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Bachelor Thesis

# Online Reviews – What Motivates You?

*A qualitative study of Customers' Motivation  
to Write Online Reviews*



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## Forewords

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This bachelor thesis has been written during the spring 2015, which is the last assignment of the three-year marketing programme at Linnæus University. The purpose of this study has been to explore customers' motivation to write Online Reviews. Numbers of key persons have been a great asset in order to be able to perform this study and we would therefore like to send a special thanks to the following;

First of all, we want to thank our tutor Dan Halvarsson who has been a valuable person to discuss ideas with during the entire working process. He has, with his expertise, provided us with valuable advices and viewpoints. Moreover we want to tank Åsa Devine, our examiner, for guidance and comments on how to improve the thesis as a whole. Last but not least, we would like to send a sincere thank you to the ones that participated in our interviews. Without their willingness to share their thoughts and experiences, this thesis would be impossible to carry out.

Thank you,

Hereby we wish you a pleasant reading!

Växjö 2015-05-27

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## Abstract

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**Title:** Online Reviews – What Motivates You?

**Keywords:** *Motivation, motivational factors, online reviews, user generated content, electronic word of mouth.*

**Background:** To understand the consumers' motivation to write online reviews is of importance, especially for companies since a large number of reviews have a positive influence on sales. Previous research has been done regarding what motivate consumers to provide user generated content, online word of mouth and also, to some extent, online reviews. However, these studies have primarily been adopted in a quantitative manner. To explore, from customers' own perspective, the motivation to write online reviews is therefore valuable to add depth to the existing literature.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to explore customers' motivation to write online reviews.

**Research question:** What factors motivate customers to write online reviews?

**Methodology:** The design of the research is a case study where the data collection method was conducted by semi-structured interviews.

**Conclusion:** The result of this study shows that customers' motivation to write online reviews is due to a variety of situations. The customers are motivated to write to enhance their self-image, helping both customers and companies, and in some situations to even harm companies. Also, customers were motivated to write to obtain economical incentives. The features of the platform are important, where easiness and the opportunity to be anonymous were preferred.

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# 1. Introduction

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*The introduction chapter presents the background to the phenomenon studied, online reviews as well as essential concepts related to the subject. This follows by a problematisation that shows the importance of the research. The introduction chapter ends with a purpose of the study and a research question.*

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## 1.1 Presentation of the phenomenon

The explosive growth of the Internet has enabled individuals to share and collect product related information with others online (Chen & Xie, 2008). This creates an ever-growing amount of content created by individuals, commonly referred to as user generated content. One of the most common forms of user generated content is online reviews, which is described as a product evaluation posted on a website (Banerjee & Chua, 2014). Additionally, online reviews are often described as an accessible and frequently used form of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) (Floh et al., 2013). It encompasses the act of write as well as the act of assimilates information provided by others (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Consumers can post reviews, among others, on online retailer websites, reviews sites (Chen & Xie, 2008), opinion platforms (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) and online communities (Wang et al., 2012).

Consumers seek online reviews since they are seen as a valuable and credible source of information concerning products' strengths and weaknesses (Ho-Dac et al., 2013; Robson et al., 2013). Online reviews decrease uncertainty in purchase situations (Hu et al., 2008), create product awareness (Duan et al., 2008), and increase the popularity of products (Zhang et al., 2010). Moreover, products provided with an online review are also selected twice as often as products without reviews (Senecal & Nantel, 2004; Tsang & Prendergast, 2009). Duan et al. (2008) highlight online reviews and argue that the amount of posted reviews has a significant influence on sales. It indicates that the content of online reviews have limited persuasive effect on customers in purchase situations. However, the amount of reviews creates awareness, which ultimately affect sales (Duan et al., 2008).

Several researchers have stressed the importance of online reviews due to its influence on customers' purchase decisions (e.g. Chen & Xie, 2008; Hu et al., 2008; Wang et al., 2012). Researchers have, due to this, studied a number of different motivational factors such as self-enhancement, social benefits and economic rewards in an attempt to demonstrate customers' motivation to write (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011; Cheung and Lee, 2012; Tong et al., 2013). An early study that identified factors to motivate customers to participate in communities were



Balasubramanian & Mahajan (2001). This was later on was extended by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) whose study regarding eWOM is considered to be seminal within the field (Jeong & Jang, 2011; Cheung & Lee, 2012). Several subsequent researchers have since then used similar factors as part of their studies (e.g Cheung & Lee, 2012; Kostyra et al., 2015).

## 1.2 Problem Discussion

A large number of studies have been conducted regarding motivational factors that influence customers to contribute with online content (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Cheung & Lee, 2012; Tong et al., 2013). However, the results have been inconsistent and there is a lack of consensus in the findings (Olivera et al., 2008). This concerns where researchers have stated differently whether some factors motivate customers or not motivate customers to write online reviews (Tong et al., 2013; Wolny & Mueller, 2013). An illustration of this is self-enhancement, where one study argues that it is a motivational factor (Tong et al., 2013), while another study claims the opposite (Yang & Lai, 2010). The same situation applies to another motivational factor, advice seeking where the same inconsistent result exists (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Wolny & Mueller, 2013). Besides, a large extent of quantitative studies has been conducted considering what motivational factors that make customers write online reviews (Cheung & Lee, 2012; Tong et al., 2013). Such studies have delimited the research to some motivational factors. Thereby not uncovered all possible factors that motivate customers to write online reviews (Cheung & Lee, 2012; Tong et al., 2013).

It is necessary for businesses to understand all mechanisms that motivate customers to participate in the creation of online reviews (Chen & Xie, 2008), since online reviews have an impact on prospective customers' purchase decisions (Wang et al., 2012). If businesses have a better understating about the customer, then it will be easier to motivate them to write online reviews (Jeong & Jang, 2011). Online reviews are becoming widely used (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010) and also an important element of an increasing number of interaction forms. This possibility opens up for new factors to emerge (Cantalops & Salvi, 2014). Furthermore have the frequent use of quantitative studies created a gap in the literature, which creates a need for qualitative research since it would add depth to the literature (Parikh et al., 2015).

Online reviews is an emergent field of study, both from a theoretical as well as a practical point of view (Zhang et al., 2010). Firstly, the literature lacks a clear view of the motivational

factors that motivate customers to write online reviews. Secondly, businesses continuously strive to grasp what influence customers to write (Cantalops & Salvi, 2014). Online reviews are becoming increasingly used by customers and it is essential to understand the ones who write them (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). Therefore, it is vital to grasp customers' own view, which is also highlighted by Jeong and Jang (2011), and Cheung and Lee (2012).

### 1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore customers' motivation to write online reviews.

### 1.4 Research question

What factors motivate customers to write online reviews?

## 2. Theoretical Framework

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*In the theoretical chapter are all motivational factors presented. The authors have not been selective in the presentation of the theory, hence the unequal information regarding the different factors. In the end of the theory chapter is a summation of the factors presented. Furthermore, is another table presented in Appendix A regarding what authors that have covered which factors for those who find it interesting.*

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### 2.1 Motivation

To understand the reasons behind consumers' writing of online content, have studies implemented the motivation theory since it provides insight to human behaviour (Tong et al., 2013). The different motivational factors that outline the theoretical chapter are: *Focus-Related Utility*, *Consumption Utility* and *Approval Utility*. They are identified in the study by Balasubramanian and Mahajan (2001), which Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) later extended with two factors, these are: *Moderator-Related Utility* and *Homeostase Utility*. More recent studies have examined motivational factors to create content online (Yang & Lai, 2010; Bronner & de Hoog 2011; Jeong & Jang, 2011; Cheung & Lee, 2012).

### 2.2 Focus Related Utility

Focus related utility refers to the usefulness customers receive as they add value to an online community (Balasubramanian & Mahajan, 2001; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Customers' contribution includes reviews, comments and evaluations of both products and services that could be valuable to other members of a specific community (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). According to Matta and Frost (2011), there are three factors that fall under focus related utility. These three factors are social benefits, exerting power and altruism (Matta & Frost, 2011).

#### 2.2.1 Social benefits

Customers' motives for making frequent visits on opinion platforms are due to social benefits and the quest for a sense of belonging. Such behaviour can be seen in that customers choose to become a part of online communities to search for social integration and identification (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Cheung and Lee (2012) define that an individual's act to spread eWOM is performed with the intention to benefit the group. When individuals identify themselves as a part of a community, they become motivated to contribute with eWOM to benefit the whole group rather than oneself (Cheung & Lee, 2012). Hennig-Thurau et al.

(2004) further claim that customers' desire to belong strongly motivates them to provide content to opinion platforms. The need to feel attached to a social group has also been highlighted as an essential factor in Bronner and de Hoog's (2011) study concerning vacationers' motives to write reviews. Cheung and Lee (2012) found that consumers' eWOM intention was impacted by the sense of belonging, which is an emotional involvement an individual has with a group. This means that when consumers had a strong sense of belonging to a community, this influenced them to write (Cheung & Lee, 2012).

### **2.2.2 Exerting power**

Exerting power refers to the availability and the long lasting nature of eWOM. When customers retell negative product and service experiences they may hurt the perception of a company's image. Therefore, is eWOM used by customers to possess control over companies leading to a shift of power between the two (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). However, Bronner and de Hoog (2011) found that harming a particular company by contributing with damaging reviews were an insignificant motivational factor for writing them. This indicates that reviews can be written with the intention to harm although it is rarely used in practice (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011)

### **2.2.3 Altruism**

Altruism is an umbrella term covering a variety of motives aimed at helping others than oneself (Cheung & Lee, 2012). Such motives include concern for others, enjoyment of helping and helping the company (Cheung & Lee, 2012; Tong et al., 2013; Parikh et al., 2015). Cheung and Lee (2012) state that individuals, who engage in eWOM with altruistic goals, share their experiences for the benefit of others without expecting anything in return. Parikh et al. (2015) conducted a study that examined customers' motivation to articulate and read online restaurant reviews, and altruism is argued to be the main reason to why customers choose to provide review content. Jeong and Jang (2011) claim that experiences from a restaurant atmosphere was found to motivate customers to spread positive eWOM for the intention of concern for other customers. This means that a restaurant with superior quality stimulates customers' feelings of altruism to share their experience with future customers (Jeong & Jang, 2011).

Enjoyment of helping others by writing a review was considered a crucial factor to affect consumers' intention to spread eWOM (Cheung & Lee, 2012). Parikh et al. (2015) further claim that customers are motivated to write reviews since they see the activity as enjoyable. Through writing, consumers benefit others by sharing their own experiences since it saves others from having a bad experience (Cheung & Lee, 2012). Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) also claim that customers are more prone to visit online platforms frequently and contribute with content when they feel concern for fellow customers. Tong et al. (2013) has a similar description of a factor in his study, but call it fulfilling instead. Helping others is a self-fulfilling return for the ones that contribute with content online. It is described as the experience of satisfaction during a process when one performs a challenging task. Fulfilling is derived from positive reviews when helping to promote certain products or improving the consumption experience. It can also be when exhibiting vengeance due to a bad experience. Regardless of motive, one can anticipate pleasure when the possibility to influence the products exists (Tong et al., 2013). The online content contributors who feel good when helping other consumers are more likely to engage in reviews (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011; Tong et al., 2013). This is due to the opportunity of helping others to make better purchase decisions (Tong et al., 2013).

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) found an insignificant relationship between customers' willingness to help a company and their intention to make frequent visits at opinion platforms. Hence, helping a company does not motivate customers to provide eWOM on opinion platforms (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). This conclusion is in contrast to Bronner and de Hoog (2011) who mean that helping a particular company is an essential factor that motivates consumers to write online reviews. This is also in line with Parikh et al. (2015) who conclude that the prime motivation to write reviews is to help a particular company, share thoughts and make it easier for others to find a pleasant restaurant. Jeong and Jang (2011) further argue that positive experiences from restaurants with food quality and service quality are factors that motivate customers to spread eWOM for the reason of helping the company. This means that satisfactory services trigger consumers and their desire to help companies (Jeong & Jang, 2011).

### 2.3 Consumption Utility

Consumption utility refers to consumers obtained value from the presence of other consumers' contribution online (Balasubramanian & Mahajan, 2001). By Balasubramanian and Mahajan (2001) is consumption utility the same factor as Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) use in their study, but referred to advice seeking instead (Matta & Frost, 2011). Further Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) state that in an online context, consumption occurs when consumers are able to read reviews provided by others, which also can motivate consumers to write reviews. Seeking advice is shown to be a significant factor that motivates customers to write comments on online opinion platforms (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Furthermore, Matta and Frost (2011) only mention Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) and Balasubramanian together with Mahajan (2001) for investigating the relation between consumption utility and eWOM. Wolny and Mueller (2013) explain that advice seeking was referred to as a motive of negative eWOM by former researchers, but that Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) put the factor in a context of positive eWOM where it is said that consumers genuinely are interested in other consumers' opinions and advices. This is mainly due to doubt of formal marketing offers. Therefore, opinion leaders are more likely to be the contact for advice or verification regarding a product or a brand. Contradictory to the result by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) was Wolny and Muellers' (2013) study that showed no relationship between advice seeking and eWOM. However, Wolny & Muellers' (2013) study concerned fashion brand-related eWOM engagement.

### 2.4 Approval Related Utility

Balasubramanian together with Mahajan (2001) and Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) explain approval related utility as the satisfaction individuals receive when others within a community consume and approve the contribution that has been given. A similar explanation is made by Olivera et al. (2008), but in that study is the factor called instrumental motivation. It is explained as the desire for individuals to obtain external rewards and the rewards can be either tangible or intangible (Olivera et al., 2008). Additionally, Cheung and Lee (2012) call the factor for egoism and explain that individuals' motivation to spread eWOM is essential to benefit oneself. Furthermore, individuals are considered as egoistic when their aim is to obtain tangible or intangible returns after contributing with knowledge (Cheung & Lee, 2012). Tangible rewards can be monetary compensation while intangible rewards can be

social recognition (Olivera et al., 2008). Two factors that fall under these types of rewards that motivate individuals are economic rewards and self-enhancement (Matta & Frost, 2011).

#### **2.4.1 Economic rewards**

Economic rewards is an external factor that influences motivation (Tong et al., 2013). It can be used to trigger individuals to perform certain activities (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) and some studies have investigated the relationship between economic rewards and individuals intention to provide online content (e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Yang & Lai, 2010). Economic rewards provide contributors with a sense of appreciation that their choice to write has been valuable for the reward giver (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) found a significant relationship between economic rewards and customers' tendency to provide comments on opinion platforms. Customers are also motivated to make frequent visits on opinion platforms if they receive some form of economic reward (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Yang and Lai (2010) conducted a study that sought to evaluate individuals' motivation to provide online content on Wikipedia and reached a similar result, which indicates that individuals are motivated to write in exchange for economic rewards.

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) divide customers into distinct segments and argue that their motives for providing content to online platforms are different. Customers who are self-interested, referred to as self-interested helpers, are strongly motivated by economic rewards whereas customers who are motivated by helping a company or fellow customers showed limited interest to provide online content in exchange for economic rewards (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Tong et al. (2013) mean, financial rewards are seen as a motivational factor when consumers see it as an opportunity to enhance their self-image and perceive it as effortless to recall the product information. However, without such preconditions, the impact of financial rewards on customers' motivation to write online reviews is argued as relatively insignificant (Tong et al., 2013).

#### **2.4.2 Self-enhancement**

Bronner and de Hoog (2011) concluded that a self-directed motive, like self-enhancement is the most prominent factor that motivates individuals to write online reviews. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) identified self-enhancement for being a factor that influences the contribution of eWOM (Matta & Frost, 2011). Olivera et al. (2008) explain self-enhancement to be the

motivation to develop and maintain positive thoughts about oneself. Several authors use different terms for the same meaning as self-enhancement. These frequently used terms are; self-concept (Rogers, 1959; Tajfel, 1981; Yang & Lai, 2010), image/reputation (Lee et al., 2006) and self-image (Tong et al., 2013). Many studies have tested whether the motivational factor is significant for contribution behaviour through information technologies (Olivera et al., 2008), eWOM (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Tong et al., 2013), and knowledge sharing online (Lee et al., 2006; Yang & Lai, 2010).

Image/reputation is described by Lee et al. (2006) as the recognition achieved when sharing content on platform-based discussion boards. Additionally, it is shown that decisions to share content online are made due to one's own sake like reward, recognition or dictates from others (Lee et al., 2006). In the study by Tong et al. (2013), it is argued that self-image is an internalized motivation. The researchers state that an individual who contributes with feedback online can receive respect and recognition by other people when providing insightful product reviews. The respect and recognition can lead to a higher status where it is said that individuals rely on others' appraisal of improving one's status (Tong et al., 2013). This is in line with what Rogers (1959) states about the self-concept. The self-concept is explained to be an individual's perception about oneself and the traits one is striving to possess, the ideal self. Additionally, Yang and Lai (2010) argue that self-concept can be divided into two motivational types; internal self-concept and external self-concept. The external self-concept is individuals' motivation to maintain an activity, which is in line with the expectations of a reference group (Yang & Lai, 2010). With other words, individuals are motivated due to the positive feedback it generates from a reference group, but also for the feeling of belonging to the group (Tajfel, 1981).

Yang and Lai (2010) tested whether the factor had a positive effect on individuals sharing behaviour on Wikipedia. The finding from the study shows that there was no significant effect on individuals to share content online. However, Yang and Lai (2010) explain that Wikipedia has a lower social interaction between users in comparison to other online platforms. On the other hand, Tong et al. (2013) tested whether self-image was positively related to consumer contribution online and the study shows that it has an effect on the consumer contribution online.



## 2.5 Moderator-Related Utility

Moderator-related utility refers to a company's accessibility for its customers at online platforms (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). This utility is derived from the presence of a moderator that facilitates the interaction process, both among customers and with a company. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) further argue that motives that influence customers to provide eWOM are problem solving support and convenience.

### 2.5.1 Platform assistance

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) identified the motivational factor, platform assistance in the context of eWOM. The arguments for the motivational factor are that consumers may spread eWOM if online platforms are easy to make complaints at and easy for customers to negotiate with the providers. In the same study as platform assistance was identified, was it also discovered that it had no effect on the spreading of eWOM (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Nevertheless, other studies have adopted this motivational factor where Matta and Frost (2011) state that there might be a correlation with what type of media eWOM is spread on. Furthermore, Matta and Frost (2011) write that sites should be designed to facilitate consumers' opinions exchange of their consumption experiences.

