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THE INFLUENCE OF ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH ON CONSUMERS' DECISION-MAKING PROCESS: THE TRIPADVISOR CASE.

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Abstract

With the emergence of Web 2.0, characterized by User-Generated Content, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) is becoming an important source of influence on consumer's product's and service's evaluation. E-WOM can be found in virtual communities such as travel communities, consumer reviews, blogs, forum and social network, etc. etc., which are used by consumers to make purchase decision. More and more consumers visit Web sites and read reviews from other consumers in order to learn more about a product or service, before making a purchase. One of the sectors where electronic word-of-mouth is becoming the major source of information is the travel industry. Indeed online travel communities are becoming increasingly important because individuals utilize information from these communities to make travel-related decisions and the most high-profile example of online travel communities is TripAdvisor. Therefore this study will examine the E-WOM on a specific online travel community, TripAdvisor, and will investigate if E-WOM influences the consumers' decision-making process. It will cover the literature review of the main aspects and characteristics of the E-WOM that may influence the consumers' decision-making process. Through the literature review this study will develop a framework that will be tested with an online survey, distributed by GN-Research on a statistically representative panel of the Italian population. Finally, it will investigate which specific features of the E-WOM on TripAdvisor influence more the restaurant's decision-making process of Italians from 18 to 64 years old.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter will present the topic of research that this study will analyse. It will firstly give an understanding of the research by providing the background and it will explain the reasons and context as to why this research has been undertaken. Secondly, this chapter will utilise the state of the art research to gain the most up to date information. Thirdly, it will outline objectives that this work endeavours to attain and finally will display a short summary of the content of each chapter of this thesis.

1.1 Context

The affirmation of new technologies and new media was the most important element of change in the landscape of the Italian society in recent years (Source: US Census Bureau, InternetWorldStats, 2014).

The progress of Internet, through Web 2.0 also called user-generated content, that gives the opportunity to everyone to share their opinions and any kind of contents, have allowed a proliferation of opinion platforms and information exchange tools. Social communities are online networks of people who share common interests and are the perfect example of the phenomenon of Web 2.0. This progress has modified channels by which consumers search, obtain and collect information, and moreover the way by which they communicate with each other and share knowledge. Platforms or online communities are available for many categories and strata of products and services and are used by consumers to get information because they can easily access these opinions and also express their opinion on them, producing electronic word-of-mouth. Therefore these social communities are not just social networks, but dynamic

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platforms that enable and empower users to generate content and re-tell their own experiences. The Web 2.0 diffusion, thanks to its easiness of interactivity, has been rapid and widespread, and tourism and travel topics are among the most popular issues in this environment (indeed almost 40% of purchases online are of travel and transportation services, source: Nielsen). Moreover the rapid success of mobile connectivity constitutes the passage that multiplies the possibilities offered from the Internet when individuals search information. Radically changed is not only the way individuals communicate, but also their way of life, relationships with others, work and how they spend free time, realise their passions and make explicit their individuality. Of course, among other things, mobile connectivity has also radically changed models of purchase and consumption.

According to a survey conducted by the agency WeAreSocial, Italians who have network access and navigate on the Internet are 35.5 million: almost 6 Italians out of 10 (63%) consult the web regularly, and Internet users in Italy spend on average 4 hours and 40 minutes in 'surfing' online. The phenomenon of social networks has great importance when examining new social trends; it has become the main tool, which Italians communicate by, build relationships with other people, and ultimately exchange information. Internet and technology are altering the perception and enjoyment of leisure time whilst impacting profoundly on Italians consumer behaviour and purchasing. Also considering that, in the imagination of the consumer, Internet and social media take place of advertising (Source: Nielsen). The purchase process tends to be influenced more by the Internet and also from the spread of devices that are available at any time. The web is a tool that allows everyone to access and search information about products, in order to compare prices and exchange views and opinions with those

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who have already made the purchase. People have learned to use the Internet to access information on the product, to review others experiences, reading electronic word-of-mouth of other consumers, and finally to make their purchase.

1.2 Presentation of the topic

In light of the previous context, the use of electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) provides important information and suggestions to consumers when they are making a purchase decision. Therefore, it is interesting to analyse the influence of information written from other users on the Internet by consumers, and so this thesis aims to investigate the power that electronic word of mouth has on consumers' decision-making process and analyse which are the aspects that characterize E-WOM.

Tourism and travel topics are among the most popular topics online, yet there is a difficulty in evaluating products and services before their consumption (Litvin S.W., Goldsmith R.E. and Pan B., 2008), this thesis has chosen to analyse, specifically, the planning of dining out. Also because, in 2013, food was the topic that has received, on Internet, much interest among Italians (Source: Nielsen).

The online community that boasts having the largest number of restaurant reviews is TripAdvisor and that is why this thesis will specifically analyse the E-WOM in this online travel community. It will be discovered what proportion of Italians use TripAdvisor to search information about a restaurant. Moreover, it will be investigated if Italians consumers are influenced by reviews available on this online travel

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community and which aspect of the electronic word of mouth influences more during their research of information in the network.

1.3 State of the art

In order to better present the topic, it is important to analyse the most state of the art and up to date electronic word of mouth. The existing literature shows that several studies have been made on this topic. In 2003 Corritore, Kracher and Wiedenbeck, started analysing the general consumers' on-line trust and in 2004 Hennig-Thurau and Walsh, introduced research on the electronic word-of-mouth, studying it's potential motives and the consequences of reading review online. Some researchers investigated the impact of tourist's use of restaurants webpages on their decision of a restaurant. Others analysed which motives are behind the consumers' engagement in the electronic word-of-mouth. In 2006 Gruen, Osmonbekov and Czaplewski, published an article where they investigated the effect of the E-WOM, discovering that the know-how exchange on the Internet impacts the customer's perception of product value. Lee and Youn, three years later (2009), analysed how much E-WOM platforms influence consumer product judgment.

A great help for this thesis was provided by the work of Gretzel, Yoo and Purifoy, in 2007, in which was conducted a study to investigate the role and the impact of online travel reviews during the planning process of travel related activities. Indeed, they identified factors that influence the credibility and the usefulness of E-WOM, as well as the motivation to write the review. Park, Lee and Han, in the same year,

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investigated the role of engagement on consumer purchasing intention. More recently Cheung and Lee, in 2012, analysed what drives consumers to spread electronic word of mouth in online consumer-opinion platforms. Moreover, in literature, Burton and Khammash, in 2010, studied the reasons why people read reviews online and Shu-Chuan and Yoojung, in 2011 investigated the determinants of consumer engagement in E-WOM in social networking sites.

Another important piece of research for this thesis, on the E-WOM in the travel industry, was the work of Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan, (2008) where they affirm that electronic word-of-mouth in the travel industry is ranked as the most important information source. Bronner and Hoog also confirmed this theory, in 2010, establishing that consumer-generated content is more influential than marketer-generated content.

