11-3-2016

The Impact of Emojis and Emoticons on Online Consumer Reviews, Perceived Company Response Quality, Brand Relationship, and Purchase Intent.

Jayme Hill Hill
University of South Florida, jaymehill10@gmail.com

The Impact of Emojis and Emoticons on Online Consumer Reviews, Perceived Company Response Quality, Brand Relationship, and Purchase Intent.

by

Jayme Hill

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Mass Communication
with a concentration in Strategic Communication
Department of Mass Communication
College of Arts and Science
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Artemio Ramirez, Ph.D.
Jameson Hayes, Ph.D.
Janelle Applequist, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
November 2, 2016

Keywords: Paralinguistic Cues, electronic Word of Mouth, Purchase Intent, Brand Relationship, Customer Satisfaction, Online Consumer Review

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

Several studies have examined the use of emoji and emoticons in computer mediated communication among peers and colleges but there is yet academic research on the impact of businesses using these paralinguistic cues when responding to online consumer reviews. This research is examining the influence these paralinguistic cues have on the consumers perception of the companies quality of the response to an online consumer review, brand relationship, purchase intent.

Using an online survey, participants are asked to answer general questions about the brand, the quality of the response, brand relationship, and purchase intent after seeing a random condition of both a low and high involvement product.

Result support previous eWOM research as valence of the review had the largest impact on the consumers perception of the companies quality of the response to an online consumer review, brand relationship, purchase intent with an interesting finding where in most cases the addition of an emoji in positive valence message attributes to the strongest findings.

With the increase in emoji usage in marketing and advertising, it is important that business are utilizing these tools in effective means otherwise the use of these paralinguistic cues could negatively impact the companies quality of the response to an online consumer review, brand relationship, purchase intent.

Chapter One: Introduction

The interpersonal need to connect has inspired the creativity and evolution of communications' media and their standards. With the rise of smart phones, companies are seeing a shift in consumer service outreach and transactions that previously took place in person, are now happening on the telephone and are either tweeted or tagged in a SNS post, or on and online consumer review is posted on an e-commerce sites (Benmark & Singer, 2012; Cairns, 2016; Digital Marketer Report, 2013; Elrhoul, 2015; Huang, 2015).

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) refers to any positive or negative content generated by a consumer and posted on the internet (Lee, Rodgers& Kim, 2009). Previous eWOM research has focused on the impact of online consumer reviews (OCRs) on purchasing intent, consumer participation, brand relationships, customer satisfaction, and willingness to pay (Einwiller & Steilen, 2015; Tsao & Hsieh, 2015; Wang, Cunningham, & Eastin, 2015).Positive and negative consumer review can cause significant influence on an individual's purchase decision and perceived value of the product (Baek, Ahn, & Choi, 2012;Floh, Koller, & Zauner, 2013; Jabor & Zheung, 2014; Lee, Rodgers,& Kim, 2009; Tsao & Hsieh 2015; Walther, Liang, Ganster, Wohn, & Emington, 2012; Wang, Cunningham, & Eastin, 2015). Consumers are actively using their mobile and internet connected devices when researching products and service they are considering to purchase. In effect, these acts to eliminate cognitive dissonance, cognitive effort, and anxiety of the purchasing decision by providing independent third party

review of the product or service (López & Sicilia, 2014; Tsao & Hsieh 2015; Wang, Cunningham, & Eastin, 2015).

Consumers participate in eWOM not only to show support for a particular brand or product but also to describe how a company or product has failed. These OCRs, when properly responded to, can provide monetary benefits, an additional channel to talk with customers, foster the brand relationships, increase customer satisfaction, and influence purchase intent while decreasing their cost per resolution over more traditional media to one-sixth the cost of a call center (Benmark & Singer 2012; Cairns, 2016; Elrhoul, 2015; Huang, 2015).

Consumers now search products and companies on their phone while they are actively shopping in store or online for a particular product to ensure they are making the best purchase by examining OCR and how the company responded to the review (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004). Recently Twitter examined a large US Airline company and found that by responding directly to an OCR it produced higher consumer satisfaction than any other medium and increased the amount an individual would spend with the company by an additional $9.00 (Huang, 2015).

Although computer mediated communication (CMC) affords seemingly instant gratification, it is considered a "lean" media due to the inability to experience nonverbal cues such as: facial expressions, body movements and postures, gestures, eye contact, touch, space that are used to pursue interpersonal goals. A lack of nonverbal cues influences the perceived quality of CMC and can result in a decrease feeling of connectedness or intimacy (Gunawardena, & Zittle, 1997; Janssen, Ijsselstijn, & Westerink, 2014).

Emojis are pictorial representations of facial features, animals, and objects are included to clarify and strengthen the message between the sender and receiver (Derks, Bos, & Grumbkow, 2008; Ganster, Eimler, & Nicole, 2012; Fullwood, Quinn, Chen-Wilson, Chadwick, & Reynolds, 2015; Lo, 2008; Tossell, Kortum, Shepard, Bar-Walkow, Rahmati, & Zhong, 2012). Emoji and emoticons are now an extensive language that is proposed to have the ability to carry more authority than words alone. This language can accurately describe what a person did or ate that day but can also illustrate emotions that would have previously gone unrealized such as sarcasm, sadness, happiness, and anger.

Emojis are becoming an increasingly popular tool in CMC to increase understanding and produce a sense of intimacy that has previously lacking. Currently 87% of individuals 14 and older use emojis in their CMC with 64% of those individuals responding that they "liked or loved them" ("The Appboy Emoji Study the Rise and Rise of Emoji Marketing", 2016).In2015, the popular Emoji ‘Face with Tears of Joy’ made up 20% of all emojis used in the UK and 17% of those in the US: a sharp rise from 4% and 9% respectively in 2014. Also that year the Oxford Dictionaries named the emoji ‘Face with Tears of Joy’ as the word of the year because it was the ‘word’ that best reflected the ethos, mood, and preoccupations of 2015 (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016).

Although there is limited research on the impact of the company's engagement with OCR, Huang (2015) study of a major airline companies and their response to SNS posts did prove a relational effect on satisfaction and purchase intent based on the company just responding to the OCR. To date, there has been no research on the impact of emojis and emoticon and their effect on consumer satisfaction, brand relationship, and purchasing decisions

(Derks, Bos, &Grumbkow, 2008; Ganster, Eimler, & Nicole, 2012; Fullwood, Quinn, Chen-Wilson, Chadwick, & Reynolds, 2015; Lo, 2008; Tossell, Kortum, Shepard, Bar-Walkow, Rahmati, & Zhong, 2012). This research seeks to understand the effects by inserting positive and negative emojis and emoticons in the company's response and its' impact on the purchasing intent, brand relationship, and customer satisfaction.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Evolution of Communication

The Gutenberg Press revolutionized mass media by increasing the efficiency of message diffusion. Today, almost 600 years later, individuals have the ability to take their cell phones out, video record an event, and post anonymously on the internet for the world to see. This instant access and gratification from CMC is different from traditional media sources such as movies, newspapers, and pre-social media news outlets. Although CMC speeds up the process of information dissemination, there is often room for misinterpretation. These misunderstandings have been attributed to the lack of nonverbal communication cues that help to reinforce or provide clues to the receiver on how to interpret the message. Nonverbal communication cues include head nods, smiles, eye contacts, and physical space allow the speaker and receiver to exchange information to help regulate and process the true meaning of the communication (Walther, Loh, & Granka, 2005).

In order to communicate ideas and linguistic subtleties that are often unrealized in CMC, new communication tools are required to better exchange information and avoid unnecessary misunderstanding. On September 18, 1982 Scott Fahlman, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon University, noticed his fellow staff misinterpreting sarcasm and negative emotions in their online forum and proposed a new character specifically used to help clarify the tone. Using the available keys on his keyboard, he sent out the first smiley emoticon ":)" along

with directions for the members on how to use the emoticon and what it represents, thus providing a solution in understanding one another when communicating online.

> "I propose that the following character sequence for joke markers: :) Read it sideways. Actually, it is probably more economical to mark things that are NOT jokes, given current trends. For this, use :(" (Etc. Etc. Etc., 2012).

Scott Fahlman forever changed the human lexicon and provided a solution to the suggested lack of nonverbal cues in CMC limited the ability to communicate expressions and tone such as sarcasm in email. As emoticons gained popularity in CMC, other individuals adapted and added to the lexicon thus creating thousands of options. Now 35 years later, a simple Google search on August 15, 2015 of "emoji" produced 81,500,000 results.

Emoticon is defined by Merriam Webster as "a group of keyboard characters " :-)" that typically represents a facial expression or suggests an attitude or emotion and that is used especially in computerized communications (as e-mail)". In 2015, Merriam Webster added "Emoji" to their unabridged dictionary. The Oxford Dictionary defines Emojis as "A small digital image or icon used to express an idea, emotion, etc., in electronic communication and originated in the 1990's from the Japanese words for e 'picture' + moji 'letter, character'."

Emojis and emoticons are symbols depicting facial expressions and objects and are now widely recognized among CMC users. These characters are a substitute for nonverbal cues in CMC. One of the early precursors to emojis of today was the AOL Instant Messenger (AIM) Buddy Icons. These animated gifs, pictures, and smiley faces available in for the instant messaging program to enhance and personalize the user experience (PC Mag, 2016). Facebook found a correlation between the use of emoticons and the likelihood that a friend would comply

with the request to take down a photo increased than a request that did not include an emoticon (Ferro, 2013). In order to address the negativity and increase kindness of the online community in 2013 Facebook worked with psychologist and Pixar illustrators in order to create "Facebook Stickers" that better capture a wider range of human emotions (Ferro, 2013).These stickers are different from emoji and emoticons as these are Facebook property and can only be used on Facebook. However, even with the technology giants collaborating with psychologists and illustrators in order to create emojis that are easily recognized, the increase in the available icons has caused confusion to what the images mean and how they should be applied towards the message.

In an attempt to stay relevant to their audience many companies, organizations, and even governmental bodies, such as the White House, have used emojis in their online marketing efforts in 2015 and 2016. Some campaigns were not as successful as others were and have faced public outcry with the misuse and in poor taste. For example, Chevrolet, announcing the 2015Cruze, completed a press release using only emojis, which the public misunderstood the initial translation. After the company released the text version the next day, it was found that a baby chicken emoji was used to reference females, which the public thought was sexist. Bud Light created a marketing campaign for the Fourth of July using only emojis. However, unlike Chevy Bud Light created a custom American Flag with cheering beer glasses as the white strips of the flag, which the twitter community found to be culturally relevant given the holiday and the product category (Sorokina, 2015).

Computer Mediated Communication

Paralinguistic cues (PLC) are one-click cues used to communicate online without exchanging a word to show support, nurture relationships, and increase the efficiency of CMC (Carr, Wohn, &Hayes, 2016). PLC include liking or using an emoji to insinuate that the receiver saw the post as funny, with surprise, sadness, anger, or love on Facebook, Favoring on Twitter, +1ed on Google Plus, and up voting on Riddit. Online participants are motivated to use PLC to show literal interpretations, acknowledgement of viewing, social support and grooming, gratifications, and utilitarian purposes (Hayes, Carr, & Wohn, 2016).

Intimacy

Originally, it was thought that CMC was less intimate than face-to-face (Ftf) however; more recent research has shown this is incorrect and can be more intimate than Ftf (Walther, Loh, & Granka, 2005). As user interactivity increases, the consumers' perception of the source credibility and trust increases (Pflug, 2011; Yang & Lim, 2009).

Not only is quantity of a person's communication important, but also is the quality of connectedness or intimacy. The perceived level of intimacy influences the level of self-disclosure (Janssen, Ijsselstijn, & Westerink, 2014). Due to the limited numbers of cues CMC includes, any cues utilized hold a higher perceived value to the community of users (Walther & D'Addario, 2001). These cues include topographical markers such as repeated punctuation marks, all caps, abbreviations, acronyms, or vernacular spelling, emoticons, and emojis to enhance intimacy, influence the message and increase the likelihood of being understood

(Vandergriff, 2013). These typographical markers minimize discrepancies between the sender and the receiver and increase the perceived utility of the medium.

Much like all material that is released in CMC, emoticons and emojis are purposely chosen and deliberately placed by the sender. Garrison, Remley, Thomas, & Wierszewski (2011) found that in IM communication emoticons are placed at the end of the sentence 147 instances (49%) of the time and are used both with and without standard written English punctuation. "Alone with" is second most frequently used emoticon pattern with 20%. This can be described when an emoticon is used alone but is mentioned in the textual conversation in the previous or subsequent message. Placing the emoticon at the start of the sentence accounted for 9% of emoticon usage. An emoticon in the middle of a post was found 16% of the time. Freestanding emoticon with no textual reference was only used 6%. Emoticons used in the "freestanding" instances provide emotional, punctuation effect, and contextual information that would have previously been provided by text alone. This phenomenon demonstrates that emoticons can contain enough verbal cues to elicit a response and provide enough visual cues to convey a message that would have to been typed otherwise (Garrison, Remley, Thomas, & Wierszewski, 2011). They suggested that emoticons can function as a form of punctuation, but is not held to as strict of rules as the standard written language. They showed that emoticons are also placeholders for breaks within the sentence structure, assist with identifying tone, and response cues (Garrison, Remley, Thomas, & Wierszewski, 2011).

Electronic Word of Mouth

eWOM is estimated to be $900 billion to $1.3 trillion in value and subject to influence one third of consumer spending (Lu, Fan, & Zhou, 2016). Many companies saw 80% of their

inbound social customer service requests happen on Twitter (Cairns, 2016) with 2.5x increase in these customer service conversations on Twitter in the past two years (Elrhoul, 2015). Every month Twitter users send over 100,000 questions, complaints, and comments to major US airlines (Huang, 2015).

Consumers participate in eWOM to participate in opinion seeking or opinion giving, (López & Sicilia, 2014) for personal self-enhancement, social benefits, or advice seeing (Yap, Soetarto, & Sweeney, 2013). Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, and Gremler (2004) found that all eWOM posts were 17% consumer advocate, 34% self-interested helpers and driven by economic incentives, and 27% of the populations are true altruists who want to help the community and consumers.

Previous eWOM research has focused on four areas: why people post, the impact of eWOM on: customer satisfaction, the brand relationship, and purchase intent. This has left a deficit in research regarding the company's response to OCR and its' impact on the consumer experience.

Computer Mediated Communication Cues

Walther and D'Addario (2001) suggested that emoticons have limited impact on message interpretation. However, according to recent discoveries in contemporary research, it is being shown to have a larger impact that first thought. In 2008, Lo found that the inclusions of emoticon increased the overall level of understanding of the message and affected what the receiver thought of the sender's attitude. When CMC users experience pure text without emoticon, most people could not perceive the correct emotion and attitude intent. However,

when emoticons are included, the receiver's perceptions of the message can significantly change (Lo, 2008).

Derks, Bos, and Grumbkow (2008) research demonstrated that positive messages with a smile are more positively perceived and the author is thought to be happier than a pure message that is text only. Negative messages with a sad emoticon were perceived to be more negative than a pure negative message. When presented with a mix message where the emoticon did not match the tone of the text, the receivers emotion were more heavily influenced by the emoticon (Derks, Bos, &Grumbkow, 2008; Ganster, Eimler, & Nicole, 2012; Lo, 2008; Tossell, Kortum, Shepard, Barg-Walkow, Rahmati, & Zhong, 2012).

Emoji versus Emoticon

There are five major differences between emojis and emoticons: additional values downloaded or provided by a company; are not rotated 90 degrees; have more facial cues such as eye brows, skin tone, and teeth; the standard color is yellow with variations to depict certain emotions and ethnicities (e.g. using the color red symbolizes anger); and are enclosed within a circle. Due to these five differences, emojis might be more noticeable than emoticons (Ganster, Eimler, & Nicole, 2012).

When used in CMC, emojis more strongly influenced the perception of commitment compared with emoticons (Ganster, Eimler, & Nicole, 2012). Ganster, Eimler and Nicole (2012) also found emojis did in fact exert a strong influence on receiver's personal mood and the perception of the writer's commitment. These graphical representations of human facial features, characters, actions, and objects help to fill the void from the lack of nonverbal communication

cues in CMC (Ganster, Eimler, & Nicole, 2012; Tossell, Kortum, Shepard, Barg-Walkow, Rahmati, & Zhong, 2012).

Social Motive for Emoticon Use

Individuals pursue interpersonal goals through social interactions and use their emotions to motive, manipulate others, and to achieve their goals (Derks, Bos, & Grumbkow, 2008). Derks, Bos, & Grumbkow (2007) research found that emoticons are used more in socio-emotional contexts than in tasks-oriented situations, as it is more appropriate to show one's emotions and feelings towards a friend than towards a colleague. He also found that similar to Ftf interactions, emoticons were more widely used in positive context than a negative context (Derks, Bos, & Grumbkow, 2007). Emoticon usage is higher amongst individuals who consider themselves friends rather than strangers. The most commonly used emoticons are the smile and big smile in positive communications, meanwhile the sad, wink, and confused emoticons are the most frequently used in negative context (Derks, Bos, & Grumbkow, 2008).The tendency of positive and negative emoticon usage mimics the tendencies of Ftf nonverbal communication. The tendency and usage of emoticons and emoji accentuates the need of CMC users to fill in the inevitable gaps from the lack of nonverbal communication cues.

