these tests, it is concluded that the dataset fails to meet all the conditions for normal distribution. However, Nunnally

(1978) contended that data rarely exhibit normal distribution because scale items are often correlated whilst Malthouse (2001) specifically noted that data obtained with seven-point scales seldom exhibit normality. The good news however, is that CFA tends to be robust against the violations of data normality (Gorsuch, 1983). Summarily, the results of the data screening indicate that the 380 extracted valid cases were all retained for further analysis.

7.3.2 Sample representativeness and common method variance (CMV)

As noted in chapter six, time trends extrapolation is the common method for assessing sample representativeness and evaluating non-response bias (Armstrong & Overton 1977). As in study 1, it was difficult to distinguish early from late responders in this study because of the way the experiment was structured and the data collection method applied. Thus, the sample (i.e. 380 cases) was randomly split into two and an independent sample *t*-test was utilized to examine response bias. Outputs show that except for perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) that recorded significant group differences ($t_{(224)} = 2.278$; $p < 0.05$, $CI_{95\%} = 0.08–1.08$), other group comparisons across all the study variables were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Thus, the sample was representative because response bias was not a serious source of concern.

In chapter six, the procedural remedies to attenuating CMV were discussed. However, it has been shown that procedural remedies are limited in several respects despite its apparent appeal (see Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Thus, these measures were augmented with statistical remedies. According to Podsakoff *et al.* (2003), one of the most widely used statistical technique for assessing CMV is the Harman's one-factor test. Consequently, all variables were factor-analyzed and the unrotated factor solution examined. Although no single factor emerged from the exploratory factor analysis, one factor explained 76.34% of the total variance. This indicate that CMV is very likely. However, the apparent shortfalls of the Harman's single-factor test may have prompted Podsakoff *et al.* (2003) to argue that it is unfit to deal with the problems of CMV. However, with the first factor representing the 3 dimensions of relationship quality (RQ) and given that the dimensions of RQ are interdependent, CMV is not a major source of concern especially with the procedural remedies applied in the design phase of this study.

7.3.2 Sample distribution and behavior

Out of the 380 usable responses, 92.9% (353 subjects) were undergraduate students while 7.1% (27 subjects) were postgraduate students. The minimum and maximum age of the subjects were 17 years and 55 years respectively. The mean and standard deviation of the subjects' age are M_{age}= 23.79 years, SD_{age}= 3.64 respectively. A clear explanation for this disparity in relation to study 1 is that this study is dominated by undergraduate students as opposed to study 1 where postgraduate students dominated the sample. Given the population distribution of Nigerian tertiary students, undergraduate students are bound to be younger than postgraduate students. Although the age distribution seems nonnormal as skewness and kurtosis respectively parallel 3.1 and 19.05 which are respectively above the maximum threshold of 3 and 8 (see Kline, 1998), this was expected because a handful of postgraduate students participated in this study. But given that undergraduate and postgraduate students didn't differ in both the pilot study and study 1, it is concluded as was noted in section 7.3.2 that the data is representative of the population. Additionally, gender distribution was relatively even as male subjects represent 51.8% (197) while their female counterparts accounted for 48.2% (183). The skewness and kurtosis of gender distribution are 0.074 and -2.005 respectively. In terms of Facebook usage frequency, over 86% admitted they use Facebook at least once a week. 7.9% admitted they use Facebook at least once a month while 5.8% claim they never used Facebook. This distribution is normal as skewness and kurtosis respectively equal -1.064 and -0.161. As in study 1, group differences were examined through one-way independent ANOVA to examine whether such differences confounded the interpretation of our results.

First, in terms of participant categories (i.e. undergraduate and postgraduate students), the subjects significantly varied in PCoNERs ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 4.585, p = 0.033); relationship trust ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 5.968, p = 0.015); relationship commitment ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 5.023, p = 0.026); and relationship satisfaction ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 5.648, p = 0.018). These findings further reinforce the skewed nature of subjects' distribution in terms of students' category. Thus, the effects of subjects' category were controlled for in subsequent analysis. Findings also indicate that subjects' age differences didn't account for any statistical significant difference in PCoNERs ($F_{(22, 357)}$ = 0.871, p = 0.634); relationship trust ($F_{(22, 357)}$ = 0.756, p = 0.780); relationship commitment ($F_{(22, 357)}$ = 0.918, p = 0.571); and relationship satisfaction ($F_{(22,}$

$_{357)}$ = 0.979, p = 0.491). Third, except relationship commitment that was statistically significant ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 6.018, p = 0.015), the gender of subjects didn't account for any statistically significant difference in PCoNERs ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 0.021, p = 0.886); relationship trust ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 1.464, p = 0.227); and relationship satisfaction ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 2.765, p = 0.097). Finally, in terms of Facebook usage, no statistically significant variation was detected in PCoNERs ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 0.346, p = 0.885); relationship trust ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 0.673, p = 0.645); relationship commitment ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 1.077, p = 0.373); and relationship satisfaction ($F_{(1, 378)}$ = 1.183, p = 0.317). Therefore, except category of subjects which was controlled for in subsequent analysis, the interpretation of subsequent results are not confounded by differences in sample characteristics.

7.3.3 Manipulation checks

The manipulation of review source credibility was checked by adhering to the approach adopted by Wan and Wyer (2015). The review source credibility manipulation was successful: the independent sample *t*-test indicates that reviews posted by celebrities were rated more positively/credibly ($M_{\text{Celebrities}}$ = 5.94, SD = 1.80) than the reviews posted by non-celebrities ($M_{\text{Non-celebrities}}$ = 2.99, SD = 1.77; $t_{(378)}$ = 16.06; $p < 0.05$, $CI_{95\%}$ = 2.58–3.30) along a scale from 1 to 7. Figure 7.6 pictorially depicts this difference. The review frequency manipulation was also successful: the Chi-Square statistic indicated a significant difference between subjects who read three reviews and those who read a single review ($\chi^2_{(1)}$ = 221.693, $p < 0.001$). In absolute terms, 78% of those who read three reviews admitted that they are many in number whereas only 22% claim they were not many in number. Additionally, 97% of those who read a single review admitted that it was low in frequency. Finally, the manipulation of prior experience type was checked using measures of cognition as noted in chapter six. Measures of cognition were negatively worded so that high scores reflect low cognition while low scores reflect high cognition. The manipulation was also successful: the independent sample *t*-test indicates that subjects who read prior positive experience were lower in cognition ($M_{\text{Prior positive experience}}$ = 5.31, SD = 1.55) than those who read prior negative experience ($M_{\text{Prior negative experience}}$ = 4.83, SD = 1.24; $t_{(368.256)}$ = 3.33; $p < 0.05$, $CI_{95\%}$ = 0.20–0.76). Figure 7.7 pictorially represents this difference.

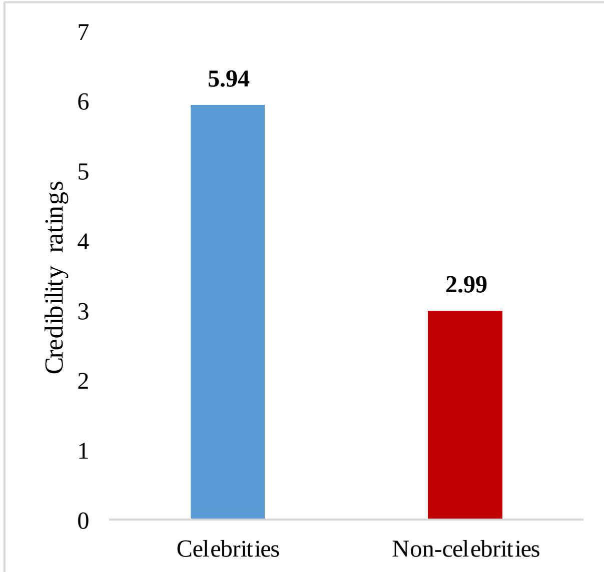

Figure 7.6 Review Source Credibility

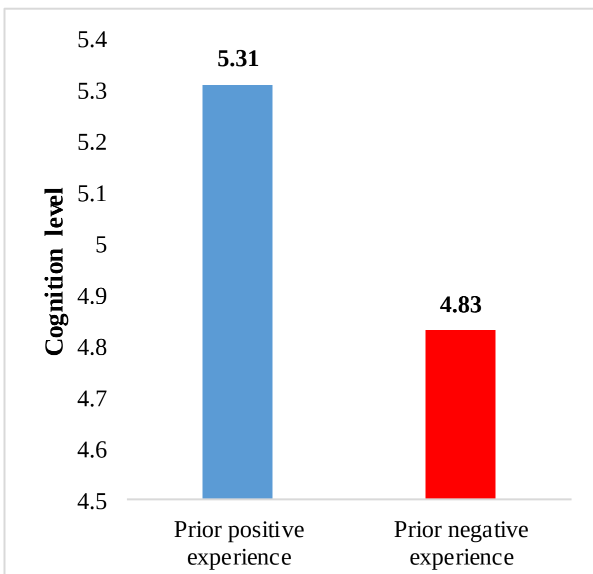

Figure 7.7 Cognition as a Function of Experience Type

7.3.4 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of the measurement scale (study 2)

7.3.4.1 Unidimensionality

As shown in Table 7.13, the scale demonstrated unidimensionality. First, all the scale items loaded with significant *t*-values which ranges from 116.542 to 331.910 at $p < 0.001$ level. A bootstrapping random resampling technique of 5,000 sub-samples recommended in the literature was used to obtain the *t*-values (Hair *et al.*, 2011). Additionally, the AVEs were well beyond the minimum limit of acceptability as it ranged from 0.901 to 0.958.

Scale items descriptions	Standardized coefficients	*t*-value	Cronbach's alpha (α)	Composite reliability	AVE
Perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs)			0.976	0.982	0.933
PCoNERs1	0.971	252.703***			
PCoNERs2	0.969	247.954***			
PCoNERs3	0.969	269.530***			
PCoNERs4	0.936	119.509***			
Relationship trust (RELTRU)			0.964	0.973	0.901
RELTRU1	0.939	116.542***			
RELTRU2	0.962	233.924***			
RELTRU3	0.941	124.539***			
RELTRU4	0.955	182.113***			
Relationship satisfaction (RELSAT)			0.978	0.986	0.958
RELSAT1	0.981	331.910***			
RELSAT2	0.983	315.802***			
RELSAT3	0.973	255.804***			
Relationship commitment (RELCOM)			0.958	0.973	0.923
RELCOM1	0.961	204.440***			
RELCOM2	0.960	160.750***			
RELCOM3	0.961	163.494***			

Note: AVE: Average variance extracted; ***$p < 0.001$

Table 7.13 Construct Measures and their Coefficients, Reliability and AVE (Study 2)

7.3.4.2 Reliability assessment

As noted in chapter six, two broad measures – a) Cronbach alpha and b) composite reliability – are often used to establish a scale's reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). In this study, the two reliability indexes were examined. The set minimum threshold for establishing reliability with Cronbach's alpha is 0.60, whereas it is 0.70 or greater for composite reliability (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Nunnally (1978 in Hosany *et al.*, 2015) recommended a minimum acceptable alpha coefficient of 0.70 when the research is at its early stages (for instance scale development) and 0.80 at the basic or applied phase of the research. These conditions were respected in all cases because Cronbach alpha ranged from 0. 958 to 0.978 while composite reliability ranged from 0.973 to 0.986 (see Table 7.13). Thus, the reflective indicators of the latent constructs were internally consistent.

7.3.4.3 Convergent and discriminant validity

In accordance with the criteria set in chapter six, all the standardized factor coefficients were above the 0.5 minimum cut-off as it ranged from 0.936 to 0.983 (see Table 7.13). The confirmatory factor coefficients were also significant whilst the AVEs were above 0.5. Thus, the scale demonstrated convergent validity. The conditions for establishing discriminant validity were also relatively met because the confirmatory factor coefficients of the reflective indicators measuring each of the three dimensions of relationship quality have high cross loadings such that the loadings on their primary construct were less than 0.2 away from their loadings on other factors for all the measurement indicators. In contrast however, the square root of the AVEs were greater than the highest correlation pair (Hair *et al.*, 2014; Fornell & Larcker, 1981) for each construct (see Table 7.14). Thus, the measurement scale is valid.

Construct	**Number of items**	**AVE**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Perceived credibility of negative experience reviews	4	0.9326	**0.9657**			
2. Relationship trust	4	0.9013	-0.6808	**0.9494**		
3. Relationship satisfaction	3	0.9583	-0.6966	0.8900	**0.9789**	
4. Relationship commitment	3	0.9229	-0.6358	0.8505	0.8650	**0.9607**

Note: AVE: Average variance extracted; all correlation coefficients are significant at $p < 0.05$ level

Table 7.14 Convergent and Discriminant Validity (Study 2)

7.3.4.4 Structural model

As noted in chapter six, the structural model was examined by assessing the inner model. First, the path coefficients and the coefficient of determination (R^2) was determined. Second, the significance state of the outputs was obtained through a bootstrapping resampling technique of 5,000 sub-samples (Hair *et al.*, 2011). Thereafter, the model was assessed for predictive relevance by obtaining cross-validated redundancy (Q^2) for the three endogenous constructs (i.e. relationship trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment) through an omission distance of 7. Since one predictor variable was involved, the estimation of effect size through the formula stated in chapter six was needless. Rather, the path coefficients, R^2, and the Q^2 were employed to determine the model's predictive accuracy and relevance. Results as shown in Table 7.15 indicate that PCoNERs have a significant negative effect on relationship trust (β = -0.681; t = 20.997; p < 0.001), relationship satisfaction (β = -0.697; t = 22.762; p < 0.001), and relationship commitment (β = -0.636; t = 19.555; p < 0.001). The R^2 respectively correspond to 0.463, 0.485, and 0.404. Thus, the predictive accuracy of the model is moderate according to the rule of thumb specified by Hair *et al.* (2011). Additionally, the Q^2 for the endogenous constructs are 0.371, 0.447, and 0.409 for relationship trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment respectively. These clearly indicate acceptable predictive relevance of the model based on the recommendation in the literature (see Hair *et al.*, 2014; Sarstedt *et al.*, 2014). With an observed power of 1.0 for each path, it was confidently concluded that, *H2a-c* are all supported.

Hypothesized path	**Path coefficient**	***t*-value**	**Cross-validated redundancy *(Q^2)***	**Observed power**
H2a: PCoNERs → Relationship trust	-0.681	20.997***	0.371	1.00
H2b: PCoNERs → Relationship satisfaction	-0.697	22.762***	0.447	1.00
H2c: PCoNERs → Relationship commitment	-0.636	19.555***	0.409	1.00
**p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001; R^2 = 0.350				

Table 7.15 Results of Hypothesis 2 (H2)

7.3.5 MANOVA results

Consistent with the procedures laid out in chapter six, the main effects of experience type, review source credibility, and review frequency as well as the two-way interaction effects of review source credibility and review frequency and the three-way interaction effects of experience type, review source credibility, and review frequency on relationship trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment were obtained through a 3-way multivariate ANOVA. In the interest of presentation parsimony, outputs from the three-way multivariate ANOVA were reported following the procedures utilized by Wan and

Wyer (2015) (see Table 7.16 and Table 7.17). In the subsections below, the results of each of the three dimensions of relationship were reported.

