

# Conceptualizing Negatively-valenced Influencing Behavior: Forms and Triggers

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This study shows how customers engage in negatively-valenced influencing behavior (NVIB) and what triggers customers to use different forms of NVIB in an online context.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A qualitative study is conducted using an unobtrusive netnography. Data collected comprises 954 negatively valenced online reviews posted on TripAdvisor to hotels, restaurants, and ‘things to do’ in twelve different destinations worldwide.

**Findings** – Drawing on recent literature relating to customer engagement behavior (CEB), this paper identifies and conceptualizes the relationship between five cognitive (service failure, overpricing, deception) and emotional (disappointment and insecurity) triggers of six forms of direct (dissuading, warning and endorsing competitors) and indirect (discrediting, expressing regret and deriding) NVIB.

**Research limitations** –The unobtrusive netnography has inherent limitations that lend itself to inductive rich insights rather than generalization. The study only focuses on NVIB within a specific online context namely TripAdvisor.

**Practical implications** –This paper provides managers with knowledge of the specific triggers of NVIB. Additionally, the paper conceptualizes the various forms of NVIB, how customers use them and what triggers them to use each form. Moreover, the paper offers relevant data-inferred recommendations to service managers on how to manage each form.

**Originality/value** – This research is the first to identify forms and triggers of NVIB, classify direct and indirect forms, and conceptualize relationships between forms and triggers.

**Keywords** –Customer Engagement Behavior, Influencing Behavior, Negatively valenced influencing behavior, Online reviews, TripAdvisor.

**Paper type** – Research paper

## **Introduction**

In today's markets, the explosive growth of the Internet has given customers a dramatic influencing role (Dessart, Veloutsou and Morgan-Thomas, 2016; Kumar et al., 2010). Moving beyond the passive role of receivers of firms' offerings and armed with knowledge, skills, experience, and time (Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016); customers proactively engage online beyond transactions through behavioral manifestations (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Libai et al., 2010). Customers rely on each other to get authoritative information (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014) and are influenced by the choices and opinions of other customers about products and services (Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo, 2004). In particular, online reviews are a major source of information. Recent market research has revealed that 77% of customers read online reviews before making a purchase decision while 35% adjust their entire plans based on online reviews (Mathwick and Mosteller, 2017; Phelan, Chen and Haney, 2013; WorldTravelMarket.com, 2014).

To capture the enhanced role customers play, the overarching concept of customer engagement behavior (CEB) is a concept that has an impact on customer experiences, values and performance of organizations (Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2016). Its pivotal role is well recognized by marketing and service research and firms are increasingly devoting their strategic efforts to foster CEB that are positive for a focal organization (Harmeling et al., 2017; Kumar et al., 2010; Van Doorn et al., 2010). However, to our knowledge, this research focuses less on how customer experiences with a focal organisation may trigger CEB that are harmful to the organization (Hollebeek et al., 2016).

This paper studies CEB through which customers willingly contribute resources with a firm/brand focus beyond transactions and resulting from triggers (Van Doorn et al., 2010, Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014). CEB has various forms that draw together a range of customer activities beyond normal transactions with 'implications for value creation' for customers, firms, and other customers (Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016, p. 21). This paper focuses on one of these forms, namely, influencing behavior which refers to customer contributions of resources (e.g. knowledge, skills, time and experience) to adjust other customers' knowledge, perception, and preferences towards a focal service provider (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014).

Customers' shared online influencing behaviors act as a contribution of resources into other customers' purchase processes (Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016; Grisseman and Stokburger-Sauer, 2012). For example, customers engage in influencing behavior to reward or punish a firm for a given customer experience by recommending or warning others not to transact with a provider respectively (Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016). As a result, influencing behavior might adjust other customers' expectations about service providers and the way they evaluate the value of offerings (Bansal and Voyer, 2000; Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1993). Hence, influencing behavior may affect attitude and intentions of other customers towards these providers (Bolton and Drew, 1991; Bowden et al., 2017; Oliver, 1980).

Favorable/unfavorable customer experiences emerge when customers are exposed to events that have physical, perceptual, affective and cognitive aspects that they recognise, interpret and respond to (McKnight and Sechrest, 2003). These triggering events affect the valence of specific customers' influencing behaviors (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2016; Van Doorn et al., 2010). The valence of influencing behavior reflects the extent to which particular service outcomes are perceived by customers as good or bad and is considered challenging for being uncontrollable in most instances (Brady and Cronin, 2001; Brady et al., 2006; Högström, Rosner and Gustafsson, 2010). Additionally, its importance lies in its potential impacts; positive (negative) valence of influencing behavior might have favorable (detrimental) long-term financial, relational, and reputational consequences on brands/firms (Kumar et al., 2010; Van Doorn et al., 2010). For example, triggered by unfavorable service experience, customers engage in negatively valenced influencing behavior to advise others not to transact with focal service providers (Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016) which by its turn might negatively impact the way other customers' think, feel and behave towards these providers (Zimbardo and Leippe, 1991) and consequently, influencing behavior has the potential to reduce a firm's value (Kumar et al., 2010).

In today's digital world, the importance of online contexts has led to a significant influence of customers' online influencing behaviors in the service industry (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). Specifically, negatively valenced influencing behavior (NVIB) which is expected to have potentially detrimental impacts being contagious and viral in nature (Bowden et al., 2017). However, despite its potentially

detrimental effects, research is skewed towards positively valenced while understanding NVIB remains scant in literature, especially empirically, and specifically regarding its forms and triggers (Hollebeek et al., 2016; Van Doorn et al., 2010).

The concept of NVIB within CEB literature is currently undefined; however, based on Jaakkola and Alexander (2014), this paper defines NVIB as *customer contributions of resources to negatively affect other customers' knowledge, expectations and perception about a focal service provider*. Additionally, despite indications that NVIB might have different forms, there is no typology to date, although it is a key challenge for service firms to manage online NVIB appropriately (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2016; Van Doorn et al., 2010). Finally, as indicated earlier NVIB will have triggers which service managers should know in order to enhance their online reputation and subsequently their revenues (Anderson, 2012; Wu et al., 2016).

Influenced by recent texts highlighting a need for scholarly and managerial understanding of NVIB, specifically regarding its forms and triggers within a network (Bowden et al., 2017; Hollebeek et al., 2016; Van Doorn et al., 2010); this study uses online customer reviews posted to TripAdvisor to enact focal NVIB. This is to show how customers engage in NVIB by conceptualizing its forms, and what triggers customers to engage in NVIB by identifying its triggers. Within this context, this research provides insight into negatively valenced customers' behavioral manifestations within a tourism service-related virtual community. Additionally, this paper conceptualizes NVIB as underpinned by a different nomological network (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2016; Smith, Juric and Niu, 2013) unlike the majority of extant studies, where positive and negative engagement have been conceptualized as two opposite forms of the same construct underpinned by the same nomological elements that signal positive engagement (e.g. trust, rapport, brand attachment, and customer empowerment).

To contribute to the growing literature on CEB and empirically respond to recent research calls, this paper first contributes by identifying and conceptualizing six forms and five emotional and cognitive triggers of NVIB. Secondly, by classifying

forms of NVIB as direct and indirect according to the way customers use these forms; and, finally, by exploring relationships between forms and triggers of NVIB.

Practically, this paper addresses one of the challenges for service providers to manage NVIB centred on identifying its different forms (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2016; Van Doorn et al., 2010). Additionally, this study provides practitioners with triggers of NVIB and offers data-inferred recommendations to manage different forms of NVIB. The paper commences by discussing the literature on CEB and influencing behavior, before outlining the methodological approach adopted. The subsequent sections report and discuss the study's findings, implications, limitations, and a future research agenda.