Company Response Quality

Previous research has shown that if a company response to eWOM there is a significant impact on the attitude towards the eWOM, brand satisfaction, brand trust, and purchase intent (Cairns, 2016; Elrhoul, 2015; Huang, 2015; Lu, Fan, & Zhou, 2016). The quality of the company response can be measured using social presence theory (SPT). SPT is the degree of person-to-person awareness, which occurs in an environment (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997), and

focus on a continuum of interpersonal emotional connection between communicators are perceived as being present, there, or real (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997; Tang, Wang, & Norman, 2013; Tu, 2002).

Consumer relationship strategies include six characteristics: courtesy, professionalism, attentiveness, knowledgeableness, preparedness, thoroughness. Knowledgeableness, preparedness, thoroughness have shown to have the highest positive impact on customer satisfaction and can thus impact the quality of the company response (Froehle, 2006; Lu, Fan, & Zhou, 2016) and can account for 60% of variance of the audience satisfaction (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997).

Brand Relationship

Brand relationship is a combination of customer satisfaction and trust with the company. Satisfaction is how a consumer views a particular activities, services, or products to meet or surpass their standards. Brand Trust is built though multiple interactions with the brand an extended period. Consumer brand relationship has been significantly and positively associated with attitude towards sharing viral advertising messages (Hayes& King, 2014; Lockie,Waiguny, & Gabner-Krauter, 2015;Walther, Kashian, Jang, & Shin, 2015; Shan, &King, 2015) and increase in customer loyalty, advocacy, and amount willing to pay (Huang, 2015; Pawle & Cooper 2006). The perceived trustworthiness of eWOM, not to be confused with brand trust, has a positive effect on the consumer's decision-making process and the brand relationship (Benmark & Singer, 2012; Cairns, 2016; López & Sicilia, 2014).

Consumer expects that a brand will respond to their SNS post. When a company responds to an OCR the average response time to an OCR on twitter is 1 hour and 24 minutes to

over 8 hours when looking at Facebook (Einwiller & Steilen, 2015; Elrhoul, 2015). The speed in which a company responded was not found to be important and did not affect the customer satisfaction. However what was found is that if the consumer did not receive a response from the company, 82% of consumer will likely experience a decrease in their customer satisfaction and are unlikely to recommend the brand following unfriendly service (Elrhoul, 2015). When consumers have friendly customer service interactions with a brand they are, 25% more likely to be satisfied and 77% of consumers are likely to recommend a brand after a positive and personalized customer service interaction (Elrhoul, 2015). Eighty-two percent of consumer who received a response from an airline on Twitter, reported sharing their positive experience with other while traditional channels for customer service (phone, email, chat, in-person, other social media), while fewer than half (44%) shared their positive experience with someone else (Huang, 2015).

Responding to SNS posts drives higher satisfaction than other customer service channels. Those who Tweeted and received a response reported higher satisfaction scores compared to those who reached out via traditional channels such as phone or in-person (Huang, 2015). Benmark and Singer (2012) found that 30% of social-media users prefer social networking sites to phoning customer service. The use of SNS in company outreach is not exclusive to millennial and Generation X, 17% of users over-65 prefer SNS it to the telephone (Benmark & Singer, 2012).

Customer service is a business cost ever in every industry, but digital methods of communicating are reducing these costs (Benmark & Singer, 2012; Cairns, 2016). A telephone call has been shown to cost at least $6 per transaction while e-mail care costs $2.50 to $5 per

interaction (Benmark & Singer, 2012). Companies are seeing that as technology use increase the cost per interaction decreases, but the real benefit is to the customer experience and its impact on the brand relationship.

Purchase Intent

The valence of the electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and OCR influences the purchase intent (Lee, Rodgers, & Kim, 2009; Wang, Cunningham, & Eastin, 2015). Extremely negative and moderately negative valence has a significant impact on attitude toward the brand (Lee, Rodgers, & Kim, 2009). Not all OCR hold the same value. When examining source credibility Tsao and Hsieh (2015) found that the credibility of eWOM had a more significant impact on credence goods than search goods. Location of the OCR also influences the credibility of the review. Reviews on independent e-commerce platforms such as Amazon have a greater impact on the product, eWOM credibility, and purchase intent than if the eWOM was present on a corporate websites (Baek, Ahn, &Choi 2012; Lee, Rodgers,& Kim, 2009; Tsao & Hsieh 2015; Walther, Liang, Ganster, Wohn, & Emington, 2012).

A positive review has the greatest impact on consumer attitudes towards the review, attitudes towards the product and purchase intent (Floh, Koller, & Zauner, 2013; Wang, Cunningham, & Eastin, 2015; Walther, Liang, Ganster, Wohn, & Emington, 2012). Reviews that discuss the benefits hold the greatest positive effect on source credibility; consumer's product attitudes, purchase intentions, and a greater recall of the OCR over attribute focused reviews (Tsao & Hsieh, 2015; Wang, Cunningham, & Eastin, 2015).

OCR has been shown to have a significant impact on sales (Ho-Dac, Carson, & Moore, 2013; Tsao & Hsieh 2015; Walther, Liang, Ganster, Wohn, & Emington, 2012). When

examining the impact that OCR has on referral products, for every 10 additional OCR the secondary product has more than the focal product there is .7-3.5% increase in sales (Jabor & Zheung, 2014). The way that company responses to OCR also influences the purchase intent. In a Twitter case study, Huang (2015) found that if the airline response times were less than 6 minutes, the customer was willing to pay almost $20 more for that airline in the future. By contrast, if the response was over an hour, the amount dropped to $2.33.

Theories

Social Presence Theory

SPT argues that the cues immediately available in CMC assist interaction and communication (Tu, 2002), and affinity, commitment, and attention (Nardi, 2005). Social presence is enhances interaction among the participating students. PLC such as text speak increase output speed and reduces wait time in CMC. PLC include the use of acronyms, emoticons, shortening/contractions, unconventional spelling and the reduction in weight time makes up for lack of nonverbal cues (Fullwood, Quinn, Chen-Wilson, Chadwick, & Reynolds, 2015; Tang, Wang, & Norman, 2013). Users of PLCs are perceived as having a higher self-esteem, higher conscientious, higher openness, lower emotional instability (Fullwood, Quinn, Chen-Wilson, Chadwick, & Reynolds, 2015). CMC users employ PLC intentionally to enhance socio-emotional communication and can account for 60% of variance of the audience satisfaction (Gunawardena & Zittle, 1997).

Social Information Processing Theory

Social information processing theory (SIP) states that as users gain experience they learn and adapt the social norms and skills required to present accurately their desired message through multiple interactions (Walther, 1992). In the literature, this is described as linguistic

variations which includes but is not limited to typographic formatting, hyperbole, understatement, rhetorical questions, sarcasm, and jocularity, exclamations points, question marks, ellipses, hyphen, parenthesis, valence of statement, clarifications, and non-linguistic statements (Walther, Loh, & Ganka, 2005; Whalen, Pexman, & Gill, 2009). As users acquire the required skills needed for the particular medium they begin to utilize the environment to its full potential and the inadequacies once felt by the lack of traditional nonverbal cues are fulfilled by the PLC.

Media Richness Theory

In 1982, Hiltz and Turoff stated, "computer conferees also find ways to overcome the lack of personal contact. They have even devised ways of sending computerized screams, hugs and kisses" (cited in Pollack, 1982). Media richness theory states the available options a medium offers their users to communicate affects their ability to transmit information correctly and increases a greater perceived utility for the user (Nardi, 2005). Communication fallout can happen when the sender assumes that recipient will understand the intended message but does not. This inefficiency is hazardous and cause additional communication transactions thus decreasing the perceived utility of the medium (Whalen, Pexman, & Gill, 2009). CMC usage is continuing to increase and, regardless of the media used, users find ways to encourage the dialogue and accomplish their objectives whether it is professionally or for personal gains with the inclusion of emoticons and emojis.

This research is looking to examine how to improve when responding to OCR in order to promote a positive impact on the company response quality, brand relationship, and purchase intent. Based on SPT, SIP, and media richness theory when individuals use PLC will assist

companies in creating a rich environment where consumers feel appreciated and in turn increase the satisfaction of the exchange (Lo, 2008; Nardi, 2005; Tu, 2002). Previously, these theories have been applied to online communicates such as chat room, SNS, and on-line learning modules, and have not been applied to e-commerce sites and specifically used when examining the impact of a company's response to OCR. Currently 77% smart phone users use emojis, companies are also see a 609% year over year growth of utilizing emojis in campaigns ("The Appboy Emoji Study the Rise and Rise of Emoji Marketing", 2016). This research is interest in the immediate impression PLC can have on the business-to-customer relationship. So by applying the SPT and Media Richness Theory lenses this research hopes to provide a better understand of how consumers are immediately impacted by the use of PLC when a company response to an OCR.

Research Question

By positively impacting customer satisfaction the probability of the company receiving additional revenue from both the original reviewer and the third party who is entering the purchasing process increases (Cairns, 2016; Wang, Cunningham, Eastin, 2015; Walther, Liang, Ganster, Wohn, & Emington, 2012; Tsao, Hsieh 2015). In order to communicate effectively intimacy and immediacy must be enhanced in order to create a positive experience where the customer will want to post or comment online about your service. Emojis and emoticons have been shown to positively influence the outcomes of desired social outcomes and reduce the perceived psychological distance among peers by increasing the intimacy and immediacy (Ganster, Eimler, &Nicole 2012; Hayes, Carr, & Wohn, 2016; Janssen, Ijsselstijn, & Westerink, 2014; Lo, 2008). Current marketing and advertising publications suggest and campaigns are

utilizing emojis, but are practitioners using these PLCs in an effective manner or are they hurting their brand? Due to the limited academic research on emoji and emoticons impact on the consumer experience, this research is guided by the following questions:

Research Question 1: Does the use of an emoji or emoticon impact the company response quality when used in a online consumer review?

Research Question 2: Does the use of an emoji or emoticon impact the brand relationship when used in a online consumer review?

Research Question 3: Does the use of an emoji or emoticon impact the purchase intention when used in a online consumer review?

Chapter Three: Method

A 2 (strong/weak brand relationship) x 2 (positive/negative valence) x 3 (emoji/emoticon/pure text) online experiment was conducted to investigate the research questions (see Figure 1). Real brands from two different product categories (high risk/low risk) were employed to increase external validity. OCR created from actual consumer reviews posted on popular e-Commerce sites were used for each product category. The use of e-Commerce sites for stimuli development was chosen in order to evaluate the individual's reactions to company responding to OCR, as they are active within purchasing process. Amazon.com was chosen as the stimuli environment for two reasons. Currently 35% of adults use Amazon as the primary location to begin holiday shopping when they do not have a specific gift in mind (Walters, 2016). The experiment was administered using Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk:www.Mturk.com). Sessions lasted approximately 30 minutes.

Table 1

2x2x3 Condition Stimuli

Computers					Chocolate Candy				
Condition	**Brand Relationship**	**Message Valence**	**Paralinguistic Cue**	**Brand**	**Condition**	**Brand Relationship**	**Message Valence**	**Paralinguistic Cue**	**Brand**
1	Strong	Positive	Emoji	Apple	13	Strong	Positive	Emoji	Hershey
2	Strong	Positive	Emoticon	Apple	14	Strong	Positive	Emoticon	Hershey
3	Strong	Positive	Pure	Apple	15	Strong	Positive	Pure	Hershey
4	Strong	Negative	Emoji	Apple	16	Strong	Negative	Emoji	Hershey
5	Strong	Negative	Emoticon	Apple	17	Strong	Negative	Emoticon	Hershey
6	Strong	Negative	Pure	Apple	18	Strong	Negative	Pure	Hershey
7	Weak	Positive	Emoji	Clevo	19	Weak	Positive	Emoji	Chase Candy
8	Weak	Positive	Emoticon	Clevo	20	Weak	Positive	Emoticon	Chase Candy
9	Weak	Positive	Pure	Clevo	21	Weak	Positive	Pure	Chase Candy
10	Weak	Negative	Emoji	Clevo	22	Weak	Negative	Emoji	Chase Candy
11	Weak	Negative	Emoticon	Clevo	23	Weak	Negative	Emoticon	Chase Candy
12	Weak	Negative	Pure	Clevo	24	Weak	Negative	Pure	Chase Candy

Stimuli Development

Following Hayes and King (2014) computers and chocolate candy were used as the high and low risk product categories due to the difference in financial and time investment when purchasing a product in these categories. The reviews for the stimuli were modified from the top rated online consumer reviews for each product from Amazon.com. The reviews were edited to have a similar word count and to have either a positive or a negative valence. The reviews were identical for each product category with the exception of brand identification occurring throughout the post and later identified in the company's response (see Appendix 1). An androgynous screen name was used to identify the original OCR to further reduce age and sex biases. A screenshot showing an Amazon URL bar of a real product for each corresponding brand was used in order to increase the authenticity of the experience.

In order to create an authentic consumer shopping experience the stimuli was designed to mimic the Amazon.com user interface. In addition to the URL bar with correct product destination code, the review's placement, graphics, font stylization, and colors were used to mimic a live interaction between a consumer post and company's response.

Using undergraduates at a southeastern state university an online pretest was completed to measure the message's valence strength (see Appendix 1). In order to mitigate any bias towards the review based on brand loyalty, brands with low brand relationship were used. For chocolate candy Response 1 was chosen for the negative OCR (M = 3.78) and Response 4 was chosen for the positive (M= 4.84) due to their significantly differences. Computers Response 5 was chosen for the negative review (M= 3.61) and Response 7 was chosen for the positive (M= 4.41). Although the computers review has less of a significant difference than the chocolate

Candy stimuli, a t (389) = 3.077 provided a significant effect size that we continued forward with the stimuli.

This study also followed Hayes and King (2014) strong-weak brand pairings. For high involvement product categories the computer manufacturer, Apple (M=4.77) and Clevo (M=2.67) were identified as an appropriate strong-weak brand pairing (t (111) = 16.397, p < .001). After a secondary test, Clevo instead of Acer for the weak brand relationship company for computers. For low involvement product categories, the chocolate manufactures Chase Candy Company (M=3.81; t (62) =-8.499, p <.001) and Hersey (M=5.52) were identified as an appropriate strong- weak brand pairing (t (62) =-8.499, p <.001).

Design and Participants

A national sample of users ages 18-34 (M=29, N=390, 66.7% female) were recruited to participate in a 2 (brand relationship strength) x 2 (strong/weak brand relationship) x 3 (emoji/emoticon/pure text) online experiment. Participants were drawn from MTurk's participant pool and paid a $0.80 cash incentive based upon session length. In order to qualify to continue with the survey, participates indicated that had used product reviews to research a product online within the last three years or more.

Procedure

This study will follow the Hayes and King (2014) design. Participants were directed to the online questionnaire after opting into the study. Following qualifying questions, 7-point scales were used to measure two control variables: brand attitude and product involvement for computer and candy categories. A 7-point Likert scales (1= *dislike,* 7= *like*) was used to measure Brand Attitude (Bat). A 7-point semantic differential scale was used to measure product involvement (Pinv). Followed by two rounds where the participant answered questions

regarding a specific categories Brand Relationship Strength (BRS), reviewed the OCR stimuli, Social Presence of the company response quality (CRQ) (Tu&2002; Lu, Fan, &Zhou, 2016), and Purchase Intent (Pint) (see Table 2). All scales were updated to suit the needs of this study and current Social Media trends. BRS was measured twice during each round as this research is hoping to identify emoji and emoticons impact on BRS. Lastly, general demographic, online purchasing behavior, and social media, emoji, and emoticon usage was collected (see Appendix 2 for questionnaire and Appendix 3 for condition stimuli).

TABLE 2

Stimuli Randomization Procedure

Product Category	Initial Brand Assignment	Second Brand Assignment
Computers	Apple	Hershey
		Chase Candy
	Clevo	Hershey
		Chase Candy
Chocolate Candy	Hershey	Apple
		Clevo
	Chase Candy	Apple
		Clevo

In each category, participants first answered questions to measure the product category Brand Relationship Strength (BRS), if they have ever owned product from either brand, the quality of the company response, and purchase intent. BRS is calculated using a composite of brand trust and brand satisfaction; (see Table 3) for major factor scales and alphas. Since brand relationships develop by establishing trust and consumer satisfaction over a numerous interactions, real brands are necessary for strong and weak relationships manipulations.