## 2.6 Homeostase Utility

Homeostase utility refers to the notion that individuals have an innate desire to strive for balance and reach equilibrium in their lives. Venting negative or positive feelings is one way for them to reach such balance. In an online platform context are individuals writing positive or negative comments as an attempt to restore equilibrium (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004)

### 2.6.1 Venting negative and positive feelings

To retell negative product or service experiences via opinion platforms are a way for consumers to reduce dissatisfaction (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). However, Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) found that consumers with a desire to share negative feelings visit opinion platforms less often to share eWOM. Jeong and Jang (2011) conducted a study of customers' intentions to spread positive eWOM based on a restaurant experience. Service quality was a factor discovered to motivate customers to spread positive eWOM for the reason to express

positive feelings. Jeong and Jang (2011) further mean that customers who are satisfied with services will be triggered to express feelings.

## 2.7 Summary of the theoretical framework

In the table below is a summary shown of the factors presented in the theoretical chapter together with a definition of each concept. The table shows the factors to the left, where the factors are displayed in bold text and sub factors are written in italic text. In the right column of the table are definitions shortly summarized and presented for each factor.

Table 1. Summary of the theoretical concepts (own table)

Motivational Factors	Summarised Definition
<b>Focus Related Utility</b>	The usefulness that the customers receive as they add value to an online community (Balasubramanian & Mahajan, 2001).
- <i>Social benefits</i>	Customers that provide with content online with the intention to benefit a group and be a part of an online community (Cheung & Lee, 2012).
- <i>Exerting Power</i>	The contribution of online content with the intention to exert power and possess control over companies (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).
- <i>Altruism</i>	Individuals who write reviews and share experiences for the benefit of others without expecting any rewards in return (Cheung & Lee, 2012). It includes areas as; concern for others, enjoyment of helping others and helping the company (Cheung & Lee, 2012; Tong et al., 2013; Parikh et al., 2015).
<b>Consumption Utility</b>	Consumers' get motivated to write when they can read others reviews and also affects by consumption (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).
<b>Approval Related Utility</b>	The desire for individuals to obtain external rewards, both tangible and intangible. Tangible rewards can be monetary compensation and intangible rewards can be social recognition (Olivera et al., 2008).
- <i>Economic Rewards</i>	Tangible economic rewards that are offered and triggers consumers to write (Tong et al., 2013).
- <i>Self-Enhancement</i>	Individuals that is motivated to write in order to maintain positive thoughts about themselves (Olivera et al., 2008). By providing with content, the individual improve their status (Tong et al., 2013).
<b>Moderator-Related Utility</b>	It is the companies' accessibility for its companies on an online platform, which can facilitate the interaction process among customers as well as companies (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).
- <i>Platform assistance</i>	The facilities on an online platform that make it easier for customers to write (Matta & Frost, 2011).
<b>Homeostase Utility</b>	Individuals that vent positive or negative comments with the intention to restore their equilibrium and strive for balance in their lives (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).
- <i>Venting negative and positive feelings</i>	Spread content online due to the feelings that the customers have (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

## 3. Methodology

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*In this chapter are methodological theories presented as well as the implementations of the research. A summary of the methods used can be found in the end of the methodology. The part regarding source criticism is excluded from this chapter and can be found in Appendix B.*

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### 3.1 Research Strategy

Research strategy is the general orientation researchers adopt when conducting research. It includes considerations regarding an inductive and/or deductive approach as well as a quantitative or qualitative research strategy (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

#### 3.1.1 Inductive or Deductive

The relationship between theory and research can be conducted both through a *deductive* and an *inductive* approach (Bryman & Bell, 2011). According to Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005), is deduction based on logic. Bryman and Bell (2011) mean that the process is linear and structured where one step follows the other. Deductive research begins with formulation of hypotheses based on existing theories and research (Robson, 2011). Adams (2007) explains that deductive methods operate from the general and moves to the specific. It is important that the researcher takes an objective view to be independent from what is being researched (Saunders et al., 2009). Conclusions are drawn from logical reasoning that essentially not needs to be true in reality (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005). It is often connected with quantitative research with the primary objective to test stated hypotheses and thereby either accept or reject hypothesized relationships (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Furthermore, it emphasises to select sample sizes to be able to generalise the findings (Saunders et al., 2009).

Inductive research begins with the collection of data where theory and concepts emerge (Robson, 2011). The research emphasises on the understanding of human behaviour in certain events (Saunders et al., 2009). It bases its conclusions from empirical observations where theory is the outcome of research (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Adams (2007) writes that the inductive method starts with the specific and moves to the general. If an event is repeated enough times, it is possible in inductive research to conclude that this event will continue to occur (Adams, 2007). Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005) mean that since the conclusions are based on a finite number of observations, can research merely arrive in a more or less probable result. Induction is often associated with qualitative research (Bryman

& Bell, 2011) where the purpose is to understand and get a sense of the nature of a problem (Saunders et al., 2009). Inductive and deductive research include different elements of each other, hence they are not entirely exclusive of each other (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011). It is possible to combine the two of them in research, which also can be of advantage (Saunders et al., 2009). Similarities with the methods are that both imply the researcher to know the existing knowledge within the field of study (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005).

*The implementation* of this research has been conducted in a *deductive* manner since the research is based on previous theoretical findings. Furthermore, the process of collecting the data was structured and linear where one step followed the other. The researchers started with the formulation of a problem, which was based on previous theoretical findings. Then the process moved towards the collection and analysis of data to be able to draw a conclusion. Even though this research primarily was conducted in a deductive manner, have the authors decided to be open for new factors to emerge. This can be seen as an inductive element where new theories can be developed. The authors were also interested to understand the respondents' reasons behind writing reviews, which according to Saunders et al. (2009) is a characteristic of inductive reasoning.

### **3.1.2 Quantitative or Qualitative**

The research strategy is often divided into two broad branches; *qualitative* and *quantitative* research (Robson, 2011). A *qualitative* research strategy emphasises individuals and their interpretation of the social world. It presupposes that the social world constantly changes as a result of individuals' creation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A qualitative research strategy further values the context and aims to understand a phenomenon in the specific setting in where it occurs (Robson, 2011). Qualitative researchers therefore provide rich and detailed information of the setting where the research was carried out. To receive a deep understanding of the setting and/or the individuals that are being studied, qualitative researchers further wish to work under as little predetermined structure as possible. A particular feature that characterizes qualitative research is that it values words above numbers. Thus, it does not seek to employ measurements to quantify the collected data (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

A *quantitative* research strategy views the social world objectively (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It is concerned with precise measurements and quantification of data to understand the behaviour of individuals (Robson, 2011). Numerical data enables researchers to explore, describe and examine a certain phenomenon and also present the relationships and patterns among data (Saunders et al., 2009). Quantitative researchers seek to generalize their findings beyond the setting where the research was carried out (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Generalizability is closely related to another distinctive feature that characterizes quantitative research; replicability. To value the generalizability of research findings, quantitative researchers often seek to replicate each other's studies in another setting or with another sample. It is especially useful when findings are controversial or seen to be of particular importance (Robson, 2011).

*The implementation* of a qualitative research strategy was chosen since the aim was to understand the phenomenon of online reviews and what motivates consumers to write it. Therefore, a quantitative strategy was not useful since the authors had no interest in measuring the behaviour of individuals. Instead this research valued individuals' own meaning of a certain phenomenon; hence words were more valued than numbers. The use of words allowed the researchers to demonstrate the picture of what motivates consumers to write online reviews.

### 3.2 Research Approach

There exist three main types of research approaches; *exploratory*, *descriptive* and *causal* research. These have distinct differences concerning the research purpose and following research question, precision of hypotheses and data collection methods (Aaker et al., 2010).

*Exploratory* research is often applied to research problems that are unstructured and poorly understood (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005). It is often used when problems need to be more precisely defined, when researchers need to map out an appropriate course of action or when further knowledge is needed to develop an approach (Malhotra, 2010). Common features of exploratory research are that it is qualitative in nature, includes high flexibility and limited structure (Aaker et al., 2010). *Descriptive* research is used when a research problem is clearly understood and has an evident structure. Detailed rules and practices are important features of descriptive research. *Causal* research is also applied to problems that are structured in nature.

However, causal research is applied when researchers want to determine whether causes lead to effects (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005).

*The implementation* for this research approach has been conducted with an *exploratory* purpose. Research concerning what motivates consumers to write online reviews have earlier been conducted to a large extent in a quantitative manner. Therefore, an exploratory purpose was chosen in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the reasons behind. Based on this, both descriptive and causal research was considered less appropriate for this study. Quantitative research within this area has identified motivational factors to write online reviews, however the reasons behind these actions are poorly understood from a consumer perspective.

### 3.3 Research Design

A research design constitutes a structure that leads researchers on how to gather and analyse data (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Several research designs exist to guide researchers in the research process. Some of these are *experiments*, *cross-sectional design*, *comparative design*, *longitudinal design* and *case studies* (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

*Experiments* are often performed when researchers want to determine if, and how, a dependent variable is affected due to a change in an independent variable (Saunders et al., 2009). An experiment is performed by exposing an experimental group to a specific treatment and then compares it to a control group that does not receive any treatment. The individuals who take part of the experiment are unaware of what group they are placed in. This course of action allows researchers to be confident that any affect in a dependent variable is attributable to a manipulation in an independent variable (Bryman & Bell, 2011). *Cross-sectional design* is a research design in which data are collected from a sample at one point in time (Malhotra, 2010). This design is often used to examine and detect patterns based on quantifiable data where the variation in the variables is of interest. Furthermore, a structured and standardized method is required to obtain consistent data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). *Comparative design* is a research design that study two or more contrasting cases. It emphasizes comparison since social phenomena is argued to be best understood under such conditions. Two of the most common forms of comparative design are cross-national or cross-cultural research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). *Longitudinal design* is a research design that study cases over time to identify

change (Bryman & Bell, 2011) and development (Saunders et al., 2009). The design uses a fixed sample together with defined variables and studies those at least two points in time (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Longitudinal studies are suitable for researchers that seek an in-depth understanding of events and changes that occur over longer periods of time (Maholta, 2010).

*Case study* is a research design in which the researchers carefully study one particular case. It can be an organization, a group, an individual or anything that is of interest to the researchers (Robson, 2011). The aim is to grasp the complexity and distinctive nature of a particular case (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A case study design is suitable for researchers that seek rich and deep understanding of a particular setting and is frequently used in exploratory research (Saunders et al., 2009). Saunders et al. (2009) distinguishes between single, multiple, holistic and embedded case studies. A single case study design is applied to cases that are typical for the phenomenon being studied. The design is also commonly used among researchers that seek to explore a phenomenon, which has previously been unexplored. A multiple case study design involves the study of several cases. The purpose to study several cases is to see if findings from one case match findings from other cases. The aim is consequently to try to generalize the conclusions. Holistic and embedded case studies involve the unit/s the researcher seek to analyse. When researchers seek to analyse an entire unit as a whole, such as an entire organization, they adopt a holistic view of the particular case. Embedded case study involves analysis of more than one unit. Within an organization the researcher may seek to analyse additional units such as workgroups or departments (Saunders et al., 2009).

*The implementation* for this research is a *case study* design. The authors saw this as an appropriate design since it aims to obtain rich and deep understanding of a phenomenon, which was consistent with the research purpose. It was possible to study the case in-depth to receive an understanding of what motivates consumers to write online reviews. Furthermore, a case study was considered suitable since it helped the authors to find the answer to what motivates customers to write online reviews. This research used a single case study design since the study has an exploratory purpose and aims at explore one phenomenon. An experiment was considered inappropriate since such design would not facilitate the authors to answer what motivates customers to write online reviews. Also, the interest in this study is not to view the effect that one variable might have on another. Furthermore, a cross-sectional design was not found as applicable due to that the research neither wanted to quantify data or find variation in variables. To compare different cases was not an interest in this study so a



comparative research design was regarded as inappropriate. The longitudinal design requires a researcher to collect data through a longer period of time in order to detect changes. This was not feasible within the timeframe of this study and change was not the suitable for this research, therefore was longitudinal not an option.

### 3.4 Data Source

Primary and secondary data are the two types of data sources that researchers use in studies (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The researcher originates *primary data* for the specific purpose of the research (Malhotra, 2010). It is collected for the purpose to extract relevant data for the research problem (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005). The advantage with primary data is that it is gathered for the particular research at hand and therefore will the information be consistent with the study. Primary data also allow information about what is behind consumer behaviour and attitudes of a specific product. Disadvantages are that the collection of data is time consuming and it might be difficult to find respondents to involve in the research (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005).

*Secondary data* refers to the collection and analyse of material that already has been gathered by another researcher for another purpose (Saunders et al., 2009). Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005) therefore mean it is important to consider the time period from when the data was collected so that it suits the present. The advantage with secondary data analysis is that it allow researchers to utilize others data and concentrate on interpretation and analysis (Robson, 2011). Furthermore, Malhotra (2010) argues that it is rapid and easy to collect the material in secondary data and less time consuming. However, the usefulness of secondary data may be limited since it is collected for another research problem. Hence, the methods and objectives used may not be suitable in the current situation (Malhotra, 2010).

*The implementation* for this research was to use *primary data* to collect the information. This was done since this study uses a qualitative research strategy with an exploratory purpose, where the data was collected directly from the respondents in order to answer the study's purpose. Also, primary data was beneficial because the information could be gathered for the study's specific purpose and was therefore consistent with the research. Furthermore, primary data enabled the authors to discover the reasons behind consumers' intention to write online

reviews, which secondary data would not contribute with. Using secondary data in this study was seen as unusable since the authors wanted to explore customers' motivation to write.

### 3.5 Data Collection Method

What data collection method that is appropriate for a particular research is considered when researchers have decided upon a research strategy and a research design. To collect appropriate data, researchers may watch individuals to understand a specific situation, ask them about a particular situation or look at material they leave behind. These approaches represent *observations*, *documentary analysis* and *interviews* (Robson, 2011).

Participant *observations* are described as when the researcher participate in a social setting and becomes a part of the group together with its respondents. This method gives the observer the possibility to experience and feel the event, which enables an understanding of the participants (Saunders et al., 2009). The observer's role is to listen to conversations, observe behaviour and also ask questions to the participants. One common focus within research where participant observations are conducted is within cultures (Bryman & Bell, 2011). *Documents* are different sources of data that initially have been produced without any purpose to serve as a basis for research. It includes personal, public, organizational and visual documents. Also mass media outputs such as films, television programmes, magazines and newspapers could be used for research purposes. The documents that researchers chose to collect can then be analysed through content analysis, semiotics, hermeneutics or historical analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Often are documents an addition to another data collection method, which collects primary data such as observations or interviews (Saunders et al., 2009).

*Interviews* are according to Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005) regarded as a method for data collection and it can be performed in person, by phone or via mail. It is a useful method when researchers seek to understand an individual's attitude, opinion or underlying reasons for making certain decisions (Aaker et al., 2010). Bryman and Bell (2011) further argue that interviews are the most commonly used method for data collection in qualitative research. Several types of interviews exist but the semi-structured and unstructured interview are the major types used within qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Both data collection methods are argued to be suitable for research of an exploratory nature (Aaker et al., 2010). The

respondents in a semi-structured interview are relatively free to respond to the questions posed by the interviewer (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The topic the researcher wants to cover is predetermined, which also the size of the sample and the respondents are (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005). An interview guide is used, but the order and wording of the questioning are flexible. Semi-structured interviews are performed in such way that researchers have the opportunity to reply to respondents' interpretations of their social world and new emerging ideas associated with the research topic (Merriam, 2009). A completely unstructured interview is used when researchers want respondents to discuss one or several topics very freely. Some unstructured interviews involve only one question and the interview should be of the same character as a conversation. The interviewer's role is solely to pick up and respond to interesting points mentioned by the respondent (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Unstructured interviews are often used when researchers have too little knowledge about a phenomenon in order to formulate a set of relevant questions. One of the purposes is thus to receive enough knowledge to be able to form questions for future interviews (Merriam, 2009).

*The implementation of the interviews was semi-structured interviews.* Mainly since the aim was to explore what factors that motivated the respondents to write online reviews, but also to cover the existent factors in the literature. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews enabled for the authors to provide a deeper understanding of the respondents understanding of the motivation to write. In the existing literature, some factors have been said to motivate customers while others are said not to motivate. Therefore, there was a need to cover all potential factors and let the respondents freely express their interpretation. The authors of this paper compiled the interview questions together as well as participated in the interviews separately. The interviews were conducted separately between the 23th and 26th of April. One of the interviews was conducted by phone and the rest were performed in person. Every interview was recorded, which enabled the authors to transcribe each interview. Transcripts are to be found in Appendix D. The other data collection methods (observations and documentary analysis) were excluded since they were considered less suitable. Observations were not applicable since the authors sought to explore consumers' motivation to write online reviews. To gain such information the authors considered it vital to ask respondents through interviews. Furthermore, the authors had chosen to not use secondary data and therefore were documentary analysis not useful.

### **3.5.1 Operationalization**

Operationalization is where the researchers demonstrate which concept that is going to be measured (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It is the translation of concepts into tangible and measurable factors (Saunders et al., 2009). Arbnor and Bjerke (1994) describe, the closer the objective world that a concept appears to be the more operational it is. Therefore, it is of importance that the operational definition of the concept is as accurate as possible so that the researcher knows what to register from the objective world (Arbnor & Bjerke, 1994). The purpose with operationalization is to ensure that the relevant empirical material will be collected to facilitate the analysis and conclusion (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

*The implementation* of the operationalization was divided into sections where the questions in the first section were asked to let the respondents give their own view of online reviews. The aim was to see what motivated the respondents to write without leading them in their answers. This was done to understand what motivated customers to write online reviews. The second section contained questions of a more leading character, which were mainly used if the respondents lost track of the subject or if they stopped talking. However, the questions were adapted to the interviews and the order varied. An operationalization table is presented below, labelled Table 2.