The literature on the E-WOM, in 2012 by Qiu, Pang and Lim moved its attention to study the effects of conflicting aggregated rating on E-WOM review credibility and in 2013 Racherla, Connolly and Christodoulidou, investigated what determines consumers' ratings of service providers. That same year Nga, Carson and Moore, investigated the effects of positive and negative online customer reviews. Ayeh, Au and Law, (2013) examined the credibility perceptions and online traveller's attitude toward using user-generated content. Baek, Ahn and Choi, (2013) analysed the helpfulness of E-WOM. Finally, Reichelt, Sievert and Jacob in 2014, studied "how credibility affects E-WOM reading: the influences of expertise, trustworthiness, and similarity on utilitarian and social functions".

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1.4 Objectives

The objective of this research is to analyse and evaluate the characteristics of the electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) and which of these has the utmost influence on the consumers' decision-making process. Specifically, this research examines one exponent of the online travel community: TripAdvisor, and assess the effect that E-WOM, contained in it, has on consumer's decision-making process. Therefore, the ultimate objective of this thesis is to understand how the E-WOM influences the decision-making process of Italian consumers when choosing a restaurant. This research will highlight which aspect of the E-WOM influences them the most during the research of information and experiences of restaurants contained in TripAdvisor. In addition this thesis will endeavour to understand the incidence usage that Italians have on TripAdvisor and discover if they are influenced by E-WOM and to what extent.

1.5 Report structure

The report structure of this study is made up of six main chapters and following will be a brief summary of the content of each:

Introduction: Introduces the background of the research, providing the context, the presentation of the topic, the state of the art and objectives of the research.

Literature review: Firstly presents a literature review of the main areas around which the current knowledge on E-WOM is constructed. These areas are the quantity, the quality and the credibility, which are E-WOM influencing factor of the decision-making process; and the engagement of E-WOM which is taken into account to

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understand the motives that lead to participate or not in the creation of E-WOM. Secondly, it illustrates the conceptual framework build on these areas, and the connected hypotheses, which is used to answer to the research questions. Finally it concludes with a description of the online travel community selected: TripAdvisor.

Research aim and methods: Presents the research sequence adopted for this research. It provides a detailed description of each part of the research. The research questions, the objectives and the methodology are presented and the sampling methods and questionnaire design are explained.

Data analysis and results: Reports the descriptive analysis of findings of the questionnaire.

Results validation and discussion: Verify, through the regression analysis, the validity of the thesis's hypotheses, answer the research questions and describe in details how this thesis reaches the objectives. Finally, it includes the summary of the findings according to the conceptual framework.

Conclusion: Provide a summary of this thesis and its findings. Presents the analysis of the managerial implications of the findings and the discussion of the limitations of this thesis and of the future researches.

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Chapter 2 – Literature Review

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

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This chapter firstly presents a literature review of the electronic word-of-mouth and of the main areas around which the current knowledge of E-WOM is constructed. Secondly, it illustrates the conceptual framework build on these areas, and on the connected hypotheses, which will be used to answer to the research questions. Finally it concludes with a description of TripAdvisor explaining how it works and how consumers use it.

2.1 Electronic word of mouth

Electronic word-of-mouth communication can be defined as any positive or negative comment made by potential, actual, or previous customers about a product, a service, or a company, which is made available to a multitude of people on the Internet. (Thorsten Hennig-Thurau F., Gwinner K., Walsh G. and Gremler D., 2004).

Before the proliferation of the Internet, the flow of word-of-mouth information was restricted and impacted mainly the local group of friends and family. The advent of the Internet and thus electronic word-of-mouth has facilitated information flow to a boundless and infinite audience, as all visitors of the community can read every message in every moment that was ever written. Previous research suggest that E-WOM is more powerful that traditional WOM (Liang S.W.J., Ekinci Y., Occhiocupo N. and Whyatt G., 2013) for various reasons. The first reason is the intrinsic characteristics of the E-WOM that is the speed of propagation and the greatness of the audience (Litvin S.W., Goldsmith R.E. and Pan B., 2008). Secondly is the fact that the receiver of the message can access a wide range of comments, from different kinds of people not only from acquaintances. Thirdly, why e-WOM is more influential, is due to the permanence

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of message; it remains online for a long time, indefinitely in fact, allowing the researcher to gain information instantly or after a period of time. Furthermore, another factor that makes E-WOM more powerful than traditional WOM, concerns the anonymity of the post that helps both the writer and the reader of the message. The writer feels free to express their opinion without recrimination under a veil of anonymity and the reader is not influenced by knowing the person who wrote the message, but only the content of the message.

There is evidence that online or electronic word-of-mouth has a significant influence on purchase behaviour (Chen Y., Fay S. and Wang Q., 2011). For Dellarocas (2003) the digitalization of word of mouth has produced both new opportunities and difficulties for consumers when seeking information. E-WOM, with the low cost to obtain and exchange information, has created new dynamics in the market but also new problems, which may arise considering the anonymity of contents. Strategic manipulation and abuse of E-WOM can occur when a travel operator posts in the community, as an independent user, dishonest comments and reviews which, as a result, promote their reputation or defame one of their competitors (Litvin S.W., Goldsmith R.E. and Pan B., 2008). Indeed, new opportunities may arise from the service or product providers' point of view, considering that E-WOM represents a new way of marketing activity.

2.2 Electronic word-of-mouth in the travel industry

Prior to the advent of Internet, the travel industry focused on the travel agency sales channel. Customers had to visit their local travel agencies to purchase travel

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tickets and to plan their travel and also to get an idea about the travel and destination. The appearance of the Internet and Web 2.0 has caused a revolution in the way of obtaining information. Customers now have the ability to search travel destinations, purchase online hotel accommodation and book airline, train and cruise ship tickets. When a traveller realises how easy it is to use the Internet for travel plans, it is difficult to justify the use of a traditional travel agency with its inherent additional costs involved. These new technologies improve the propagation of information to everyone, thereby lowering the importance of travel agency (Cheung R. and Lam P., 2009).

Therefore with the improvement of new Internet technologies, a growing number of consumers, or travellers, are using Internet as a tool to seek destination information in order to make the best purchase decisions. Indeed Ayeh, Au and Law (2013) stated that travellers are becoming more and more independent. They search and disseminate their own information to make the best decision for their travel, about the destination and all the relative services, avoiding the involvement of travel intermediaries. Thus E-WOM in the travel industry has been identified as very influential tool in consumers' the decision-making process (Litvin S.W., Goldsmith R.E. and Pan B., 2008). Current research in the travel industry has shown the great influence of reviews on tourism products and services. Litvin, Blose and Laird (2004) affirmed that consumers' selection of restaurant is predominantly conditioned by E-WOM recommendations. Moreover Litvin, Blose and Laird (2004) stated that restaurateurs have shifted their attention from the traditional marketing channels, such as advertising and public relations, to a non-traditional interpersonal marketing strategy.