Independent variables	Wilks' Lambda	*F*	*p*-value	η^2	Observed power
Experience type	0.509	118.773	0.000	0.491	1.000
Review source credibility	0.991	1.070	0.362	0.009	0.289
Review frequency	0.967	4.242	0.006	0.033	0.859
Experience type × review source credibility	0.989	1.331	0.264	0.011	0.355
Experience type × review frequency	0.969	3.895	0.009	0.031	0.825
Review source credibility × review frequency	1.000	0.055	0.983	0.000	0.060
Experience type × review source credibility × review frequency	0.984	2.047	0.107	0.016	0.524

Table 7.16 Wilks' Lambda, Effect Size and Statistical Power

	High review frequency		Low review frequency	
	High review source credibility	Low review source credibility	High review source credibility	Low review source credibility
Relationship trust				
Positive experience	4.54_{a} (1.83) (4.17–4.90)	4.66_{a} (1.96) (4.2–5.05)	5.71_{c} (1.20) (5.34–6.08)	5.55_{c} (1.33) (5.15–5.95)
Negative experience	2.68_{b} (1.47) (2.23–3.13)	2.07_{ab} (0.83) (1.63–2.52)	2.57_{b} (1.20) (2.10–3.04)	2.30_{b} (0.97) (1.84–2.77)
Relationship satisfaction				
Positive experience	4.79_{a} (2.07) (4.40–5.19)	4.62_{a} (2.34) (4.20–5.05)	5.75_{c} (1.25) (5.35 – 6.16)	5.60_{c} (1.49) (5.19–6.03)
Negative experience	2.18_{b} (1.32) (1.68–2.68)	1.88_{b} (1.00) (1.39–2.36)	2.30_{b} (1.37) (1.79–2.81)	1.86_{bc} (0.89) (1.35–2.37)
Relationship commitment				
Positive experience	4.79_{a} (1.82) (4.41–5.16)	4.40_{a} (2.00) (4.00–4.80)	5.46_{c} (1.07) (5.08–5.84)	5.31_{c} (1.34) (4.90–5.71)
Negative experience	2.47_{b} (1.53) (2.00–2.94)	2.35_{b} (1.18) (1.89–2.81)	2.60_{b} (1.25) (2.12–3.08)	2.26_{bc} (1.15) (1.78–2.74)

Note: The range of values in the parenthesis represent 95% confidence interval. The standard deviations are the decimal values in parentheses. The values with subscripts are the means. Means with different subscripts are significantly different at $p < 0.05$

Table 7.17 Dimensions of Relationship Quality as a Function of Review Source Credibility, Review Frequency, and Experience Type

7.3.5.1 Relationship trust

Participants' relationship trust in the online retailer are summarized in the top section of Table 7.17 as a function of experience type, review source credibility, and review frequency. The results indicate that after reading other customers' negative experience review(s), participants were generally more likely to exhibit relationship trust when their previous shopping experiences are positive than when their previous shopping experience are negative ($M_{\text{Positive experience}}$ = 5.12, SE = 0.10 vs $M_{\text{Negative experience}}$ = 2.41, SE = 0.12, respectively; $F_{(1, 379)} = 322.09$, $p < 0.001$). The eta-squared ($\eta^2 = 0.46$) indicates that the effect of experience type on relationship trust lies in between medium and large effect size based on Cohen's convention (see Table 7.16). Results also indicate that after reading other customers' negative experience review(s), participants were generally less likely to exhibit relationship trust when exposed to three negative experience reviews than when exposed to one negative experience reviews ($M_{\text{High frequency}}$ = 3.49, SE = 0.11 vs $M_{\text{Low frequency}}$ = 4.04 SE = 0.11, respectively; $F_{(1, 379)} = 13.18$, $p < 0.001$). The eta-squared ($\eta^2 = 0.03$) indicate a small effect size. Additionally, results show that the above tests are sufficiently powered to detect the observed effects. The above results permit us to confirm that *H7a* is fulfilled.

In contrast, the main effect of review source credibility on relationship trust ($M_{\text{High review source credibility}}$ = 3.88, SE = 0.11 vs $M_{\text{Low review source credibility}}$ = 3.65 SE = 0.11, respectively; $F_{(1, 379)} = 2.28$, $p = 0.13$) was not significant. The eta-squared ($\eta^2 = 0.01$) reveal a small effect size whilst the test is insufficiently powered. The interaction effects of review source credibility and review frequency ($F_{(1, 379)} = 0.01$, $p = 0.93$) and the three-way interaction of these variables and experience type ($F_{(1, 379)} = 1.06$, $p = 0.31$) were also not significant. The effect sizes of these interactions ($\eta^2 = 0.00$ and $\eta^2 = 0.00$ respectively) indicate that zero can act as good enough approximation for both effect size measures whilst outputs indicate that the tests were not sufficiently powered. These effect sizes are truly not substantive on relationship trust. Thus, there was insufficient evidence to confirm that *H6a* and *H8a* are fulfilled.

Drawing on the outputs captured in Table 7.17, Figures 7.8, 7.9, 7.10 and 7.11 respectively depict the schematic representation of the main effect of experience type, main effect of review frequency, interaction effects of review source credibility and review frequency, and the three-way interactions of review source credibility, review frequency and experience type.

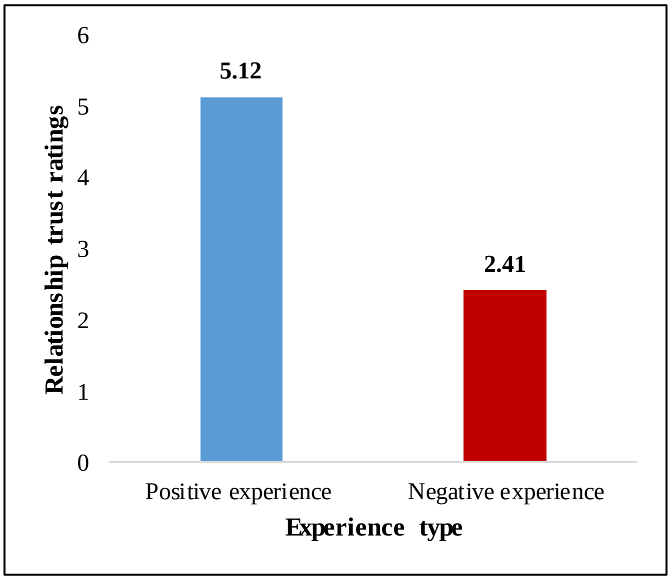

Figure 7.8 Relationship Trust as a Function of Experience Type

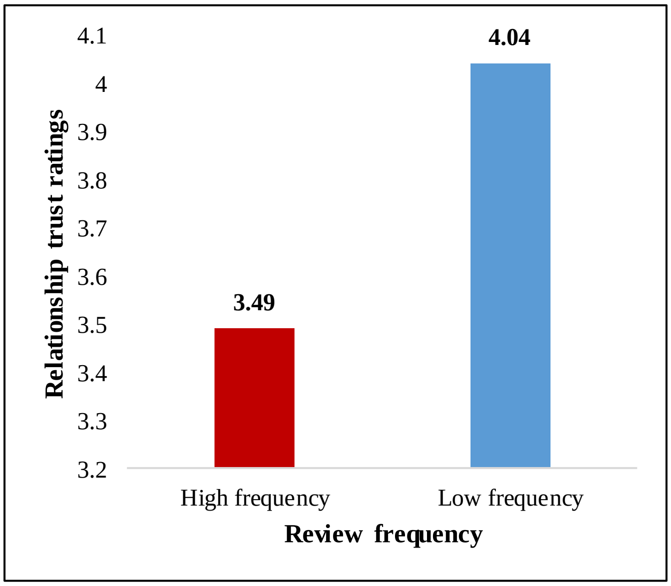

Figure 7.9 Relationship Trust as a Function of Review Frequency

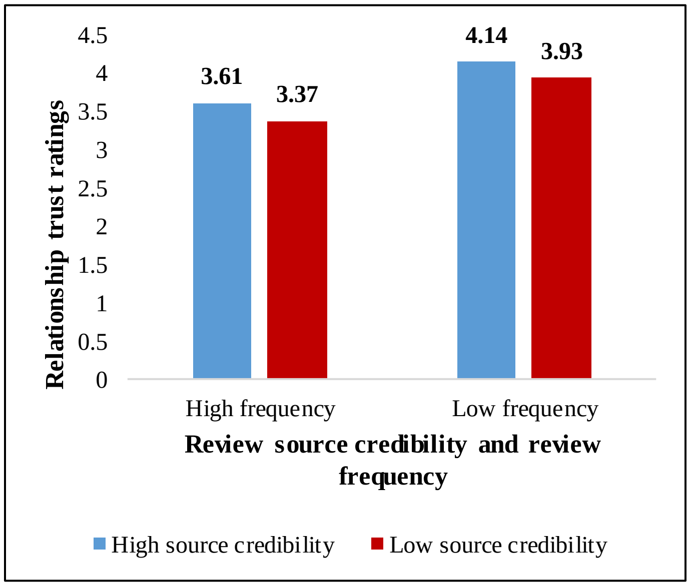

Figure 7.10 Relationship Trust as a Function of Review Source Credibility and Review Frequency

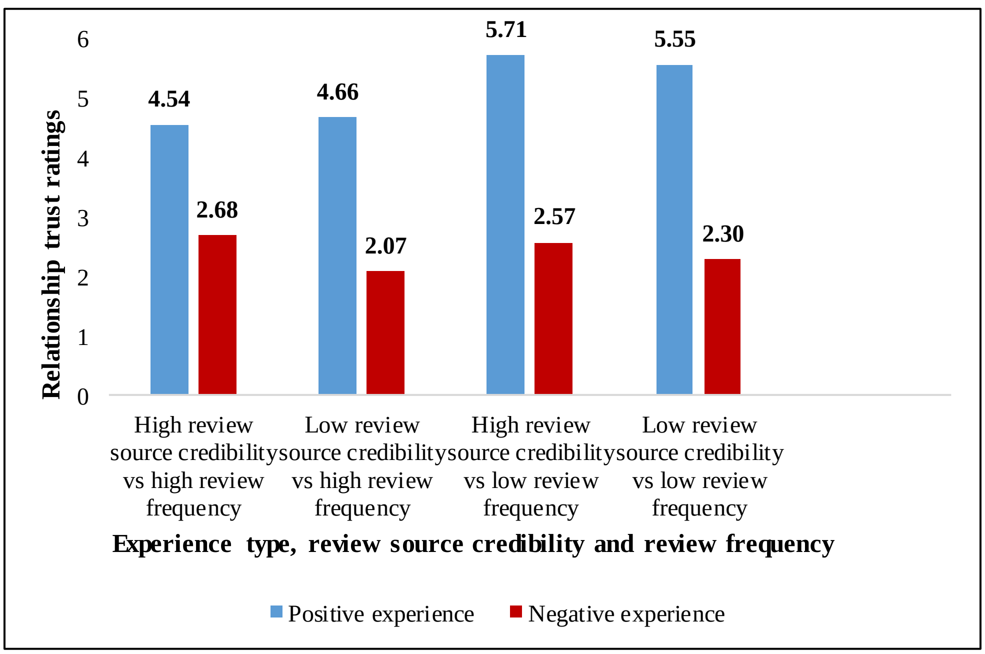

Figure 7.11 Relationship Trust as a Function of Experience Type, Review Source Credibility, and Review Frequency

7.3.5.2 Relationship satisfaction

Participants' relationship satisfaction with the online retailer are summarized in the second section of Table 7.17 as a function of experience type, review source credibility, and review frequency. The results indicate that after reading other customers' negative experience review(s), participants were generally more likely to be satisfied with the quality of the relationship when their previous shopping experiences are positive than when their previous shopping experience are negative ($M_{\text{Positive experience}}$ = 5.19, SE = 0.11 vs $M_{\text{Negative experience}}$ = 2.05, SE = 0.13, respectively; $F_{(1, 379)}$ = 361.13, p < 0.001). The eta-squared (η^2 = 0.49) indicate that the effect of experience type on relationship satisfaction lies in between medium and large effect size. Results also indicate that after reading other customers' negative experience review(s), participants were generally less likely to be satisfied with the quality of relationship when exposed to three negative experience reviews than when exposed to one negative experience reviews ($M_{\text{High frequency}}$ = 3.37, SE = 0.12 vs $M_{\text{Low frequency}}$ = 3.88 SE = 0.12, respectively; $F_{(1, 379)}$ = 9.47, p < 0.01). The eta-squared (η^2 = 0.03) indicate a small effect size. The above results permit us to confirm that *H7b* is fulfilled.

In contrast, the main effect of review source credibility on relationship satisfaction ($M_{\text{High review source credibility}}$ = 3.76, SE = 0.12 vs $M_{\text{Low review source credibility}}$ = 3.49 SE = 0.12, respectively; $F_{(1, 379)}$ = 2.58, p = 0.11) was not significant. The eta-squared (η^2 = 0.01) reveal a small effect size. The interaction effects of review source credibility and review frequency ($F_{(1, 379)}$ = 0.03, p = 0.86) and the three-way interaction of these variables and experience type ($F_{(1, 379)}$ = 0.06, p = 0.81) were also not significant. The effect sizes of these interactions (η^2 = 0.00 and η^2 = 0.00 respectively) indicate that zero can act as good enough approximation for both effect size measures. Thus, these effect sizes are truly not substantive on relationship satisfaction. The above results show that there was insufficient evidence to confirm that *H6b* and *H8b* are supported.

Drawing on the outputs captured in Table 7.17, Figures 7.12, 7.13, 7.14 and 7.15 respectively depict the schematic representation of the main effect of experience type, main effect of review frequency, interaction effects of review source credibility and review frequency, and the three-way interactions of review source credibility, review frequency and experience type.