TABLE 3

Survey Questions Reliability

	Computer		Candy	
	Alpha	Mean	Alpha	Mean
Company Response Quality	**0.912**	**5.088**	**0.933**	**5.002**
Company Response Quality 1	0.888	4.99	0.918	4.89
Company Response Quality 2	0.9	4.95	0.92	4.82
Company Response Quality 3	0.927	5.03	0.937	4.98
Company Response Quality 4	0.891	5.18	0.915	5.05
Company Response Quality 5	0.882	5.25	0.915	5.16
Company Response Quality 6	0.885	5.13	0.915	5.11
Brand Relationship				
Satisfaction	**0.943**	**3.629**	**0.947**	**3.912**
Satisfaction 2		3.6		3.92
Satisfaction 3		3.66		3.9
Trust	**0.956**	**3.718**	**0.952**	**3.762**
Trust 1	0.946	3.56	0.948	3.587
Trust 2	0.946	3.85	0.94	3.851
Trust 3	0.947	3.78	0.938	3.826
Trust 4	0.945	3.68	0.942	3.587
Trust 5	0.954	3.69	0.945	3.892
Trust 6	0.945	3.74	0.943	3.826
Purchase Intent	**0.954**	**3.957**	**0.962**	**4.418**
Purchase Intent 1	0.907	3.96	0.929	4.4
Purchase Intent 2	0.952	4.24	0.956	4.6
Purchase Intent 3	0.94	3.67	0.947	4.25

The participant (was then shown) one of twelve randomly assigned stimuli that featured a consumer review and a company response for either a computer or candy company. The stimuli featured either positive or negative valence user-generated review. This research is specifically designed to analyze the impact, emoji or emoticon has on the consumer's interpretation of the message, and thus in order to manipulate their impact a standardized company response that

matched the valence of the OCR was used. If an emoji or emoticon was used in the company's response, the valence of the PLC matched the valence of the OCR, (see Table 4). Reviews without any PLC are used as the control.

TABLE 4

Stimuli PLC structure

Paralinguistic Cue	Positive Consumer Review	Negative Consumer Review
Pure Text (Control)	Positive Company Response + Pure Text/ words only	Negative Company Response + Pure Text/ words only
Emoji	Positive Company Response + 😊 happy emoji	Negative Company Response + 😔sad emoji
Emoticon	Positive Company Response + :) happy emoticon	Negative Company Response + : (sad emoticon

Chapter Four: Analysis and Results

Manipulation Checks

Paired sample t test were used to check the BRS manipulations and appropriate significant difference were present. For computers, Apples BRS (*M*= 4.412) was significantly higher than Clevo's BRS (*M*=2.2.248;*t* (389) = 24.388, *p*< .001)for candy, Hershey's BRS (*M*= 4.237) was significantly higher than Chase's BRS (*M*=2.206; *t* (358) = 24.731, *p* < .001). Manipulation was successful.

An independent-samples t-test was used to check the Valence manipulations and appropriate significant difference were present. For computers, Positive Valence (*M*= 6.29; *SD*= 1.020) was significantly higher than Negative Valence (*M*=2.02; *SD*= 1.533) conditions; *t* (388) = 32.355, *p*< .000) . For candy, there was a significant difference in the scores for Positive Valence (*M*= 6.34; *SD*= .998) and Negative Valence (*M*=2.29; *SD*= 1.602) conditions; *t* (387) = 29.847, *p*< .001). Manipulation was successful.

An independent-samples t-test was used to check the PLC manipulations to see if participants could accurately recall if the company response include a PLC (emoji, emoticon, or pure text. For computers, participants actually recalled emojis 62%, Emoticons 43.1%, and pure text 86.3%. (See Table 5 for computers and Table 6 for candy). For candy, participants actually recalled emojis 91.3%, Emoticons 74.8%, and pure text 89.3%. Manipulation had mixed results.

TABLE 5

PLC awareness for computers

Awareness PLC Crosstabulation for Computers

			PLC Condition			
			Emoji	Emoticon	Pure	Total
Awareness Recall Choice	Emoji	Count	80	8	41	129
		% within Public Display	62.00%	6.20%	31.80%	100.00%
	Emoticon	Count	5	56	69	130
		% within Public Display	3.80%	43.10%	53.10%	100.00%
	Pure	Count	9	9	113	131
		% within Public Display	6.90%	6.90%	86.30%	100.00%
Total		Count	94	73	223	390
		% within Public Display	24.10%	18.70%	57.20%	100.00%

TABLE 6

PLC awareness for candy

Awareness PLC Crosstabulation for Candy

			PLC Condition			
			Emoji	Emoticon	Pure	Total
Awareness Recall Choice	Emoji	Count	116	4	7	127
		% within Public Display	91.30%	3.10%	5.50%	100.00%
	Emoticon	Count	7	98	26	131
		% within Public Display	5.30%	74.80%	19.80%	100.00%
	Pure	Count	7	7	117	131
		% within Public Display	5.30%	5.30%	89.30%	100.00%
Total		Count	130	109	150	389
		% within Public Display	33.40%	28.00%	38.60%	100.00%

Research Questions Analysis

For each research question, the categories were analyzed individually and then compared by examining a two (valence) by three (PLC) Analysis of Variance (ANOVAs).

Research question 1 asks if the use of an emoji or emoticon impact the company response quality to the review.

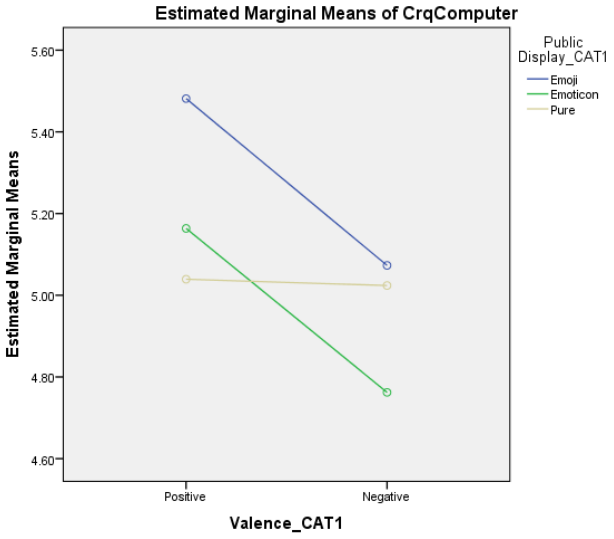
The results of the ANOVA indications a significant main effect for Valence, for computers$F$= (1, 390) = 4.889,p = .028. Participants in the positive valence condition (M=5.238;

SD= 1.119) reported significantly greater company response quality than the negative valence condition (*M*=4.938; *SD*= 1.324) . The results also showed both PLC,*F*= (1, 390) = 2.337,*p* = .098, and the 2-way interaction *F*= (1, 390) = 1.100, *p* = .334), failed to achieve statistical significance.

Positive valence messages with emojis produced the most significant positive influence CQR (*M*= 5.482; *SD*= .917).Negative valence messages with emoticons produced the most significant negative impact on CQR (*M*= 4.762; *SD*= .1.443).

Only emojis with positive valence response or pure text suggested.

Figure 1



Mean CQR scores for computers by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Table 7

Between Subject Effects for computers by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Between Subject Effects for Computer CQR

Source	df	F	p
PLC	2	2.337	0.098
Valence	1	4.889	0.028
PLC * Valence	2	1.100	0.334

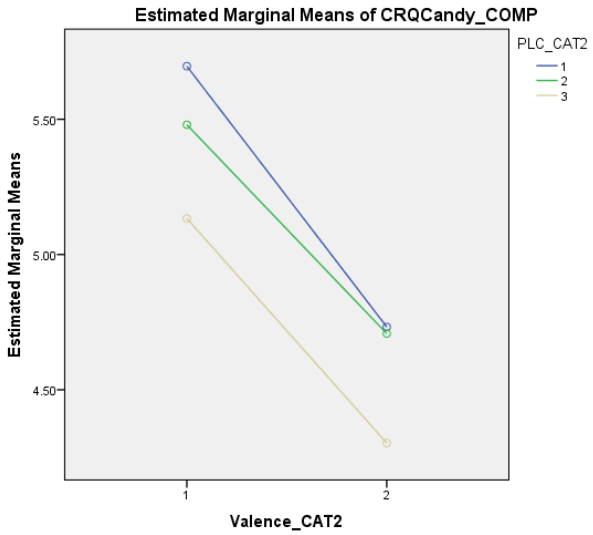
Significant such that p < .05.

The results of the ANOVA indications a significant main effect for Valence *F*= (1, 390) = 7.754, *p* = .000 and PLC*F*= (1, 390) = 5.828, *p* = .003) for candy. Participants in the positive valence condition (*M*=5.433; *SD*= 1.157) reported significantly greater company response quality than the negative valence condition (*M*=4.580; *SD*= 1.306) . The results also showed the 2-way interaction*F*= (1, 390) = .209, *p* = .811, failed to achieve statistical significance.

Positive valence messages with emojis produced the most significant positive influence CQR (*M*= 5.697; *SD*= 1.104). Negative valence messages with pure text produced the most significant negative influence CQR (*M*= 4.303; *SD*= 1.498).

Emojis for positive message are suggested. PLC are not suggest for negative valence message.

Figure 2



Mean CQR scores for candy by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Table 8

Between Subject Effects for candy by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Between Subject Effects for Candy CQR

Source	df	F	p
Valence	1	47.754	0.000
PLC	2	5.828	0.003
Valence* PLC	2	0.209	0.811

Significant such that $p < .05$.

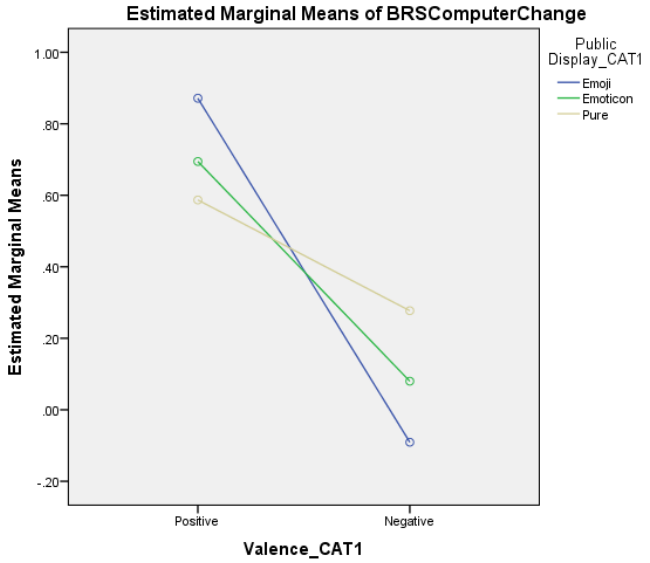
Research Question 2 asks if the use of an emoji or emoticon impacts the brand relationship when used in a eWOM consumer review. The participants completed the BRS questions twice during each condition, once before and once after being exposed to the stimuli. The analysis below represents the change in the BRS score after the individual was exposed to the stimuli.

The results of the ANOVA indications a significant main effect for Valence F= (1, 390) = 34.90, p = .000 and the 2-way interaction F= (1, 390) = 3.151, p = .044 for computers. Participants in the positive valence condition (M=.22; SD= 1.182) reported significantly greater in the change of brand relationship than the negative valence condition (M=.0937; SD= .893) . The results also showed PLC,F= (1, 390) = .074, p = .929 failed to achieve statistical significance.

Positive valence messages with emojis produced the most significant positive influence on the change in BRS (M=.8715; SD= 1.220). Negative valence messages with emojis produced the most significant negative influence on the change in BRS (M= -.907; SD= .729).

Emojis and emoticon with are suggested positive message only.

Figure 3



Mean Change in Mean BRS scores for computer by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Table 9

Between Subject Effects for computer by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Between Subject Effects for Computer BRS

Source	df	F	p
Valence	1	34.905	0.000
PLC	2	0.074	0.929
Valence * PLC	2	3.151	0.044

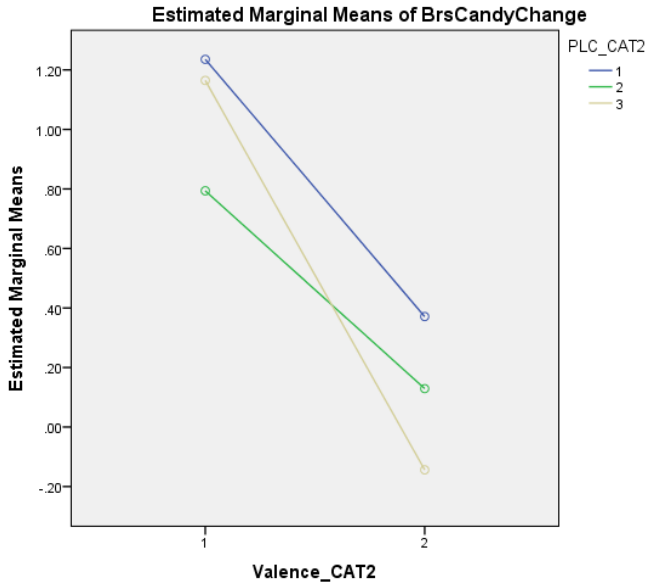
Significant such that p < .05.

The results of the ANOVA indications a significant main effect for Valence *F*= (1, 390) = 49.246, *p* = .000and PLC,*F*= (1, 390) = 2.505, *p* = .083, for candy. Participants in the positive valence condition (*M*=1.060; *SD*= 1.430) reported significantly greater change in brand relationship than the negative valence condition (*M*=1.234; *SD*= 1.196). The results also showed the 2-way interaction *F*= (1, 390) = 1.998, *p* = .137, failed to achieve statistical significance.

Positive valence messages with emojis produced the most significant positive influence on the change in BRS (*M*=1.234; *SD*= 1.558) Negative valence messages with pure text produced the most significant negative influence on the change in BRS (*M*=-.144; *SD*= 1.262).

Emojis with are suggested for both positive and negative valence message whereas pure text is not recommended for negative valence messages and any PLC should be included.

Figure 3



Mean Change in Mean BRS scores for candy by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Table 10

Between Subject Effects for candy by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Between Subject Effects for Candy BRS

Source	df	F	p
Valence	**1**	**49.246**	**0.000**
PLC	**2**	**2.505**	**0.083**
Valence * PLC	**2**	**1.998**	**0.137**

Significant such that p < .05.

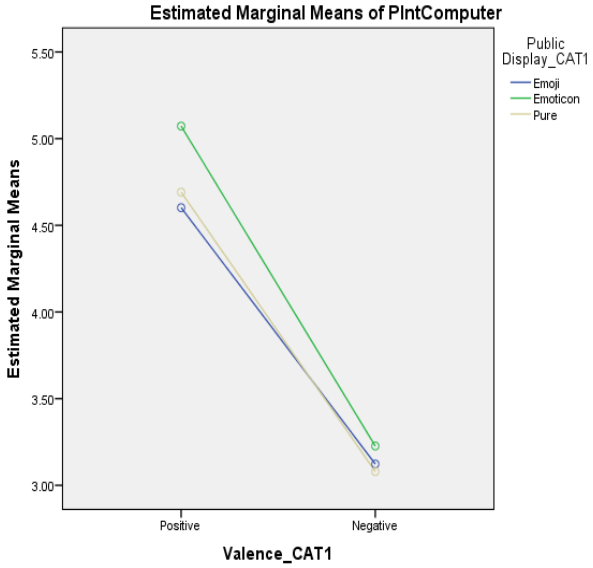
Research Question 3 asked is the use of an emoji or emoticon impact the purchase intention when used in a eWOM consumer review.

The results of the ANOVA indications a significant main effect for Valence, for computers F= (1, 390) = 85.204, p = .000. Participants in the positive valence condition (M=4.766; SD= 1.562) reported significantly greater purchase intent than the negative valence condition (M=3.149; SD= 1.912) . The results also showed both PLC,F= (1, 390) = 1.063, p = .346, and the 2-way interaction F= (1, 390) = .359, p = .699, failed to achieve statistical significance.

Positive valence messages with emoticon produced the most significant positive influence on purchase intent (M=5.073; SD= 1.445). Negative valence messages with pure text produced the most significant negative influence on purchase intent (M=3.079; SD= 1.262).

Emoticon with are suggested for positive valence message whereas emojis and not recommended for any messages as their addition produced no additional changes over pure text alone.

Figure 4



Mean Change in Mean Purchase intent scores for computer by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Table 10

Between Subject Effects for computer by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Between Subject Effects for Computer PInt

Source	df	F	Sig.
Valence	1	85.204	0.000
PLC	2	1.063	0.346
Valence * PLC	2	0.359	0.699

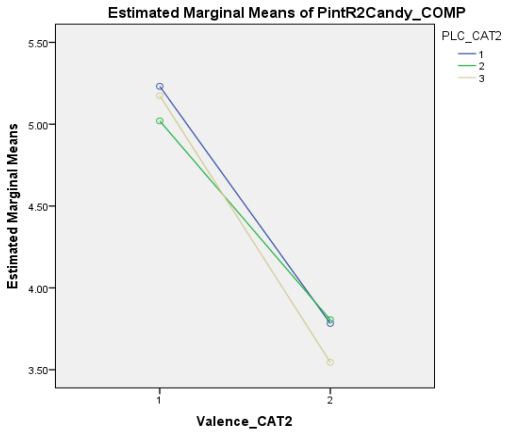
Significant such that p < .05.