Relevant to this study is the penetrability of the Internet and how its spread new ways of communication sharing information, through travel communities, consumer

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reviews, blogs, forum and social network. These constitute forms that empower both consumers and providers, allowing new ways for sharing information and experiences for travellers, and a new marketing channel for providers. E-WOM is in the on-line space that can be accessed, joined and explored, giving to travellers more possibilities to locate or search travel information, since they rely more and more on search engines on the Internet. For this reason E-WOM has logically changed travellers' structure to search information, the way they access them and, consequently, their knowledge and opinion of different travel products. In addition, electronic word-of-mouth is creating electronic relationships and communities entailing the creation of a new type of reality by influencing travellers during their online searches of information and purchase decision process (Ayeh J.K., Au N. and Law R., 2013).

2.3 Electronic word-of-mouth influencing factors

Despite the fact that there are a multitude of variables that can influence the effectiveness of E-WOM (Litvin S.W., Goldsmith R.E. and Pan B., 2008), the literature review analyse the electronic word-of-mouth under four principal aspects. First the quantity, that is the number of reviews that the reader face about a single product or service. Secondly the quality, that is the rating that a single product or service has, as a result of all the positive and negative reviews about it. Thirdly the credibility that is divided into the credibility of the reviewer and the trustworthiness of the review. These three aspects are E-WOM influencing factor of the decision-making process. Finally, the fourth aspect is the engagement which is considered to understand the motives that

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lead or not to participate in the creation of E-WOM.

These areas are analysed in order to develop hypotheses to clearly understand which aspects of E-WOM influence more the consumers' decision-making process, and to what extent, and to evaluate the motives in the electronic word of mouth engagement. Furthermore, these areas, and the connected hypotheses, build the conceptual framework that this thesis will test.

2.3.1 Quantity of E-WOM

González, Gidumal and Valcárcel (2013) define the quantity of E-WOM as the volume, which measures the total amount of E-WOM interaction. The number of on-line reviews of a product or service represents the review quantity and may be defined as a product's popularity due to the reasonable assumption that the number of reviews is strictly related to the number of consumers who have purchased a product or have used a service. And that, the review quantity may also be explained by the high satisfaction or to the high dissatisfaction of the product or service. Moreover if a large number of reviews is present for a single product or service, and the majority recommend it, the reader, is likely to assent with the reviews' suggestion and will believe the E-WOM and choose accordingly (Park D.H., Lee J. and Han I., 2007). Zhang, Ye, Law and Li (2010) revealed that positive E-WOM directly improved the online popularity of a restaurant and the quantity of reviews can increase the interest in visiting the restaurant's website. To confirm the importance of online comments Park, Lee and Han (2007) also stated that the decision-making process is positively influenced when the quantity of reviews increase. Thus, the following hypotheses can be postulated:

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Hypothesis 1: The quantity of E-WOM influences consumers' decision-making process.

Hypothesis 1a: The high number of reviews on a restaurant depends more on the restaurant's popularity than on the high satisfaction/dissatisfaction of consumers' on the restaurant.

Figure 1 shows the hypotheses path derivate from the combination of the theories of Zhang, Ye, Law and Li (2010), González, Gidumal and Valcárcel (2013) and Park, Lee and Han (2007).
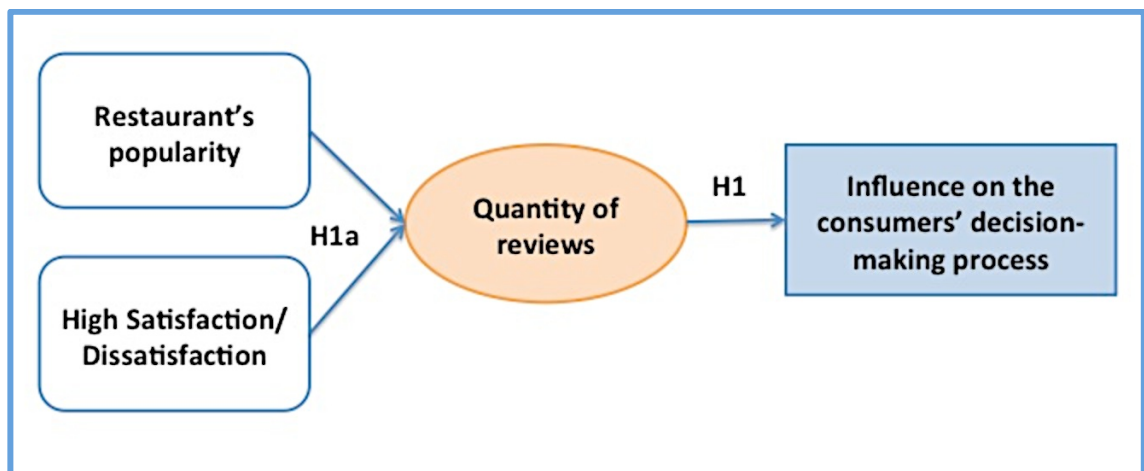
Figure 1 – Quantity's hypotheses.

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2.3.2 Quality of E-WOM

In literature review the quality of on-line reviews can be explained by two different aspects. The first look at the quality of E-WOM considering the content of the message; the second is more specific to the travel industry and refers to E-WOM in online travel communities, where the quality of E-WOM is the rating of the product or service, as a result of the correlation between all positive and negative reviews.

The first aspect that concerns itself with the quality of on-line reviews is explained in terms of message contents, Park D.H., Lee J. and Han I., 2007 stated that there are two considerably different kind of review content: one is more subjective and emotional, in which the writer expresses his or her feelings when used or consumed or experienced the product or service. The other kind of review content is more objective, specific and clear supporting its motivation with reasonable and measurable variables. In addition they affirmed, "The review quality is defined as the quality of a review's contents from the perspective of information characteristics: relevance, understandability, sufficiency, and objectivity". Thus the more specific and detailed the message is, the more is its quality. They argued that a message that is more detailed and accurate is more high quality because it is believed to hold more truth. Truth enables the message to be trusted more. Due to anonymity of the writer, the truth of their message must endeavour to gain more trust to be an influence on the consumers' decision-making process. The following hypothesis is therefore submitted:

Hypothesis 2a: Objective and detailed E-WOM message are more influential than subjective and emotional ones.