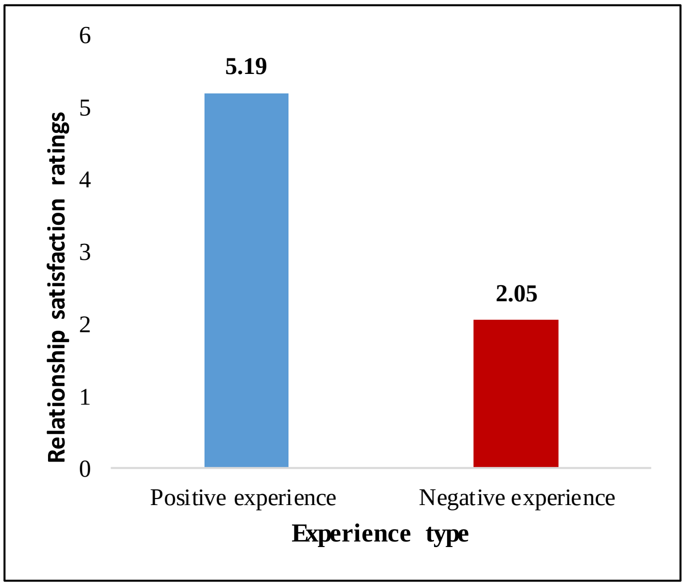

Figure 7.12 Relationship Satisfaction as a Function of Experience Type

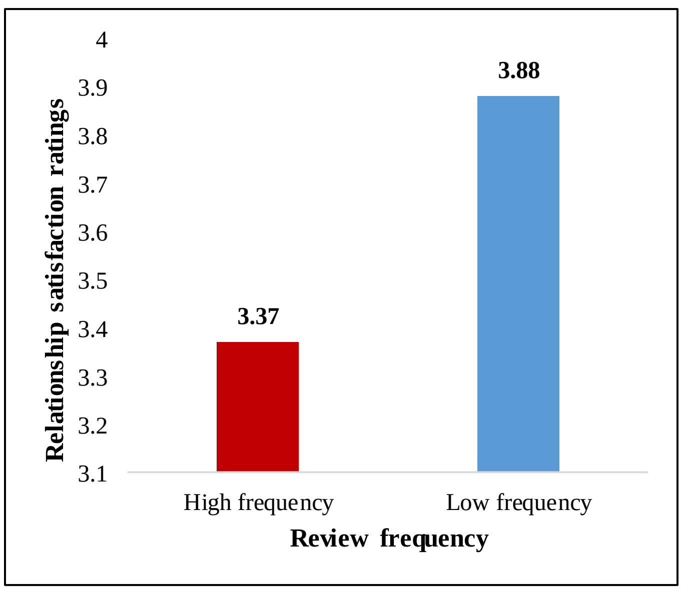

Figure 7.13 Relationship Satisfaction as a Function of Review Frequency

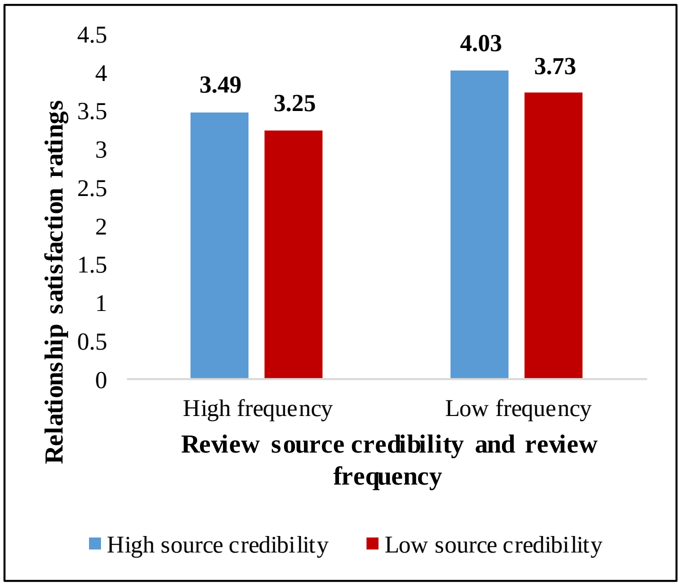

Figure 7.14 Relationship Satisfaction as a Function of Review Source Credibility and Review Frequency

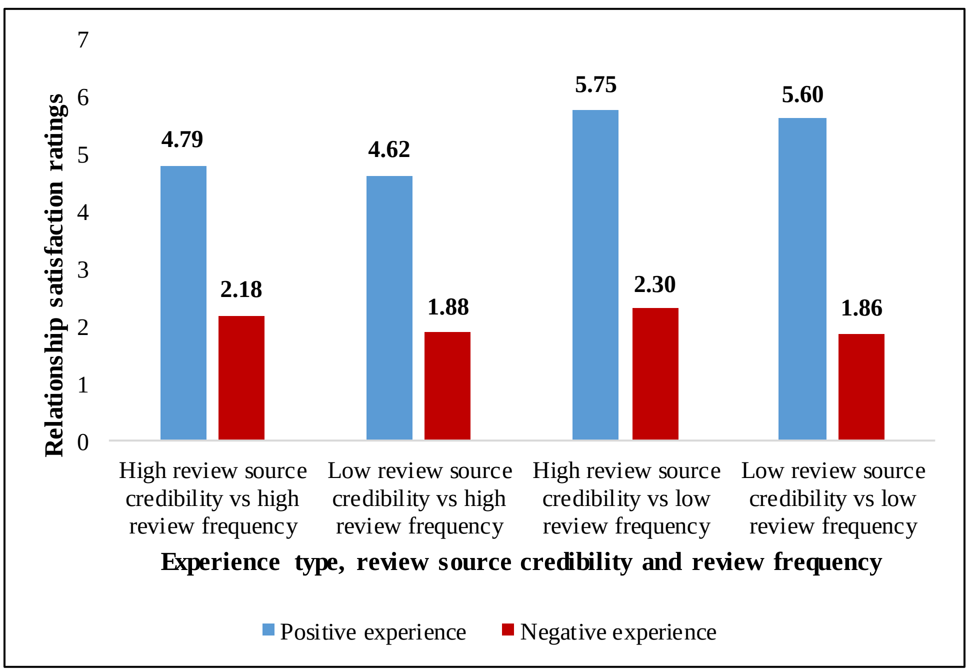

Figure 7.15 Relationship Satisfaction as a Function of Experience Type, Review Source Credibility, and Review Frequency

7.3.5.3 Relationship commitment

Participants' relationship commitment to the online retailer are summarized in the last section of Table 7.17 as a function of experience type, review source credibility, and review frequency. The results indicate that after reading other customers' negative experience review(s), participants were generally more likely to be committed to the relationship when their previous shopping experiences are positive than when their previous shopping experience are negative ($M_{\text{Positive experience}} = 4.99$, $SE = 0.10$ vs $M_{\text{Negative experience}} = 2.42$, $SE = 0.12$, respectively; $F_{(1, 379)} = 273.91$, $p < 0.001$). The eta-squared ($\eta^2 = 0.42$) indicate that the effect of experience type on relationship commitment lies in between medium and large effect size. Additionally, results indicate that after reading other customers' negative experience review(s), participants were generally less likely to be committed to a relationship when exposed to three negative experience reviews than when exposed to one negative experience reviews ($M_{\text{High frequency}} = 3.50$, $SE = 0.11$ vs $M_{\text{Low frequency}} = 3.91$ $SE = 0.11$, respectively; $F_{(1, 379)} = 6.88$, $p = 0.009$). The eta-squared ($\eta^2 = 0.02$) indicate a small effect size. The above results permit us to confirm that *H7c* is fulfilled.

In contrast, the main effect of review source credibility on relationship commitment ($M_{\text{High review source credibility}} = 3.83$, $SE = 0.11$ vs $M_{\text{Low review source credibility}} = 3.58$ $SE = 0.11$, respectively; $F_{(1, 379)} = 2.61$, $p = 0.11$) was not significant. The eta-squared ($\eta^2 = 0.01$) reveal a small effect size. The interaction effects of review source credibility and review frequency ($F_{(1, 379)} = 0.00$, $p = 0.99$) as well as a three-way interaction of these variables and experience type ($F_{(1, 379)} = 0.53$, $p = 0.47$) were also not significant. The effect sizes of these interactions ($\eta^2 = 0.00$ and $\eta^2 = 0.00$ respectively) indicate that zero can act as good enough approximation for both effect size measures. Additionally, there was insufficient power to conclude on these effects. Thus, there was inadequate evidence to confirm that *H6c* and *H8c* are fulfilled.

Drawing on the outputs captured in Table 7.17, Figures 7.16, 7.17, 7.18 and 7.19 respectively depict the schematic representation of the main effect of experience type, main effect of review frequency, interaction effects of review source credibility and review frequency, and the three-way interactions of review source credibility, review frequency and experience type.

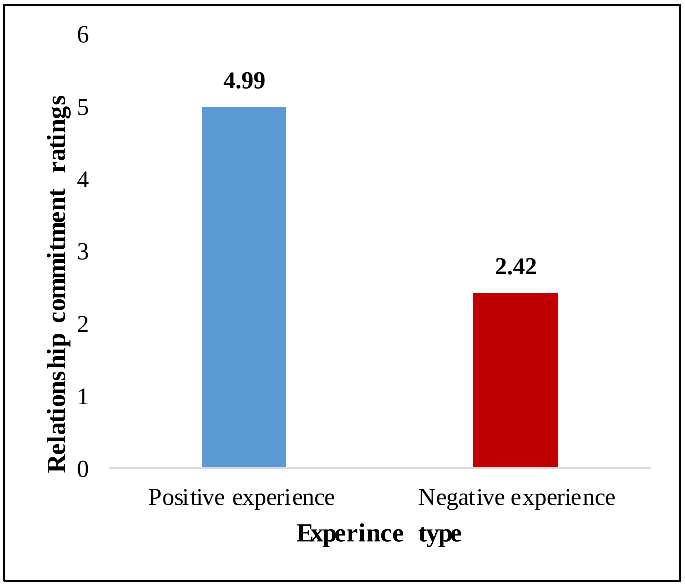

Figure 7.16 Relationship Commitment as a Function of Experience Type

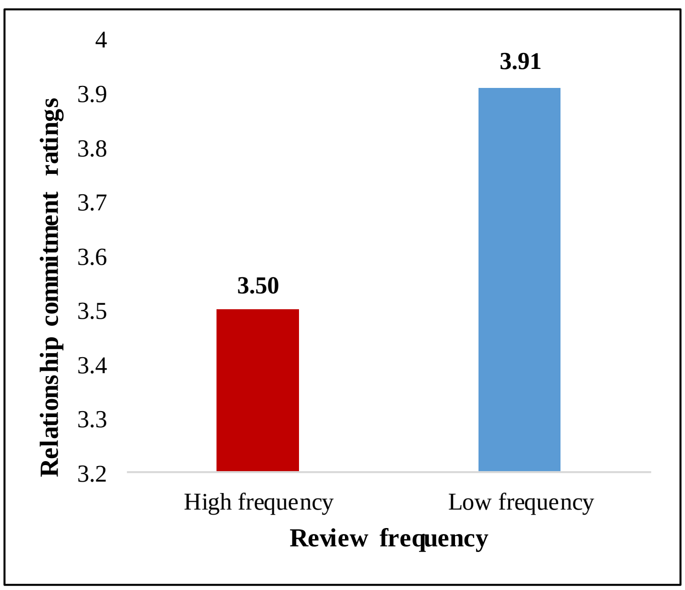

Figure 7.17 Relationship Commitment as a Function of Review Frequency

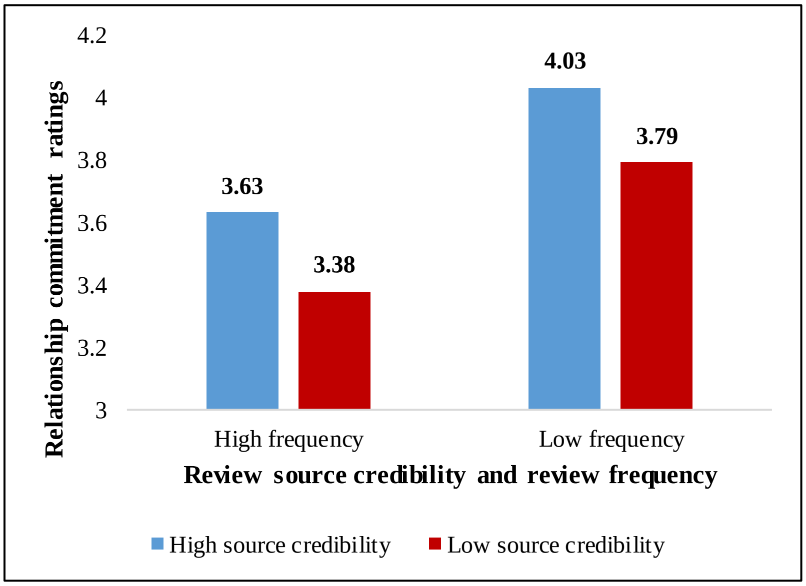

Figure 7.18 Relationship Commitment as a Function of Review Source Credibility and Review Frequency

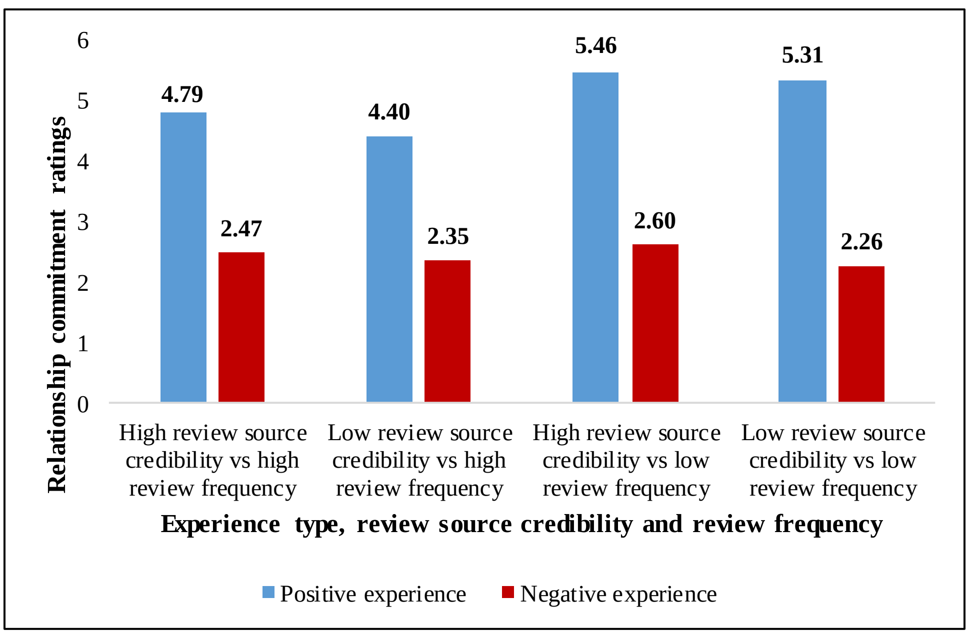

Figure 7.19 Relationship Satisfaction as a Function of Experience Type, Review Source Credibility, and Review Frequency

Hypothesized path	Evidence	Result
H1a: Sensory experience → PCoNERs	$p > 0.05$	Not supported
H1b: Emotional experience → PCoNERs	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H1c: Cognitive experience → PCoNERs	$p < 0.01$	Supported
H1d: Behavioral experience → PCoNERs	$p > 0.05$	Not supported
H1e: Relational experience → PCoNERs	$p > 0.05$	Not supported
H2a: PCoNERs → Relationship trust	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H2b: PCoNERs → Relationship satisfaction	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H2c: PCoNERs → Relationship commitment	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H3: Experience type → PCoNERs	$p < 0.001$	Supported
H4: Shopper type → PCoNERs	$p > 0.05$	Insufficient power
H5: Experience type × shopper type → PCoNERs	$p > 0.05$	Insufficient power
H6a: Review source credibility → Relationship trust	$p > 0.05$	Insufficient power
H6b: Review source credibility → Relationship satisfaction	$p > 0.05$	Insufficient power
H6c: Review source credibility → Relationship commitment	$p > 0.05$	Insufficient power
H7a: Review frequency → Relationship trust	$p < 0.01$	Supported
H7b: Review frequency → Relationship satisfaction	$p < 0.01$	Supported
H7c: Review frequency → Relationship commitment	$p < 0.01$	Supported
H8a: Review source credibility × review frequency → Relationship trust	$p > 0.05$	Insufficient power
H8b: Review source credibility × review frequency → Relationship satisfaction	$p > 0.05$	Insufficient power
H8c: Review source credibility × review frequency → Relationship commitment	$p > 0.05$	Insufficient power

Notes: Insufficient power connotes that the test is not sufficiently powered to conclude on the observed effect and by implication the hypothesized path

Table 7.18 Summary of the Results Generated from the Hypotheses Tests

7.4 Summary

This chapter presented the analysis of the data generated from four experiments mapped out into a pilot study and two main studies. The pilot study a) tested the manipulation quality of the experimental conditions for the two differently-styled experiments; b) purified and summarized online customer experience measures; and c) examined the psychometric properties of the measures. The results indicate that the manipulation quality of the experiments was reasonable whilst measures taken to ensure a more effective manipulation quality emerged from the pilot study. The measurement scales also demonstrated good validity and reliability. Study 1 and study 2 were utilized to examine the hypothesized relationships. Results indicate that nine of the hypothesized paths were supported while the rest were either not supported or insufficiently powered to detect the proposed effect assuming such effect exists in the population. Chapter eight discusses a) the results generated in this chapter in relation to the literature; and b) relevant issues that emerged from the review of relevant literatures.