The results of the ANOVA indications a significant main effect for Valence, for candy *F*= (1, 390) = 66.620, *p* = .000. Participants in the positive valence condition (*M*=5.140; *SD*= 1.582) reported significantly greater purchase intent than the negative valence condition (*M*=3.711; *SD*= 1.854). The results also showed both PLC, *F*= (1, 390) = .240, *p* =.787, and the 2-way interaction *F*= (1, 390) = .471, *p* = .625, failed to achieve statistical significance.

Positive valence messages with emojis produced the most significant positive influence on purchase intent (*M*=5.231; *SD*= 1.721). Negative valence messages with pure text produced the most significant negative influence on purchase intent (*M*=3.546; *SD*= 2.067).

Emojis with are suggested for both positive and negative valence message whereas pure text is not recommended for negative valence messages and any PLC should be included.

Figure 5



Mean Change in Pint scores for candy by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Table 11

Between Subject Effects for candy by comparing PLC and Valence of the OCR

Betweeen Subject Effects for Candy Pint

Source	df	F	p
Valence	1	66.620	0.000
PLC	2	0.240	0.787
Valence * PLC	2	0.471	0.625

Significant such that p < .05.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The primary research goal for this thesis was to provide a greater understanding the customer online shopping experience and the impact of online consumer review. Specifically, this research explored the influence paralinguistic cues when used by the company in response to an online consumer review and their impact on the company response quality, brand relationship, and purchase intent. The result offer evidence to support two overarching findings. For all categories and regardless of the brand relationship strength the valence of the consumer review provide a greater impact on the overall customer experience. Even though the PLC recall was low, all categories and regardless of the brand relationship strength positive emojis in conjunctions with positive valence reviews produces the strongest mean scores for all research questions. The findings of this research reinforce previous findings (Lee, Rodgers, &Kim, 2009; Wang, Cunningham, & Eastin, 2015).

For both high and low involvement products, the valence had the most significant impact on the company response quality. However, the finding for candy also illustrated that the use of paralinguistic cues affected the company response quality. Considering that high involvement products require a higher investment, consumers may require a more serious response from the campaign. By comparing the mean scores by valence and PLC, for both categories Positive OCR with an emoji produced the strongest CQR scores but low involvement category candy also saw an improvement in the CQR reviews when an emoticon was included matching the valence as well. Previous research has not yet to review how SPT affects the CRQ with OCR however,

this current research illustrates that the additional of the PLC impacted the SPT and aided in the improvement of the overall CQR scores for both high and low involvement categories (Nardi, 2005; Tu, 2002).

For both high and low involvement products the valence had the most significant impact on the change is brand relationship strength from pre to post stimuli. Computers also illustrated a correlation by examining the interaction between the valence and PLC on the change in brand relationship strength. Candy also illustrated a PLC had a significant impact on the change in brand relationship strength. Positive OCR with an emoji produced the strong positive change in BRS for both categories. Emojis with positive valence message are suggested for both product categories. Previous research has not yet reviewed how BRS with OCR.

For both high and low involvement products, the valence had the most significant impact on the purchase intent which reinforces previous findings (Ho-Dac, Carson, & Moore, 2013; Tsao & Hsieh 2015; Walther, Liang, Ganster, Wohn, & Emington, 2012). Using PLC with a positive OCR are suggested for both categories. However, findings suggest that computers should use emoticons whereas candy should use an emoji. The finding also suggest that candy and computer company should also include a PLC in negative OCR as either an emoji or emoticon produced a more positive change in purchase intent to pure text alone.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

Emoji and emoticon are a new opportunity for companies and consumers with little research currently available. This paper provides a foundation for findings in an otherwise unexamined area of online consumer reviews and the impact of the company response.

Managerial implications from this paper illustrate some guiding principles for emoji and

emoticon usage with the current customer communication strategies. Based on the results of this thesis, companies should carefully consider the product involvement and category, audience, the valence of the message prior to utilizing any PLC when responding to OCR. Due to the sensitive nature of OCR, the miss use of PLC have shown to negatively impact the company response quality, brand relationship strength, and purchase intent. Although there has been some discrepancy found between high and low involvement products, this paper suggests that only emojis should be used in positive valence OCR and pure text messages for negative OCR. The discrepancies found in this thesis might be attributed to the level of involvement that the two product categories require and the marketing managers should consider how the individual and the online community might respond to how they respond.

Theoretical implications suggest that regardless of the product category or brand strength, valence of the OCR had the most significant impact on the perceived company response quality, change in brand relationship strength, and purchase intent. These results reinforce previous findings of eWOM and the customer experience. Although PLC recall was low and did not provide a direct impact on the consumer experience, change in brand relationship strength, or purchase intent, OCRs with a positive valence and an emoji present tended to influence the highest rated levels of company response quality, change in brand relationship strength, and purchase intent. These conclusions present an interesting theoretical implication and suggest an unrealized influence on the consumer experience, change in brand relationship strength, and purchase intent. This provides an interesting opportunity for academic professionals to understand the possible relationship effects and influence of emojis and emoticons and their impact on purchasing habits of on and offline consumers.

Additional theoretical implications include specific instances where PLC should and should not be used based on the particular goal of the communication. This paper specifically looked at OCR, which have a very different objective then a viralbility or brand awareness campaign. This can be an important distinction of when and how PLC contributes positively and negatively to the CMC.

Finally, this research hopes to begin presenting foundational learning to a previously un-researched area of eWOM and CMC by specifically looking at how a company influences the consumers' perception of OCR by their response. Previous research has only focused on the why individuals post OCR, and consumer-to-consumer effect of OCR with their impact on brand relationship strength, purchasing intent.

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

This thesis research begins to understand the impact of a company's role in a consumer's perception of OCR on purchasing behavior. Due to the lack of previous direct research, the ability to perform future research is limitless.

The current research has several limitations that restrict the ability to generalize these findings to other products and services. Although the proportion of females to males was permissible for the purpose of this study, utilizing a more representative gender breakdown of the public in future research will be ideal.

There are also categorical and media limitations presented in this paper. This paper focused on computers and candy as the high and low involvement products. Future research should examine experiential service such as hotels or home services and other categories of

consumer goods such as insurance, automobiles, and household consumer goods. In addition, this research specifically looked at OCR as the method of customer communication. Responding to an OCR requires different key performance indicator (KPI) benchmarks then a brand awareness or viral marketing campaign. The findings presented in this paper are not applicable to all marketing and advertising strategies and further research should look at how emoji and emoticons impact the consumer experience, brand relationship, and purchase intent for other strategies and KPI initiatives.

This research used Amazon.com for the stimuli. Given Amazon's ability for independent third party reviews, consumers find these to be more trustworthy than reviews found on a company's website. Another area of future research would be to review site bias and examining how personal or corporate SNS or e-commerce sites such as Amazon and eBay can influence the reviews. In addition to site bias, by examining who is the spokesperson for the company or service; i.e., a spokesperson for the brand, a customer service representative for the company, or a customer service representative for the e-commerce site and that impact could provide some interesting results.

This research aimed to assess specifically at the impact emoji and emoticons have on the review, and in order to magnify the PLC a canned company response was utilized. Future research should review how the different styles and degrees of personalization influence the perceived quality of the review.

Lastly, there is not currently a style guide on how a particular character of an emoji should appear. It is up to the manufacture of the product or the developer of the web platform to design the particular artwork that will display so what might seem as an emoji with a big smile

might show as a face of worry depending on the device. By understanding how the miss-communication of emotion that is displayed by the users' lack of understanding of the icon could also allow for interesting results.

References

Alba, J. W., & Hutchinson, J. W. (1987).Dimensions of Consumer Expertise. *Journal of Consumer Research, 13(4),* 411.doi:10.1086/209080

Baek, H., Ahn, J., & Choi, Y. (2012). Helpfulness of Online Consumer Reviews: Readers' Objectives and Review Cues. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce, 17(2),* 99-126. doi:10.2753/jec1086-4415170204

Benmark, G., & Singer, D. (2012). Turn Customer Care into "Social Care" to Break away from the Competition. Retrieved June 8, 2016, from https://hbr.org/2012/12/turn-customer-care-into-social/

Cairns, I. (2016, February 18). Making customer service even better on Twitter [Web log post]. Retrieved June 8, 2016, from https://blog.twitter.com/2016/making-customer-service-even-better-on-twitter

Carr, C. T., Wohn, D. Y., & Hayes, R. A. (2016). As social support: Relational closeness, automaticity, and interpreting social support from paralinguistic digital affordances in social media. *Computers in Human Behavior, 62,* 385-393. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.087

Computer network. Electrical Engineering in Japan, 177(3), 36-45.

Derks, D., Bos, A., &Grumbkow, J. (2007). Emoticons and social interaction on the Internet: The importance of social context. *Computers in Human Behavior,23,* 842-849. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2004.11.013

Derks, D., Bos, A., &Grumbkow, J. (2008).Emoticons and Online Message Interpretation. *Social Science Computer Review*, 379-388. doi:10.1177/0894439307311611

Derks, D., Bos, A., &Grumbkow, J. (2008). Emoticons in Computer-Mediated Communication: Social Motives and Social Context. *Cyber Psychology & Behavior,11(1),* 99-101. doi:10.1089/cpb.2007.9926

Einwiller, S. A., &Steilen, S. (2015). Handling complaints on social network sites – An analysis of complaints and complaint responses on Facebook and Twitter pages of large US companies. *Public Relations Review, 41(2),* 195-204. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2014.11.012

Eisenstein, J., O'connor, B., Smith, N., & Xing, E. (2014).Diffusion of Lexical Change in Social Media. PLoS ONE, 1-14. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0113114

Elrhoul, M. (2015, July 30). Research: Four ways brands can build customer service relationships on Twitter [Web log post]. Retrieved June 08, 2016, from https://blog.twitter.com/2015/research-four-ways-brands-can-build-customer-service-relationships-on-twitter

Epley, N., & Kruger, J. (2005). When what you type isn't what they read: The perseverance of stereotypes and expectancies over e-mail. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology,41,* 414-422. doi:10.1016/j.jesp.2004.08.005

Etc. Etc. Etc. (2012, November 1). Professional Safety, 56-56.

Ferro, S. (2013, May 13). How Facebook Used Science To Design More Emotional Emoticons. Retrieved January 7, 2016, from http://www.popsci.com/science/article/2013-05/how-design-more-emotional-emoticon

Floh, A., Koller, M., &Zauner, A. (2013).Taking a deeper look at online reviews: The asymmetric effect of valence intensity on shopping behavior. Journal of Marketing Management, 29(5-6), 646-670. doi:10.1080/0267257x.2013.776620

Froehle, C. M. (2006).Service Personnel, Technology, and Their Interaction in Influencing Customer Satisfaction*. *Decision Sciences, 37(1),* 5-38. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5414.2006.00108.x

Fullwood, C., Orchard, L., & Floyd, S. (2013). Emoticon convergence in Internet chat rooms. *Social Semiotics, 23(5),* 648-662. doi:10.1080/10350330.2012.739000

Fullwood, C., Quinn, S., Chen-Wilson, J., Chadwick, D., & Reynolds, K. (2015). Put on a Smiley Face: Textspeak and Personality Perceptions. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 18(3),* 147-151. doi:10.1089/cyber.2014.0463

Ganster, T., Eimler, S., & Nicole, K. (2012). Same But Different!? The Differential Influence of Smiles and Emoticons on Person Perception. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking,15(4),* 226-230. doi:10.1089/cyber.2011.0179

Garrison, A., Remley, D., Thomas, P., &Wierszewski, E. (2011). Conventional Faces: Emoticons in Instant Messaging Discourse. *Computers and Composition, 28,* 112-125.

Gunawardena, C. N., & Zittle, F. J. (1997). Social presence as a predictor of satisfaction within a computer-mediated conferencing environment. *American Journal of Distance Education, 11(3),* 8-26. doi:10.1080/08923649709526970

Happy birthday. (2002). *Communication of the ACM,45(11),* 10-10.

Hayes, J. L., & King, K. W. (2014). The Social Exchange of Viral Ads: Referral and Coreferral of Ads Among College Students. *Journal of Interactive Advertising, 14(2),* 98-109. doi:10.1080/15252019.2014.942473

Hayes, R. A., Carr, C. T., &Wohn, D. Y. (2016). One Click, Many Meanings: Interpreting Paralinguistic Digital Affordances in Social Media. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 60(1),* 171-187. doi:10.1080/08838151.2015.1127248

Hennig-Thurau, T., Gwinner, K. P., Walsh, G., &Gremler, D. D. (2004). Electronic word-of-mouth via consumer-opinion platforms: What motivates consumers to articulate themselves on the Internet? *Journal of Interactive Marketing, 18(1),* 38-52. doi:10.1002/dir.10073

Ho-Dac, N. N., Carson, S. J., & Moore, W. L. (2013). The Effects of Positive and Negative Online Customer Reviews: Do Brand Strength and Category Maturity Matter? *Journal of Marketing, 77(6),* 37-53. doi:10.1509/jm.11.0011

Huang, A., Yen, D., & Zhang, X. (2008).Exploring the potential effects of emoticons. *Information & Management,45,* 466-473. doi:10.1016/j.im.2008.07001

Huang, W. (2015, December 7). New research: Consumers willing to spend more after a positive customer service interaction on Twitter [Web log post]. Retrieved June 8, 2016, from https://blog.twitter.com/2015/new-research-consumers-willing-to-spend-more-after-a-positive-customer-service-interaction-on

Jabor, W., &Zheung, Z. (2014, September). Know Yourself and Know Your Enemy: An Analysis of Firm Recommendations and Consumer Reviews in a competitive Environment. *MIS Quarterly, 38(3),* 635-654.

Janssen, J., Ijsselsteijn, W., &Westerink, J. (2014). How affective technologies can influence intimate interactions and improve social connectedness. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies,72,* 33-43.

Ki, E., &Nekmat, E. (2014). Situational crisis communication and interactivity: Usage and effectiveness of Facebook for crisis management by Fortune 500 companies. *Computers in Human Behavior, 35,* 140-147. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2014.02.039

Klie, L. (2015). In Customer Service, It's More Efficient to be Effective. Rushing customers off the phone might cut costs, but ignores the potential for greater value. *Customer Relationship Management,* 37-40. Retrieved from www.destinationCRM.com.

Korzenny, F. (1978). A Theory of Electronic Propinquity: Mediated Communication in Organizations. *Communication Research, 5(1),* 3-24. doi:10.1177/009365027800500101

Krohn, F. (2004). A Generational Approach To Using Emoticons As Nonverbal Communication. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication,34(4),* 321-328.Lo, S. (2008). The

Nonverbal Communication Functions of Emoticons in Computer-Mediated Communication.*Cyber Psychology & Behavior,11(5),* 595-597. doi:10.1089/cpb.2007.0132

Lee, M., Rodgers, S., & Kim, M. (2009). Effects of Valence and Extremity of eWOM on Attitude toward the Brand and Website.*Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising, 31(2),* 1-11. doi:10.1080/10641734.2009.10505262

Lo, S. (2008). The Nonverbal Communication Functions of Emoticons in Computer-Mediated Communication. *Cyber Psychology & Behavior,11(5),* 595-597. doi:10.1089/cpb.2007.0132

Lockie, M., Waiguny, M. K., &Grabner-Kräuter, S. (2015). How style, information depth and textual characteristics influence the usefulness of general practitioners' reviews. *Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ), 23(3),* 168-178. doi:10.1016/j.ausmj.2015.01.005

López, M., & Sicilia, M. (2014). EWOM as Source of Influence: The Impact of Participation in eWOM and Perceived Source Trustworthiness on Decision Making. *Journal of Interactive Advertising, 14(2),* 86-97. doi:10.1080/15252019.2014.944288

Lu, B., Fan, W., & Zhou, M. (2016). Social presence, trust, and social commerce purchase intention: An empirical research. *Computers in Human Behavior, 56,* 225-237. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2015.11.057

Luor, T., Wu, L., Lu, H., & Tao, Y. (2010). The effect of emoticons in simplex and complex task-oriented communication: An empirical study of instant messaging. *Computers in Human Behavior,26,* 889-895. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2010.02.003

Pawle, J., & Cooper, P. (2006). Measuring Emotion—Lovemarks, The Future Beyond Brands. *Journal of Advertising Research JAR, 46(1),* 38-48. doi:10.2501/s0021849906060053

PC Mag. (2016). Google Books. Retrieved 3 November 2016, from https://books.google.com/books?id=FqDGJj2foBIC&pg=PA49&lpg=PA49&dq=when+were+aim+buddy+icons+released&source=bl&ots=VMWjVLksSq&sig=1EU85v9Fb1ogWteofpS_HC8gbcA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwisr6-9443QAhUM8WMKHXxnC9MQ6AEIUDAI#v=onepage&q=when%20were%20aim%20buddy%20icons%20released&f=false

Mackenzie, S. B., & Lutz, R. J. (1989).An Empirical Examination of the Structural Antecedents of Attitude toward the Ad in an Advertising Pretesting Context. *Journal of Marketing, 53(2),* 48.doi:10.2307/1251413

Masahide Yuasa, Keiichi Saito and Naoki Mukawa, Brain activity associated with graphic emoticons. The effect of abstract faces in communication over a computer network, *Electrical Engineering in Japan, 177 (3),* 36-45.