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The other point of view to interpret the quality refers to the rating of review. Existing literature divides the quality of the comment between positive and negative feedback. Most of the literature suggests that consumers pay greater attention to negative review and that negative messages have a greater impact in respect to the positive ones. Indeed, when a consumer is forming their overall judgment, they tend to weigh more heavily negative than positive information. This is due to consumers perceiving negative comments as more demonstrative than positive ones (Lee M. and Youn S. 2009). Other researchers, like Gretzel, Yoo and Purifoy (2007), support that E-WOMs in travel communities are more useful when they maintain a balance between positive and negative comments. While Qiu, Pang and Him (2012) investigated the effect of the presence of conflicting comments or ratings on the adoption of E-WOM, and found that the presence of conflicting rating decreases the credibility of E-WOM. Moreover Sun-Jae Doh and Jang-Sun (2009) argue that the consensus of E-WOM's comments is important to define the persuasiveness of E-WOM. Consensus is defined as the agreement between the majority of the comments (it can be positive consensus or a negative consensus) about a product or service. They stated that the higher the consensus is, the more persuasive the e-WOM; conversely, the lower the consensus is, the less powerful the E-WOM. Although, some messages against the tide of overall consensus can be helpful in promoting E-WOM credibility. This is explained in the sense that consumers may suspect the credibility of E-WOM if they don't find any posts that give varying opinions. Therefore in light of the previous considerations the following hypothesis is drawn:

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Hypothesis 2: The rating of the restaurant influences consumers' decision-making process.

Combining the two different points of view of the quality of E-WOM, the quality's hypotheses path is constructed and it is visible in Figure 2.
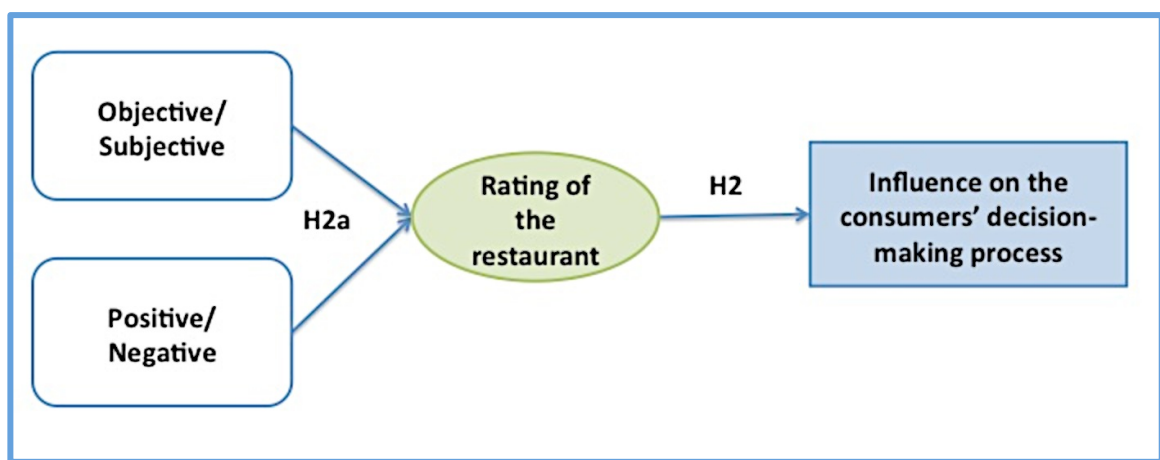
Figure 2 – Quality's hypotheses.

2.3.3 Credibility and trustworthiness in E-WOM

The trustworthiness of some information, in the online space, or of its source represents the credibility of E-WOM. Thus, this factor may be divided into the credibility of the writer of the comment, or review, and in the credibility or more accurately; in the trustworthiness of the review itself.

Cheung, Luo, Sia and Chen (2009) define the credibility of electronic word of mouth as the extent to which consumers feel that the product information, comment and review are factual, true or believable. The credibility is a critical dimension in the travel

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community, and travellers may consider E-WOM to be credible because other travellers generate it. Indeed Park, Lee and Han (2007) argued that E-WOM in the online community is more credible for users than information provided by travel intermediaries or agencies. The credibility that the reader awards to the comment will determine how influential the E-WOM will be on the decision-making process of the traveller. Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu (2011) suggested that trust in online community is an important influencer that determines the influence that E-WOM has on the travellers' decision-making process. They also affirm that the intention to follow the read advice, in an online travel community, implies the intention to act in a defined way, in accordance with the suggestion contained in the comment posted by other users of the community. Moreover these authors stated that the perceived usefulness of the comment assist travellers in their decision-making process for the most relevant solution. Also Reichelt, Sievert and Jacob (2014) take on this aspect and write that the usefulness of the E-WOM information depends on its credibility.

In the traditional word-of-mouth, the source is known because family members, friends or acquaintances transmit the information, therefore consumers are able to assess the credibility of the information judging the source of the received advice. In the on-line space this is not possible, because of the anonymity of the source of the information. Due to the anonymity of the writer, reviews may have less credibility and for this reason the content of E-WOM review is a very important element to determine the credibility of the message. In order to reduce this anonymity, some online communities such as TripAdvisor or Amazon, ask writers to identify themselves (providing name, age and country of origin) and this provides a sufficient degree of influence to the reader to identify the writer. Nonetheless it is difficult to make a

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distinction between fake and manipulated E-WOM from the honest ones, provided by real people. Cheung, Luo, Sia and Chen (2009) showed that there are two influencers of credibility: informational and normative determinants. The informational influence is based on the content of the message while the normative ones consider the impact of social aggregation mechanisms obtained in the social community. They found that informational factors influence more the credibility of E-WOM than the normative ones. Also Park, Lee and Han argue that if the content of the review is persuasive and logical, consumers are more likely to follow the message. Therefore the perceived usefulness of a message is an important and fundamental factor that influences the consumers' decision-making process. Therefore it impacts on the intention to follow the advice obtained from E-WOM messages and it depends wholly on the credibility of the message.

The first aspect of the credibility is represented by the credibility of the reviewer. This depends on the perceived expertise that the writer gives to the reader, on the perceptual affinity and on the total amount of reviews that the reviewer has posted, which gives to the reader of the review the impression that the reviewer is not occasional or fake. The perceived expertise is defined by Reichelt, Sievert and Jacob (2014) and it occurs when a person shows themselves to be credible through deep and extensive knowledge and experience of the given topic and give to the reader the feeling of trust in that E-WOM. Ayeh, Au and Law (2013) analyse the perceptual affinity, to assess the credibility of E-WOM. They say that people usually regard others, who are similar to themselves, as a credible source. Perceptual affinity is meant as the similarities among people that share the same interests, tastes, values, experiences and lifestyles. When consumers, searching travel related information, perceive that the

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content of the message is similar in terms of mind-set, worldview and travel behaviour, so the acceptance of the E-WOM is supposedly higher. In other words, the more the reader feels a perceptual affinity with the writer of the message, the more will be the influence of the E-WOM on the decision-making process. The high number of reviews, that the writer has posted, could give the perception credibility of the reviewer of the E-WOM. Other calculations of the credibility of the reviewer are made in a systematic way based on algorithms utilizing objective information: the duration of the membership, the number of review posted, the number of feedback received and assigned to others. All this information helps the consumer to determine the credibility of the reviewer to better distinguish fake reviewers from honest ones. Therefore, the following hypotheses are presented:

Hypothesis 3: The credibility of the reviewer influences consumers' decision-making process.

