The Relationship Between Self-Image and the Usage of Different Types of Tourist Information

Master's Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the degree

Master of Science

in International Tourism Management

Submitted to Dr. Astrid Dickinger, PD

Jelena Krnić

1013002

<Vienna>, <14> <June> <2012>

AFFIDAVIT

I hereby affirm that this Master's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

The thesis was not submitted in the same or in a substantially similar version, not even partially, to another examination board and was not published elsewhere.

Date	Signature

ABSTRACT

Information search represents an important part of the travel planning process. Due to the character of the tourist product, potential tourists are not able to investigate in person neither the destination nor the hotel. This results in a greater need for travel related information.

With the increasing popularity of the Internet, a vast variety of information providers have emerged offering a mixture of travel information. With the abundance of various information channels it is important to understand what drives potential tourists to follow advices retrieved online.

Past research suggests that self-image congruity has a great impact on human behavior and therefore on customers' purchase decisions (Sigy, 1982; Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987). Self-image congruity and the information search strongly impact individuals' travel planning process.

Therefore the aim of this thesis is to examine if there is a relationship between self-image and the usage of different online information sources.

The results of the analyses indicate that there is no relationship between self-image and the usage of different tourist information sources. However, the results show that there are differences between service providers when it comes to the ability of a service provider to provide excellent information which suggest that not all service providers are perceived to have benevolent intentions towards customs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people that have helped me throughout my MSC education and who had helped me in my efforts to produce this Master thesis.

A special thank you goes to my supervisor, Dr. Astrid Dickinger, for all her precious advice, recommendations and support she gave me.

A big thank you also goes to my friends and colleagues for their help, encouragement and support.

The biggest thank you goes to my family for their unconditional love, support, patience and understanding.

VI

"Success is not final, failure is not final; it is the courage to continue that counts"

Winston Churchill

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Figures

1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism is an information intensive industry that depends heavily on the flow of information and interactions between various stakeholders and the tourist community. Evidence shows that the Internet has became one of the most frequently used sources of information, covering a vast spectrum of product related information as well as industry related information (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006). Nowadays, besides seeking product/service information customers are starting to produce content themselves (Dickinger, 2010). This contributes to the fact that from the year 2000 to 2011 the number of Internet users has increased by 528.1%. Today approximately 2,267,233,742 individuals have Internet access, and the number is growing on a daily basis (Internet World Status, 2011). New technologies have enabled the customer to exercise powerful influence on service providers as well as other travelers (Litvin & Goldsmith & Pan 2007). It is of crucial importance for businesses in all branches to understand the power and numerous possibilities that the Internet provides.

New technologies have reshaped the way in which tourists search, gather and generate a vast variety of information (Ye & Law & Gu & Chen, 2010; Dickinger, 2010). It is as well a helpful instrument used by marketers in the pursuit of new customers and markets (Schmidt & Spreng, 1996). The tourist product is intangible, experimental and involves a spatial dimension. That implies that potential tourists are not able to investigate in person neither the destination nor the stakeholders before the actual travel (Dickinger, 2010).

The Internet has enabled potential tourists to gather relevant information in order to get an overview of available opportunities, where to find them and at what cost (Raitz & Dakhil, 1989). Nowadays information providers like tourist boards, hotel and resort web sites, travel agents, bloggers and magazines offer a wide array of information (Dickinger, 2010). Travel decisions can be made by consulting guidebooks, regional and destination information brochures and tourist boards, as well as consumer generated sites like blogs and online communities (Bieger & Laesser, 2004; Casalo & Flavian & Guinaliu, 2011).

Taking into account the information stated above, two streams of literature are most relevant. These are self-image and information search. Previous research carried out in

the past indicates that customers will use a specific kind of information provider depending on the stage of the travel planning process and the type of information provider. A number of different consumer behavior studies have used self-image theory as a vehicle for better understanding and explaining consumer purchase decisions. Furthermore, a great deal of the research on self-image theory done in the past has shown that customers will purchase products/services that represent their identity. Therefore customers purchase products not just for their practical use but also for their self-expressive benefits (Onkvist & Shaw, 1987). The match between self-image and brand-image is referred to as self-image congruence (Sigy & Lee & Johar & Tidwell, 2008).

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between an individual's self-image and the usage of different types of tourist information sources.

1.1 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

Potential consumers will purchase a certain brand/product/service not just for its functional but as well for its symbolic meaning. The opportunity to express their own individuality is what motivates individuals to engage in a specific purchase (Kressmann, Sirgy, Herrmann, F. Huber,S. Huber, Lee). It is of crucial importance for companies and marketers to understand the power of destination image and the message that it transmits. That is reflected in the fact that consumption has symbolic meanings for customers; it symbolizes personal attributes, motivation and social patterns (Hosany & Martin, 2011). Past research has provided evidence that certain destinations or purchase decisions evoke certain stereotyped believes. Chon (1992) along with Sirgy and Su (2000) found out that individuals have stereotyped beliefs towards travelers who visit certain destinations like the Caribbean as upper class or wealthy. Other connotations related to the Caribbean vacation were romantic, friendly or family oriented. That indicates that individuals tend to choose a specific destination based on their stereotyped beliefs about the self and the message they want to transmit to the environment (Ahn & Ekinci & Li, 2011).

The Internet has become an important source of formal as well as informal information. This is due to some properties that are unique to the Internet such as high levels of interactivity and customization (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006). Throughout the Internet consumers are able to interact with each other, exercise powerful influence and communicate with organizations. While destinations and businesses have the chance to reach broader audiences, at the same time communities have strong influence on organizations and among each other (Jacobsen & Maunar, 2012).

When looking for travel related information potential travelers can consult a variety of formal and informal information sources; some sources even have social electronic media like Facebook integrated into their websites or are providing special platforms where customers can give their ratings and comments, e.g., TripAdvisor (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012; Jeacle & Carter, 2011). Despite that the amount and variety of information are increasing on a daily basis, it is not clear which information provider is most frequently used and why. And what is the reason behind the choice of a certain information provider? (Wendel & Dellaert 2005).

1.2 THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is, therefore, to examine the relationship between the self-image and different online information sources. The relationships will be tested through a questionnaire, which includes three theoretical constructs: self-image, trust and information search. In order to acquire the necessary data and to test the hypothesis some theoretical constructs were adopted from literature.

Therefore the questionnaire is constructed as follows:

First the respondents will be provided with a screenshot of the online channels investigated in this study. This approach has yielded a total of three versions of the questionnaires.

The first part of the questionnaire represents questions related to the self-image perception adopted from Kleijnen, Ruyter, Andreassen (2005). After the statistical testing this will provide evidence on the relationship between image congruence and the usage of a specific online information source.

The second important construct integrated in the questionnaire is trust. According to the literature, trust is considered to have several dimensions: ability, benevolence and integrity. This will help to assess the respondent's confidence in the information provided. Confidence is an important factor in the information search process because it shows the individual's intention to follow advice gathered online. The measures were adopted from Gefen (2000).

Drawing on findings from research on virtual communities and traditional world-of-mouth literature the typology of motives for engaging in the WOM communication were adopted from Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, Gremler (2004). WOM communication is one type of social influences that have received major attention in the consumer behavior literature especially because of the fact that WOM has two dimensions. One is positive and the other is negative WOM. Both have a powerful influence on consumer purchase decisions (Bailey, 2005).

1.3 THE THESIS STRUCTURE

This master's thesis on **"**The Relationship Between Self-image and the usage of different types of tourist information sources**"** consists of five major sections.

The first section presents the introduction to the study at hand. It provides a short overview of the most important components of the thesis as well as a brief introduction to the most relevant theoretical constructs and their implications to the tourism industry. Furthermore, it brings focus to the main problem being addressed in the study, namely the reason for choosing a specific information provider. The section titled "Objective of the study" states not only the objective of the study but also presents how the research has been conducted. Several important theoretical concepts like self-image, trust and information use has been incorporated in the questionnaire in order to test the hypothesis and provide an answer to the proposed research question.

The second part of the master's thesis provides a comprehensive background of the most important theoretical constructs. It gives insight into the relevant theories, problems and ongoing discussions concerning self-image, congruence theory, information search and trust.

The section devoted to the research methodology contains a step-by-step description of the entire research procedure, from construction of the questionnaire to the sampling procedure and collection of the data. It order to test the hypothesis and analyze the data, the program SPSS has been employed.

The following section includes the results of the analysis including the presentation and explanation of the data obtained.

The master's thesis ends with a conclusion and suggestions for further research, followed by the bibliography and the appendices.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 SELF-IMAGE

There is an extensive body of research on self-image in psychology as well as management. It is believed that self-image has a big influence on human behavior and therefore on customer's purchase decisions (Sigy, 1982; Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Onkvisit & Shaw, 1987). Rosenberg et al. (1995) define self-image as a unique mixture of characteristics, limitation, appearance and personality. Rogers (1959) on the other hand defines self-image as *"organized, consistent, conceptual, gestalt composed of perceptions of the relationships of the 'I' or 'me' and the perceptions of the relationships of the 'I' or 'me' to others and the various aspects of life, together with the values attached to these perceptions."* Hence it can be said that each individual has a personal self-image concept which is a unique mixture of various skills, traits, habits, possessions and relationships. From the above proposed definitions the conclusion that the self-concept can be seen as a diverse and multifunctional construct is made (Sigy & Grewal & Mangleburg, 2000). Therefore, it is believed that an individual embodies a number of different selves that come into action depending on a specific situation and the message that one wants to transmit to its environment. In addition a person's self-image picture does not change because of a personal need or process but rather through social experiences and interactions (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967). The marketing literature defines four main self constructs that are helping to predict and explain consumer behavior: *actual self-image* (how an individual perceives himself), *ideal self-image* (how an individual would like to perceive himself), *social self-image* (how an individual feels others perceive him) and *ideal social self-image* (how an individual would like to be perceived) (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007).

When it comes to consumer goods Sirgy (1982) suggests that consumers will engage in the purchase of a certain product depending on the match between the product user image and the image that an individual has constructed about his own self. The product on the other hand has to have a clear brand image and has to be socially recognized by the customer's reference group (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967).

Brands with positive psychological connotations have a strong impact on the consumers purchase decision by causing positive emotions. In addition the tourist purchase helps the individual to reinforce his self-image, and at the same time, it helps the individual to transmit a certain message about him to his environment. Positively associated emo-

tions towards a brand or product mean that an individual is congruent with a certain product (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). Brand/product congruence is based on the theory that an individual will purchase products with characteristics that match his/her self-image picture (Usakli & Balogu, 2010).

2.2 FOUR MAIN CLASIFICATIONS OF SELFIMAGE

The concept of self-image in social research has been examined from a variety of fields and points of view. Some of the fields and theories involved in the examination of self-image are psychoanalytic theory, behavioral theory, organismic theory and cognitive theory. In general, it can be said that self-image theory can be viewed as a multidimensional construct, combined by four main classifications of self-image (Srigy, 1982).

1. **ACTUAL SELF-IMAGE:** How consumers in fact perceive themselves
2. **IDEAL SELF-IMAGE:** How consumers would like to perceive themselves
3. **SOCIAL SELF-IMAGE:** How consumers feel others perceive them
4. **IDEAL SOCIAL SELF-IMAGE:** How consumers would like others to perceive them (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007).

2.2.1 ACTUAL SELF-IMAGE

The actual self-image is the opinion that an individual has constructed about his/her own self. This image is composed by specific attributes and qualities; mixed together they create a unique self-image concept that has positive as well as negative self-images. Therefore some parts of the self-image are evaluated more positively than the others (Solomon et al., 2010). For example, self-esteem is one of many indicators of positive or negative self concepts.

Arnold, Price and Zinkhan define self-esteem as: "patterns of beliefs that an individual has about self-worth". It can be said that self-esteem represents a personal opinion about the self which is a result of various experiences like success, failure, interpersonal interactions, social learning, maturation and heredity (Arnold et al., 2004). Individuals with positive self-esteem are more willing to take risks as a consequence of their own credentials, their own success and positive outcome. On the other hand individuals with low self-esteem believe that they will perform poorly and therefore will try to avoid embarrassment, failure or rejection by remaining loyal to products and services they are already familiar with. Generally speaking it can be said that consumers are more willing to purchase products/services that they already consume. Furthermore this group of "familiar" products can be divided in two sub-groups. The first group is

composed of a mix of products that are helping individuals to reinforce their actual self, while the second group consists of products that customers purchase in the pursuit of their ideal self-image.

Marketers are using a vast range of promotional mixes and tactics in order to make the product more appealing. Appealing ads can trigger process like social comparison where a person compares his/her-self with the person represented in the advertisement campaign (Solomon et al., 2010). The problematic mater of social comparison arises from the fact that an individual compares him/herself with these idealized self-identity images which are representing an idealized person-type in order to attract consumers (Bishop, 2000).

Park and John (2011) examined the influence of implicit self-theories on ad appeal effectiveness. They used two main implicit self-theories: incremental theory where individuals believe that their personal qualities can be changed and developed; and entity theory where individuals believed that their personal qualities are fixed and cannot be changed. In order to test their hypothesis they developed two different ads for a new Victoria's Secret eye shadow (Victoria's Secret Angels Eyes). They tested the hypothesis on a sample of eighty-four undergraduate students. Forty students were assigned to the appeal group and 43 were in the self-improvement group. The results showed that participants in the entity theory group had more favorable attitudes towards advertizing products in the context of signaling and appeal. When it comes to self improvement and appeal, participants in the incremental theory showed more favorable attitudes towards the product used in the advertisement campaign (Park & John, 2011).

2.2.2 IDEAL SELF-IMAGE

While the actual self-image represents the appraisal of qualities a person has or lacks, ideal self-image represents a person's concept about how they would like to be seen (Solomon et al., 2010). In other words ideal self-image represents a person's desire of what he/she would like to be, and what they believe they could be. The pursuit of the ideal self-image defines an individual's motivation and goals. Motivation pushes an individual to act, while goals are directing an individual's efforts towards a certain objective.

Many scholars have directed their research efforts towards understanding consumer's behavioral patterns. The most prominent motivational frameworks are proposed by Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Abraham Maslow and Henry Murray (Arnold et al., 2004, p. 267).

- Fraud's concept of drivers (e.g., as mediated by the id, ego and super ego)
- Jung's concept of archetypes (e.g., the self, the great mother and the hero)
- Maslow's concept of a hierarchy of needs (e.g., physiological needs and safety needs)
- Murray's list of human needs (e.g., abasement, acquisition, affiliation).

The reason why there is such a diverse classification of motives can be seen through the fact that motives are psychological constructs; therefore, they are difficult to be observed directly.

In addition Grubb and Grathwohl (1967) stress upon the importance of self-image motivation in relation with market behavior. Because the self is of great importance to the individual he will undertake a number of measures in order to enhance and maintain a certain self-image concept. Therefore individuals will purchase products in the pursuit of the ideal self-image that will help them to overcome the gap between the actual self and the ideal self (Solomon et al., 2010). These products are acting as symbols serving as means of communication. In order for a symbol to be meaningful to others it must be recognized within a reference group (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967). In western societies it is believed that the decoration style of a home reflects the owner's personality. As a consequence individuals are spending considerable amounts of money on home decoration that will make his/her living and working place unique and special. Although self-image perception affects individuals personally, it helps as well to evaluate other people. People tend to surround themselves with friends, partners and coworkers that are strengthening their ideal self-image (Arnold et al., 2004).

2.2.3 SOCIAL SELF-IMAGE

There is no clear distinction in the literature between the constructs of social self-image and ideal social self-image. There is as well a lack of existing definitions of two constructs. The literature mainly focuses on actual self-image and social self-image neglecting the other two constructs. Nevertheless social self-image is an important integral part of self-image theory. It represents how individuals feel others see them (Sirgy, 1982).

Self-concept grows and evolves through interactions with others in our surroundings. Meaning that through consumption of certain groups of products/services/brands an individual tries to transmit a certain image about the self. Therefore consumers will engage in the purchase of a certain product for its functional value as well as symbolic

meaning (Hosany & Martin, 2011). In addition, Levy (1959) states that consumers will purchase certain products not just for their functional use but as well for their representation of status and lifestyle.

If the attempt of communication throughout purchase is successful, the reference group will receive the right message and will react in the desired manner. People tend to embrace certain brands or products that will help them to associate with the kind of people he/she considers the reference group (Grubb & Hupp, 1968). Certain products can transmit powerful messages as well as symbolic meanings and social patterns. One example can be seen through the consumption of luxury goods like high performance automobiles. On the one hand they transmit to the broad audience inputs about an individual's social status, and on the other hand they help individuals to reinforce their self-image perception (Hosany & Martin, 2011).

2.2.4 IDEAL SOCIAL SELF-IMAGE

Ideal social self-image represents the way how individuals would like to be seen by others (Sirgy, 1982). In order to transmit the desired picture about himself, an individual will assume different roles and purchase specific groups of products (Graeff, 1997; Usakly & Balogu, 2011). These products usually have well defined brand personalities which are of great importance to the customer and have a strong impact on an individual's purchase decisions. Aaker (1997, p.347) suggests that brand personality can be seen as "the set of human characteristics associated within a band". This personality characteristic can contain specific traits such as youthful, sporty, energetic or sophisticated. According to Usakli and Balogu (2011) personality traits can help in describing products, such as "cool" for Coca-cola or "sophisticated" for BMW cars.

2.3 PERSONALITY TRAITS

In the context of consumer behavior research, traits are representing one of the most influential personality characteristics. The reason why can be seen throughout the fact that traits are stable over time and have direct influence on human behavior. Therefore they can serve as a helpful tool when predicting consumer behavior. (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2008; Landers & Lounsbury, 2006; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). It can be said that personality can be defined as "intrinsic organization of an individual's mental world that is stabile over time and consistent over situations" (Mulyanegaraet et al., 2007). The table below provides some examples of perception when it comes to favorable, neutral and unfavorable personality traits. The scores were obtained by asking 100 US students to rank each word on a scale from 0-6.

Table 1: Favorable, neutral and unfavorable personality traits

FAVORABLE TRAITS		NEUTRAL TRAITS		UNFAVORABLE TRAITS	
Trait	*Rating*	*Trait*	*Rating*	*Trait*	*Rating*
Sincere	5.73	**Quiet**	3.11	**Dishonest**	0.41
Honest	5.55	**Impulsive**	3.07	**Cruel**	0.40
Understanding	5.49	**Changeable**	2.97	**Mean**	0.37
Loyal	5.47	**Conservative**	2.95	**Phony**	0.27
Truthful	5.45	**Hesitant**	2.90	**Liar**	0.26

Source: Matthews G., Deaty I J., Whiteman C. (2003) "Personality trait." (2ed.)

Although a vast variety of personality trait dimensions has been proposed throughout the years, the Five Factor Model initially conceptualized by Goldberg (1993) remains one of most widely used typology of personality trait.

The Five Factor Model proposes that personality traits are organized in five broad dimensions:

- Extraversion
- Neuroticism
- Openness
- Agreeableness
- Conscientiousness

1. Extraversion

Extroversion is considerate to be a personality trait that encompasses characteristics like talkativeness, sociability and the ability to make friends (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). Extroverted people tend to have a high desire for social recognition, prize status, exhibi-

tion and power; therefore, they have a high tendency to assume the role of leaders (Saleem et al., 2011).

2. Neuroticism

Neuroticism is a personality trait that describes individuals who are unstable, anxious, insecure and depressed. Individuals that have scored a high level on neuroticism tend to avoid social contact. That implies that they are strongly rejecting the leadership role, and they feel that they have no control over life situations (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011; Saleem et al., 2011).

3. Openness

Individuals that have high levels of openness are more willing to novelty and therefore are willing to take risks and are open to changes. Some adjectives that are used to describe openness are: imaginative, curious, original, broad-minded and original (Yoo & Gretzel 2011; Saleem et al., 2011).

4. Agreeableness

Individuals that score high on agreeableness are cooperative, cheerful and supportive. They can be described with adjectives like courteous, flexible, cooperative and tolerant. On the other hand if individuals obtain a low score on agreeableness they usually have little respect for others and are less concerned with social norms (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011; Saleem et al., 2011).

5. Conscientiousness

Individuals with high levels of conscientiousness are well organized, efficient and systematic. They have a high degree of self-control, persistence and order. (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011; Saleem et al., 2011).

In recent years scholars have focused their attention on the influence that personality has in the context of online behavior (e.g. Yoo & Gretzel, 2001; Ryan & Xenos, 2011; Picazo-Vela & Chou & Melcher & Pearson, 2010).

Ryan and Xenos (2011) have examined the relationship between the Five Factor Model and Facebook. The results showed that Facebook users are likely to be extraverted and narcissistic, but they have shown to have week interpersonal relationships with family members. Facebook non-users are more likely to be conscientious, shy and lonely.

Yoo and Gretzel (2011) on the other hand have directed their focus on the role that personality traits play in generating online reviews. Individuals that have scored high on openness and extraversion were more motivated to leave reviews because of the opportunity for venting. While on the other hand neurotic individuals have shown nearly no desire or urge to leave an online review.

2.4 SELF-IMAGE CONGRUENCE MODEL

Research on self-image congruence, as an integral part of consumer behavior theory, has shown that consumers will choose products whose image matches an individual's self-image concept (Sigy 1982). Self-image congruence model predict that a customer will purchase products whose features correspond with his/her self-image perception (Solomon et all 2010). These specific brands and products possess symbolic meanings complimentary to a customer's self-image (Hosany & Martin, 2011). Various researches indicate that self-image congruency with a specific brand creates so-called positive self-brand connections; in other words, customers see these brands as representative aspects of themselves. Product congruence will come into action depending on the specific situation and product in question. A brand can be highly congruent with a customer's self-image in one specific situation and not at all congruent in another. That implies that congruence with a certain type of product will come into action depending on the message that an individual wants to transmit to his/her environment (Sirgy, 1982).

Depending on the specific situation there are four forms of product-image perception that can occur:

- *"Positive self-congruity* – comparison between a positive product-image perception and a positive self-image belief
- *Positive self-incongruity* – comparison between a positive product image perception and a negative self-image belief
- *Negative self-congruity* – comparison between a negative product-image perception and negative self-image belief
- *Negative self-incongruity* – comparison between a negative product-image perception and a positive self-image belief"* (Sirgy, 1982).

Each of the above stated self-image/product-image congruity state will have a different impact on customers' purchase motivation and decision. Positive self-congruity will have the strongest impact on purchase motivation followed by the remaining three cat-

egories. The relationship between self-esteem and self-congruity can be observed through their interaction with each other. For example, from the self-esteem perspective a customer will be highly motivated to make purchase decisions regarding a certain product that has been evaluated in a positive way in order to maintain a positive self-image perception. On the other hand consumers will avoid purchasing products that have been perceived as bad in order to avoid negative self-congruity and self-incongruity condition. In terms of self-consistency, customers will be motivated to purchase products that are congruent with their self-image (Sirgy, 1982).

Thus the match between self-image and product image is an important factor in the decision making process; there is a variety of other factors that can have a strong impact on customers' decision making process. Researchers in the field of social identity theory propose the hypothesis that an individual will go beyond his personal identity in order to identify oneself with a group of their choice. The identification group can be placed in the working place environment, club or a membership (Kramer, 1991).

Self-image theory has strong implications both in the theoretical as well as managerial field. From a business perspective self congruity plays an important part in attraction and retention of customers. It is a valuable asset; it increases the market competition and at the same time enhances brand equity. A good example can be seen through Apple whose smart phones are perceived as young and cool. They have managed to create a strong network of faithful followers who identify themselves with the brand (Miles, 2010).

2.5 SELF-IMAGE VS. DESTINATION IMAGE CONGRUITY

Today's marketplace is full of all kinds of products and services. Marketers and managers are using an extensive range of marketing strategies in order to differentiate their products from the competition. In the context of tourism, destinations can be defined as brands as well as products. The product property is due to the fact that the tourist product consists of tangible as well as intangible characteristics (Usakli & Balogu, 2011). As already stressed in previous chapters, product-self-congruity represents a match between users' and products' personality (Sirgy, 1983). It can be said that tourists will choose a particular destination for their vacation according to the match/mismatch between psychological and functional variables. Examples of psychological variables are attitudes, motivation and self-concept (Ahn & Li, 2011). In an article about destination image titled "Self Congruence and Travel Behavior", Sirgy and Su (2000) argue that in order to understand the tourist decision making process it is es-

sential to observe the relationship between self-congruence and functional congruence. Functional congruence can be defined as the match/mismatch between a tourist's notion of a destination's functional attributes and a destination's actual functional attributes. Therefore, they argue that self-congruence and functional congruence have a big impact on tourist behavior. As well they stress that customers will purchase a certain product according to the product's functional and symbolic meaning. Functional values represent products' performance while symbolic values represent customers' perceptions of a destination. Therefore, a potential tourist can perceive a certain destination as modern, classy, fashionable or young.