Table 2. Operationalization of the factors (own table)

<b>Theory</b>	<b>Key words</b>	<b>Operational purpose</b>	<b>Main questions</b>
<b>Motivation</b> The motivation to write online content.	<b>Online reviews</b> Customers' motivation to contribute with online reviews.	<i>To discover existent and new motivational factors as well as explore customer's own interpretation of online reviews.</i>	- How would you describe an online review? - What do online reviews mean to you? - What motivates you to write online reviews?
<b>Categorisations of factors</b>	<b>Factors</b>	<b>Operational purpose</b>	<b>Questions to use if necessary</b>
<b>Focus Related Utility</b> The utility customers receive when adding value to a community online.	<b>Social Benefits</b> The intention to benefit the group.	<i>To see if the respondents are motivated to benefit a specific group.</i>	-Have you written an online review to feel that you are part of a group? -Have you written an online review to benefit the group?
	<b>Exerting Power</b> Customers' intention to possess control over companies.	<i>To see if the respondents are motivated by possess control of companies.</i>	-Have you written an online review in an attempt to harm a company?
	<b>Altruism</b> The motivation to help others without expecting anything in return. Concern areas; helping other customers and /or helping the company.	<i>To see if the respondents genuinely are motivated to help either customers and/or companies.</i>	-Do you write online reviews with the intention to help other customers or companies?
<b>Consumption Utility</b> Consumption motivates consumers to write online.		<i>To see if there are any types of products or services in particular that motivates respondents to write.</i>	- What type of product or service would make you write an online review?

<p><b>Approval Related Utility</b>          The desire by the individual to obtain external/internal rewards.</p>	<p><b>Economic Rewards</b>          Tangible rewards.</p> <p><b>Self-enhancement</b>          Intangible rewards.</p>	<p><i>To see if tangible rewards motivate the respondents to write online reviews.</i></p> <p><i>To see if intangible rewards motivate the respondents to write online reviews.</i></p>	<p>- Do you know about a reward system when writing online reviews?          - In what situation are you motivated by economic rewards?          - What type of rewards would motivate you to write?</p> <p>-Are you motivated by maintaining positive thoughts about yourself when write online reviews?</p>
<p><b>Moderator-Related Utility</b>          The business accessibility for its customers, concerns problem solving support and convenience.</p>	<p><b>Platform assistance</b>          The easiness to write.</p>	<p><i>To see what role the platform has for the respondents to write and how the moderator (companies) should outline it.</i></p>	<p>-What possibilities on the site where online reviews exist make you write?</p>
<p><b>Homeostase Utility</b>          Desire to strive for balance and reach equilibrium.</p>	<p><b>Venting negative and positive feelings</b>          Spread content online due to one's feelings.</p>	<p><i>To see what role feelings have when it comes to the motivation by the respondents to write.</i></p>	<p>-What feelings motivate you to write online reviews?</p>

### **3.5.2 Interview Guide**

The design of an interview guide is determined by the structure of the interviews and whether they are structured, semi-structured or unstructured in nature (Merriam, 2009). In semi-structured interviews is the interview guide a list of questions and topics created in advance for the interview. This is prepared to ensure that the questions and topics will be asked and covered, but also to give the respondent the space to answer freely (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This guide facilitates the researcher to obtain rich and detailed responses (Saunders et al., 2009). There are no predetermined rules of the order of the questions (Merriam, 2009). However, the questions should be asked in a logical order so that the respondents easily can follow (Saunders et al., 2009). Merriam (2009) means that researchers should pose neutral questions at an early stage of the interview and then move sensitive questions to a late stage of the interview to obtain as much detailed information as possible from the respondents.

*The implementation;* the interview guide was based on the authors operationalization and the guide can be found in Appendix C. The interviewers had topics that the authors wanted to cover. However, the order of the questions was flexible and the interviewer was free to pose questions depending on how the interviews proceeded. By not limiting the respondents in their replies, it was possible for the interviewer to receive deep and rich data from the respondent. To gain as much valuable information as possible had the interviewer general questions early in the interview and moved successively towards more sensitive questions. Nevertheless, the respondents guided the order of the questions.

### **3.5.3 Pilot study**

A pilot study is a pre-test that is conducted in a small scale before the full study is carried out (Saunders et al., 2009; Robson, 2011). The purpose with it is to ensure that the respondents understand the questions asked in the intended manner, as well as to reduce any problems with the recording of data (Saunders et al., 2009). Furthermore, Ghauri and Grønhaug (2005) discuss that the pilot study reveals respondents understanding of the research problem. Saunders et al. (2009) suggest asking experts of the field of study to comment on the questions, this will also establish validity and reliability in the data collection. According to Bryman and Bell (2011), pilot studies are more commonly used in quantitative research because it is more difficult to adjust questions afterwards than in qualitative studies. It is important that the respondents of the pilot test are not a part of the sample that will be included in the full study (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

*The implementation* of the pilot study in this research was conducted to ensure the quality of the interview questions. The interview questions were formed and then evaluated by three different teachers at the Marketing Department at Linnæus University. This was done to ensure that the questions formed were connected to the theoretical framework and also suitable considering the research purpose and research question. The feedback given allowed the researchers to reformulate the questions before they were posed to the test respondents. The questions were adjusted and reformulated before they were used in the pilot study with three students that were a part of the population. This was done as a final check to ensure that the respondents understood the questions in the way the authors intended and for the interviews to practice. However, the ones participating in the pilot study were not part of the chosen sample when the actual interviews were about to be performed.

### 3.6 Sampling

*Sampling* refers to divide a whole population into a sub-group, where a portion of the population is chosen to collect information from. The sample is chosen to represent the whole population, since it is unusual to be able to ask every element of a population (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Population refers to the whole set of elements from where the sample is chosen. This technique allows researchers to draw conclusions based on the elements asked and refer to the whole population (Saunders et al., 2009). Furthermore Malhotra (2010) mean that sampling is useful in order to focus and draw attention to individual cases as in the case of interviews.

When the researcher has defined its target population, the next step is to determine the *sampling frame* (Malhotra, 2010). Sampling frame is described by Bryman and Bell (2011) as a representation of all the elements in the target population where the sample will be selected. Saunders et al. (2009) explain that it consists of a list of all elements in the population from where the sample will be chosen. Furthermore it is important to consider the validity and reliability of the sample frame, so the correct information will be gathered (Saunders et al., 2009). There are two sampling techniques available classified as *probability* and *nonprobability* sampling (Malhotra, 2010; Robson, 2011).

In *probability sampling*, every element within a population has the same equal chance or probability of being selected (Saunders et al., 2009). It is possible in advance to specify which



potential elements that have the probability of being selected within the sampling frame (Malhotra, 2010). Probability sampling is often used in studies where the researchers need a sample in order to generalize the findings from a whole population (Saunders et al., 2009). Hence, probability sampling is most commonly used in quantitative studies (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The chance of being selected in *nonprobability sampling* is not known in advance and cannot be specified (Saunders et al., 2009). This implies that some elements of the population have greater chance of being selected (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005). Instead this sampling relies on the researcher's judgement and that decides which respondents to include in the sample (Malhotra, 2010). Nonprobability sampling is advantageous and typically used in qualitative studies. The main reason is since researchers consciously can turn to elements that have knowledge within the specific field of study. This generates detailed and in-depth information, which often is considered valuable in qualitative studies (Christensen et al., 2010).

The techniques commonly used in nonprobability sampling are: *convenience*, *snowball* and *quota* sampling (Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011). In convenience sampling are the respondents selected because they are found easy and convenient to use in the sample selection (Robson, 2011). The reason could for instance be because they are at the right place at the right time or because the researcher knows the respondent (Malhotra, 2010). The respondents are randomly selected in snowball sampling. The researcher usually starts to randomly select the initial respondents and then the subsequent respondents are selected based on the information given by the initial respondents (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In quota sampling are researchers dividing the sample of a population into different categories, also called quotas (Malhotra, 2010; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Examples of quotas are: age, social class, gender and region of residence (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

*The implementation;* the entire population consist of those who have written online reviews and that was the only qualification to participate. Therefore, aspects considering region of residence, gender, age and occupation were not important for this research. Since it is impossible to interview an entire population, a *nonprobability sampling* was used to select respondents to the interviews that should be made in this research. A nonprobability sampling may not accurately represent an entire population in the same way as a probability sampling (Maholta, 2010). However, the purpose of this research is not to generalize any findings so the potential problems that exist with nonprobability sampling are, in this case, seen as

irrelevant. The sample was based on the researchers' judgement of what respondents that were suitable for the study. This course of action was suitable since the researchers considered that appropriate respondents were in their vicinity. The authors were not dependent on dividing the population into quotas since factors, as age, gender and occupation were not considered important for this study. Instead, the researchers knew the respondents in advance and had knowledge that they had written online reviews. Hence, the sampling technique applied was *convenience sampling*. The size of the sample was not pre-determined. Instead the authors choose to stop interviewing when saturation was reached. This means that another interview was considered superfluous and would not contribute with anything more. The saturation was reached when six persons had been interviewed. The authors were at this point able to sense a pattern; this means that the authors began to notice that the respondents mentioned similar things. The respondents are chosen to be anonymous in the study and are instead named after colours: Pink, Black, White, Red, Orange and Green.

### 3.7 Method for Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis represents a variety of different processes that help researchers to transform data into a form that explains and create understanding of a specific context of the people studied (Chowdhury, 2015). One commonly adapted approach to reach such understanding is through hermeneutics (Bryman & Bell, 2011), which focuses on the interaction between parts and whole (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008). Hermeneutics can hence be seen as a circle. To receive understanding, researchers begin by picking out one part and tries to explore the meaning of that part in connection to the whole. By doing so, the whole receives a new meaning. The researchers begin to explore one part and systematically go through the interplay between all parts and the whole to receive an in-depth and detailed understanding of both (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008). Bryman and Bell (2011) mean that hermeneutics advantageously can be used as an analysis method within research to understand the meaning of individuals and their actions.

An additional approach for qualitative data analysis is proposed by Christensen et al. (2010) who argue that researchers should consider three different steps in the analysis process; *reduction*, *structuring* and *visualizing*. *Reduction* includes coding of the empirical material that researchers have at hand. This is important since the amount of data often is large in qualitative research. This process enables researchers to receive a first overview of the

collected material. *Structuring* includes the process of connecting key codes in order to create some form of pattern. By structuring codes, researchers are able to create an understanding and receive an explanatory value of the material. *Visualizing* includes the transformation of the reduced data and emerging pattern into short and concise summaries. The process of visualization is the last phase of the analysis and lays the foundation for the conclusion (Christensen et al., 2010).

*The implementation* of the analysis has been inspired both by certain hermeneutic elements and the three steps from Christensen et al. (2010). To be able to analyse what factors that motivated the respondents, it has been important to relate small pieces of information in connection to a larger context as hermeneutics advocates. This means that the authors have viewed the information in detail, as in codes, and then related the codes to the whole context to receive a meaning. Different situations and factors may more or less motivate the respondents to write. Therefore, the authors found it significant to use hermeneutic as an approach in the analysis. Furthermore, the three different steps of Christensen et al. (2010) in the analysis are presented in different subheadings below, together with an implementation of each step.

### **3.7.1 Reduction Process**

Researchers must reduce the collected amount of data in order to make it useful and create an overall picture of it. The process to do so is through coding the material (Christensen et al., 2010). Researchers use coding as an approach to identify themes within the collected data. It is a careful and systematic approach that aims to seize individuals' viewpoints and meanings (Watts, 2014). The identified codes will then constitute the basis for some sort of pattern and/or structure of the material (Christensen et al., 2010). Bryman and Bell (2011) suggest several steps to use in the preparation before and during the process of coding. It is recommended to, at first, read through the collected material without taking notes. Then, start coding early to sharpen the understanding of the gathered data in order to decrease the risk of ending up with too much data in the end. Furthermore, the researcher should read through the data again and make as many notes as possible about significant observations or remarks. This type of notes should be basic; it can for example be keywords that the respondents used themselves. Coding is only a part of the analysis and therefore it is of importance to treat it as one part that enables for the analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

*The implementation*; the first step in the analysis process proceeded in the following way, the authors started with reading through the empirical material without taking any notes in order to get an overview of the data. This enabled the authors to be open for the content of the material as well as not miss out on any vital points made by the respondents. Thereafter, the authors read through the material and wrote down the keywords that the respondents mentioned as well as significant comments, with this the authors began coding. Then the authors read through the material once more and wrote down more codes to not miss out on any significant remarks. In order to know what keywords that already had been written down, the codes were marked with marking pens. When the authors felt they covered all the important parts of the material the coding process stopped. All codes were then placed out on a desk to easily get an overview and enable for the structuring process.

### **3.7.2 Structuring Process**

Christensen et al. (2010) describe that the structuring process has its purpose of creating an understanding of the reduced material. This means that the researcher compiles the codes and relates them to each other, which is where patterns emerge (Christensen et al., 2010). Furthermore, researchers should review the codes in order to see if the codes are related to concepts from the literature (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The process of combining the codes will in the beginning be difficult, but with time will a clear pattern grow. The structuring process involves categorising and grouping of the material. When the categories are identified should the researcher try to bring some of them together and form a parent category (Christensen et al., 2010). Christensen et al. (2010) mean that this is how a pattern is formed. At this point will the researcher be able to identify whether more material needs to be gathered to complete the analysis. This is an on-going process until the researcher cannot find any new codes or categories that can be compiled. It is also highlighted that the data should not be initiated into predetermined categories. Instead the focus lies within the conducted data and to let the interplay between the material form categories (Christensen et al., 2010). The researcher will at this point be able to bring out some general theoretical ideas and outline relations between the categories (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

*The implementations* of the structuring process began with overviews of the codes and place them in different suitable categories. This enabled the authors to find connections and patterns in the codes as well as relate the codes to each other. It was important for the authors to not

use the factors in the theoretical framework as predetermined categories. Having the factors from the literature in mind had implicitly demonstrated a preference for certain factors and that were considered to limit the analysis process. The purpose of the analysis was to look at which factors that motivated customers to write online reviews. Furthermore, the interplay between codes formed the categories. The authors began to overlook the material when all codes were placed in different categories. The process left the authors with 15 categories. Therefore the authors continued and placed the 15 categories to form eight parent categories. At this point, a pattern could be seen among the categories and it was considered that saturation had been reached. There was consequently no need to collect more material to complete the analysis.

### **3.7.3 Visualizing Process**

When researchers have gone through the reduction and structuring process they focus on visualizing the collected data. Visualizing aims to express the reduced data into concise and organized figures or short summaries. This is a way for the researchers to present the different categories and the interrelationship between them. The research results are presented in the visualizing process and forms the basis from which researchers draw conclusions (Christensen et al., 2010).

*The implementation* of the visualizing process looked as follows; in the end of the analysis was amount of data minimized. A shorter summary of the categories and the interrelationship in between them are presented. The visualization is based on patterns that the authors identified and wanted to highlight. This final step facilitated the authors to draw a conclusion.

## **3.8 Quality Criteria**

There are two important criteria in order to assess quality in the research and they are; *reliability* and *validity* (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Christensen et al. (2010) argue that regardless of the research strategy, it is important that both the analysis and conclusion are reliable and valid. However, while the concepts are crucial in quantitative studies have their relevance been questioned in qualitative studies. *Reliability* concerns whether it is possible to repeat a research and obtain similar results (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The notion of reliability is argued to be irrelevant in qualitative studies since it is associated with a measurement's stability and consistency. Qualitative studies are based on interaction, context, time and space. The

problem lies within the fact that reality is constantly changing and that makes it virtually impossible to collect identical data to measure. To be able to collect identical data is thus a prerequisite to receive similar results (Christensen et al., 2010).

*Validity* on the other hand, is described as the extent to which a variable measures what it intends to measure (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Christensen et al. (2010) highlight validity as an important element of qualitative studies, but argue that the concept has a different meaning compared to quantitative studies. Validity partly concerns how accurately a research's conclusion reflects the reality and how trustworthy the result seems to be (Christensen et al., 2010). Christensen et al. (2010) refers to this as internal validity whereas Bryman and Bell (2011) alternatively has named it credibility. The credibility is assessed when submitting the research's conclusions to the individuals that were studied, so they can confirm that researchers accurately have understood their viewpoints (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Validity also concerns the generalizability of a research's conclusions (Christensen et al., 2010). Christensen et al. (2010) refer this to external validity whereas Bryman and Bell (2011) have named it for transferability. The transferability of research is assessed when viewing how well researchers have managed to describe the individuals and the context that have been studied. This enables other researchers to look at the conclusions and determine the potential transferability to another context (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Bryman and Bell (2011) include an additional criterion to assess the quality of qualitative research, confirmability. This criterion is concerned with researchers subjectivity. This means that it should be clear that researchers have acted according to good faith and not completely let personal values direct the research and its conclusions. It is also important that researchers do not let preferences for a specific theory affect the research (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

*The implementation* of the quality criteria used in this research has been internal validity, external validity, and also confirmability. To assess the internal validity the authors offered the respondents to take part of the conclusion to confirm the findings validity. The authors recorded the interviews to be able to listen and transcribe each of them in retrospect. This was made so that a detailed description could be carried out of the respondents and their point of views. The authors have tried to provide as thick descriptions as possible of the empirical material and analysis to enable future researchers to assess the potential generalizability of the research conclusions. Furthermore, this study has been of a qualitative nature and is subjectively presented since the authors conducted the interviews. It is impossible to be

entirely objective in interviews since the authors performed the interviews themselves. However, the authors of this study have emphasized the significance to be open for the collected material and not used one's own preferences to determine what has been of importance.

### 3.9 Social and Ethical Issues

Virtually every research is in some way dependent on the participation of the general public. This requires that researchers conduct research in a way that is ethically justifiable. Ethics concerns matters of morality and the perception of what is right versus wrong, which guides researchers in their actions. There are no established laws governing ethics in research. However, general guidelines exist. One of the most common is that you should treat your fellow man the same way as you want to be treated (Christensen et al., 2010). Researchers have a responsibility to consider potential ethical issues and based on them make informed decisions regarding the research process (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The ones who are most exposed and also most vulnerable in research are the respondents (Christensen et al., 2010). Bryman and Bell (2011) distinguish between four main areas of ethical principles connected to the respondents; invasion of privacy, lack of consent, harm to respondents and deception. It is essential that respondents were given the opportunity to be anonymous. This ensures that respondents' personal information are not misused by the researchers or given to a third party. If researchers wish to reveal the respondents' identity it is crucial that they have asked for permission to do so (Christensen et al., 2010). Invasion of privacy is closely connected to the area of informed consent (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Informed consent basically states that researchers need to receive respondents' consent to participate in the particular research (Christensen et al., 2010). Harm to participants includes a variety of aspects such as hurting respondents self-esteem, career prospects, personal development or expose them to stress. Researchers who are involved with deception present their research as something that it is not (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

*The implementation;* ethical considerations are an important element in all types of research. When the interviews were conducted in this research the authors sought to have the participants best interest in mind. This means that the authors as a first step asked potential participants if they wanted to participate in this research. The ones who answered yes were given an explanation of the research topic and also the purpose, both of the research and of

the interviews. This was done to minimize the risk that any of the respondents would feel deceived or harmed by the interview. By giving the respondents an explanation of the research they had the opportunity to drop out if they repented their consent to participate. It was important for the authors to protect the respondents' privacy and the respondents were informed that they were going to be anonymous throughout the entire research, prior to the interviews. This was the primary reason to rename the respondents after different colours.