Hypothesis 3a: The credibility of the reviewer of the E-WOM message depends more on the perceived expertise of the reviewer than on the number of other comments that the reviewer has posted.

The credibility of the reviewer's hypotheses path is constructed and it is visible in Figure 3.

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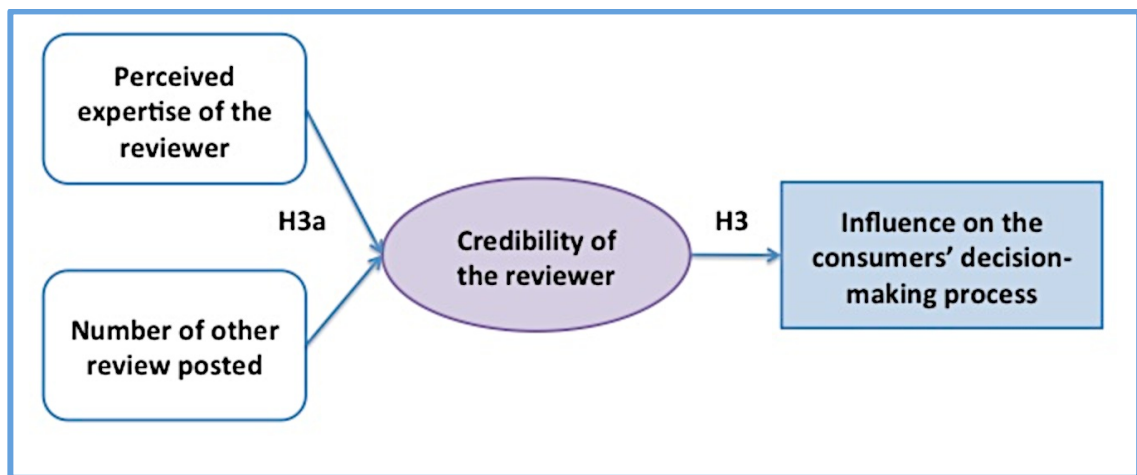
Figure 3 – Credibility of the reviewer's hypotheses.

The second aspect of the credibility is represented by the trustworthiness of the review. This is determined firstly by the date of the post of the review and also by multimedia added to the comment, like photos or videos. Secondly by perceived usefulness which is estimated by the rating of the review itself. TripAdvisor allows voting on the "helpfulness" of the comment, as a feedback of the usefulness of that comment, which represents the rating of the review. In this way review can obtain different grades of helpfulness from other members of the community, which already have used and have proved that the comment was helpful in their decision-making process. Thus, this mechanism decreases the uncertainty about the truthfulness of the comment and help consumers to identify whom to trust for their decision-making process. Therefore, the following hypotheses are created:

Hypothesis 4: The trustworthiness of the review influences consumers' decision-making process.

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Hypothesis 4a: The trustworthiness of the review depends more on rating of the review than on the date of post of the review.

The trustworthiness of the review's hypotheses path is constructed and it is visible in Figure 4.
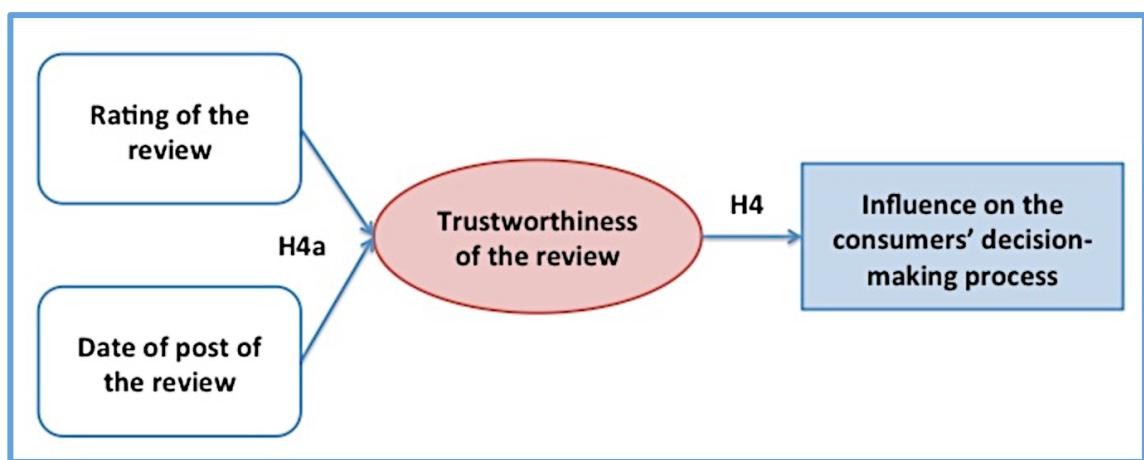
Figure 4 – Trustworthiness of the review's hypotheses.

2.3.4 Engagement in E-WOM

Past researchers have determined diverse reasons to the engagement in E-WOM. One incentive can be identified as the possibility to obtain social approval of self-approval, by showing their excellent purchase decision, through the altruistic behaviour of sharing their experience with others. Furthermore existing literature has recommended that the main motivations behind the engagement in the E-WOM are the extreme satisfaction or the extreme dissatisfaction of consumers about a product or service. In these situations consumers are more likely to share their expertise, initiating

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information flows, than consumers with a more moderate experience. Indeed literature suggests that when a consumer has an unsatisfactory experience at a restaurant (if is one who regularly visits restaurant reviews on internet) there is a higher inclination to engage in negative E-WOM (Boo S. and Kim J., 2013).

Chen, Fay and Wang (2011) analysed the engagement in relation with the quality and the price of products and services. They stated that for a given quality of a product or service, a very low price generates a very high level of consumer satisfaction, as the opposite, when the price is very high the consumer's satisfaction will be very low. As a consequence, the high satisfaction leads to a high consumer rating and posting therefore a high level of engagement. Whereas, low satisfaction determines low engagement with posting feedback of the product of service. In addition, they said that for a given price of a product or service, when the quality is low the dissatisfaction of the consumer will be very high, conversely when the quality is very high it generates a high level of consumer satisfaction. This leads to the conjecture that both situations; very high satisfaction and very high dissatisfaction, bring about high levels of engagement in the E-WOM. Moreover consumer's satisfaction, pleasure and sadness all encourage those to share personal experiences, although many people enjoy sharing their experiences with others because they consider it as one of the pleasures of travelling and sharing experiences.