Along with functional and symbolic values, customers develop certain stereotype images vis-à-vis a destination and its visitors. Guided by stereotype beliefs, potential customers can perceive fellow tourists taking a Caribbean cruise vacation as upper class or wealthy.

Besides judging fellow travelers they are trying to place them within a certain group of their choice (Chon, 1992; Sirgy & Su 2000).

2.6 REFERENCE GROUPS

From the customers point of view a reference group is seen as a group of people whose behavior is used as an example of conduct in specific situations (Moriatry & Mitchell & Wells, 2009). In addition, people are influenced by their surroundings regardless if they are members of a specific group. Arnold at al. (p.209) define a reference group as "*a group whose presumed perspectives, attitudes, or behaviors are used by an individual as the basis for his or her perspectives, attitudes, or behavior.*" Furthermore, they make a classification of reference groups according to: membership, attraction and degree of contact.

- **MEMBERSHIP** – There are two kinds of group membership: formal and informal. Some groups form formal memberships such as Harley-Davison club members, Jeep owners or Star Trek fans. These specific groups shape consumer behavior as can be seen through the purchase of specific products that demonstrate belonging to a group. Informal memberships have less formal rules and its members can chose if they want to be passively or actively engaged in group activities (Arnold, Price, Yikhan 2004).

- **ATTRACTION** – Refers to the level of attention that a group gives to an individual or vice versa. Association or attraction to a certain group can be in the posi-

tive or negative context. When it comes to the negative context an individual holds negative sentiment towards a certain group and will do everything in his/her power to dissociate from the group.

In cases where a member holds positive sentiments towards a group, he/she will do everything in his/her power to consolidate the ties with that specific group. One example can be seen through the Adidas award-winning marketing campaign focused on runners. The slogan of the campaign - "Runners, Yeah We're Different" was directed towards individuals who feel positive about their identity as runners (Arnold & Price & Zikhan, 2004). As a consequence Adidas' sales sky rocked and its brand awareness reached the highest level in company's history (cabine.magazine.org).

Figure 1: Some exsamples of Adidas award-winning marketing campaign
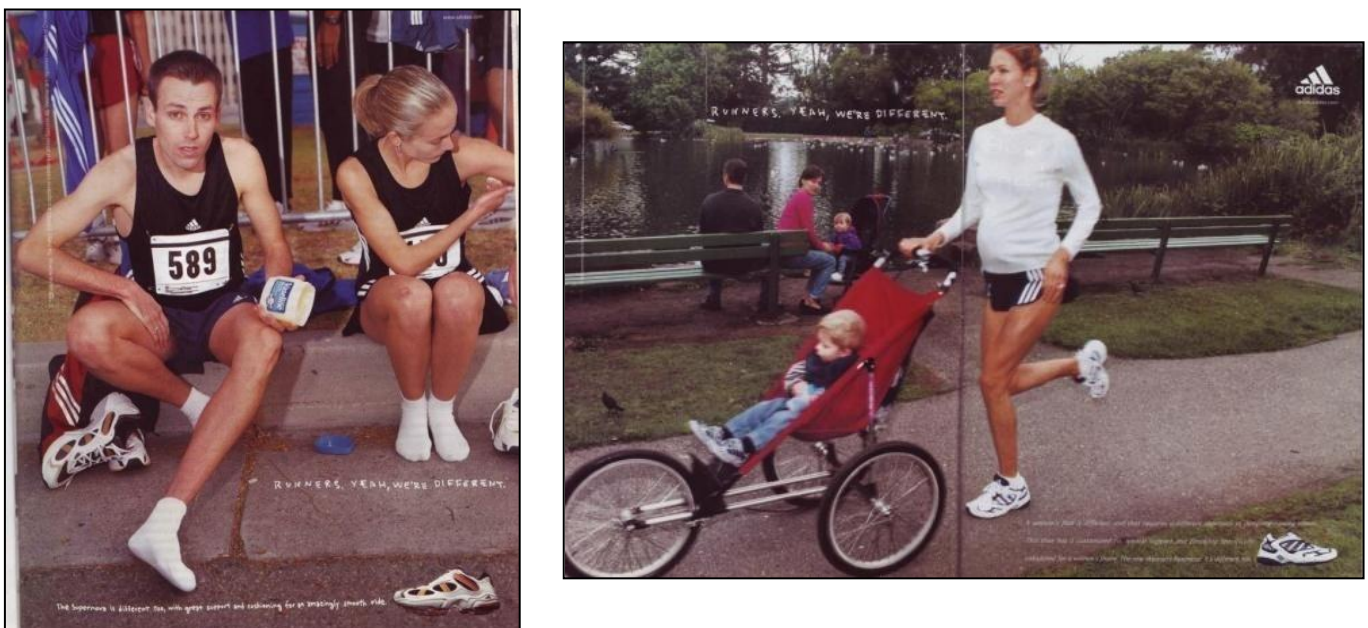
Source: thisisnotadvertising.wordpress.com

- **DEGREE OF CONTACT** – Is the degree to which members of a group interact with each other. They can be divided into two groups: primary group and secondary group. In the primary group members communicate frequently while in the secondary group they exercise limited interpersonal contact (Arnold & Price & Zikhan, 2004).

The Internet has a huge impact on creating new online reference groups. There is a vast variety of virtual communities that represent huge varieties of interests, hobbies and brands.

Reference groups have three main functions:

1. *They produce information.*
2. *They serve as means of personal comparison.*
3. *They offer guidance.*

Many other reasons have a strong influence on why customers are attracted by a certain reference group. One of the reasons can be a customer's wish to assimilate to the members of his reference group out of respect or admiration (Moriatry & Mitchell& Wells, 2009).

It is clear that self-image congruity has a big impact on individuals' purchase decisions. They are motivated to behave in a way that is consistent with their own self perception; otherwise, it can lead to psychological discomfort. This is the stage where an individual is purchasing a product that is not in congruence with his/her self-image.

2.7 TRUST

Trust is a complex issue investigated by many scholars in a variety of fields like sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, organizational behavior, marketing and information systems (Dickinger, 2010). Hence there is an extensive body of research and definitions dealing with the issue of trust. The Oxford English Dictionary proposes a definition of trust as "*Confidence in or relevance on some quality or attribute of a person or a thing or a truth of a statement*" (p. 3423). While Myer at al. (1995) define trust as the "*willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectations that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party*" (p. 712). Trust is an important prerequisite for all kinds of business transactions especially when it comes to the context of tourism (Dickinger, 2010). Therefore it is of crucial importance for all businesses to gain consumers' trust (Kim & Ferrin & Rao 2007).

In line with this statement, Mayer et al. (1995) define three characteristics that define and explain trustworthiness as an integral part of trust. They are ability, benevolence and integrity.

- **Ability** - is defined as a group of skills, competences and characteristic that enables an individual to have influence within a certain domain.
- **Benevolence** - is the degree to which an individual wants to do good to the trustor; therefore the trustee has positive feelings towards the trustor.
- **Integrity** - are positive beliefs that the trustor holds towards the trustee; therefore, he believes that the trustee will tell the truth, act ethically, and be trustworthy.

Trust has as well a number of prerequisites. With time the relationship between the trustor and the trustee can change and develop as can the level of trust that can vary over time. Consequently the relationship between the trustor and the trustee is based on interdependence; therefore, the interest of the trustor cannot be successfully achieved without the trustee trusting the trustor. The relationship between the trustee and the trustor is dynamic and can be divided into three general phases (Schultz, 2007).

1. **Trust building phase** – in this phase the trust is formed or reformed. The trust level towards the trustee increases due to a trustor's timely fulfillment of obligations and trustees' expectations.

2. **Stability phase** – in this phase the level of trust is constant. This is due to a trustor's good level of performance.

3. **Decline phase** – the trust of the trustor has to be violated and as a conse-quence the trustor is not interested in engaging further in any relationship relat-ed to that specific trustee. Not all relationships have to end in the moment of violation of the trust of the trustee; the trustee can renegotiate the terms for fu-ture transactions and therefore give a chance to the trustor to restore the lost trust (Schultz, 2007).

2.8 THE ONLINE TRUST

Making a travel decision involves a certain amount of risks due to the nature of the tourist product (Dickinger, 2010). Beside the risk involved in making a travel decision, the literature suggests that there are a number of other risks involved in the travel deci-sion making process like financial risks, physical risks, social risks and health risks (Quinal & Lee & Soutar, 2010).

Therefore trust represents an important variable when it comes to the tourist decision making process.

Urban at al. (2000) propose three stages for establishing trust in the e-commerce envi-ronment.

1. The Internet user has to have trust in the Internet and the specific web site that he has the intention to use.

2. Drawing on the trustworthiness of the web site the user has to trust the infor-mation provided by that specific site.

3. The trust and trustworthiness effects draw to customers purchase or order ful-fillment.

Figure 2: A Model of Trust Formation within E-commerce
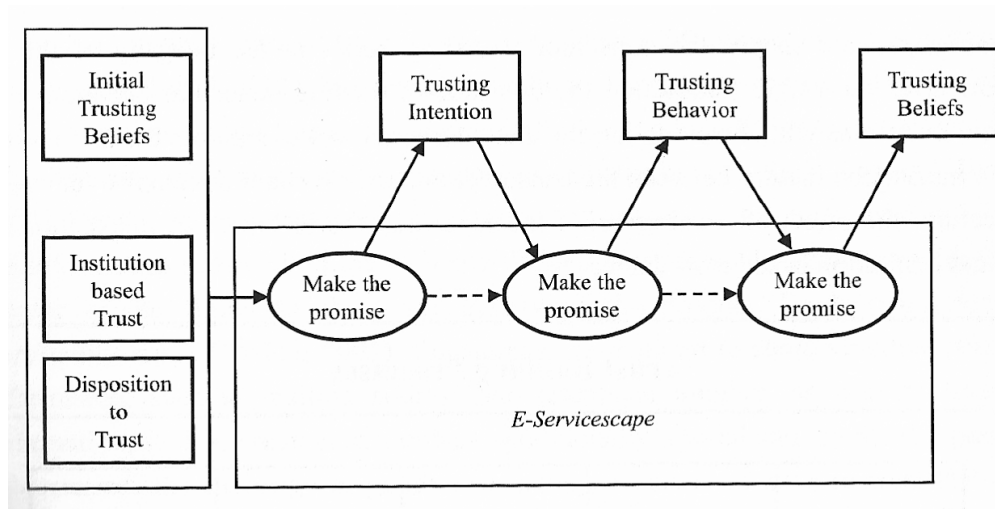
SOURCE: Carsten D. Schultz (2007) "Consumer trust in E-Commerce" (p. 21)

The model of trust formation within e-commerce assumes that the consumer is willing to engage in a business relationship within an e-vendor due to a combination of trust beliefs. The model integrates three initial trusting beliefs proposed by Solomon and Flores (2001): the simple trust, blind trust and authentic trust. The blind trust proposes that an individual is willing to trust a vendor without any shadow of doubt or fear. Simple trust rejects the possibility of distrust. Although blind trust has been violated the trustee is still persistent in their trust believes. Authentic trust is taking in account the possibility of distrust. In order to exercise authentic trust a person has to have incorporated in his self-image perception the concept of self-trust. Self-trust refers to the belief of an individual that he is capable to make the right decision. In addition, McKnight and Chervany (2002) propose an interdisciplinary typology of trust. The typology of trust is composed of disposition to trust, institution based trust, trusting beliefs and trusting intentions. All four constructs imply that the outcome is going to be positive and beneficial, but at the same time the possibility of risks and uncertainty is taken in account.

Formation of trust depends on the willingness of a customer to give credence to a specific e-vendor. At this stage the potential customer is consulting and evaluating a variety of different alternatives. Assuming that he/she is interested in a specific offer, he is expressing his willingness to trust an e-vendor by engaging in the purchase procedure. The first step of purchase intention can be seen through placement of a product in a virtual shopping cart. This action implies that the customer is willing to take a risk and that he is willing to trust a specific e-vendor. During this "intentional process" the customer is evaluating the vendor's benevolence and the capability of fulfillment of the

given promise. On the other hand the e- vendor shows its capability and competence by delivering the product/service in time. By fulfilling the obligation, the vendor is setting the ground for future business transactions. After the fulfillment of all stages of the purchase, the customer is evaluating and comparing the lived experience and the promise made by the vendor with the personal expectations.

Trust is an important prerequisite for any kind of communication and business transactions conducted on the Internet since there is not an encompassing set of rules that would regulate the conduct on the Internet. Therefore trust in virtual communities depends heavily on interpersonal relationships (Ridings & Gefen & Arinze, 2002).

Figure 3: The sequence of trust transaction
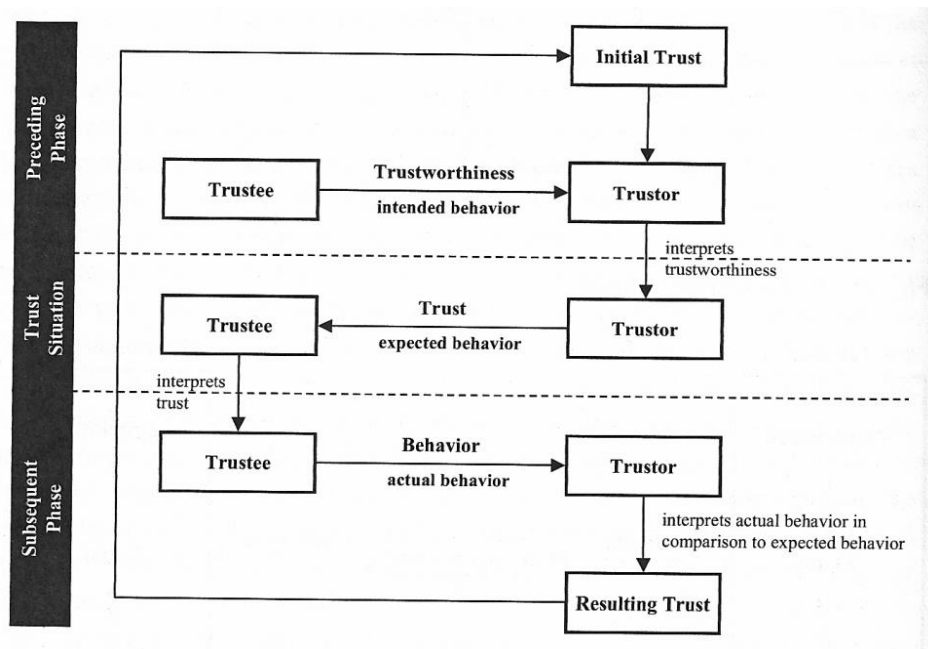
Source: Carsten D. Schultz (2007) "Consumer trust in E-Commerce" (p. 34)

3 INFORMATION SEARCH

Information search can be seen as an integral part of the travel planning process. Potential tourists engage in the information search in order to make important travel related decisions (Dey & Sarma, 2010; Yuan & Gao, 2005). Information acquisition can be seen as the starting point of the decision-making process. Potential tourists use gained knowledge in order to make decisions regarding a specific travel destination, accommodation, transport and other activities (Snepenger at all 1990). In order to gain the needed information they consult a vast variety of information sources. In other words it can be said that an individual is goal directed, and therefore he searches for relevant information in order to be able to answer questions related to specific products or services (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998). The search for information may first start within the internal search extending to the second level of external search. Internal search begins when the customer is consulting already existing knowledge stored deep in his/her memory (Yuan & Gao, 2005). Stored information is a result of previous experiences (Lamb & Hair & McDaniel, 2011). The external search consists of information gathered from various sources like reading materials, consultancy with the vendor or direct observations (Yuan & Gao, 2005). Furthermore, external search can be divided into two sub-groups: non-marketing controlled and marketing controlled. Non-marketing controlled information is gained by personal experience such as observations of products; through personal sources like family and friends, public sources like consumer reports or other rating organizations that provide product assessment. The Internet is a great example of a non marketing controlled information channel. Information can be retrieved from various sources like blogs, bulletin boards, activists, web sites, web forums, and various consumer opinion sites.

Marketing controlled information sources on the other hand are concentrated towards a specific product. Generated information is provided, designed and placed by marketers engaged in its promotion. The channels through which this information is distributed are mass media advertisers like radio, TV, newspapers or sales promotions such as displays, premiums, salespersons, and the Internet. However, many consumers are skeptical about marketing controlled information because they believe that most marketing campaigns are only emphasizing products' positive attributes and ignoring the negative ones (Lamb et al., 2011).

In order to make a purchase decision, customers employ both types of information searches simultaneously. Most commonly, potential customers will consult past experiences, friends, family, destination specific literature, travel books, government or state publications, auto clubs, travel agents, or in more recent times the Internet (Hyde, 2008).

Beside the internal and external information search, there is as well the existence of the "accidental search" and deliberate search. The accidental search occurs unconsciously. It is the knowledge generated from past experiences that are evoked by a present need for information. Another way of gathering knowledge can be through exposure to advertizing campaigns, packaging and sales promotions. The outcome of all these activities directed toward consumers result in accidental learning (Lamb et al., 2011).

The information search should result in a group of products – the so-called buyer's evoked set. These evoked sets represent combinations of consumers' most preferred alternatives. They will choose a group of products which in their opinion best meet their need (Solomon at al., 2006).

3.1 ONLINE INFORMATION SEARCH

The Internet has a huge impact on the way consumers will access, gather and process information. Customers nowadays are able to store, search and analyze gathered information before making a purchase decision (Yuan & Gao, 2005). The usage of Web 2.0 applications like blogs, wikis or online communities are constantly increasing. Consumers are using the Internet for sharing, as well as the development and dissemination of consumer generated content (Casalo et. al, 2010). Consumers are constantly exposed to all kinds of online and offline advertisements and commercials. A survey from 2010 showed that display advertising reached 97 % of users in the UK, France and Germany. The leading publisher categories were social networks (comScore, 2010). Altogether the Internet has a profound impact on consumers' decision making process. Users will use the Internet as an information source in cases where they can generate certain benefits. When it comes to information searching as an integral part of the consumer decision making process, the extent to which consumers use the Internet depends on their capacity and knowledge of browsing the web (Novak et al., 2000).

A survey from 2007 showed that 84 % of Internet users reported that online reviews from other travelers had a significant influence on their purchase decisions. Potential

customers noted as well that they had greater trust in travel content generated by other travelers than in the content generated by companies (comScore, 2007).

3.2 MULTIPLE INFORMATION ROLES

Vogt and Fesenmaier (1998) proposed a conceptual model of information search where they recognized multiple information roles and needs. Customer search is triggered by a need for a certain type of information that will be of significant help in the decision making process.

A need can be described as an internal process that is triggered by a lack of some kind of stimulus.

Functional needs, for example, present one basic perspective embedded in the information search. In order to make purchase decisions customers must utilize knowledge that will help them make satisfying purchase decisions. The first step consists of consulting the existing internal knowledge. In cases where internal knowledge is not sufficient the search is extended to the second phase which is called the external search. Further, they recognize different types of relationships between background factors such as demographics, distribution, information search, situation factors and specific source categories.

The purpose of an information search is to gather lacking information about functionality, innovation, hedonistic, sign and aesthetic aspects.

Figure 4: Conceptual Model of Information Search and Source Utilization
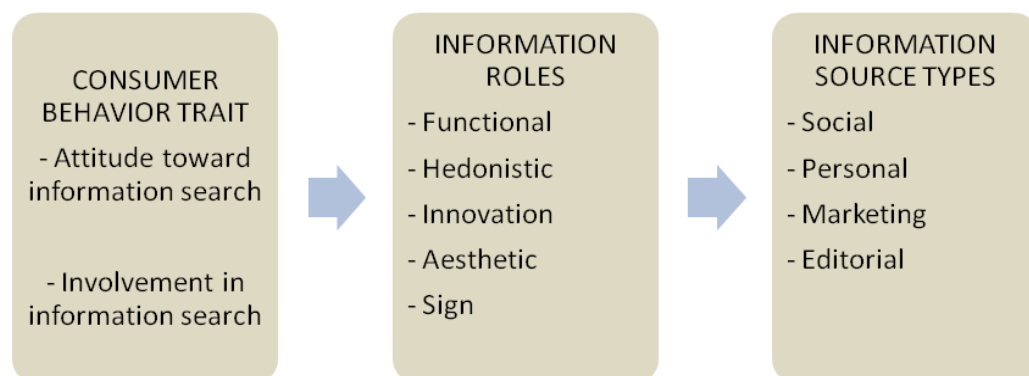
(Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998)

3.2.1 Functional Needs

The search for information begins with consulting the knowledge that an individual already possesses. If an individual finds that existing knowledge is not enough to make a purchase decision he continues the search on the external level.

There are four main components that define the functional need of information search:

1. *Product knowledge* – customers collect knowledge about products' utility attributes and applications.
2. *Uncertainty* – is the level of risk concerning the product ability to satisfy consumer need. Additional product information is helping the customer to reduce the level of uncertainty concerning a product or brand. More reliable and credible information have the power to reduce the risk of purchase decisions substantially. Buying uncertainty can be divided into knowledge uncertainty, which refers to information available concerning product features, and choice uncertainty, which refers to the choice between different brands.
3. *Utility* – is based on how well collected information fulfills the intended purpose of filling the lack of knowledge.
4. *Efficiency* – is the usefulness of collected data (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998).

3.2.2. Hedonistic Needs

The hedonistic needs are representing the satisfaction and pleasure customers experience during the decision making process and the purchase. The search for information can also include pleasant emotions like enjoyment, amusement, arousal and fun (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998).

3.2.3. Innovation Needs

Innovation needs represent an individual's openness and willingness to adopt new products and information. Novelty seeking customers are in the search for new and different information in order to gain knowledge about new possibilities. An example of novelty seeking can be seen in the context of a tourist customer who is in a constant search for new and exciting experiences. Novelty seeking can be seen as a motivational force that is encouraging customers to engage in a search for new incremental product knowledge (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998).

3.2.4. Aesthetic Needs

The aesthetic information needs differ from the other needs because of their abstract nature. The aesthetic needs are subjective, non-utilitarian, unique and holistic. It is an

intangible and self-evoked need that evokes the imagination. It has strong implications on problem solving because of its ability of thinking "outside the box" which generates the best solutions among a variety of possibilities. Highly creative individuals possess characteristics such as open-mindedness, empathy, sensibility, rationality and problem solving skills (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998).

3.2.5. Sign Needs

Sign needs are the interpersonal, social and symbolic aspect of information search and knowledge gaining. The importance of sign needs can be seen through an example in tourism. Individuals that are planning a vacation are taking recommendations from family and friends into great consideration when choosing a travel destination. Throughout a variety of signs an individual can express and transmit a certain type of message like status, personality or identity (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998).

3.3 THE EXTENT OF THE INFORMATION SEARCH

Many factors are influencing the need for information. There are some general rules that suggest that there is going to be a greater need for information in cases where the purchase in question is of great importance, when there is a need for additional information in order to make a purchase decision and in cases where obtained information is easily gathered and utilized.

A big role in the information search process involves individuals' background, gender, personality, self-image and preferences. Customers who are moderately knowledgeable about a product should engage more time and effort in gathering information. Customers with low levels of knowledge and limited experience can feel incapable or intimidated to start the search, and they may even have problems in detecting from which point and from where to start the search (Solomon at all 2006).

3.4 PERCEPTION OF RISKS AND EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

Customers purchase an extensive variety of products every day. The amount of pre-purchase information that an individual needs depends on the type of product that he/she intends to purchase. Usually risks are highly correlated with expensive and complicated products that are hard to understand or brands that are unknown to customers. There is as well the risk of failure or embarrassment when product choice is visible to the broader audience. Deciding between a few product alternatives demands a greater need for additional information in order to make a purchase decision. Today's

globalized marketplace is full of products that have the same or similar features. From the producers perspective it means tougher competition while for the customer it means greater variety of products/services and a greater demand for information. Evidence indicates that there is a greater need for additional information in situations where difficult tradeoffs exist (Solomon et all. 2010).

3.5 LOW-INVOLVEMENT vs. HIGH-INVOLVEMENT IN PURCHASE DECISION

The message impact model suggests that most customers follow a fairly predictable decision making process that can be described in five steps:

1. *Need for Recognition*

In order to engage in the information search individuals must recognize a need for a certain product. That can be induced by an imbalance between actual and desired states. The *what* represents the consumer's recognition of a certain need. While the stimulus represents the reason why there is a need for a certain product. The stimuli can be divided in two groups: internal stimuli and external stimuli.

Internal stimuli come into action as a result of an internal need such as thirst or hunger. On the other hand the external stimuli represent the influences from external sources. Individuals can experience a need for a certain product/service after getting positive feedback from friends or family, advertisements in news papers, TV, or the Internet (Lamb et al., 2011).