## **Theoretical Background**

### *Customer Engagement Behavior (CEB)*

Customer engagement (CE) is a psychological state that takes place by virtue of interactive customer experiences with a firm or brand (Brodie et al., 2011). Typically, CE is multidimensional, capturing customers' cognitive, behavioral, and emotional investment in specific firm/brand interactions (Brodie et al., 2011; Groeger, Moroko and Hollebeek, 2016). This paper acknowledges this tripartite dimension but concentrates on the behavioral dimension of CE represented by the term CEB (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Although understanding CEB has become one of the top priorities for firms and a new research perspective in marketing and service management (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; MSI, 2016), extant research is largely conceptual (Hollebeek et al., 2016). This paper focuses on CEB, through which customers willingly contribute resources with a firm/brand focus beyond transactions and resulting from triggers (Van Doorn et al., 2010, Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014).

In general, triggers refer to factors or events experienced by customers that change the basis of a relationship and alter customer's evaluation of an offering or service, consequently affect the valence of CEB (Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos, 2005; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2016; Van Doorn et al., 2010). The valence of behavior refers to positive or negative characteristics of emotion or behavior based on theories of emotion (Colombetti, 2005). For example, 'approach, retaining,

tolerance, and acquisition' refer to positive valence, while 'withdrawal, escape, refusal, and aggression' refer to negative valence (Lewin, 1935, p. 77; Schneirla, 1959, p. 30). The valence of behavior reflects the extent to which particular service outcomes are perceived by customers as good or bad and is considered challenging for being uncontrollable in most instances (Brady et al., 2006).

The importance of valence of CEB is represented by its potential impacts; positive (negative) valence of behavior might have favorable (detrimental) long-term financial, relational, and reputational consequences on brands/firms (Kumar et al., 2010; Van Doorn et al., 2010). Despite its influencing power and relationship to key outcomes for firms such as loyalty, lifetime, and shareholder value (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verleye, Gemmel and Rangarajan, 2014), the majority of studies address positively valenced CEB; thus largely overlooking the negative side and its ensuing implications (Bowden et al., 2017; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015).

### *Influencing Behavior*

Influencing behavior is one particular form of CEB and refers to:

'Customer contributions of resources (e.g. time, experience, and knowledge) to affect other actors' knowledge, preferences, and perceptions about a focal firm, brand, or service' (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014, p. 256).

Customers use the internet to share experiences, recommend service providers or firms, or warn other customers against focal providers (Blazevic et al., 2013; Kumar et al., 2010). Prior empirical and conceptual research has shown that customers are influenced by the choices and opinions of other customers about products and services (Dholakia, Bagozzi and Pearo, 2004; Libai et al., 2010). They rely on each other for authoritative information about offerings and accept shared influencing behavior to alleviate perceived risks and reduce their reliance on communications provided by firms (Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016). Their shared experiences, positive and negative, contribute resources (e.g. knowledge, experience, skills, and time) to other customers' purchase processes, potentially adjusting their expectations about service providers and consequently the way they evaluate the value of focal offerings (Oliver, 1980; Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman, 1993).

Influencing behavior as a form of CEB is a recently defined concept; as such it is important to distinguish influencing behavior from other communication activities (e.g. WOM, and electronic-WOM). Customers engage in influencing behaviors with the intention of affecting the ways in which other customers behave, feel, and think about focal firms and service providers (Zimbardo and Leippe, 1991). By engaging in influencing behavior, customers contribute resources (e.g. knowledge, skills, time, and experience) using various communication tools (e.g. WOM, electronic-WOM, referrals, recommendations, online reviews, blogging, and mobile apps) to share this behavior with other customers (Groeger, Moroko and Hollebeek, 2016; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014). Customers might, therefore, use different communication tools each time they engage in influencing behavior or engage in different forms of influencing behavior but still use the same tools to share these.

Based on the theoretically derived definition, NVIB can negatively affect other customers' knowledge, expectations, and perception about a focal service provider. However, despite its potentially detrimental impact, its forms and triggers remain scant in the literature (Hollebeek et al., 2016; Van Doorn et al., 2010). NVIBs are preceded and affected by triggering events experienced by customers (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2016; Van Doorn et al., 2010). These triggering events represent a decline in service providers' performance levels and redirect the attention of customers towards evaluating providers' overall performance (Gardial, Flint and Woodruff, 1996; Roos, 2002). Consequently, these triggers spark NVIB, with potentially detrimental long-term financial, relational, and reputational consequences on brands/firms such as, but not limited to, increased distrust in brands and deterioration of focal firm reputation and perceived brand image (Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos, 2005; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2016; Wu et al., 2016).

Although NVIB is a novel concept, extant studies in parallel research streams have explored the negative side of service relationships and identified triggers that might antagonise customers. These triggers include misuse of information, privacy invasion, unjust favouritism and financial exploitation (Frow et al., 2011). Moreover, a typology of triggers of customers' negatively/positively brand engagement is provided by Hollebeek and Chen (2014) to include perceived brand innovativeness, responsiveness, quality, action, value and delivery of promises. Nevertheless, none of

these studies has identified the relationships between triggers and subsequent forms of customers' negatively valenced engagement behaviors they induce which this paper provides. Additionally, apart from a recent study that identified cognitive (subjectivity) and emotional (irritation and community intimacy) triggers of community engagement (Heinonen, 2017), the majority of existing studies on the negative valence of engagement have identified only emotional triggers, such as hatred, anger and stress, towards a service provider, brand or firm (e.g. Bowden et al., 2017; Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2016; Naumann et al., 2017).

Despite indications in the literature that customers might engage in a range of NVIB (Juric, Smith and Wilks, 2016), forms of NVIB are not yet researched. Several authors argue that a key challenge for firms when managing online NVIB is to identify its different forms (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Van Doorn et al., 2010). Research on NVIB remains scant in literature to date, however, extant insights from studies on online brand communities (OBCs), and social media engagement behavior (SMEB) provide some typologies, yet, in some instances, these typologies are making a kin to disengagement rather than negatively valenced engagement. For example, negatively valenced SMEB forms include dormancy (inactive state), detachment (removal of brand-related contents) and destruction (negative active contribution) (Dolan, Conduit and Fahy, 2016). However, according to Brodie et al. (2011), dormancy and detachment are considered disengagement rather than negative engagement.

Additionally, within OBCs, forms include destructive behavior (recruiting others to boycott a provider), constructive behavior (directed at solving the problem) (Naumann et al., 2017), brand boycotting behavior and exiting brand community behavior (Bowden et al., 2017). Constructive behavior is arguably a positively valenced engagement behavior, and exiting brand community signals disengagement rather than negative engagement.

Consequently, despite related insights, recent research calls identify negative valence of engagement as a key area for advancing engagement research. Specifically, how customers engage in NVIB and what triggers it (Hollebeek et al., 2016). Furthermore, as the extant literature focus extends beyond dyadic customer/firm perspective, a need exists to better understand NVIB within a network



which is scant in literature to date (Bowden et al., 2017; Hollebeek, Conduit and Brodie, 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2016). The following section presents the methodology and findings of the empirical study which aims to show how customers engage in NVIB by conceptualizing its forms, and what triggers customers to engage in NVIB by identifying its triggers and by exploring relationships between triggers and forms of NVIB.