Nardi, B. A. (2005). Beyond Bandwidth: Dimensions of Connection in Interpersonal Communication. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW), 14(2*), 91-130. doi:10z.1007/s10606-004-8127-9

Newport, F. (2015, July 9). Most U.S. Smartphone Owners Check Phone at Least Hourly. Retrieved February 27, 2016, from http://www.gallup.com/poll/184046/smartphone-owners-check-phone-least-hourly.aspx

Oxford Dictionaries Word of the Year 2015 is... | OxfordWords blog. (2015, November 16). Retrieved November 17, 2015, from http://blog.oxforddictionaries.com/2015/11/word-of-the-year-2015-emoji/

Park, J., Baek, Y., & Cha, M. (2014). Cross-Cultural Comparison of Nonverbal Cues in Emoticons on Twitter: Evidence from Big Data Analysis. *Journal of Communication,64,* 333-354. doi:10.1111/jcom.12086

Pflug, J. (2011). Contextuality and computer-mediated communication: A cross cultural comparison. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27, 131-137. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2009.10.008

Rossiter, J. R., &Bergkvist, L. (2009, February). The importance of choosing one good item for single item measures of attitude towards the ad and attitudes towards the brand and its generalization to all measures. Transfer, 08-18.

Shan, Y., & King, K. W. (2015).The Effects of Interpersonal Tie Strength and Subjective Norms on Consumers' Brand-Related eWOM Referral Intentions. *Journal of Interactive Advertising, 15(1),* 16-27. doi:10.1080/15252019.2015.1016636

Sorokina, O. (2015, August 26). Emoji Marketing DOs and DON'Ts. Retrieved September 7,2015, from http://blog.hootsuite.com/the-dos-and-donts-of-using-emoji-in-marketing-campaigns/

Stammerjohan, C., Wood, C. M., Chang, Y., & Thorson, E. (2005). An Empirical Investigation Of The Interaction Between Publicity, Advertising, And Previous Brand Attitudes And Knowledge. *Journal of Advertising, 34(4),* 55-67. doi:10.1080/00913367.2005.10639209

Steinmetz, K. (July 28). Not Just a Smiley Face. The emoji boon is changing the y we communicate. *Time*, 52-53.

Tang, F., Wang, X., & Norman, C. S. (2013). An investigation of the impact of media capabilities and extraversion on social presence and user satisfaction. *Behavior& Information Technology, 32(10),* 1060-1073. doi:10.1080/0144929x.2013.830335

The 2013 Digital Marketer report and webinar series. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.experian.com/marketing-services/2013-digital-marketer-report.html

The Appboy Emoji Study: the Rise and Rise of Emoji Marketing (White Paper). (2016). Retrieved October 25, 2016, from http://info.appboy.com/rs/367-GUY-242/images/Appboy_Emoji_Report.pdf?utm_source=marketo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=2016-ENG-0927-General Nurture Campaign-Emoji Study-Email-1&mkt_tok=eyJpIjoiTkRkak5qWmxNR1poTnpkaCIsInQiOiIxXC9sZnFHWHF3eW9ZcFFacEdcLzRyNiswQkd2Z0NZbmRWSU1hVVBpZXhOQlptMlwvUFNIc3lJSUdmbHBWOFZZWkpVRTJTcTBVQ2NiYk9iUDJGbVhoMUx2bTJIZTFYUlZmOFpZb0J2UzZWRUNkYz0ifQ==

The Truth about Privacy (White Paper).(n.d.).McCann Truth Central. Retrieved from http://mccann.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/McCann_Truth_about_Privacy.pdf

Tossell, C., Kortum, P., Shepard, C., Barg-Walkow, L., Rahmati, A., &Zhong, L. (2012).A longitudinal study of emoticon use in text messaging from smartphones. *Computers in Human Behavior,28,* 659-663. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2001.11.012

Tsao, W., & Hsieh, M. (2015). EWOM persuasiveness: Do eWOM platforms and product type matter? *Electronic Commerce Research,15(4),* 509-541. doi:10.1007/s10660-015-9198-z

Tu, C. (2002). The Measurement of Social Presence in an Online Learning Environment. *International Journal of E-Learning,* 34-45.

Vandergriff, I. (2013). Emotive communication online: A contextual analysis of computer-mediated communication (CMC) cues. *Journal of Pragmatics,51,* 1-12. doi:10.1016/j.pragma.2013.02.008

WALTHER, J. (n.d.). Interpersonal Effects in Computer-Mediated Interaction A Relational Perspective. *Communication Research, 19(1),* 52-90. doi:10.1177/009365092019001003

Walther, J., &D'addario, K. (2001).The Impacts of Emoticons on Message Interpretation in Computer-Mediated Communication. *Social Science Computer Review,19(3),* 324-347.

Walther, J. B., Kashian, N., Jang, J., & Shin, S. Y. (2015).Overattribution of Liking in Computer-Mediated Communication: Partners Infer the Results of Their Own Influence as Their Partners Affection. *Communication Research, 43(3),* 372-390. doi:10.1177/0093650214565898

Walther, J. B., Loh, T., &Ganka, L. (2005). Let Me Count the Ways: The Interchange of Verbal and Nonverbal Cues in Computer-Mediated and Face-to-Face Affinity. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 24(1),* 36-65. doi:10.1177/0261927x04273036

Walther, J. B., Liang, Y. J., Ganster, T., Wohn, D. Y., &Emington, J. (2012). Online Reviews, Helpfulness Ratings, and Consumer Attitudes: An Extension of Congruity Theory to Multiple Sources in Web 2.0. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 18(1),* 97-112. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01595.x

Walters, T. (2016).*The Amazon Threat and the Facebook Trap* (White paper). Retrieved June 28, 2016 , from Digital Clarity Group: http://www.digitalclaritygroup.com/holiday-retail-amazon-threat-facebook-trap/

Wang, S., Cunningham, N. R., & Eastin, M. S. (2015). The Impact of eWOM Message Characteristics on the Perceived Effectiveness of Online Consumer Reviews.*Journal of Interactive Advertising, 15(2),* 151-159. doi:10.1080/15252019.2015.1091755

Whalen, J. M., Pexman, P. M., & Gill, A. J. (2009). "Should Be Fun--Not!": Incidence and Marking of Nonliteral Language in E-Mail. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology, 28(3),* 263-280. doi:10.1177/0261927x09335253

Yang, S., & Lim, J. S. (2009).The Effects of Blog-Mediated Public Relations (BMPR) on Relational Trust. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 21(3),* 341-359. doi:10.1080/10627260802640773

Yap, K. B., Soetarto, B., & Sweeney, J. C. (2013). The relationship between electronic word-of-mouth motivations and message characteristics: The sender's perspective. *Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ), 21(1),* 66-74. doi:10.1016/j.ausmj.2012.09.001

Appendices

Appendix A: IRB Approval

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND COMPLIANCE
Institutional Review Boards, FWA No. 00001669
12901 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MDC035 • Tampa, FL 33612-4799
(813) 974-5638 • FAX (813) 974-7091

7/8/2016

Jayme Hill
School of Advertising and Mass
Communications 4202 East Fowler Ave
Tampa, FL 33620

RE: Expedited Approval for Initial Review

IRB#: Pro00026858

Title: Emoji Usage and its impact on the Customer-BrandRelationships

Study Approval Period: 7/8/2016 to 7/8/2017

Dear Ms. Hill:

On 7/8/2016, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed and **APPROVED** the above application and all documents contained within, including those outlined below.

Approved Item(s): Protocol Document(s):

JaymeHillPro00026858ResearchprotocolV1

Consent/Assent Document(s):

OnlineorPaperSurveyConsentFormNoSignatureLineV1MTurk

It was the determination of the IRB that your study qualified for expedited review which

includes activities that (1) present no more than minimal risk to human subjects, and (2) involve only procedures listed in one or more of the categories outlined below. The IRB may review research through the expedited review procedure authorized by 45CFR46.110. The research proposed in this study is categorized under the following expedited review category:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your survey qualifies for a waiver of the requirements for the documentation of informed consent as outlined in the federal regulations at 45CFR46.117(c) which states that an IRB may waive the requirement for the investigator to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects if it finds either: (1) That the only record linking the subject and the research would be the consent document and the principal risk would be potential harm resulting from a breach of confidentiality. Each subject will be asked whether the subject wants documentation linking the subject with the research, and the subject's wishes will govern; or (2) That the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.

As the principal investigator of this study, it is your responsibility to conduct this study in accordance with IRB policies and procedures and as approved by the IRB. Any changes to the approved research must be submitted to the IRB for review and approval via an amendment. Additionally, all unanticipated problems must be reported to the USF IRB within five (5) calendar days.

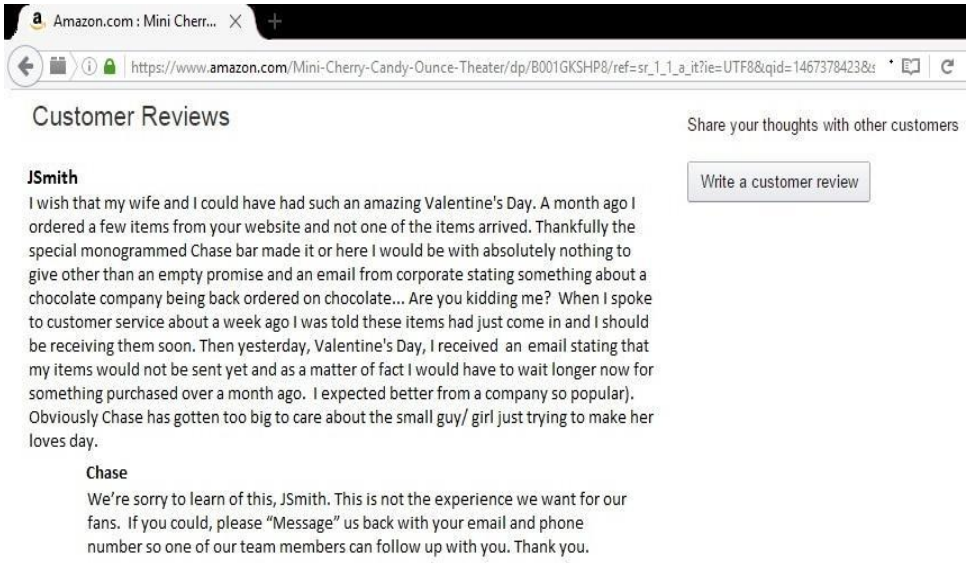
We appreciate your dedication to the ethical conduct of human subject research at the University of South Florida and your continued commitment to human research protections. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call 813-974-5638.

Sincerely,

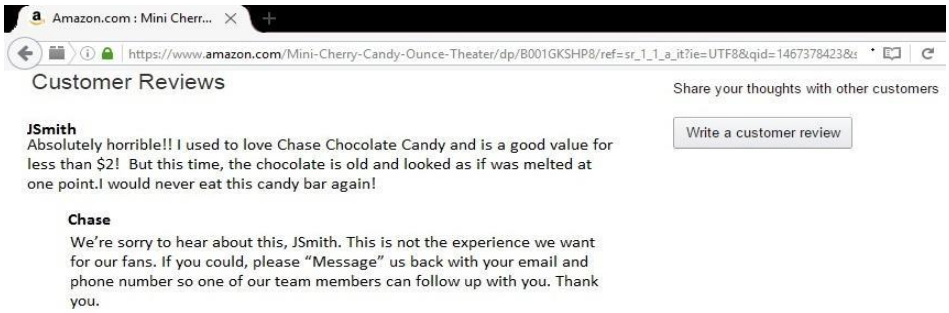
Kristen Salomon, Ph.D., Vice
Chairperson USF Institutional Review
Board

Appendix B: Pre Test Stimuli Development

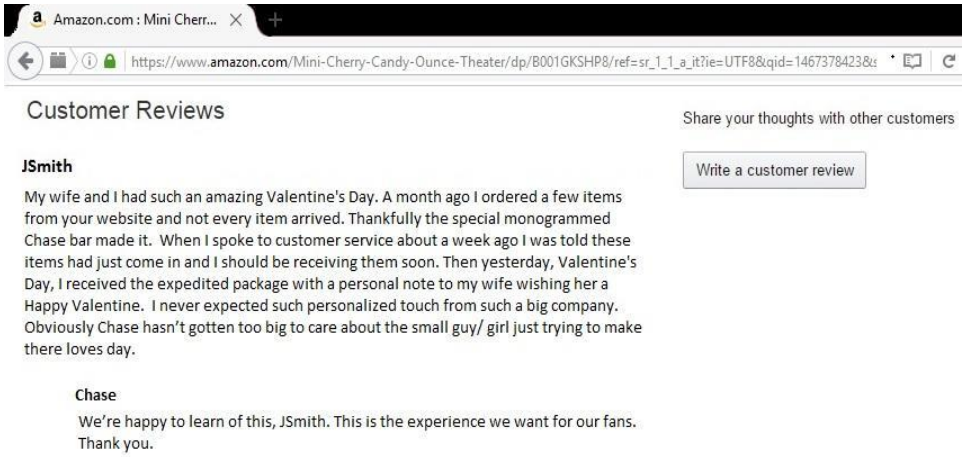
Candy Review 1



Candy Review 2



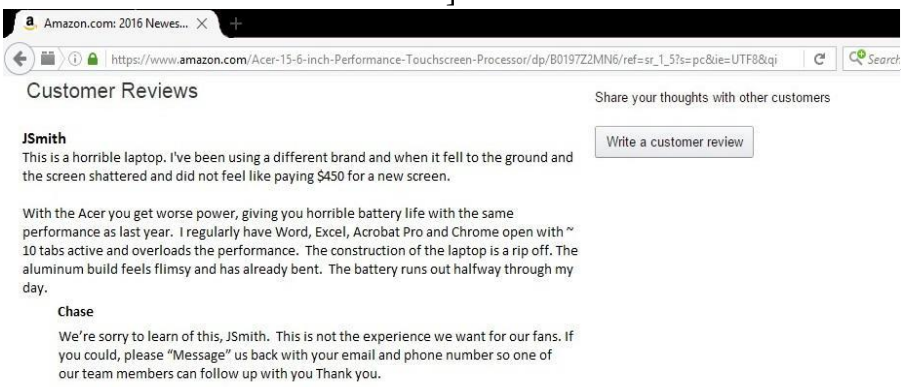
Candy Review 3



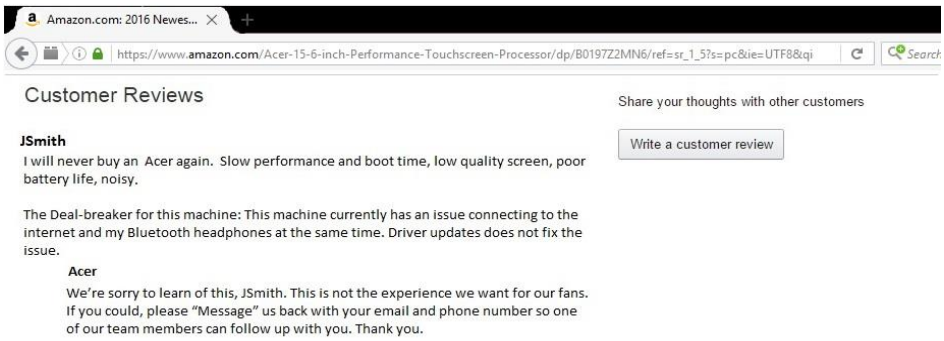
Candy Review 4

Computer Review 5

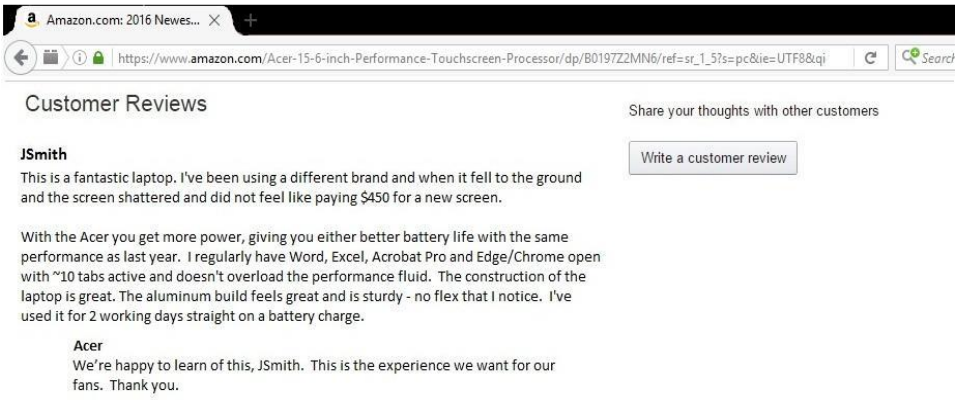
]



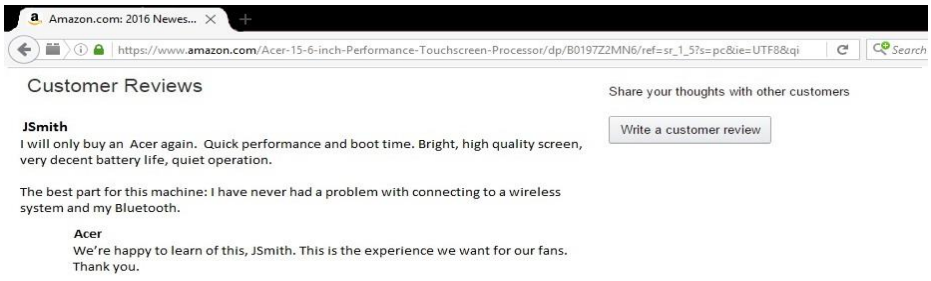
Computer Review 6



Computer Review 7



Computer Review 8



Appendix C: Survey Questions

Qualifying questions

How often have you used online product reviews to research products? (e.g., Yelp, Amazon Reviews, Angie's List, etc)

- In the last month
- In the last six months
- In the last year
- In the last 3 years
- 3 years or more
- Never

If Never Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 - 84
- 85 or older

If Under 18 Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey. If 35 - 44 Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey. If 45 - 54 Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey. If 55 - 64 Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey. If 65 - 74 Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey. If 75 - 84 Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey. If 85 or older Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Please specify your gender.