Gretzel and Yoo (2008) studied traveller's motivations to write online travel review, and results showed that there are three factors that encourage travellers to post online travel reviews: to help a travel-service provider, to inform other travellers and to satisfy the desire of self-enhancement. They also found that economic incentives, advice seeking and social benefit do not have an important influence in engagement in

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E-WOM. Bronner and Hoog (2011) created a classification of the motivations that drive travellers to share information. They stated that the two groups of motivations are the self-directed motivations and other-directed motivations. The first category includes negative review and only text while in the second they incorporate positive review together with photos rating and text. Liang, Ekinci, Occhiocupo and Whyatt (2013) suggest that travellers that perceive E-WOM to be useful and easy, have a positive attitude and are more likely to engage in E-WOM for posting their review. While those who believe that E-WOM is not helpful or that is not an acceptable communication channel, are unlikely to engage with E-WOM. Moreover they stated that travellers who are satisfied or dissatisfied with their consumption of travel products or services have a positive attitude to the use of E-WOM, because they perceive E-WOM as a facilitator tool and a channel to achieve their intention to help others during their decision-making process.

Consequently engagement in E-WOM is strictly related to the perceived usefulness that a consumer has about the online travel community; indeed Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu (2011) defined the perceived usefulness of the online community as the degree to which a consumer thinks that the membership to it will give him or her a defined benefit that could be impossible, or at least difficult, to obtain without being part of the network. These benefits derive from the sense of belonging to a group and from utility to base future decisions via the exchange of information or knowledge.

After all is said and done, different consumers may be driven by different motivations for their engagement: the extreme satisfaction or dissatisfaction, the perceived usefulness for other users and the self-enhancement. This conjecture is summarized in the hypothesis:

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Hypothesis 5a: Consumers' engagement in e-WOM is explainable in relation to the high satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the product or service more than for the usefulness for others.

Figure 5 shows the hypotheses path on the engagement:
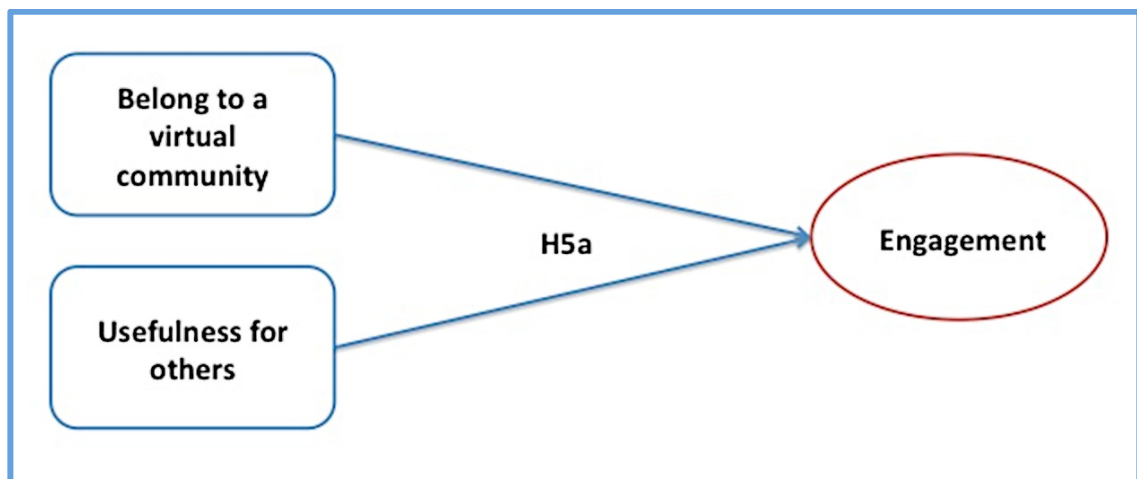
Figure 5 – Engagement's hypothesis.

2.4 Conceptual framework of E-WOM

The literature review has determined the main areas around which the current knowledge on E-WOM is constructed. The factors that may influence the decision-making process are the quantity, the quality, considered as the rating, and the credibility that is divided into the credibility of the reviewer and the trustworthiness of the review.

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In addition the engagement is considered to understand the motives that lead or not to participate in the creation of E-WOM.

Therefore these areas, and the connected hypotheses, build the conceptual framework that this thesis will test to analyse which aspect of reviews on TripAdvisor influences more during the reservation process of a restaurant. H1, H2, H3 and H4 are used to answer to the research questions of this thesis; therefore to analyse which aspect of the E-WOM on TripAdvisor influences more during the reservation process of a restaurant. H1a, H2a, H3a, H4a and H5a are used to define the most influential factor in the assessment of every the E-WOM aspects. Figure 6 shows the conceptual framework.
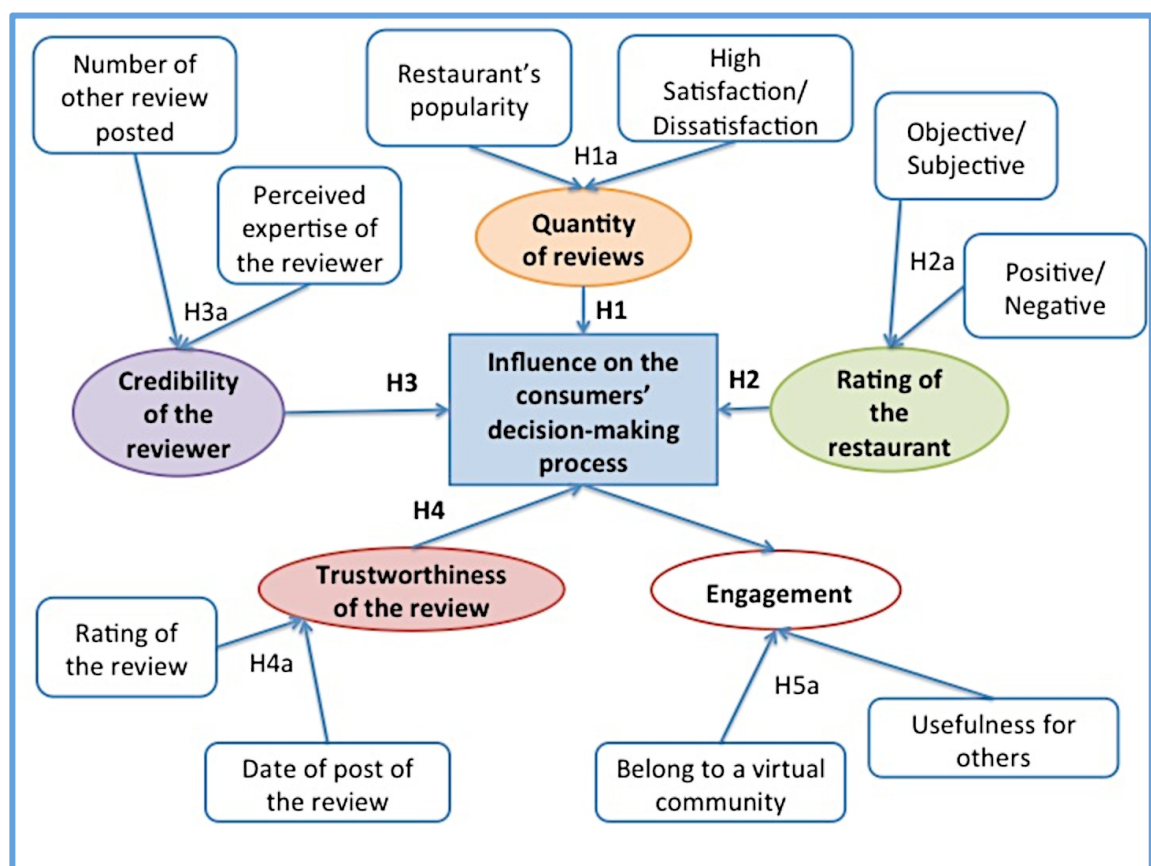
Figure 6 – Conceptual framework with hypothesized paths.