## **Methodology**

As the research aim is exploratory, a qualitative approach was adopted and netnography was selected to guide this inquiry. Netnography is an increasingly popular method used to ‘investigate communities and cultures that are emerging through computer-mediated communications’ (Kozinets, 2002, p. 62). As a marketing research technique, netnography uses online, publicly available information to explore and understand the needs and decision influences of relevant online consumer groups (Kozinets, 2010). Multiple authors have advocated the use of netnography when studying online user-generated content (e.g. blogs, microblogs, and reviews) posted by individuals about focal firms, products, and services. Such content is available for a multitude of people to read (e.g. Belz and Baumbach, 2010; Kozinets, 2010; Mkono and Markwell, 2014). Similarly, in service management and customer engagement areas, several studies have used netnography to investigate how different styles of practices influence service systems (Chandler and Chen, 2016); identify the motivators that drive patients’ value co-creation activities in online health communities (Zhao, Wang and Fan, 2015), and explore consumers’ online discussions to identify their behavioral, cognitive, and emotional patterns (Brodie et al., 2013; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014).

Netnography can be conducted using participative or unobtrusive approaches (Kozinets, 2010). Most tourism researchers conduct netnography adopting a passive, ‘lurker’ approach when studying individuals’ reviews posted on online tourism communities (Mkono and Markwell, 2014, p. 290). Multiple unobtrusive netnographic studies use TripAdvisor as a focus to study traveler collaboration to image destinations (Miguéns, Baggio and Costa, 2008); online complaints (Vásquez,

2011); helpful reviewers (Lee, Law and Murphy, 2011) and hotel image (O'Connor, 2010). In line with this approach and context, this research uses the unobtrusive approach of netnography to study negatively valenced reviews publicly posted by travelers on TripAdvisor.

TripAdvisor is the most prominent stand-alone user-generated review site within travel, playing the role of trusted intermediary for travelers (Jeacle and Carter, 2011; O'Connor, 2010). Its credibility is underlined by academic research that refutes fears about false posted reviews and underpins its reliability (Chua and Banerjee, 2013; Filieri, Alguezaui and McLeay, 2015; Miguéns, Baggio and Costa, 2008; O'Connor, 2010). TripAdvisor is deemed to be relevant to this study based on Kozinets' (2010) recommendations for site selection (see Table 1).

<b>Kozinets Recommendations</b>	<b>How TripAdvisor matches them</b>
<b>Active, they have recent and regular communications</b>	TripAdvisor is the 'largest travel community on the web (Miguéns et al., 2008, p. 2). It offers 385 million reviews and opinions covering 6.6 million accommodations, restaurants and attractions (TripAdvisor.co.uk, 2016b).
<b>Data-rich, offering more detailed or descriptively rich data.</b>	TripAdvisor offers detailed descriptive data; Travellers can post reviews and rate quality of service, value, location...etc. (Schuckert, Liu and Law, 2016).
<b>Substantial, they have a critical mass of communicators and energetic feel</b>	TripAdvisor demonstrates recent and regular publicly available communications reaching 350 million average monthly new visitors and 255 new posted contributions per minute (TripAdvisor.co.uk, 2016b).
<b>Interactive, they have a flow of communications between participants</b>	Discussion forums on TripAdvisor offer engagement and flow of communication between participants (Breidbach and Brodie, 2016).
<b>Heterogeneous, they have a number of different participants</b>	TripAdvisor has a mass of heterogeneous communicators; operating in 48 markets worldwide (TripAdvisor.co.uk, 2016b).

Table 1: Kozinets recommendations for site selection (Kozinets, 2010: p. 89)

### *Data Collection*

To ensure a diversity of contexts associated with different experiences and thus different behavioral responses, all categories (i.e. hotels, restaurants, and things to do) of travelers' experience available on TripAdvisor were selected across twelve destinations worldwide. Destinations include most and second most visited

destinations for the year 2016, per continent (see Table 2). To ensure additional robustness of findings, the research exercise is composed of six consecutive phases to confirm and refine coding.

<b>Most visited</b>	<b>Second most visited</b>	<b>Continent</b>
London – United Kingdom	Paris – France	Europe
Siem Reap – Cambodia	Bangkok - Thailand	Asia
Marrakech – Morocco	Cape Town – South Africa	Africa
New York City – USA	Cancun - Mexico	North America
Buenos Aires – Argentina	Rio De Janeiro - Brazil	South America
Sydney – New South Wales	Queenstown – New Zealand	South Pacific

**Table 2: Visited Destinations World Wide, 2016 (TripAdvisor.co.uk, 2016a)**

To strengthen the stability and validity of findings, ‘a range of similar and contrasting categories’ was considered (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 29). Each phase, therefore, included three categories (hotels, restaurants, and things to do), sampled purposively per destination to include high and low overall rated categories that demonstrate the highest number of reviews, ensuring an appropriate amount of data. For example, London is a most visited destination in Europe for the year 2016. The categories sampled in this destination for the first phase were ‘The Montague on the Gardens (hotel, excellent (5/5)), ‘Jimmy’s World Grill and Bar’ (restaurant, poor (2/5)), and ‘Downing Street’ (things to do, average (3/5)). Table 3 shows an example of a collection phase.

The rating system of TripAdvisor allows reviewers to rate categories (e.g. hotels) numerically using a five-point scale (5= Excellent, 1=Terrible). This is a process known as an individual rating. However, the overall rating of a hotel is calculated as a weighted sum of all individual ratings posted to this hotel (Wu et al., 2016). For example, if the overall rating of a hotel is excellent (5/5), this relates to the number of excellent reviews compared to the number of very good, average, poor, and terrible individually rated reviews posted for this hotel. This means that high overall rated categories (i.e. hotels, restaurants, and things to do) still attract negative reviews. Accordingly, following recommendations for netnographic studies, it was deemed appropriate to copy archival data comprising all posted reviews per

category for a specific period of time, and then filter this for relevance, with a narrowing focus to include only negatively valenced reviews posted in English for analysis (Kozinets, 2010).

Location	Category	Sampled Categories	Overall Rating		Sampled Reviews	Relevant Reviews
London	Hotels	The Montague on the Gardens	<b>5/5</b>	Excellent	150	1
	Restaurants	Jimmy's World Grill & Bar	<b>2/5</b>	Poor	50	25
	Things to do	Downing Street	<b>3/5</b>	Average	31	4
Siem Reap	Hotels	Steung Siem Reap Hotel	<b>4/5</b>	V. Good	13	0
	Restaurants	Angkor Palm	<b>3.5/5</b>	Good	10	1
	Things to do	Two Season Travel & Tour	<b>2/5</b>	Poor	15	8
Marrakech	Hotels	Club EldoradoPalmeraie	<b>4/5</b>	V. Good	8	3
	Restaurants	Café de France	<b>3/5</b>	Average	30	14
	Things to do	Royal Palace of Marrakech	<b>2.5/5</b>	Bad	10	7
New York City	Hotels	Manhattan Broadway Hotel	<b>3/5</b>	Average	8	1
	Restaurants	Roxy Diner	<b>2.5/5</b>	Bad	31	20
	Things to do	Central Park Zoo	<b>4/5</b>	V. Good	90	8
Buenos Aires	Hotels	NH Buenos Aires City	<b>4/5</b>	V. Good	3	0
	Restaurants	Salvador Grill Bar	<b>2.5/5</b>	Bad	10	7
	Things to do	Estacion Terminal de Buenos Aires	<b>3/5</b>	Average	1	0
Sydney	Hotels	L'Otel	<b>1/5</b>	Terrible	10	10
	Restaurants	Farm House Kings Cross	<b>5/5</b>	Excellent	40	2
	Things to do	Kings Cross	<b>3/5</b>	Average	10	2
<i>Total number of reviews for phase 1, a three-month period (Jun – Aug, 2016)</i>					<b>520</b>	<b>113</b>