- Male
- Female

Brand Attitude

Please rate your attitude towards the following brands on a 7-point scale with 1 being "dislike" and 7 being "like."

Cadbury	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hewlett Packert	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Hershey	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Apple	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Clevo	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Chase Candy Company	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Computer Product Involvement

Please think about how you feel about computers. On each of the 7-point scales below, please indicate which response comes closest to how you feel about computers.

Important:Unimportant	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Irrelevant:Relevant	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mean a lot to me:Mean nothing to me	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Valuable:Worthless	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interesting:Boring	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Unexciting:Exciting	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Appealing:Unappealing	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mundane:Fascinating	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not needed:Needed	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Involving:Not involving	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Candy Product Involvement

Now, please think about how you feel about chocolate candy products. On each of the 7-point scales below, please indicate which response comes closest to how you feel about chocolate candy.

Important:Unimportant	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Irrelevant:Relevant	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mean a lot to me:Mean nothing to me	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Valuable:Worthless	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Interesting:Boring	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Unexciting:Exciting	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Appealing:Unappealing	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Mundane:Fascinating	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Not needed:Needed	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Involving:Not involving	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Pre Stimuli Brand Relationship

INSTRUCTIONS: The following series of questions will ask your thoughts on how much you trust each brand to do or provide different things for customers. The questions ask you to indicate your level of agreement on a 6-point scale (1 = disagree, 6 = agree). Please note that "disagree" does not mean distrust in this context; rather, it means "a lack of trust" or "lack of knowledge." So, if you neither trust nor distrust in the brand to do or provide what the statement discusses due to lack of knowledge of or experience with the brand, then a lower scale score (closer to disagree) is appropriate to show this.

Have you ever owned or used any (brand) products?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Please indicate the number of letters in the word "candy" below.

- 2
- 4
- 5
- 7

I feel I know what to expect from (Brand).	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am usually satisfied with (Brand).	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am usually satisfied with my experience with (Brand).	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I trust (Brand) to offer me new products I may need.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I trust that (Brand) is interested in my satisfaction as a consumer.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
(Brand) values me as a consumer of its product.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I trust (Brand) to offer me recommendations and advice on how to make the most of its product.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
(Brand) offers me (product) with a constant level of quality.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I trust that (Brand) will help me solve any problem I could have with the product.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Instructions: On the following screen you will be presented with an actual online review of a product by a consumer and the company's response to the consumer review. Please read the review and the response and answer the following questions.

Please read the following review.

Condition Stimuli Goes Here- see Appendix 4

Post stimuli questions:

Post stimuli Attitude towards Review

Please indicate your attitude towards the review.

Dislike:Like	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Post stimuliSocial Presences

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following statements in regards to the company response.

There is a sense of sociability from the company response.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
There is a sense of personalness from the company response.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I can make sense of the attitude from the company's response post.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
There is a sense of respect for the customer from the company response.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
There is a sense of attentiveness from the company response.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
There is a sense of caring about the customer from the company response.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Post Stimuli Purchase Intent

Please indicate with your level of agreement with the following statements

I am very likely to buy the product from the company.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would consider buying the product from the company in the future.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I intend to buy the product from the company.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Post stimuli Attitude towards Brand

Please indicate your attitude towards (Brand)

Dislike:Like	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Post stimuli Attitude towards Review

Please indicate how positive OR negative you perceive the review to be.

Negative:Positive	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Post stimuli PLC recall

Please indicate which, if any, of the following your review contained?

❍ Emoji (e.g. 😊 😔)
❍ Emoticon (e.g.: :) :( )
❍ Neither an Emoji nor an Emoticon

Demographic Questions

What year were you born?

- ❍ 1920
- ❍ 1921
- ❍ 1922
- ❍ 1923
- ❍ 1924
- ❍ 1925
- ❍ 1926
- ❍ 1927
- ❍ 1928
- ❍ 1929
- ❍ 1930
- ❍ 1931
- ❍ 1932
- ❍ 1933
- ❍ 1934
- ❍ 1935
- ❍ 1936
- ❍ 1937
- ❍ 1938
- ❍ 1939
- ❍ 1940
- ❍ 1941
- ❍ 1942
- ❍ 1943
- ❍ 1944
- ❍ 1945
- ❍ 1946
- ❍ 1947
- ❍ 1948
- ❍ 1949
- ❍ 1950
- ❍ 1951
- ❍ 1952
- ❍ 1953

- 1954
- 1955
- 1956
- 1957
- 1958
- 1959
- 1960
- 1961
- 1962
- 1963
- 1964
- 1965
- 1966
- 1967
- 1968
- 1969
- 1970
- 1971
- 1972
- 1973
- 1974
- 1975
- 1976
- 1977
- 1978
- 1979
- 1980
- 1981
- 1982
- 1983
- 1984
- 1985
- 1986
- 1987
- 1988
- 1989
- 1990
- 1991
- 1992
- 1993

- ❍ 1994
- ❍ 1995
- ❍ 1996
- ❍ 1997

Sex
- ❍ Male
- ❍ Female

Please select all online outlets you have participated in? (please check all that apply)
- ❑ Facebook
- ❑ Twitter
- ❑ Pinterest
- ❑ Youtube
- ❑ Reddit
- ❑ Linkedin
- ❑ Tumblr
- ❑ Yelp
- ❑ Yahoo! Answers
- ❑ Instagram
- ❑ myMFB
- ❑ whatsApp
- ❑ vk.com
- ❑ Google+
- ❑ Renren
- ❑ Xing
- ❑ Snapchat
- ❑ Meetup
- ❑ Forum
- ❑ Blog
- ❑ Amazon
- ❑ eBay

Have you ever purchased a product online?
- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Maybe
- ❍ No

How frequently do you purchase an item online?

- ❍ In the last month
- ❍ In the last six months
- ❍ In the last year
- ❍ In the last 3 years
- ❍ Never

What are the types of products do you purchase? (please choose all that apply)

- ❑ Clothing and footwear
- ❑ Localized services
- ❑ Computer and accessories
- ❑ Good and health products
- ❑ Books
- ❑ Skin care and cosmetics
- ❑ Sporting gear
- ❑ other

Have you ever used an online review when making a purchasing decision?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

When was the last time you used online consumer reviews?

- ❍ In the last month
- ❍ In the last six months
- ❍ In the last year
- ❍ In the last 3 years
- ❍ Never

Were online consumer review helpful in your decision making process?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Maybe
- ❍ No

Have you ever posted a product or company review before?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Maybe
- ❍ No

Answer If Have you ever posted a product or company review before? Yes Is Selected

Did you receive any direct response back from the company ?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Maybe
- ❍ No
- ❍ I don't remember

Have you ever seen an Emojis or Emoticons?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Have you ever used an Emoji or Emoticons?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

Do you think the using an Emojis or Emoticons helps communicating online?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ Maybe
- ❍ No

Answer If Do you think the using an Emojis or Emoticons helps communicating online? Yes Is Selected And Do you think the using an Emojis or Emoticons helps communicating online? Maybe Is Selected

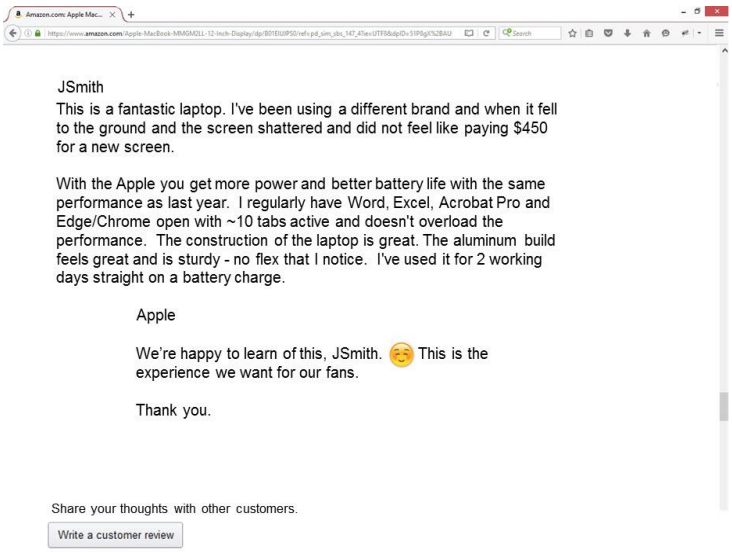
Why do you think that Emojis or Emoticons can help communicate online?

Answer If Do you think the using an Emojis or Emoticons helps communicating online? No Is Selected

Why do you think that Emojis or Emoticons cannot help communicate online?

Appendix D: Survey Stimuli

Condition 1: Strong Positive Emoji- Apple



JSmith

This is a fantastic laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Apple you get more power and better battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and doesn't overload the performance. The construction of the laptop is great. The aluminum build feels great and is sturdy - no flex that I notice. I've used it for 2 working days straight on a battery charge.

Apple

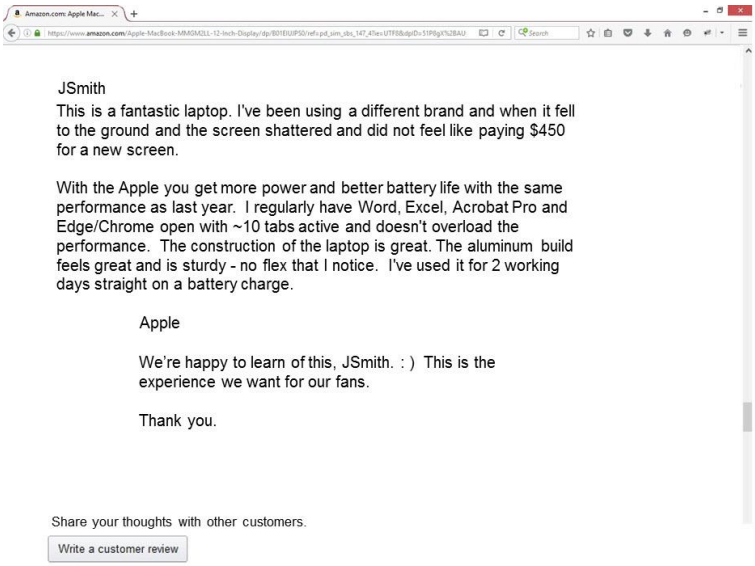
We're happy to learn of this, JSmith. 😌 This is the experience we want for our fans.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 2: Strong Positive Emoticon-Apple



JSmith

This is a fantastic laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Apple you get more power and better battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and doesn't overload the performance. The construction of the laptop is great. The aluminum build feels great and is sturdy - no flex that I notice. I've used it for 2 working days straight on a battery charge.

Apple

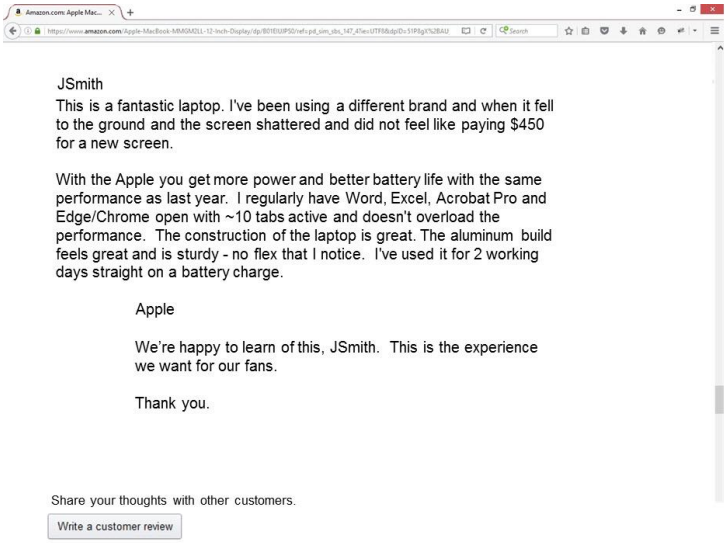
We're happy to learn of this, JSmith. :) This is the experience we want for our fans.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 3: Strong Positive Pure- Apple



JSmith

This is a fantastic laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Apple you get more power and better battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and doesn't overload the performance. The construction of the laptop is great. The aluminum build feels great and is sturdy - no flex that I notice. I've used it for 2 working days straight on a battery charge.

Apple

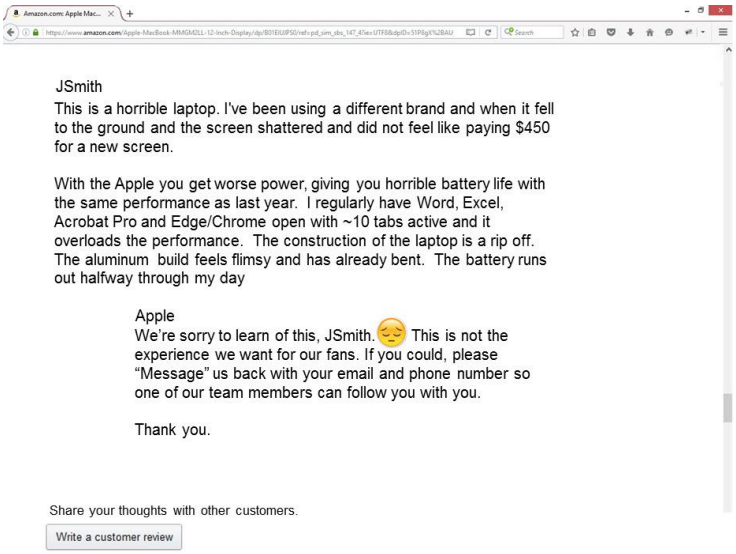
We're happy to learn of this, JSmith. This is the experience we want for our fans.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 4: Strong Negative Emoji- Apple



JSmith

This is a horrible laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Apple you get worse power, giving you horrible battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and it overloads the performance. The construction of the laptop is a rip off. The aluminum build feels flimsy and has already bent. The battery runs out halfway through my day

Apple

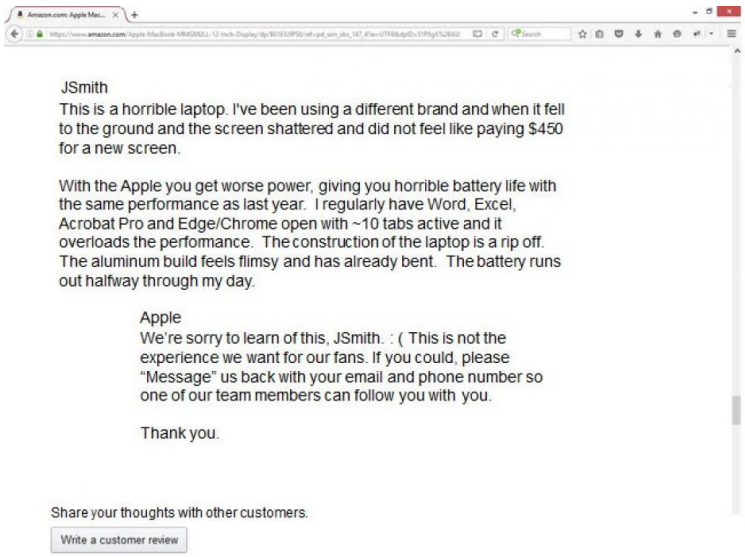
We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. 😔 This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow you with you.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 5: Strong Negative Emoticon- Apple



JSmith
This is a horrible laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Apple you get worse power, giving you horrible battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and it overloads the performance. The construction of the laptop is a rip off. The aluminum build feels flimsy and has already bent. The battery runs out halfway through my day.