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Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.5 TripAdvisor

A relevant example of consumers sharing their opinion about hospitality, dining and in general tourism opinions is represented by TripAdvisor. It continues to become a popular information source for travellers, also because TripAdvisor is a website based on the idea that travellers rely on other travellers' reviews to plan their trips, or at least that it can help in taking their decisions (J. Miguéns, R. Baggio, and C. Costa, 2008).

TripAdvisor is a travel website offering reviews of travel-related matters and it also contains interactive travel forums. TripAdvisor was one of the first websites adopting the user-generated content, meaning that users provide most of the content. An advertising business model maintains this online travel community and all services offered by this platform are free to users (tripadvisor.com). According to its website, TripAdvisor is the biggest travel site in the world, with more than 60 million users and about 170 million reviews and opinions of hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions and other travel-related activities. TripAdvisor was founded in February 2000 and, up to now, its site operates in 44 countries and in 27 different languages. TripAdvisor also offers easy access worldwide to important online travel agencies like Expedia, Orbitz, Travelocity, hotels.com, Priceline, Booking.com, and many more.

TripAdvisor provides advices, experiences, stories and opinions from travellers about travel-related activities like restaurants, hotels and tourist attractions. Users can update at any moment the huge amount of reviews, comments and rating; therefore TripAdvisor is constantly brought up to date with all changes of the travel related business. It offers a wide variety of travel alternatives and gives the possibility to book through planning features that directly link to online travel agencies. Furthermore,

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TripAdvisor provides the possibility to insert multimedia elements like photos and videos, or travel maps and itineraries of previous trips, or take part in discussion forums that are web-based applications that permit users to write some material and debating some specific theme. The authors of the forum need to be registered in TripAdvisor thus to create a profile containing basic data (like nickname, residence etc.) and some additional information to identify the author.

In the image below it is possible to see the graphic web page of TripAdvisor when searching information of restaurants:
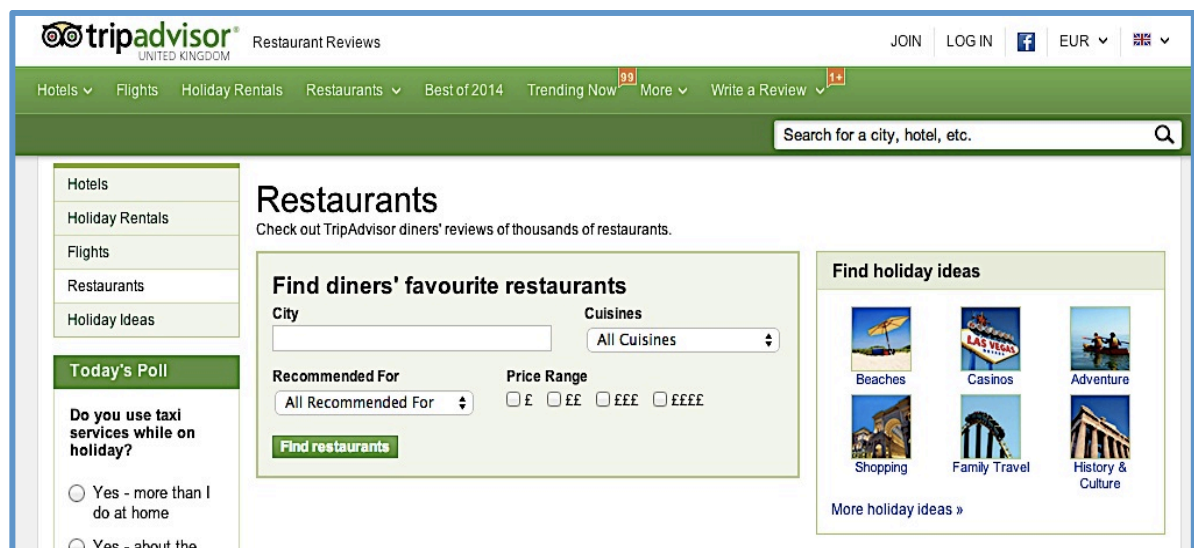
Figure 7 – TripAdvisor restaurant reviews interface.

Users can start the research of a restaurant writing in the city where they are looking for the restaurant, and it is possible to specify the cuisine's type or the kind of restaurant recommended for specific reasons. These alternatives are child-friendly, romantic, bar scene, group, business, local cuisine, outdoor seating, special occasion,

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view, entertaining clients or cheap eats. Then there is also the possibility to specify the price range of the restaurant.

Starting the research it is then possible to use an interactive map in order to find restaurant in specific zones; to select specific neighbourhood or dining option to refine the research. The restaurant list can be viewed according to the ranking, or to the name or to the price of the restaurant.

Once selected, a restaurant's, information will appear, like the address, the phone number, the website of the restaurant, the e-mail to contact, the price range, opening hours and the kind of cuisines. It is also possible to see the ranking that the restaurant has, the number of reviews that are also divided in class of quality (excellent, very good, average, poor, terrible) and a summary of the rating about food, service, value and atmosphere.

Scrolling down the page is possible to start reading all the reviews (sorted by date or rating). Next to the review appears the reviewer: his/her photo and general information that include country of origin, number of review posted, how many of them were defined helpful for others, the number of cities visited and all the ranking that he/she has given to its posts.

This interactive travel forum is very easy to use and can be accessible from any device (pc, tablet, iPhones and android) also thanks to the application that facilitate the research. TripAdvisor is not only used by potential or actual consumers, but also from restaurateurs and hotels' managers. The latter have the possibility to read how the service they provide is perceived, they can read feedback and also answer to the reviewer (thanks them for the comment, apologizing if the writer complained about the service, or justifying the complaint).

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Chapter 3 – Research Aim and Methods

CHAPTER 3 - RESEARCH AIM AND METHODS

The influence of E-WOM on consumers' decision-making process: the TripAdvisor case.

Chapter 3 – Research Aim and Methods

This chapter provides the overview of the techniques used to study and to answer to the thesis topic, discussing which are the research aims and methods adopted. In the first part will be explained the research sequence used in this thesis, and then, in the second part, it will be clarified each part of the research and, in the specific, what is the research question and which are the objectives that this work wants to accomplish; how it has been developed the questionnaire, the sapling methods adopted and how the data has been collected.