**Table 3: Phase One: Sample of Categories per Destination**

Over the six phases of the study, 954 negatively valenced reviews were identified and analyzed. For phases one, two, and three, relevant data comprised 360 negatively valenced reviews posted to categories from June to August 2016 within the most visited destinations worldwide (London, Siem Reap, Marrakech, New York, Buenos Aires, and Sydney). Following analysis of the three phases, another wave of data collection was undertaken to check and confirm coding. This wave was composed of three more phases and relevant data comprised 594 negatively valenced reviews posted to categories from March to August 2016 (phase 4), from January to September 2016 (phase 5), and from September 2015 to September 2016 (phase 6) within the second most visited destinations worldwide (Paris, Bangkok, Cape Town, Cancun, Rio de Janeiro, and Queenstown). Table 4 shows an example of a collection phase.

Location	Category	Sampled Categories	Overall Rating		Sampled Reviews	Relevant Reviews
Paris	Hotels	Pavillon Opera Lafayette	2.5/5	Bad	15	9
	Restaurants	Le Relais Paris Opera	2/5	Poor	21	13
	Things to do	ParcZoologique de Paris	3/5	Average	39	2
Bangkok	Hotels	Kawin Place	2/5	Poor	10	7
	Restaurants	Baiyoke Sky Hotel Restaurant	3.5/5	Good	116	28
	Things to do	Patpong Night Market	3/5	Average	320	111
Cape Town	Hotels	Protea Hotel Cape Town	3/5	Average	65	11
	Restaurants	Peddlers& Co.	3/5	Average	72	18
	Things to do	Castle of Good Hope	3.5/5	Good	142	44
Cancun	Hotels	Hotel Los Girasoles Cancun	3/5	Average	17	1
	Restaurants	Mocambo's	4/5	V. Good	92	10
	Things to do	Playa Delfines	5/5	Excellent	273	3
Rio de Janeiro	Hotels	Hotel Astoria Palace	3.5/5	Good	43	4
	Restaurants	Espirito Santa	4/5	V. Good	63	10
	Things to do	Museu da Republica	4.5/5	Great	20	4
Queenstown	Hotels	Swiss-Belresort Coronet Peak	3/5	Average	56	12
	Restaurants	Memories of Hongkong	3/5	Average	5	4
	Things to do	The Winery	5/5	Excellent	115	2
<i>Total number of reviews for phase 6, a twelve-month period (Sept 2015- Sept 2016).</i>					1484	293

**Table 4: Phase Six: Sample of Categories per Destination**

The rationale behind decisions regarding periods of data collection, language, and valence of reviews is discussed as follows. First, assigned periods are selected based on their recency to the time of data collection, and availability of high anticipated numbers of reviews posted to categories, which specifically depends on high tourism season indifferent destinations (e.g. summer in Sydney is winter in Paris). Second, to avoid inaccurate translation, only reviews posted in English were considered. Third, to ensure the relevance of the data to the stated research aim; NVIB is identified within reviews in accordance with the theoretically informed definition of NVIB in addition to consulting research papers that address textual discourse (e.g. Broadbent, 1977; Giora, 2002; Polanyi and Zaenen, 2006) to aid the identification of negatively valenced reviews. Moreover, to ensure analytical rigor, contextual valence shifters (i.e. negatives, intensifiers, presuppositions, and connectors) are considered (see Table 5).

Part of Speech	Positive Valence	Negative Valence
<b>Simple Lexical Valence</b>		
<b>Verbs</b>	Boost, Ease, Encourage, Delight,	Discourage, Fail, Haggle
<b>Nouns</b>	Benefit, Worth, Favor	Backlash, Catastrophe
<b>Adjectives</b>	Attractive, Better, Good	Annoying, Awry, Bad
<b>Contextual Valence Shifters</b>		
	<b>Effect</b>	<b>Terms</b>
<b>Negatives</b>	Flip the valence of a term	Not, never, nobody, neither, nothing..etc.
<b>Intensifiers</b>	Weaken a valence of a term Strengthen a valence of a term	<i>Rather</i> efficient <i>Deeply</i> suspicious
<b>Presuppositions</b>	Shift the valence of evaluative terms	<i>Barely</i> sufficient
<b>Connectors</b>	Negate evaluations	Although, however, but, on the contrary, notwithstanding...etc.

Table 5: Elements communicating positive and negative valence in text (Polanyi and Zaenen, 2006).

Additionally, the way in which negative valence is communicated (e.g. ironically) (Giora, 2002) and its weight (negative vs. positive) were considered (Broadbent, 1977; Polanyi and Zaenen, 2006). For example, when reviewers mention one negative feature or aspect of a service but show many other aspects to be adequate, their reviews do not communicate negative valence (see Table 6).

Type of review	Example of reviews
<b>Not considered a negatively-valenced review</b>	<i>'Had a 10-day business trip to Cape Town. free Wi-Fi, large LED Amazing view Amazing buffet breakfast... receptionist friendly and always willing to help. BUT, there were ongoing construction at the time, disturbances during the day were common'</i> (Wilcot, Hotel: Cape Town).
<b>Considered a negatively-valenced review</b>	<i>'This place is the rip-off of all rip-offs! Dry, over-cooked fake chicken. Mushy cold fries...They forgot our sauces And they are rude. Avoid like the plague.'</i> (Ken M, Restaurant: Cancun).

Table 6: Weight of negative valence within reviews

### *Interpretation and Analysis*

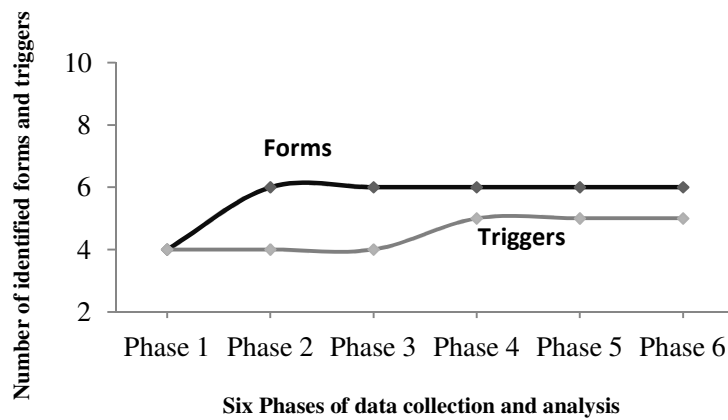
Thematic analysis is used to interpret forms and triggers of NVIB. Unlike content analysis, the thematic analysis considers the entire post as the unit of analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Thomsen, Straubhaar and Bolyard, 1998). Thematic analysis is conducted using open and axial coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Open coding involves breaking data apart and considering all possibilities within, followed

by ‘coding conceptual labels’ on the respective data. Axial coding involves ‘crosscutting or relating concepts to each other’ (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 195). The open/axial coding represented an iterative process of going back and forth between extant literature, data, and the emerging theory (Danneels, 2003).