2. *Information Search*

The information search can occur on two levels: internal and external. When it comes to consumer behavior, in terms of information search consumers can be divided in two groups: the searchers and the impulse buyers. The searchers are potential customers that make an extensive search about a product before making a purchase decision, particularly when it comes to major purchase decisions. Impulse buyers generally are very spontaneous. They have no need for information related to the product prior to the purchase. Impulse buyers usually act based on some immediate desire like hunger or thirst and in cases where there in not much at stake; therefore, the risks of making a wrong decision are low (Moriatry et all 2009).

3. Evaluation of Alternatives

In this stage consumers make evaluations between various products. They select certain product features and based on that selection they reduce the choice to a few product samples (Moriatry et al., 2009). The process of evaluation depends on individual differences and environmental influences. When evaluating the alternatives individuals can consult preexisting knowledge or decide to create new knowledge regarding a specific product. Preexisting knowledge can be seen as a consequence of already lived situations. In cases where an individual does not have enough personal lived experiences, he/she can consult a variety of information sources beginning with family and friends. The next step consists of evaluations of products within the consideration set, which leads the way to the third and final phase of judging and decision making (Knotzer, 2006).

4. Purchase Decision

The purchase decision can be divided in two phases. In the first phase an individual makes a decision to purchase a certain product/brand while in the second phase he selects a particular outlet to carry out the purchase (Moriatry et al., 2009).

5. Post Purchase Evaluation

In this stage customers make a reevaluation of their decision. In order to make a justification of a purchase online, many consumers read information related to the product (Moriatry et al., 2009).

The whole purchase process can vary between low or high involvement towards a purchase decision (Moriatry et al., 2009).

3.6 DIFFERENT TYPES OF INFORMATION PROVIDERS

Information providers can be divided in two main categories: formal and informal. Formal information providers are representatives of the commercial environment such as travel agents, tourist boards, brochures, travel guide books and travel maps, magazines, newspaper, or TV. On the other hand informal information providers are providing consumer generated content (Mansfeld, 1992; Dickinger, 2010).

5.7 FORMAL INFORMATION PROVIDERS

Formal information providers, like tourist boards, provide customers with information concerning the destination. According to Kozak and Baloglu (2011) a destination information system should consist of four main components: virtual information space (VIS), virtual communication space (VCS), virtual transaction space (VTS), and virtual relationship space (VRS). Analyzing different components they discovered that tourist boards are performing well in offering useful travel information regarding the attractions, activities and accommodation. On the other hand there is a lack of communication between the tourist board and the potential and current tourists. Therefore there is a poor chance for establishing a relationship between the destination tourist board and the customers. Further, they suggest that destination tourist boards should take the huge advantages that the Internet offers and try to enhance perception and the image of the destination through incorporating a variety of different applications like virtual tours, web cams, weather updates, music clips, oral histories, collection highlights, etc. (Kozak & Balogu 2011; Dickinger, 2010).

3.8 INFORMAL INFORMATION PROVIDERS

The rapid growth and popularity of the Web 2.0 has empowered users to add value to the online community by adding content, comments or tags. In the context of the tourism domain it has enabled the user to obtain a two-way communication which results in a constantly increasing amount of online user generated content about tourist destinations, hotels and travel services (Wang et al., 2001; Ye et al., 2010). Despite the huge popularity of the Web 2.0, there is no standard definition of the term. One commonly used description is proposed by Tim O´Reilly who created the term in 2004: *"Web 2.0 is the business revolution in the computer industry caused by the move to the Internet as a platform, and the attempt to understand the rules of success on that new platform. Chief among those rules is this: Build applications that harness network effects to get better the more people use them"* (O´Reilly 2006).

Deficiency in the definition stems from the fact that the author is describing the Web 2.0 just from the platform perspective. While Högg et. al (2006) on the other hand propose that Web 2.0 applications share some common characteristics:

- The applications enable the users to generate content and services.
- The generated content is possible to update, manage and share.

- Automatic update procedures that evaluate each user input and as a consequence generate new knowledge and content.
- Trust building services that enable the users to rate and vote.

The web-based communities have a variety of different functionalities and content where people with common interests can gather to share thoughts, comments and opinions. Despite all that they can be divided in some general categories.

- ***Blogs and Blogospheres*** are functioning as online journals where one or more people are posting articles, images or links. The readers of a specific blog have the possibility to share comments about each post (Weber, 2007; Shelly & Frydenberg, 2011). The content of the blog varies from user to user. Therefore they can contain news, photos, videos or personal stories. The blogosphere is the term used to describe the whole domain of blogs. It is the sum of all blogs. (Jonson & McDougall, 2010). (Example: Blogger.com)

- ***Wikis*** are collections of text and data composed of many linked web pages. The users are able to change or ad content of any page that the Wiki contains (Jonson & McDougall, 2010). (Example: Wikipedia)

- ***Podcasts*** are media files that are made of music or videos files. They are distributed over the Internet; therefore, users need Internet access (Lytras at al., 2010). (Example: iTunes)

- ***Social networks*** *"a online social network is a system where (a) users are first class entities with a semi-public profile, (b) users can create explicit links to other users or content items, and (c) users can navigate the social network by browsing the links and profiles of other users"* (Mislove, 2009).
  All online social networks have some common features in their very purpose, such extending, strengthening or making new social ties, sharing information and finding interesting new content (Mislove, 2009). (Example: Facebook)

- ***<u>Consumer Communities</u>***

Consumer communities are web based platforms where consumers are able to exchange suggestions, opinion and the latest brand/service rumor (Shmitt & Roggers, 2008). (Example: E-pinion)

- ***<u>File sharing Communities</u>***

File sharing communities are involved in sharing a vast range of videos and photography content. The site offers its users the possibility to tag, comment and add content. Thanks to these new media technologies, everyone is able to become a producer or director (Weinberg, 2009). (Example: YouTube, Flicker)

- ***<u>Online Virtual Community</u>***

  There is an extensive amount of definitions and descriptions defining virtual communities, their core characteristics, and fundamental needs. In general it can be said that a virtual community consists of people who communicate online. They form special interest groups covering an extensive variety of fields of interest like education, hobbies and professional issues (Wang et al., 2002). According to Rheingold (1994) a virtual community can be generalized as a place where *"we chat and argue, engage in intellectual discourse, perform acts of commerce, exchange knowledge, share emotional support, play games and metagames, flirt... We do everything people do when people get together, but we do it with words on computer screens, leaving behind... our bodies behind your identities commingle and interact electronically, independent of local time and location"* (Rheingold 1994, p. 58).

  According to Preece (2000) virtual communities share some common features:

- Individuals who take part in a virtual community share common interests, goals, needs or activities.
- In the group, members are constantly and actively interacting among each other.
- Members of the group have access to shared resources and information.
- They have a strong sense of belonging to the group and therefore support and encourage each other.

3.9 WORD OF MOUTH

Before making a purchase decision potential customers are engaging in the external search for information that will help them make a purchase decision. In the process of the information search they consult a variety of formal and information sources. Word of mouth (WOM) in general is considerate to be an informal and interpersonal form of communication between two or more individuals. The sender of the information takes the role of the expert in a certain field and can be seen as an opinion leader. At the same time an opinion leader can seek advices from others referring to a field in which he is not an expert (Hörandner & Innerlohinger, 2010).

As a consequence the number of online reviews is increasing on a daily basis as a result of the growing popularity of the Internet and Web 2.0 applications. Searching for travel-related information provided by other travelers is becoming one of most popular pre-travel activities (Baumgartner, 2009).

People that share WOM on the Internet have some common features:
- They are individuals that like to consider themselves as independent.
- They are spreading positive, negative or neutral comments about a certain product or service.
- They are free to express their thoughts without the fear of being censored (Hörandner & Innerlohinger, 2010; Litvin et al., 2007).

Blackwell et al. (2001) distinguish some benefits of WOM like functional and hedonistic. Functional benefits represent the information exchange itself while hedonistic benefits represent the feelings of the group and the process itself. As stated before, a receiver of the WOM communication is receiving valuable inputs regarding specific brands, products and services (Hörandner & Innerlohinger, 2010; Litvin et al., 2007). Therefore, WOM is a way of communication between consumers regarding a specific product, service or a company. One of the main characteristics of WOM is that it is an independent way of communication, meaning that the communication is not a result of some kind of marketing or commercial influence (Litvin et al., 2007).

Online WOM represents a specific form of WOM with huge implications in the tourist domain. Online consumer reviews are considered to be an independent and informal source of information. Henning at al. (2004) define electronic WOM as *"any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about a product or*

company which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet."

Chatterjee (2001) suggests that consumer comments, suggestions and ratings are the most common and easily accessible form of electronic WOM. In addition, consumer reviews are considered to be one of the most influential forms of WOM due to the fact that they are a result of a user lived experience and are offering an opportunity to a reader to engage in an indirect experience (Yoo & Gretzel, 2009). On the other hand authors of online reviews have a chance to express their satisfaction, dissatisfaction, pleasure or sadness (Litvin et al., 2007).

Through electronic WOM (eWOM) customers are able to express their feelings and lived experience as well as gather valuable information from other customer reviews. There is an extensive body of research dealing with motives that are pushing customers to engage in electronic WOM.

Henning Thurau et al. (2004) composed 11 distinct motivations that consumers may have in engaging in eWOM. They build their 11 motives on past research by Dichter (1966); Engel, Blackwell, Miniard (1993); and Sundaram, Mitra, Webster (1998).

Table 2. Motives for World-of-mouth Communication Behavior Indentified in the Literature

AUTHOR(S)	MOTIVE	DESCRIPTION
Dichter (1966)	Product-involvement	A customer feels so strongly about the product that a pressure builds up in waiting to do something about it; recommending the product to others reduces the tension caused by the consumption experience
	Self-involvement	The product serves as a means through which the speaker can gratify certain emotional needs.
	Other-involvement	World-of-mouth activity addresses the need to give something to the receiver
	Message-involvement	Refers to the discussion which is stimulated by advertisements, commercials, or public relations
Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard (1993)	Involvement	Level of interest or involvement in the topic under consideration serves to stimulate discussion
	Self-enhancement	Recommendations allows a person to give attention, show connoisseurship, suggest status, give the impression of possessing inside information, and assert superiority
	Concern for others	A genuine desire to help a friend or relative to make a better purchase decision
	Message intrigue	Entertainment resulting from talking about certain ads or selling appeals
	Dissonance reduction	Reduces cognitive dissonance (doubts) following a major purchase decision
Sundaram, Mitra, & Webster	Altruism (positive WOM)	The act of doing something for others without anticipating any reward in return
	Product involvement	Personal interest in the product, Excitement resulting from product ownership and product use
	Self-enhancement	Enhancing images among other consumer by projecting themselves as intelligent shoppers
	Helping the company	Desire to help the company
	Altruism (negative WOM)	To prevent others from experiencing the problems they had encountered
	Anxiety reduction	Easing anger, anxiety, and frustration
	Vengeance	To retaliate against the company associated with the negative consumption experience
	Advice seeking	Obtaining advice on how resolve problems

Source: Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, Gremler (2004), page 41

The table tree represents 11 motives that can motivate an individual to engage in WOM communication as proposed by Henning -Thurau, Wals, Gremler and Gwinner (2004).

Table 3: Motives for engaging in WOM communication

Motives of eWOM communication
• Concern for other customers
• Desire to help the company
• Social benefits received
• Exertion of power over companies
• Post-purchase advice seeking
• Self-enhancement
• Economic reward
• Convenience in seeking redress
• Hope that the platform operator will serves as a moderator
• Expression of positive emotions
• Venting of negative feelings

Source: Henning -Thurau, Wals, Gremler and Gwinner (2004) 11 motives consumers have in engaging in eWOM

The first four motives from the table above can be seen as integral parts of focus related utility. Focus related utility can be defined as the utility that a consumer receives when adding value to the community through placing comments and reviews on different web-based opinion platforms. This can be achieved through commenting and reviewing product/services that are of interest to other community members. Therefore included in these categories are motives such as:

- **Concern for other customers** – can be seen as the whish and the degree to which individuals that have already experienced the product/service are willing to help other community members (altruism).

- **Helping the company** – the desire to help the company through commenting about the product/service.

- **Social benefit** – placing comments on various web-based platforms have as a consequence customer involvement in specific virtual communities. These communities can have positive benefits for a customer in terms of social integration and identification.

- ***Exertion of (collective) power over companies*** - arises from the collective power of the online consumer community. That is due to the WOM specific properties such as the durability of the comments and the large number of online audiences. Meaning that once a comment is placed online, it is accessible to a great number of potential receivers, and the comments themselves are lasting on the web for a long period of time.

The second group of motives describes the consumption utility. In the context of the web based opinion platforms, consumption occurs in the moment when an individual reads a comment or review. Readers can be motivated to leave their own comments or seek advice requiring a specific product/service. A consequence of these post-purchase advice-seeking is that customers learn about and better understand a product. Therefore, they learn about how to better understand, use, operate, modify, or repair a product.

The approval utility comes into action when other users are making use of reviews placed on web based platforms. Information approval can be exercised in two ways: formal and informal. Informal approval arises when another user either publicly or privately communicates to the author of the review about the usefulness of the review. There is a vast extent of platforms that offer the user of a comment to rank the quality of reviews. In the end the raking system creates a cluster of "top reviews", which represent the top ranked reviews.

In the category of approval utility, the following motives can be placed:
- ***Self – enhancement*** – represents the need of an individual for positive recognition from other community members. It comes as a consequence of self-related consumer needs. These needs can be satisfied just through social interaction with other community members.
- ***Economic rewards*** – are considerate to be sign of appreciation as well as incentive for generating reviews. Individuals tend to involve more often in an activity if they expect some benefit from it.

The moderator utility is the ability of the third party, in this case - the web based platform, to facilitate the process of customer complaining. They act as moderator between the consumers and the company. The reasons why an individual would use a web based platform are:

- ***Convenience*** – in some cases it is easier for the customer to place a comment and seek advice on web based platforms than trying to reach a company member who would be able to respond to customer requests.

- ***Platform operations as moderators*** – consumer opinion platforms in some cases are acting as facilitators in communication between the customers and the company. They are forwarding the comments of unsatisfied customers to the company, exposing the customers at low financial and psychological risks.

Homeostase utility is the need for balance in life; once this balance has been violated, customers will do everything in their power to restore the lost balance.

In this case there are two motives that are associated with the loss of balance:

- ***Expressing positive emotions*** – the positive emotions towards a product-service can be a result of a satisfactory experience and the wish to share the positive emotions. By placing a comment on the Internet, customers are restoring the balance by sharing the positive experience with other members of the online community.

- ***Venting of negative feelings*** – not all experiences with a service/product are positive. Therefore the online platform can serve as a venue where customers can express their dissatisfaction and frustration. In doing so they are not just alerting other consumers but reducing their own negative feelings and restoring balance (Henning-Thurau & Wals & Gremler & Gwinner, 2004). The part of the questionnaire regarding self-image is adopted from Kleijnen, Ruyter, Andreassen (2005) using a series of semantic differential scales.

Consulting online reviews has become a popular information source when it comes to the tourist decision making process. Today tourists are searching the web for product information as well as comments generated by fellow travelers. Positive ratings, for example, can contain information regarding the quality of a product as well as its design and other comments. In cases of certain products, they can contain reviews about the usability of written user instructions. The reviews usually contain a description of the product in question and a description of the lived experience. The reviews differ in length and content and usually can contain an overall rating of a product.

One prominent example of a review website is TripAdvisor. It offers to its users suggestions and comments about accommodation, restaurants and attractions in a destination

of their choice (Jacle & Carter, 2011). According to the TripAdvisor organization fact sheet of 2011, they attract and generate more than 50 million monthly visitors, 20 million members and 60 million reviews and opinions. The huge popularity among travelers can be seen in the fact that they are receiving on average 40 contributions every minute (tripadvisor.co.uk).

TripAdvisor can be seen as an alternative to classical guide books and travel agencies. They describe themselves as *"the world's largest travel community where you can get information, advice, and opinions from millions of travelers to plan and take your perfect trip. TripAdvisor is a place you can go for insights and tips, a place that is literally alive with experiences and opinions. It's a place that feels like a local neighborhood coffee shop, a café, a pub. A friendly and relaxed community filled with unscripted conversations between travelers like you"* (tripadvisor.com).

The success of TripAdvisor streams from the fact that they have successfully integrated and facilitated the communication between customers as well as customers and stakeholders. They operate on the principle of gathering reviews on a certain establishment (hotel, restaurant, attraction). When writing a review an individual describes in his/her own words the impressions and opinions and makes a selection among five proposed categories (terrible, poor, average, very good, excellent) proposed by TripAdvisor, describing the overall satisfaction with the service. This process has as a result an overall rating of the establishment obtained through calculations of summary scores based on quality, quantity and age of traveler reviews. Therefore, TripAdvisor has become a helpful tool for travel organization as well online information source (Jeacle & Carter, 2011).

Figure 5: TripAdvisor screen shot

SOURCE: http://www.tripadvisor.com

3.10 GENDER DIFFERENCES

In the literature there is evidence that suggests there is a difference between men and women when it comes to online communication. Gender has been used as grounds for market segmentation and creation of different marketing strategies. The reason why gender is so often used in marketing segmentation is proposed by Darley and Smith (1995). They suggest that gender is easily identifiable; they are easily accessible and large enough to create significant cash flows. Baily (2005) conducted a research on consumer awareness and use of product review websites where gender was used as one of the individual difference factors. The results showed that there are some differences existing between genders concerning awareness of product review web sites. Men tend to visit product review sites before engaging in a purchase. In addition, both men and women stated that review sites are important and provide substantial help when it comes to decision making. Baily (2005) also referred to the studies conducted by Sheen (1999) and Ha and Stoel (2004) where evidence was found about differences between male and female. For example, women were more concerned about privacy and giving personal information online. Despite the fact that woman were more concerned, the research showed that they tend to undertake fewer steps in order to protect their privacy. Further, there is evidence that women and man react in different ways when it comes to visual images and information processing (Simon, 2001).

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The information search begins when an individual recognizes a need for information. The search for information begins at two levels: internal and external (as already stated before in chapter three). The individual self has a big influence on the choices that an individual makes regarding a specific information provider as well as on what kind of information he/she requires.

It is of vital importance for marketers and organizations conducting their businesses online to understand what drives customers to follow advice and retrieve information from a specific website. as Also they should understand which relationships exist between specific information providers and potential travelers.

This research encompasses several stages:

1. The first stage includes the development of the questionnaire.

2. In the second stage, the questionnaire was distributed throughout the Internet using snowball sampling method.

3. One stage is devoted the collection of data and evaluation of responses.

4. The final stages involves SPSS data analysis.

The quantitative data used for this research have been collected through a questionnaire distributed by e-mail. The data obtained have been analyzed by the software SPSS.

4.1 HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Over the years there has been an extensive body of research related to consumer behavior in terms of self-image, congruity theory and tourist information search. There is evidence that self-image congruity theory and information search have a strong impact on individuals' travel planning and destination choice.

Dolich (1969) examined the relationship between self-image and brand image congruence.

Findings suggest that customers will prefer brands consistent with their self-image perception. Further, Hosany and Martin (2011) conducted a research on the relationship between image congruence, tourist, experience and intention to recommend, thereby integrating the four dimensions of self-image. Results showed that high levels of image

congruence between an individual's ideal self-image and other travelers will contribute to the overall satisfaction with the travel. Beerli, Meneses and Gil (2007) focused on the impact that self-image congruity has on destination choice. They found out that high levels of congruence between the destination image and the individual's actual and ideal self-image increase the probability of purchase. In addition, the involvement in the information search and the familiarity with the destination increased the level of self-congruity with the destination image.

Information search represents an integral part of the decision making process. (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998; Dey & Sarma, 2010; Yuan & Gao, 2005). In addition, the Internet has fundamentally reshaped the way potential tourists search for information as well as what type of information they require (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006; Litvin & Goldsmith & Pan, 2007; Jeacle & Carter, 2011; Baily, 2005). Pan and Fesenmaier (2006) conducted an extensive research on how tourists search for information online. They found out that the planning process follows a hierarchical structure and that each user engaged in the information search is using a different semantic mental model related to the different kind of information sources. Xiang and Gretzel (2010) examined the impact that social media has on the online information search. Their findings suggest that social media has an important role in the tourist search process and that the amount of search is not dependent on the type of the destination but on the individual.

Since potential tourists are not able to investigate in person neither the hotel nor the destination and other facilities available, they are diminishing the risk by collecting available information. The tourist board and service providers are independent channels which provide the most relevant information (Dickinger, 2010). Social medial and Web 2.0 applications (blogs, online communities) are on the other hand providing consumer generated content. Throughout these channels individuals are able to develop, share and disseminate information (Sigle, 2008). Social media can be considered as a form of WOM (word-of-mouth) which allows consumers to share opinions and information that can induce customers to buy or reject a certain product, brand or service (Hawkins et all, 2004).

Taking in account the literature review and the research done in the past, there is clear evidence that there is a gap in the existing tourism literate that combines self-image and the online information search. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between an individual's self-image and the usage of different types of tourist information sources. Taking in account the theories outlined in the literature review tree, different information providers will be used in this study as examples of information

providers. Specifically, a service provider serves as an example of marketing generated content; social media as an example of user generated content; and a service provider that has simultaneously integrated marketing as well as consumer generated content (Dickinger, 2010).

Therefore three hypotheses are proposed in order to show which factors have a major influence on an individual's choice of information source.

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between the self-image and the preference of an online information source.

Hypothesis 1a: There is a positive relationship between the online information search and the online bookings.

Hypothesis 2: There is a difference between demographics and the congruence with an information source.

Hypothesis 2a: There is a difference between age and the information source congruence.

Hypothesis 2b: There is a difference between gender and the congruence with an information source.

Hypothesis 2c: There is a relationship between the online, the online booking, and the congruence with an online information source.

Hypothesis 3: The level of congruence will vary according to the source provider.

Hypothesis 3a: High levels of congruence will generate high levels of trust.

Hypothesis 3b: The information source will have positive effects on the perception of the information quality.

Hypothesis 3c: There is a relationship between congruence and relevancy of information provided.

Hypothesis 4: The information source will vary in the level of ability, integrity and benevolence.

4.2 SELECTION OF THE METHODOLOGY

Social research in its core has two fundamental methods of research: qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative research can be described as "an host of other aspects" because of its property of verifying different approaches that are integrated in the research task. That implies that a qualitative research will incorporate:

- Accounts and findings that are represented in a non-numerical form. It is important to stress that this approach does not require the use of statistics or any numerical data.

- The inductive logic from the beginning to the end of the research with a strong focus on meanings.

- It is of crucial importance for the researcher to understand the phenomena discussed.

- The situations are described from the perspectives of the researcher.

- The design of the research is flexible throughout the research.

- It requires a small group of individuals involved in the situations under study (Robson, 2011).

The qualitative approach has been heavily criticized by many scholars in the past because its properties and the fact that the findings depend on researchers' interpretative skills.

On the other hand the quantitative research method is based on extensive analyses of hard data obtained usually through surveys. Some of the characteristics concerning the quantitative approach are:

- Measurement and quantification (turning the data into numbers). It is very important to have clear and precise measurements.

- The research design must be in detail pre-specified before the beginning of the research process.

- Reliability (consistency over time).

- Validity (showing that it measured what has been intended to be measured).

- Statistical analyses of the data.

- Conclusions are driven from the findings and leave little space for personal interpretation (Robson, 2011).

The Internet has reshaped and facilitated the way of conducting quantitative research. The reason why can be seen through the fact that the Internet is enables the quick and

cost-effective generation of data as well as access to a large and diverse participant pool. Further advantages of an Internet mediated research (IMR) can be seen throughout the:

- Facilitation of cross-cultural research;
- Access to larger sample size;
- High level of participant privacy; and
- The participants are able to participate in their own timescale and within their own space.

Every research design has its positive and negative characteristic. In the case of IMR there are concerns raised related to the trustworthiness of the data as well as the lack of control over the participants' behavior and competence regarding a specific topic (Fielding et al., 2008).

Within the quantitative research there is a variety of research designs that can be used. Taking in account the aim and the scope of this thesis, the research design proposed is the Quasi-experiment. According to Powers and Knapp (2006) the quasi-experimental design involves situations where "*experiment has manipulation and some control but lacks random assignment of individual subjects to the statement conditions*". Robson (2006) ads to the discussion that this is a rather flexible approach to research design and interpretation suggesting that "particular patterns of results and circumstances under which the study took place interact with the design to determine what inferences can be made".

When it comes to designs such the quasi-experiment, serious consideration must be given to others factors that might have an impact on the results of the study and therefore create threats to validity (Powers & Knapp, 2006; Robson, 2006). In essence the quasi-experimental design was chosen because the nature and the purpose of this thesis. Therefore three variations of the questionnaire are developed, each of them representing one information source. All respondents needed to be Internet users in order to participate in the survey.