CHAPTER EIGHT
DISCUSSION

8.0 Introduction

In chapter seven the generated data was analyzed, and results presented. This chapter undertakes an in-depth discussion of those results whilst results are juxtaposed with the extant literature. The results relating to the effects of previous OCE on PCoNERs will be discussed first. In some instances, the results are juxtaposed with research evidences that emerged from matured markets. Thereafter, results relating to the effect of PCoNERs on consumer-firm relationship quality will be discussed. Finally, key issues inferred from the review of relevant literatures will also be discussed.

8.1 Discussion of Empirical Results

This study set out to investigate the effect of previous online customer experience (OCE) gleaned from a company on perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) posted on the social media, and the consequent effect of the latter on consumer-firm relationship quality. Building on the extant gaps in the literature (see Verhoef *et al.*, 2009) and two social cognitive psychology theories (i.e. the schema theory and the elaboration likelihood model), an experience-perception-attitude model was theorized and validated in an emerging e-retailing context through a data generated from two differently-styled experiments after an initial pilot study aimed at testing the manipulation quality of the experiments and validating the OCE scale. The model is multichannel-oriented because it reflects how experiences gleaned from two retail touchpoints (i.e. Facebook and website) influence consumer-firm relationship quality. Some interesting results emerged from the empirical studies conducted to validate the conceptual model. This section undertakes an in-depth discussion of those results.

8.1.1 Previous OCE and PCoNERs

In chapter five, a theoretical case for further investigation of the effect previous OCE on PCoNERs was made because such rendition will offer systematic insights into purposeful and efficient customer clues management. The effect of previous OCE on PCoNERs was examined with the data that emerged from study 1. Overall, results support the differential importance of the OCE dimensions on PCoNERs. Specifically, emotional experience appeared as the most important significant predictor of PCoNERs followed by cognitive experience. The effects of emotional experience and cognitive experience on PCoNERs were both negative, implying inverse effects. Although the effects of sensory experience, behavioral experience, and relational experience dimensions of OCE on PCoNERs correspondingly followed, they were insignificant. Despite the insignificant results generated in respect of the effects of some dimensions of OCE on PCoNERs, the predictive relevance of the model is within the acceptable threshold whilst the tests are sufficiently powered to detect effects if any of such exist in the population. The foregoing results therefore support *H1a-e*. Specifically, these findings are consistent with Adhikari (2015) who found that subjective attributes are more influential than objective attributes in the Indian restaurant context and Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015) who utilized a sample of UK users of online travel websites to demonstrate that social value experiences do not contribute to e-value. The findings are also consistent with the thoughts of business consultants who claim that 85% and 15% of customer experience are respectively emotional and physical (Shaw, 2007; Shaw & Ivens, 2002) and the intuition-based reasoning that developed markets consumers place more emphasis on 'value for money' than consumers situated in emerging markets. In contrast to our results, Mohd-Any *et al.* (2015) found that e-value formation is fundamentally driven by cognitive effort and utilitarian value/control, and to a lesser extent by the perception of emotional value within the UK online travel websites context. Contrary to our results also, evidences from developed markets indicate that relational experience is an important driver of consumer behavior (e.g. Blasco-Arcas *et al.*, 2014; Nambisan & Watt, 2011). It can be generally argued that our results support the view that certain dimensions of experience are more influential than others (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013) in certain contexts. In emerging e-retailing contexts, the effect of emotional experience predominates the effects of every other dimension of OCE. This outcome may be traceable to the fact that emerging markets millennials dominate the population of online shoppers in those markets. Since digitalized differences exist between millennials situated in emerging markets and their matured markets' counterparts to the extent that the latter place more emphasis on 'value for money' than the former (Marceux, 2015), it is logical to argue that emotional factors are more likely to govern the perceptions of online shoppers situated in emerging markets.

Furthermore, results show that the main effect of experience type on PCoNERs is significant. Specifically, customers that previously had negative experience(s) with a firm's website were more likely to believe negative experience review(s) posted in the social media than customers who previously had positive experience(s). Thus, while previous positive experiences attenuate the effect of negative experience review(s) posted in the social media, previous negative experience(s) induce the opposite effect. Consequently, not only does experience(s) at *t-1* influence experience(s) at time *t*, the effects of positive experience and negative experience at time *t-1* on experiential perceptions at time *t* is asymmetric. This outcome is supported by the schema theoretical viewpoint which holds that background knowledge influences consumer perceptions (see Spielmann, 2016; Aronson *et al.,* 2010; Palmer, 2010; McVee *et al.,* 2005) as well as the reasoning that exposure to a piece of information can trigger distorted perceptions (Meng *et al.*, 2015); studies that show that negative information exerts stronger influence on behavior than positive information in the field of advertising (e.g. Klebba & Unger, 1983) and organizational behavior (e.g. Kanar *et al.*, 2010); and empirical evidences demonstrating that information abstracted from environmental cues influence consumers' perceptions of service providers (Baumgarten & Hensel, 1987 in Baker *et al.*, 2002). The result also brings out very clearly, the dynamic and holistic nature of customer experiences stressed in previous research (e.g. Juttner *et al.*, 2013; Lemke *et al.*, 2011; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009; Gentile *et al.*, 2007) from the viewpoint of the schema theory.

Additionally, our findings show that the main effect of shopper type (experienced vs. novice) and the interaction effect of experience type and shopper type on PCoNERs were insignificant. However, it wasn't possible to conclude on these effects because the tests were insufficiently powered.

8.1.2 PCoNERs and relationship quality

In chapter one, it was argued that despite the acclaimed importance of online experience reviews (Eisingerich *et al.*, 2015), substantial research effort was yet to be focused on how consumers process and integrate multiple online reviews (Kim & Lee, 2015). In chapter five, a more compelling theoretical case for the investigation of the effects of negative eWOM from the perspective of the elaboration likelihood model was specifically made because Strauss and Hill (2001) argued that complaint management enhances consumer-firm relationship quality. The perception-attitude links that emerged from the foregoing were assessed in study 2. Generally, results show that PCoNERs has a significant negative effect on the three dimensions of relationship quality (i.e. relationship trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment). Thus, *H2a-c* were supported. Specifically, the effect of PCoNERs on relationship satisfaction was the strongest, followed by its effect on relationship trust. The effect of PCoNERs on relationship commitment was the least amongst the three dimensions of relationship quality. The predictive accuracy of the model was moderate while the predictive relevance of the model was within the acceptable limit. These results are consistent with previous studies that confirmed the effect of eWOM on brand/firm awareness (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), company image (Litvin *et al.*, 2008), purchase intention (Tsao *et al.*, 2015; Robins & Holmes, 2008; Park *et al.*, 2007), overall firm performance (Kim *et al.*, 2015) and so on. Our results suggest that whilst literature has paid limited attention to the effect of eWOM on the dimensions of relationship quality, the quality of consumer-firm relationships can be hampered by PCoNERs. Thus, consumers who credibly perceive negative experience reviews posted by fellow consumers are very unlikely to sustain their relationships with such firm especially if alternative offerings abound. Such negative effects can even be extrapolated to competing market offerings (Sawyer, 1997).

The above position may be likely attributed to the reasoning that the formulation of purchase intentions is a function of consumers' perception of the opinions of important 'others' (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980 in Park & Lee, 2009) and the view that it is competition that necessitates differentiation (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Additionally, greater percentage of customers that switch to competing offerings do so because of poor or negative experiences (Afshar, 2015; Wollan, 2014). Thus, minimizing negative experiences which lead to negative eWOM is an important task that organizations must strive to fulfil. Since services are intangible in nature, service failures are inevitable (Kuo & Wu, 2012). However, even when negative eWOM occurs, recovery strategies must be put in place to recover dissatisfied customers since Kuo and Wu (2012) argued that dissatisfied customers can be appeased to maintain lasting relationships with the firm if recovered. One of the most effective ways of recovering failed experiences is to create platforms (e.g. review sites) that facilitate the retrieval and management of customer complaints because Ahmad (2002) found that firms induce customer defection when they fail to establish suitable complaint management and service recovery systems. Since contents generated on Facebook are more credible than contents generated in other platforms (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015), online retailers can improve complaint management and consequently enhance consumer-firm relationship quality by creating Facebook pages to retrieve and respond to consumers' reviews. Although online retailers have Facebook pages, little attention is paid to customer complaint (especially negative reviews-dominated pages) management on this platform. Online retailers like Konga.com rarely respond to consumer reviews while Jumia.com respond to some reviews but not all. Such practices are very likely to induce negative feelings in the customers who do not receive response on their complaints. The negative feelings arising from lack of, or inadequate response to complaints can hamper consumer-firm relationship quality.

Additionally, at the industry level, negative eWOM emanating from one firm can be extrapolated to other firms with similar offerings. According to Sawyer (1997), irrespective of how sterling a company's reputation is, customers may resist purchases due to previous bad experiences with competing brands. Thus, firms must learn how to recover customers who are dissatisfied with its offerings and put strategies (such as superior services, competitive positioning in their websites and Facebook pages) in place to shield itself from the influence of negative eWOM emanating from competing firms. Since service process improvement initiatives that reduces waiting time enhance customers' satisfaction with the focal retailer and simultaneously reduces customers' satisfaction with the retailer's competitors (Kumar, 2005), firms that offer distinctive services that competitors cannot equal are better placed to attenuate the effects of extrapolated negative perceptions. Such firms should also be better placed to build lasting and quality relationships with consumers. Since aesthetic website features can distinctively position a website (Demangeot & Broderick, 2006), an optimal integration of these features into an e-retailer's website can set the firm apart from competitors. Additionally, since top companies like Microsoft, IBM, and Dell have acknowledged online product communities as core elements of their service infrastructure and consequently positioned the platforms as post-purchase support centers (Nambisan & Watt, 2011) whilst contents generated in Facebook pages is more credible when compared to other platforms (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015), online retailers can deploy their Facebook pages to tell distinctive and compelling stories about their firms. Such distinctive and compelling stories have the capacity to weaken the effects of negative eWOM emanating from competitors.

Results from study 2 also indicate that the main effect of review frequency on relationship trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment was significant but a small effect size was detected. Online shoppers were less likely to exhibit relationship trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment when exposed to three reviews than when exposed to a single review. Thus, *H7a-c* are supported. This result is consistent with the consensus in the literature which holds that constant negative reviews induce negative effects whilst reviews are poised to have greater effects when they are many in number (e.g. Ladhari & Michaud, 2015; Zhu & Zhang, 2010). However, since a small effect size was detected, one to three negative experience reviews is not large enough to warrant management attention because Tiago *et al.* (2015) noted that negative online reviews are likely to have a weak effect on consumers who are already familiar with the services of the firm in question especially if they are few. Furthermore, the main effect of review source credibility and the interaction effect of review source credibility and review frequency on relationship trust, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment was not statistically significant. But, it wasn't possible to conclude on these effects because the tests were insufficiently powered.

Although not hypothesized, the main effect of experience type and the interaction effect of experience type and review frequency on consumer-firm relationship quality was statistically significant. Shoppers who previously had positive experiences with the online retailer were more likely to maintain quality relationships than shoppers who previously had negative experiences. Additionally, under the previous negative experience condition, the effect of high and low review frequency on consumer-firm relationship quality was the same but under the previous positive experience condition, consumers were more likely to maintain quality relationships with online retailers when the frequency of review was low than when the frequency of reviews were high. Thus, consistent with expectations, for consumers who have previously had positive experiences, low number of negative reviews are tolerable and does not hamper consumer-firm relationship quality but as the number of negative reviews increases, consumer-firm relationship quality also wanes. This supports the view that greater number of reviews with consistent valence induce greater eWOM effects (Tsao *et al.*, 2015) and the idea that consistent negative reviews can tarnish a firm's image (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009). The result is also consistent with the view that the adoption of the current message is a function of the consistency between an individual's previous knowledge and available information (Zhang & Watts, 2003 in Baek *et al.*, 2012). Thus, as stated elsewhere in this section, firms especially online retailers must put the number of negative reviews on check especially if they are not too confident about the quality of customers' previous experiences with their products and services. Conversely, consistent delivery of superior services can attenuate the effects of negative experience reviews on consumer-firm relationship quality.

The strong effect of experience type on relationship quality may have influenced the nature of the relationship between review source credibility and relationship quality and the interaction effect of review source credibility and review frequency on relationship quality. But since the statistical power of the observed effects were below the acceptability threshold, further discussions on this was reserved for the study limitations and future research directions section. Returning briefly to the effects of positive versus negative previous experiences, the need to put the number of negative reviews on check is founded on the thought that positive information induces a weaker effect than similar extremely negative information. One notable explanation for this is that it is easier for consumers to perceive negative than positive information (Parke & Lee, 2009; Kanouse & Hanson, 1972 in Baek *et al.*, 2012) probably because negative information is more diagnostic for decision-making purposes than positive information (Lee *et al.*, 2008). From the evolutionary stance, the potential benefits of negative information far surpass the benefits of positive information while biological explanation suggests that when compared with positive news contents, negative news contents are more likely to activate arousal and attentiveness (Soroka, 2015). Thus, irrespective of the viewpoint taken, the effect of negative reviews is pronounced and can only be checked through consistently enhancing service experiences which consequently minimizes the frequency of negative experience reviews. This is because as Dailey (2004) demonstrated, the effect of negative information can be eased by positive prior experiences.

8.2 Discussion of Key Issues from the Literature

8.2.1 Customer experience and associated constructs

In the literature, customer engagement, service quality, value co-creation, and customer experience were previously discussed in a manner that it becomes tempting not to rule out the possibility that these concepts represent one and the same thing. In this study, a full section of the literature was devoted to exploring whether these concepts mean the same thing. Specifically, each of customer engagement, service quality, and value co-creation was juxtaposed with customer experience to draw points of similarities and distinctions. Consistent with previous research (see Bilgihan *et al.*, 2015; Brodie *et al.*, 2011; Pine & Gilmore, 1999), it was argued that like customer experience, customer engagement involves value co-creation, interactions, possess process and outcome elements, perceive customers as active co-creators of value, is governed by goals, and portends unique and context-specific behavior. In contrast, a case that the two concepts differ to the extent that customer experience is more encompassing in dimensionality was made. Considering the opposing views postulated in the literature (see Lilja *et al.*, 2010; Bolton *et al.*, 2014; Brodie *et al.*, 2011), it was further established that the directionality of the link between customer experience and customer engagement is not yet definitive.