In this study, themes initially identified inductively from the raw data, and deductively from the literature review (Danneels, 2003; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014; Taylor and Bogdan, 1984). However, as prior research addressing NVIB does not exist in literature, the analytical emphasis is placed on the inductively emanated themes. Therefore, themes initially emerged using open coding gained further scrutiny and/or linking to NVIB during axial coding. This study coincides with the process of analysis that ‘builds over time [here in six phases] with the acquisition of data’ (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 57). This process corresponds to the analytical sequence of abstracting and comparing followed by checking and refinement which is also recommended for netnographic data analysis (Kozinets, 2010; Miles and Huberman, 1994). To illustrate, during data analysis, themes emerging from the first phase are compared for similarities and differences against the sets of data collected in the subsequent phases. This resulted in the discovery of new codes and subsequently new forms and triggers over the six phases.

To ensure efficient management of data, NVivo10 was used. Coding and analysis demonstrated a total of 1941 coded references for both forms (1091) and triggers (850) of NVIB. The number of coded references results from coding all 954 reviews. The coded references demonstrate that a single review reveals both triggers and forms. Additionally, one trigger can lead customers to use more than one from within different reviews. Analysis of the first phase revealed four forms of NVIB (Discrediting, expressing regret, deriding and dissuading) and four triggers (Service failure, overpricing, deception and disappointment). Two more forms of NVIB (Warning and endorsing competitors) were observed during analysis of the second phase; however, analysis of the third phase demonstrated the same number of forms and triggers generated from the preceding phases. Analysis of the fourth phase revealed one new trigger (insecurity) on top of those previously observed during analysis of the preceding phases. However, analysis of the two successive phases (five and six) resulted in no new triggers or forms. Thus, theoretical saturation was

achieved (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Figure 1 illustrates the identification of forms and triggers over the six phases.



**Figure 1: Identification of Forms and Triggers over the six data collection phases.**

Following the recommendations of (Creswell, 2014), crosschecking of coding was undertaken. Eight doctoral students studying marketing were chosen according to their experience with the process of coding and were sent a document with a sample of eleven reviews and a list of all codes developed during analysis. To avoid confusion or misinterpretation, the document included clear coding instructions. They were asked to read the reviews carefully and match them to identified codes. Agreement on coding depends on ‘whether two or more coders agree on codes’ used for reviews (Creswell, 2014, p. 203). In this study, six coders showed a 100% coding agreement with all codes developed during analysis, while two coders mismatched only two codes of eleven; giving a high overall consistency between coders (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The analysis reveals six forms of NVIB: *discrediting*, *expressing regret*, *deriding*, *dissuading*, *warning* and *endorsing competitors*. The five triggers identified are *service failure*, *overpricing*, *deception*, *disappointment*, and *insecurity*. These are introduced and discussed in the following sections with exemplars of reviews analyzed (bold font is used in exemplars to highlight specific forms and triggers).



## Findings

### *Forms of Negatively Valenced Influencing Behavior*

This study provides a typology of six forms of NVIB, namely, *Discrediting*, *Expressing Regret*, *Deriding*, *Dissuading*, *Warning*, and *Endorsing competitors*. The study also identifies that customers engage in NVIB either by addressing other customers or without addressing other customers in their reviews; accordingly, this study classifies NVIB into direct and indirect based on the way customers use each of its forms in their reviews (see Figure 2).

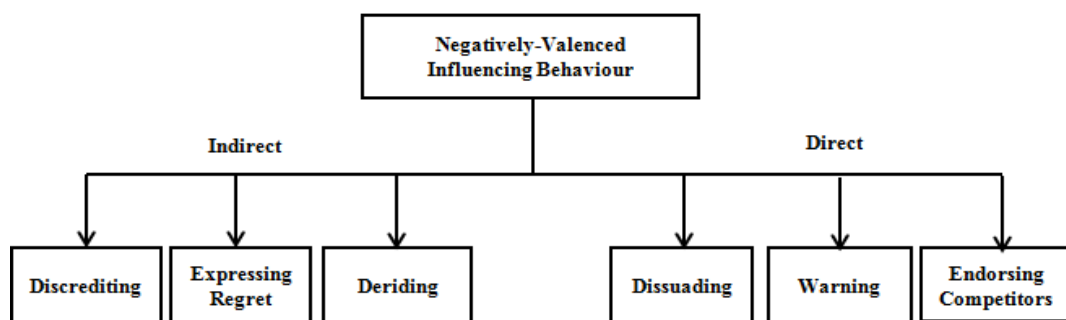


Figure 2: Direct and Indirect Forms of Negatively-valenced Influencing Behavior

### **Indirect Forms**

*Discrediting*, *expressing regret* and *deriding* forms represent indirect NVIB. By using indirect forms, customers contribute resources such as knowledge, skills, time and experience to discredit a service provider, to express regret for choosing a focal provider or to deride service providers based on their experiences without directly addressing other customers not to transact with particular firms or service providers.

#### ***Discrediting***

Customers engage in NVIB by discrediting service providers. In 46% of reviews, customers share their negative experiences, reporting on details of substandard service provided by focal service providers or firms without addressing other customers or advising them not to transact with this provider. In most instances, reviewers evaluate the functional and service environment quality and the service staff of firms or service providers. For example:

*The staff at the reception was not friendly or helpful; the girl who served us continued her conversation with a security guard on the other side of the foyer whilst serving us...pleased that we hadn't spent a lot of money to go there (Kindcat2014, Things to do: New York).*

*How bad can a 4\* be! In this case, really, really bad. Unfortunately, the facilities haven't been updated. Peeling paint, noisy ...food was awful ...None of the staff was able to do anything without the manager's approval who conveniently was never available...I electrical socket per room, the staff were horrible...A truly horrible place (travelgirl078, Hotel: Marrakesh).*

### ***Expressing Regret***

Customers engage in NVIB by expressing regret for choosing a service provider. In 20% of the reviews, customers express their regret for choosing specific service providers without addressing other customers. It is common that customers communicate negative emotions within their online reviews even if they regret their choices (Zeelenberg and Pieters, 2004). Embedded emotions of regret within online reviews are known to play a powerful role in changing other customers' perceptions and knowledge towards focal service providers as they elicit an avoidance motivation (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer, 1999; Lee, Jeong and Lee, 2017; Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan, 2013; Strack and Deutsch, 2004). In addition to expressing regret, customers also reveal their 'not to repeat' intentional plans (Strack and Deutsch, 2004). For example:

*We had an awful time in a horrible room and a very noisy area!! All in all a regretful choice and a horrible experience never to be repeated!! (Nurlo15, Hotel: Queenstown).*

*'When I spent my night in this hotel it was my worst experience. I regretted my decision and I will not stay there again' (Xnan44, Hotel: Paris).*

Notably, customers engaging in this form focus mainly on communicating regret to other customers to tell them about a bad service (Zeelenberg and Pieters, 2004) rather than sharing detailed service experiences. This is unlike the discrediting form where customers share detailed negative experiences without expressing any emotions.