### 3.10 Summary of the Methodology

Table 3. Summary of the Methods used (own table)

<b>Research Strategy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Deductive and some elements of inductive</li> <li>- Qualitative research</li> </ul>
<b>Research Approach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exploratory research</li> </ul>
<b>Research Design</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Case study</li> </ul>
<b>Data Source</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Primary data</li> </ul>
<b>Data Collection Method</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Semi-structured interviews</li> </ul>
<b>Sampling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nonprobability sampling</li> <li>- Convenience sampling</li> </ul>
<b>Method for data analysis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inspiration of hermeneutics</li> <li>- Reduction process</li> <li>- Structuring process</li> <li>- Visualizing process</li> </ul>
<b>Quality Criteria</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internal and external validity</li> <li>- Confirmability</li> </ul>



## 4. Empirical investigation

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*In this section is the empirical material presented. The empirical material is based on six interviews that were conducted the 23th and 26th of April. Each interview is presented separately to give rich and detailed information of the answers given. Transcripts of the interviews can also be found in Appendix D. The respondents are anonymous and henceforth named after the colours; Pink, Black, White, Red, Orange and Green.*

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### 4.1 Pink

*The answers from respondent Pink are divided into subdivisions suitable for the content in each section. The following subdivisions are; Good experience or bad experiences, I feel content with myself, Help the group, Seek compensation and scare others, Pleasant surprise, Easiness and opportunity for anonymity, Get mad, and If I have knowledge.*

#### ***Good experience or bad experiences***

Respondent Pink explained online reviews as a good way to state one's opinions at websites. Additionally, it was elaborated that online reviews are a good way to receive or give knowledge to others, particularly when Pink is interested to make a purchase. When the participant was asked to give an example, the answer was *“If I have a good experience or a bad experience about something. It’s a good way to both give others that information and receive that information for myself”*. Then, Pink gave an example regarding a dog food purchase, which was mouldy once the respondent got it delivered. Pink therefore wrote an online review to affect the company in order to make them compensate Pink, but also to warn others that this service did not work. Furthermore, it was mentioned that helping others make the respondent write online reviews. Online reviews are a good way to share information of one's experiences. An example of this was given regarding shoes where it was stated that those are very hard to buy online and peoples’ reviews regarding the sizes are helpful, mean Pink. Furthermore, the respondent is motivated to write online reviews concerning the quality and the service, an example is how long the delivery takes.

#### ***I feel content with myself***

When the respondent were asked about the feelings when writing, the answer was *“I feel content with myself”* mentioned Pink in relation to writing online reviews to help others. Pink means that the benefit does not always have to be achieved by the participant if it is possible to help others. Also, Pink believes in the future that the help will be returned.

### ***Help the group***

The respondent has written online reviews to be a part of a group. It was elaborated that the dog breed group Pink belongs to, stays at different hotels due to all dog shows they participate at. Therefore, Pink writes online reviews with the purpose to help the group. The reviews are good and are in style with *“oh you can stay here since it's cheap and you get this and this”* explains Pink. The reviews benefit the group, but also Pink since others write in the group too. Pink knows all the people in the group but have not met all of them in real life and gives this explanation; *“if we do the reviews we would do them through Facebook or other social media sites. So that's how we met and also how we know each other”*. The online reviews on Facebook occur in different groups and look like social interactions.

### ***Seek compensation and scare others***

The participant is driven to write online reviews if getting mistreated by a company with the purpose to get compensated, but also to show the company that the behaviour is not okay. It was explained that Pink does not complain for small things. The incident with the dog food occurred three times, where Pink ended up with twenty kilos of moulded meet. Additionally, Pink could only assume that an online review would help to get compensated for three boxes of mouldy meet by the company. The online review was based on a movie where Pink explained how bad it looked and smelled to show others how bad the dog food was. *“This was an effective way for others to also get scared to buy the same”* stated Pink and added that the video was a warning and a social responsibility. It was stated that it felt like the company had to compensate Pink, but Pink was not content with the compensation where it was argued that the compensation was little in comparison to what was paid for the dog food. The online review Pink made regarding the dog food was an attempt to harm the company, but also since Pink had heard that it would be possible to get compensated. Also, Pink assumed that the company had to give a compensation to please Pink as a customer since it was so drastic.

### ***Pleasant surprise***

Pink was asked if the respondent has been offered a reward when writing an online review. Pink described, the respondent once wrote an online review for a company due to satisfaction with the products and the shipping. It was an online review where the participant gave four stars. Small samples of dog bones and dog treats were then given to Pink who stated *“that was fun since it wasn't expected. They didn't write that I would get it. So that was a pleasant surprise”*.

### ***Easiness and opportunity for anonymity***

Pink explained that it has to be easy in order for the respondent to write online reviews and will not write any online reviews if there are too many steps to go through. Additionally, Pink explains that it should be easy to write comments or to give stars without a need to give personal information. So the respondent wants to be anonymous, and writes online reviews when it is easy and not personal. Pink said *“I want to be anonymous since you share your own opinions, but the opinions might not always be pleasant for the companies to read so therefore I don’t want my name to be associated”*. Additionally, it was explained that Pink has worked at companies where they know customers by name that always do reviews to harm a company. The respondent means that one does not want to look bad in front of companies, but only get across one’s opinions to make them listen. When Pink made the online review regarding dog food it was admitted that the company got furious. First, Pink emailed them the video, but since the company did not react the video got posted on the company’s Facebook page. Then, Pink mentioned how quick the company’s responses were regarding compensation and how sorry they were. The company answered much quicker when it was posted online and possible for others to see than in a personal email.

### ***Get mad***

The respondent was asked if the feelings influenced to write the angry online review. Pink explained that the dog food was not only affecting Pink but neighbours as well, which resulted Pink to get mad. The dog food was brought to the bin station and smelt for three weeks. Pink explained how disgusting it smelled since it all occurred in the summer.

### ***If I have knowledge***

Pink prefers to be anonymous when writing online reviews, but does not mind others to know what Pink writes when it comes to positive reviews or if it is based on knowledge. Pink stated *“if I have knowledge that I know is valuable for others, so like in a way so its not gonna make me look bad, then I would put my name on it”*. This is since Pink wants to help other people and make it possible for them to contact Pink if there is a need. Pink made the dog food review public only so that the company could compensate the reviewer. If it had been a smaller mistake, then Pink would prefer to be anonymous.

## 4.2 Black

*The answers from respondent Black are divided into subdivisions suitable for the content in each section. The following subdivisions are; The world must know, Favour people and affect companies, Help others, Just reward me, It has to be easy, and This place should burn to the ground.*

### ***The world must know***

Respondent Black explains that online reviews are reviews that are on the Internet and the meaning of them varies whether it concerns a service or a product. Black elaborates that if it concerns a product, all reviews are looked at and if it concerns a service then Black only looks at what is written about it. It is the experiences on either products or services that makes Black write online reviews. The participant stated, *“if I get something and it’s absolutely terrible, then the world must know, so then I write a bad review”* furthermore it was mentioned that a good experience makes Black think *“Oh, let’s help this place out”*, which then leads to a good review. If the participant’s experiences are neither good nor bad, but in the middle with other words, then Black is not motivated to write online reviews. Online reviews are only made when the experiences are good or bad.

### ***Favour people and affect companies***

Moreover it was stated that Black wants to share good experiences to help the product or service in order make the company a favour. On the other hand, when the experiences are bad then it is the other way around means Black who said, *“because then they are crap and people should know they are crap”*. The bad experience makes Black want to let people know so that they not buy or consume the service in order to affect the company. Furthermore, this is done to both help people, but also to affect the company means Black.

### ***Help others***

The respondent has not written an online review to be a part of a group. That is according to Black weird and further stated *“I won’t spend my time on speaking to randomly people on the Internet”*. The only purpose Black writes online reviews are to help others, but would never spend time to become a part of a group. They are not real since Black has never talked to them before. Black returns to Amazon to write online reviews due to bad and good experiences by companies, but believes that some people are influenced by the rating system that is given in return to a reviewer.

### ***Just reward me***

The respondent was not aware of economic rewards and explained that rankings and points do not motivate the respondent to write. When an example of an economic reward was given, discounts, it was explained that Black never seen that before, but that it would make Black write online reviews if it was used. Black said *“money. A product for free, all them things would make me write. Any reward basically. Just reward me”*.

### ***It has to be easy***

The interviewer asked what possibilities on a website that makes Black write and Black only writes online reviews if the experience is good or bad, but not if the process is too tough. *“It has to be easy, that is the main thing,”* stated Black. Additionally, it was explained how much the respondent hates scales. It should be possible to write and give a ranking, but not scales with options from one to ten regarding plenty of different topics. *“It’s either gonna be like one, two, three, eight, nine or ten. It’s never gonna be like four. It’s so stupid. It doesn’t make any sense”* was Black's explanation of the scale system. Both words and a ranking system are needed for the online review to be useful for the ones who read it. On the other hand, the scale system often asks the reviewer to fill in one's opinions regarding plenty of options and the participant further said *“I don’t wanna go through different things for everything”*.

### ***This place should burn to the ground***

*“Anger!”* was the first word Black said when the interviewer asked if there are feelings involved when Black writes online reviews. Furthermore Black said *“If something is so crap, rubbish then like ‘aarhh’, and then I write something”*. Moreover, an example was given from when the respondent was traveling in Vietnam. Black booked all accommodations through the site called Booking. One of these places in particular was very bad, the respondent explained that it smelt bad and everything with it was *“shit”*. Black went straight online and gave the place one star. This was done more than one time and the respondent said *“I clicked that button many many times, even though it makes no difference”*. Additionally, the respondent wrote something in line with *“this place should burn to the ground”* and thereafter added Black that maybe it was not quite that much, but that the review was made since Black was very angry.

### 4.3 White

*The answers from respondent White are divided into subdivisions suitable for the content in each section. The following subdivisions are; Deserved a good review, That little extra, Easy and not exist any barriers, To be a part of a group, Improve companies, More money involved, I feel like a good citizen, and It is the feeling that I feel good.*

#### ***Deserved a good review***

Respondent White describes online reviews for being a good tool when looking for information about services when taking part of something. White often uses online reviews to read what others say regarding their experiences, which therefore makes online reviews as a guarantee stamp whether something is good or bad. Once, White wrote an online review about an apartment and has more recently written online reviews regarding restaurants. White gave the interviewer an example on when the respondent wrote an online review regarding a cottage in Scotland; *“I was really pleased with the service and though they had done a good job so they deserved a good review”* were White’s own words. Further on, White states that the respondent has never written any bad review even though there have been reasons to do so. The respondent writes online reviews at Tripadvisor, but the online review concerning the cottage was made at a site that White does not remember the name of. At least the site was something similar to Tripadvisor and also provides same services.

#### ***That little extra***

White is primarily motivated to write online reviews when the service is good and explains like this about the cottage rental; *“when we left the place we felt appreciated and prioritised by the owner and also liked”*. Accommodation companies are worth a good comment when they give that little extra without being too obstructive. Moreover it was said that White has been satisfied with nearly every accommodation, however *“it is only when it’s been that little extra that I write”* admits White. *“That little extra”* for White means that the company has been good and that it has been over the respondent’s expectations. That is when the online reviews get written, but White also admits *“It has happened that I have been so super happy too, but not have written”*. The reasons to why the respondent not always writes even though feeling this happy is due to laziness. The respondent has a note at home to remind White to write an online review regarding something particular that has been there for three years.

### ***Easy and not exist any barriers***

Tripadvisor is a site that White writes online reviews on sometimes. One does not need to be a member on the site to be able to write online reviews thinks White. At least, White has never needed to login to write a review and would never write if that was a requirement since the obstacle would be huge. It should be easy and not exist any barriers since it will be too complicated says White and ads “*one’s so spoiled with that everything should be so simple*”. The online reviews should be as simple as possible to write, but not too simple since people will be able to comment how they want and in that way decrease the reliability of the reviews. White recalls that when writing the review for the cottage rentals a link was sent to the respondent. The link was sent together with the confirmation where White was able write a comment with a simple click on the link. It was mentioned that “*it falls if it becomes too easy for people to write*” means White. A month ago, White together with others went to a restaurant in Barcelona, which was a huge disappointment. The place had good recommendations so the expectations were high before going to the restaurant. Afterwards, White looked for the restaurant on Tripadvisor and the reviews and rating were good. Therefore, White means that these types need to have the reviews open so everyone can write, but leaves no control as in comparison with the link that was sent to White. However, easiness makes White write and there is nothing one can do to make people write if it is a barrier.

### ***To be a part of the group***

The interviewer asked if the respondent wrote the review in order to help the cottage rental business and White means that it was written to help the cottage rentals due to that the respondent was satisfied and believed that the company deserved more customers. Indirectly White helps other customers when writing, like for example the cottage case where the primary goal with the review was for the ones who lease the cottage. In other situations, White has written to help others. An example on this is when the respondent wrote an online review about mountain biking facilities in Scotland. The respondent wrote the review since the respondent likes to read what others say regarding the facilities. White continued “*at that webpage they required me to become a member before I could write, but then it was something I’m interested in and therefore I see a benefit in becoming a member and to interact at the community*”. The respondent elaborated that the online review was created in order to be a part of the group on the site, and has also done it at other places.

### ***Improve companies***

The respondent was asked if White has written a review to destroy or control a company. White means that one does not write online reviews to harm a company, but has written online reviews if companies have not delivered what they were supposed to. Moreover, it is highlighted by White that online reviews are not written to destroy for companies, but to improve them.

### ***More money involved***

Products and services that make White write are things that matter to White like for example accommodations since there are more money involved in comparison with restaurants. On the other hand, the restaurant in Barcelona was not cheap and White said, *“our whole family spent a lot of money and it was so lousy”*. White never made an online review about it and says that maybe it will happen now. White believes that the more high involved a person is, the more vital and motivated does the person become to write.

### ***I feel like a good citizen***

The participant has been offered rewards and explains that it is often things one can win if participating, but White has not done that. In research purposes has White been offered rewards as thanks for participating by colleagues, but the reward is not what motivates White. It is rather to help the colleagues stated the respondent. Further White says *“I actually don’t want to have a reward; those kind of things do not matter to me”*. It is for example possible to be a part of iPad giveaways on Facebook if people share and spread pictures, but that is nothing White would do. White shares recommendations of things that are good since companies should deliver what the customer wants that gives a higher value than other companies. White means that it is the key for companies to success and that is what White thinks of when writing reviews and says *“if I believe the company could deliver a high value then I feel the need to tell the company that”*. That is what motivates the respondent, not to be rewarded and White hopes that others think in the same way even though White is aware that not everyone thinks alike. Additionally, White believes rewards would be more effective if prizes were given directly when writing online reviews. Continually, it is explained that White strengthen the image when writing and stated *“I feel like a good citizen”*. White’s image gets affected when helping to provide a better world when doing online reviews. The respondent means that the thinking might sound weird, but it is all about that. White wants others to take part of the experiences that were good and to let others know when they were



bad. Companies can then change it to the better or go bankrupt if they do not care means the respondent. White elaborates *“this is how I see that I become a better citizen when I write”*.

### ***It is the feeling that I feel good***

The feeling of helping the ones who do a good job motivates White to write online reviews who moreover said *“It is the feeling that I feel good when I help others”*. Satisfaction drives the respondent to write online reviews and not rewards. Mostly it is laziness that makes White to not write regarding for example about the restaurant in Barcelona and other places that have been to disappointment.

## **4.4 Red**

*The answers from respondent Red are divided into subdivisions suitable for the content in each section. The following subdivisions are; Dissatisfied or satisfied, The only way is to harm the company, Wants others to know, Everything is important, Rewards would trigger, Perceived as a good person, and It needs to be simple.*

### ***Dissatisfied or satisfied***

The respondent Red explained online reviews as a review of something on the Internet. Furthermore Red said that one can fill in ratings, write with own words, and also answer specific questions. Online reviews are different from time to time mean Red. Online reviews, for the respondent, are to write when Red is dissatisfied or satisfied with something. With the respondent's own words, *“I write since I want a product to receive the ‘tribute’ it deserves or not deserves”*. Furthermore, red added that online reviews also are a way to highlight that particular products need to be improved. Often the respondent writes when being upset, irritated and angry, or when the respondent is very happy and pleased with something. Red wants the companies to know and adds that Red writes more often when being angry than happy.

### ***The only way is to harm the company***

Red cannot think of a specific occasion the respondent has written in an attempt to harm a company and further on says, *“It definitely feels like something I could have done”*. Once again the respondent brings up that if one is very unsatisfied with something, the only way then is to harm the company. Additionally, it is stated that Red can possibly call companies in

order to whine to show dissatisfaction. Although, only one person will hear that Red is dissatisfied and that is the person on the other side of the phone. Therefore, when Red writes on websites many more people will see and take part of the information.

### ***Want others to know***

To benefit a group motivates Red to write. This makes Red think of the online review Red wrote regarding shampoo. The respondent receives help from other reviews, so when Red is happy with products the respondent wants others to know that. *“It is the opposite of harming a company”*, states Red. On the other hand, Red does not write online reviews to become a part of a group but to help companies and customers.

### ***Everything is important***

*“Almost anything”* is Red's answer concerning what products or services that make the respondent write online reviews. Although, Red's spontaneous feeling is to write when it concerns more expensive products or services. It gets more important for Red to write when people are hesitating to make a purchase. Though, Red writes about smaller purchases as well like the example with the shampoo. However, Red point out that the shampoo is of high quality and also expensive. There is one thing, which makes Red more prone to write and that is everything that has to do with travels like hotels, flights or travel agencies and destinations. That is because people spend much money on such things, which makes it important for Red to write. Moreover Red adds that everything is important and gives two more examples, broker and banking. *“Basically, it feels important to write when it concerns large decisions”*.

