Intentions to Use the TripAdvisor Review Website and Purchase Behavior After Reading Reviews

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TripAdvisor is a popular online review website mostly used for rating hotels. We study variables associated with intention to use TripAdvisor and also behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading TripAdvisor reviews. College students (n = 620) were surveyed about demographics, trust, knowledge about online review fraud, and Internet/online travel review website experience. Increased search engine optimization trust for published online consumer reviews and correct knowledge of review fraud about positive online reviews posted about branded-chains were associated with increased intentions. Increased agreement for typically read online review-based websites and previously wrote a TripAdvisor review were each associated with both increased intentions and behavior. No association for either intentions or behavior was found for demographics of age, sex, race/ethnicity, and born in the United States. We recommend that hotel managers post responses to negative reviews as this may reassure those reading reviews to have trust about the hotel. As non-branded chain hotel reviews are considered possibly fraudulent, managers of non-branded chain hotels should respond with content even for positive reviews to reassure the reader that these positive reviews are genuine.

Keywords: electronic word of mouth, Internet experience, knowledge, online consumer reviews, social media, trust

TripAdvisor is the largest social media review-based travel website and has more than 250 million reviews and opinions (TripAdvisor 2015). TripAdvisor lists many of a particular location's hotels, restaurants, and attractions. Consumers can post reviews and these consumer ratings influence the ranking order (Brown 2012). Social media review-based websites can influence consumers about booking a particular hotel. For example, after reading a negative review, the probability of booking a particular hotel is 2 out of 5, while after reading a positive review, the probability of booking a particular hotel is 3.5 to 4 out of 5 (Verma, Stock & McCarthy 2012). Reliance on review-based websites not only facilitates the consumer experience, but also creates a reputation economy in which vendors value their online reputation (Hearn 2010). Vendors may engage in review manipulation by encouraging or even financially supporting the production of fake promotional reviews (Mayzlin, Dover & Chevalier 2014).

Consumers typically use online travel reviews after they have decided on a destination and want to choose a hotel accommodation and attractions to visit (Cox, Burgess, Sellitto & Buultjens 2009). The top three reasons endorsed by over 90 percent of TripAdvisor users for valuing other online travel reviews on TripAdvisor are that reviews are a good way to learn about the travel destination, product or service; help people evaluate different alternatives; and help people avoid places and/or services that they would not enjoy (Gretzel & Yoo 2008). The most common topic mentioned in TripAdvisor hotel reviews is about hotel location (O'Connor 2010). Research reports that hotel managers rarely respond to reviews on TripAdvisor, with only 2 of 500 (0.4%) managers responding to reviews (O'Connor 2008; O'Connor 2010). It is possible that hotel manager and/or hotel staff response rates have improved since the time those studies (O'Connor 2008; O'Connor 2010) were published, although anecdotally one can see that many negative TripAdvisor reviews do not have any hotel manager and/or hotel staff responses.

An experimental study with simulated online travel website review content reported that reading positive reviews was associated with positive attitudes about hotels (Vermeulen & Seegers 2009). Two studies use number of online hotel reviews published as a proxy measure for hotel bookings. These studies found that increased levels of positive reviews were associated with increased sales revenue from hotel room bookings (Ye, Law & Gu 2009; Ye *et al.* 2011). However, a proxy measure of reviews written is not objective reporting of hotel room bookings nor of customer self-reported hotel room booking purchase behavior. Another study used data of number of online booking of hotel rooms and total revenue obtained from hotel room bookings to calculate hotel booking revenue per number of booking transactions. This study found a positive association of both TripAdvisor rating (i.e., star quality rating based upon total consumer reviews) and TripAdvisor number of reviews with increased hotel booking revenue per number of booking transactions. No association was found for TripAdvisor ranking (i.e., placement in a ranking list from best to worst in the particular location) with hotel booking revenue per number of booking transactions (Torres, Singh & Robertson-Ring 2015). However, not differentiating between positive and negative valence of the review potentially misses key information, as valence of a review can potentially impact hotel room bookings. Also, although that study measured aggregate booking behavior and a relationship with TripAdvisor content on a macro level, a major gap missing is that there does not appear to be any studies on the micro level that focus on how individual consumers reading online TripAdvisor reviews impact individual consumer behavior related to future actual purchases after reading these reviews. The purpose of this paper is twofold. One aim is to study consumer intentions to use the TripAdvisor consumer review website. Another aim is to study consumer purchase behavior after reading TripAdvisor reviews. The methodology used is to consider relevant variables from the areas of trust, knowledge about online review fraud, Internet and online travel review website experience, demographics, and

the theory of planned behavior as predictor variables for the analyses. A multivariate framework is used to consider the impact of these variables when included in the same analytical model. The a-priori hypothesis approach is to consider if these potentially relevant variables are associated with our study aims of intentions to use the TripAdvisor consumer review website and also consumer purchase behavior after reading TripAdvisor reviews.

This paper also provides several applied contributions. First, this paper provides guidance on topics of importance for hotel managers on how online consumer reviews are perceived and reacted upon by potential consumers. Second, this paper provides applied recommendations for hotel managers on how best to interact with the TripAdvisor review-based travel website.

Literature Review

The literature review section reviews potentially relevant variables that have either been studied with online review websites in general or more specifically with TripAdvisor. One major area of focus is on the area of trust with several aspects of trust that include brand trust, search engine optimization (SEO) trust for published online consumer reviews, trust in positive affect wording of reviews, and trust in negative affect wording of reviews. We also review knowledge of online review website fraud patterns, previous Internet and online travel review website experience, demographics, and the theory of planned behavior.