### ***Deriding***

Customers engage in NVIB by deriding a focal service provider. In 5% of reviews, also without addressing other customers, customers use sarcasm that shifts the polarity of positive or negative speech to its opposite (Giora et al., 2000;

González-Ibáñez, Muresan and Wacholder, 2011) to deride a focal firm or service provider based on their negative experiences. For example:

*This is Pippa the pig – Barn accommodation. On a lovely rainy noon, we arrived at the barn...The smell was beyond sensational. Even if I was a pig, enjoying mud, dirt etc. This is not worth it even for - 125 pounds for 4 (Cornelia W, Hotel: Queenstown).*

*TV seemed to be an Internet stream as it kept buffering and played more like a slide show. Shaving light cover is lying next to bare bulb. This is what I can recall before my brain started to subliminally bury the horror to protect my sanity (willbug, Hotel: London)*

Customers sometimes use salient incompatible meanings of non-literal language which are more retainable and memorable than compatible literal meanings (Giora, 2002). For example:

*To show the poor state of the Castle of Good Hope in Cape Town: ‘Castle of Doom!’ (683stuarie, Things to do: Cape Town).*

*To call TGI Fridays, based on a bad experience: ‘Thank GOD it’s Finished’ (Audacious\_D12, Restaurant: New York).*

## Direct Forms

*Dissuading, Warning and Endorsing competitors* represent direct forms of NVIB. By using these forms, customers explicitly address other customers in their reviews by dissuading or warning them to avoid transacting with focal providers based on their unsatisfactory or perilous experiences, respectively, or by endorsing competitors encouraging other customers to transact with over a focal provider.

### *Dissuading*

Customers engage in NVIB by dissuading other customers from transacting with a focal firm or service provider. In 33% of reviews, customers directly address other customers attempting to convince them not to transact with a focal provider stressing on opposition to and the refusal of a focal provider based on an unfavourable experience. For example:

*The waiter was WAY too busy to listen to us and brought us vegetarian food we didn’t want and didn’t order. The food was greasy and expensive. No one cared that it wasn’t what we ordered. **Do not eat here** (Susan B, Restaurant: Paris).*

*We were cheated, was told \$100 for 2 persons...But when we going to leave we were told to pay 3800 baht!!!! For few stupid adult shows...This is absurd!!! **Tourists do not be tempted to go the Ping Pong show** (Quek P, Things to do: Bangkok)*

### **Warning**

Customers engage in NVIB by warning other customers against a service provider. In 5% of the reviews, customers explicitly warn other customers when they have evidence of or concerns about risk (Meloy et al., 2012). They warn other customers of a probable risk based on a perilous experience. Unlike any other form of NVIB, customers here keep their reviews as short as possible, use affirmative and simple sentences, which are known to be easier to understand than negative and passive ones (Broadbent, 1977). They also use capital letters within their reviews, which are regarded as playing a central role in highlighting their alerting message (Godfrey et al., 1983). This makes warning a distinct form of NVIB. For example:

***Warning! Read this if you are going to Patpong. WARNING! BE WARNED!!! Thailand doesn't seem that safe after all. BEWARE!*** (PatrikL, Things to do: Bangkok).

***I WARN YOU! NO CREDIT CARDS- THEY WILL ROB YOU!!!!***(Bennett\_Traveler, Restaurant: Rio De Janeiro).

Customers using this form do not share their experiences as much as they focus on warning others highlighting issues of risk, peril and insecurity in their reviews. They specify the entire review for warning others, which is unlike the dissuading form where customers detail their experiences and then advise others not to transact with focal service providers.

### **Endorsing Competitors**

Customers engage in NVIB by endorsing competitors for other customers over a focal service provider. In 6% of reviews, customers directly address other customers attempting to actively recommend one or more competitors over the focal providers. For example:

***If you are up for all you can eat in Port Madero, go to Gourmet Porteno better than this restaurant by far*** (MzHC, Restaurant: Buenos Aires)

***Other resorts have better facilities. Other resorts go above and beyond to give you what you want. Crown Paradise...does a much better job of catering, and offering entertainment for adults and kids. Golden Parnassus - highly recommended if you are going without kids. All better experiences than this Riu hotel*** (Kimberly R, Hotel: Cancun)

Notably, customers using this form are not sharing their detailed experience or directly dissuade others from transacting with focal providers; instead, they devote their reviews to recommend competitors attempting to encourage other customers to choose these competitors over a focal provider. Providing other customers with alternatives (competitors) influences their commitment to a focal provider (Yim, Chan and Hung, 2007).

### *Triggers of Negatively Valenced Influencing Behavior*

In general, triggers refer to factors or events experienced by customers that alter customer evaluation of an offering or service, consequently inducing NVIB (Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos, 2005). This study identifies five triggers of NVIB; namely, *service failure, overpricing, deception, disappointment, and insecurity*. The first trigger is service failure and relates to critical incidents when a focal service fails to meet customer expectations (Edvardsson, 1992; Lewis and McCann, 2004). Categories of service failure are revealed in reviews to comprise the core service itself, service environment, the behavior of service staff, and dysfunctionality of service facilities. For example:

*We seated ourselves and had to sit at a **dirty table** while waiting around 10 minutes to simply get a menu and then waited a further 10-15 minutes for someone to take our food/drink order. When we finally got our food **everything was wrong**...Overall terrible service and the food is horrible (anonymous16162016, Restaurant: New York).*

The second trigger is overpricing, which relates to the conceptualization of poor value for money. Customers conceive a service or product as overpriced when the value of what they receive (e.g. taste of a meal, hygiene standards, service level, type of attraction, facilities of a focal place) is poor compared to the price they pay (Priem, 2007). For example:

***Overpriced** for a chain restaurant...It's also dirty and the staff is plain rude...Venture out and look on trip advisor for other restaurants in the area. The food is better and the price will either be the same or cheaper – depending on what you're looking for (Vanessa N, Restaurant: New York).*

The third trigger is deception, which relates to a perceived act of cheating deliberately carried out by a focal firm or service provider toward customers (Chowdhury and Miles, 2006; Williamson, 1993) For example:

*'I thought about the bill driving home and wondered how it could be so high – and then I saw it. Gigantic Rip-off' (tch22016, Restaurant: Sydney).*

The fourth trigger is disappointment. This relates to negative feelings occurring when the outcomes of a focal service disconfirm customers' previously held expectations (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988; Zeelenberg and Pieters, 2004). For example:

*'I convinced my boyfriend we should go for a wander around and was **thoroughly disappointed**. The whole area lacked any character or atmosphere. Most of the stalls were half empty, the traders rude, and prices expensive and definitely no taxi ride out there' (Lucy R, Things to do: Bangkok).*

The fifth trigger is insecurity and relates to customers' feelings of insecurity based on perilous experiences involving particular threat assessments (Patterson, Yu and De Ruyter, 2006).

*'Believe me, they try it on me but I started to yell so they let me go, but it was a scary experience. Too many stories about tourist being stung over here' (Coby D, Things to do: Bangkok).*

The five triggers of NVIB have both cognitive and emotional roots. Cognition and emotions coexist and interplay to elicit human behaviors (Bigné, Mattila and Andreu, 2008). However, human behavior is 'controlled by two interacting systems that follow different operating principles' (Strack and Deutsch, 2004, p. 220). The reflective system requires a high amount of cognitive capacity to generate a focal behavior based on knowledge, evaluation, and assessment of facts and values, while the impulsive system requires little cognitive capacity as it elicits focal behavior based on emotions (Strack and Deutsch, 2004). Translating this to relate to the findings of this study, 'service failure', 'overpricing' and 'deception' are considered triggers with more cognitive than emotional roots as they involve an assessment of services, prices, and provider dishonesty in the minds of customers, traded off against their expectations of what they would receive in interactions with particular firms and service providers (Hollebeek and Chen, 2014). On the other hand, 'disappointment' and 'insecurity' are considered triggers with more emotional than cognitive roots, as they involve feelings of antipathy expressed by customers when they feel disappointed or insecure (Verhagen, Nauta and Feldberg, 2013).