### ***Economic rewards would trigger***

First, when the interviewer asks the respondent whether Red is aware of reward systems is the answer no. Then, it is added that Red might be aware of it, but that it does not motivate the respondent to write. Further on Red explains that economic rewards would trigger Red to write in any situation. However, Red writes without incentives and therefore feels that the subject is odd.

### ***Perceived as a good person***

To the question if the respondent is motivated to write to maintain positive thoughts about one, it was stated that neither does Red's status or image get improved when writing online reviews, which is why it is not something that motivates Red. The respondent explains that is

due to that no one knows that Red is the one who writes. Yet, Red feels pleased due to being perceived as a good person when sharing experiences with others. Moreover Red adds, *“Indirectly, it improves my self-image a bit since I’m perceived as a good person”*. That is although not the primary motivation to write online reviews means Red.

### ***It needs to be simple***

The design on the website is important for the respondent and means that it has to be neatly made. Also, it is important that the questionnaires are not too long if a company asks Red to write a review for them. Red’s own words are, *“it needs to be simple to fill in”*. If the respondent opens a questionnaire and sees that it is page one of seven, then the respondent will never complete the questionnaire. If the questionnaire is easy to overview with only four questions then Red might fill it in quickly. Availability states Red for being crucial as well and says, *“I will never sit down trying to locate a place where I can write reviews, it will never happen”*. Easy and in close connection to the product or service should it be means Red. The chances would drastically decrease for Red to write if it was needed to create an account and login for being able to write the review.

## 4.5 Orange

*The answers from respondent Orange are divided into subdivisions suitable for the content in each section. The following subdivisions are; Show other people what the company has done, Contributed with the negative, Vent the anger, Of interest to read others’ reviews, Money would affect, Privacy, Simple and rapid, Extreme feelings, and Helping the company.*

### ***Show other people what the company has done***

The respondent Orange describes an online review as a situation when a person share and recommend an experience of a product or service to others online. Orange talks about a situation when writing a negative review on a company's Facebook page. The reason for posting this review was because an airline company had lost the respondent’s bags. Orange continues to say that it was primarily the anger that drove to write the review *“when one’s angry, you really want to show people that this company is crap”*. Also, the respondent mentions that good experiences are not that motivating to write about and this is primarily because of laziness. Anger was the feeling that affected Orange to write. Orange describes that other people could press a like button on the review, but it was only the company that

comment on it and promised that they would help. The respondent also mentions that there existed other angry comments on the company's Facebook page.

### ***Contributed with the negative***

Orange has never written a review to be a part of a group and mean that the review about the airline was primarily to help other customers not to fly with this company. The review was one of many others that had the same issue with the company. Orange hoped that through writing, this could help new customers to show that many people think the same thing. "*I contributed with the negative,*" means Orange.

### ***Vent the anger***

The feelings of destroy for the airline company was exactly what Orange wanted with the review on Facebook. However, Orange points out that it was not a feeling of controlling the airline. It was rather to vent the anger and to get help with the lost bags. The review was a way of contact the company publicly, partly to give bad publicity and also to reach out to many people within the community. Orange also hoped the comment affected others and helped their choice of airline. "*I thought that even if only one person read my comment, it can still help that person and that is good if my comment at least help that one person, it is not the amount of people that matters*" says Orange.

### ***Of interest to read others' reviews***

On the question what other types of products or services that affect the respondent to write, Orange answered, "*To me it is music or movies that affect me*". The reason for this is mainly because it interests Orange to read those types of reviews about music or movies that others have written. Therefore this also affects the respondent to contribute with content about this type of products for others to read.

### ***Money would affect***

Orange has never been offered an economic reward for writing reviews, but knows that it exists. Furthermore Orange continues to say, "*money would affect me, or that I would receive any product for free, but it would depend what kind of product they would offer me for free as well*". Orange describes that if a company offers a cinema ticket, this would affect to write a review about for example a movie. The respondent explains that what the company then

wants in return from Orange is a vital. The respondent does not want to write a review if the company force the respondent on what to write.

### ***Privacy***

The interviewer asks the respondent if writing affects something inwardly, but Orange means that the respondent does not write reviews online often and believes it is because little activity on social medias. Orange describes that privacy is the reason to the respondents limited activity online, but also that the respondent does not like to share information about Orange's life. Furthermore Orange continues to say, *“Something big must have happened to affect me to write”*.

### ***Simple and rapid***

Orange describes a time at CDON when the respondent was going to write a review about a movie, but did not go through the process. Time was a definitive factor to not go through with the review and also that Orange did not know what to write. If the website requires to create a new account to be able to write the review, Orange believes this would as well hinder from writing since it would be too hard to go through. Too many stages increase the barrier to post a review. Simple, rapid and anonymity are factors that positively affect Orange to go through the process.

### ***Extreme feelings***

Extreme feelings such as really angry or satisfied with something are what affect Orange to write. Orange further describes, *“it needs to be extreme, it cannot be the feeling of that something was okay that wouldn't affect me to write”*. Passion as well as the feeling of love to a product is emotion mentioned to motivate. Peoples' reviews and comments that one can read online often display extreme satisfaction contra dissatisfaction with a product or service.

### ***Helping the company***

The respondent gets motivated to write with the feeling of helping the company and mean that helping the company is a higher motivational factor than to help other customers. Orange mean that if one writes positive things about a company, it is more with the intention to help the company to attract customers than to help customers. Furthermore, if being a huge fan of a company, Orange would be willing to write positive things about a new released product to others, even if Orange does not like the product. This is the intention to help the company.

## 4.6 Green

*The answers from respondent Green are divided into subdivisions suitable for the content in each section. The following subdivisions are; Diary on the site, Own experiences, To facilitate conversation between customers, Indirectly harm the company, Discounts right away, Reputation, Turn to communities when needing help, No extra effort to write, and Return the help.*

### ***Diary on the site***

For the respondent Green is an online review a forum or a diary on a site, which makes it possible to write one's thoughts regarding products, sites, companies etc. With the word diary Green means that one can look at the ones selling products and the online reviews work as diaries for each product. The information provided concerns a product's general level and the opinions provided form a sort of diary means the respondent. Green sees an online review as an advantage before making a purchase if they exist. Green gives sportswear as an example where the respondent means that the variety of sizes is great. Green adds *"a size M, for example, does not say that much about the actual size and then the reviews become important if someone has written that the size is small, big etc."* Green continues to say that one is never badly portrayed when writing online reviews. Furthermore, Green explains that the reviewers can be anonymous and not get any comments. Green gets motivated to write since the contribution can help others and it is an easy way to help others. Green bought shoes yesterday and explains that it is difficult to know what size to get and companies write very rarely about their sizes either. So, Green feels good when helping others when someone is about to buy shoes and says, *"It is like a win-win situation, both for me, the company and the other customers"*.

### ***Own experiences***

Green rarely shops online, but the writing of online reviews depends on Green's knowledge. Mainly, the respondent writes concerning products like clothes, sizes, and products like a lawn mower where there are plenty of options. There is product information available by companies just that they never bring up measurement, speed, sound etc. mean Green. Therefore it is good if someone who has the product makes a review with a text and a rating. When talking about services, Green explains that it is important for restaurants to have online reviews. Green adds that restaurants can have an appealing menu, but that tells nothing about the quality, the staff and more things. A product's price impact Green's motivation to write

online reviews. Often, the respondent retells own experiences of a product and very rarely writes to ask for advice. In general Green does not write reviews to products that are below 500SEK, but that excludes clothes since the sizes are misleading. On the other hand, when it comes to services like restaurants it is important to Green to maintain a good service and that makes reviews more important. The respondent explains, *“a menu does not say especially much of a restaurant more than what food they serve. But that is far from the whole experience of going out to dinner”*. Therefore, it is the customers’ task to evaluate the entertainment, the service and the food. Green states that online reviews are good to both share and take part of information where Green shares information to prepare others of what to expect.

### ***To facilitate conversation between customers***

Green writes online reviews with the intention to help other customers, but not companies. The diary Green mentioned before is out of company's’ interest. Therefore, online reviews offer an additional service. The respondent ads *“For me are online reviews more of a service aimed to facilitate conversation between customers”*. That can be good for companies if the reviews are good means Green. Additionally, bad reviews can help companies to remove products with bad quality. Green does not write online reviews to help companies, but could likely help them if they sent a survey.

### ***Indirectly harms the company***

The interviewer asked if Green has written an online review in an attempt to harm a company, Green answers one has never written to harm a company since the respondent does not have the attitude to write with the aim to reach companies. The respondent indirectly harms the company when writing bad reviews. An example is if Green has the intention to discourage others from visiting for example a specific restaurant.

### ***Discounts right away***

The participant has not experienced economic rewards, but is aware that it exists. An example of these rewards is discounts that Green mentions. Green says that it is boring with these types of rewards since the reviewer does not receive them straight away. One has to wait until after the product is bought, although incentives motivate Green to write. An example given by Green is a 10 per cent discount offer when writing a review. That would motivate Green to write since it would be possible to get the discount right away. Moreover, it would be ultimate

if Green was given a reward at the same time as writing the review. It would also motivate Green if it for example was possible to post a tweet during an event and then show the tweet to get the discount. If Green on the other hand buys a product and writes a review and thereafter has to wait for the discount, the respondent would not be keen to write the review since it gets displaced. Green finds real money appealing as a reward and also to get additional products. The respondent gives as example that if the respondent bought shoes, then the additional product could be a t-shirt. Green highlights that it is important that the gift, which is given is suitable to the context. Green then says, *“I mean, if I want to buy a new protein powder a t-shirt is not as appealing as a new protein shaker”*. Therefore, it is vital that the reward suits the product that was bought.

### ***Reputation***

The respondent is motivated to write online reviews by maintaining positive thoughts inwardly. The respondent moreover said *“if I’m able to help someone I feel that I have done something good and for me that is a reward in itself”*. Green feels that there are different usefulness of reviews and a rating system of the reviews would be good. The respondent gets motivated to write reviews if the respondent gets feedback on the reviews that the respondent made. That would lead to write even more online reviews states Green. The rating system would show whether Green’s reviews were good or not, who also stated *“To just write reviews do not give me especially much, it is when people recognize me and give my reviews feedback that I feel it gives me something to write”*. If Green got feedback, then it would be a trigger to visit the website again to see the comments on the review and even write more. If Green gets a good reputation, then that would be a motive to write more since Green would know that the reviews benefit the people.

### ***Turn to communities when needing help***

The respondent was asked if Green has written an online review to feel a part of a group. However Green has never turned to a community to feel belonging to a group when writing online reviews. Though, Green can turn to certain communities when Green needs help and then participate in the threads to come up with possible solutions that are positively responded. Then, it will feel like Green is a part of a group.



### ***No extra effort to write***

The respondent is motivated to write when it is possible to see others reviews. Companies could also make appealing requests in order to invite people to write state Green. It also matters whether Green frequently visit the site or not. If Green visits the site often, then it does not matter if the review is difficult or easy to make. Also, if the respondent already has an account then there will be no extra effort to write. However, Green thinks it is better if there is no need to create an account and no need to log in when writing reviews. If it is possible to remain anonymous one will not need to create an account and that motivates Green to write. Online reviews are, although, more trustworthy if there is a signature or if one needs an account to write. Green describes that “*A site needs to be accessible, easy to grasp, clear and structured*”. Also, Green gets motivated to write when getting discounts and customer ratings, and if others see Green as knowledgeable.

### ***Return the help***

The interviewer asks a question about what feelings motivate Green to write reviews online and Green simply answered “*Gratitude*”. That is due to that Green feels happy when getting help by others and that is what motivates Green to do the same to help someone else.

## 5. Analysis

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*The analysis of the empirical material is divided into three parts. Part one analyse the interviews in relation to the theoretical framework, Part two analyse the identified combinations of the motivational factors. Lastly, Part three provides an overall summary of the analysis.*

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### 5.1 Part one

#### ***Favour a particular community***

As stated regarding social benefits in the literature, is the customer motivated to benefit the whole group before oneself (Cheung & Lee, 2012), or to search for social integration and identification (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Some of the respondents were motivated to write to feel a sense of belonging. One of these situations were at communities that was in relation to the respondents' own interests from spare-time activities. Some of the respondents were not directly motivated to write in an attempt be included in a group. Nevertheless, it was important to provide online reviews if they could be problem solving for someone else within a group or community. This can be seen as a paradox since some respondents did not admit that they wrote to be included and favour a group, but their explanations of situations showed that they did in some cases.

#### ***Get companies' attention***

It has been shown that respondents that have been ignored by companies write online reviews in an attempt to be seen. There is a belief that publicly written reviews are effective when seeking response. The respondents also expect other customers to see the review and get more strength so that companies listen to the respondents. The motive for the respondents is therefore a way to get power over the company. Exerting power is the motive to harm companies and get a shift of power between the customer and the company (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), and it can be argued that the respondents perform this in some situations. The respondents' aim is to reach out to a large number of people to discourage them and in that way get an effect on companies. With other words, the respondents' motives are to get response and to harm companies.

#### ***Helping others***

From the interviews it appeared that the respondents had the customers in mind when writing online reviews. All respondents write online reviews in order to help other customers, where respondents moreover wanted others to take part of good experiences. This can be seen as an

act where customers are motivated to help others but themselves (Cheung & Lee, 2012). Respondents write online reviews due to goodwill and hence not expect anything in return for writing. Furthermore, the respondents are motivated to write online reviews since they want to prepare others of what to expect and to help due to good or bad experiences.

There is another motivational factor that makes the respondents write online reviews and that is when having the company in mind. The aim is to improve and help companies. Either, companies deserve good online reviews to make them more attractive or they need to know what to improve in order to become successful. The explanation of this reflects altruism, which is explained as customers' willingness to help companies (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

Another situation that came up, which is paradoxical to the two situations above, was that the respondents were motivated to help others but had themselves in mind as well. An example was when the respondents explained, through helping others with for example sizes on clothes or shoes, the respondents also expected to get the same information in return. This means that the respondents become motivated to help others and expect a mutual behaviour.

### ***Expensive or cheap products and services***

There exists different opinions in the literature whether consumption utility motivates customers to provide content online or not (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Wolny & Mueller, 2013). Some respondents explained that they wrote online reviews after reading others' reviews about products and services. That is in line with what Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) mentioned regarding consumption utility. However, the respondents explained that the primary motivation to write online reviews was since they wanted to advise others regarding products and services. Situations when the respondents in the research were motivated to write are when products and services were considered more costly. Products and services that were illustrated in such situations were for instance airlines, banking, brokers, hotels, and travel agencies. It was shown that the more involved a respondent was in a purchase situation, the more motivated they became to write. However, there exists an exemption when the respondents also write online reviews concerning less costly products. Shoes, clothes, food and sportswear were considered less costly products yet motivated the respondents to write online reviews due to own interests.

### *Monetary inducements*

The respondents have tangible rewards as motives when writing online reviews. As in line with the literature, the respondents feel appreciated that their online reviews are valuable for the reward giver (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). However, in the literature it is mentioned that self-interested customers are strongly motivated by tangible rewards while customers with motive to help companies or fellow customers are less interested in tangible rewards (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). That was identified among the respondents, where some were very positive and mean that rewards would make them write about anything, while some meant that rewards were a nice way to show appreciation for the online review even though it was not the motivation to write. One respondent was unexpectedly rewarded after writing an online review and the respondent thought it was a kind act. Another respondent stated that rewards would not affect the person to write, but states the opposite further into the interview. It shows, whether rewards are seen as a kind act from companies or a motivation for the respondents, that rewards are appreciated. This is also inline with what Yang and Lai (2010) concluded. It has also, in the existing literature, been little information regarding what type of tangible rewards that motivate customers. The literature mentions monetary compensations as tangible rewards (Olivera et al., 2008), but does not go into detail what this includes. The respondents on the other hand knew what motivated them. No matter what type of reward it is, the respondents want to get the reward directly when writing the online review. The respondents meant that the optimal would be if the reward could be given or possible to utilize simultaneously as the online review was written. Suitable rewards are discounts, money, gifts, and an additional product when writing something. The additional product should be suitable to what is bought to make sure it is valuable for the respondent.

If companies' products or services have failed and not met customers' expectations, then the respondents write online reviews in order to get compensation for the failure. The respondents are not negotiable in these situations and expect compensation suitable for the failure. Such compensation could be to give the money back or give a new product or service to the respondent. Obviously did the respondents not think that it should be necessary to write online reviews to get compensation for a failure, but in some cases that was what motivated the respondents to write.

### ***Improvement of one's image***

From the interviews it was shown that the respondents were motivated to write due to maintaining a good self-image. From the literature, it is said that self-enhancement is an internalized motivation that makes customers write online reviews (Tong et al., 2013), which was supported by the respondents. Based on the respondents' answers there were two different situations in which self-enhancement played a prominent role. Firstly, respondents write since they want to get a good reputation, be a good person, and by that improve their self-image. This provides positive thoughts inwardly among the respondents and makes them to good citizens. Hence, the motivation to write is constituted by the recognition of others. Something that is consistent with Lee et al.'s (2006) findings regarding image/reputation and motivation to share content online. To be a good citizen could also be one step on the way to achieve the ideal self. Secondly, the respondents feel that they can affect their self-image when providing knowledge gained from experiences regarding products and services, or due to their knowledge field. These knowledge fields can be based on occupation, own interests and so on. Like for example where one respondent is active in dog shows and sees oneself as knowledgeable in the subject. Therefore, the respondent provides online reviews to be recognized and seen as knowledgeable to others with the same interests.

### ***Convenient websites***

The literature talks about platform assistance and its influence on consumers' motivation to write online reviews (Matta & Frost, 2011). However, the information provided until now has been relatively undetailed and also contradictory, where it has been said to have and not to have an effect on consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Matta & Frost, 2011). Although, from the empirical material it has been possible for the authors to identify several features connected to online platforms that motivate respondents to write reviews. It has to be easy to write online reviews, respondents mean that this includes the design of the site, that it is simple to grasp and neatly made. This spurs respondents' motivation to write online reviews since the process in such case becomes convenient. Respondents further explained that a large part of their motivation was dependent upon whether they needed to create an account to login to write. This was seen as a barrier, instead the respondents preferred websites that did not require this step in order to write. This is what the literature says as well, that consumers write on platforms that are easy to write at (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). The respondents developed an explanation of this and described that laziness was the reason to why the respondent wanted it to be easy.