4.3 THE MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENT

Since the study focuses on three online sources of information (service provider, tourist board, and a service provider that combines marketing content as well as social media content), three questionnaires have been developed in order to examine the relationship between self-image and the online information search (see Appendix A for exsamples). The questionnaires were distributed through the Internet; therefore, a selection about the type of respondents was already made through the fact that they needed to use the Internet in order to be able to participate in the survey.

The questionnaire was constructed as follows:

- First, the respondents were given some general information about the purpose of the study, as well as information about confidentiality and anonymity. Further they were invited to participate in the survey.

- Second, each individual questionnaire includes a screen shot of one specific information provider that yielded a total of three questionnaires.

- Finally, the questionnaires were divided into several parts - each of them referring to one of the main theoretical constructs.

Therefore, in this section further discussion will focus on the subject of the theoretical contents and the structure of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire begins with a short introduction written by the author about the aim and the purpose of the study in hand. Further there is a set of questions referring to the usage of the Internet as an information source as well as the frequency of hotel online booking.

Each questionnaire contains a screen shot of a specific online information provider (service provider as an example of marketing generated content; social media as an example of user generated content; and a service provider that has simultaneously integrated marketing as well as consumer generated content). The screen shot serves as a reference point for further sets of questions each referring to a specific theoretical construct.

The first sets of questions refer to the respondents' image perception of the information providers' website. In order to be able to measure the image perception, the questionnaire items were adopted from Kleijnen, de Ruyter, Andreassen (2005). Testing on a

bipolar scale ranging from 1 to 5, respondents express their degree of agreement/disagreement with the following characteristics:

"*Please indicate how much the following characteristics apply to the above mentioned information source.*

- *Old fashioned - Modern*
- *Unsuccessful - Successful*
- *Local - Global*
- *Easy going - Economical*
- *Inefficient - Efficient*
- *Slow - Fast*
- *Conventional/Solid - Young, Urban/Trendy*
- *Unimportant - Influential*
- *Technological follower-Technological pioneer* "

The next section of the questionnaire refers to sets of questions focusing on the concept of trust. As stated before in the literature review, trust is composed of three different characteristics: ability, benevolence and integrity (Mayer, 1995). Further, multiple-item 5-point Likert scales adopted from Gefen (2000) were used in order measure the trust and trustworthiness.

The Likert scale represents *"a scale whose categories are based on the level of agreement with a particular statement or issue"* (Sirkin, 2006, p. 43).

Meaning that the scales used in the questionnaire are in the range from:
- *Strongly agree*
- *Agree*
- *Neutral*
- *Disagree*
- *Strongly disagree*

Further, the first section, referring to the concept of trust, is testing the overall trust in a specific service provider by using questions such as:
- *"I trust this information source.*
- *This is a good source of information.*
- *This information source supplies relevant information.*
- *This information source has timely information".*

Followed by questions concerning integrity:

- *"Promises made by this information source are likely to be reliable.*
- *I doubt the honesty of this information source.*
- *I expect the advice given is in their best judgment.*
- *I expect that the information providers will keep promises they make.*
- *I can count on this information source to be sincere".*

Benevolence is tested by the set of questions such as:

- "I expect that the information provider is willing to assist and support customers.
- I expect that the information provider has good intentions toward customers.
- I expect that the tourist information providers' intentions are benevolent.
- I expect that the information provider puts customers' interests before his own".

And ability is tested throughout questions such as:

- *"The information provider is competent.*
- *The information provider understands the market they work in.*
- *The information provider knows about hotels.*
- *The information provider knows how to provide excellent information".*

Incorporated in the questionnaire are Henning-Thurau, Wals, Gremler and Gwinner's (2004) 11 motives why consumers may have engaged in eWOM.

Represented by a set of questions such as:

- *"Contributions by other travelers help me to make the right travel decision.*
- *I benefit from others' experiences before making a booking.*
- *I read them because one saves a great deal of time when booking.*
- *Here I get the information on the quality of products faster than elsewhere.*
- *Through travel reviews I get advice and solutions.*
- *I find the right answers when I have difficulties with a product.*
- *Through reading travel reviews I see that I am not the only one with certain problems.*
- *Through reading one can get confirmation that one made the right buying decision".*

The questionnaire concludes with a section concerning demographics such as age, gender, level of education, current occupation, number of inhabitants of the respondent's hometown and the approximate amount of the monthly salary.

4.4 SAMPLING

The sampling method chosen for this study is the so-called snow ball sampling. That implies that a group of respondents are initially chosen as a starting point for recruiting other respondents. The initial respondents act as a means throughout which the researcher indentifies other potential respondents creating a snow-ball effect. Meaning that the research begins with a rather small sample, but it becomes bigger and bigger with time (Baily, 1994).

4.5 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

4.5.1 THE SAMPLE

A total of 117 fully completed questionnaires are included in the analysis. The distributions in the sample regarding the tree questionnaires are as follows: In the case of the marketing generated information provider $n = 47$ (represented in the form of a screen shot from the Hotel Adriatic Kempinski official website). For social media information provider $n = 35$ (represented by TripAdvisor website screen shot). And an example of a service provider that combines marketing as well as social media generated content $n = 35$ (represented by Hotel Adriatic Kempinski official website).

4.6 THE RESULT

4.6.1 GENDER

The gender distribution in the sample is not proportional. There is a larger response rate from women $n = 85$ which makes 72 or 65 % of the sample. For men $n = 32$ which makes 27.3% of the sample.

The mean age of the total sample is 28.86. When divided by gender, the mean age of women is 22.28 while for men the mean average is 33.28.

Figure 6: The age distribution of men throughout the sample
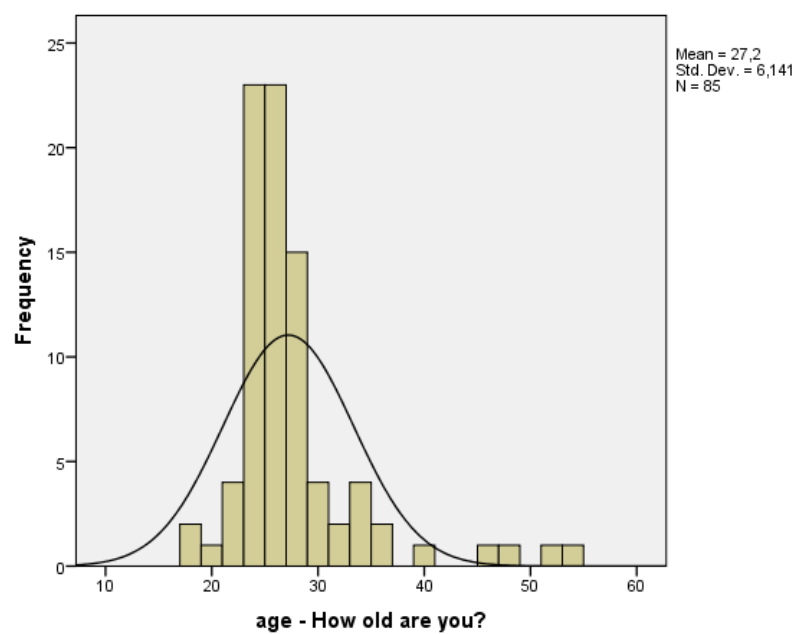
Figure 7: The age distribution of women throughout the sample

4.6.2 EDUCATION

In terms of education 90.6 % of respondents have a college or university degree while 11 % have obtained a high school degree. There were no respondents with primary school or vocational training; therefore, these variables are excluded from the final analyses.

Table 4: Degree of education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	High school	11	9,4	9,4	9,4
	College/University	106	90,6	90,6	100
Valid	Total	117	100	100	

Regarding occupation the respondents are mainly students with 38.5 %, followed by white collar workers (employees) with 29.9 %. 12.0 % of respondents are in professional training, 8.5 % are currently unemployed, entrepreneurs make up 5.1 %, blue collar workers 4.3%, whereas pensioners and housewives both account for 0.9 %. There were no respondents working as farmers; therefore, this variable has been excluded from the final analyses.

Figure 8: Current occupation (employment)
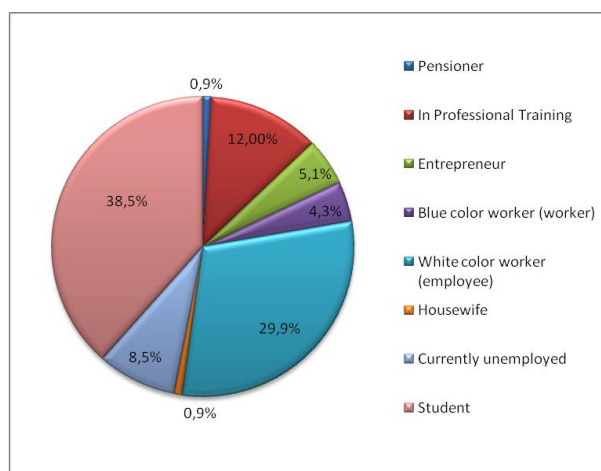
4.6.3   MONTHLY INCOME

Most of the respondents (62.4 %) have stated that their monthly income is between 0 and 1000 Euro, which is not a surprise when taken into account that 38.5 % of respondents are students. The second income category is the monthly income ranging between 1,001 and 2,000 Euro, which is as well consistent with the number of white color workers (employees) represented in the sample.

Table 5: Monthly income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	0-1000 Euro	73	62,4	63,5	63,5
	1001-2000 Euro	33	28,2	28,7	92,2
	2001-3000 Euro	6	5,1	5,2	97,4
	More than 3.001 Euro	3	2,6	2,6	100
Valid	Total	115	98,3	100	
Missing	System	2	1,7		
Total		117	100		

Figure 9: Monthly income pie chart
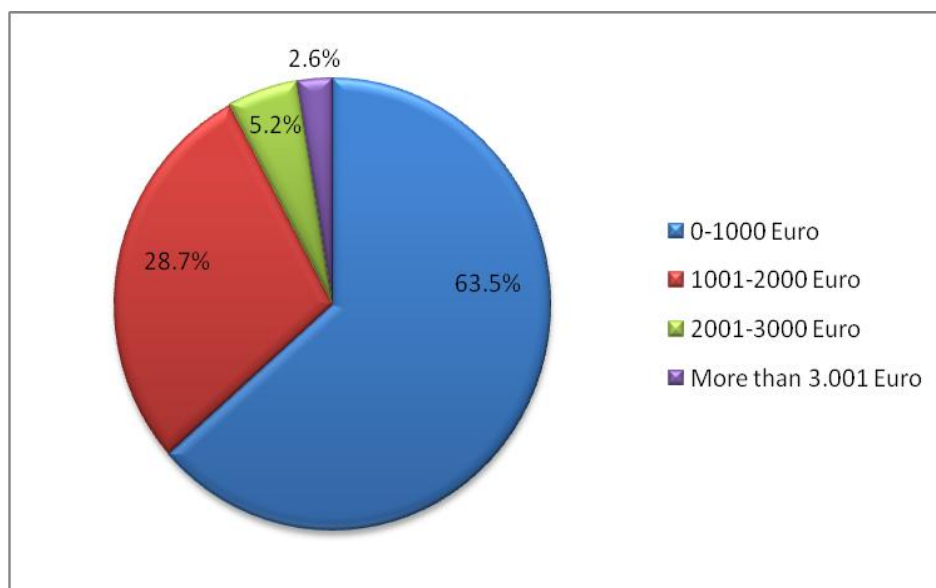
4.7 FREQUENCY OF INTERNET USAGE

The respondents were asked to rate on a five-point scale the frequency of Internet us-age as an information source as well as a booking instrument. The results showed a discrepancy in the online hotel information search (59.8 %) and the actual online hotel bookings (23.1 %). Nearly 60 % of the respondents are using the Internet for their in-formation retrieval, but just 23.1 % of them are always booking their hotel online. Nev-ertheless, 54.7 % of the respondents stated that they are frequently using the Internet for their hotel bookings.

Figure 6: Online Hotel search

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Always use the Internet	70	59,8	59,8	59,8
Frequently use the Internet	33	28,2	28,2	88
Offline and online equally much	6	5,1	5,1	93,2
Rarely use the Internet	7	6	6	99,1
Never use the Internet	1	0,9	0,9	100
Valid Total	117	100	100	

Figure 10: Usage of Internet as an information source
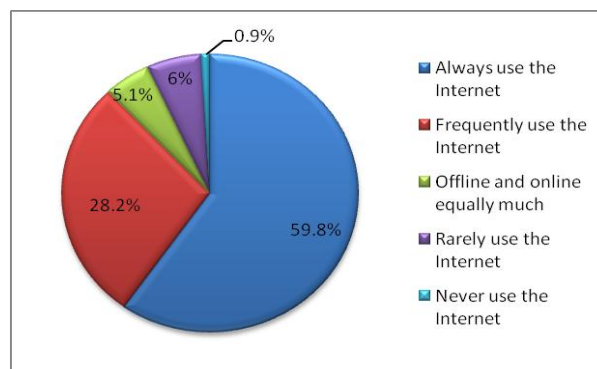
Table 7: Online Hotel booking

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Always use the Internet	27	23,1	23,1	23,1
Frequently use the Internet	64	54,7	54,7	77,8
Offline and online equally much	14	12	12	89,7
Rarely use the Internet	6	5,1	5,1	94,9
Never use the Internet	6	5,1	5,1	100
Valid Total	117	100	100	

Figure 11: Usage of the Internet as a booking tool
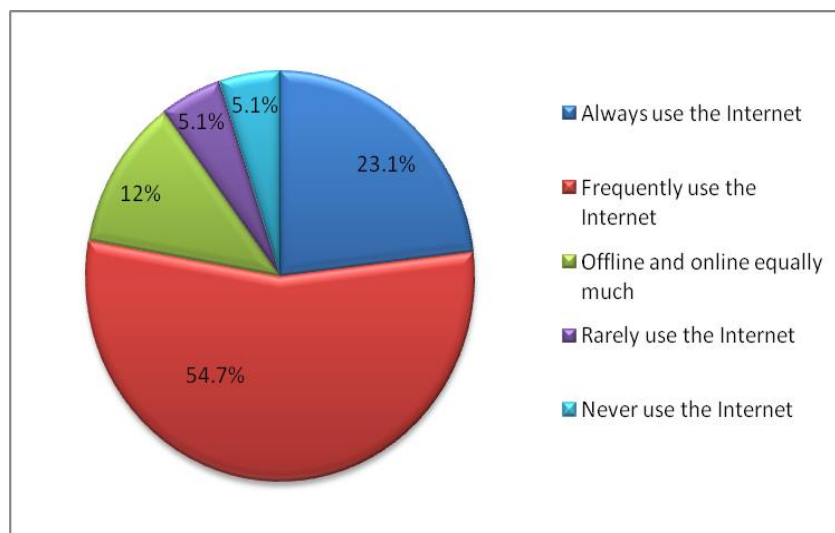
4.8 HYPOTHESIS TEST

H1: There is a positive relationship between the self-image and the preference of an online information source

There is no significant difference between the self-image and the preference of an online information source (p > 0.395).

Table 8: The result of the Chi-squared test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4,079[a]	4	0,395
Likelihood Ratio	4,063	4	0,398
Linear-by-Linear Association	0,451	1	0,502
N of Valid Cases	117		

The reason why there is no significant difference between self-image and the congruence with an information source can be seen through the equal congruency distribution among all three information providers.

Figure 12: Self-image and the preference towards an online information source
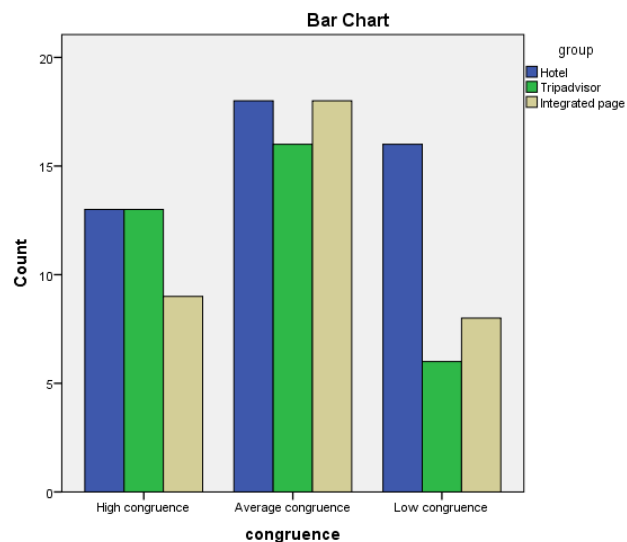
Table 9: The self-image and the congruence with an online information source

			group			
			Hotel	Tripadvisor	Integrated page	Total
congruence	High con-gruence	Count	13	13	9	35
		% within congruence	37,1%	37,1%	25,7%	100,0%
		% within group	27,7%	37,1%	25,7%	29,9%
		% of Total	11,1%	11,1%	7,7%	29,9%
	Average congruence	Count	18	16	18	52
		% within congruence	34,6%	30,8%	34,6%	100,0%
		% within group	38,3%	45,7%	51,4%	44,4%
		% of Total	15,4%	13,7%	15,4%	44,4%
	Low congru-ence	Count	16	6	8	30
		% within congruence	53,3%	20,0%	26,7%	100,0%
		% within group	34,0%	17,1%	22,9%	25,6%
		% of Total	13,7%	5,1%	6,8%	25,6%
Total		Count	47	35	35	117
		% within congruence	40,2%	29,9%	29,9%	100,0%
		% within group	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	40,2%	29,9%	29,9%	100,0%

H1a: There is a relationship between the online information search and the online bookings

The results of the analyses show that there are significant differences between the online information search and the online bookings (p < 0.000) which can be observed in the table below.

Table 10: The relationship between the online bookings and the online information
search

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	113,542[a]	16	0
Likelihood Ratio	76,866	16	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	48,66	1	0
N of Valid Cases	117		

Figure 13: The online information search and the online bookings
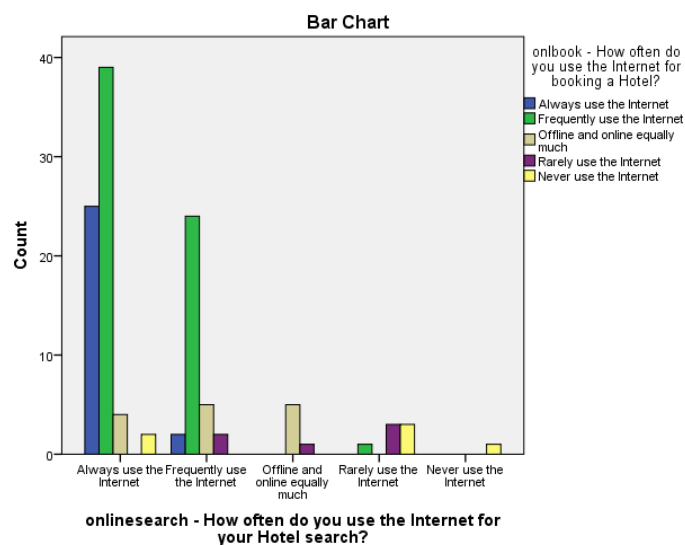
The respondents were asked to point out on a five-point scale the frequency of online hotel information search and the frequency of online hotel bookings. The scale range was as follows: always use the Internet, frequently use the Internet, offline and online equally match, rarely use the Internet, and never use the Internet.

The results of the analyses show that most of the respondents (54.7 %) frequently use the Internet for their hotel search. Although they are using the Internet for information retrieval, just 37.5 % of respondents proceeds to the actual online hotel booking.

Further, the respondents that tend to search for information exclusively online (23.1 %) are usually proceeding to the online hotel bookings at a rate of 92.6 %.

At 77.8 % it can be said that a majority of the respondents are engaging in an online hotel information search while the rest of the sample, or 22.2 %, tend to combine offline and online information sources. Of this percentage 12 % are combining offline and online sources of information while 5.1 % are rarely or never using the Internet for their hotel information search.

The results show that the respondents are frequently searching for information online but at the same time are not engaging in online hotel bookings; whereas the respondents that are exclusively searching for information online are as well booking their hotel online.

10.5 % of respondents are rarely or never using the Internet for their hotel information search. One reason why could be because of the bookings of pre-designed holiday packages proposed by travel agencies. In this case the necessary information is already provided by travel agents and brochures; therefore, there is no need for an additional information search.

Table 11: The online information search compared with online bookings

			onlbook - How often do you use the Internet for booking a Hotel?					
			Always use the Internet	Frequently use the Internet	Offline and online equally much	Rarely use the Internet	Never use the Internet	Total
online search - How often do you use the Internet for your Hotel search?	Always use the Internet	Count	25	39	4	0	2	70
		% within online search	35,70%	55,70%	5,70%	0,00%	2,90%	100,00%
		% within onlbook -	92,60%	60,90%	28,60%	0,00%	33,30%	59,80%
		% of Total	21,40%	33,30%	3,40%	0,00%	1,70%	59,80%
	Frequently use the Internet	Count	2	24	5	2	0	33
		% within online search	6,10%	72,70%	15,20%	6,10%	0,00%	100,00%
		% within onlbook -	7,40%	37,50%	35,70%	33,30%	0,00%	28,20%
		% of Total	1,70%	20,50%	4,30%	1,70%	0,00%	28,20%
	Offline and online equally much	Count	0	0	5	1	0	6
		% within online search -	0,00%	0,00%	83,30%	16,70%	0,00%	100,00%
		% within onlbook	0,00%	0,00%	35,70%	16,70%	0,00%	5,10%
		% of Total	0,00%	0,00%	4,30%	0,90%	0,00%	5,10%
	Rarely use the Internet	Count	0	1	0	3	3	7
		% within onlinesearch	0,00%	14,30%	0,00%	42,90%	42,90%	100,00%
		% within onlbook	0,00%	1,60%	0,00%	50,00%	50,00%	6,00%
		% of Total	0,00%	0,90%	0,00%	2,60%	2,60%	6,00%
	Never use the Inter-net	Count	0	0	0	0	1	1
		% within online search	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	100,00%	100,00%
		% within onlbook	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	16,70%	0,90%
		% of Total	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,00%	0,90%	0,90%
Total		Count	27	64	14	6	6	117
		% within online search	23,10%	54,70%	12,00%	5,10%	5,10%	100,00%
		% within onlbook	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
		% of Total	23,10%	54,70%	12,00%	5,10%	5,10%	100,00%

H2: There is a difference between demographics and the congruence with an information source

The results of the analyses show no significant difference between demographics and the congruence with an information source. The table below represents the summary of the results obtained after the analyses in form of p-values (see Appendix B for corresponding tables).

Table 12: Demographics and congruence with an information source

DEMOGRAPHICS	p-value
GENDER	0.310
AGE	0.059
EDUCATION	0.654
OCCUPATION	0.818

H2a: There is a difference between age and information source congruence

There are no significant differences ($p > 0.059$) found between age and congruence with an information source. Nevertheless, it can be observed that the result is near the significance level and thus further analyses of the results were made.

The age variable includes 117 age categories; therefore, a syntax function in SPSS was conducted in order to better organize the data.

Four groups were made ranging from the lowest age category represented in the sample to the highest age category represented in the sample. The coding of the age groups can be seen in the table below.

Table 13: Recoded age groups

AGE GROUP	CODING
18 – 27	1
28 – 37	2
38 – 47	3
48 – 57	4
58 – 64	5

In total 29.9 % of respondents have shown high levels of congruence with an information source. Within the high level congruence group, 62.9 % are respondents in the age group coded 1 ranging from 18 – 27 years old. This goes in line with the fact that 38.5 % of the sample's respondents are students. The next age group within the high congruence level is coded 2 ranging from 28 – 37 years old with 31.4 %. Further, there is only 5.7 % of respondents belonging to the age group coded 4 ranging from 48 – 57 years old. Within the high congruence category there are no respondents represented in the age categories 3 (38 - 47) and 5 (58 - 64).

Most of the sample (44.4 %) has shown average congruence levels with an online information source. Within the average congruity level, 78.9 % of respondents are in the 1 (18 – 27) age group followed by 17.3 % of respondents in the 2 (28 - 37) age group. The 3 (38 - 47) and the 5 (58 – 64) age groups are represented with just 1.9 % within the average congruence group. There are no respondents within this congruence category that fall within the 4 (48 – 57) age group.

25.6 % of respondents have shown low levels of congruity with an information source. Within this congruity level, 50 % of respondents are in the 1 (18 – 27) age category followed by 26.7 % in the 2 (28 – 37) age category. 13.3 % are represented by the 4 age category (48 – 57), and 6.7 % of respondents are in the 4 (48 – 57) age category followed by 3.3 % of the respondents in the 5 (58 – 64) age category.

The results of the analyses show no significant differences because $p > 0.059$. Therefore the alternative hypothesis must be rejected.