There are many types of products sold on the Internet. One classification approach useful for understanding online shopping behavior for these types of products is the experience versus search goods product paradigm. The greater the need to experience the product prior to purchase indicates that a product has more experience product content than search product content. Products can be either experience products or search products or contain both experience and search attributes (Weathers, Swain & Grover 2015). A study of online reviews for products with

mostly experience attributes (vacuum cleaners, outdoor grills, skin care products) and mostly search attributes (DVD players, laptop computers, digital camcorders) found that online reviews for products with balanced online reviews containing both positive and negative reviews were perceived as more helpful for experience goods than for search goods (Weathers *et al.* 2015). Products sold online can have perceived performance risk where the consumer is concerned that the product will not work properly. Reading of online reviews was associated with decreased concerns of perceived performance risk for purchasing home appliance products online (Ibrahim, Suki & Harun 2014). Reading of negative online reviews was more persuasive than reading positive online reviews for intention to purchase group package tours online, a product with supply network complexity associated with increased risk (Tsaur, Huang & Luoh 2014). Also, increased consumer trust is associated with decreased perceived risk when purchasing products online (Meskaran, Abdullah & Ghazali 2010). A tourism service such as hotel accommodation is an intangible service which can have online reviews evaluating many different aspects of the hotel experience as important (e.g., staff service, room cleanliness, property location) and may be associated with greater risk than other products that are evaluated on just one aspect (e.g., product works properly).

Brand trust is the confidence level that consumers believe a given brand will perform properly even in risky situations (Delgado-Ballester, Munuera-Aleman & Yague-Guillen 2003). Customer brand trust is positively associated with customer loyalty (Atakora 2014). With regard to social media networks, brand trust is positively associated with consumer brand relationships, consumer product relationships, and consumer company relationships. However, among those who are highly engaged with a social media network, the positive association of brand trust only occurs for consumer brand relationships and consumer product relationships but not for consumer company relationships (Habibi,

Laroche & Richard 2014). Brand trust is positively correlated with purchase behavior (Fianto *et al*. 2014).

We hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1a: Brand trust is positively associated with intention to use the online travel review website of TripAdvisor.

Hypothesis 1b: Brand trust is positively associated with the behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor.

SEO tactics are an essential part of the branding strategy of many companies. SEO tactics focus on directing and increasing activity towards a company's website (Lombardi 2013). SEO tactics can boost a webpage ranking by thousands and elevate a webpage to the top 20 results from a Google search (Boutet & Quoniam 2012). Elevating a webpage's rank from a lower ranking to a higher ranking seen as one of the first few retrieved results from an Internet search greatly increases a page viewer's tendency to purchase (i.e., increased conversion rate) (Ghose & Yang 2009). However, some companies use questionable *black-hat* SEO tactics that do not comply with a search engine's webmaster guidelines. For example, the black hat technique of link farms creates many website links using automated processes solely for the purpose of increasing web rank (Malaga 2010).

The presence of consumer online reviews on a company's website is central for a successful SEO strategy. Key attributes of consumer reviews are rating score, average rating score, number of reviews, and number of recent reviews (Anderson & Magruder 2012; Short 2013). Consumer online reviews are used by Google to determine website rankings (Kramers 2016). One important SEO tactic is to encourage consumers to write reviews (Spears 2011). However, some companies take shortcuts and instead post paid-for reviews that are fake and not written by consumers using their products (Trika 2016). Consumers increasingly value user-generated content more than content created by marketers (Moran,

Muzellec & Nolan 2014). We propose a concept of SEO trust that measures the confidence that consumers believe that posted reviews on a company's website are those written by consumers who used the product. Consumers would be interested in this SEO trust as consumers want to know that the website that they retrieved as high ranked after they completed their web search is based upon true user-generated content reviews and not fake reviews.

We hypothesize:

Hypothesis 2a: SEO trust for the SEO tactic of published online consumer reviews is positively associated with intention to use the online travel review website of TripAdvisor.

Hypothesis 2b: SEO trust for the SEO tactic of published online consumer reviews is positively associated with the behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor.

Affect can potentially influence consumer purchase behavior. A review of a number of studies indicates that those experiencing negative affect often choose to engage in behaviors that allow for increased positive feelings (Cohen, Pham & Andrade 2006). Positive reviews are associated with positive changes in attitudes toward a hotel. Negative reviews are associated with negative changes in attitudes toward a hotel (Vermeulen & Seegers 2009). In a study of book reviews on Amazon.com, positive wording in a review increased product purchase intentions, while negative wording in a review decreased product purchase intentions. (Ludwig *et al.* 2013). Also, a study of both DVD and book review ratings on Amazon.com found that negative reviews were more influential than positive reviews for receiving more votes and for being rated as more helpful (Kuan *et al.* 2015). Social media also can impact affect. Facebook users who had reduced positive content in news feeds had a greater percentage of negative status updates. Similarly, Facebook users who had reduced negative content in news feeds had a greater percentage of positive status updates (Kramer, Guillory & Hancock 2014).

We hypothesize:

Hypothesis 3a: Trust in positive affect wording in a review is positively associated with intention to use the online travel review website of TripAdvisor.

Hypothesis 3b: Trust in positive affect wording in a review is positively associated with the behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor.

Hypothesis 4a: Trust in negative affect wording in a review is negatively associated with intention to use the online travel review website of TripAdvisor.

Hypothesis 4b: Trust in negative affect wording in a review is negatively associated with the behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor.

As reviews can influence consumer purchase behavior, there is the potential for review fraud on review-based websites. On the consumer review website of Yelp, a study found that when a restaurant has a few reviews, it is associated with increased fraudulent positive reviews. Increased competition from similar independent restaurants is associated with increased fraudulent negative reviews (Luca & Zervas 2013). Also, low ratings of a vendor can possibly influence the vendor to engage in increased fraudulent positive reviews (Luca & Zervas 2013). Although many reviewers will review after a confirmed purchase, there exist a small percentage of reviews that are not linked to a confirmed purchase on websites such as Amazon.com and these non-linked reviews can potentially be fraudulent reviews (Anderson & Simester 2014). Alternatively, the concept of rating bubbles shows that many product websites tend to have overly positive ratings for products and may reflect human nature and not that there are mostly fraudulent positive reviews (Muchnik, Aral & Taylor 2013). Research for purchases on Amazon.com found that consumers believe that newly advertised books, DVDs, and videos contain manipulated reviews and focus more on price as a quality indicator rather than on the review (Hu, Liu & Sambamurthy 2011). Also, consumers

ignore book reviews on Amazon.com perceived to be manipulated reviews when deciding which book to purchase (Hu *et al.* 2012).