### ***Express feelings***

From the empirical material the authors were able to identify motivational factors connected to the respondents' feelings. These were; venting negative- and positive feelings. According to the literature, individuals have a desire to reach a balance, where expressing feelings becomes a motivation to write (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). From the answers, it was shown that extreme feelings that make the respondents write are angry, upset, happy, and grateful. It is, as the literature states, when the customers have a desire to reach equilibrium that they write (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Additionally, one respondent furthermore supports this where it was mentioned that "*extreme feelings like happy and angry*" makes the respondent write. As in line with Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), the respondents write more online reviews when feeling angry than happy. This shows that there is a stronger need to reach a balance when negative feelings exist. Respondents' expectations of products and services created these feelings when it was not as expected. An example of this was when one respondent had experienced a hostel visit that did not meet the expectations. Respondents did not think much when having negative feelings, this means that the online reviews were quickly created. One respondent explained that the anger drove the respondent to repeatedly send the same criticism, although the respondent knew this would make no difference. Nevertheless, positive feelings are also a motivation, but the online reviews are more thought through and a feeling like "*love to a product*" does not occur as rapid as furious feelings. Additionally, it was stated in the literature that the quality of services is a motive for customers to express positive feelings (Jeong & Jang, 2011), which is supported by the respondents' answers. The respondents brought up different types of services as for example restaurants and hotels. One example of this was when one respondent said that that "*little extra*" makes the respondent write, which shows the need to express positive feelings concerning the quality of services.

## **5.2 Part two**

### ***Help others to become a good citizen***

Writing to help others is defined by the literature as altruism, which primarily aims at helping others rather than oneself through provide content online (Cheung & Lee, 2012). To help others was considered as a motivational factor that the respondents talked about. However, to be perceived as a good citizen and as a knowledgeable person were often mentioned in the context of helping others. Self-enhancement involves that individuals write to maintain positive thoughts about oneself and that affect one's image (Olivera et al., 2008), which can be connected with being perceived as a good citizens and a knowledgeable person. This

indicates that there is a connection between self-enhancement and altruism. The respondents are motivated to help other and that boosts their self-image since they are perceived as a good person and/or knowledgeable, which is seen as a win-win situation for the respondents. Therefore, this situation can be seen as a combination of two factors; altruism and self-enhancement where the respondents write to help others and at the same time affect their self-image.

### ***Expectations of products or services***

Respondents expressed that they were motivated to write online reviews since they wanted to help a specific company. They meant that it was important to inform companies when their products and services lacked in quality with the aim to help them improve. Respondents were also motivated to write when they could help other customers by giving advice about products and services of poor quality. These situations can be seen as a combination of both altruism and consumption utility. Whether customers write online reviews or not, is dependent upon how well a company's products or services manage to meet the respondents' expectations. When products or services fail, respondents are motivated to discourage others from the purchase and at the same time advise companies that there are products and services that do not meet up to expectations. Respondents expressed that companies who manage to deliver above one's expectations are worth a good review. Further, they are motivated to advice other consumers to buy the same product. Products or services that have high quality and exceed the expectations, function as motivation for customers to write.

### ***Warn customers and harm companies***

Exerting power and altruism are in some situations connected, this is when respondents have experienced bad situations with products or services and for that reason want to warn customers out of concern. But also to get an effect on companies and in that way harm them. When customers retell negative product or service experiences, it may hurt a company's image (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), which is the respondents' motive. Additionally, respondents get motivated to write online reviews if companies promise to help and do not. One respondent explained that a personal email gave no effect, therefore the respondent was motivated to write an online review to be taken seriously. Also, in order to show other customers the bad experience and get back at the company. When customers have difficulties to contact a company to bring forward complaints they become motivated to write negative

content (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), which are the respondents aim in the situations mentioned above.

### ***Favour groups to be seen as knowledgeable***

It was important for respondents to feel a sense of belonging and that further motivated them to write online reviews. This is consistent with what the literature concludes about social benefits (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011). From the empirical material it is possible to sort out a deeper explanation to this. To be related to each other through online communities consequently enhanced respondents' motivation to write. Since they are a part of a group due to their interests, is it important for them to be seen as knowledgeable. Moreover, respondents emphasized that being part of a group was important since they could expect a mutual behaviour from the group. The respondents are motivated to benefit the group with writing since they expect others to do the same. This is done to achieve a good reputation within the group as well as to share experiences. This indicates that even though respondents are motivated to write online reviews to benefit the group, they have their own interest in mind as well.

### ***The opportunity to be anonymous***

The respondents highlighted the choice to remain anonymous when writing online reviews and this was especially essential when writing reviews of a negative character. However, there existed an exception and that was when respondents sought compensation from companies. In such situation, a public name or signature enables companies to contact the respondents. Otherwise, the respondents explained that they did not want companies to have access to names and identities when the respondents had negative things to put forward. Smaller complaints were not enough for the respondents to feel that it would be worth to show their names publicly. Noteworthy was that the respondents preferred to use their names when they contributed with positive reviews or wrote based on their knowledge. This indicates that recognition by others is an important motivational factor that spurs respondents to write online reviews of a positive character, which goes in line with self-enhancement (Lee et al., 2006). It has been shown that the respondents are motivated to write when other consumers can give feedback on their reviews. Such feedback includes a rating system or a textbox adjacent to the written review where other consumers can write a comment of the quality of the review. Seeking recognition by others motivates the respondents and such behaviour is consistent with self-enhancement (Tong et al., 2013).



### 5.3 Part three

Customers are motivated to help others and favour groups, but it was shown in many situations that they have themselves in mind as well. The customers' own perspective is that they want to help others, but in the end it is apparent in many cases that customers expect something in return. This return comes in different guises, such as; get help in return, be seen as knowledgeable, be seen as a good person or feel as a good citizen. Customers genuinely want to help others, however even if customers do not use the words themselves, there is an indication of a selfish manner due to their expectations.

In some situations, customers are motivated to improve companies and do not want anything in return. That is when products and services do not meet expectations, which can be both negative and positive. When a product or service fail to meet customers expectations, they are motivated to write since they want companies to know that products or services need to be improved. The motivation is to help them by highlighting a problem. During a positive experience, it is an inwardly feeling that makes customers want to simply let the companies know how good they are since they deserve it. Furthermore, customers are also motivated to write in order to harm companies in situations when companies ignore them or do not respond to their request. Such behaviour by companies motivates customers to write publicly and reach out to a large amount of people.

Motivation to write online reviews is in many cases dependent upon whether customers' can do it on their own conditions. Customers want to have the opportunity to be anonymous under different circumstances. When the intention is to harm companies, customers want to remain anonymous. Their thought is to not let the companies know who they are to avoid their names being associated with the content of the online review. However, this does not apply to the customers who seek compensation. In such situations, it is not favourable for customers to be anonymous since they could miss the opportunity to be compensated. Furthermore, the respondents feel that it is acceptable by others to bring forward content aimed to harm companies when situations are unacceptable. Also, customers were motivated to use their real names when writing reviews based on their knowledge. This is due to the opportunity to enhance their image.

## 6. Conclusion

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The result of the thesis is that customers' motivation to write online reviews is influenced by a variety of situations. Customers are genuinely motivated to help others when possible, and at the same time get something in return for writing. This means that customers want to help, but are also motivated to enhance their own image. Customers are motivated to write online reviews with the aim to favour a group. This is done to share experiences and by that receive recognition of the group. Furthermore, interests and level of involvement in purchases situations motivate. When products and services exceed, or fail to meet expectations, customers are motivated to write online reviews. This with the aim to either let them know about the pleasant experience or with the aim to help the company improve. Also, customers are motivated to write in an attempt to seek attention by companies, and this together with negative experiences motivates to harm companies. Both negative and positive experiences motivate customers to write online reviews and reach inner balance, but negative feelings motivate rapidly while positive feelings are thought through. The platform affects the motivation, which should be accessible and simple to write online reviews at. Furthermore, customers get motivated to write when no requirement exists to create a new account and there is an opportunity to be anonymous. Economical inducement is positively associated of the customers and function as a motivation for some to write online reviews. However, these who are not motivated do not see economic inducements as something negative. Lastly, customers' motivation to write online reviews is based on individuals, their interests and situations.

## 7. Research Implications

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*This chapter presents practical implications as guidance for businesses based on the results of the thesis, as well as theoretical implications. Furthermore are limitations for this research presented.*

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### 7.1 Practical Implications

This thesis has generated practical implications that are valuable for companies. It has been possible to demonstrate what motivates customers to write online reviews. This enables companies to understand customers on a deeper level, which helps them to pursue actions that could boost customers' motivation to write. Furthermore, companies get a hint of what factors that contribute with negative and positive online reviews. Even though the purpose of this paper was to not explore when positive and negative online reviews occur, it is shown that some factors are tied together with negative reviews and the opposite. This is therefore useful information for companies in order to minimise negative online reviews, or also make use of them to improve one's business.

From the empirical material it has been shown that customers' motivation is influenced by the features of a company's website. It is important that it is accessible for customers to post their reviews, as well as the content should be easy and convenient to fill in. Also, it should be possible to write an online review in close relation to the service or the product. Another implication that could be valuable for companies is the importance to provide customers with the opportunity to be anonymous when writing online reviews. Customers were also motivated by economical rewards and emphasized that motivation could be enhanced if rewards such as discounts, money etc. were achieved directly when the online review was written. It is also important for companies to be present online to respond to complaints from customers when services or products have failed. Customers explained that when companies ignore complaints, customers are motivated to write online reviews to hurt the company. This is further an attempt to exert power over the company by publicly post negative information about the failing product or service. Being present is therefore an easy way for companies to avoid being poorly portrayed. The implications presented should be seen as guidelines for companies on how it could be possible to motivate customers to write online reviews.

## 7.2 Theoretical Implications

This study has contributed with a deeper understanding of customers' motivation to write online reviews. By conducting a qualitative study, the authors have been able to demonstrate customers' own view of what motivates them to write online reviews. The authors identified that customers are influenced by several factors simultaneously. This is something that quantitative studies have overlooked by asking predetermined questions and treated each factor one by one. By adopting a qualitative approach have the authors been able to receive a deeper explanation concerning the factors presented in the literature. Instead of generalizing the findings, this thesis aimed to explore customers' motivation to write in an attempt to add depth to the field. In this way, the authors also managed to explore more deeply what motivated customers to write online reviews. This was possible since the authors let respondents freely express themselves through interviews. This had been difficult to achieve if a quantitative approach was used. Also, since online reviews take place on the Internet, which is a rapid changing environment, a qualitative study shows what factors that motivate customers to write online reviews today.

## 7.3 Limitations

The trustworthiness of the research can be questioned due to the respondents' differences as age, gender and occupation. Such respondent characteristics may have affected the respondents' answers, which allow one to question whether the conclusions drawn can be seen as valid for every customer. However, the purpose of the thesis was not to generalize the findings or to divide the respondents into different segments. Therefore, personal information about the respondents was excluded from the thesis. The authors have tried to provide as thick descriptions as possible regarding the respondents and their contexts. This qualitative thesis has been dependent upon time and space, which is constantly changing. The possible transferability of the conclusions can therefore be seen as limited. The authors acted as moderators for the interviews and their assessment of what is important depend on their subjectivity, which can have affected the conclusions. Further, only six respondents were interviewed since it was concluded that saturation was reached at that amount. To draw generalizable conclusions based on six interviews can then be seen as difficult. However, the purpose of this thesis was to explore customers' motivation to write online reviews. Generalizability was hence not something the authors aimed to reach.

## 8. Future Research

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This research opened up for all motivational factors that make customers write online reviews. It ought to explore what motivated customers to write, and a qualitative research was conducted. This qualitative research was based on six interviews and if it should be possible to implement this for the general customer, a quantitative study is needed. This is in order to test the findings concerning motivational factors and online reviews on a larger amount of people. Nevertheless is more qualitative studies needed. Firstly, because there might exist other motivational factors among other customers that yet have not been explored. Secondly, there are not many studies that have opened up for all motivational factors concerning online reviews and more qualitative research is needed in order to explore other situations with other respondents. Thirdly, online reviews occur on the Internet and the rapid changes on the Internet creates new situations, which eventually could lead to new motivational factors. It is also interesting to conduct studies concerning what situations and what factors that create negative versus positive online reviews in order for companies to take advantage of it. Additionally, since it has been shown that involvement influences the motivation to write online reviews, it would be interesting to conduct a study concerning high and low involvement to see how it affects motivation.

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## Appendix A

Overview of the presented factors in the theory chapter

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Table 4. Overview of the theoretical field (own table)

<b>Researcher:</b>	Balasubramanian & Mahajan, 2001	Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004	Lee et al., 2006	Olivera et al. 2008	Yang & Lai, 2010	Bronner & de Hoog, 2011	Jeong & Jang, 2011	Matta & Frost, 2011	Cheung & Lee, 2012	Tong et al., 2013	Wolny & Mueller, 2013	Parikh et al., 2015
<b>Factor:</b>												
<b>Focus Related Utility</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>						<b>X</b>				
Social benefits		<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>			
Exerting power		<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>						
Altruism: (Self-fulfilling, Enjoyment of helping, Helping the company)		<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
<b>Consumption Utility</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>						<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Approval Related Utility</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			
Economic rewards		<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>					<b>X</b>		
Self enhancement		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>		
<b>Moderator-Related Utility</b>		<b>X</b>										
Platform assistance		<b>X</b>						<b>X</b>				
<b>Homeostase Utility</b>		<b>X</b>										
Venting negative and positive feelings		<b>X</b>					<b>X</b>					

## Appendix B

### Source criticism and the choice of scientific articles

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#### Source Criticism

Source criticism refers to a collection of rules with the aim to help researchers and individuals in general to determine what information that is likely to be true (Thurén & Strachal, 2011). It is a method used to evaluate information's credibility and find the origin of the source (Alexandersson, 2012). Source criticism does not warrant the truth but are nevertheless an effective way to assess the reliability of different sources (Thurén & Strachal, 2011). This approach for evaluating sources is the process of forming an own opinion of the source's credibility, through answering a series of questions and principles (Alexandersson, 2012). Thurén (2013) highlight four different principles that should be used to Asses the reliability of a source. These are; *authenticity*, *time*, *independency* and *tendency*.

- *Authenticity* - refers to source's genuineness and that the information provided is not counterfeit.
- *Time* - refers to the timespan between an event occurred and the time it was retold, the longer time in-between, the less reliable the source becomes.
- *Independency* - refers to the notion that a source becomes more reliable when it is independent of other sources.
- *Tendency* - refers to the notion that a source becomes more reliable when personal interest; political or economical stances have not affected the result (Thurén, 2013).

*The implementation;* the articles used in the paper have been chosen with the four mentioned criteria's above. To verify the *authenticity* the authors used Ulrichsweb, a website where peer-reviewed journals are listed. However, even though journals are peer-reviewed in Ulrichsweb, there is not a guarantee that the articles are scientific. Therefore, the authors also controlled that the articles included an abstract, introduction, method, result, discussion and references (Linnæus University, 2014). One article from a journal was listed as not peer-reviewed in Ulrichsweb, but according to the authors was considered scientific, was Matta and Frost (2011). This article was used since the authors perceived that it provided an overview and summary of the factors that have been studied until 2011. The summary enabled for the authors to easily access those articles to include in the theoretical framework. Matta and Frost (2011) conducted a proposed study and include: abstract, introduction, literature review,

methodology, proposed analysis and references. Furthermore, the article relies upon 29 other sources, which makes it trustworthy.

Furthermore, as far as it was possible, the authors tried to use as recent sources as possible to receive the most updated information within the field. Nevertheless may some of the sources used still be perceived as a bit old. The main reasons to include them was that they either were considered salient or valuable when defining certain concepts. The *independency* of the sources was verified by ensuring that a source was not completely dependent upon just one or a very limited number of other sources. It was also important to review a sources references to asses the genuineness of those as well. The last criterion that the authors used was *tendency*. If there was any reason to suspect that a source was affected by personal, political or economical interests, it was directly removed from the study.

## Appendix C

### Interview guide

Table 5. Interview guide (own table)

<b>Definition:</b>	<b>Questions:</b>
Opening question about motivation in relation to online reviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* How would you describe an online review?</li> <li>* What do online reviews mean to you?</li> <li>*Can you give examples?</li> <li>*What motivates you to write online reviews?</li> </ul>
<b>Focus related Utility</b> <i>The utility customers receive when adding value to a community online</i> <b>Social Benefits:</b> The intention to benefit the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Have you written an online review to feel that you are part of a group?</li> <li>*Can you give an example?</li> <li>*Have you written an online review to benefit the group?</li> <li>*Can you give an example?)</li> </ul>
<b>Exerting Power:</b> Customers posses control over companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Have you written an online review in an attempt to harm a company?</li> <li>*Can you give an example?</li> </ul>
<b>Altruism:</b> The motives to help others without expecting rewards in return and concerns areas; helping other customers and /or helping the company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Do you write online reviews with the intention to help other customers or companies?</li> <li>*Can you give an example?</li> </ul>
<b>Consumption Utility</b> <i>Consumption motivate consumers to write comments online</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*What type of product or service would make you write an online review?</li> <li>*Can you give an example?</li> </ul>
<b>Approval Related Utility</b> <i>The desire by the individual to obtain external rewards</i> <b>Economic Rewards:</b> Tangible rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Do you know about a reward system when writing online reviews?</li> <li>*In what situation are you motivated by economical rewards?</li> <li>*What type of rewards would motivate you to write?</li> </ul>
<b>Self enhancement:</b> Intangible rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Are you motivated by maintaining positive thoughts about yourself when write online reviews?</li> <li>*Can you give an example?</li> </ul>
<b>Moderator-Related Utility</b> <i>The business accessibility for its customers, concerns problem solving support and convenience</i> <b>Platform assistance:</b> The easiness to write	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*What possibilities on the site where online reviews exist make you write?</li> <li>*Can you give an example?</li> </ul>
<b>Homeostase Utility</b> <i>Desire to strive for balance and reach equilibrium</i> <b>Venting negative and positive feelings:</b> Spread content online due to ones feeling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*What feelings motivate you to write online reviews?</li> <li>*Can you give an example?</li> </ul>

## Appendix D

Interview transcripts with *Pink, Black, White, Red, Orange and Green*.