There are some indications that there are some differences between the congruity levels and age. That can be observed through the fact that most of the respondents are

moderately congruent with an information provider and are represented by the 1 (18 - 27) age category, which reflects the typical age range for students.

It can be said that they use the online information sources but are not keen to make their travel decisions based just on the information offered by the online information providers.

Furthermore, it can be said that the younger population is more accustomed to using the Internet for the information retrieval, while the older population is likely to combine both information sources.

Figure 14: The level of congruence and age
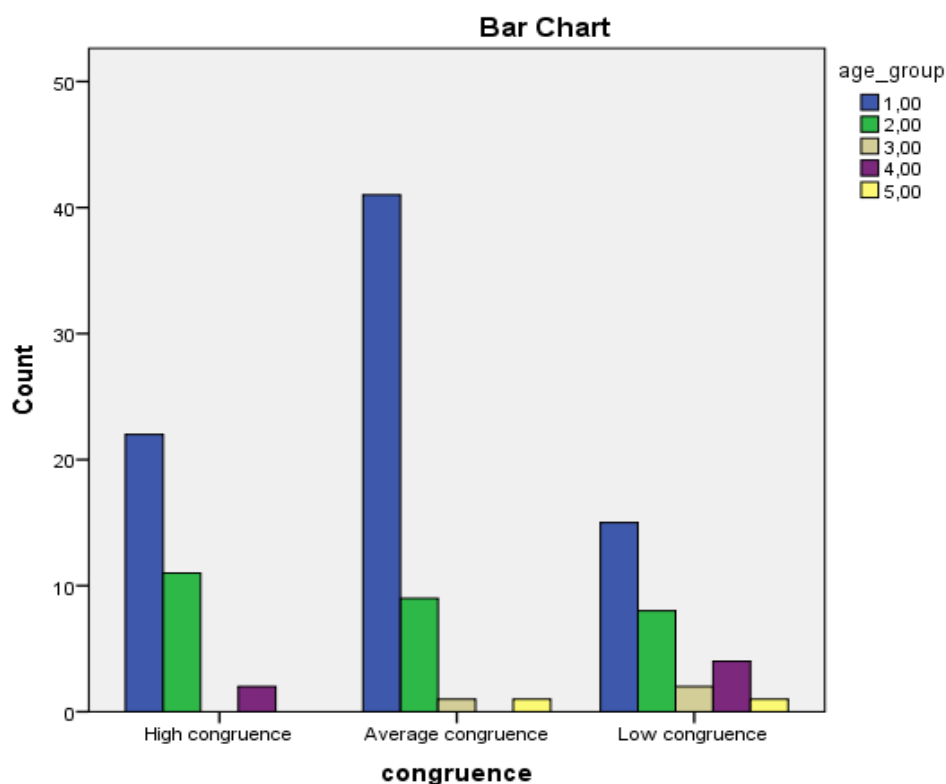
Table 14: The level of congruence and age

			age_group					Total
			1	2	3	4	5	
congruence	High con-gruence	Count	22	11	0	2	0	35
		% within congruence	62,90%	31,40%	0,00%	5,70%	0,00%	100,00%
		% within age_group	28,20%	39,30%	0,00%	33,30%	0,00%	29,90%
		% of Total	18,80%	9,40%	0,00%	1,70%	0,00%	29,90%
	Average congruence	Count	41	9	1	0	1	52
		% within congruence	78,80%	17,30%	1,90%	0,00%	1,90%	100,00%
		% within age_group	52,60%	32,10%	33,30%	0,00%	50,00%	44,40%
		% of Total	35,00%	7,70%	0,90%	0,00%	0,90%	44,40%
	Low con-gruence	Count	15	8	2	4	1	30
		% within congruence	50,00%	26,70%	6,70%	13,30%	3,30%	100,00%
		% within age_group	19,20%	28,60%	66,70%	66,70%	50,00%	25,60%
		% of Total	12,80%	6,80%	1,70%	3,40%	0,90%	25,60%
Total		Count	78	28	3	6	2	117
		% within congruence	66,70%	23,90%	2,60%	5,10%	1,70%	100,00%
		% within age_group	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
		% of Total	66,70%	23,90%	2,60%	5,10%	1,70%	100,00%

H2b: There is a difference between gender and the congruence with an online information source.

The reason why there is no significant difference between gender and the level of congruence with an online information source is because there is an unequal distribution of males (32) and females (85) in the sample.

In terms of congruity levels, 29.9 % percent of respondents is highly congruent with an information source. When divided by gender, it is indicated that 21.4 % represents females, while men are represented with 8.5 % which makes a share of 28.6 % percent in the high congruence category.

The average congruence with the information source has the highest share of total respondents (44.4 %) which indicates that most of the respondents have moderate congruence with the information sources. When divided by gender, males are represented with 9.4 %, while females account for 35.0 %. Within the group, the congruence distribution is 21.2 % male and 70.8 % female.

The last category is representing low level of congruity with a participation rate of 25.6 %. Organized by gender, males are participating with 9.4 % and females with 16.2 %. Within the low congruence category, the distribution is as follows: male 27 %, female 72.6 %.

There is evidence in the literature that women tend to be more responsive when asked to fill out a questionnaire which is consistent with the response distribution obtained in this research.

Figure 15: Congruence and gender
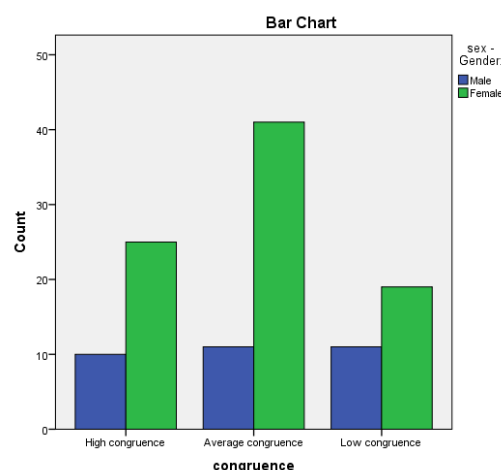
Table 15: The level of congruence with an information source and gender

			sex - Gender:		Total
			Male	Female	
congruence	High congruence	Count	10	25	35
		% within congruence	28,60%	71,40%	100,00%
		% within sex - Gender:	31,20%	29,40%	29,90%
		% of Total	8,50%	21,40%	29,90%
	Average congruence	Count	11	41	52
		% within congruence	21,20%	78,80%	100,00%
		% within sex - Gender:	34,40%	48,20%	44,40%
		% of Total	9,40%	35,00%	44,40%
	Low congruence	Count	11	19	30
		% within congruence	36,70%	63,30%	100,00%
		% within sex - Gender:	34,40%	22,40%	25,60%
		% of Total	9,40%	16,20%	25,60%
Total		Count	32	85	117
		% within congruence	27,40%	72,60%	100,00%
		% within sex - Gender:	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
		% of Total	27,40%	72,60%	100,00%

H2c: There is a difference between the online booking and the congruence with an online information source

The results show no significant difference between the online booking and the congruence with an online information source (p > 0.756). The results of the analyses can be observed in the table below.

Table 16: Congruence and online booking

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5,014[a]	8	0,756
Likelihood Ratio	6,407	8	0,602
Linear-by-Linear Association	0,343	1	0,558
N of Valid Cases	117		

Figure 16: The levels of congruence and online bookings
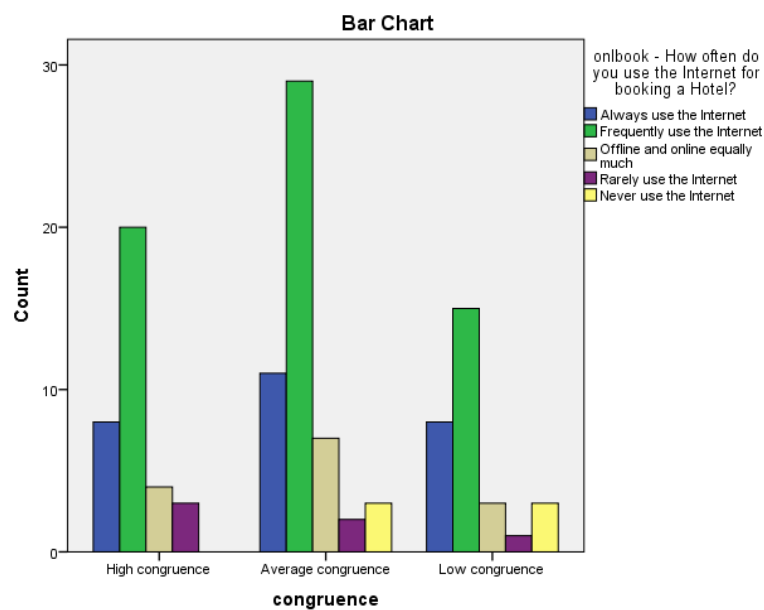
H3 The levels of congruence will vary according to the service provider

The results reveal that there are no significant differences (p > 0.395) between congruence levels and a specific information source. When looking at the results in more detail, 27.7 % of respondents are highly congruent with the hotel web page, 37.1 % of respondents are highly congruent with the TripAdvisor web page, followed by 29.9 % of respondents that are highly congruent with the online information source providing integrated marketing as well as consumer generated content. Summed up 29.9 % of the total sample is highly congruent with the information source.

44.4 % of respondents showed an average congruence level with the information provider web page. When looking at each information source separately, they show almost equal shares of congruence levels: Hotel 34.6 %, TripAdvisor 30.8 %, and Integrated page 34.6 %.

Of the total respondents 25.6 % have shown low level of congruence within the three information sources. When looking at the distribution of congruence among the sample, 53.3 % is associated with the hotel web page, 20 % is associated with the TripAdvisor web page, while and 29.9 % is associated with the web page providing integrated content.

Table 17: The result of the Chi-squared test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4,079[a]	4	0,395
Likelihood Ratio	4,063	4	0,398
Linear-by-Linear Association	0,451	1	0,502
N of Valid Cases	117		

Figure 17: The level of congruence and the service provider
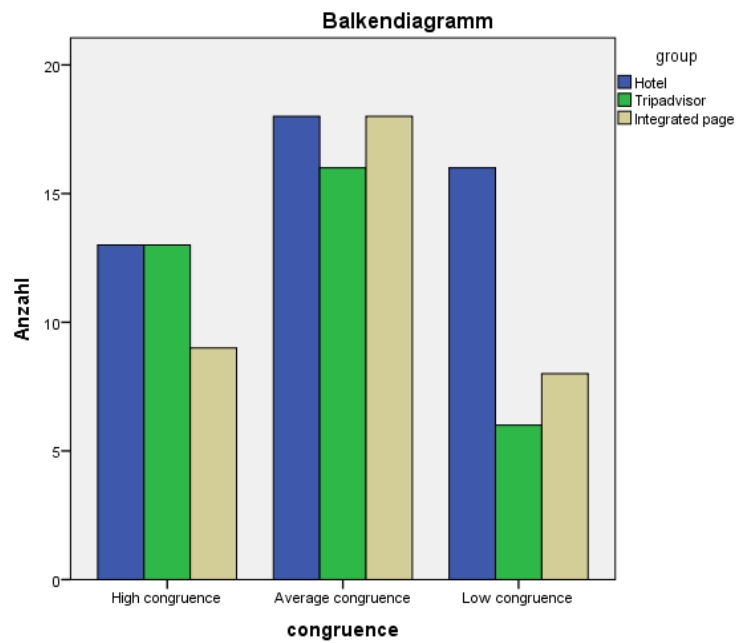
Table 18: The level of congruence between different information providers

			group		Total
		Hotel	TripAdvisor	Integrated page	
	Count	13	13	9	35
	% within congruence	37,10%	37,10%	25,70%	100,00%
High congruence	% within group	27,70%	37,10%	25,70%	29,90%
	% of Total	11,10%	11,10%	7,70%	29,90%
	Count	18	16	18	52
	% within congruence	34,60%	30,80%	34,60%	100,00%
Average congruence	% within group	38,30%	45,70%	51,40%	44,40%
	% of Total	15,40%	13,70%	15,40%	44,40%
	Count	16	6	8	30
	% within congruence	53,30%	20,00%	26,70%	100,00%
Low congruence	% within group	34,00%	17,10%	22,90%	25,60%
congruence	% of Total	13,70%	5,10%	6,80%	25,60%
	Count	47	35	35	117
	% within congruence	40,20%	29,90%	29,90%	100,00%
	% within group	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
Total	% of Total	40,20%	29,90%	29,90%	100,00%

H3a: High level of congruence will generate high level of trust

When looking at the relationship between congruence and trust there are no significant differences found ($p > 0.173$). Therefore, it can be said that the level of congruence with an information source does not have an impact on the level of trust in an information source.

Table 19: The result of the Chi-squared test

	Wert	df	Asymptotically Significance (2-seitig)
Chi-Squared by persons	11,535[a]	8	0,173
Likelihood-Quotient	12,012	8	0,151
Zusammenhang linear-mit-linear	3,643	1	0,056
Anzahl der gültigen Fälle	117		

Figure18: Level of congruence and trust
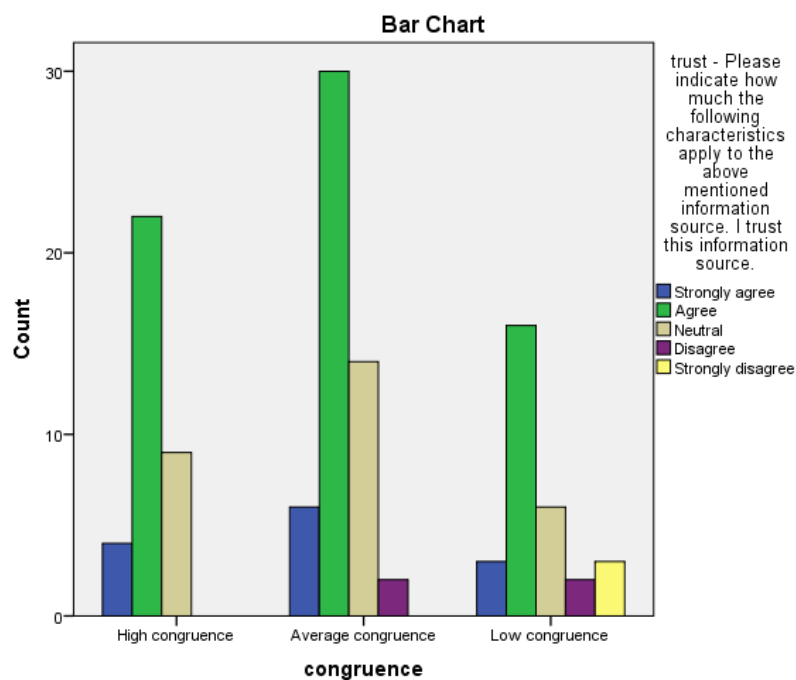
H3b: The information source will have positive effects on the perception of information quality

There are significant differences found between congruity and information providers quality ($p > 0.036$).

Table 20: The result of the Chi-squared test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13,510[a]	6	0,036
Likelihood Ratio	14,816	6	0,022
Linear-by-Linear Association	4,739	1	0,029
N of Valid Cases	117		

Of the total sample 29.9 % percent of respondents have high levels of congruity when it comes to the perception of the information providers' information quality.

Within the high congruence category 22.2 % of respondents agree with the statement that the information provider is a good source of information, followed by 3.8 % of respondents that strongly agree and 3.4 % of respondents that are neutral.

Further 44.4 % of the total respondents have shown moderate level of congruence toward the information quality provided. With 31.5 % of respondents agreeing that the information provider is a good source of information, followed by the neutral sentiment towards the quality of information provided with 9.4 %, and just 1.7 % of respondents strongly agree or disagree with the statement that the information provider is a good source of information.

Low level of congruence towards the quality of information provided represents a total of 25.6 % of respondents. Within the low congruence level 10.3 % of respondents are strongly agreeing, 65.8 % are agreeing, 18.8 % are neutral, and 51 % of respondents are disagreeing.

Of the total sample 29.9 % of respondents have high levels of congruity when it comes to the perception of the information providers' information quality.

Within the high congruence category 22.2 % of respondents agree with the statement that the information provider is a good source of information, followed by 3.8 % of respondents that strongly agree, and 3.4 % of respondents that are neutral.

Further 44.4 % of the total respondents have shown moderate levels of congruence toward the information quality provided. With 31.5 % of respondents agreeing that the information provider is a good source of information, followed by the neutral sentiment towards the quality of information provided with 9.4 %, and just 1.7 % of respondents strongly agreeing or disagreeing with the statement that the information provider is a good source of information.

Low level of congruence towards the quality of information provided represents a total of 25.6 % of respondents. Within the low congruence level 10.3 % of respondents are strongly agreeing, 65.8 % are agreeing, 18.8 % are neutral, and 51 % of respondents are disagreeing.

Figure 19: Perception of information sources information quality
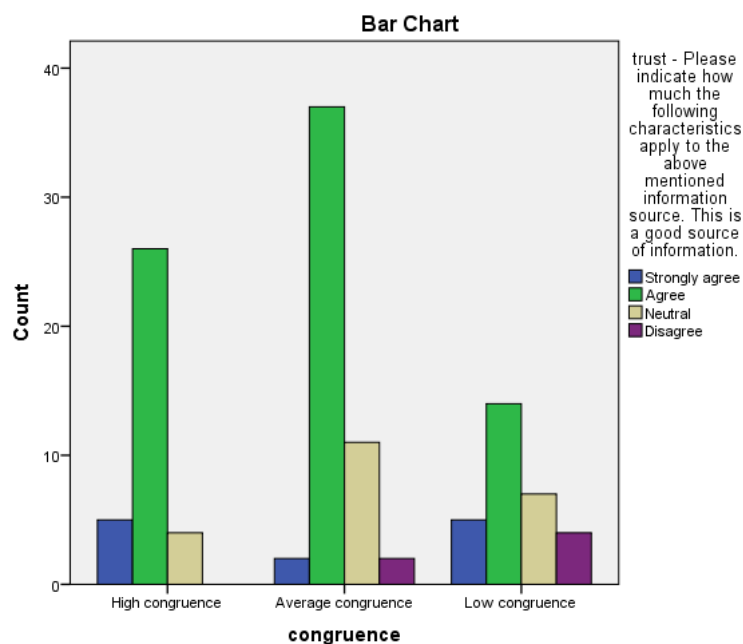
Table 21: Perception of quality by different information provider

| | | | Trust - Please indicate how much the following characteristics apply to the above mentioned information source. This is a good source of information. | | | | |
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
congruence	High congruence	Count	5	26	4	0	35
		% within congruence	14,30%	74,30%	11,40%	0,00%	100,00%
		% within trust - This is a good source of information.	41,70%	33,80%	18,20%	0,00%	29,90%
		% of Total	4,30%	22,20%	3,40%	0,00%	29,90%
	Average congruence	Count	2	37	11	2	52
		% within congruence	3,80%	71,20%	21,20%	3,80%	100,00%
		% within trust - This is a good source of information.	16,70%	48,10%	50,00%	33,30%	44,40%
		% of Total	1,70%	31,60%	9,40%	1,70%	44,40%
	Low congruence	Count	5	14	7	4	30
		% within congruence	16,70%	46,70%	23,30%	13,30%	100,00%
		% within trust - This is a good source of information.	41,70%	18,20%	31,80%	66,70%	25,60%
		% of Total	4,30%	12,00%	6,00%	3,40%	25,60%
Total		Count	12	77	22	6	117
		% within congruence	10,30%	65,80%	18,80%	5,10%	100,00%
		% within trust - This is a good source of information.	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
		% of Total	10,30%	65,80%	18,80%	5,10%	100,00%

H3c: There is a relationship between congruence and relevancy of information provided

The results of the test reveal that there is no significant difference between congruence and the relevancy of information provided.

Table 22: The result of the Chi-squared test

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12,168[a]	6	0,058
Likelihood Ratio	14,222	6	0,027
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,689	1	0,006
N of Valid Cases	117		

Although the results of the analyses is not significant (p > 0.058), the p-value is very close to the significance level; therefore, there could be some difference between the levels of congruity and the perception of information relevancy.

The results of the analyses are shown in the table below.

Most of the respondents (44.4 %) are moderately congruent when it comes to the relevance of information. With a distribution of 5.1% of respondents that are strongly agreeing, 23.1 % agreeing, 13.7 % are neutral, and 2.6 % are disagreeing. Within the congruence category 5.1 % of respondents are agreeing that the information source supplies relevant information, followed by 30.8 % of respondents that are neutral towards the information relevance. 11.5 % strongly agree that the information provided is relevant and 5.8 % of respondents disagree that the information provided is relevant.

Respondents with high congruence level toward the information relevance provided account for 29.9 %. Divided by category, 5.1 % of respondents strongly agree, 22.2 % of respondents agree, 1.7 % is neutral, and 0.9 % disagree that the service provider is providing relevant information.

Low congruence within the sample totals 26.6 % of respondents with 0.9 % that are strongly agreeing, 15.4 % are agreeing, 6.8 % are disagreeing, and 2.6 % are neutral towards the relevancy of information provided.

Table 23: Congruence and relevancy of information provided

| | | | Trust - Please indicate how much the following characteristics apply to the above mentioned information source. This information source supplies relevant information. | | | | |
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
group	Hotel	Count	4	28	14	1	47
		% within group	8,50%	59,60%	29,80%	2,10%	100,00%
		% within trust -	30,80%	39,40%	53,80%	14,30%	40,20%
		% of Total	3,40%	23,90%	12,00%	0,90%	40,20%
	TripAdvisor	Count	5	22	6	2	35
		% within group	14,30%	62,90%	17,10%	5,70%	100,00%
		% within trust -	38,50%	31,00%	23,10%	28,60%	29,90%
		% of Total	4,30%	18,80%	5,10%	1,70%	29,90%
	Integrated page	Count	4	21	6	4	35
		% within group	11,40%	60,00%	17,10%	11,40%	100,00%
		% within trust -	30,80%	29,60%	23,10%	57,10%	29,90%
		% of Total	3,40%	17,90%	5,10%	3,40%	29,90%
Total		Count	13	71	26	7	117
		% within group	11,10%	60,70%	22,20%	6,00%	100,00%
		% within trust -	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
		% of Total	11,10%	60,70%	22,20%	6,00%	100,00%

Figure 20: Congruence and information relevancy
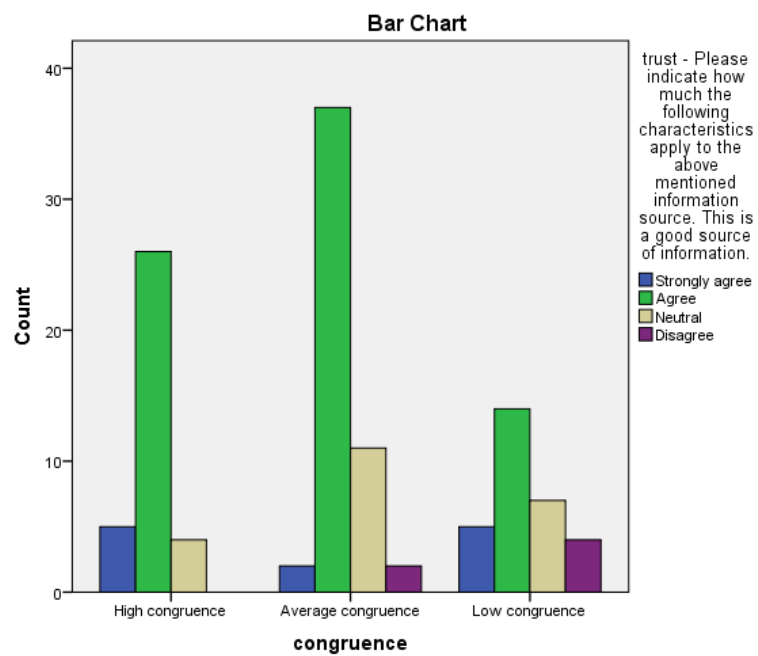
<u>*H4*</u>*: **The information sources will vary in the level of ability, integrity and benevolence***

A Pearson's Chi-square test was conducted in order to determine whether there were significant differences in levels of ability, integrity and benevolence.

INTEGRITY

Five questions were asked in order to test each information source's level of integrity. The results of the analyses revealed no significant differences among the levels of integrity, which can be observed in the form of high p-values in the table below (see Appendix B for corresponding tables).

Table 24: Summary of integrity levels

VARIABLES	p - value
Promises made by this information source are likely to be reliable	0.335
I doubt the honesty of this information source	0.865
I expect the advice given is in their best judgment	0.358
I expect that the information providers will keep promises they make	0.111
I can count on this information source to be sincere	0.528

In order to test the construct of integrity five questions were made. The results of the analyses show that there is no significant difference among levels of integrity. That can be seen by looking at the results of questions like "I except that the information providers will keep promises they make", where quasi equal distribution of answers is clearly visible. 29.9 % of respondents stated that they are highly comgruent with the information provider therefore expect that the service provider will keep given promises.