We hypothesize:

Hypothesis 5a: Knowledge of online review website fraud patterns is positively associated with intention to use the online travel review website of TripAdvisor.

Hypothesis 5b: Knowledge of online review website fraud patterns is positively associated with the behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor.

Previous experience with online review websites can influence purchase intention and purchase behavior. The belief that online reviews, blog posts, and other forms of electronic word of mouth are credible is associated with increased purchase intention (Fan & Miao 2012). Consumer belief that the user generated content is credible is associated with increased intentions to use the online review content for planning their travel (Ayeh, Au & Law 2013). However, customer experience with consumer generated media was not associated with trust in a travel review website (Filieri, Alguezaui & McLeay 2015). Number of reviews posted by a reviewer on TripAdvisor was associated with increased review helpfulness (Lee, Law & Murphy 2011). In general, previous online shopping experience is associated with increased online purchase intentions (Ling, Chai & Piew 2010; Tong 2010). With regard to specific online purchasing topics, reading online reviews about cars is associated with increased purchase intention for cars (Jalilvand & Samiei 2012a). Reading mostly positive travel reviews and also reading recent positive travel reviews were associated with intentions to book a hotel room (Sparks & Browning 2011). In two studies that used number of hotel reviews published as a proxy measure for hotel bookings, increased average positive ratings for hotel reviews were associated with increased number of hotel reviews (Ye, Law & Gu 2009; Ye *et al.* 2009).

We hypothesize:

Hypothesis 6a: Previous Internet and online travel review website experience is positively associated with intention to use the online travel review website of TripAdvisor.

Hypothesis 6b: Previous Internet and online travel review website experience is positively associated with the behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor.

Demographics are useful for understanding consumer use of online review websites. Use of online word-of-mouth differs by age where those younger than age 40 use online word-of-mouth more often than those above age 40 (Moliner-Velázquez, Ruiz-Molina & Fayos-Gardó 2015). Marketers often study race/ethnicity for understanding consumer behavior (Jafari & Visconti 2015). In particular, a greater percentage of whites preferred to shop online than Hispanics. Also, Hispanics had lower perceptions of the security of Internet shopping websites than whites (Changchit, Garofolo & Gonzalez 2009). There can be sex differences for the impact of online reviews as both negative and positive reviews have a greater influence for purchase intention for women than men (Bae & Lee 2011). Culture is relevant for online reviews. Online review content of those from the United States had lengthier reviews and more direct recommendations than Chinese. Chinese had a greater focus for content on website customer service and product packaging than those from the United States (Lai *et al.* 2013). Also, online purchasing behavior differs by culture. Those from the United States had lower perceived risk for purchasing online and a greater number of purchases than those from either Jordan or India (Kailani & Kumar 2011). Demographics can influence travel planning. In a sample of Generation Y college students, women had greater perceptions than men that the Internet is beneficial for reserving hotels. Also, those ages 18–25 had greater perceptions than those ages 26–35 that travel agents have higher transaction costs than using the Internet for reserving hotels (Prayag & Del Chiappa 2014).

We hypothesize:

Hypothesis 7a: Demographic factors of younger age, female sex, white race/ethnicity, and those born in the United States are positively associated with intention to use the online travel review website of TripAdvisor.

Hypothesis 7b: Demographic factors of younger age, female sex, white race/ethnicity, and those born in the United States are positively associated with the behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor.

This study is guided by the theory of planned behavior. The theory of planned behavior suggests that attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control influence intentions and intentions then influence behavior (Askew *et al.* 2014). This theory has been used for understanding social networking website use (Gironda & Korgaonkr 2014) and liking a brand on a social networking website (Muk, Chung & Kim 2014). This theory has been successfully used as a conceptual framework for understanding electronic word-of-mouth, a broad construct that also includes online review websites, and how it relates to intentions to travel (Jalilvand & Samiei 2012b).

We hypothesize:

Hypothesis 8a: The theory of planned behavior is positively associated with intention to use the online travel review website of TripAdvisor with attitudes, social norms, and behavioral control positively associated with intentions.

Hypothesis 8b: The theory of planned behavior is positively associated with behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor with attitudes, social norms, and behavioral control positively associated with behavior.

Methodology

Participants

We approached in person 745 students to participate in our paper-based survey at a public college located in New York City. There were 60 students who refused to participate. Also, 23 surveys collected were deemed invalid due to not completing substantial portions of the survey. We calculated a response rate of 89 percent from the 662 completed surveys [(662 / 745) x 100%]. Also, 42 people above the age of 36 were excluded from our sample in order to maintain a sample of young adults. From the 620 remaining surveys, we analyzed the data. The survey was conducted from December 2013 to January 2014. This study received ethical approval from the college Human Research Protection Program. All participants provided informed consent.

Participants completed anonymous surveys at the college either before, during, or after class. The survey began with a description of the purpose of three consumer review websites of Yelp, TripAdvisor, and UrbanSpoon. Participants were then asked to answer a series of questions in regard to these websites. The analyses in this manuscript focus on TripAdvisor. Further details about the research with this sample for separate outcomes for the consumer goods and services review website of Yelp (Fogel & Zachariah 2017) and the restaurant review website of UrbanSpoon (Fogel & Kumar 2017) can be found by reading the published articles on these topics.

Measures

Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior variables studies intentions, attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control. Questions were created and based upon the manual for creating a survey using the Theory of Planned Behavior (Francis *et al.* 2004).