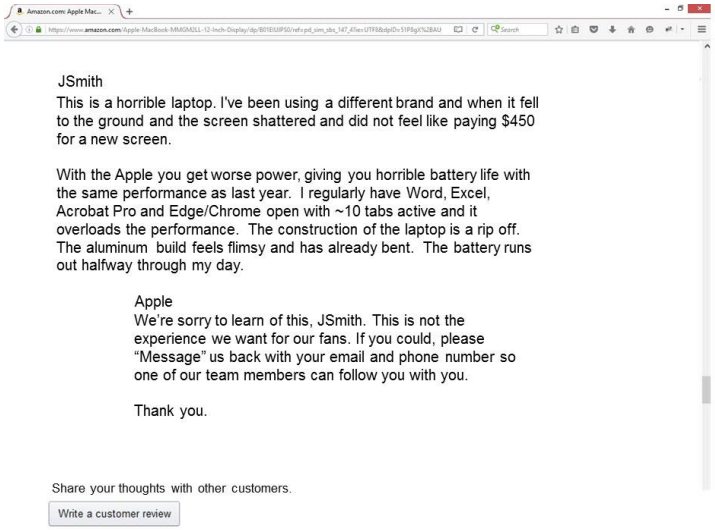
Apple
We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. : (This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow you with you.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 6: Strong Negative Pure- Apple



JSmith
This is a horrible laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Apple you get worse power, giving you horrible battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and it overloads the performance. The construction of the laptop is a rip off. The aluminum build feels flimsy and has already bent. The battery runs out halfway through my day.

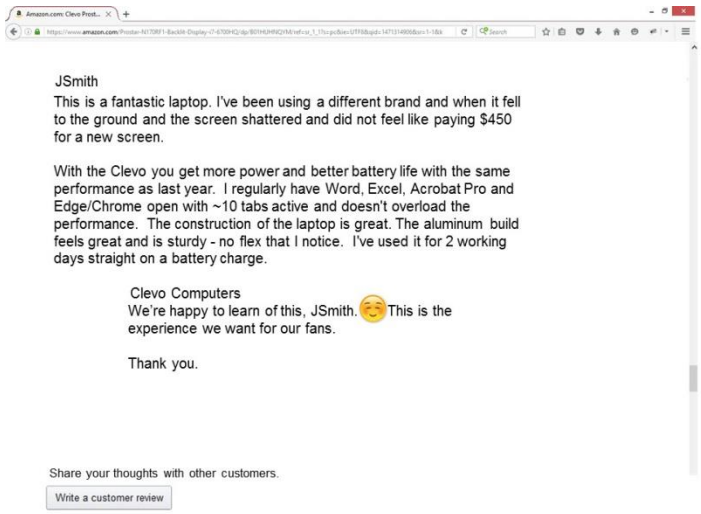
Apple
We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow you with you.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 7: Weak Positive Emoji- Clevo



JSmith

This is a fantastic laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Clevo you get more power and better battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and doesn't overload the performance. The construction of the laptop is great. The aluminum build feels great and is sturdy - no flex that I notice. I've used it for 2 working days straight on a battery charge.

Clevo Computers

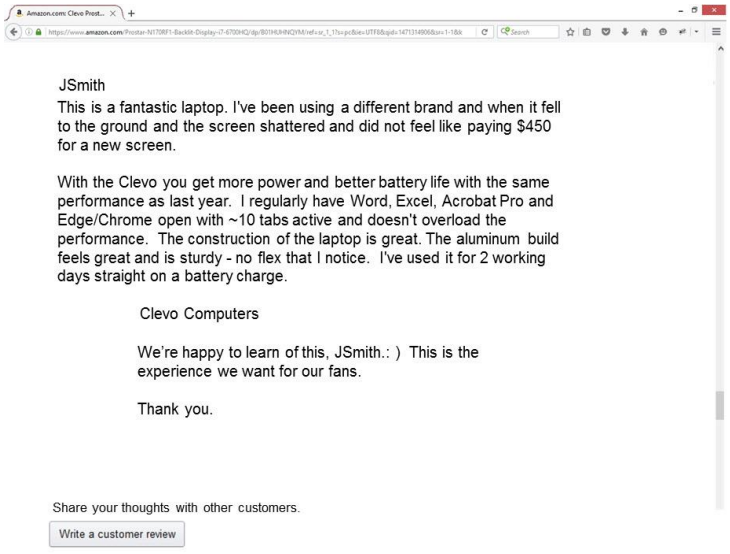
We're happy to learn of this, JSmith. This is the experience we want for our fans.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 8: Weak Positive Emoticon-Clevo



JSmith

This is a fantastic laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Clevo you get more power and better battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and doesn't overload the performance. The construction of the laptop is great. The aluminum build feels great and is sturdy - no flex that I notice. I've used it for 2 working days straight on a battery charge.

Clevo Computers

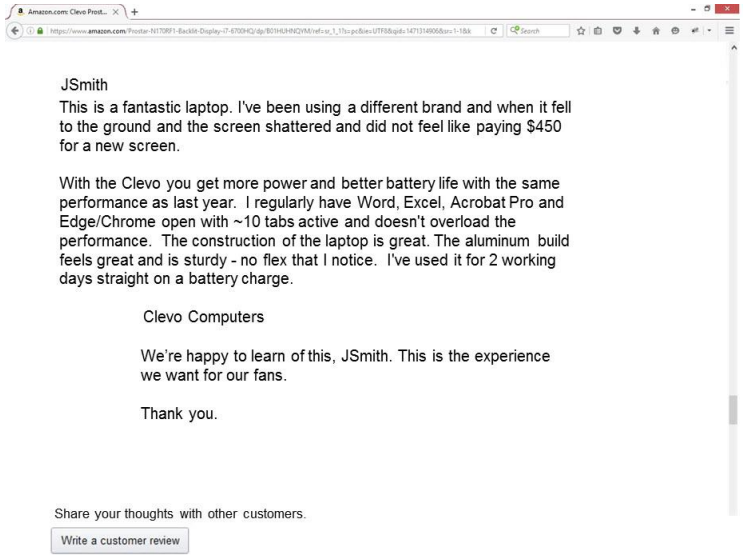
We're happy to learn of this, JSmith.:) This is the experience we want for our fans.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 9: Weak Positive Pure- Clevo



JSmith

This is a fantastic laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Clevo you get more power and better battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and doesn't overload the performance. The construction of the laptop is great. The aluminum build feels great and is sturdy - no flex that I notice. I've used it for 2 working days straight on a battery charge.

Clevo Computers

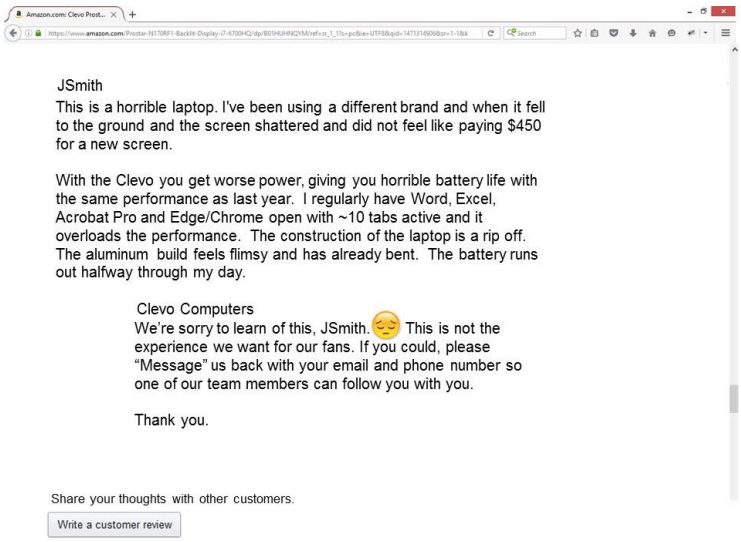
We're happy to learn of this, JSmith. This is the experience we want for our fans.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 10: Weak Negative Emoji- Clevo



JSmith

This is a horrible laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Clevo you get worse power, giving you horrible battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and it overloads the performance. The construction of the laptop is a rip off. The aluminum build feels flimsy and has already bent. The battery runs out halfway through my day.

Clevo Computers

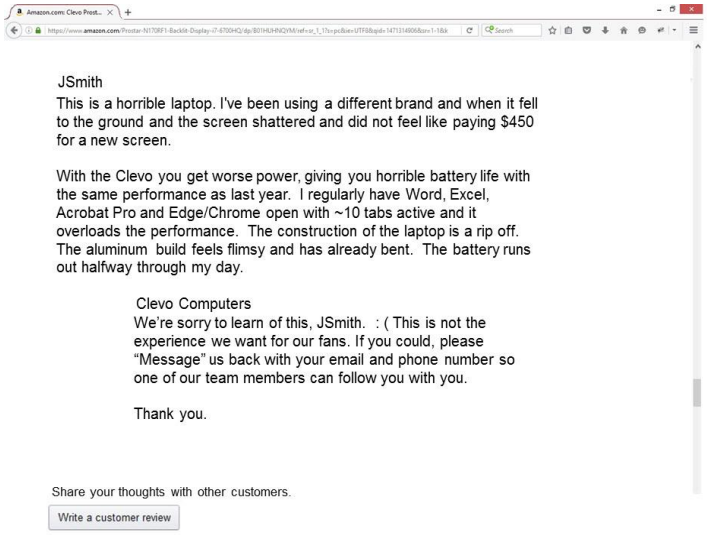
We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. 😔 This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow you with you.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 11: Weak Negative Emoticon- Clevo



JSmith

This is a horrible laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Clevo you get worse power, giving you horrible battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and it overloads the performance. The construction of the laptop is a rip off. The aluminum build feels flimsy and has already bent. The battery runs out halfway through my day.

Clevo Computers

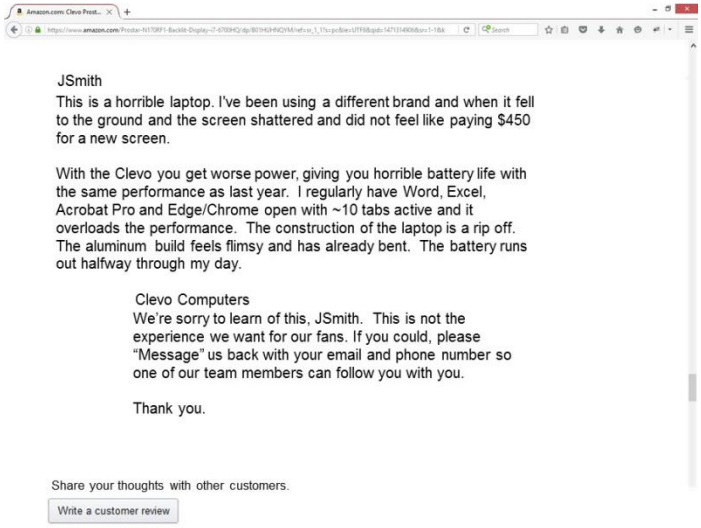
We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. : (This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow you with you.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 12: Weak Negative Pure- Clevo



JSmith

This is a horrible laptop. I've been using a different brand and when it fell to the ground and the screen shattered and did not feel like paying $450 for a new screen.

With the Clevo you get worse power, giving you horrible battery life with the same performance as last year. I regularly have Word, Excel, Acrobat Pro and Edge/Chrome open with ~10 tabs active and it overloads the performance. The construction of the laptop is a rip off. The aluminum build feels flimsy and has already bent. The battery runs out halfway through my day.

Clevo Computers

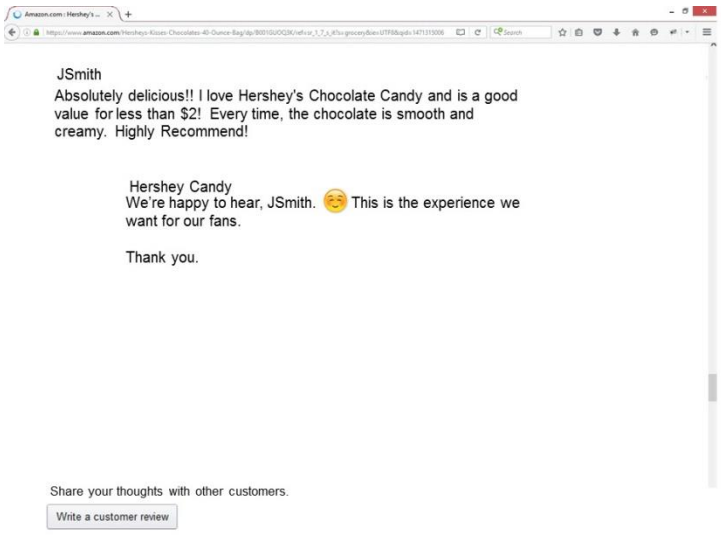
We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow you with you.

Thank you.

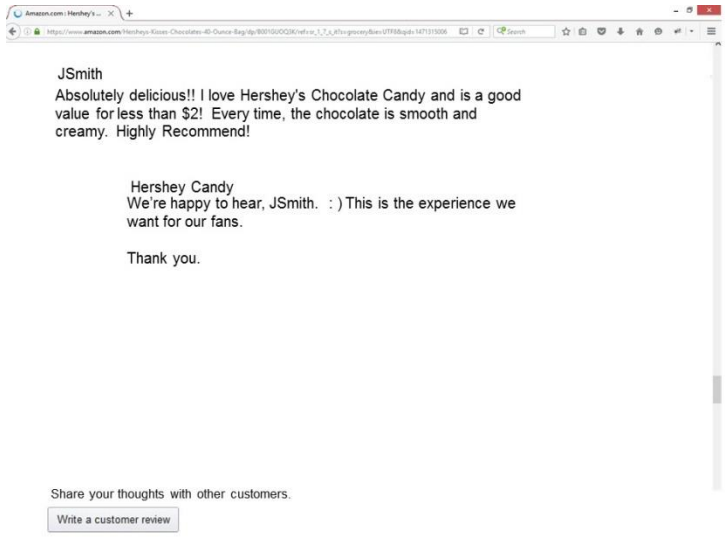
Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

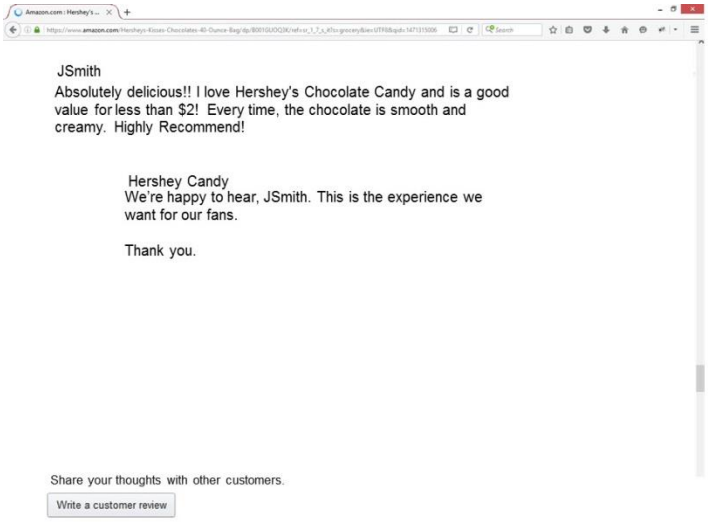
Condition 13: Strong Positive Emoji- Hershey



Condition 14: Strong Positive Emoticon- Hershey



Condition 15: Strong Positive Pure- Hershey



JSmith

Absolutely delicious!! I love Hershey's Chocolate Candy and is a good value for less than $2! Every time, the chocolate is smooth and creamy. Highly Recommend!