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### Interview with Pink

**How would you describe an online review?**

- I would describe it as a good way to review/ state my opinions on a website or on a paper I guess, there are different ways of doing it.

**What does an online review mean to you?**

- I think it is a good way of receiving or giving knowledge to others. Or to myself when I'm interested to make a purchase.

**Can you give examples?**

- If I have a good experience or a bad experience about something, it's a good way to both give others that information and receive that information for myself. So for example when I made a purchase, I bought dog food, which was fresh meat and it took nine days to get it. So when I got it, it was mouldy and then I made an online review in order to, I wanted to affect the company to compensate me and also to warn others that it is not working, this service. So I think that was a good.

**What motivates you to write online reviews?**

- In order to help others ...I think, yea it is a good way to share information that I know of. My experiences. If I buy something like shoes, since shoes are very hard to buy online for example. So if I try them on and they feel oh maybe this size is on the smaller side or the bigger side, like shoes and those I think that's a good online review since the others can see that and read that indication of what shoes they should get. The quality and how the service work, for example the shipping delivery. If that takes long time or short time. If it is not working as efficiently as I want it.

**And when you write online reviews in order to help others how do you feel like inwardly?**

- I feel content with myself, I feel it's not always about me getting the benefit, but if I know that it can help someone else, then I also think that in the future that maybe somebody will do that for me some day and that it will help me.

**And when you help others, have you done it also to be a part of a group?**

- Yes.

**Would you like to give an example?**

- An example would be, at the moment we have booked a lot of hotels and places to live when we go to different dog shows and I have do the review in order to help my group or the breed or the social thing, so since we are a group and try to help each other. Its very good to give them the review "oh you can stay here since its cheap and you get this and this and this". In order to benefit the social group and I know for a fact that they would do the same back. So if we have built some sort of social community based up on that, and that's why we feel we can do the reviews.

**Do you know these people?**

- Yes

**So you have met them?**

- Sometimes, sometimes I haven't met them and sometimes I have met them. It's very different, but usually if we do the reviews we would do them through Facebook or other social media sites. So that's how we met and also how we know each other. But the reviews can be either offline, but also online. We have different Facebook groups for the breed, and on the review it would say "oh you can stay at this and this hotel and it was fabulous service and it was very cheap" then they would go like "oh yea I've

heard about this place too” and then so we do the reviews. But it’s more like a discussion, so it’s more like a social interaction.

**I wonder regarding the food, since you said, “I wrote it to get compensation”. So I wonder if this is something that drives you to write online reviews?**

- Yes, if I feel like I’ve been mistreated or how to put it. Then I feel like I want to get compensated and also to affect the company to not think that this should be okay. I’m not one of those who complain all the time for small things, but in my case when this happened it was the third time. So I got three boxes, like twenty kilos of mouldy meet and that was not fun. To have to either to get rid of. I wasn’t guaranteed to get compensation. I was writing and also made an online review based on a movie, it wasn’t even writing. I did a movie where it was explained how bad it looked and we wanted to show others like this is what it looks like and we explained it smells really bad, look at the holes, look at this and look at this. This was an effective way for others to also get scared to buy the same. So it was more like a warning. So it was like a social responsibility but also I felt like this will mean that they need to compensate me. However, I was not content with the compensation. Cause it was very little in comparison to what I had to pay for it all the three boxes.

**Was this an attempt to harm the company?**

- Yes. I’m such a bitch haha.

**Would you write online reviews if you knew before that you would get a reward?**

- I assume I wrote cause I heard that, like you can get compensation, but I feel like. I assume I would get it cause it was so drastic, like they have to do something to please me as a customer. But there was no really guarantee for it.

**What type of compensation did you expect to get?**

- Monetary or like compensation like they give me the product free of charge. So something with the monetary.

**Have someone offered you a reward when writing an online review?**

- Yes, I wrote for a company. I was pleased with the products, the shipping and everything. So I wrote, I gave four stars or something. And then I got small samples of dog bones, dog treat of small samples. And that was fun since it wasn’t expected. They didn’t write that I would get it. So that was a pleasant surprise.

**What possibilities on the site where the online review exist make you write online reviews?**

- If it’s easy, if it’s a big hassle, if there are many steps to go through I will not do it. But if its easy and just write a simple comment or give stars or something like that without having to give personal information. That I don’t like. So when I write I want to be anonymous. So if it’s easy to use and not so personal then I think I would write. I want to be anonymous since you share your opinions, but the opinions might not always be pleasant for the companies to read so therefore I don’t want my name to be associated. Because I have worked at companies and we do have people which we do know by name which are like trouble makers online, and they do these types of reviews all the time online to harm the company And you don’t want to be associated to be one of those because they might have to, you don’t want to have a bad influence look bad for the companies either. You just want to get your opinion across so they will listen.

**When you wrote the online review and made a video about the dog food you mentioned that you want it go quick. How was your experience in that situation?**

- Yes, they were furious. First i emailed them the video, but the thing was that when it goes through emails you don't get a response quick enough. They don't really react, they feel like yea yea yea. But when you post it online, on for example their Facebook



page they answer really quick and like “we wanna compensate you and we are sorry and this and this”. However, we still had arguments because they still didn't wanna, like compensate what i felt was like a reasonable compensation for those three boxes. However, they answered much quicker if I posted it online for other customers to see rather than if i email them personally.

**Would you say that your feelings influenced you when you wrote that online review?**

- Yea, I wouldn't have been so mad if..like, it wasn't just me, it was affecting. Because there were other neighbours complaining, because even though we carried these boxes to the bin station. So it smelled for three weeks or something, and it was like a salmon meat mix. Disgusting. It smelt so bad and it wasn't a small little box, it was like a moving box with food. So it was really ...in the middle of the summer so you know how that can smell.

**You said you wanted to be anonymous when you are writing online reviews, is there situation when you want other people to be able to see what you write?**

- Yes, regarding..how to say, positive reviews or if its more like knowledge. If i have knowledge that i know is valuable for others, so like in a way so its not gonna make me look bad, then I would put my name on it, because i think that, ehm.. i think its good that people, like i said earlier help each other and then people can contact me if they had a question, but only if i feel that its necessary. But otherwise I don't think it doesn't really matter.

**So you add your name on positive online reviews, but when you did the review about the dog food, was that according to you a positive review or how come you made it public?**

- It was because I wanted compensation. The only reason was since the company made such a huge mistake three times and I assumed I will be compensated for it. If it was a smaller mistake, like forgot to send it, that doesn't mean a bigger compensation then I would prefer to be anonymous.

**Okay, thanks for participating!**

## Interview with Black

**How would you describe an online review?**

- A review that's on the Internet.

**What do online reviews mean to you?**

- hm...depends on if it's a service or a product. It varies, if it's a product then i will look on all reviews, but if it's a service then I just look on what's actually written about it.

**What motivates you to write an online review?**

- My experience on either the product or the service, ehm...for example if I get something and it's absolutely terrible, then the world must know, so then i write a bad review, but if it's really good then im like ‘Oh, let's help this place out’, so then I write a good review. And if it's in the middle, then I don't really do anything, but if it's good or bad then i write a review.

**So, how come you wanna share your experiences regarding the service or the product?**

- If it's good, because then you are helping the product or service out. You are doing them a favour. And if it's bad, then it's the other way around. Because then they are crap and people should know they are crap.

**Is there any other reason to why you want to let people know when they are crap?**

- Yes, because then people will see it and it will affect them to not buy or consume the service.

**So you want to help the people and also affect the company then?**

- Yes, both.

**Have you written an online review to feel that you are a part of a group?**

- No. That is just weird. I won't spend my time on speaking to randomly people on the Internet. It's not real.

**So when you write your online reviews it's mainly to help others?**

- It's just for that purpose. I don't spend my time to be a part of a group, they are not real. I haven't talked to them before.

**Before you told me that you write online reviews on Amazon, what is the reason to why you come back and post reviews there?**

- Same thing, like if it's bad, then people must know that it's bad. and if it's good, then i thought 'okay, help the company out a little bit and write a good online review'. If it's in the middle then i don't write anything.

**So there is nothing in particular with Amazon that makes you write?**

- No. I guess, some people...not me, are influenced by the whole you can vote and then you get a score, a rating.

**Do you know about the reward system when writing an online review?**

- Is that not what I just explained?

**The ratings? Yes that is one type of reward system, but there are other types**

- Yea like points, and rankings and all that sort of things, but I'm not motivated by that, but I think a lot of people are.

**What about economic rewards?**

- What do you mean?

**For example discounts.**

- I have never seen such things that they do that. But if there was then yea I would write.

**Is there any type of economic rewards?**

- Money. A product for free, all them things would make me write. Any reward basically. Just reward me.

**What possibilities on the website where the online review exist are there that make you write?**

- What possibilities make me write?! ... ehm, I only write if it's good or bad, but not if the process to do it was tough. It has to be easy, that is the main thing. I hate the one to ten scale...I just wanna write like...just let me write one review...just like get five stars. Don't make me write 'Okay, how was, on a scale from one to ten, how was this and on a scale from one to ten how was this'. Who knows what one and ten is? It's either gonna be like one, two, three, eight, nine or ten. It's never gonna be like four. It's so stupid. It doesn't make any sense. So it needs to be stars.

**So either like a ranking system or if you write with own words?**

- I think not only words, the ranking system is needed as well. I think rating is more important though. Because it's very difficult to tell by writing, someone could say 'mm yea this place was nice', but you don't know what they mean by nice. Or else it could be a three, a four or a five. 'How nice was it I say'. So both is needed.

**How come you think a rating system is good, but not a scale system?**

- Well, the rating system is one to five. The scale system is not asked only once, there are usually ten options like 'okay from a scale on one to ten how was our service', 'on a scale from one to ten, how was our food', 'on a scale from one to ten how was ...'. There are just so many options; I just wanna give one overall rating. I don't wanna go through different things for everything.

**Okay, and then you said..you write when you have a good or a bad experience, is there situations when you write due to feelings?**

- Anger! If something is so crap, rubbish then like ‘aarhh’, and then I write something. When i was traveling, in Vietnam especially. I put all my bookings through booking.com and then I had all places sorted out. There was one place aah it was so shit, you couldn't even walk inside with your shoes on, bathroom smelt so bad...and everything was just so shit. I just went straight online and wrote one star, one star, one star, one star, one star, one star, one star...I clicked that button many many times, even though it makes no difference, and then I wrote something like ‘this place should burn to the ground’, only maybe not quite that much, but you know what I mean. I wrote a bad review because I was so pissed off.

**Okay, that was all. Thanks for participating!**

## Interview with White

**How would you describe an online review?**

- Do you mean general what it is?

**What it means to you?**

- To me is an online review a good tool when I look for information about services in order to take a part of something. It's a kind of recommendation to understand if it is a good restaurant and critics against it. I often look for them when we are going on vacations, then we often rent self catering cottages and apartments, where I think reviews are a good tool to see what people that have stayed there before think and if they had a nice experience from it. So I use it very much to read what others have written

**What is an online review for you then?**

- It is a guarantee stamp about something, if it is good or bad

**You rely on others written judgements?**

- Yes, I mean if there is only one comment then I'm a bit critical against it, but if 15 comments are saying the same thing then I interpret it as reliable. I mean then you have to work really hard as a service provider to write 15 separate comments, if one thinks that companies control and write it, because you can do that but I don't believe they do it. There are also other tools, when we visited USA two years ago they have an app called “Urbanspoon” that is well established over there and many use it to find different dining options. It has very good search functions where you can search for what type of food you want to eat and how close it is to you since the app knows your position. It is full of comments and ratings; it is really superb and well established but mainly driven by customers and thereby seen as reliable

**Okay have you written a comment there?**

- No not there, but I have written on an apartment sometime and restaurants, but not in that app

**Do you want to share an occasion that you remember when you wrote a comment?**

- Yes it was some time ago, I'm usually very bad at writing comments, and I often think that I should do it but then I don't. I have written about a cottage once from when we stayed in Scotland and were really satisfied. I actually haven't written any bad review although I should have done it.

**What was the reason for writing the review from the trip in Scotland then?**

- I was really pleased with the service and thought they had done a good job so they deserved a good review

**Where did you write the review?**

- At some point it was at Tripadvisor. The cottage rentals, where we rent the cottage from, provide this type of services that also have reviews where I have written my opinion, but I can't remember what their name is

**What was it that primarily motivated you to write?**

- Good service, when we left the place we felt appreciated and prioritised by the owner and also liked. If someone gives that little extra and has been very careful with that one should have a good stay without being too obtrusive, then I feel that they are worth a good comment. We have been satisfied with almost every accommodation we have stayed at without written any review, it is only when it's been that little extra that I write.

**Do you mean that the little extra made you write that time?**

- Yes, when they have been that good and over my expectations, then I have written a review. It has happened that I have been so super happy too, but not have written.

**Okay, could you please tell why you didn't write then?**

- Yes, it is pure and simple laziness, I have a note on my bulletin at home that says that I should write the review, but it has been hanging there for 3 years now.

**You said that you have written at Tripadvisor, how does it work there? Do you need to be a member?**

- Yes I have done it some time; I don't think you need to be a member. If I remember correctly then it was the cottage rentals that used Tripadvisor and that their webpages were linked together. But I don't think I needed to become a member, I've never had to login in order to write a review, if that had been a requirement then I'd skipped to write because then the obstacle becomes too large.

**What on a webpage motivates you to write then, what would you say simplifies it for you?**

- It has to be easy, there should not exist any kind of barrier as so much else, then it becomes too complicated, one's so spoiled with that everything should be so simple. It should be as simple as possible to write. At the same time it cannot be too simple and that people can comment how they want, then the reliability of the comments decreases. I think that the times when I have written it's when the cottage rentals sent me a link, if I don't remember it wrong, then I think I got the link together with the confirmation and could just click on it and then write. Otherwise it falls if it becomes too easy for people to write.

**So you mean that it shouldn't be too easy to write?**

- Well it depends, a restaurant visit for example, when we were in Barcelona a month ago and visited a restaurant that was a huge disappointment in a place where we had gotten good recommendations on, then our expectations were high when we went to the restaurant. Later on when we looked it up at Tripadvisor we saw that they had received good reviews and ratings by others. This type of visit needs to have it open so that everyone can write and no login is required, although this type is not possible to control as the cottage rentals, which I talked about earlier where they sent you the link in order to write the comment.

**Was it the easiness that made you write then?**

- Yes it was, easiness, it does not matter whatever you do, easiness facilitates for people to go through with things, it cannot be complicated because then it becomes a barrier and then I don't do it and I think most people work in that way

**That time when you wrote to for the cottage rentals, did you feel that you write in order to help the business or...?**

- No I felt that I wrote to help the cottage rentals, the business. I did it because I was satisfied and I thought they deserved to have more customers

**But have you at some point written to destroy or control a company?**

- Nooeeaaa, not to destroy for them, in that case it has been because they haven't delivered what they suppose to. I think about if I have done it some time, I probably should have done it many times of course. No I don't think I actually have done it, but if I write I don't do it to destroy for them, I rather do it so they can improve themselves.

**Have you written a review in order to help other customers, or did you feel that you helped others when you wrote the comment about the cottage?**

- Hmm, indirectly I also help other customers when I write, eh, but my primary objective with the review was for those who leases the cottage. In other situations on the other hand, then I have written reviews to help others. I have for example written a comment about Mountain biking facilities in Scotland, I did it because I myself appreciate to read what others have written about the facilities and what I get when I bike in the different places. However, at that webpage they required me to become a member before I could write, but then it was something I'm interested in and therefore I see a benefit in becoming a member and to interact at the community.

**What type of product or service do you believe motivates you to write?**

- Things that matter to me, as accommodation for example because there is more money involved than for example a restaurant. But the restaurant that we visited in Barcelona that I talked about, I actually should have written and maybe I should do it now because that wasn't cheap at all, our whole family spent a lot of money at it and it was so lousy. I believe the more high-involved you are, the more important and motivated you become to write.

**Do you know about a reward system when writing online reviews that companies offers?**

- Yes I do

**Have you ever been offered any reward if you write?**

- Eh, I think that I have been offered that, you often see that you can participate to win things. But I've never done it in order to get a giveaway. I have answered on questionnaires and evaluated them for my colleagues in research purposes and then I got Trisslotter as a thank you. But the motivation is not the reward; it is rather to help them, so no I have never done a review for the purpose to receive a reward.

**Okay, if we say you purchase a product online, rent a cottage or anything, what type of reward would make you write?**

- I actually don't want to have a reward; those kinds of things do not matter to me. If we take Facebook as an example where people share and spread pictures to be a part of 100-iPad giveaways, I have never done that. I have on the other hand shared my recommendations of things that I think is good and like, things that I stand behind. It is not like I do this often, but it has happened when I'm super satisfied with something. I think I do this because my interpretation of marketing is that the company should deliver what the customer wants that gives a higher value than the competitors, that is the key to success for businesses and this is what I keep in mind when I write my reviews, if I believe the company could deliver a high value then I feel the need to tell the company that. Maybe I should write more often than I actually do and I should definitely tell them when it's bad, I feel that I contradict myself here. But this is what drives me and not that I should be rewarded just because I'm nice towards them and I hope this is how other people work as well, however I know that not everyone think like this. If I may speculate then I would think that more people are driven by what I just said and not that you may win an award. I believe that reward would be more

effective if you get the prize directly when you write, but this would be more costly for the company.

**If we instead think about intangible rewards, how do you feel about your image when you write, do you feel it is affected?**

- Yes I feel that I strengthen my image when I write, I feel like a good citizen

**In what way, would you like to elaborate your answer?**

- Well, I think that in one way your image is affected because I help to provide a better world with my writing, it maybe sounds strange what I say but that's what it's all about. When something is good and I'm super satisfied with it, then I also want other people to take part of my experience and hopefully become satisfied as well. Also I should tell others when something is really bad as well so that the company can change and make it better or go bankrupt if they don't care about the comments, this is how I see that I become a better citizen when I write.

**Which feelings would you say motivates you to write?**

- I would say in my cases it's the feeling of helping someone who does a good job.