Attitudes

The attitudes scale consisted of four items. A Likert-style scale was used to measure all the items with a range from 1 to 7 with negative and positive attitudes as the endpoints. Two items were reverse coded to be in the direction of 7 = positive. All items had the stock phrase of "Reading reviews about a merchant or vendor on online review-based websites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, or UrbanSpoon is:" An example positive endpoint had worthless = 1 and useful = 7. The total score was calculated by adding all four items. Greater scores indicate greater positive attitudes. Cronbach alpha in this sample was 0.75.

Subjective Norms

The social norms scale consisted of three items. A Likert-style scale was used to measure all the items with a range from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. An example item is, "It is expected of me that I read reviews about a merchant or vendor on online review-based websites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, or UrbanSpoon." The total score was calculated by adding all three items. Greater scores indicate greater positive social norms. Cronbach alpha in this sample was 0.64.

Behavioral Control

Behavior control consisted of four items. A Likert-style scale was used to measure all the items with a range from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. An example item is, "I am confident that if I wanted to, I could make a decision about a merchant or vendor on online review-based websites such as Yelp TripAdvisor, or UrbanSpoon." Two items were reverse coded to be in the direction of greater positive behavioral control. See Table 1 for the topics of these four items. Due to poor Cronbach alpha, we could not use a total score and each item was analyzed separately.

Demographics

Age (years), sex (man, woman), and race/ethnicity (White, African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, South Asian, or other), and born in the United States (no/yes) were measured.

Brand Trust

There were four items used to measure brand trust. Items were based upon topics used in a previous Likert-style scale for brand trust for particular products (Valta 2013) and modified for the current topic by replacing the particular brand name with "online reviews that I read on online review-based websites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, or UrbanSpoon about merchants or vendors." A Likert-style scale was used to measure all the items with a range from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Our items were, 1) "I trust online reviews that I read on online review-based websites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, or UrbanSpoon about merchants or vendors," 2) "Online reviews that I read on online review-based websites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, or UrbanSpoon about merchants or vendors meet my expectations," 3) "I feel confident in online reviews that I read on online review-based websites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, or UrbanSpoon about merchants or vendors," and 4) "Online reviews that I read on online review-based websites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, or UrbanSpoon about merchants or vendors never disappoint me." The total score was calculated by adding all four items. Greater scores indicate greater brand trust. Cronbach alpha in this sample was 0.78.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Trust

There were four items used to measure SEO trust for the SEO tactic of published online consumer reviews. Items were based upon topics studied in previous research about online reviews (Anderson & Magruder 2012; Short 2013). A Likert-style scale was used to measure all the items with a range from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. These items

were: 1) "The rating score (e.g., from 1 to 5 or positive/negative rating) from individual reviewers for a vendor or merchant influences me to trust the online reviews for a vendor or merchant," 2) "The total number of available reviews for a vendor or merchant influences me to trust the online reviews for a vendor or merchant," 3) "The average rating score (e.g., from 1 to 5 or percentage positive rating) for a vendor or merchant influences me to trust the online reviews for a vendor or merchant," and 4) "The number of recent reviews within the past month for a vendor or merchant influences me to trust the online reviews for a vendor or merchant." The total score was calculated by adding all four items. Greater scores indicate greater SEO trust. Cronbach alpha in this sample was 0.76.

Trust for Positive/Negative Affect Words

There were two items that measured use of either positive or negative affect words in reviews for trust in that review. Items were based upon topics studied in previous research (Ludwig *et al.* 2013). A Likert-style scale was used to measure all the items with a range from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. These items were, "Use of positive words such as love, nice, or sweet makes an online review more trustworthy" and "Use of negative words such as ugly, dumb, or hate makes an online review more trustworthy."

Knowledge

There were five questions used to measure knowledge. Questions were based upon topics studied in previous research with the online review website of Yelp (Luca & Zervas 2013). Choices were "yes" or "no" with yes answers indicating correct knowledge. These items were: 1) "A vendor or merchant that has a large number of low star or negative ratings on an online review-based website has increased risk for fraud with positive reviews," 2) "A vendor or merchant with very few reviews on an online review-based website has increased risk for fraud with positive

reviews," 3) "A vendor or merchant with many reviews on an online review-based website has decreased risk for fraud with positive reviews," 4) "A vendor or merchant that is part of a branded chain (and is not an independent establishment) has decreased risk for fraud with positive reviews on an online review-based website," and 5) "A vendor or merchant with a claimed page on an online review-based website where the vendor or merchant can respond to consumer comments, add photos, and post information about the service establishment has increased risk for fraud with positive reviews."

Internet and Online Travel Review Website Experience

One item was measured on a Likert-style with a range from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. This item was, "I typically read online review-based websites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, or UrbanSpoon, before visiting a new vendor or merchant." This was based upon a topic studied in a previous article (Short 2013). Two other items inquired about, "previously wrote a review on TripAdvisor" and "never read a review on TripAdvisor." Choices were either "no" or "yes." Two questions measured number of reviews read and percentage of reviews read that were believed to be real which were based upon topics studied in a previous article (Short 2013). These questions were: "How many online reviews do you read from review-based websites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, or UrbanSpoon, before visiting a new vendor or merchant?" and "What percentage of online reviews from review-based websites such as Yelp, TripAdvisor, or UrbanSpoon do you believe are those that were really composed by consumers?" Lastly, a question asked about number of hours using the Internet each week.

Outcome Variables

Intentions

The intentions scale consisted of three items. A Likert-style scale was used to measure the items with a range from 1 = strongly disagree to

7 = strongly agree. An example item is, "I expect to read reviews about a merchant or vendor on TripAdvisor to influence my decision about whether to use a service or purchase a product." We calculated a total score by adding the three items. Greater scores indicate greater positive intentions. Cronbach alpha in this sample was 0.95

Behavior

Behavior was measured with choices of "no" or "yes" to the item of, "After reading reviews about a merchant or vendor on TripAdvisor, these reviews resulted in my use of a service or purchase of a product."