Hershey Candy

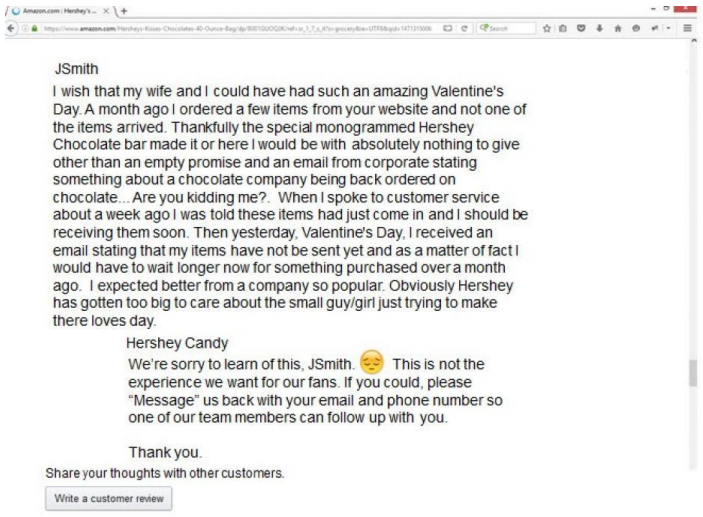
We're happy to hear, JSmith. This is the experience we want for our fans.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 16: Strong Negative Emoji- Hershey



JSmith

I wish that my wife and I could have had such an amazing Valentine's Day. A month ago I ordered a few items from your website and not one of the items arrived. Thankfully the special monogrammed Hershey Chocolate bar made it or here I would be with absolutely nothing to give other than an empty promise and an email from corporate stating something about a chocolate company being back ordered on chocolate…Are you kidding me?. When I spoke to customer service about a week ago I was told these items had just come in and I should be receiving them soon. Then yesterday, Valentine's Day, I received an email stating that my items have not be sent yet and as a matter of fact I would have to wait longer now for something purchased over a month ago. I expected better from a company so popular. Obviously Hershey has gotten too big to care about the small guy/girl just trying to make there loves day.

Hershey Candy

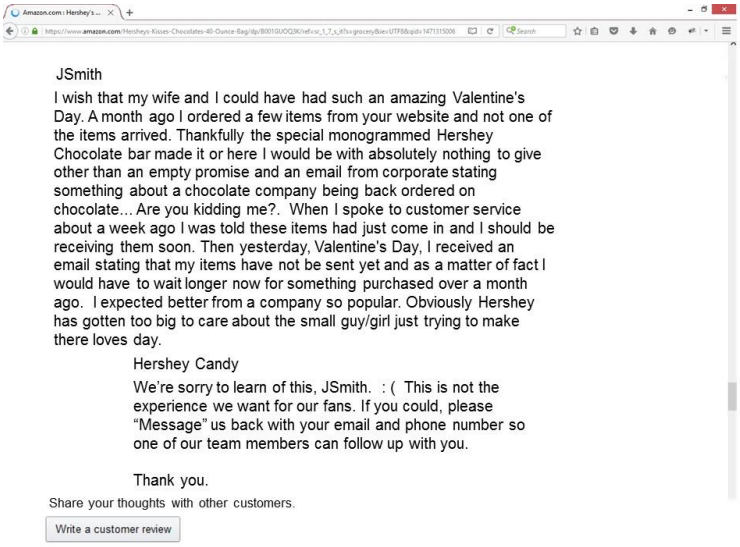
We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. 😔 This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow up with you.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 17: Strong Negative Emoticon-Hershey



JSmith

I wish that my wife and I could have had such an amazing Valentine's Day. A month ago I ordered a few items from your website and not one of the items arrived. Thankfully the special monogrammed Hershey Chocolate bar made it or here I would be with absolutely nothing to give other than an empty promise and an email from corporate stating something about a chocolate company being back ordered on chocolate... Are you kidding me?. When I spoke to customer service about a week ago I was told these items had just come in and I should be receiving them soon. Then yesterday, Valentine's Day, I received an email stating that my items have not be sent yet and as a matter of fact I would have to wait longer now for something purchased over a month ago. I expected better from a company so popular. Obviously Hershey has gotten too big to care about the small guy/girl just trying to make there loves day.

Hershey Candy

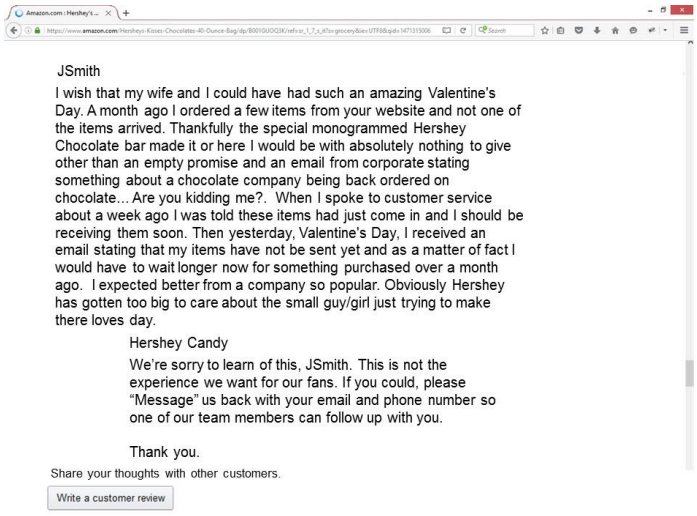
We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. : (This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow up with you.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 18: Strong Negative Pure- Hershey



JSmith

I wish that my wife and I could have had such an amazing Valentine's Day. A month ago I ordered a few items from your website and not one of the items arrived. Thankfully the special monogrammed Hershey Chocolate bar made it or here I would be with absolutely nothing to give other than an empty promise and an email from corporate stating something about a chocolate company being back ordered on chocolate... Are you kidding me?. When I spoke to customer service about a week ago I was told these items had just come in and I should be receiving them soon. Then yesterday, Valentine's Day, I received an email stating that my items have not be sent yet and as a matter of fact I would have to wait longer now for something purchased over a month ago. I expected better from a company so popular. Obviously Hershey has gotten too big to care about the small guy/girl just trying to make there loves day.

Hershey Candy

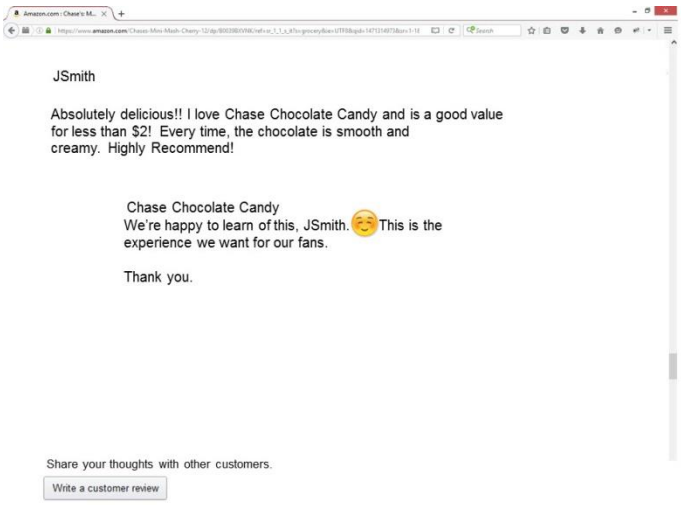
We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow up with you.

Thank you.

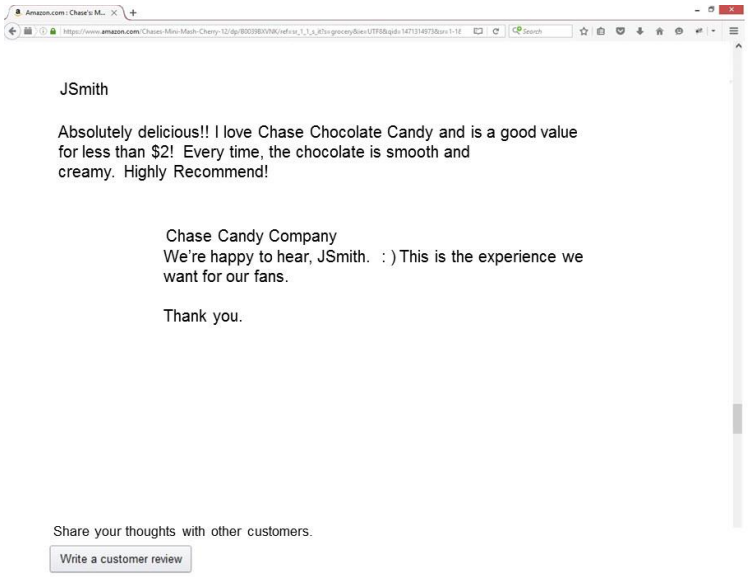
Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

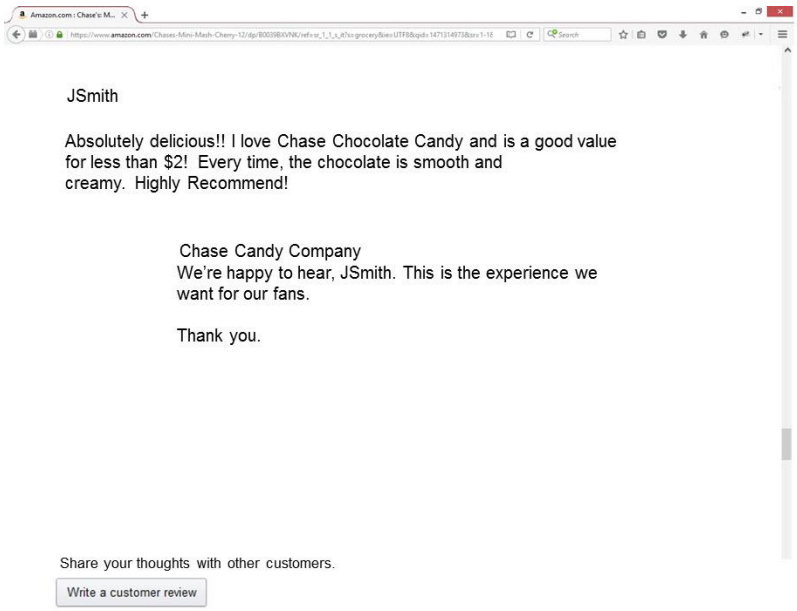
Condition 19: Weak Positive Emoji- Chase Candy



Condition 20: Weak Positive Emoticon- Chase Candy



Condition 21: Weak Positive Pure- Chase Candy



JSmith

Absolutely delicious!! I love Chase Chocolate Candy and is a good value for less than $2! Every time, the chocolate is smooth and creamy. Highly Recommend!

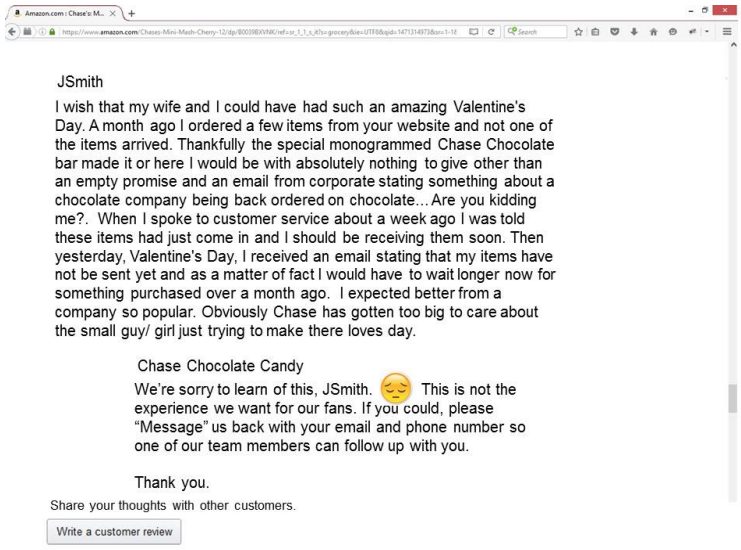
Chase Candy Company
We're happy to hear, JSmith. This is the experience we want for our fans.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 22: Weak Negative Emoji- Chase Candy



JSmith

I wish that my wife and I could have had such an amazing Valentine's Day. A month ago I ordered a few items from your website and not one of the items arrived. Thankfully the special monogrammed Chase Chocolate bar made it or here I would be with absolutely nothing to give other than an empty promise and an email from corporate stating something about a chocolate company being back ordered on chocolate... Are you kidding me?. When I spoke to customer service about a week ago I was told these items had just come in and I should be receiving them soon. Then yesterday, Valentine's Day, I received an email stating that my items have not be sent yet and as a matter of fact I would have to wait longer now for something purchased over a month ago. I expected better from a company so popular. Obviously Chase has gotten too big to care about the small guy/ girl just trying to make there loves day.

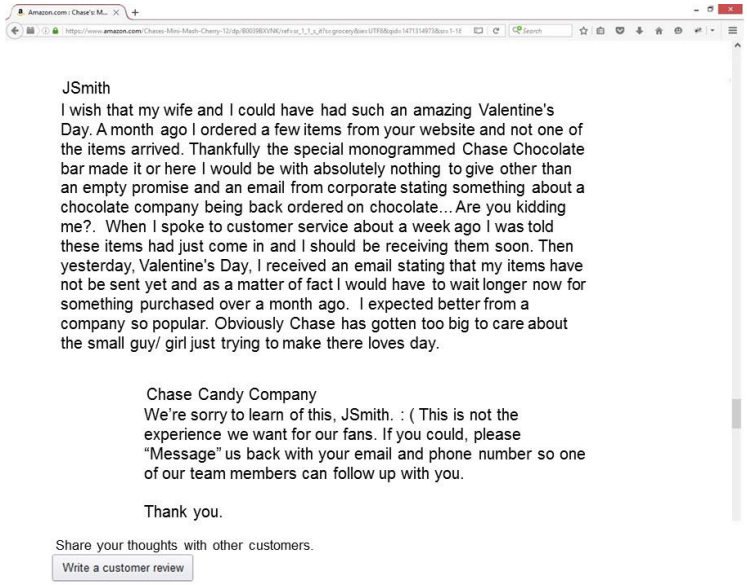
Chase Chocolate Candy
We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. 😔 This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow up with you.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 23: Weak Negative Emoticon- Chase Candy



JSmith

I wish that my wife and I could have had such an amazing Valentine's Day. A month ago I ordered a few items from your website and not one of the items arrived. Thankfully the special monogrammed Chase Chocolate bar made it or here I would be with absolutely nothing to give other than an empty promise and an email from corporate stating something about a chocolate company being back ordered on chocolate... Are you kidding me?. When I spoke to customer service about a week ago I was told these items had just come in and I should be receiving them soon. Then yesterday, Valentine's Day, I received an email stating that my items have not be sent yet and as a matter of fact I would have to wait longer now for something purchased over a month ago. I expected better from a company so popular. Obviously Chase has gotten too big to care about the small guy/ girl just trying to make there loves day.

Chase Candy Company

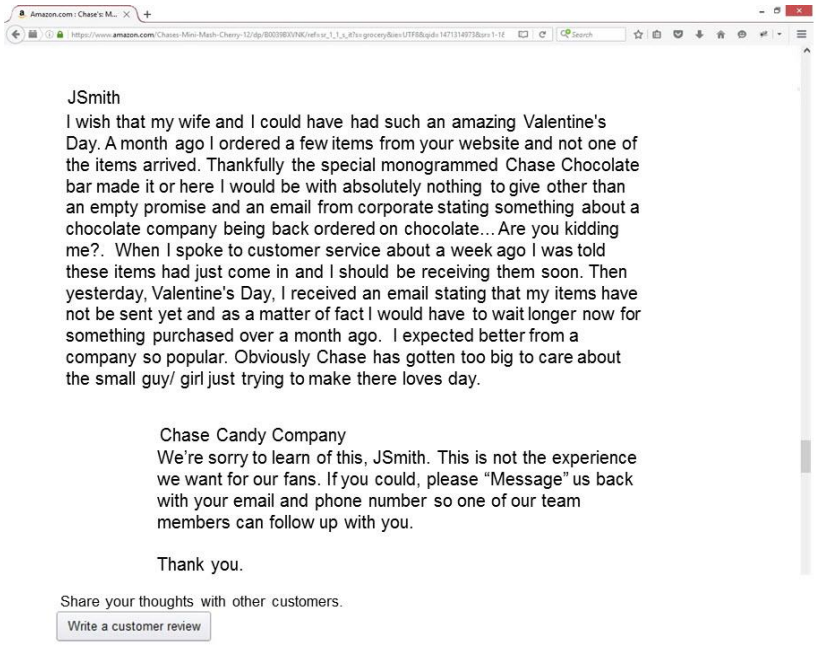
We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. : (This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow up with you.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review

Condition 24: Weak Negative Pure- Chase Candy



JSmith

I wish that my wife and I could have had such an amazing Valentine's Day. A month ago I ordered a few items from your website and not one of the items arrived. Thankfully the special monogrammed Chase Chocolate bar made it or here I would be with absolutely nothing to give other than an empty promise and an email from corporate stating something about a chocolate company being back ordered on chocolate... Are you kidding me?. When I spoke to customer service about a week ago I was told these items had just come in and I should be receiving them soon. Then yesterday, Valentine's Day, I received an email stating that my items have not be sent yet and as a matter of fact I would have to wait longer now for something purchased over a month ago. I expected better from a company so popular. Obviously Chase has gotten too big to care about the small guy/ girl just trying to make there loves day.

Chase Candy Company

We're sorry to learn of this, JSmith. This is not the experience we want for our fans. If you could, please "Message" us back with your email and phone number so one of our team members can follow up with you.

Thank you.

Share your thoughts with other customers.

Write a customer review