Consistent with the classic writings of some thought leaders (e.g. Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985; 1988; Grönroos, 1982), both service quality and customer experience possess process and outcome components. Through literature, it was also established that service quality perception and customer service experience are both interpreted as service performances. Thus, both concepts are governed by perceived value. In contrast, the study established that customer experience and service quality are created through divergent dimensions and processes (Högström *et al.*, 2010) whilst service quality is widely operationalized based on a single episode while customer experience reflects cumulative effects of numerous encounters across firms' orchestrated channels (Maklan & Klaus, 2011). In terms of dimensionality and the roles that customers play in producing and experiencing services, the study also established that service quality leads to customer experience whilst customers are not just passive receptors of value embedded in service quality but actively co-create their own experiences. Thus, service quality fails to account for the relational component of value which customer experience emphasizes. Literature (e.g. LaTour &

Carbone, 2014; Lilja *et al.*, 2010) also noted that SERVQUAL, the most cited measure of service quality neither accounted for the customers' emotional outcomes in any event nor does it reflect the memorability of events.

Between customer experience and value co-creation, not much similarities or disparities abound. The central idea that links the two concepts is perceived value because the take away impression from every co-creation activity is customer experience even though both concepts are facilitated by service systems which implies that similar stimuli drive them. Thus, just like service quality, value co-creation is an antecedent of customer experience. In terms of scope also, customer experience is more encompassing than value co-creation which fails to capture relational experience. Drawing on the foregoing discussions and studies on how value is created and co-created (e.g. Grönroos, 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008), perceived value was established as the concept that ties these concepts (i.e. customer experience, customer engagement, service quality, and value co-creation) together. A conceptual framework was proposed to that effect. The proposed framework (see Figure 2.2 in chapter two) summarily and tentatively holds that value co-creation leads to both customer experience and service quality while service quality leads to customer experience whilst the directionality of the relationship between customer experience and customer engagement is inconclusive.

8.2.2 Rethinking the measurement of online customer experience (OCE)

Through an in-depth review of the OCE literature, it was demonstrated that the measures of the five dimensions of OCE adopted for this study (i.e. sensory experience, emotional experience, cognitive experience, behavioral experience, and relational experience) abound. However, not only were overlaps found in existing measures, one general trend uncovered in the literature is that apart from the reason related to the application of the adapted scale by previous studies, marketing scholars failed to state other real reasons for adapting scales used in previous studies. This is problematic given that Churchill (1979) argued that researchers must be onerous or thorough in delineating what is included in the definition of a construct and what is excluded.

A rigorous scrutiny of the literature also shows that most of the acclaimed multidimensional measures of customer experience are at best unidimensional. Findings also indicate that definitional issues characterized extant scales of customer experience. Additionally, most extant measures of OCE within the context of retailing did not emerge from rigorously validated scales. It was argued that absence of such scales within the online retailing literature accounted for this. Bluntly stated however, OCE lacks a uniform measure (e.g. Klaus, 2015; Maklan & Klaus, 2011). Summarily, it was argued that since most previous value and customer experience scales were developed and validated in offline retail contexts, rigorous application of these measures in the online retailing context may not be without limitations. Thus, measurement of OCE should be rethought.

Consistent with the foregoing, the study reinforced that although scale development has become inevitably important, efforts were made to avoid some of the shortfalls of previous research since scale development lies outside the scope of this study.

8.3 Summary

This chapter discussed the findings generated from this study. The chapter first discussed the results generated in chapter seven. Thereafter, key issues from the literature review chapters were discussed. Chapter nine will draw on these discussions to outline the research contributions, managerial implications, and the research limitations and future research directions.

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSION

9.0 Introduction

This study initially set out to investigate how online retailers can exploit the link between previous shopping experiences and perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) to enhance consumer-firm relationship quality. Drawing on some evident gaps in the literature, an experience-perception-attitude model was developed from the perspective of the schema theory and the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) and validated with data from series of scenario-based experiments. Chapter eight discussed the interesting results that emerged from this study. This chapter is devoted to uncovering how the research findings advance extant literature both theoretically and methodologically. Thereafter, the practical implications of the findings will be discussed. The chapter concludes with an illumination of the study limitations and future research directions.

9.1 Theoretical Contributions

Several theoretical contributions were discerned from this research. First and foremost, the study offers original revelatory insights (Corley & Gioia, 2011) to the experiential consumption literature by developing and testing an experience-perception-attitude model. The effects of previous online customer experience (OCE) are well noted in the literature (see Giudicati *et al.*, 2013; Wan *et al.*, 2012; Cho, 2011). But the effect of previous OCE on PCoNERs is yet to be categorically established. Additionally, little attention is paid to how consumers process and integrate multiple online reviews (Kim & Lee, 2015) especially the processes through which PCoNERs generate consumer-firm relationship quality. These evident gaps identified in the literature necessitated the development and validation of an experience-perception-attitude model that was examined in this study. The model not only portray the multi-channel nature of OCE from the perspective of two social cognitive psychology theories (i.e. the schema theory and elaboration likelihood model), but also advanced the holistic view of customer experience held in a variety of previous studies (see Lemke *et al.*, 2011; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009; Gentile *et al.*, 2007) by demonstrating how consumer-firm relationship quality can be enhanced through a simultaneous consideration of shopping experiences emanating from both company website and social media site. Although the holistic viewpoint implies that the delivery of consistent experience across channels has become invaluable (Frow & Payne, 2007; Berry *et al.*, 2006) whilst academics and practitioners (see Gentile *et al.*, 2007; Wyner, 2003) argue that customer experience management should be optimized because all customer touchpoints/channels are not equal, the current understanding of multichannel customer experience according to Badrinarayanan *et al.* (2012 in Frasquet *et al.*, 2015) is inadequate. Herhausen *et al.* (2015) specifically argued that while channel integration has been recognized as a promising strategy for retailers, its influence on customer responses toward retailers and across several channels is still unclear. This study advances previous works on channel integration (e.g. Herhausen *et al.*, 2015; Meli *et al.*, 2015) by facilitating the understanding of how multichannel customer experience influence relationship quality from the viewpoint of two theories of social cognitive psychology. The tested experience-perception-attitude model rooted mainly in the schema theory and the ELM is unique from the viewpoint of both substance and orientation because it clearly showed how multiple experiential factors/attributes gleaned from a company's website can influence consumer perception of eWOM found in the social media and how such insights influences consumer-firm relationship quality.

Second, consistent with Adhikari (2015) who found that subjective attributes are more influential than objective attributes and Pine and Gilmore's (1999) thought that it is far more beneficial to relate with customers on the affective level, findings indicate that previous emotional experience(s) is/are the most influential driver of PCoNERs. Although it is vital to examine customer experience holistically through aggregate measures, examining specific dimensions of customer experience is vital because certain elements of experience are more influential than others (Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2013). The context-specific character of customer experience was incrementally extended (Corley & Gioia, 2011) by demonstrating that shoppers' previous emotional experience(s) is/are the most influential driver of PCoNERs in an emerging online retailing market. This is so despite several disparities between emerging and developed markets (see Narang & Trivedi, 2016; Atsmon *et al.*, 2012). Given that the above results were gleaned from a recessionary economy, this study strengthened extant customer experience research by showing that the role of emotional attributes are outstanding even in an emerging economy passing through economic recession. The foregoing also strengthens the counteracting intuition-based view that developed market consumers place more emphasis on 'value for money' than their emerging markets counterparts (see Marceux, 2015).

Third, research on negative eWOM customers' behavior is scarce (Boo & Kim, 2013). Additionally, Kim and Lee (2015) noted that how consumers process and integrate multiple online reviews is underexplored. Specifically, previous studies did not address the effect of PCoNERs and how review source credibility interacts with review quantity to influence relationship quality from the perspective of ELM. This is so despite Eisingerich *et al.*'s (2015) broad claim that eWOM has become a key determinant of consumer behavior whilst Internet platforms has been declared the future fronts for successful customer relationship management and Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980 in Park & Lee, 2009) specific reasoning that the formulation of purchase intentions is a function of consumers' perception of the opinions of important 'others'. This study advanced the eWOM literature and the ELM by drawing on the ELM to demonstrate that PCoNERs have negative effect on consumer-firm relationship quality. The study also show that review frequency affects consumer-firm relationship quality such that consumer-firm relationship quality attenuates as review frequency increases. The study therefore, incrementally adds to the growing body of eWOM literature which established the influence of eWOM on firm reputation (Mattila & Mount, 2003), company image (Litvin *et al.*, 2008), brand or firm awareness (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), website popularity (Zhang *et al.*, 2010); purchase intention (Tsao *et al.*, 2015; Robins & Holmes, 2008; Park *et al.*, 2007), customer retention (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), sales volume (Ye *et al.*, 2009; Clemons, 2008; Davis & Khazanchi, 2008; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006), and overall firm performance (Kim *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, by simultaneously demonstrating the abovementioned effects in situations of previous positive experience vs. previous negative experience, this study responded to previous calls to ascertain whether positive and negative perceptions induce asymmetric effects (see Meuter *et al.*, 2013; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). This study also advances the ELM by demonstrating that the effects (i.e. main and interaction effects) of the two thresholds of elaboration (in our case, review source credibility and review frequency) can become infinitesimal if consumers are exposed to reviews with consistent valence. Specifically, it was shown that under situation of consistent negative reviews, the effects of review source credibility and review frequency on consumer-firm relationship quality were weakened to a negligible extent; although some of the tests were insufficiently powered to detect effects.

Fourth, within the services marketing literature (see for instance Juttner *et al.*, 2013; Chang & Horng, 2010; Brakus *et al.*, 2009), customer experience is variedly described/defined. Within the context of online retailing, diverse descriptions also abound (see for instance Klaus, 2013; Chen *et al.*, 2009; Li *et al.*, 2001 in Liao & Keng, 2013). These diverse descriptions imply that a universally accepted definition of OCE does not exist. According to Palmer (2010), this has led to ambiguous application of the concept whilst Klaus (2015) argued that scholars are less unified on how customer experience should be precisely defined. By subjecting 30 definitions/descriptions of customer experience to in-depth scrutiny, twelve features with which customer experience has been previously characterized were pointed out and a comprehensive definition of OCE based on those twelve identified features was postulated. The postulated definition unifies the diverse descriptions of the constructs found in the extant literature and identified pointers to the character/nature of the concept.

Finally, customer experience as was demonstrated in section 2.4 is likened to customer engagement, service quality, and value co-creation on several counts. Thus, at first glance, one may be tempted to substitute customer experience with any of these three concepts. But customer experience differs from these concepts in a variety of ways. Yet, previous researchers failed to clarify the similarities and disparities between customer experience and its associated constructs. This study reorients traditional definitions of customer experience (see Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Hoffman & Novak, 1996) and responds to the need to clarify the connection between customer experience and its associated concepts (Klaus & Maklan, 2011) through in-depth review of the literature that gave birth to a theoretical portrayal of how customer experience relates and differs from its associated constructs and proposed a conceptual framework in this direction. The proposed conceptual framework advanced the experiential consumption literature by posing perceived value as the central construct that glues customer experience and its associated concepts together while also pointing out the directionality of the relationships amongst the concepts.

9.2 Methodological Contributions

Methodologically, this study contributes to the literature in three directions. First, through literature, the study substantiated that extant measures of online customer experience (OCE) are limited in a variety of ways including being fraught with both dimensional and definitional confounds. These necessitated the rethought of the measurement of OCE and the establishment of the need for new scale development through a rigorous literature review. Although it was argued that scale development lies outside the scope of this study, the measures of OCE employed were generated by avoiding most of the shortfalls of extant measures. Methodologically therefore, this study advanced the measurement of OCE by first, evolving a conceptual definition of each dimension of OCE through a rigorous literature review and by second, deriving the measures of each dimension of OCE based on both the conceptual definitions and the influential similar extant measures identified in the literature. Our approach is therefore useful for future researchers whose aims lie outside scale development but are interested in employing valid measures of the constructs under investigation through an operationally appealing conceptual review of literatures of the study constructs.

Second, literature indicates that measures of credibility vary (see Fang, 2014; Moran & Muzellec, 2014; Metzger & Flanagin, 2013; Luo *et al.*, 2013; Cheung *et al.*, 2009; Flanagin & Metzger, 2003). Through in-depth review of extant credibility literature, two lines of measurement – i) the psychology and communication literature that focuses on message source credibility; and ii) the information science literature that focuses on the credibility of the information itself rather than the credibility of the message source – were identified. This study advanced the measurement of credibility by integrating the above two views from the perspective of ELM. Such rendition is broader in scope compared to extant measures of the construct.

Finally, little is known about how customers' multiple channel experiences form into a process (McColl-Kennedy *et al.*, 2015) despite Berry *et al.* (2006) arguing that firms that desire to stay competitive must design and orchestrate customer clues (functional, mechanic and humanic clues). Extant customer experience studies (e.g. Visinescu *et al.*, 2015; Mosteller *et al.*, 2014; Blasco-Arcas *et al.*, 2014; Kim *et al.*, 2013; Papagiannidis *et al.*, 2013) that utilized an experimental design failed to delineate how experiences gleaned from a company's website can influence consumers' perception of negative experience reviews posted by fellow customers on the social media. This study makes a methodology contribution by representing the first systematic attempt to demonstrate how website experiences affect consumer perception through an experimental kind of research design. In addition to the above stated, the designs of the scenario-based experiments were uniquely consistent with Kozinets' (1998) netnographic research method/approach which is supported as the best suited for the study of consumers' behavior of Internet cultures and communities while also offering significant insights into the consumption patterns of online consumer groups because the narratives built into pilot experiment 2 and study 2 were naturalistic reviews of previous experienced customers. The approach adopted in this study therefore compliments the experimental design technique utilized by channel integration researchers (see Herhausen *et al.*, 2015) and previous panel data-based studies (e.g. Meli *et al.*, 2015) that investigated how drivers of online store choice change as multi-channel shoppers gain OCE.

9.3 Practical Contributions/Implications

First, by pointing out the similarities and distinctions between customer experience and its associated concepts, this study not only illuminate the probable misconceptions that would have trailed these concepts to the understanding of practitioners but also provide a practical guide on how these concepts should be holistically viewed. By so doing, the study implicitly draws the boundaries between more traditional drivers of marketing outcomes such as service quality and more recent concepts such as customer experience, customer engagement, and value co-creation. Such rendition is a good guide for firms on the level of strategic position to pursue depending on their resources and capabilities. For new start-ups, efficient services through cost-effective customer engagement and co-creation tools which Internet platforms offer in abundance can be the initial focus for winning and retaining customers. E-retailers particularly new start-ups can practically get this done by developing an app that not only allows customers to co-create their own experiences but also enables e-retailers to track and respond to customers' activities and complaints within the firm's website and social media site especially Facebook. Thus, the app should play customer-support services roles and ease the depth of work available for staff to undertake. As such, the pressure on staff will become more minimal, whilst customers will more likely engage with the firm's products and services at far lesser costs. But for well-established e-retailers with strong competitors, delivering extraordinary experiences through small things that make great difference is paramount. Pursuing such strategic position will make more practical sense if Bolton *et al.*'s (2014) three approaches through which service consumption experiences can be enhanced are adopted. Bolton *et al.* (2014) demonstrated that using little things to make big difference include i) ensuring that customer-oriented experiences are emphasized in every shopper-firm touchpoint/channel seamlessly; ii) creating emotionally engaging features (e.g. pictures and demonstration videos) that appeal to consumer emotions; and iii) optimal integration of human touch (e.g. co-creation opportunities such as POS at delivery points) and emotionally engaging experiences. One key step is to present consistent information across various customer channels especially websites and the social media. For instance, the prices displayed on the store shelf must be the same with those that customers view in the online store. If there is any need for variations, the reasons behind such variations must be clearly spelt out to the customers. Additionally, products displayed in the website must be available for pick up in the store.