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used for the continuous variables and percentage and frequency for the categorical variables. Linear regression analysis studied the outcome of intentions to use TripAdvisor. Predictors included the theory of planned behavior variables (attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control), demographic variables, the brand trust scale, the SEO trust scale, word trust variables, knowledge variables, and Internet and online travel review website experience variables. Logistic regression analysis studied the behavior outcome of, "after reading reviews about a merchant or vendor on TripAdvisor, these reviews resulted in my use of a service or purchase of a product." Predictors included all the above variables used for linear regression and also included the intentions scale. For both the linear and logistic regression analyses, univariate analyses were conducted. All those variables statistically significant in the univariate analysis were included simultaneously in a multivariate analysis. The variable of percentage of reviews really composed by consumers had a skewed distribution. As there were responses of zero precluding a logarithmic transformation, the value of 1 was added to all participants and then the variable was logarithmic transformed. All analyses used IBM SPSS version 22 (IBM Corporation 2013). All *p*-values were two-tailed.

Results

Table 1 describes the variables.

Variable	Mean	SD	Percentage	Frequency
Demographics				
Age (years)	22.73	3.36	---	---
Sex				
Women	---	---	58.2	361
Missing			0.5	3
Race/Ethnicity				
White			35.3	219
African American			11.3	70
Hispanic American			13.7	85
Asian/Asian American	---	---	22.9	142
Southeast Asian			6.8	42
Other			8.5	53
Missing			1.5	9
Born in United States				
Yes	---	---	56.6	351
Missing			0.6	4
Theory of Planned Behavior				
Attitudes	19.8	4.35	---	---
Subjective Norms	10.3	3.68	---	---
Confidence in decision making based on reviews and review websites	4.6	1.39	---	---
Easiness of decision making after reading reviews	4.4	1.40	---	---
Control over decision-making after reading reviews	4.6	1.56	---	---
Decision-making after reading reviews entirely up to me	5.1	1.55	---	---
Trust				
Brand Trust	13.2	2.52	---	---
SEO Trust	14.2	2.61	---	---
Use of positive words makes an online review more trustworthy	3.1	1.03	---	---
Use of negative words makes an online review more trustworthy	3.0	1.08	---	---

Variable	Mean	SD	Percentage	Frequency
Knowledge				
Knowledge of review fraud based on number of negative reviews				
Yes	---	---	56.9	353
Missing			2.1	13
Knowledge of review fraud based on few reviews				
Yes	---	---	42.4	263
Missing			2.1	13
Knowledge of review fraud based on many reviews				
Yes	---	---	54.0	335
Missing			2.4	15
Knowledge of review fraud for vendor part of branded chain	---			
Yes		---	51.9	322
Missing			3.2	20
Knowledge of review fraud by vendors who can respond to consumer comments	---	---	34.4	213
Yes			3.5	22
Missing				
Internet and Online Travel Review Website Experience				
Typically read online review-based websites before visiting a new vendor or merchant.	3.5	1.07	---	---
Previously wrote TripAdvisor reviews				
Yes	---	---	11.0	68
Missing			0.8	5
Never read review on TripAdvisor				
Yes	---	---	42.7	265
Missing			1.1	7
Number of reviews read before trying a new vendor	6.6	8.56	---	---
Percentage of reviews really composed by consumers	55.5	27.48	---	---

Variable	Mean	SD	Percentage	Frequency
Hours spent on the Internet per week	27.0	24.23	---	---
Outcomes				
Intentions	13.0	4.48		
Behavior				
Yes			43.4	269
Missing			3.7	23

Note: SD=standard deviation, SEO=search engine optimization

Table 1: Sample Characteristics of College Students

With regards to demographics, the mean age was nearly 23 years old and slightly more than half were women. Close to a quarter were Asian/Asian American. Other minority groups included Hispanic American with nearly 14 percent of participants and African American at over 11 percent. Slightly more than half were born in the United States. With regard to the theory of planned behavior variables, the attitudes score was above the midpoint toward strongly agree, subjective norms was below the midpoint towards strongly disagree, and all behavior control items scored above the midpoint in the direction of strongly agree. With regard to the trust variables, brand trust, SEO trust, and positive affect word trust scored slightly above the midpoint toward strongly agree. Negative affect word trust was at the midpoint between strongly disagree and strongly agree. Correct knowledge ranged from as high as 57 percent to as low as 34 percent. With regard to the Internet and online travel review website experience variables, typically read online reviews before visiting was slightly above the midpoint toward strongly agree. Slightly more than one-tenth had written a TripAdvisor review while more than 40 percent never read a review on TripAdvisor. The mean number of reviews read before trying a new vendor was nearly 7, the percentage of reviews that were thought to be real was 55 percent. Mean Internet weekly use was 27 hours. With regard to the outcome variables, mean intention was above the midpoint in the direction toward strongly agree. Almost half performed

the behavior of after reading reviews on TripAdvisor that the reviews resulted in use of a service or purchase of a product.

Table 2 shows linear regression analyses for intentions to use TripAdvisor.

Variable	Univariate B	SE	*p*-value	Multivariate B	SE	*p*-value
Demographics						
Age	0.04	0.05	0.42	---	---	---
Sex (women)	-0.04	0.37	0.91	---	---	---
Race						
White	reference					
African American	-1.03	0.62	0.09			
Hispanic American	-0.02	0.58	0.97	---	---	---
Asian/Asian American	0.32	0.49	0.51			
Southeast Asian	-0.32	0.75	0.67			
Other	0.69	0.69	0.31			
Born US				---	---	---
Yes	0.07	0.37	0.86			
Theory of Planned Behavior						
Attitudes	0.34	0.04	<0.001	0.15	0.04	<0.001
Subjective Norms	0.40	0.05	<0.001	0.15	0.05	0.003
Confidence in decision making based on reviews and review websites	1.30	0.12	<0.001	0.60	0.14	<0.001
Easiness of decision making after reading reviews	-0.12	0.13	0.37	---	---	---
Control over decision-making after reading reviews	-0.42	0.12	<0.001	-0.19	0.12	0.10
Decision-making after reading reviews entirely up to me	0.52	0.12	<0.001	0.07	0.12	0.52
Trust						
Brand Trust	0.58	0.07	<0.001	0.03	0.09	0.73
SEO Trust	0.65	0.06	<0.001	0.28	0.08	0.001