### Relationship between Forms and Triggers

Further investigation of the relationships between triggers and forms of NVIB was conducted using the matrix coding query function of NVivo10 to show coverage of each form and possible co-occurrence with triggers (see Table 7) by ‘searching for data coded to multiple pairs of items simultaneously’ (Hutchison, Johnston and Breckon, 2010, p. 295) using the row percentage matrix. This matrix considers the total number of coded words across all cells for each row and then a percentage is given for each cell to represent its proportion compared to other cells in the same row (QSRInternational.com, 2016).

	Discrediting	Expressing Regret	Deriding	Dissuading	Warning	Endorsing Competitors
<b>Service Failure</b>	<b>37.19%</b>	26.73%	8.23%	21.79%	0.48%	5.59%
<b>Overpricing</b>	<b>35.17%</b>	23.26%	3.33%	<b>27.88%</b>	0.71%	9.64%
<b>Disappointment</b>	34.95%	<b>40.77%</b>	3.14%	17.78%	0%	3.37%
<b>Deception</b>	19.8%	22.41%	0.14%	<b>35.3%</b>	11.4%	10.95%
<b>Insecurity</b>	8%	16.07%	0%	10.65%	<b>52.66%</b>	12.63%

Table 7: Matrix Coding Query – Row Percentages

The table shows dominant (circled and bold) and less common relationships (i.e. more than 25%, circled only). The results of this coding query reveal that service failure and overpricing triggered 37.19% and 35.17% of coded discrediting form of NVIB, respectively. Both service failure and overpricing trigger other forms of NVIB but less commonly, such as expressing regret and dissuading forms, respectively. The first example shows the discrediting form triggered by service failure, and the second, by overpricing:

*‘I was greeted at the front area by a **rude bartender** who mocked me as soon as my back was turned by saying ‘hello hello hello’ Wow, haven’t experienced this level of **impertinence at any restaurant before, and so blatant**. Then, I was served **cold ravioli, not once but twice**’ (JudyLemke, Restaurant: London).*

*‘Way too expensive for what you get. My husband is a huge star wars fan and we saw this and felt it was a must see. **We spent \$65 for two tickets, which is a total overcharge...**to just walk around and look at costumes that are about it. Plus we can’t take photos with a flash and most of the rooms are dark’ (LisaClohessey, Things to do: New York).*

As revealed in reviews, disappointment overwhelmingly triggers the expressing regret form of NVIB, for example:

*'Extremely disappointing! I and my partner went to the London Sea Life centre along with the Dungeons. We were thoroughly looking forward to spending a couple of hours going around the place, but we regret our choice!! What a massive let down. We wouldn't visit again!'* (Nick, Things to do: London).

In most instances, deception from service providers triggers the dissuading form, while insecurity exclusively triggers the warning form of NVIB. The first example shows dissuading elicited by deception, and the second shows warning elicited through insecurity:

*So we had 16 minutes to put our stuff in a paid locker (there are free ones next the attraction but the lady at the counter didn't tell us that) so we were lied to... We rushed past the next round of wax dummies to the 4D movie. What a joke. It's barely 2.5d. The glasses were useless... Don't waste your time or money, this software isn't even in beta and they are selling it as a premium experience (sqm211, Things to do: New York).*

*Absolutely Horrifying!! We originally planned to stay for 2 nights, ended up staying for one... only. As we ran away the receptionist then picked up a heavy glass ashtray to throw at us but we got away safely. We went to the police but they told us to go back to the hotel and get hit by the receptionist because they wanted to see blood before they could do anything! BEWARNED DO NOT STAY HERE!!!!!!* (Enisab13, Hotel: Bangkok).

Given the lower frequency of both endorsing competitors and deriding forms of NVIB compared to other forms in the row, a column percentage matrix was developed to consider all coded words per column and the cross cells that show higher percentages per column representing the associated trigger (Hutchison, Johnston and Breckon, 2010; QSRInternational.com, 2016). Therefore, a column percentage matrix was developed to consider all coded words for the two respective forms and their co-occurrence with the five triggers (see Table 8).

	Deriding	Endorsing competitors
Service Failure	86.34%	45.35%
Overpricing	9.51%	21.3%
Disappointment	3.77%	3.13%
Deception	0.39%	23.99%
Insecurity	0%	6.24%

Table 8: Matrix Coding Query – Column Percentage

The matrix shows that both the deriding and endorsing competitors forms are most frequently triggered by service failure. For example:



*As soon as we arrived we were visited by a family of 5 flying cockroaches.....At the end of the night, another flying cockroach came to say goodbye. It was a memorable night (Patrick A, Restaurant: Rio de Janeiro).*

*We went in on Saturday evening for a few drinks and something to eat... Shown to a **dirty wobbly table...Not even been offered a drink. Go to Applebee's round the corner (705grant, Restaurant: New York).***

To summarize the findings of this paper, Figure 3 illustrates the five triggers (cognitive/emotional roots) and their relationships with the six forms of NVIB (Bold arrows represent dominant relationships while dotted arrows represent less common ones). The next section discusses the findings of the research and their theoretical and practical implications, as well as the limitations of the study.

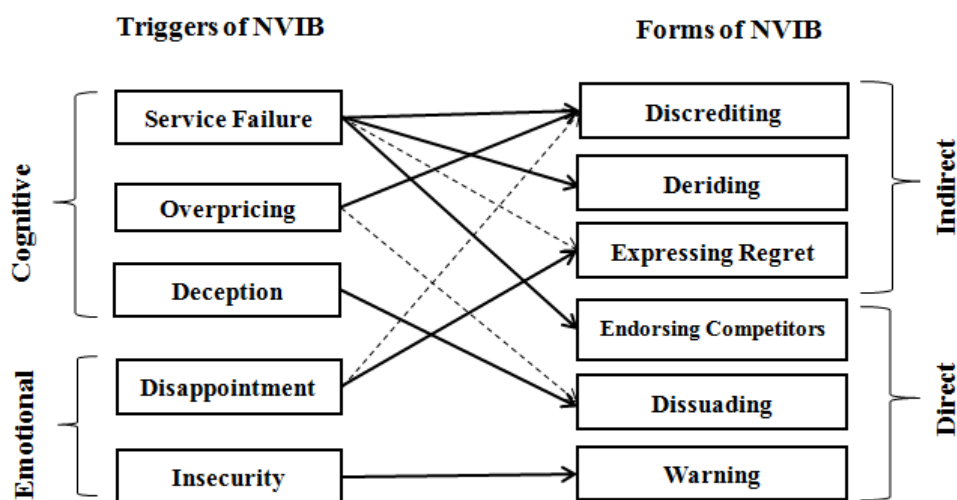


Figure 3: Forms and Triggers of Negatively-valenced Influencing Behavior

## Discussion

This study advances empirical research on negatively valenced engagement, and represents one of the first studies to explore NVIB, thus responding to recent calls from Van Doorn et al. (2010), Hollebeek and Chen (2014), and Hollebeek et al. (2016). Using a netnographic study within a service-related web community context; this study conceptualizes six forms of NVIB and classifies them into direct and indirect based on the way customers use them in their reviews. Moreover, the study identifies five triggers of NVIB with both cognitive and emotional roots. The research identifies specific relationships between triggers and forms of NVIB.

Prior CEB research has tended to focus on the positive aspects of engagement, with minimal focus on the negative side and its ensuing outcomes (Hollebeek et al., 2016). In providing an empirically-generated conceptualization of forms of NVIB, this paper contributes to emerging literature on negative forms of NVIB which has so far been nebulous.