Average Congruece with an information source has 44.4% of respondents while low congruence 25.6%

Table 25: The result of the Chi-squared test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13,026[a]	8	,111
Likelihood Ratio	12,415	8	,134
Linear-by-Linear Association	4,504	1	,034
N of Valid Cases	117		

Figure 21: The distribution of expectation that the information providers will keep promises they make
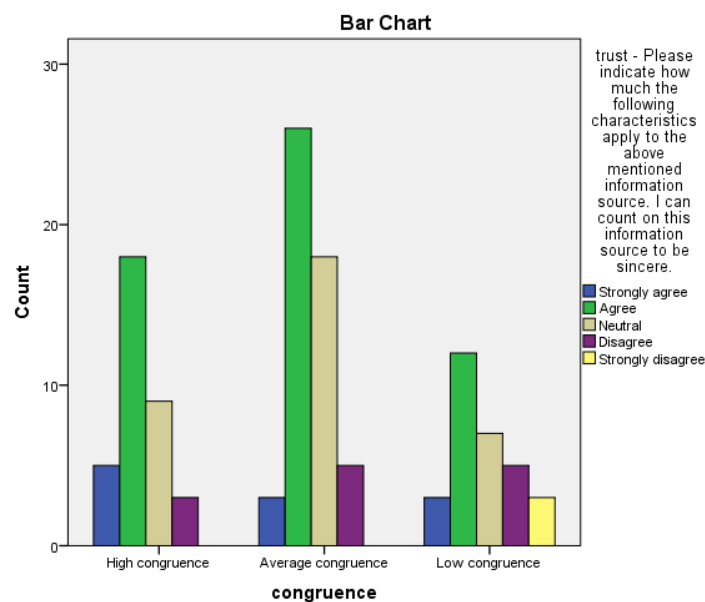
Table 26: Integrity and the level of trust

			trust - Please indicate how much the following characteristics apply to the above mentioned information source. I expect that the information providers will keep promises they make.					
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
congruence	High congruence	Count	9	18	8	0	0	35
		% within congruence	25,7%	51,4%	22,9%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within trust I expect that the information providers will keep promises they make.	42,9%	30,0%	29,6%	0,0%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	7,7%	15,4%	6,8%	0,0%	0,0%	29,9%
	Average congruence	Count	9	27	13	3	0	52
		% within congruence	17,3%	51,9%	25,0%	5,8%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within trust I expect that the information providers will keep promises they make.	42,9%	45,0%	48,1%	50,0%	0,0%	44,4%
		% of Total	7,7%	23,1%	11,1%	2,6%	0,0%	44,4%
	Low congruence	Count	3	15	6	3	3	30
		% within congruence	10,0%	50,0%	20,0%	10,0%	10,0%	100,0%
		% within trust I expect that the information providers will keep promises they make.	14,3%	25,0%	22,2%	50,0%	100,0%	25,6%
		% of Total	2,6%	12,8%	5,1%	2,6%	2,6%	25,6%
Total		Count	21	60	27	6	3	117
		% within congruence	17,9%	51,3%	23,1%	5,1%	2,6%	100,0%
		% within trust I expect that the information providers will keep promises they make.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	17,9%	51,3%	23,1%	5,1%	2,6%	100,0%

BENEVOLENCE

The test reveals that there is no significant difference between the levels of benevolence among information providers.

In order to test the hypothesis a set of four questions representing the concept of benevolence were incorporated in the questionnaire. The p-values in the table below represent the significance levels for each individual question (see Appendix B for corresponding tables).

Table 27: Summary of benevolence levels

VARIABLES	p - value
I expect that the information provider is willing to assist and support customers	0.565
I expect that the information provider has good intentions toward customers	0.636
I expect that the tourist information providers' intentions are benevolent	0.365
I expect that the information provider puts customers' interests before his own	0.562

Quasi equal distribution of responses can be seen throughout examples of questions like "I expect that the information providers' intentions are benevolent". According to the results of the analyses, 39.8 % of respondents agree with the above mentioned statement followed by the same number of TripAdvisor respondents. A slightly higher

percentage is associated with the information provider offering marketing as well as user generated content.

Table 28: The result of the Chi-squared test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8,741[a]	8	,365
Likelihood Ratio	9,834	8	,277
Linear-by-Linear Association	,012	1	,911
N of Valid Cases	117		

Figure 22: Expectation of benevolent intentions
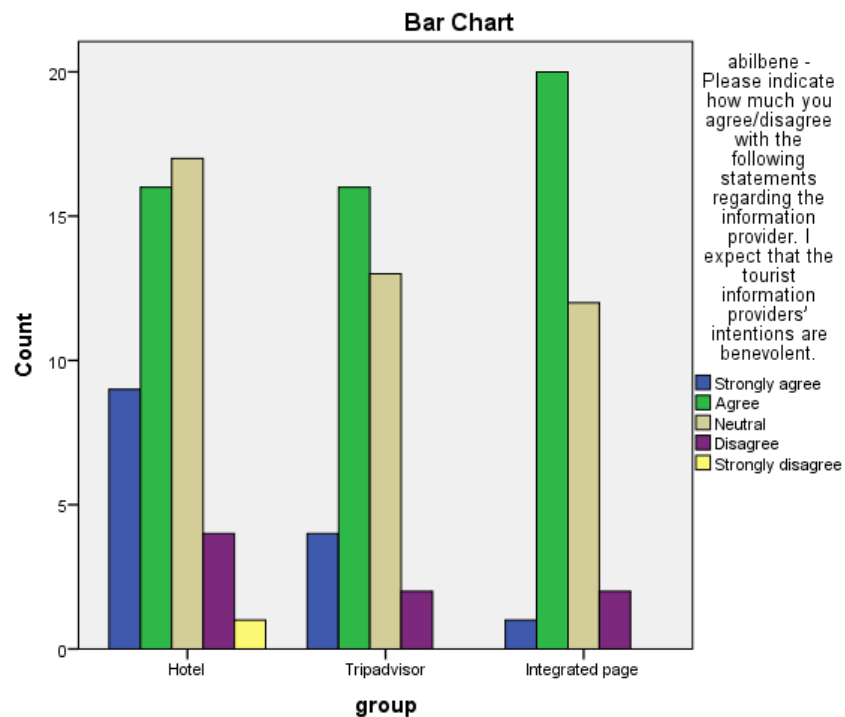
Table 29: Benevolence and the level of trust

			Ability - Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding the information provider. I expect that the tourist information providers' intentions are benevolent.					
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
group	Hotel	Count	9	16	17	4	1	47
		% within group	19,1%	34,0%	36,2%	8,5%	2,1%	100,0%
		% within abilbene -I expect that the tourist infor-mation provid-ers' intentions are benevolent.	64,3%	30,8%	40,5%	50,0%	100,0%	40,2%
		% of Total	7,7%	13,7%	14,5%	3,4%	,9%	40,2%
	TripAdvisor	Count	4	16	13	2	0	35
		% within group	11,4%	45,7%	37,1%	5,7%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - I expect that the tourist infor-mation provid-ers' intentions are benevolent.	28,6%	30,8%	31,0%	25,0%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	3,4%	13,7%	11,1%	1,7%	0,0%	29,9%
	Integrated page	Count	1	20	12	2	0	35
		% within group	2,9%	57,1%	34,3%	5,7%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - I expect that the tourist infor-mation provid-ers' intentions are benevolent.	7,1%	38,5%	28,6%	25,0%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	,9%	17,1%	10,3%	1,7%	0,0%	29,9%
Total		Count	14	52	42	8	1	117
		% within group	12,0%	44,4%	35,9%	6,8%	,9%	100,0%
		% within abilbene -I expect that the tourist infor-mation provid-ers' intentions are benevolent.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	12,0%	44,4%	35,9%	6,8%	,9%	100,0%

ABILITY

As integrity and benevolence, ability was tested throughout a set of representative questions. There is a positive relationship in the case where the respondents were asked to assess if the information providers know how to provide excellent information. (see Appendix B for corresponding tables)

Table 30: Summary of ability levels

VARIABLES	p - value
The information provider is competent	0.466
The information provider understands the market he works in	0.440
The information provider knows about hotels	0.605
The information provider knows how to provide excellent information	0.010

The official hotel website (Kempinski) is perceived as the information provider that offers the best quality of information (69.2 %). This fact does not come as a surprise when taken into account that one of the main purposes of the site is to attract customers and stimulate sales. Therefore, it is in their best interest to offer the most up-to-date and relevant information. On the other hand consumer generated content and information provided by the information provider offering integrated consumer as well as marketing generated content are perceived as less reliable and sincere in terms of information excellence with 15.4 %. The reason why can be seen throughout the fact that consumer generated content is based on individual's personal lived experience and knowledge.

Presently there are still threats of review forgery. Although lot of online consumer generated information providers are investing great efforts and means in detecting systems

that recognize fools reviews, there is still space and opportunities for plagiarism and fraud. There were several reports of big companies having employed professional bloggers to write positive reviews on their behalf. Therefore, there is still a stigma towards the excellence of the content generated by users.

Table 31: The result of the Chi-squared test for the question about the ability of the information provider to provide excellent information.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20,035[a]	8	,010
Likelihood Ratio	22,464	8	,004
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,201	1	,007
N of Valid Cases	117		

Figure 23: The ability of the information provider to provide excellent information
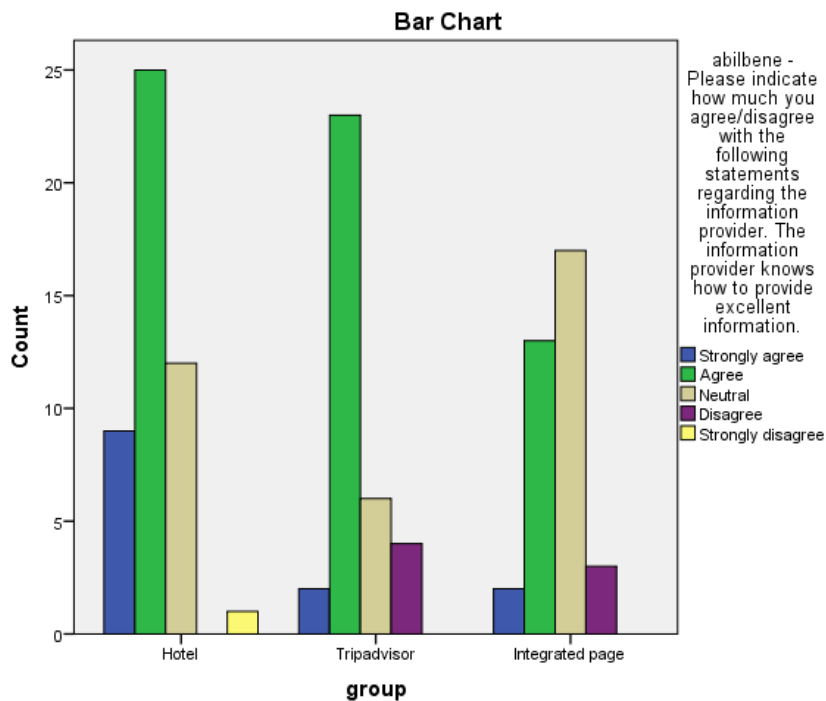
Table 32: The ability of the information provider to provide excellent information

			Ability - Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding the information provider. The information provider knows how to provide excellent information.				
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
group	Hotel	Count	9	25	12	0	1
		% within group	19,10%	53,20%	25,50%	0,00%	2,10%
		% within abilbene - The information provider knows how to provide excellent in-formation.	69,20%	41,00%	34,30%	0,00%	100,00%
		% of Total	7,70%	21,40%	10,30%	0,00%	0,90%
	TripAdvisor	Count	2	23	6	4	0
		% within group	5,70%	65,70%	17,10%	11,40%	0,00%
		% within abilbene - The information provider knows how to provide excellent in-formation.	15,40%	37,70%	17,10%	57,10%	0,00%
		% of Total	1,70%	19,70%	5,10%	3,40%	0,00%
	Integrated page	Count	2	13	17	3	0
		% within group	5,70%	37,10%	48,60%	8,60%	0,00%
		% within abilbene - The information provider knows how to provide excellent in-formation.	15,40%	21,30%	48,60%	42,90%	0,00%
		% of Total	1,70%	11,10%	14,50%	2,60%	0,00%
Total		Count	13	61	35	7	1
		% within group	11,10%	52,10%	29,90%	6,00%	0,90%
		% within abilbene - The information provider knows how to provide excellent in-formation.	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%	100,00%
		% of Total	11,10%	52,10%	29,90%	6,00%	0,90%

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 THE SUMMARY

The goal of this research is to investigate if there is a relationship between self-image and the usage of different tourist information sources.

Building on the literature review on self-image, trust and information search, this study investigates four main hypotheses:

H1: There is a positive relationship between the self-image and the preference of an online information source.

H2: There is a positive relationship between the online information search and the online bookings.

H3: The level of congruence will vary according to the source provider.

H4: The information source will vary in the level of ability, integrity and benevolence.

The results of the analyses of 117 questionnaires indicate that there are no significant differences between self-image and the preference of an online information source (p > 0.395). Therefore, it can be concluded that self-image has no impact on the choice of a specific online information source, which is in contradiction with the research done it the past where product-self-congruity represents a match between users and products personality (Sirgy, 1983; Ahn & Li, 2011; Sirgy & Su 2000; Arnold et al. 2004). It is argued that tourists will choose a particular destination for their vacation according to the match/mismatch between psychological and functional variables (Ahn, Li 2011).

Nevertheless, significant differences between the online information search and the online bookings have been found (p < 0.000). The results suggest that the respondents are frequently using the Internet for their hotel search but are not that prone to book their hotel online. This indicates that they do not entirely trust the information provided by the online information source, and that they tend to consult other sources of information before their actual booking.

In terms of demographics and the congruence with online information source, there are no significant differences found: gender p > 0.312, age p > 0.059, education p > 0.654, occupation p > 0.818. It can be seen from the results in form of the p-values that age is the only variable on the "margin" of significance. The results indicate that there could be some differences between age and information source congruence. Respondents

who have highly or average congruence level with an information source account for 53.8 % of the sample and are belonging to the 1 age group (18-27). Therefore, it can be said that they tend to relate more with the online information source and the type of information provided.

Further, when testing the level of congruence between different online information pro-viders (Hotel, TripAdvisor, Integrated page), there are no significant differences found (p > 395). The results suggest that there are no significant differences between self-image and the choice of a specific information source. Whereas there are significant differences found between the congruence and the perception of information quality (p < 0.036). TripAdvisor is perceived as the best provider of quality information (33.3 %), followed by the official Kempinski hotel web site with 26.5 %. While 16.3 % of re-spondents agrees that the web site that integrated both the marketing and user gener-ated content is a good source of information. The results indicate that the respondents perceive user generated content as a good source of information. The reason for that could be that the recommendations and comments provided by TripAdvisor are the results of already lived experiences. They are usually based on personal observations, impressions and suggestions (Jeacle, Carter 2011). On one hand TripAdvisor offers information that is not based on hard facts but is the result of individuals' personal im-pressions. On the other hand official hotel websites provide hard factual information about the hotel and in some cases about the destination in question. That indicates that editorial content is perceived as more informative and goal-directed (Dickinger 2010).

When investigating whether information sources will vary in the level of ability, integrity and benevolence, there were no significant differences found expect in the case of be-nevolence. The results show a significant relationship p > 0.010 when it comes to the ability of a service provider to provide excellent information. This indicates that not all service providers are perceived to have benevolent intentions towards customs.

5.2 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Although this research provides new insights into the relationship between self-image congruity and information search, there are still many more research tools and methods available that can be used in order to further investigate the relationship between the two constructs.

First, the survey instrument developed for this research only imitates the real online environment and therefore does not provide a full overview of all the available online tourist information sources. This might have an impact on the responses obtained. Further research should include a broader variety of information providers in order to facilitate the comparison between various information sources.

Second, the gender distribution in the sample is not equally distributed which might have had an impact on the results of this research. Therefore to investigate more in depth the differences among demographics, a sample with an equal gender distribution would be required.

Third, there was a slightly higher response rate in the case of TripAdvisor which could be the result of respondents' familiarity with the information provider in question.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, this research contributes to the understanding of what type of impact self-image congruence has on the online information search. Also it provides avenues for further research when it comes to self-image congruence and online information usage.

Understanding what motivates potential travelers to follow information gathered online is of crucial importance for tourist service providers. The results show that there are important managerial implications related to tourist information search in the context of information quality and willingness to follow advices derived from an online information provider.

It is clear that there is still a big discrepancy between online information search and online bookings. It would be interesting to investigate more in depth the reasons why such differences arise.

6 BIBLOGRAPHY

Aaker, J.L. (1997). "Dimensions of brand personality". Journal of Marketing Research, 34, 347-356.

Ahn, T., Li, Y., (2011). "Self-congruence, functional congruence and destination choice." Journal of Business research.

Arnold, J.E. Price, L. Zinkhan, M.G. (2004) "Consumers". McGraw-Hill/Irwin, New York.

Baily D. Kenneth (1994) "Methods of Social Research". (4th ed.) The Free Press, USA.

Baumgartner, Andreas (2009) Explaining participation behaviour in communities of regional leisureblogs. Doctoral thesis, WU Vienna University of Economics and Business.

Bieger T., Leasser, C. (2004). "Information Sources for Travel Destinations: Toward a Source Process Model." Journal of travel and Research, 42 (4): 357-71.

Bishop, J., John (2000). "Is Self-Identity Image Advertizing Ethical?". Business Ethics Quarterly,10, 371-398.

Blackwell, R.D., Miniard, P.W, Engel, J.F. (2001). "Consumer behavior". (9th ed.) Cincinnati, OH: South-Western College Pub.

Casaló, L.V., Flavián, c., Guinaliu, M.,(2011). "Understanding the intention to follow the advice obtained in an online travel community". Computers in Human Behavior 27(2): 622-633.

Chaffey, D. (2007). "E-business and E-Commerce Management." (3th ed.) Prentice Hall, England.

Chatterjee, P. (2001), "Online Reviews: Doconsumers use them?". Advances in Consumer Research Volume 28, eds. Mary C. Gilly and Joan Meyers-Levy, Valdosta, GA : Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 129-133.

Chon K.S. (1992). "Self-image/destination image congruity" Analyses of Tourism Research,19:360-3.

Darly, W.K., Smith, R.E. (1995). "Gender differences in Information Processing Strategies: An empirical Test of the Selectivity Model in Advertising Response". Journal of Advertising, Vol. 24, Iss.1. p. 41-59.

David Chaffey (2002). "E-Business and E-commerce Management". Pearson-Education Limited, England.

Day, B., Sarma, K., M. (2010). "Information source usage among motive-based segments of travelers to newly emerging tourist destinations."Journal of Tourism Management, 341–344.

Dickinger, A. (2010). "The Trustworthiness of Online Channels for Experience – and Goal-Directed Search Tasks". Journal of Travel Research, 1-14.

Dolich, I.J. (1969). "Congruence Relationship Between Self-images and Product Brands". Journal of Marketing and Research, 80-4.

Escalas E. Jennifer, Bettman R. James (2003) "You Are What They Eat: The Influence of Reference Groups on Consumer's to Brands." Journal of Consumers Psychology, 13 (3), 339-348.

Fellenstein, C., Wood, R. (2000). „E-commerce, Global E-business, and E-societies." Prentice Hall, USA.

Fielding, N., Lee, M., Razmond, B.G. (2008). "The SAGE handbook of Online Research Methods." Sage, Oxford, U.K.

Gao Yuan. (2005). "Web Systems Design and Online Consumer Behavior." Idea Group Publishing, USA.

Gefen, D. (2000). "E- commerce: the role of familiarity and trust". The International Journal of Management Science, 28, 725-737.

Graef, R.T. (1997). "Consumption Stimulation and the Effects of Brand image on Consumers Brand Evidence ." Psychology & Marketing, 14.1. ABI/INFORM Global; pg. 49.

Grubb, L., Grathwohl, E. (1967). "Consumer Self-Concept, Symbolism and Market Behavior: A Theoretical Approach". The Jurnal of Marketing, 31, 22-27.

Grubb, E.L., Hupp, G. (1969). "Perception of self, Generalized Stereotypes, and Brand Selection." Journal of Marketing Research, Vol. 5., No1, pp. 58-63.

Goldberg, L. R. (1993). "The structure of phenotypic personality traits". American Psychologist 48 (1): 26–34.

Hazwood, D.I., Best, R., Coney, K.A. (2004). *"Consumer behavior: Building marketing strategy".* (9th ed),McGraw-Hill, Boston, US.

Heat, A.P., Scott, D. (1998). *„The self-concept and image congruence hypothesis: An empirical investigation in the motor vehicle market."* Eur J Markn, 32(11/12):1110-23.

Henning-Thurau, T., Gwinner, P.K., Walsh, G., Gremler D.D. (2004). "Electronic Word-of-Mouth Consumer-Opinion Platforms: What Motives Consumers to Articulate them selves on the Internet." Journal of Interactive Marketing, Vol.18, No 1.

Hosany, S., Martin, D. (2011). „Selfimage congruence in consumer behavior". Journal of Buisness Research, JBR-07197.

Högg, R. Meckel, M., Stanoevska-Slabeva, K., Martignoni, R. (2006). "Overview of business models for Web 2.0 communities". Proceedings of GeNeMe.

Hörander, S., Innerlohinger, K. (2010) "The Significance of Online Word-of-Mouth." Thesis, Vienna University of Economics.

Hyde, F., Kenneth (2008). "Information Processing and Touring planning Theory". Pergamon, 712-731.

Jacobsen, J.Kr.S., Munar, A.M. (2012). "Tourist information search and destination choice in a digital age". Journal of Tourism Management Perspectives, 1, 39-47.

Jacle, I., Carter, C., (2011). "In TripAdvisor we trust: Rankings, calculative regiment and abstract systems". Journal of Accounting, Organizations and Society, 63, 193-309.

Kalakota, R., Whinston, A.B. (1997). "Electronic commerce: A manger's guide". Reaing MA; Addison-Press.

Kim., J.D, Ferrin, D.L, Rao (2007). "A trust-based consumer decision-making model electronic commerce: The role of trust, perceived risk, and their antecedents." Journal of Decision Support Systems, 544-564.

Kleijnen, M., Ruyter de K., Andreassen, T.W. (2005). "Image Congruence and the Adoption of Service Innovations". Journal of Service Research, 343-359.

Knotzer, N. (2006). "Online Product Recommendations in E-Commerce Retailing applications". University of Economics Vienna.

Kozak, M., Balogu, S. (2011) "Managing and Marketing Tourist Destinations: Strategies to Gain Commpetitive Edge". Routledge, USA.

Kramer, R.M. (1991). "Intergroup Relations and Organizational Dilemmas: The Role of Categorization Processes," Research in Organizational Behavior, 13 191–207.

Kressmann, F., Sirgy, J.M.,Herrmann, A., Huber, F., Huber, S., Lee., D.J. (2006). "Direct and indirect effects of self-image congruence on brand loyalty". Journal of Business Research, 59, 955-964.

Lamb, C.W., Hair J.F., McDaniel Jr.,C. (2011). *"MKTG."* Student edition, South-Western, USA.

Landers, R. & Lounsbury, J. W. (2006). "An investigation of Big Five and narrow personality traits in relation to Internet usage". Computers and Human Behavior, 22, 283-293.

Laurent, G., Kapferer, J. (1985). *"*Measuring Consumer Involvement Profiles*".* Journal of Marketing and Research, 22:41-53.

Levy, S. (1959). "Symbols for sale." Harward Business Review 37:117-9.

Litvin, S., Goldsmith, R.E., & Pan, B. (2008). "Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management". Tourism Management, 29(3): 458-468.

Mansfeld, Y. (1992). "From Motivation to Actual Travel". Annals of Tourism Research, 19 (3): 399- 419.

Lytras, D.M., Tennyson, R., Pablos, P.O. (2010). "Knowledge Networks: The Social Software Perspective". IGI Publishing, Hershey, US.

Matthews G., Deaty I J., Whiteman C. (2003) "Personality trait." (2ed.), Cambridge University Press (p.4).

Mayer, R.C., Davis, J.H., Schoorman, F.D. (1995). "An integrative model of organizational trust". Academy of Management Review, 709-734.

Mislove, E., Alan (2009) "Online Social Networks: Measurement, Analysis, and Applications to Distributed Information Systems." Thesis, Rice University, Texas, US.

Moriarty, S., Michell, N., William, D., (2009). "Advertising Principles and Practice". (8th Ed.), Pearson International Edition, Prentice Hall.