Additionally, drawing on the context-specific perspective of customer experience, it is important to emphasize that some dimensions of customer experience are more important than others in certain contexts. According to Klaus (2015), the role that rational and emotional attributes play in influencing customer purchase decision and more specifically when emotional factor dominate cognitive factors in different contexts deserve to be enlightened more to the benefit of practitioners. Our study confirmed that previously experienced emotional attributes/factors are more likely to govern the perceptions of online shoppers situated in emerging markets than cognitive and other dimensions of customer experience. Thus, online retailers operating in Nigeria should orchestrate service clues that activate customers' emotions. Additionally, since digitalized differences exist between millennials situated in emerging markets and their matured markets' counterparts to the extent that the latter place more emphasis on 'value for money' than the former (Marceux, 2015), the application of the above findings can also be extended to other emerging markets with similar business and economic history. Online retailers operating in emerging markets must integrate emotional clues into their website design if they intend to achieve excellent customer clues management and consequently influence consumer perception. Specifically, e-retailers should integrate aesthetic features like attractive pictures and demonstration videos into their website design because such features activate consumers' emotions while also weakening negative information attributed to the firm by other customers. This is because delivering emotionally engaging experiences requires systematic integration of features that trigger consumer emotions. Demonstration videos that is action-oriented and clear pictures of available products and services are strong emotional activators. Furthermore, when integrating website features that activate consumer emotions, e-retailers must be careful not to eliminate cognitive features such as the ease with which shoppers navigate the website and find what they are shopping for as well as the speed at which webpages load.

Since results show that consumers who credibly perceive negative experience reviews posted by fellow consumers are very unlikely to sustain their relationships with such a firm especially if alternative offerings abound whilst such negative effects can even be extended to competing market offerings; it is paramount for e-retailers striving to maintain quality consumer-firm relationship to attenuate the credibility of negative experience reviews posted by other consumers. E-retailers can achieve this by delivering positive consumer experiences in every customer touchpoints (e.g. websites) through consistent delivery of distinctive services (that is, services that wow! customers). Since services fail sometimes, platforms such as review sites that facilitate the retrieval and rectification of customers' complaints can also help to keep negative perceptions at moderate levels because as Ahmad (2002) counteractively argued, firms induce customer defection when they fail to establish suitable complaint management and service recovery systems. Creating a Facebook page specifically designated for the retrieval of customer complaints and resolution can be of immense influence because Ladhari and Michaud (2015) argued that contents generated on Facebook are more credible than contents generated in other platforms. Facebook can also widen the latitude for customers to share their experiences and respond to each other's complaints, thereby performing short-term marketing roles for e-retailers. Additionally, competitive positioning in websites and Facebook pages can also shield e-retailers from the influence of negative eWOM emanating from competing firms.

Finally, and on a more general note, to thoroughly engage in a systematic management of customer clues, online retailers must be vigilant to the operational processes of cross-channel customer experience. The importance of this reasoning lies in the need for organizations to tell consistent, cohesive, and compelling story of their services across channels (Berry *et al.*, 2006). Through series of scenario-based experiments, this study demonstrated that experiences that shoppers retrieve from companies' websites affects consumers PCoNERs posted in the social media. This consequently affects consumer-firm relationship quality. Thus, online retailers who intend to attract enhanced consumer-firm relationship quality are challenged to orchestrate important service clues (e.g. design features that activate shoppers' emotions) on their websites to attenuate the effects of negative information posted in the social media. Attenuating the effects of negative information is specifically important because inferences from Kumar's (2005) study and Sawyer (1997) indicate that an experience with one single supplier can be extrapolated to all suppliers. To reduce the effects of such extrapolated negative experiences, e-retailers must have to deliver services in a manner that is totally different from those of competitors. Crafting a unique web navigation experiences such as the one that engages the shopper both body and soul as well as excellent customer complaint system that caters to the need of customers in a way that leaves an indelible impression on their emotions is the key.

9.4 Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

As with every research of this nature, some limitations are certainly evident and must be pointed out. First, the results obtained from the study must be interpreted with caution because of the use of student subjects. Specifically, Patzer (1996) stated that studies based on student samples may suffer from the threat of external validity. Hair *et al.* (2006) specifically noted that while convenience samples such as college students are easy to generate, it may not be generalizable to the entire population. Thus, although the use of students as surrogates for the entire population has received wide acceptance whilst clever justifications for its use in this study were put forward, external validity of the generated findings would have been enhanced by employing a more diverse sample. Additionally, our results (see chapter seven) indicate that some of the links hypothesized in the conceptual model examined in this study were not concluded on due to insufficient power. The implication is that our sample is limited. Yet, it has been argued that results generated from a representative sample is more generalizable than those that are not (see Bryman &

Bell, 2015; Saunders *et al.*, 2009; Baruch & Holtom, 2008). Thus, a replication study with more representative sample is obviously required to generate a more generalizable result.

Second, the online shopping experiences described in the experimental scenarios were generic and did not refer to any particular product or service. The scenarios may therefore, lack the capacity to reflect the unique attributes of different categories of product. Yet, consumer behavior evidently varies across different product categories (Girard *et al.*, 2003). Thus, it might be difficult for online retailers to rigorously apply the results of this study across different categories of product especially as Peterson *et al.* (1997) argued that the special features of the Internet are a clear indication that marketing products and services in this medium depends on the characteristics of the product involved.

Third, while it was easy to establish through the literature that the link between previous online customer experience (OCE) and consumer perception is very likely to be moderated by several situational and consumer factors, this study was limited to two consumer factors. Although it is possible to investigate other situational and consumer factors that moderate the link between previous OCE and consumer perception, such an investigation may require a completely new research question that may constitute a different PhD research. To further strengthen our proposed model and provide greater insights into multichannel experience, the investigation of other moderators is required. Additionally, even though it has become important to monitor all the touchpoints through which consumers interact with the product and services of firms, this study was limited to two touchpoints (i.e. websites and Facebook page). Examination of other touchpoints is certainly an area that warrant further investigation because such scholarly effort can offer insightful understanding of multichannel customer experience.

Finally, this study is also limited to the extent that the utilized scale was not validated through a standard scale development procedure such as the one suggested by Churchill (1979). This is so despite rigorous scrutiny of literature suggesting a development and validation of an OCE scale that can be rigorously applied in the context of online retailing. This is an area that requires further investigation. Churchill's (1979) standard scale development process and the augmentations recommended by subsequent researchers (e.g. Netemeyer *et al.* 2003 in Elbedweihy, 2014) would have been a perfect guide for furthering such investigation but such research endeavor was clearly outside the scope of this study.

The foregoing notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that the limitations do not by any means invalidate or impair the valuable insights and the significant findings generated in this study. The limitations rather provide useful insights into several issues that warrant further investigation. First, whilst this study demonstrated the feasibility of using student sample to investigate online shopping experience based mainly on previous literatures, it is felt that a sample drawn from a more diverse population will be more generalizable. According to Patzer (1996), subjects of convenience samples may differ from the target population which consequently pose external validity threat. Although the shopping context selected in this study is neutral to gender, age and income levels, it is strongly recommended that future researches are conducted using a more diverse sample especially if the chosen research context is prone to age, gender and income level differences. Such studies can also aim at investigating how consumer demographic differences moderate the previous OCE-consumer perception link hypothesized in this study. While a controlled lab-based experiment such as the one conducted in this study will be useful, survey-based technique can complement the robustness and generalizability of findings.

Second, calibrating products and services into categories, and studying how product type differences impact online shopping experiences is an arena that is yet to receive adequate systematic response from researchers. According to Girard *et al.* (2003), why consumers shop for certain products online and not others is still unclear and inadequately understood. In this study, the employed experimental scenarios were generic and did not refer to a particular product or service. Given that customers' willingness to purchase products is a function of product category (Cho, 2011), researches narrowed to specific products and services may yield richer insights. Thus, future researchers can generate great insights by investigating the moderating effect of product types in the links modelled in the conceptual model. Additionally, Huang *et al.* (2009) has shown that the Internet blurs the traditional disparities in consumers' ability to evaluate search and experience products as consumers spend similar amount of time searching for both products. In more specific terms, although Klein (1998) argued that through enabling consumers to obtain experiential information via social media, the Internet is transforming products that were hitherto classified as experience products into search products, Nakayama *et al.* (2010) provided a counterfactual evidence that this is rarely the case. While it would have been interesting for this study to further the thesis of this debate, such view was clearly beyond this study's scope. A deeper insight into how shopping experiences differ across various product types can be fostered by further clarifying the above controversy. Specifically, it will make great academic sense to further investigate the extent to which the Internet is capable of transforming experience into search goods. Such research will even be more interesting if the features of experience goods that can be easily transformed into search features by the Internet are properly delineated because such insight will guide practitioners on features they can focus on to achieve product or service differentiation.

Third, although this study established through literature that both customer experience and customer engagement are simultaneously similar and different on several grounds, the directionality of the relationship between the two concepts as was tentatively argued in section 2.4 was not considered definitive. Offering an empirical evidence in this direction was clearly beyond the scope of this research. To foster theory development while at the same time guiding firms on how to articulate the sequence of occurrence of the two concepts and consequently logically orchestrate the necessary service clues that will induce both acts, further research is needed to clarify the directionality of the relationship between customer experience and customer engagement. A covariance-based structural equation modelling ahead of the partial least squares structural equation modelling technique employed in this study will be a better analytical technique because of its utility in generating fitness measures. Additionally, all the theoretical links identified in the conceptual model are yet to receive strong empirical validation in the literature. Testing these links empirically can form part of future research proposals.

Fourth, our results (see chapter seven) indicate that some of the links hypothesized in the conceptual model examined in this study were not concluded on due to insufficient power. The implication is that our sample is limited. Thus, future researchers are encouraged to do one or both of two things. First, to increase the sample size to ensure that their tests are sufficiently powered. Second and more appropriate, to determine a priori, the sample size needed to detect an effect if any of such effect exists in the population before proceeding with data collection. A guideline for how this can be done are clearly outlined in Piyathasanan *et al.* (2014-2015) and Field and Hole (2003). Following the procedures laid out by the above authors to further investigate the tenability of the unconcluded paths hypothesized in this study may yield richer insights into how customer experience can be managed across several customer-firm interaction channels.

Additionally, it has been argued that consumers' experiences with a given firm can be extrapolated to competing brands. Although we demonstrated how the management of review frequency can help firms attenuate the effect of extrapolated negative experiences in this study, the interaction between experience type and review quality and how such interactions will likely affect consumer-firm relationship quality is an area that warrant further investigation. Additionally, studying the interaction effect of experience type and social aggregation factors on consumer-firm relationship quality from the viewpoint of the dual-process theory is a viable area of research that can serve to advance contemporary theories of persuasion and the multiple processes through which attitude change take place.

Sixth, while it has been demonstrated that successful firms attain such heights by telling a cohesive, consistent and compelling story about their services through systematic and purposeful management of all customer touchpoints (Berry *et al.*, 2006), this study was limited to two customer touchpoints despite the myriad of touchpoints through which customers interact with companies' products and services. To further the understanding of multichannel customer experience especially as Frasquet *et al*. (2015) and Bolton *et al*. (2014) noted that full comprehension of the domain of customer experience can only be gained by understanding every direct and indirect consumer-firm interaction channel, it is important that future researchers investigate other consumer touchpoints. Apart from other social networking sites such as MySpace and Friendster, it might also be important to further examine how consumer activities in microblogging sites (e.g. twitter), creativity works-sharing sites (e.g. YouTube), emails and a host of other customer touchpoints shape their (customers) perception about products and services and consequently affect consumer-firm relationship quality.

Seventh, while it was easy to establish through the literature that the link between previous OCE and consumer perception is very likely to be moderated by several situational and consumer factors, this study was limited to only two consumer factors. It might be particularly interesting to consider how consumer Internet experience, shopping goals (i.e. experiential vs. task orientation), price sensitivity or involvement interact with experience type (i.e. positive vs. negative experience) to influence consumer perception. Since most previous customer experience research focused mainly on the direct effect of customer experience on consumer attitude and behavior, and firm profitability, examining any of the interaction effects proffered above is a research effort that is worth fostering an enhanced understanding of the schema theoretical viewpoint and its currently less understood operational processes vis a vis the domain of customer experience.

Finally, given that previous measures of OCE were problematic on several counts, thus, warranting the development and validation of a comprehensive and theoretically parsimonious measures of OCE within the retailing context; developing a new OCE scale applicable to the online retailing context is a clear issue that was not investigated in this study but obviously demand urgent research attention. Future researchers can take up this evident gap. Churchill's (1979) standard scale development process and the augmentations recommended by subsequent researchers (e.g. Netemeyer *et al*. 2003 in Elbedweihy, 2014) are perfect guides for researchers intending to engage in rigorous development and validation of an OCE scale that can be applied to the online retailing context.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF Hull

Business School

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSENT FORM: SURVEYS, QUESTIONNAIRES

I, ……………………………………………………of ……………………………………

Hereby agree to participate in this study to be undertaken by **Ernest Emeka Izogo**

and I understand that the purpose of the research is **to investigate how online retailers can exploit the link between previous shopping experiences and perceived credibility of negative experience reviews (PCoNERs) to enhance consumer-firm relationship quality through scenario-based experiment(s).**

I understand that

1. Upon receipt, my questionnaire will be coded and my name and address kept separately from it.
2. Any information that I provide will not be made public in any form that could reveal my identity to an outside party i.e. that I will remain fully anonymous.
3. Aggregated results will be used for research purposes and may be reported in scientific and academic journals (including online publications).
4. Individual results **will not** be released to any person except at my request and on my authorization.
5. That I am free to withdraw my consent at any time during the study in which event my participation in the research study will immediately cease and any information obtained from me will not be used.

Signature: Date:

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Appendix 2: Pilot Experiment 1 and Study 1

Form A1

You have been a regular customer of an online retailer called **Osas.com**. You have been buying many things/products that you need from this Internet Company. By your assessment, their website seems good because products are displayed in such a way that it is very easy to find anything that you want. The quality of the pictures of the products in **Osas.com**'s website is also amazing. So, it has always been an exciting experience to shop on **Osas.com**'s website. The prices of products are also reasonable and affordable. Each time you buy a product from **Osas.com**, they deliver it to your doorstep at the shortest possible period of time. Their products are always worth the price you paid for them. Moreover, all the products you have purchased from **Osas.com** in the past were in good working condition when they delivered it to you.

Based on your experience with **Osas.com** as described above, please answer the questions in the tables below by ticking (√) in the right box/column.