The second contribution of this paper is the classification of NVIB into direct and indirect forms based on the way customers employ them. Prior research commonly concentrates on recommending, referring or warning to capture customers' influential roles (e.g. Blazevic et al., 2013; Gummerus et al., 2012; Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Verhoef, Reinartz and Krafft, 2010), which are typically direct in nature. However, this research shows that customers engage in NVIB either by directly addressing other customers in their reviews (e.g. dissuading, warning, and endorsing competitors) or without addressing other customers (e.g. discrediting, expressing regret and deriding). Additionally, valence, as a dimension of CEB, is known to be positive or negative (Brady et al., 2006; Van Doorn et al., 2010), this research contributes to knowledge with the classification of negative valence to direct and indirect, thereby, providing a clearer view of how customers may attempt to influence other customers and establishing new routes for addressing CEB and its forms.

This paper also contributes to CEB and influencing behavior literature by providing five triggers of NVIB that connote negative rather than positive CEB. Moreover, this paper classifies these triggers into cognitive (service failure, overpricing and deception) and emotional (disappointment and insecurity), a classification that has rarely been utilized in the literature. Additionally, in opposition to prior studies within CE and CEB literature that have addressed negative and positive engagement behaviors as two opposite forms of the same construct underpinned by the same nomological network that signals positive engagement (cf. Bowden et al., 2017; Dolan, Conduit and Fahy, 2016; Hollebeek and Chen, 2014), this paper extends the extant nomological network by providing a nomological network that encompasses *deception*, *disappointment*, *insecurity*, *service failure* and *overpricing* rather than trust, rapport, brand attachment, customer empowerment and

loyalty, which signal positive rather than negative elements. Thereby verifying and advancing research on CE and CEB, specifically the negative side.

This research provides further evidence that NVIB, at service system level, is likely to affect value co-creation (Jaakkola and Alexander, 2014). For customers, the value of engaging in NVIB relates to ‘their power to punish a service provider for a bad service’ (Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016, p. 8). For other customers, the value of NVIB relates to gaining trustworthy information which by its turn reduce uncertainty (Daft and Lengel, 1986; Libai et al., 2010), specifically regarding purchase decisions related to services, as it is difficult to inspect the quality of service before actual experience (Mittal and Baker, 2002). As revealed in the reviews, other customers might change their plans based on customers’ reviews of focal providers and, in some instances, regret not checking reviews before making decisions. Additionally, some customers might consider it as their duty to warn other customers against focal providers underpinning the interactive, co-creative nature of value creation between customers and other customers within service relationships (Brodie et al., 2011). For example:

*We use TripAdvisor to book all our stays and one concern was the report on noise at 4 am. (You can look back to find this.) We asked reception for a quiet room (Galloway26, Hotel: Queenstown).*

*‘Oh, TripAdvisor, why did I not open and read you before I chose to dine today??? I would have saved some cash’ (Froglovinlady, Restaurant: New York).*

*‘I had to let everyone know how bad it really is’ (Aaron R, Restaurant: New York).*

*‘We feel a strong need to warn other parents about staying here’ (Iriana, Hotel: Cancun).*

However, for service providers, NVIB has the potential to negatively affect their online reputations (Wu et al., 2016), thus making them less appealing to other customers (Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016), potentially reducing their value (Kumar et al., 2010) and leading to lower revenues (Anderson, 2012). As a result, understanding what triggers NVIB and how customers engage in NVIB are important to develop adequate strategies to manage NVIB appropriately.

### *Managerial Implications*

The findings of this study show that engaging in NVIB potentially has detrimental implications for service providers, making it necessary for practitioners to better understand how customers engage in NVIB and what triggers customers to engage in NVIB. However, the challenge for managers lies in developing appropriate strategies to manage NVIB when it occurs (Van Doorn et al., 2010). This implies applying different approaches as forms and triggers of NVIB differ. This study indicates five triggers of NVIB to enrich practitioners' understanding of how their offered services are perceived by customers and to help them identify triggers that induce NVIB, thus impacting their online reputation and subsequently their revenues.

To manage forms of NVIB, it is recommended that managers use specific rather than generic responses to gain trust (Wei, Miao and Huang, 2013). Customers use each of the indirect forms differently. Deriding service providers appears to be more retainable and memorable (Giora, 2002; Giora et al., 2000). Managerial responses to this type of behavior might differ from responses to other indirect forms of NVIB. For instance, a response to the discrediting form of NVIB might be functional in nature, while empathy is likely to be required in response to expressing regret. However, it is suggested that responses to the deriding form involving simple, friendly humour which is likely to counter its negative effects (Collinson, 2002). In addition, engaging in dialogue with customers to increase trust and loyalty (Kumar et al., 2010) is likely to decrease customers' inclinations to deride service providers.

Similarly, customers use direct forms in different ways. The warning form seems to be the most severe form. This study reveals that customers attempt to emphasise the risk assessed within focal services by using alarming words written mostly in capital letters and simple sentences, which are easier to understand (Broadbent, 1977; Godfrey et al., 1983). Managerial responses to this form might differ from responses to other direct forms of NVIB. For instance, responses to dissuading and endorsing competitors' forms might involve acknowledgement of the causes of dissatisfaction, apology, explanation and promises of future satisfaction. While the dissuading form involves an attempt to convince other customers not to transact with focal providers, endorsing competitors focuses on direct recommendations of competitors. Warning

is exclusively based on perilous experiences, meaning that responses are likely to be challenging. Responses might show concrete evidence of future security to reduce potential anxiety.

## **Limitations and Future Research**

Despite the contributions and implications indicated above, limitations to this study also offer the potential for future research in this area. Using unobtrusive netnography allowed identification of new forms and triggers of NVIB nevertheless, netnography has inherent limitations that lend itself to inductive rich insights rather than generalization (Kozinets, 2010). However, sampling was intended to be meticulous to ensure diversity of contexts (all traveler's activities on TripAdvisor were sampled), robustness (research was conducted over six consecutive phases to confirm and refine coding) and stability of findings (a range of similar and contrasting categories' was considered) (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

TripAdvisor is selected as the focus of this study for reason of appropriateness rather than representativeness (Kozinets, 2010), however, findings of this research do reveal a convergent pattern across similar and contrasting categories located in twelve different destinations worldwide. Despite this rigor, future research might explore different online and offline contexts. Similarly, both the categories (hotels, restaurants, and things to do) chosen to study and the destinations (most and second most visited for the year 2016) were selected based on our sampling criteria (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009), rather than the industry representativeness. However, although this study presented comparative data and analysed a large number of reviews, they may not be representative of all travel services despite demonstrating a stable pattern across multiple and various destinations worldwide. Further studies should replicate this study within different industries and sectors. Finally, this research does not present evidence of causation; further studies may statistically analyze large sample data to test the proposed relationships between forms and triggers.

This paper reveals that customers engage in NVIB either by directly or indirectly addressing other customers in their reviews. Consequently, the impact of direct and

indirect NVIB may differ, which merits further investigation to identify the impact of direct versus indirect NVIB. This study provided six forms of NVIB; future research may investigate the impact of each form on other customers' expectations and intentions towards service providers. Moreover, this paper focused on one form of CEB, future research may empirically explore the other forms of CEB; mobilizing, augmenting and co-developing behaviors, specifically regarding the relationship between these different CEBs, especially in terms of their triggers and forms.

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