Variable	Univa-riate B	SE	*p*-value	Multi-variate B	SE	*p*-value
Use of positive words makes an online review more trustworthy	0.92	0.17	0.001	0.31	0.19	0.11
Use of negative words makes an online review more trustworthy	0.55	0.17	<0.001	0.001	0.18	0.10
Knowledge						
Knowledge of review fraud based on number of negative reviews (yes)	0.78	0.37	0.03	0.42	0.35	0.23
Knowledge of review fraud based on few reviews (yes)	0.27	0.37	0.46	---	---	---
Knowledge of review fraud based on many reviews (yes)	0.76	0.37	0.04	-0.40	0.35	0.26
Knowledge of review fraud for vendor part of branded chain (yes)	1.65	0.36	<0.001	0.78	0.36	0.03
Knowledge of review fraud by vendors who can respond to consumer comments (yes)	0.56	0.39	0.15	---	---	---
Internet and Online Travel Review Website Experience						
Typically read online review-based websites before visiting a new vendor or merchant	1.68	0.16	<0.001	0.62	0.18	0.001
Previously wrote TripAdvisor reviews	2.49	0.57	<0.001	1.23	0.54	0.02
Never read review on TripAdvisor	-1.52	0.36	<0.001	-0.79	0.34	0.02
Number of reviews read before trying a new vendor	2.66	0.45	<0.001	0.55	0.45	0.22
Percentage of reviews really composed by consumers	0.02	0.01	<0.001	-0.004	0.01	0.58

Variable	Univa-riate B	SE	p-value	Multi-variate B	SE	p-value
Hours spent on the Internet per week	0.36	0.49	0.47	---	---	---
Intercept				-0.89	1.40	0.52

Note: B=beta, SE=standard error, SEO=search engine optimization

Table 2: Linear Regression Analyses for Intention to Use TripAdvisor

In the univariate analysis, none of the demographic variables were associated with intentions. With regard to the theory of planned behavior variables, increased attitudes, increased subjective norms, increased confidence in decision making, and increased decision making entirely up to me were each statistically significantly associated with increased intentions. Decreased lack of control over decision-making was statistically significantly associated with increased intentions. With regard to the trust variables, increased brand trust, increased SEO trust, increased positive affect word trust, and increased negative affect word trust were each statistically significantly associated with increased intentions. With regard to the knowledge variables, correct knowledge of review fraud based on number of negative reviews, correct knowledge of review fraud based on many reviews, and correct knowledge of review fraud for a vendor part of a branded chain were each statistically significantly associated with increased intentions. With regard to the Internet and online travel review website experience variables, increased agreement for typically read review-based websites before visiting a new vendor or merchant, previous wrote a TripAdvisor review, increased percentage of number of reviews read and increased percentage of reviews believed to be real were each statistically significantly associated with increased intentions. Never wrote a TripAdvisor review was statistically significantly associated with decreased intentions. Internet use was not associated with intentions. In the multivariate analysis, only the theory of planned behavior variables of increased attitudes, increased subjective norms, increased confidence in decision making, the trust variable of increased

SEO trust, the knowledge variable of review fraud for a vendor part of a branded chain, the Internet experience variables of increased agreement for typically read online review-based websites before visiting a new vendor or merchant, and previous wrote TripAdvisor review were each statistically significantly associated with increased intentions. Never wrote a TripAdvisor review was statistically significantly associated with decreased intentions.

Table 3 shows logistic regression analyses for after reading reviews on TripAdvisor that the reviews resulted in use of a service or purchase of a product.

Variable	Univari-ate OR	95% CI	*p*-value	Multiva-riate OR	95% CI	*p*-value
Demographics						
Age	1.02	0.97, 1.07	0.37	---	---	---
Sex (women)	0.84	0.61, 1.17	0.31	---	---	---
Race/Ethnicity						
White	1.00					
African American	0.72	0.41, 1.26	0.25			
Hispanic American	0.86	0.51, 1.45	0.58			
Asian/Asian American	0.90	0.58, 1.39	0.63	---	---	---
Southeast Asian	0.85	0.44, 0.66	0.64			
Other	1.27	0.69, 2.33	0.44			
Born in United States	0.77	0.55, 1.06	0.11	---	---	---
Theory of Planned Behavior						
Intentions	1.33	1.26, 1.40	<0.001	1.25	1.17, 1.34	<0.001

Variable	Univari-ate OR	95% CI	*p*-value	Multiva-riate OR	95% CI	*p*-value
Attitudes	1.11	1.06, 1.15	<0.001	1.01	0.96, 1.07	0.70
Subjective Norms	1.16	1.10, 1.21	<0.001	1.05	0.98, 1.13	0.15
Confidence in decision making based on reviews and review websites	1.31	1.16, 1.48	<0.001	0.90	0.75, 1.09	0.27
Easiness of decision making after reading reviews	0.97	0.87, 1.09	0.62	---	---	---
Control over decision-making after reading reviews	0.90	0.81, 1.00	0.05	1.05	0.90, 1.23	0.54
Decision-making after reading reviews entirely up to me	0.98	0.88, 1.08	0.65	---	---	---
Trust						
Brand Trust	1.26	1.17, 1.36	<0.001	1.10	0.98, 1.23	0.11
SEO Trust	1.21	1.12, 1.29	<0.001	0.93	0.83, 1.04	0.19
Use of positive words makes an online review more trustworthy	1.48	1.25, 1.74	<0.001	1.20	0.94, 1.54	0.15
Use of negative words makes an online review more trustworthy	1.31	1.13, 1.53	0.001	1.07	0.85, 1.35	0.58
Knowledge						
Knowledge of review fraud based on	1.16	0.83, 1.61	0.39	---	---	