Question	Extremely satisfactory	Very satisfactory	Slightly satisfactory	Neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory	Slightly unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Extremely unsatisfactory
Overall, how satisfactory would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely favorable	Very favorable	Slightly favorable	Neither favorable nor unfavorable	Slightly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	Extremely unfavorable
Overall, how favorable would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely pleased	Very pleased	Slightly pleased	Neither pleased nor displeased	Slightly displeased	Very displeased	Extremely displeased
Overall, how pleased would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely interesting	Very interesting	Slightly interesting	Neither interesting nor uninteresting	Slightly uninteresting	Very uninteresting	Extremely uninteresting
How interesting do you think the shopping experience described above was? *							

Questions	Extremely important	Very important	Slightly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Very unimportant	Extremely unimportant
How important will quality of pictures of products and the website's beauty be to you in making that purchase?							
How important will the visual quality of videos demonstrating product features be to you in making that purchase?							
How important will the clearness and quality of sounds of audio videos demonstrating products features be to you in making that purchase?							

Questions	Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Slightly helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Slightly unhelpful	Very unhelpful	Extremely unhelpful
How helpful was the online shopping activity in stimulating your curiosity/interest in online shopping?							
How helpful would you say the quality/price relationship was to you in making the purchase in **Osas.com**? *							
How helpful do you think the ease with which you can shop around/access products in **Osas.com** website was to you in making the purchase?							
Overall, how helpful do you think **Osas.com** was in enabling you solve your purchase problems? *							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent would you say shopping on **Osas.com** went in creating positive feelings in you?							
To what extent would you say that shopping on **Osas.com** went in putting you in a certain mood (e.g. joyous mood)?							
To what extent would you say shopping on **Osas.com** went in creating fun-like feelings in you?							
To what extent can you say that shopping in **Osas.com** didn't appealed to your inner feelings in anyway							

Questions	Extremely important	Very important	Slightly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Very unimportant	Extremely unimportant
How important do you think shopping in **Osas.com** was in making you think about your lifestyle?							
How important do you think shopping in **Osas.com** was in reminding you of the things you are capable of doing?							
How important would you say shopping in **Osas.com** from the comfort of your home was in enabling you change your lifestyle?							

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
Shopping in **Osas.com** did not make you think about your lifestyle							
Shopping in **Osas.com** did not remind you of what you are capable of doing							

Question	Extremely likely	Very likely	Slightly likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Slightly unlikely	Very unlikely	Extremely unlikely
How likely are you to share your **Osas.com** shopping experience with other people (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc.)? *							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent do you think shopping on **Osas.com**'s website make you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society (i.e. do you think shopping **Osas.com** will make you feel perceived positively by your peers, family members, colleagues etc?)							
To what extent does shopping on **Osas.com's** website make you think about relationships with others (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc)							
To what extent do you think shopping on **Osas.com**'s website doesn't make you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent do you perceive the shopping incident described above as something that happened to you?							
To what extent do you think that the shopping incident described above can happen in real life?							
To what extent is the whole exercise easy to understand?							

Assume that you logged into **Osas.com's** Facebook page and found that another customer of **Osas.com** posted a negative comment about their experiences with the products and services of the company. Based on your past experience with **Osas.com** as described in the scenario on page 1 above, how will you perceive the negative comment posted by that customer?

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I will perceive that information as reliable							
I will perceive the information as trustworthy							
I will perceive the information as accurate							
I will perceive the information as biased							

Form A2

In a conversation with **Mr. Donald Okafor**, a friend of yours, regarding some products that you intend to buy, he told you that you can actually purchase everything you want on the Internet and it will be delivered to your doorstep without you bothering to visit a physical store. So you decided to give **Donald's** idea a trial. **It was your first time of trying to buy products online.** You decided to shop on the website of an online retailer called **Osas.com**. By your assessment, their website seemed good because products were displayed in such a way that it was very easy to find anything that you want to buy. The quality of the pictures of the products in their website was also amazing. So it was an exciting experience to shop on **Osas.com's** website. The prices of products were also reasonable and affordable. After the purchase, the company delivered the product to your doorstep at the **shortest period of time possible**. When the product arrived, it was **worth the price** you paid for it. Moreover, the product was also in **good working condition** when the company delivered it to you. **But remember that this was just your first time of buying something from Osas.com.**

Based on your experience with **Osas.com** as described above, please answer the questions in the tables below by ticking (√) in the right box/column.

Question	Extremely satisfactory	Very satisfactory	Slightly satisfactory	Neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory	Slightly unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Extremely unsatisfactory
Overall, how satisfactory would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely favorable	Very favorable	Slightly favorable	Neither favorable nor unfavorable	Slightly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	Extremely unfavorable
Overall, how favorable would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely pleased	Very pleased	Slightly pleased	Neither pleased nor displeased	Slightly displeased	Very displeased	Extremely displeased
Overall, how pleased would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely interesting	Very interesting	Slightly interesting	Neither interesting nor uninteresting	Slightly uninteresting	Very uninteresting	Extremely uninteresting
How interesting do you think the shopping experience described above was? *							

Questions	Extremely important	Very important	Slightly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Very unimportant	Extremely unimportant
How important will quality of pictures of products and the website's beauty be to you in making that purchase?							
How important will the visual quality of videos demonstrating product features be to you in making that purchase?							
How important will the clearness and quality of sounds of audio videos demonstrating products features be to you in making that purchase?							

Questions	Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Slightly helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Slightly unhelpful	Very unhelpful	Extremely unhelpful
How helpful was the online shopping activity in stimulating your curiosity/interest in online shopping?							
How helpful would you say the quality/price relationship was to you in making the purchase in **Osas.com**? *							
How helpful do you think the ease with which you can shop around/access products in **Osas.com** website was to you in making the purchase?							
Overall, how helpful do you think **Osas.com** was in enabling you solve your purchase problems? *							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent would you say shopping on **Osas.com** went in creating positive feelings in you?							
To what extent would you say that shopping on **Osas.com** went in putting you in a certain mood (e.g. joyous mood)?							
To what extent would you say shopping on **Osas.com** went in creating fun-like feelings in you?							
To what extent can you say that shopping in **Osas.com** didn't appealed to your inner feelings in anyway							

Questions	Extremely important	Very important	Slightly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Very unimportant	Extremely unimportant
How important do you think shopping in **Osas.com** was in making you think about your lifestyle?							
How important do you think shopping in **Osas.com** was in reminding you of the things you are capable of doing?							
How important would you say shopping in **Osas.com** from the comfort of your home was in enabling you change your lifestyle?							

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
Shopping in **Osas.com** did not make you think about your lifestyle							
Shopping in **Osas.com** did not remind you of what you are capable of doing							

Question	Extremely likely	Very likely	Slightly likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Slightly unlikely	Very unlikely	Extremely unlikely
How likely are you to share your **Osas.com** shopping experience with other people (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc.)? *							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent do you think shopping on **Osas.com**'s website make you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society (i.e. do you think shopping **Osas.com** will make you feel perceived positively by your peers, family members, colleagues etc?)							
To what extent does shopping on **Osas.com's** website make you think about relationships with others (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc)							
To what extent do you think shopping on **Osas.com**'s website doesn't make you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent do you perceive the shopping incident described above as something that happened to you?							
To what extent do you think that the shopping incident described above can happen in real life?							
To what extent is the whole exercise easy to understand?							

Assume that you logged into **Osas.com's** Facebook page and found that another customer of **Osas.com** posted a negative comment about their experiences with the products and services of the company. Based on your past experience with **Osas.com** as described in the scenario on page 1 above, how will you perceive the negative comment posted by that customer?

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I will perceive that information as reliable							
I will perceive the information as trustworthy							
I will perceive the information as accurate							
I will perceive the information as biased							

Form A3

You have been a regular customer of an online retailer called **Osas.com**. You have been buying many products that you need from this online retailer. By your assessment, **their website is not good** because products are **displayed** in such a way that it is **very difficult to find** what you want to buy. The **quality of the pictures of the products** displayed in their website is also not good by your assessment. So, each time you shop on **Osas.com's** website, it is not always an exciting experience. The prices of products are also expensive but you still decided to continue buying products from them because they have all the products that you need. Each time you purchase an item from them, it takes very long time for the product to arrive and on some occasions up to **2 months**. Their products are not always worth the price you paid for them. Moreover, some of the products you purchased from them in the past were not in good working condition when they were delivered to you.

Based on your experience with **Osas.com** as described above, please answer the questions in the tables below by ticking (√) in the right box/column.

Question	Extremely satisfactory	Very satisfactory	Slightly satisfactory	Neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory	Slightly unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Extremely unsatisfactory
Overall, how satisfactory would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely favorable	Very favorable	Slightly favorable	Neither favorable nor unfavorable	Slightly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	Extremely unfavorable
Overall, how favorable would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely pleased	Very pleased	Slightly pleased	Neither pleased nor displeased	Slightly displeased	Very displeased	Extremely displeased
Overall, how pleased would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely interesting	Very interesting	Slightly interesting	Neither interesting nor uninteresting	Slightly uninteresting	Very uninteresting	Extremely uninteresting
How interesting do you think the shopping experience described above was? *							

Questions	Extremely important	Very important	Slightly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Very unimportant	Extremely unimportant
How important will quality of pictures of products and the website's beauty be to you in making that purchase?							
How important will the visual quality of videos demonstrating product features be to you in making that purchase?							
How important will the clearness and quality of sounds of audio videos demonstrating products features be to you in making that purchase?							

Questions	Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Slightly helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Slightly unhelpful	Very unhelpful	Extremely unhelpful
How helpful was the online shopping activity in stimulating your curiosity/interest in online shopping?							
How helpful would you say the quality/price relationship was to you in making the purchase in **Osas.com**? *							
How helpful do you think the ease with which you can shop around/access products in **Osas.com** website was to you in making the purchase?							
Overall, how helpful do you think **Osas.com** was in enabling you solve your purchase problems? *							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent would you say shopping on **Osas.com** went in creating positive feelings in you?							
To what extent would you say that shopping on **Osas.com** went in putting you in a certain mood (e.g. joyous mood)?							
To what extent would you say shopping on **Osas.com** went in creating fun-like feelings in you?							
To what extent can you say that shopping in **Osas.com** didn't appealed to your inner feelings in anyway							

Questions	Extremely important	Very important	Slightly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Very unimportant	Extremely unimportant
How important do you think shopping in **Osas.com** was in making you think about your lifestyle?							
How important do you think shopping in **Osas.com** was in reminding you of the things you are capable of doing?							
How important would you say shopping in **Osas.com** from the comfort of your home was in enabling you change your lifestyle?							

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
Shopping in **Osas.com** did not make you think about your lifestyle							
Shopping in **Osas.com** did not remind you of what you are capable of doing							

Question	Extremely likely	Very likely	Slightly likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Slightly unlikely	Very unlikely	Extremely unlikely
How likely are you to share your **Osas.com** shopping experience with other people (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc.)? *							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent do you think shopping on **Osas.com**'s website make you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society (i.e. do you think shopping **Osas.com** will make you feel perceived positively by your peers, family members, colleagues etc?)							
To what extent does shopping on **Osas.com's** website make you think about relationships with others (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc)							
To what extent do you think shopping on **Osas.com**'s website doesn't make you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent do you perceive the shopping incident described above as something that happened to you?							
To what extent do you think that the shopping incident described above can happen in real life?							
To what extent is the whole exercise easy to understand?							

Assume that you logged into **Osas.com's** Facebook page and found that another customer of **Osas.com** posted a negative comment about their experiences with the products and services of the company. Based on your past experience with **Osas.com** as described in the scenario on page 1 above, how will you perceive the negative comment posted by that customer?

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I will perceive that information as reliable							
I will perceive the information as trustworthy							
I will perceive the information as accurate							
I will perceive the information as biased							

Form A4

In a conversation with **Mr. Donald Okafor**, a friend of yours, regarding some products that you intend to buy, he told you that you can actually purchase everything you want on the Internet and it will be delivered to your doorstep without you bothering to visit a physical store. So you decided to give **Donald's** idea a trial. **It was your first time of trying to buy products online.** You decided to shop on the website of an online retailer called **Osas.com**. Their website was not good because products were not well displayed for easy access and the quality of the pictures of the products you viewed on the website was poor. So nothing was exciting about **Osas.com's** website but you decided to continue with the shopping. Although you managed to find the kind of product that you were looking for, it took you too much time and energy to find it. As you browsed through the website, you also found out that their **prices** were very expensive. In spite of all these, you still decided to buy from the company because they have all the products that you need. After purchase, it took very long time (say **2 months**) for the company to deliver the product to you. When the product finally arrived, it was not worth the price you paid. Moreover, some parts of the product were damaged before delivery.

Based on your experience with **Osas.com** as described above, please answer the questions in the tables below by ticking (√) in the right box/column.

Question	Extremely satisfactory	Very satisfactory	Slightly satisfactory	Neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory	Slightly unsatisfactory	Very unsatisfactory	Extremely unsatisfactory
Overall, how satisfactory would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely favorable	Very favorable	Slightly favorable	Neither favorable nor unfavorable	Slightly unfavorable	Very unfavorable	Extremely unfavorable
Overall, how favorable would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely pleased	Very pleased	Slightly pleased	Neither pleased nor displeased	Slightly displeased	Very displeased	Extremely displeased
Overall, how pleased would you say your shopping experience with **Osas.com** was?							

Question	Extremely interesting	Very interesting	Slightly interesting	Neither interesting nor uninteresting	Slightly uninteresting	Very uninteresting	Extremely uninteresting
How interesting do you think the shopping experience described above was? *							

Questions	Extremely important	Very important	Slightly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Very unimportant	Extremely unimportant
How important will quality of pictures of products and the website's beauty be to you in making that purchase?							
How important will the visual quality of videos demonstrating product features be to you in making that purchase?							
How important will the clearness and quality of sounds of audio videos demonstrating products features be to you in making that purchase?							

Questions	Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Slightly helpful	Neither helpful nor unhelpful	Slightly unhelpful	Very unhelpful	Extremely unhelpful
How helpful was the online shopping activity in stimulating your curiosity/interest in online shopping?							
How helpful would you say the quality/price relationship was to you in making the purchase in **Osas.com**? *							
How helpful do you think the ease with which you can shop around/access products in **Osas.com** website was to you in making the purchase?							
Overall, how helpful do you think **Osas.com** was in enabling you solve your purchase problems? *							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent would you say shopping on **Osas.com** went in creating positive feelings in you?							
To what extent would you say that shopping on **Osas.com** went in putting you in a certain mood (e.g. joyous mood)?							
To what extent would you say shopping on **Osas.com** went in creating fun-like feelings in you?							
To what extent can you say that shopping in **Osas.com** didn't appealed to your inner feelings in anyway							

Questions	Extremely important	Very important	Slightly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Very unimportant	Extremely unimportant
How important do you think shopping in **Osas.com** was in making you think about your lifestyle?							
How important do you think shopping in **Osas.com** was in reminding you of the things you are capable of doing?							
How important would you say shopping in **Osas.com** from the comfort of your home was in enabling you change your lifestyle?							