**And what emotions in yourself then?**

- It is the feeling that I feel good when I help others

**Would you say that satisfaction drives you more to write than for example the bad restaurant visit in Barcelona where you didn't write any review at all?**

- No it is, well that's of course... When I write positive reviews then satisfaction drives me to write and not that I can get any reward. It is mostly laziness that is the reason for me not to write that comment about the restaurant in Barcelona and other places that I've been dissatisfied with.

**Thank you for participating!**

## Interview with Red

**How would you describe an online review?**

- An online review is a review of something on the Internet. Sometimes you can fill in ratings, one to five stars for instance, sometimes you write on your own and sometimes you answer specific questions. It's different from time to time.

**What do online reviews mean to you?**

- Often, I write an online review since I'm dissatisfied with something or because I'm very pleased with something. I write since I want a product to receive the 'tribute' it deserves or not deserves. That is what I think they mean. It is also a way to highlight that certain products need to be improved.

**What motivates you to write online reviews?**

- The answer to this is the same as for the previous question. But I want to add that often I think you write since you are very upset, irritated and angry with something, or very happy and pleased with something. You want the ones who made a product should know. I would say that I'm a bit more prone to write if I'm very angry than if I'm very happy.

**Have you written an online review in an attempt to harm a company?**

- I may have done it although I cannot think of a specific occasion. It definitely feels like something I could have done. It is like I said; if you are very unsatisfied with something that is the only way to proceed to harm a company. I can also be a person calling a company and whines just to show my dissatisfaction. However if I do so, it is just me and the one I'm talking to that hear and knows that I'm dissatisfied. If I write it on a site than many will see it and can take part of the information.

**Have you written an online review to benefit the group?**

- Mm...I have done that. Now, I think of when I'm about to write a review when I order shampoo on the Internet. You know that you receive a lot of help from other peoples' reviews or at least I think so. If I'm happy with a product I want others to know how good it is. It is the opposite of harming a company.

**Have you written an online review to feel that you are part of a group?**

- No I cannot remember that I have done that...or wait, let me think about it. No my answer is no to that question.

**Do you write online reviews with the intention to help other customers or companies?**

- Yes, or companies...well, the answer is the same as on the questions above.

**What type of product or service would make you write an online review?**

- I think I could write reviews for almost anything. However, my spontaneous feeling is that you write when products or services are more expensive. When people are hesitating if they should purchase something or not I feel that it is more important for me to write online reviews. On the other hand, I do it on smaller purchases as well, like shampoo. One thing that makes me prone to write online reviews is hotels, travel destinations, everything that have to do with travelling, like flights, hotels or travel agencies since people spend a lot of money on such things. I think that is important, but now when we talk it feels like everything is important, broker and banking are also two examples. Basically, it feels important to write when it concerns large decisions.

**Do you know about a reward system when writing online reviews?**

- Hmm...you write a reviews and are than rewarded?

**Yes?**

- No I don't think I have heard of that...or maybe if I think about it really carefully. However, it is not that that motivates me to write online reviews.

**In what situation are you motivated by economical rewards?**

- In any situation, rewards had triggered me to write in any situation, of course. However, since I currently write without any incentive, the question come across as a bit odd to me.

**What type of rewards would motivate you to write?**

- Except from money...I could take anything. Discount coupons or something like that. Or maybe you could get the product you review, that had been the ultimate reward although it may be unrealistic.

**Are you motivated by maintaining positive thoughts about yourself when write online reviews?**

- No I don't think so since no one knows that I'm the one writing. Hence, my reputation or status does not improve since I'm anonymous. However, I might feel a little pleased since I am perceived as a good person who shares my experiences with others. That, indirectly, improves my self-image a bit since I'm perceived as a good person. However, it's not my primary motivation for writing online reviews.

**What possibilities on the site where online reviews exist make you write?**

- Design is important, how it looks in general, it needs be neatly made. If a company asks me to review their products or whatever, it is crucial that their questionnaire is not too long. It needs to be simple to fill in. If I open a questionnaire and see that I am on page one out of seven, I will never fill it in. On the other hand, if I see that it is just four questions and that the questionnaire is easy to overview, I might just fill it in quickly. Availability is also crucial, of course. I will never sit trying to locate a place where I can write reviews, it will never happen. It should be easy and in close connection to the product or service I want to review.

**How do you feel about creating an account or log in to be able to post a review?**

- That would drastically lower the chances of me writing a review. It needs to be as easy as possible, no obstacles on the way. It just wants to write.

**Thank you for participating.**

## Interview with Orange

### **How would you describe an online review?**

- Do you mean what it is or?

### **Yes or how you would describe it?**

- When a person like sharing and recommending his or her experiences of a product or services or something else

### **And what does an online review mean to you?**

- I usually use reviews for like movies, then I usually read them, even if I don't let them affect me or my decision I find it fun to read them and I often do this after I've seen the movie, maybe it's the opposite of what others do. Also I use reviews for hotels in countries I've never visited before in order to see what others think about it if maybe it's a cheap hotel or something like that. It's not that I often read reviews, it is not that I would base my life on reviews, for instance it would not affect me to not see a movie just because someone wrote anything negative about it.

### **Okay so it reviews does not mean that much to you?**

- Well it depends on what it is, like hotels then I would care for what other people have written but not movies because I would watch the movie even if it has bad reviews

### **When have you yourself written a review?**

- One time I wrote a review because I flew with an airline that lost my bags, then I was really angry so then I wrote. I think I would have written, when one's angry you really want to show people that this company is crap and when you have experienced something good then maybe you don't write about it because you might think that... One's lazy. But in this case I was angry so then I wrote negative about the airline.

### **Where did you write your comment about this?**

- On Facebook, on their own Facebook page

### **Were there others who comment on...?**

- No not others who comment on my post, it was only the airline company who comments on it, however there were people who liked my post. Also the airline company wrote "how can we help you, send your information to us privately so that we can help you" in a private message to me and I sent my information to them and then they actually helped me, but this took very long time and I'd to nag on them so that they would help me, they often wrote to me that they would get back to me in one day or two, which they didn't do so I'd to write plenty of times.

### **So the comment on Facebook wasn't enough?**

- No it wasn't. But I saw on their Facebook page that all the other comments written there were negative ones, every comment included something negative about customers' bags, company's service, it was negative about everything.

### **What would you say motivates you to write reviews?**

- I've been close to write, reviews about albums and then it's because I like the artist, so then I want to show them support, so this would also make me write. But I haven't done it.

### **Okay, so it is not only negative things that motivate you?**

- No, but take for example there is a really kind and sweet bus driver that is really friendly, but it's not that I contact Länstrafiken Kronoberg and tell them that this bus



driver is really nice, I want to do it, but at the same time I think that I'm too lazy, I have other things to do you know.

**Have you ever written a review to feel that you are a part of a group?**

- No

**When you wrote on the airline's Facebook page, was that to be a part of the group?**

- No it wasn't, I was just angry

**Have you ever written a review to benefit a group, for example when you wrote the comment about the airline?**

- Yes I did, It felt that it could help others to see that they shouldn't fly with them, because I was one of many and if someone visit their page then they can see that there are many who think the same thing or been through the same thing, so then I contributed with the negative.

**Did you feel that you wanted to destroy for the airline company when you wrote?**

- Yes that was exactly what I wanted

**Did you feel that you controlled the company?**

- No not controlled, I only wanted to, I think when one's angry you want to vent your anger and this was also what I did in order to get help from them, because when I called them they were really rude and unhelpful. Then I thought if I publicly show this, then this is bad publicity for them, because their travellers write bad things about them and this reaches many people through Facebook. Even if I don't get response directly from the company it is still someone who will read it and affect their choice of airline. Maybe it was little power in it. I thought that even if only one person read my comment, it can still help that person and that is good if my comment at least help that one person, it is not the amount of people that matters.

**In this case it was your suitcases that affected you to write the review, but in other cases, what type of product or service do you believe affect you to write?**

- To me it is music or movies that affect me, because that interests me and I read that kind of reviews myself so I think music and movies affect me to write

**Do you know about a reward system and that companies sometimes offer rewards to people that write reviews?**

- Yes, bloggers and well-known reviewers they get paid for writing about products and services

**Have you yourself been offered any reward if you write?**

- No not myself, haha.

**Would any kind of economical reward affect you to write, if you have bought a product online for instance?**

- Money would affect me, or that I would receive any product for free, but it would depend what kind of product they would offer me for free as well. I would definitely write a review about a movie if a company would offer me a cinema ticket, but it depends what they want to have from me in return, how much I would need to write and what they want me to write, if they force me to write positive for example, I'm picky you know, haha.

**If you think about your image instead, do you feel that affect something inwardly through writing?**

- Well, no it's not like I often write reviews, I've been close to write reviews other times as well. I think it depends on that I'm not that active on social medias, if I'd been that then I think I would have written more often, but I'm a very private person that don't like to share too much of my life and therefore I don't really care so much about what people think. Personally I think that I wouldn't post any reviews on my Facebook as a

status, because I'm private and not active. Something big must have happened to affect me to write

**Have you at some point written any review on a company's' webpage or elsewhere, for movies for example?**

- I have never written about any movies, I've only been close doing it on for example Cdon, but I didn't went through it

**Okay, so what stopped you then?**

- I thought to myself, well, no I didn't have the time or know what to write in the review.

**If you were going to write a review on a webpage, what possibilities on it would affect you to write and go through the whole "process"?**

- If it were easy or hard to write, if it is for instance that you need to create a new account on the page then I wouldn't have created a new account only to write the review. If it's anonymously and you only can click on it and post it and then it's posted. But if you have to go through many stages to post it then this would have stopped me to go through it, if it is not easy to do it. It must be simple and rapid to go through.

**What feelings would you say motivates you to write?**

- Extreme feelings, either extremely angry or really satisfied. It need to be extreme, it cannot be the feeling of that something was okay that wouldn't affect me to write. I need to feel passionate about it in order to write, either angry or that I love the product, extreme feelings to drive me to write. One can see that on the comments online that people's reviews are often extremely satisfied contra dissatisfied

**Is there anything further that you want to add that you would say motivates you?**

- I think for example music; if I'm a huge fan of a band then I want to write about them in order to help them, feelings are involved in the motivation. For example if we say I like Michael Jackson and that I really like him, if I tell others about his music then I help the artist when I write about him, I don't help the other fans.

**Is it the same thing with companies that you write for the benefit of the company?**

- Yes, it's hard to say because I haven't done it, but I think that if I'd been a huge fan of a company I would do anything to help them through writing positive things about them. If I give coca cola as an example, if they releases a new taste that I do not like then I would still give them positive feedback and tell others that the taste is good, because if I'm a huge fan then I want to help the company.

**Thank you for participating!**

## Interview with Green

**How would you describe an online review?**

- For me, an online review is like a forum or diary on a site where it is possible to write what you think about products, sites, companies and so on.

**What do you mean with a diary?**

- If you look at people who sell products, online reviews work as a diary for each product. It is not actual sales information; instead it is more information concerning a product on a general level. You leave a personal opinion that forms some sort of diary.

**What do online reviews mean to you?**

- In general, online reviews do not tell me much but I see them as an advantage if they exist when I'm about to buy products. Sometimes I as a consumer have a hard time to absorb the sales information that exist and might not receive accurate information of

what a product actually can achieve. When I'm on a site, I see online reviews as an advantage if they are there.

**Can you give examples?**

- We can talk about clothes, if we imagine a site that sell sportswear, often there are great variety when it comes to sizes in different garments. A size M, for example, does not say that much about the actual size and then reviews become important if someone has written that the size is small, big etc. Or if someone writes that I'm a normal size M but in this garment I needed a size XL. That means a lot.

**What motivates you to write online reviews?**

- It what I said before, it works a bit like a diary and you are never badly portrayed.

***When you talk about badly portrayed, do you mean that you like being anonymous?***

- Yes exactly, you can be anonymous and you cannot be commented. It is like an open diary for someone else to use.

**What motivates you to write online reviews?**

- I am motivated to write online reviews since I can contribute with something that can help someone else. It is an easy way to help others. Yesterday when I bought shoes it had been very good if... people do not know whether they have size 41 or another size and on websites it is rare that a company write anything about the sizes. For me, it feels good to be able to help others when they are about to purchase shoes. It is like a win-win situation, both for me, the company and other customers.

**What type of product or service would make you write an online review?**

- I rarely shop online but no not really. It depends a bit on my level of knowledge. I have three examples. It is mainly when it comes to clothes and sizes, but it can also include products like a lawn mower where there is a jungle of different options. You can get product information from a company but that information rarely says much more than measurement, speed, sound etc. That information does not say much really and that is why it is good if someone that has the product already can leave a review, maybe together with a rating, someone that can say "this product are noisy, difficult to install, an incomprehensive manual or whatever". Such parameters are important. Could you please ask the question again?

**What type of product or service would make you write an online review?**

- Services where reviews and ratings are important are restaurants. I often look at others reviews and ratings of restaurants before I chose a particular restaurant. It's like I have said before, a restaurant can have an appealing menu but that really do not say much about the quality. I also look if there are nice staff, tasty food, entertainment, milieu, and so on.

***You mention lawn mower, which is a quite expensive product, mostly. Does a product's price impact your motivation to write online reviews?***

- Definitely, when I bought my TV for instance, I had some knowledge in advance but the range is extremely big and the price is large. So I went online to look at other people's opinion of the TV I was interested in. I went the store and asked several sales people just to get a sense of comfort since it was such a large purchase. In that way I ensure that I will be pleased with my purchase. Now I talk about a situation where I look for online reviews. When I write reviews I write to retell my experience of a product. I seldom write reviews to ask for advice. In general, I write reviews of products that have a higher price. It doesn't think it's worth writing reviews of products that have a price below 500 SEK. However, an exception is clothes since the size misleading sometimes.

***What about restaurants?***

- It's more of a service. When it comes to services it is important for me that companies maintain a good service and in that case, reviews become much more important. Like I said, a menu does not say especially much of a restaurant more than what food they serve. But that is far from the whole experience of going out to dinner. It's the customers' task to evaluate the entertainment, service, food, milieu etc. Online reviews are a good way to share and take part of such information. I write information to prepare others of what to expect.

**Do you write online reviews with the intention to help other customers or companies?**

- Customers yes, but not with any intention to help a company. This diary that I explained before, it's outside a company's interest, instead that is more of additional service they offer. For me are online reviews more of a service aimed to facilitate conversation between customers. However, that can be good for companies as well if they receive good reviews. If customers post negative product reviews that could also help a company to remove products of bad quality and so on. Basically, I don't write online reviews to help a company. I may help them if they send me a survey or something to review their products.

**Have you written an online review in an attempt to harm a company?**

- No I have never done that since I have never gone in with the attitude to write with the aim to reach a company. However, if I give a bad review of, for instance, a restaurant with the intention to discourage others from visiting that restaurant I indirectly harm that company. I unofficially hurt that company. I think people who wants to hurt a company talks negatively about them to friends and family.

**Do you know about a reward system when writing online reviews?**

- I have never experienced such offer myself although I know it exists. I have heard of discounts for instance.

**In what situation are you motivated by economical rewards?**

- Hm...what is a bit boring with economical incentives is that I don't receive them immediately or can use them right away. I have to wait until after I have bought my product. Nevertheless, it is certainly an incentive that motivates me to write. For instance, get a 10 percent discount if you write a review. If you buy something that is limited to a particular period, like a ticket to participate in an event in general and they have a sign that says "review this event and get 10 percent discount". That motivates me to write an online review since I can receive a discount on any product they sell at the event right away. I had been motivated to write online reviews if I could receive the reward at the same time that had been the ultimate. For instance, if I could show that I posted a tweet during an event, and could furthermore show that tweet in a beer tent to receive a discount, I would be very motivated to write. When I have bought a product and have written a review and then have to wait for an email with my discount code and so on I'm not so keen on writing anymore because everything becomes so displaced. I have a hard time to see that this would work for online retailers that sell products although that had been the ultimate motivation for me to write.

**What type of rewards would motivate you to write?**

- Instead of just receiving rewards in percent discounts, real money appeals to me, for instance a 200 SEK discount. But if I would think of things other than real money I would be motivated to write by receiving additional products as an added value. For instance, if I buy new running shoes I receive a t-shirt. It's important that the gift I'm given for writing a review is suitable to the context. I mean, if I want to buy a new protein powder a t-shirt is not as appealing as a new protein shaker. It's important that the reward is suitable to the product that I'm buying.

**Are you motivated by maintaining positive thoughts about yourself when write online reviews?**

- That is absolutely true, if I'm able to help someone I feel that I have done something good and for me that is a reward in itself. But I think that reviews can have different levels of usefulness so a rating system where people could rate the helpfulness of different reviews had been good. When I get feedback that my reviews are good and helpful that motivates me to write even more reviews. It gives me a sense that I'm good at what I'm doing. To just write reviews do not give me especially much, it is when people recognize me and give my reviews feedback that I feel it gives me something to write. If I'm aware of the feedback that people have given me, I might receive an email or so, I'm more triggered to visit the website again and see what people have commented and also write again. If have a good reputation, that also motivates me to be well behaved and also write more reviews since I know that people benefit from them.

**Have you written an online review to feel that you are part of a group?**

- No never. I have not turned to a community to feel a sense of belonging. However, if I have a problem and turn to a special community and participate in a special thread where I post a possible solution that the group respond positively to, I feel that I am a part of that group.

**What possibilities on the site where online reviews exist make you write?**

- I'm motivated when I can see other peoples' reviews. I also think that companies could be better at writing an appealing request that invite people to write online reviews. It also depends, if I frequently visit a site I don't really care if it is difficult or easy to write an online review. When I visit a site frequently and have an account and such, it's no extra effort for me to write a review. In general, a site where it is easy to write motivates me more than if it is difficult, but as I said before, it depends. I think it's better if you don't need to create an account and log in to write, it should be possible to just do so. If you are able to be anonymous you don't need to create an account and that would motivate me to write. However, a review becomes trustworthier if it comes from a signature or someone that have an account. A site needs to be accessible, easy to grasp, clear and structured. I'm motivated if I can receive ratings from other customers and get discounts.

***Are you motivated if others see you as knowledgeable?***

- Yes of course, if you think of Aftonbladet, they do not always base their texts on the most reliable sources. There, some may be motivated to correcting facts to be seen by others.

**What feelings motivate you to write online reviews?**

- Gratitude

***Can you elaborate?***

- I feel happiness that I have been helped and that motivates me to help someone else.

**Thank you for participating!**