Variable	Univari-ate OR	95% CI	*p*-value	Multiva-riate OR	95% CI	*p*-value
number of negative reviews (yes)						
Knowledge of review fraud based on few reviews (yes)	1.40	1.01, 1.94	0.04	1.03	0.66, 1.59	0.90
Knowledge of review fraud based on many reviews (yes)	1.18	0.85, 1.64	0.32	---	---	---
Knowledge of review fraud for vendor part of branded chain (yes)	1.87	1.34, 2.60	<0.001	1.28	0.83, 1.98	0.27
Knowledge of review fraud by vendors who can respond to consumer comments (yes)	1.54	1.10, 2.17	0.01	1.22	0.77, 1.92	0.40
Internet and Online Travel Review Website Experience						
Typically read online review-based websites before visiting a new vendor or merchant	2.11	1.76, 2.52	<0.001	1.32	1.03, 1.69	0.03
Previously wrote TripAdvisor reviews	4.18	2.35, 7.44	<0.001	2.90	1.37, 6.16	0.01
Never read review on TripAdvisor	0.36	0.26, 0.51	<0.001	0.55	0.35, 0.85	0.01
Number of reviews read before trying a new vendor	2.76	1.79, 4.27	<0.001	1.26	0.70, 2.27	0.45

Variable	Univari-ate OR	95% CI	*p*-value	Multiva-riate OR	95% CI	*p*-value
Percentage of reviews really composed by consumers	1.01	1.003, 1.02	0.01	1.00	1.00, 1.01	0.43
Hours spent on the Internet per week	1.28	0.83, 1.98	0.27	---	---	---

Note: OR=odds ratio, CI=confidence, SEO=search engine optimization

Table 3: Logistic Regression Analyses for Behavior of Use of a Service or Purchase of a Product After Reading Reviews On TripAdvisor

In the univariate analysis, none of the demographic variables were associated with use. With regard to the theory of planned behavior variables, increased intentions, increased attitudes, increased subjective norms, and increased confidence in decision making were each associated with increased odds for use. Increased control for decision making was associated with decreased odds for use. With regard to the trust variables, increased brand trust, increased SEO trust, increased positive affect word trust, and increased negative affect word trust were each associated with increased odds for use. Correct knowledge of review fraud based on few reviews, a vendor part of a branded chain, and ability of a vendor to respond to consumer comments were each associated with increased odds for use. With regard to the Internet and online travel review website experience variables, increased agreement for typically read online review-based websites before visiting a new vendor or merchant, previous wrote a TripAdvisor review, increased percentage of number of reviews read, and increased percentage of reviews believed to be real were each associated with increased odds for use. Never wrote a TripAdvisor review was associated with decreased odds for use. In the multivariate analysis, only the theory of planned behavior variables of increased intentions, increased agreement for typically read online review-based websites before visiting a new vendor or merchant, and previous wrote a TripAdvisor

review were each associated with increased odds for use. Never wrote a TripAdvisor review was associated with decreased odds for use.

Discussion

There were a number of variables associated with intention to use TripAdvisor. We found that increased theory of planned behavior variables (attitudes, subjective norms, confidence in decision making), SEO trust, correct knowledge that a vendor or merchant that is part of a branded chain has decreased risk for fraud with positive reviews on an online review-based website, increased online travel review website experience variables (agreement for typically read online review-based websites before visiting a new vendor or merchant and previously wrote a TripAdvisor review) were each associated with increased intention to use TripAdvisor. Those who had never read a review on TripAdvisor were associated with decreased intention to use TripAdvisor. There were a number of variables associated with behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor. Increased intentions and increased online travel review website experience variables (agreement for typically read online review-based websites before visiting a new vendor or merchant and previously wrote a TripAdvisor review) were each associated with increased odds for behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor. Those who had never read a review on TripAdvisor were associated with decreased odds for behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor. Table 4 summarizes the hypotheses and how they relate to the study findings.

We found support for hypothesis 2a that increased SEO trust for the SEO tactic of published online consumer reviews was associated with increased intentions to use TripAdvisor but did not find any support for hypothesis 2b that SEO trust for the SEO tactic of published online consumer reviews was associated with behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor. We did not find support for hypotheses 1a, 1b, 3a, 3b, 4a, and 4b where brand trust,

positive affect word trust, and negative affect word trust were not associated with either intentions to use TripAdvisor or behavior after reading reviews on TripAdvisor.

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Topic	Hypothesis Support
Trust		
1a	Brand trust and intentions	No support
1b	Brand trust and behavior	No support
2a	Search engine optimization trust for published online consumer reviews and intentions	Yes support
2b	Search engine optimization trust for published online consumer reviews and behavior	No support
3a	Trust in positive affect wording in a review and intentions	No support
3b	Trust in positive affect wording in a review and behavior	No support
4a	Trust in negative affect wording in a review and intentions	No support
4b	Trust in negative affect wording in a review and behavior	No support
Knowledge		
5a	Knowledge of online review website fraud patterns and intentions	Yes support
5b	Knowledge of online review website fraud patterns and behavior	No support
Internet and Online Travel Review Website Experience		
6a	Internet and online travel review website experience and intentions	Yes support
6b	Internet/online travel review website experience and behavior	Yes support

Hypothesis	Hypothesis Topic	Hypothesis Support
Demographics		
7a	Demographics and intentions	No support
7b	Demographics and behavior	No support
Theory of Planned Behavior		
8a	Theory of planned behavior and intentions	Yes support
8b	Theory of planned behavior and behavior	Yes support

Note: Intentions are for intentions to use TripAdvisor

Behavior is for use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor

Table 4: Hypothesis Summary

Consumers trust Google and click on content placed in higher rank positions after a website search (Pan *et al.* 2007). Our results for SEO trust and intentions to use TripAdvisor are similar to this finding as consumers trust the SEO online review content on TripAdvisor that influences the pattern of rankings on TripAdvisor and intend to use TripAdvisor. Our results also show that it is specifically SEO trust topics that are associated with intentions to use TripAdvisor. The TripAdvisor website presents ratings consistent with a search engine optimization approach. Recent reviews are listed first and the number of individual reviews in each rating category is presented at the top of the reviews. Furthermore, users can choose to browse reviews by average ranking. As TripAdvisor provides reviews in this format, consumers are likely to connect with and want to use such a website. The lack of any association of SEO trust with behavior is possibly either because intentions do not always translate into behavior or that there is an intermediate variable necessary to occur before SEO trust translates into behavior.