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
Shopping in **Osas.com** did not make you think about your lifestyle							
Shopping in **Osas.com** did not remind you of what you are capable of doing							

Question	Extremely likely	Very likely	Slightly likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Slightly unlikely	Very unlikely	Extremely unlikely
How likely are you to share your **Osas.com** shopping experience with other people (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc.)? *							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent do you think shopping on **Osas.com**'s website make you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society (i.e. do you think shopping **Osas.com** will make you feel perceived positively by your peers, family members, colleagues etc?)							
To what extent does shopping on **Osas.com's** website make you think about relationships with others (e.g. friends, colleagues, family members etc)							
To what extent do you think shopping on **Osas.com**'s website doesn't make you feel a sense of belonging to the wider society							

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent do you perceive the shopping incident described above as something that happened to you?							
To what extent do you think that the shopping incident described above can happen in real life?							
To what extent is the whole exercise easy to understand?							

Assume that you logged into **Osas.com's** Facebook page and found that another customer of **Osas.com** posted a negative comment about their experiences with the products and services of the company. Based on your past experience with **Osas.com** as described in the scenario on page 1 above, how will you perceive the negative comment posted by that customer?

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I will perceive that information as reliable							
I will perceive the information as trustworthy							
I will perceive the information as accurate							
I will perceive the information as biased							

Notes: *Are the questionnaire items dropped after pilot experiment 1. Thus, study 1 used the above forms (i.e. Form A1 to Form A4) except that the asterisked items were not included in study 1 because of the results of the pilot study.

Appendix 3: Pilot Experiment 2

Form B1

*You have been buying products from an online company called **Blue gate** and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Today, you just logged into **Blue Gate's** Facebook page and found the following comments from Nigerian popular celebrities about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Basket Mouth (Nigerian Comedian)

Blue Gate is owing me since April. They deceived me and I swiped my ATM on their POS for a wrong product delivered to me. They have retrieved the product and I cannot get my money back. Fraud! Fraud!! Fraud!!!

Mr. Ibu (Nigerian Actor)

I placed an order for a product on **Blue Gate**, they supplied the wrong item 3 days after I placed the order. I noticed that the product delivered wasn't the right item. I called them immediately and they promised to retrieve the item within 8days but this item was not retrieved after 37days after I wasted a lot of my credit calling them. NOW THE ITEM HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND MY MONEY IS TRAPPED! I know they are not going to refund me because I have called their customer service several times and no one can help me get my money back.

Patience Ozokwor (Nigerian Actress)

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I can still rely upon B**lue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							

I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by Nigerian celebrities, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
The comments of the celebrities are reliable							
The comments of the celebrities are trustworthy							
The comments of the celebrities are accurate							
The comments of the celebrities are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	female

How old are you? ………………………………

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all

Form B2

*You have been buying products from an online company called **Blue gate** and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Today, you just logged into **Blue Gate's** Facebook page and found the following comments from Nigerian popular celebrities about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Patience Ozokwor (Nigerian Actress)

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I can still rely upon **Blue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by **Patience Ozokwor**, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are reliable							
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are trustworthy							
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are accurate							
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	female

How old are you? ……………………………….

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all

Form B3

*You have been buying products from an online company called **Blue gate** and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Today, you just logged into **Blue Gate's** Facebook page and found the following comments from Nigerian popular celebrities about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Okereke Precious

Blue Gate is owing me since April. They deceived me and I swiped my ATM on their POS for a wrong product delivered to me. They have retrieved the product and I cannot get my money back. Fraud! Fraud!! Fraud!!!

Nweke Ndubisi

I placed an order for a product on **Blue Gate**, they supplied the wrong item 3 days after I placed the order. I noticed that the product delivered wasn't the right item. I called them immediately and they promised to retrieve the item within 8days but this item was not retrieved after 37days after I wasted a lot of my credit calling them. NOW THE ITEM HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND MY MONEY IS TRAPPED! I know they are not going to refund me because I have called their customer service several times and no one can help me get my money back.

Okafor Miracle

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I can still rely upon B**lue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by other customers, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
The comments of the consumers are reliable							
The comments of the consumers are trustworthy							
The comments of the consumers are accurate							
The comments of the consumers are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	female

How old are you? ………………………………….

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all

Form B4

*You have been buying products from an online company called **Blue gate** and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Shopping on Blue Gate's website has always been a thing of joy for you and full of fun as well. But today, you just logged into **Blue Gate's** Facebook page and found that the comments below were posted by another customer about the company. Please read through the comment and answer the questions that follow.*

Okafor Miracle

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I can still rely upon B**lue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the above comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by another customer of the company, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
The comments of the customer are reliable							
The comments of the customer are trustworthy							
The comments of the customer are accurate							
The comments of the customer are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	female

How old are you? ……………………………….

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all

Appendix 4: Study 2

Form B1

You have been buying products from an online company called ***Blue gate*** *and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Today, you just logged into* ***Blue Gate's*** *Facebook page and found the following comments from Nigerian popular celebrities about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Basket Mouth (Nigerian Comedian)

Blue Gate is owing me since April. They deceived me and I swiped my ATM on their POS for a wrong product delivered to me. They have retrieved the product and I cannot get my money back. Fraud! Fraud!! Fraud!!!

Mr. Ibu (Nigerian Actor)

I placed an order for a product on **Blue Gate**, they supplied the wrong item 3 days after I placed the order. I noticed that the product delivered wasn't the right item. I called them immediately and they promised to retrieve the item within 8days but this item was not retrieved after 37days after I wasted a lot of my credit calling them. NOW THE ITEM HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND MY MONEY IS TRAPPED! I know they are not going to refund me because I have called their customer service several times and no one can help me get my money back.

Patience Ozokwor (Nigerian Actress)

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent can you say that the people who posted these comments are popular Nigerian celebrities?							
To what extent can you say that these Facebook posts are well written?							

Since the Facebook posts are more than one, can you say that they are many in number?	Yes	No

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I can still rely upon B**lue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by Nigerian celebrities, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
The comments of the celebrities are reliable							
The comments of the celebrities are trustworthy							
The comments of the celebrities are accurate							
The comments of the celebrities are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	female

How old are you? ………………………………

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all

Form B2

*You have been buying products from an online company called **Blue gate** and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Today, you just logged into **Blue Gate's** Facebook page and found the following comments from Nigerian popular celebrities about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Patience Ozokwor (Nigerian Actress)

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent can you say that **Patience Ozokwor** is a popular Nigerian celebrity?							
To what extent can you say that the Facebook post is well written?							

Can you say that this single Facebook post is many in number?	Yes	No

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I can still rely upon **Blue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by **Patience Ozokwor**, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are reliable							
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are trustworthy							
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are accurate							
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	female

How old are you? ………………………………

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all

Form B3

You have been buying products from an online company called ***Blue gate*** *and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Today, you just logged into* ***Blue Gate's*** *Facebook page and found the following comments from Nigerian popular celebrities about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Okereke Precious

Blue Gate is owing me since April. They deceived me and I swiped my ATM on their POS for a wrong product delivered to me. They have retrieved the product and I cannot get my money back. Fraud! Fraud!! Fraud!!!

Nweke Ndubisi

I placed an order for a product on **Blue Gate**, they supplied the wrong item 3 days after I placed the order. I noticed that the product delivered wasn't the right item. I called them immediately and they promised to retrieve the item within 8days but this item was not retrieved after 37days after I wasted a lot of my credit calling them. NOW THE ITEM HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND MY MONEY IS TRAPPED! I know they are not going to refund me because I have called their customer service several times and no one can help me get my money back.

Okafor Miracle

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent can you say that the people who posted these comments are popular Nigerian celebrities?							
To what extent can you say that the Facebook posts are well written?							

Since the Facebook posts are more than one, can you say that they are many in number?	Yes	No

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I can still rely upon B**lue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by other customers, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
The comments of the consumers are reliable							
The comments of the consumers are trustworthy							
The comments of the consumers are accurate							
The comments of the consumers are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	female

How old are you? …………………………………

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all

Form B4

*You have been buying products from an online company called **Blue gate** and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Shopping on Blue Gate's website has always been a thing of joy for you and full of fun as well. But today, you just logged into **Blue Gate's** Facebook page and found that the comments below were posted by another customer about the company. Please read through the comment and answer the questions that follow.*

Okafor Miracle

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent can you say that the person who posted this comment is a popular Nigerian celebrity?							
To what extent can you say that the Facebook post is well written?							

Can you say that this single Facebook post is many in number?	Yes	No

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I can still rely upon B**lue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the above comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by another customer of the company, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
The comments of the customer are reliable							
The comments of the customer are trustworthy							
The comments of the customer are accurate							
The comments of the customer are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	female

How old are you? ……………………………….

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all

Form B1 (2)

*You have been buying products from an online company called **Blue gate** and their service has not been great. They always waste much time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will not refund you your money. Shopping on Blue Gate's website is not always a thing of joy for you and it is also boring. Today, you just logged into **Blue Gate's** Facebook page and found the following comments from Nigerian celebrities about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Basket Mouth (Nigerian Comedian)

Blue Gate is owing me since April. They deceived me and I swiped my ATM on their POS for a wrong product delivered to me. They have retrieved the product and I cannot get my money back. Fraud! Fraud!! Fraud!!!

Mr. Ibu (Nigerian Actor)

I placed an order for a product on **Blue Gate**, they supplied the wrong item 3 days after I placed the order. I noticed that the product delivered wasn't the right item. I called them immediately and they promised to retrieve the item within 8days but this item was not retrieved after 37days after I wasted a lot of my credit calling them. NOW THE ITEM HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND MY MONEY IS TRAPPED! I know they are not going to refund me because I have called their customer service several times and no one can help me get my money back.

Patience Ozokwor (Nigerian Actress)

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent can you say that the people who posted these comments are popular Nigerian celebrities?							
To what extent can you say that these Facebook posts are well written?							

Since the Facebook posts are more than one, can you say that they are many in number?	Yes	No

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I can still rely upon B**lue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by Nigerian celebrities, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
The comments of the celebrities are reliable							
The comments of the celebrities are trustworthy							
The comments of the celebrities are accurate							
The comments of the celebrities are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	female

How old are you? ……………………………….

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all

Form B2 (2)

*You have been buying products from an online company called **Blue gate** and their service has not been great. They always waste much time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will not refund you your money. Shopping on Blue Gate's website is not always a thing of joy for you and it is also boring. Today, you just logged into **Blue Gate's** Facebook page and found the following comments from a Nigerian celebrity about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Patience Ozokwor (Nigerian Actress)

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

Questions	**Extremely great extent**	**Very great extent**	**Slightly great extent**	**Neither great nor little extent**	**Slightly little extent**	**Very little extent**	**Extremely little extent**
To what extent can you say that **Patience Ozokwor** is a popular Nigerian celebrity?							
To what extent can you say that the Facebook post is well written?							

Can you say that this single Facebook post is many in number?	Yes	No

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I can still rely upon **Blue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by **Patience Ozokwor**, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are reliable							
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are trustworthy							
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are accurate							
The comments of **Patience Ozokwor** are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	**Very strongly agree**	**Strongly agree**	**Slightly agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Slightly disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Very strongly disagree**
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	female

How old are you? ………………………………….

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all

Form B3 (2)

*You have been buying products from an online company called **Blue gate** and their service has not been great. They always waste much time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will not refund you your money. Shopping on Blue Gate's website is not always a thing of joy for you and it is also boring. But today, you just logged into **Blue Gate's** Facebook page and found that the comments below were posted by some customers about the company. Please read through their comments and answer the questions that follow.*

Okereke Precious

Blue Gate is owing me since April. They deceived me and I swiped my ATM on their POS for a wrong product delivered to me. They have retrieved the product and I cannot get my money back. Fraud! Fraud!! Fraud!!!

Nweke Ndubisi

I placed an order for a product on **Blue Gate**, they supplied the wrong item 3 days after I placed the order. I noticed that the product delivered wasn't the right item. I called them immediately and they promised to retrieve the item within 8days but this item was not retrieved after 37days after I wasted a lot of my credit calling them. NOW THE ITEM HAS BEEN COLLECTED AND MY MONEY IS TRAPPED! I know they are not going to refund me because I have called their customer service several times and no one can help me get my money back.

Okafor Miracle

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

Questions	Extremely great extent	Very great extent	Slightly great extent	Neither great nor little extent	Slightly little extent	Very little extent	Extremely little extent
To what extent can you say that the people who posted these comments are popular Nigerian celebrities?							
To what extent can you say that the Facebook posts are well written?							

Since the Facebook posts are more than one, can you say that they are many in number?	Yes	No

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I can still rely upon B**lue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by other customers, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
The comments of the consumers are reliable							
The comments of the consumers are trustworthy							
The comments of the consumers are accurate							
The comments of the consumers are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	female

How old are you? ………………………………….

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all

Form B4 (2)

You have been buying products from an online company called ***Blue gate*** *and their service has been great. They have never wasted time in delivering the product you bought from them. Anytime that their product fails to meet your expectations, if you return it, they will refund you your money without delay. Shopping on Blue Gate's website has always been a thing of joy for you and full of fun as well. But today, you just logged into* ***Blue Gate's*** *Facebook page and found that the comments below were posted by another customer about the company. Please read through the comment and answer the questions that follow.*

Okafor Miracle

Blue Gate's online business practice in Nigeria lacks good customer service. Once they take your money, the delivery of the ordered product depends on luck. I ordered for a product and **Blue Gate** has been telling me stories on why the product was not delivered 3 weeks (21days) after as against the 3-8 days they promised. Please don't pay them before you receive and inspect the products you ordered. Or better still, AVOID this company.

Questions	**Extremely great extent**	**Very great extent**	**Slightly great extent**	**Neither great nor little extent**	**Slightly little extent**	**Very little extent**	**Extremely little extent**
To what extent can you say that the person who posted this comment is a popular Nigerian celebrity?							
To what extent can you say that the Facebook post is well written?							

Can you say that this single Facebook post is many in number?	Yes	No

To what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below concerning B**lue Gate**? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I can still rely upon B**lue Gate** to keep to their promises							
Blue Gate is still a trustworthy company to me							
I still believe that **Blue Gate** puts the customers' interests before the interest of the company							
I still feel safe to transact businesses with **Blue Gate**							
My relationship with **Blue Gate** is something that I'm still committed to							
I'm still willing to maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate** indefinitely							
I'm still willing to put maximum effort to ensure that I maintain my relationship with **Blue Gate**							
I am still satisfied with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I am still pleased with the services of **Blue Gate**							
I still feel that **Blue Gate's** services are favorable to me							

Based on your purchase experience described above and the above comments posted on the Facebook page of **Blue Gate** by another customer of the company, to what extent do you agree with the statements in the table below? Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
The comments of the customer are reliable							
The comments of the customer are trustworthy							
The comments of the customer are accurate							
The comments of the customer are biased							

Please kindly indicate how the statements in the table below best describe the way you think as a person. Mark (√) in the appropriate box/column.

Questions	Very strongly agree	Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree	Very strongly disagree
I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likelihood that I will have to think in-depth about something							
The idea of relying on thought so as to get my way to the top does not appeal to me							
I would rather do something that requires little thinking than something that will surely challenge my thinking ability							
I only think as hard as I have to think							
I am not the type of person that like thinking abstractly							

Please indicate your gender	Male	Female

How old are you? ………………………………

How often do you use Facebook?	Everyday	2 times a week	3-5 times a week	Once a week	Once every month	I don't use Facebook at all