Mulyanegara R.C., Tsarenko J., Anderson A. (2007). "The Big Five and brand personality: Investigating the impact of consumer personality on preferences towards particular brand personality". Journal of Brand Management, 16, 234-247.

Novak, T.P., Hopffman, D.L. , Yung, Y. (2000). *"Measuring the flow construct in online enviroments: A structuring modeling approach".* Marketing Science, 19(1), 22-24.

Onkvisit, S., Shaw, J. (1987). *"Self-concept and image congruence: Some research and managerial implications."* Jornal of Consum Marketing, 4(1):13-23.

Pan, B., Fesenmaier, D.R. (2006). "Online information search and trip planning process". Annals of Tourism Research, 33(3): 809-832.

Park, J.K., John, D.R., (2011) "Capitalizing on brand personalities in advertizing: the influence of implicit self-theories on ad appeal effectiveness." Journal of Consumer Psychology, Elsevier, 1057-7408.

Picazo-Vela, S., Chou, S. Y., Melcher, A. J., & Pearson, J. M. (2010). "Why provide an online review? An extended theory of planned behavior and the role of Big-Five personality traits." Computers in Human Behavior, 26(4), 685-696.

Powers BA, Knapp TR (2006) *Dictionary of Nursing*, *Theory and Research*. 3rd edn. Springer PublishingCompany Inc., New York,USA.

Quintal, V. A., Lee, J. A., & Soutar, G. N. (2010). "Risk, uncertainty and the theory of planned behavior: A tourism example". Tourism Management, 31(6), 797- 805.

Raitz, K., & Dakhil, M. (1989). A note about information sources for

preferred recreational environments. Journal of Travel Research, 27, 45–50.

Rheingold, H. (1994). "A slice of life in my virtual community. In ,L. M.Harasim (Ed.), Global networks: Computers and international communication" (pp. 57–80). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Rosenberg M., Schooler C., Schoenbach C., Rosenberg F. (1995). "Global Self-Esteem and Specific Self-Esteem Different concepts, Different outcomes." American Sociological Association, Vol 60, No 1, pp. 141-156.

Rogers, Carl. (1959) "A Theory of Therapy, Personality and Interpersonal Relationships as Developed in the Client-centered Framework." In (ed.) S. Koch, Psychology: A Study of a Science. Vol. 3: Formulations of the Person and the Social Context. New York: McGraw Hill.

Ryan, T., & Xenos, S. (2011). "Who uses facebook? an investigation into the relation ship between the big five, shyness, narcissism, loneliness, and facebook usage." Computers in Human Behavior, 27(5), 1658-1664.

Saleem, H., Beaudry A., Crotea, A.,M. (2011). "Antecedents of computer self efficacy: A study of the role of personality traits and gender". Computers in Human Behavior, 27, 1922-1936.

Schelly G.B., Frydenberg, M. (2011). "Web 2.0: Concept and Applications". CoursTechnology, Boston, USA.

Schmidt, J.B, Spreng, R.A. (1996). "A proposed model of external consumer information search". Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science,24(3):246–56.

Schmitt., B.H, Rogers D.L. (2008) "Handbook on Brand and Experience Management".

Schultz, C.D. (2007.) "Consumer trust in e-comerce: An Analyses of Means Communicating Trustworthiness From a Buying Transaction Life Cycle Perspective". Verlag Dr. Kovač, Hamburg.

Schiffman, Leon G. , Kanuk, Leslie (2007): "Consumer Behavior. " Person Prantice Hall, New Jersey.

Simon, S. J. 2001. "The Impact of Culture and Gender on Web Sites: An Empirical Study," The DATA BASE for Advances in Information Systems (32:1), pp. 18-37.

Sirgy, M.J. (1982). "Self-Concept in Consumer Behavior: A Critical Review." Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Dec., 1982), pp. 287-300.

Sirgy, M.J, Lee, D.J., Johar, J.S., Tidwell, J. (2008). "Effect of self-congruity with sponsorship on brand lozalty." Journal of Business Research, pp. 1091-1097.

Sirgy, M.J., Su, C. (2000). "Destination image, self-congruity, and travel behavior: Toward an integrative model". Journal of Travel Research, 38(4), 340–352.

Sirgy, M. J, Grewal D., Mangleburg, T.(2000), "Retail environment, self-congruity, and retail patronage: An integrative model and a research agenda," Journal of Business Research, 49, 127-38.

Snepenger, D.J., K. Meged, Snelling, M., Worrall, K. (1990). "Information Search by Destination-Naive Tourists". Journal of Travel Research 29 (Summer): 13-16.

Strategies by Destination-Naive Tourists. Journal of Travel Research 29(2):13-16.

Solomon, M.R. , Bamossy, G. , Askegaard, S. , Hogg, M.K. (2010). "Consumer behavior a European perspectiv." (4th edition) Prentice Hall, Essex, England.

Solomon, M., Bamossy, G., Askegaard S., Hogg, M.K. (2006). *"Consumer Behavior, A European Perspective. "* (3th edition), Person Education Limited, Edinburg Gate, England.

Solomon, R,C., Flores, R. (2001). "Building trust in business, policies, relationships and life". Oxford University Press, New York, US.

Sirkin R.M. (2006). "Statistics for the social sciences". SAGE Publications, Inc., Califonia, U.S.

Trochim, William, M.K., Donnelly, James, P. (2007) *"The Research Methods Knoledge Base."* (3th edition), Thomson, Mason, USA.

Urban, G.; Sultan, F.; Qualls, W. (2000). "Placing trust at the center of your Internet Strategy", *Sloan Management Review*, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 39-48.

Usakli, A., Balogu, S. (2011). "Brand personality of tourist destinations: An application of self-congruity theory". Journal of Tourism Management, 32, 114-127.

Vogt, A.C., Fesenmaier, D.R. (1998). "Expanding the functional information search model". Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 25, No. 3. Pp. 551-578.

Wandel, S., Dellaert, B.C. (2005). "Situation Variation in Consumer Media Channel Consideration". Journal of the Academy of Marketing, Vol. 33, 4, 575-584.

Wang, Y., Yu, Q., Fesenmaier, D. R. (2002). "Defining the virtual tourist community: Implications for tourism marketing". Tourism Man-agement, 23 (4), 407–417. doi:10.1016/S0261-5177(01)00093-0.

Weinberg, T. (2009). "The new Community Rules: Marketing on the social web". O'Reilly Media Inc., gravenstain Highway north, Sebastopol, U.S.

Weber, L. (2007). "How Digital Consumer Communities Build Your Business". John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, New Jersey, U.S

Yoo, K.H., Gretzel, U., (2011). "Influence of personality on travel-related consumer-generated media creation". Computers in Human Behavior, 27, 609-621.

Yuan, G., (2005) *"Web Systems Design and Online Consumer Behavior."* Idea Group Publishing: U.S.

Ye, Q., Law, R., Gu, B., Chen W. (2011). "The influence of user-generated content on traveler behavior: An empirical investigation on the effects of e-word-of-mouth to hotel online bookings". Computers in Human behavior, 27, 634-639.

ONLINE SOURCES :

Miles G. iPhone 4 vs.Droid X:AHead-to-Head Comparison. PCWorld. Retriev from;2010http://www.pcworld.com/article/199844/iphone_4_vs_droid_x_a_headtohea _comparison.html.

Accessed on 23.2.2012

O'Reilly, Tim (2006) Web 2.0 Compact Definition: Trying, 12.10.2006, Again

http://radar.oreilly.com/archives/2006/12/web-20-compact.html

Accessed on 7.2.2012

The Association of Mgazine Media „adidas America ‚Runners, Yeah We're Different"

http://www.magazine.org/advertising/kelly_awards/winners_finalists/3019.aspx

Accessed on 27.2.2012

Adidas – Runners. Yeah, We're Different (The most truthful ad campaigns), picture source

http://thisisnotadvertising.wordpress.com/2012/01/11/adidas-runners-yeah-were different-the-most-truthful-ad-campaigns

Accessed on 27.2.2012

Trip Advisor Fact Sheet

http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/PressCenter-c4-Fact_Sheet.html

Accessed on 30.04.2012

What is TripAdvisor

http://www.tripadvisor.com/help/what_is_tripadvisor

Accessed on 30.04.2012

Picture source

http://www.tripadvisor.com/HACSearch?geoOrName=geo&q=Umag%2C+Croatia&ina =4&inMonth=05%2F2012&checkIn=mm%2Fdd%2Fyyyy&outDay=6&outMonth=05%2 2012&checkOut=mm%2Fdd%2Fyyyy#02,1335794425595,bc_airports:S,bc_conventi n_centers:S,nameContains:S,cat:-1,tb:S0,style:Szff_0

APPENDICES A

1. The example of the marketing generating service provider
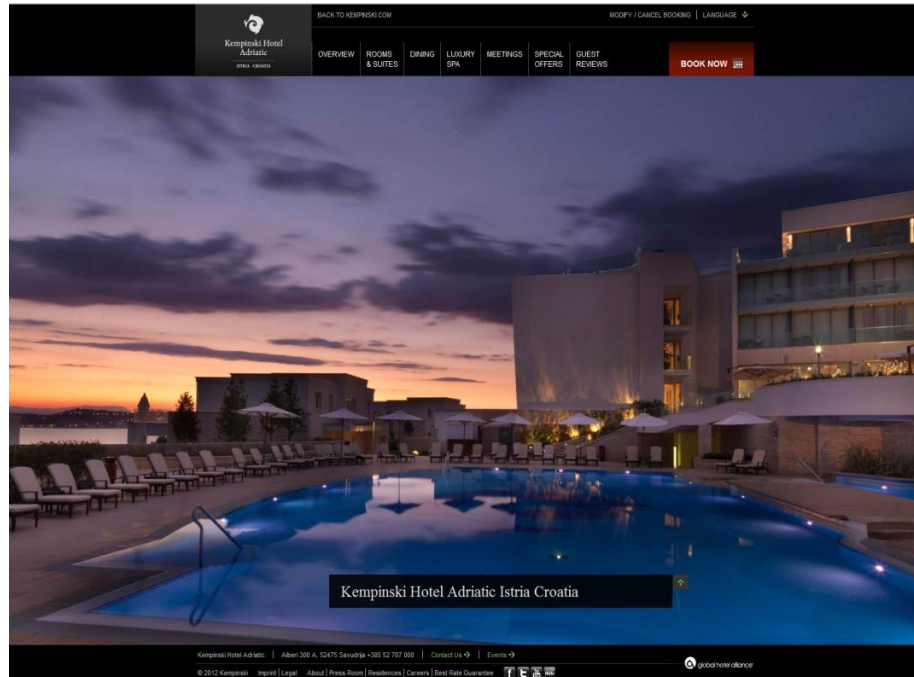
SOURCE: : http://www.kempinski.com/en/istria/hotel-adriatic/welcome/

2. The social media information provider as a example of user generated content
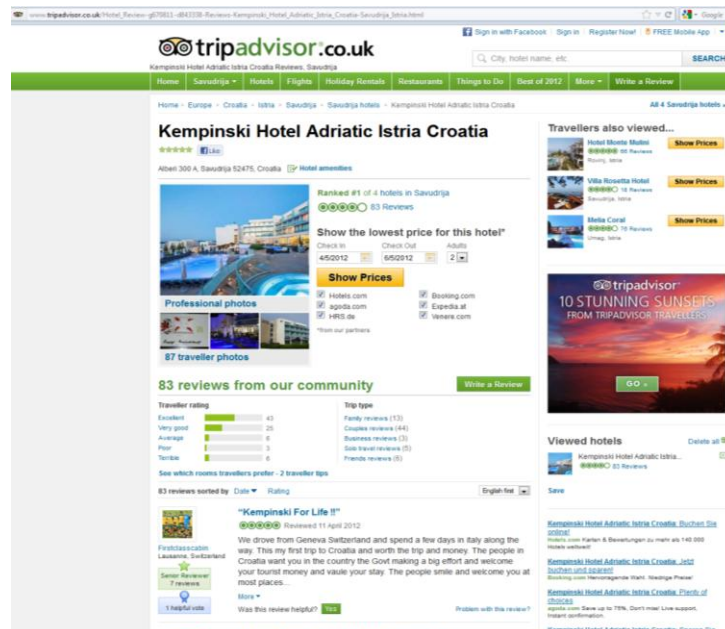
SOURCE:http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g670811-d843338-Reviews-
Kempinski_Hotel_Adriatic_Istria_Croatia-Savudrija_Istria.ht

3. Example of the combination between marketing and consumer generating content

SOURCE: http://www.kempinski.com/en/istria/hotel-adriatic/guest-reviews/

APPENDICES B

Table**:** Current occupation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Pensioner	1	0,9	0,9	0,9
	In Professional Traning	14	12	12	12,8
	Entrepreneur	6	5,1	5,1	17,9
	Blue color worker (worker)	5	4,3	4,3	22,2
	Whit color worker (employee)	35	29,9	29,9	52,1
	Housewife	1	0,9	0,9	53
	Currently unemployed	10	8,5	8,5	61,5
	Student	45	38,5	38,5	100
Valid	Total	117	100	100	

Figure : The self-image and online information source congruence
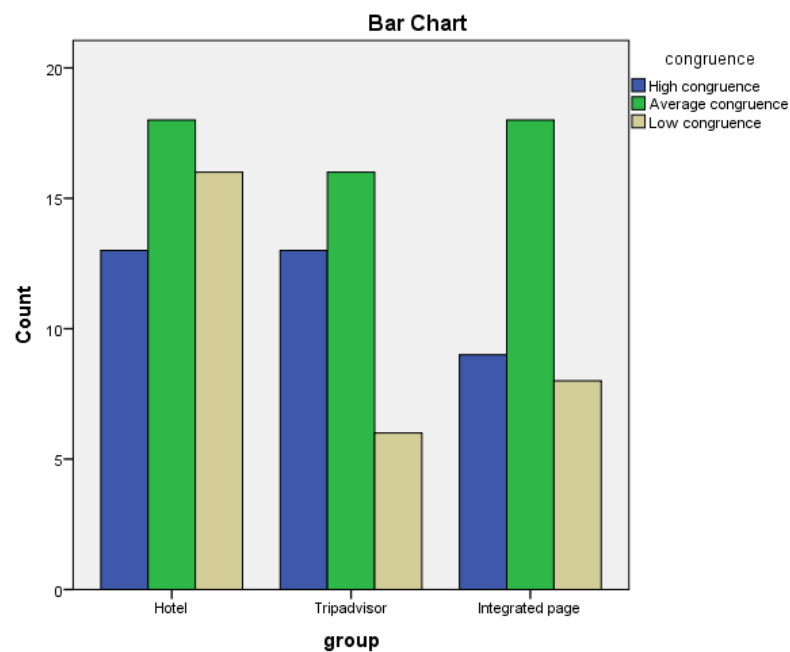
Table: Gender and the congruence with an online information source

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2,342[a]	2	,310
Likelihood Ratio	2,320	2	,314
Linear-by-Linear Association	,432	1	,511
N of Valid Cases	117		

Table: Age and information source congruence

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15,006[a]	8	,059
Likelihood Ratio	17,328	8	,027
Linear-by-Linear Association	3,459	1	,063
N of Valid Cases	117		

Table: Education and information source congruence

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	,850[a]	2	,654
Likelihood Ratio	,915	2	,633
Linear-by-Linear Association	,388	1	,533
N of Valid Cases	117		

Table: Education and information source congruence

| | | | edu - What is your highest obtained education? | | |
			High school	College/University	Total
congruence	High congruence	Count	2	33	35
		% within congruence	5,7%	94,3%	100,0%
		% within edu - What is your highest obtained education?	18,2%	31,1%	29,9%
		% of Total	1,7%	28,2%	29,9%
	Average congruence	Count	6	46	52
		% within congruence	11,5%	88,5%	100,0%
		% within edu - What is your highest obtained education?	54,5%	43,4%	44,4%
		% of Total	5,1%	39,3%	44,4%
	Low congruence	Count	3	27	30
		% within congruence	10,0%	90,0%	100,0%
		% within edu - What is your highest obtained education?	27,3%	25,5%	25,6%
		% of Total	2,6%	23,1%	25,6%
Total		Count	11	106	117
		% within congruence	9,4%	90,6%	100,0%
		% within edu - What is your highest obtained education?	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	9,4%	90,6%	100,0%

Figure: Education and information source congruence
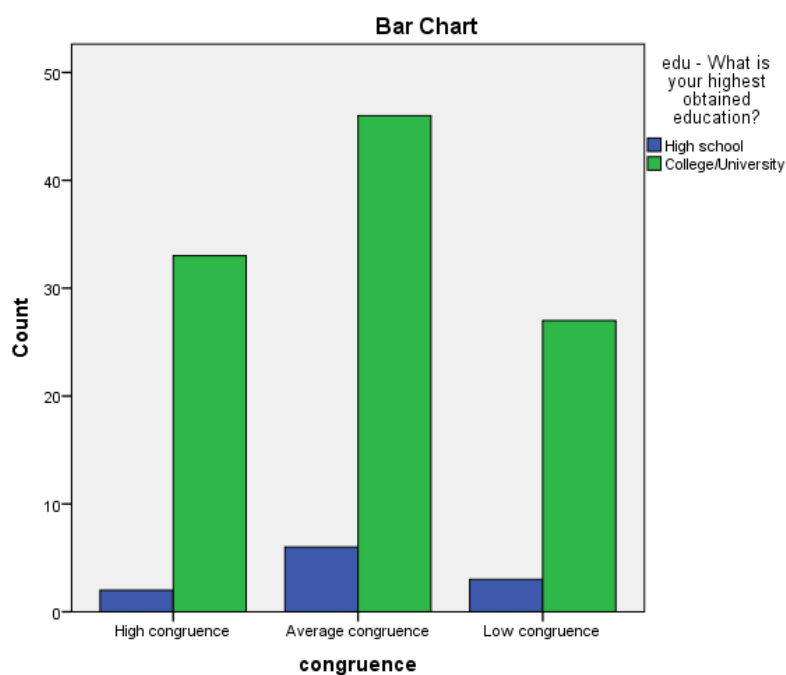
Table: Current occupation and information source congruence

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9,206[a]	14	,818
Likelihood Ratio	10,544	14	,721
Linear-by-Linear Association	,001	1	,974
N of Valid Cases	117		

Figure: Current occupation and information source congruence
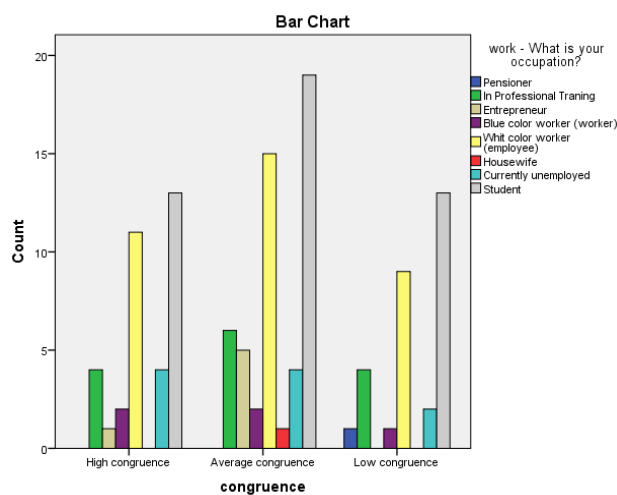
Table: Congruence and online bookings

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5,014[a]	8	,756
Likelihood Ratio	6,407	8	,602
Linear-by-Linear Association	,343	1	,558
N of Valid Cases	117		

Figure: Congruence and online bookings

Table: Congruence and online bookings

			Always use the Internet	Frequently use the Internet	Offline and online equally much	Rarely use the Internet	Never use the Inter-net	Total
congruence	High congruence	Count	8	20	4	3	0	35
		% within congruence	22,9%	57,1%	11,4%	8,6%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within onlbook -	29,6%	31,3%	28,6%	50,0%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	6,8%	17,1%	3,4%	2,6%	0,0%	29,9%
	Average congruence	Count	11	29	7	2	3	52
		% within congruence	21,2%	55,8%	13,5%	3,8%	5,8%	100,0%
		% within onlbook -	40,7%	45,3%	50,0%	33,3%	50,0%	44,4%
		% of Total	9,4%	24,8%	6,0%	1,7%	2,6%	44,4%
	Low congruence	Count	8	15	3	1	3	30
		% within congruence	26,7%	50,0%	10,0%	3,3%	10,0%	100,0%
		% within onlbook -	29,6%	23,4%	21,4%	16,7%	50,0%	25,6%
		% of Total	6,8%	12,8%	2,6%	,9%	2,6%	25,6%
Total		Count	27	64	14	6	6	117
		% within congruence	23,1%	54,7%	12,0%	5,1%	5,1%	100,0%
		% within onlbook -	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	23,1%	54,7%	12,0%	5,1%	5,1%	100,0%

onlbook - How often do you use the Internet for booking a Hotel?

Table: Congruence and levels of trust

| | | | \multicolumn{5}{c|}{trust - Please indicate how much the following characteristics apply to the above mentioned information source. I trust this information source.} | Total |
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
congruence	High congruence	Count	4	22	9	0	0	35
		% within congruence	11,4%	62,9%	25,7%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within trust - I trust this information source.	30,8%	32,4%	31,0%	0,0%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	3,4%	18,8%	7,7%	0,0%	0,0%	29,9%
	Average congruence	Count	6	30	14	2	0	52
		% within congruence	11,5%	57,7%	26,9%	3,8%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within trust - I trust this information source.	46,2%	44,1%	48,3%	50,0%	0,0%	44,4%
		% of Total	5,1%	25,6%	12,0%	1,7%	0,0%	44,4%
	Low congruence	Count	3	16	6	2	3	30
		% within congruence	10,0%	53,3%	20,0%	6,7%	10,0%	100,0%
		% within trust - I trust this information source.	23,1%	23,5%	20,7%	50,0%	100,0%	25,6%
		% of Total	2,6%	13,7%	5,1%	1,7%	2,6%	25,6%
Total		Count	13	68	29	4	3	117
		% within congruence	11,1%	58,1%	24,8%	3,4%	2,6%	100,0%
		% within trust - I trust this information source.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	11,1%	58,1%	24,8%	3,4%	2,6%	100,0%

Table: Information source and the level of reliability

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9,091[a]	8	,335
Likelihood Ratio	9,969	8	,267
Linear-by-Linear Association	,869	1	,351
N of Valid Cases	117		

Figure: Information source and the level of reliability

Table: Information source and the level of reliability

| | | | trust - Please indicate how much the following characteristics apply to the above mentioned information source. I doubt the honesty of this information source. | | | | | |
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
group	Hotel	Count	3	9	11	20	4	47
		% within group	6,4%	19,1%	23,4%	42,6%	8,5%	100,0%
		% within trust - I doubt the honesty of this information source.	60,0%	34,6%	50,0%	35,7%	50,0%	40,2%
		% of Total	2,6%	7,7%	9,4%	17,1%	3,4%	40,2%
	Tripadvisor	Count	1	9	5	17	3	35
		% within group	2,9%	25,7%	14,3%	48,6%	8,6%	100,0%
		% within trust - I doubt the honesty of this information source.	20,0%	34,6%	22,7%	30,4%	37,5%	29,9%
		% of Total	,9%	7,7%	4,3%	14,5%	2,6%	29,9%
	Integrated page	Count	1	8	6	19	1	35
		% within group	2,9%	22,9%	17,1%	54,3%	2,9%	100,0%
		% within trust - I doubt the honesty of this information source.	20,0%	30,8%	27,3%	33,9%	12,5%	29,9%
		% of Total	,9%	6,8%	5,1%	16,2%	,9%	29,9%
Total		Count	5	26	22	56	8	117
		% within group	4,3%	22,2%	18,8%	47,9%	6,8%	100,0%
		% within trust - I doubt the honesty of this information source.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	4,3%	22,2%	18,8%	47,9%	6,8%	100,0%

Table: The estimation of honesty of the information source

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3,916[a]	8	,865
Likelihood Ratio	4,096	8	,848
Linear-by-Linear Association	,033	1	,855
N of Valid Cases	117		