We found partial support for hypothesis 5a, as correct knowledge for a vendor or merchant that is part of a branded chain (and is not an independent establishment) has decreased risk for fraud with positive

reviews on an online review-based website was associated with increased intentions to use TripAdvisor. However, we did not find support for hypothesis 5b, as correct knowledge for any of the knowledge questions was not associated with behavior. Hotels that are part of a branded chain have a greater brand reputation than non-branded chain hotels and branded chains can successfully charge more than non-branded chains (Becerra, Santaló & Silva 2013) and also rely less on intermediate booking agents than non-branded chains (Calveras & Orfila 2014). Consumers have greater intentions to use TripAdvisor to search for reviews about branded hotel chains as they believe that the content from these reviews are less likely to be fraudulent. The lack of any association for knowledge about hotel branded chains and behavior can occur for two possible reasons. First, research with restaurants found that increased positive brand reputation is associated with increased brand trust (Han, Nguyen & Lee 2015). However, our study did not find any association of brand trust with either intentions or behavior. Second, intentions do not always translate into behavior.

We found support for both hypothesis 6a and 6b, as increased agreement for typically read online review-based websites before visiting a new vendor or merchant and previously wrote a TripAdvisor review were each associated with both increased intention to use TripAdvisor and with behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor. Similarly, those who had never read a review on TripAdvisor were associated with decreased intention to use TripAdvisor and decreased behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor. This is similar to the research that reading mostly positive travel reviews and also reading recent positive travel reviews is associated with increased intentions to book a hotel room (Sparks & Browning 2011). Our study adds that this occurs not only for intentions but also for behavior. Although we found univariate associations for number of reviews read before trying a new vendor and percentage of reviews really composed by consumers with both intentions

and behavior, this pattern was not seen in the multivariate analyses. We suggest that the other variables in the analytical model and especially those about online review-based websites in general and TripAdvisor are the key variables for understanding intentions and behavior.

We did not find any support for hypotheses 7a or 7b, as none of the demographic variables of age, sex, race/ethnicity, and born in the United States were associated with intention and behavior as related to TripAdvisor. Multivariate analyses with demographic predictor variables that included other predictor variables of trust, knowledge, and online travel review website experience for outcomes of online consumer review websites for restaurants (Fogel & Kumar 2017) and for Yelp (a review website for consumer goods and services) (Fogel & Zachariah 2017) did not find any association of demographic variables of age, sex, race/ethnicity, and born in the United States with behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on these online consumer review websites. Our findings for TripAdvisor are similar to this pattern. It is possible that although demographics are an important market segment for understanding travel behavior such as preferred trip duration, preferred accommodation type, and preferred transportation type (Moisescu 2013), this pattern does not occur for analyses for the online consumer travel website of TripAdvisor that adjust for other variables of trust, knowledge, and online travel review website experience in a multivariate analysis that include variables of trust, knowledge, and online travel review website experience.

We found support for hypotheses 8a and 8b. As suggested by the theory of planned behavior (Askew *et al.* 2014), attitudes, subjective norms, and behavioral control were associated with intention to use TripAdvisor. Intention was associated with behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor.

Limitations

This study has some limitations. First, we only studied those from one college and those from other colleges or areas may have different responses. Second, our sample only included those ages 18 through 35. Future research should study those of other age groups. Third, we did not ask about the typical length of TripAdvisor reviews read. Future research should include a question about the typical length of TripAdvisor reviews read, as length of review may contribute toward understanding intention and behavior. Fourth, although TripAdvisor is primarily used for hotel ratings, there are ratings available for "things to do" and restaurants. It is possible that some respondents answered for things to do and restaurants and not for hotels. Fifth, our measure of behavior was based on self-report. It is possible that respondents may have overestimated how TripAdvisor influenced their behavior.

Conclusions and Managerial Implications

In conclusion, we found that increased SEO trust for the SEO tactic of published online consumer reviews and correct knowledge for a vendor or merchant that is part of a branded chain has decreased risk for fraud with positive reviews were each associated with increased intention to use TripAdvisor. Increased agreement for typically read online review-based websites before visiting a new vendor or merchant and previously wrote a TripAdvisor review were each associated with both increased intention to use TripAdvisor and with behavior of use of a service or purchase of a product after reading reviews on TripAdvisor. Some hotel reviews on TripAdvisor have hotel manager responses and some do not have hotel manager responses. Manager response is associated with increased consumer perception of helpfulness of reviews on TripAdvisor (Kwok & Xie 2016). Manager response to negative reviews improves company reputation (Rose & Blodgett 2016). Also, managers more often respond to positive hotel reviews than negative hotel reviews (Lee & Blum 2015). It is possible that consumer readers of reviews may focus on the negative

reviews. We recommend that managers of hotels should always post professional responses to explain why the negative experience occurred to the customer who wrote the negative review. This may allow the consumer who reads the review to be reassured and have increased trust about the hotel and thus consider visiting the hotel, regardless of whether the consumer believes that there is increased risk for review fraud. Also, managers should consider paying for a sponsored review that is listed on top of other reviews as this review may be read and lead to hotel purchase behavior. As branded chain hotel reviews are considered less likely to be fraudulent than non-branded chain hotel reviews, managers of non-branded chain hotel reviews should respond to all reviews including positive reviews with content to reassure the reader that these positive reviews are genuine and not fraudulent. Lastly, TripAdvisor has a strong following and those who typically read and write reviews are those more likely to make hotel stay purchase decisions based upon content that was reviewed on TripAdvisor.

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