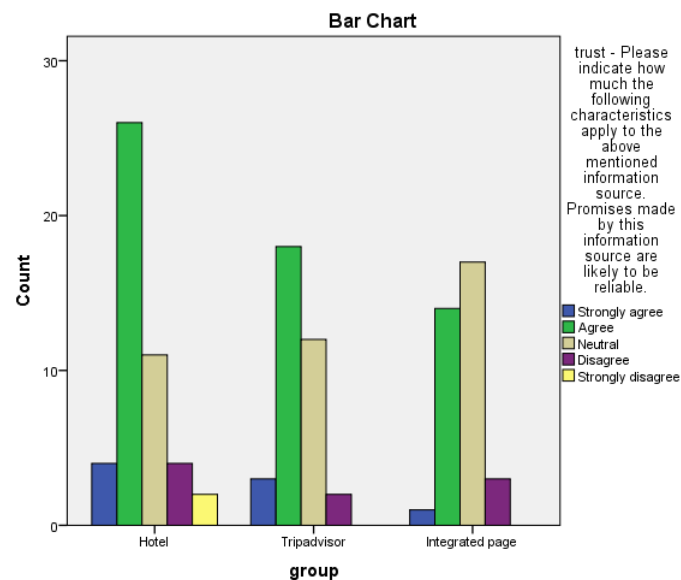Figure: The estimation of honesty of the information source
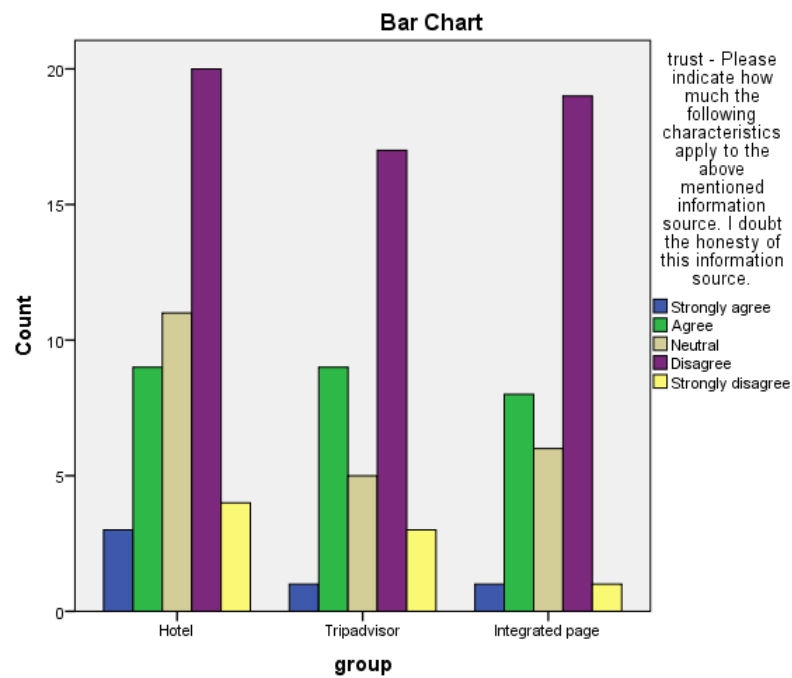
Table: The estimation of honesty of the information source

| | | | trust - Please indicate how much the following characteristics apply to the above mentioned information source. I expect the advice given is in their best judgment. | | | | | |
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
group	Hotel	Count	2	27	14	3	1	47
		% within group	4,3%	57,4%	29,8%	6,4%	2,1%	100,0%
		% within trust - I expect the advice given is in their best judgment.	25,0%	43,5%	36,8%	37,5%	100,0%	40,2%
		% of Total	1,7%	23,1%	12,0%	2,6%	,9%	40,2%
	Tripadvisor	Count	5	15	11	4	0	35
		% within group	14,3%	42,9%	31,4%	11,4%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within trust - I expect the advice given is in their best judgment.	62,5%	24,2%	28,9%	50,0%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	4,3%	12,8%	9,4%	3,4%	0,0%	29,9%
	Integrated page	Count	1	20	13	1	0	35
		% within group	2,9%	57,1%	37,1%	2,9%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within trust - I expect the advice given is in their best judgment.	12,5%	32,3%	34,2%	12,5%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	,9%	17,1%	11,1%	,9%	0,0%	29,9%
Total		Count	8	62	38	8	1	117
		% within group	6,8%	53,0%	32,5%	6,8%	,9%	100,0%
		% within trust - I expect the advice given is in their best judgment.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	6,8%	53,0%	32,5%	6,8%	,9%	100,0%

Table: Information source sincerity

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7,080[a]	8	,528
Likelihood Ratio	8,094	8	,424
Linear-by-Linear Association	,131	1	,717
N of Valid Cases	117		

Figure: Information source sincerity
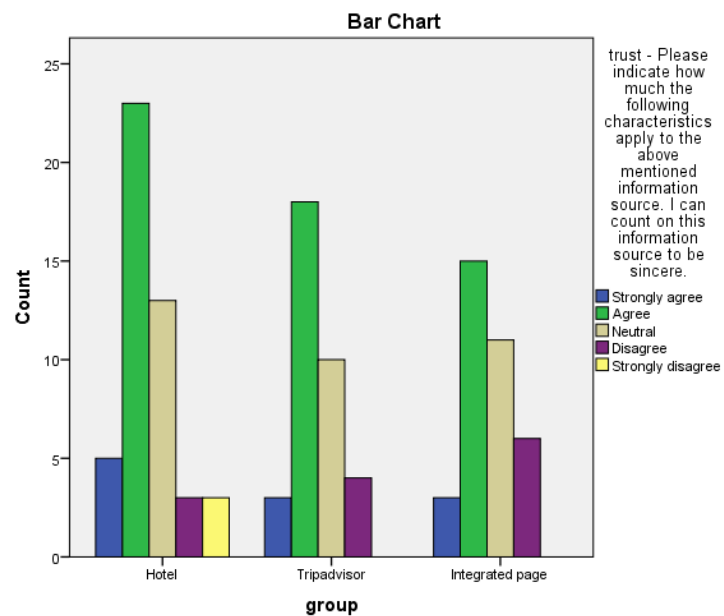
Table: Information source sincerity

| | | | trust - Please indicate how much the following characteristics apply to the above mentioned information source. I can count on this information source to be sincere. | | | | | |
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
group	Hotel	Count	5	23	13	3	3	47
		% within group	10,6%	48,9%	27,7%	6,4%	6,4%	100,0%
		% within trust - I can count on this information source to be sincere.	45,5%	41,1%	38,2%	23,1%	100,0%	40,2%
		% of Total	4,3%	19,7%	11,1%	2,6%	2,6%	40,2%
	Tripadvisor	Count	3	18	10	4	0	35
		% within group	8,6%	51,4%	28,6%	11,4%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within trust - . I can count on this information source to be sincere.	27,3%	32,1%	29,4%	30,8%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	2,6%	15,4%	8,5%	3,4%	0,0%	29,9%
	Integrated page	Count	3	15	11	6	0	35
		% within group	8,6%	42,9%	31,4%	17,1%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within trust - I can count on this information source to be sincere.	27,3%	26,8%	32,4%	46,2%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	2,6%	12,8%	9,4%	5,1%	0,0%	29,9%
Total		Count	11	56	34	13	3	117
		% within group	9,4%	47,9%	29,1%	11,1%	2,6%	100,0%
		% within trust -I can count on this information source to be sincere.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	9,4%	47,9%	29,1%	11,1%	2,6%	100,0%

Table:Perception of information providers willigness to support

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4,836[a]	6	,565
Likelihood Ratio	5,677	6	,460
Linear-by-Linear Association	,199	1	,656
N of Valid Cases	117		

Figure:Perception of information providers willigness to support
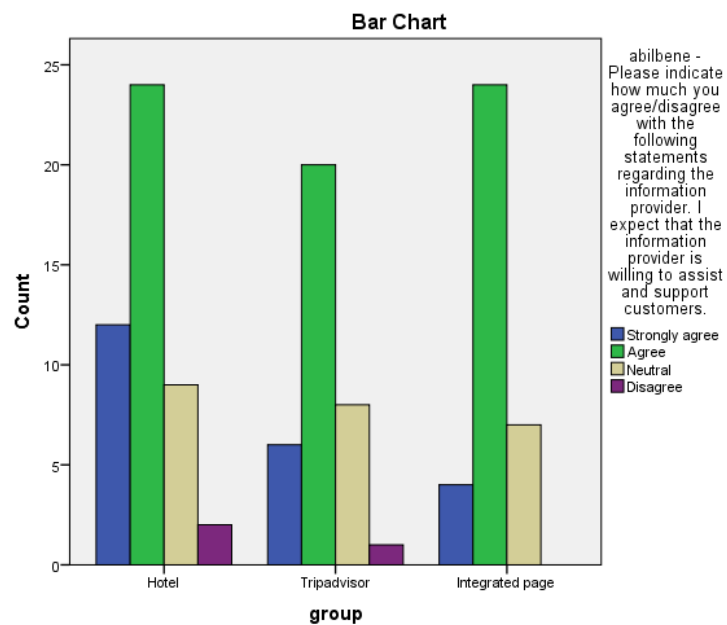
Table:Perception of information providers willigness to support

			abilbene - Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding the information provider. I expect that the information provider is willing to assist and support customers.				
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
group	Hotel	Count	12	24	9	2	47
		% within group	25,5%	51,1%	19,1%	4,3%	100,0%
		% within abilbene I expect that the information provider is willing to assist and support customers.	54,5%	35,3%	37,5%	66,7%	40,2%
		% of Total	10,3%	20,5%	7,7%	1,7%	40,2%
	Tripadvisor	Count	6	20	8	1	35
		% within group	17,1%	57,1%	22,9%	2,9%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - I expect that the information provider is willing to assist and support customers.	27,3%	29,4%	33,3%	33,3%	29,9%
		% of Total	5,1%	17,1%	6,8%	,9%	29,9%
	Integrated page	Count	4	24	7	0	35
		% within group	11,4%	68,6%	20,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within abilbene -I expect that the information provider is willing to assist and support customers.	18,2%	35,3%	29,2%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	3,4%	20,5%	6,0%	0,0%	29,9%
Total		Count	22	68	24	3	117
		% within group	18,8%	58,1%	20,5%	2,6%	100,0%
		% within abilbene -I expect that the information provider is willing to assist and support customers.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	18,8%	58,1%	20,5%	2,6%	100,0%

Table: Information provider has good intentions towards customers

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4,302[a]	6	,636
Likelihood Ratio	4,178	6	,653
Linear-by-Linear Association	,000	1	,984
N of Valid Cases	117		

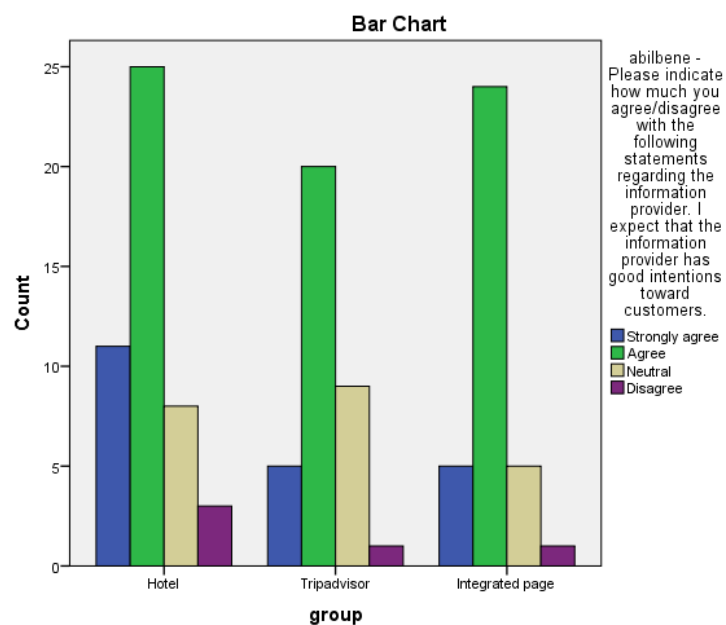Figure: Information provider has good intentions towards customers

Table: Information provider has good intentions towards customers

			abilbene - Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding the information provider. I expect that the information provider has good intentions toward customers.				
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
group	Hotel	Count	11	25	8	3	47
		% within group	23,4%	53,2%	17,0%	6,4%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - I expect that the information provider has good intentions toward customers.	52,4%	36,2%	36,4%	60,0%	40,2%
		% of Total	9,4%	21,4%	6,8%	2,6%	40,2%
	Tripadvisor	Count	5	20	9	1	35
		% within group	14,3%	57,1%	25,7%	2,9%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - . I expect that the information provider has good intentions toward customers.	23,8%	29,0%	40,9%	20,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	4,3%	17,1%	7,7%	,9%	29,9%
	Integrated page	Count	5	24	5	1	35
		% within group	14,3%	68,6%	14,3%	2,9%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - I expect that the information provider has good intentions toward customers.	23,8%	34,8%	22,7%	20,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	4,3%	20,5%	4,3%	,9%	29,9%
Total		Count	21	69	22	5	117
		% within group	17,9%	59,0%	18,8%	4,3%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - I expect that the information provider has good intentions toward customers.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	17,9%	59,0%	18,8%	4,3%	100,0%

Table: Information provider puts customers interests before his own

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6,766[a]	8	,562
Likelihood Ratio	6,837	8	,554
Linear-by-Linear Association	,007	1	,933
N of Valid Cases	117		

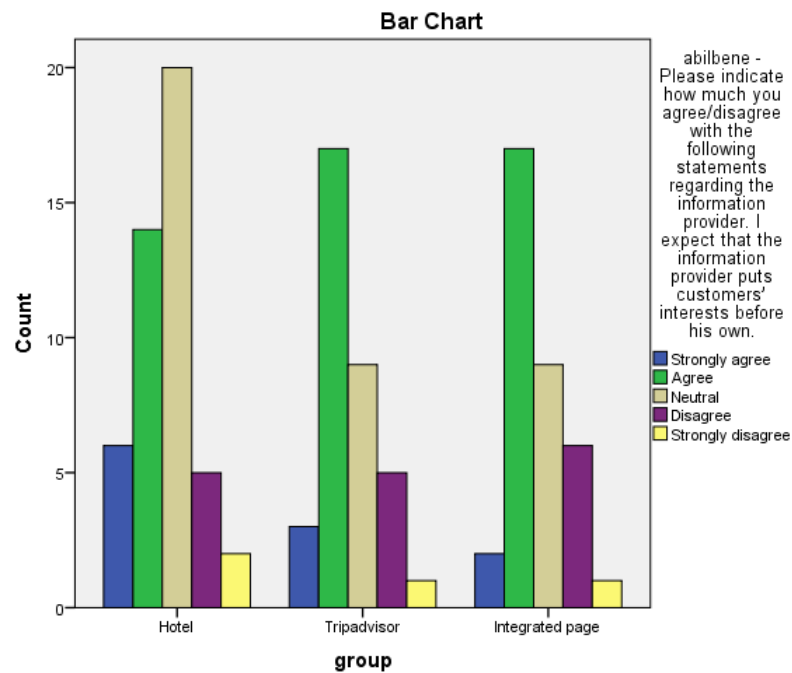Figure: Information provider puts customers interests before his own

Table: Information provider puts customers interests before his own

			abilbene - Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding the information provider. The information provider is competent.				
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
group	Hotel	Count	8	27	10	2	47
		% within group	17,0%	57,4%	21,3%	4,3%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider is competent.	53,3%	40,3%	35,7%	28,6%	40,2%
		% of Total	6,8%	23,1%	8,5%	1,7%	40,2%
	Tripadvisor	Count	6	17	9	3	35
		% within group	17,1%	48,6%	25,7%	8,6%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider is competent.	40,0%	25,4%	32,1%	42,9%	29,9%
		% of Total	5,1%	14,5%	7,7%	2,6%	29,9%
	Integrated page	Count	1	23	9	2	35
		% within group	2,9%	65,7%	25,7%	5,7%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider is competent.	6,7%	34,3%	32,1%	28,6%	29,9%
		% of Total	,9%	19,7%	7,7%	1,7%	29,9%
Total		Count	15	67	28	7	117
		% within group	12,8%	57,3%	23,9%	6,0%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider is competent.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	12,8%	57,3%	23,9%	6,0%	100,0%

Table: The information provider is competent

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5,628[a]	6	,466
Likelihood Ratio	6,768	6	,343
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,705	1	,192
N of Valid Cases	117		

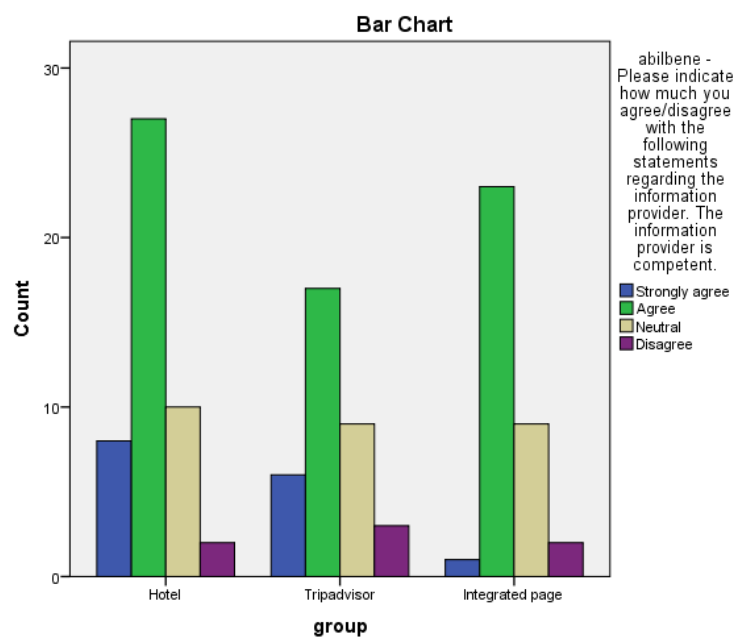Figure: The information provider is competent

Table: The information provider is competent

| | | | abilbene - Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding the information provider. The information provider is competent. | | | | |
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
group	Hotel	Count	8	27	10	2	47
		% within group	17,0%	57,4%	21,3%	4,3%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider is competent.	53,3%	40,3%	35,7%	28,6%	40,2%
		% of Total	6,8%	23,1%	8,5%	1,7%	40,2%
	Tripadvisor	Count	6	17	9	3	35
		% within group	17,1%	48,6%	25,7%	8,6%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider is competent.	40,0%	25,4%	32,1%	42,9%	29,9%
		% of Total	5,1%	14,5%	7,7%	2,6%	29,9%
	Integrated page	Count	1	23	9	2	35
		% within group	2,9%	65,7%	25,7%	5,7%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider is competent.	6,7%	34,3%	32,1%	28,6%	29,9%
		% of Total	,9%	19,7%	7,7%	1,7%	29,9%
Total		Count	15	67	28	7	117
		% within group	12,8%	57,3%	23,9%	6,0%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider is competent.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	12,8%	57,3%	23,9%	6,0%	100,0%

Table: The service provider is competent

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7,934[a]	8	,440
Likelihood Ratio	8,648	8	,373
Linear-by-Linear Association	,621	1	,431
N of Valid Cases	117		

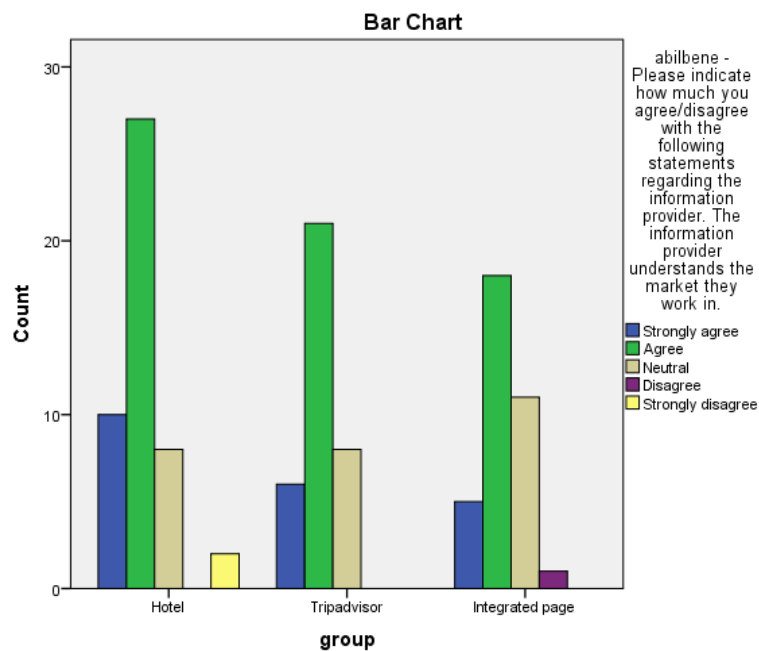Figure: The service provider is competent

Table: The service provider is competent

			abilbene - Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding the information provider. The information provider understands the market they work in.					Total
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
group	Hotel	Count	10	27	8	0	2	47
		% within group	21,3%	57,4%	17,0%	0,0%	4,3%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider understands the market they work in.	47,6%	40,9%	29,6%	0,0%	100,0%	40,2%
		% of Total	8,5%	23,1%	6,8%	0,0%	1,7%	40,2%
	Tripadvisor	Count	6	21	8	0	0	35
		% within group	17,1%	60,0%	22,9%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider understands the market they work in.	28,6%	31,8%	29,6%	0,0%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	5,1%	17,9%	6,8%	0,0%	0,0%	29,9%
	Integrated page	Count	5	18	11	1	0	35
		% within group	14,3%	51,4%	31,4%	2,9%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider understands the market they work in.	23,8%	27,3%	40,7%	100,0%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	4,3%	15,4%	9,4%	,9%	0,0%	29,9%
Total		Count	21	66	27	1	2	117
		% within group	17,9%	56,4%	23,1%	,9%	1,7%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider understands the market they work in.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	17,9%	56,4%	23,1%	,9%	1,7%	100,0%

Table: The service provider has good knowledge about hotels

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6,381[a]	8	,605
Likelihood Ratio	7,100	8	,526
Linear-by-Linear Association	,003	1	,958
N of Valid Cases	117		

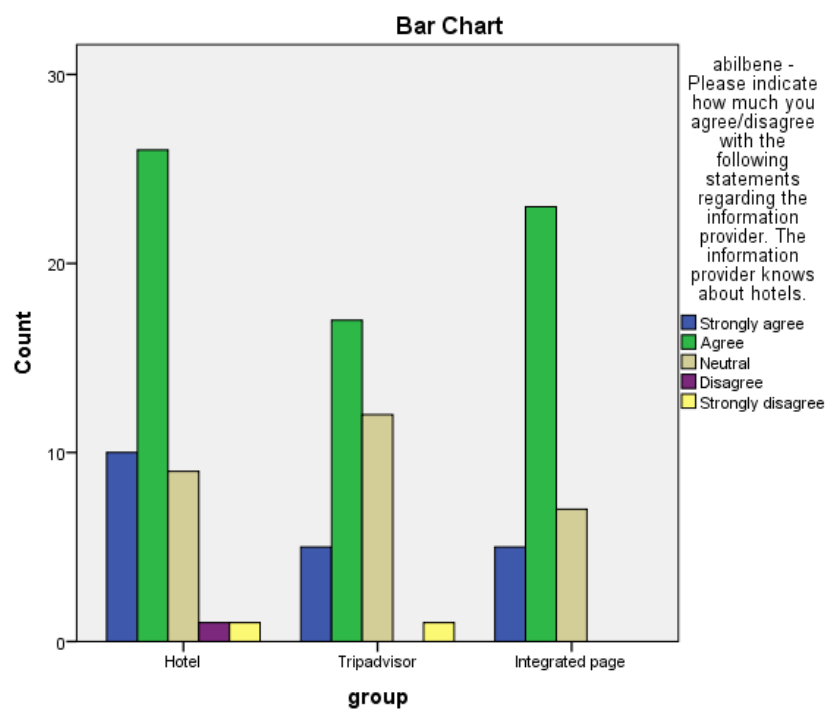Figure: The service provider has good knowledge about hotels

Table: The service provider has good knowledge about hotels

			abilbene - Please indicate how much you agree/disagree with the following statements regarding the information provider. The information provider knows about hotels.					Total
			Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
group	Hotel	Count	10	26	9	1	1	47
		% within group	21,3%	55,3%	19,1%	2,1%	2,1%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider knows about hotels.	50,0%	39,4%	32,1%	100,0%	50,0%	40,2%
		% of Total	8,5%	22,2%	7,7%	,9%	,9%	40,2%
	Tripadvisor	Count	5	17	12	0	1	35
		% within group	14,3%	48,6%	34,3%	0,0%	2,9%	100,0%
		% within abilbene The information provider knows about hotels.	25,0%	25,8%	42,9%	0,0%	50,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	4,3%	14,5%	10,3%	0,0%	,9%	29,9%
	Integrated page	Count	5	23	7	0	0	35
		% within group	14,3%	65,7%	20,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider knows about hotels.	25,0%	34,8%	25,0%	0,0%	0,0%	29,9%
		% of Total	4,3%	19,7%	6,0%	0,0%	0,0%	29,9%
Total		Count	20	66	28	1	2	117
		% within group	17,1%	56,4%	23,9%	,9%	1,7%	100,0%
		% within abilbene - The information provider knows about hotels.	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	17,1%	56,4%	23,9%	,9%	1,7%	100,0%