3.1 Research sequence

The research sequence adopted in this work is divided in four principal parts. The first part is the "Problem Definition" part in which it has been conducted the identification of the gap in the literature, and the determination of the research questions and of the objectives. Basically after a screening of the literature, on the electronic word of mouth, the travel industry and the specific platform of TripAdvisor, it has been identified the gap that concerns which aspects of the E-WOM influence more consumer's decision-making process of the restaurant to go when using TripAdvisor.

The second part of the research sequence is the "Desk Research" meaning that it has been conducted a deep literature review on the electronic word of mouth, on the travel industry and on TripAdvisor and it has been developed the conceptual framework. In the meanwhile it has been decided the methodology to use during the whole research. During this sequence it has been advanced hypotheses and the

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elaboration of the questionnaire, in order to answer to the hypothesis and to achieve the objectives of this research.

The third part of the research sequence is the "Field Research" during which it has been conducted the data collection and, after it, the analysis of the data and the explanation of the findings.

The fourth and last part is the "Finding and Conclusion" part in which there is the discussion of the results and the conclusion of the research.

The figure below illustrates the sequence of the research followed by this thesis.
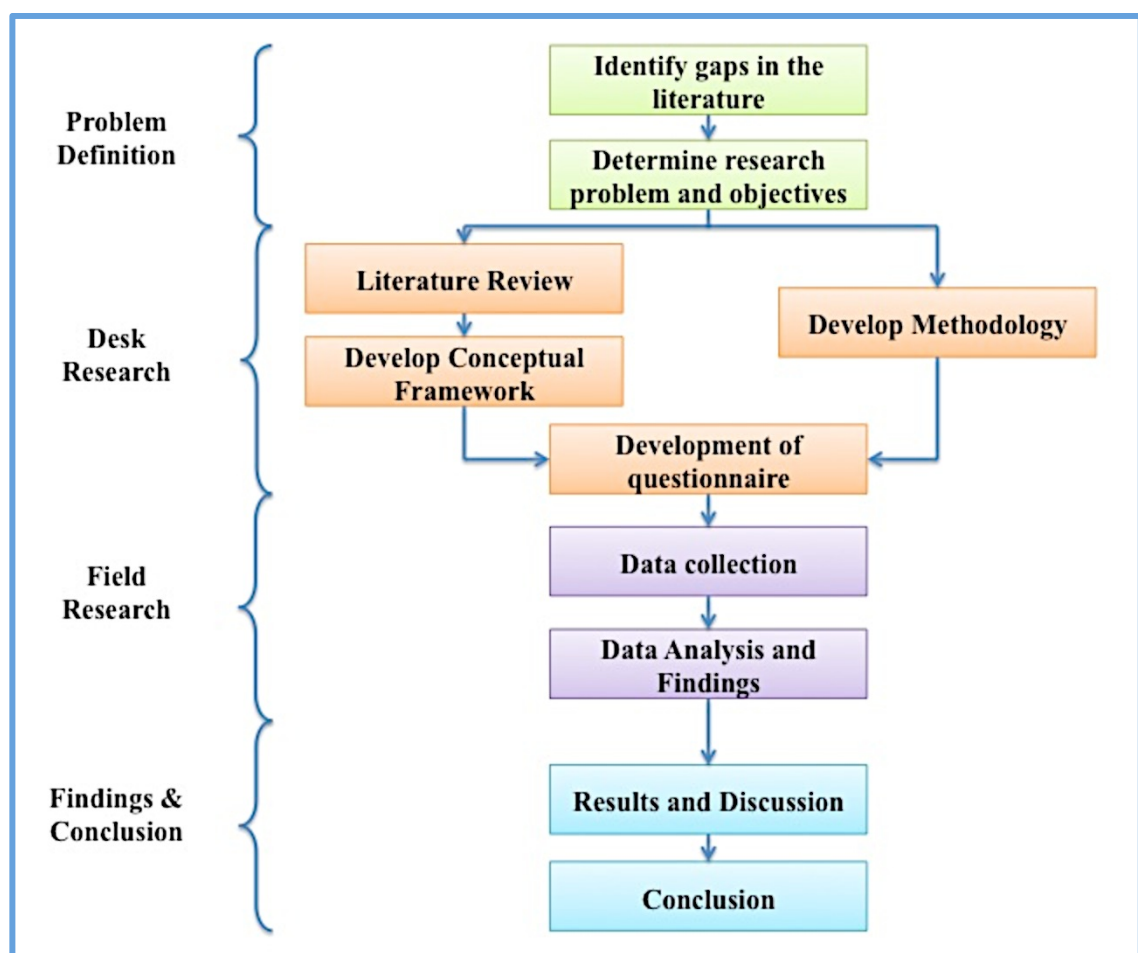
Figure 8 – Research sequence.

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3.2 Problem definition

During this phase it has been identified the gap in the literature and it has been determined research questions and objectives.

3.2.1 Research questions

The key aim of the research is to investigate the role and the impact of E-WOM in the restaurant planning process, in other word to determine if the electronic word of mouth influences the decision-making process of consumers when reading information through TripAdvisor, for the decision of the restaurant to go. Furthermore the intention of this research is to understand which aspect of the electronic word of mouth influences more this decision-making process. Therefore, the following research questions have been formulated:

- **Does E-WOM on TripAdvisor influence the decision-making process for a restaurant?**

- **Which aspect of the E-WOM on TripAdvisor influences more during the decision-making process of a restaurant?**

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3.2.2 Research objectives

The objective of this research is to identify the user's profile, and to evaluate the engagement level in E-WOM. Therefore, after the research questions the following objectives have been established, in order to reach the main aim of this research study:

Objective 1: Identify the incidence usage of TripAdvisor.

Objective 2: Find the circumstances in which TripAdvisor is used.

Objective 3: Identify the place where TripAdvisor is used.

Objective 4: Evaluate the engagement level in the electronic word of mouth.

3.3 Desk research

At this point of the study it has been done the literature review and the resulting development of the conceptual framework that this thesis wants to test. In the meanwhile it has been done the development of the hypothesis to test, moreover it has been developed, considering the methodology adopted, the questionnaire, to test hypothesis, achieve objectives and answer to research questions.

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3.3.1 Literature review

The desk research started with the literature review that has been presented in the second chapter of this thesis. It involved an organized review of the main academic and non-academic publications regarding the electronic word of mouth. The literature review helped in the identification of the areas that distinguish the electronic word of mouth, and thus, it helped the identification of the main aspect that characterize the electronic word of mouth. After the analysis of the E-WOM (Figure 9) and of the E-WOM in the context of the travel industry (Figure 10) it has been analysed the factors that may influence the decision-making process. These are the quantity (Figure 11), the quality (Figure 12), considered as the rating, and the credibility (Figure 13) that is divided into the credibility of the reviewer and the trustworthiness of the review. In addition the engagement (Figure 14) is considered to understand the motives that lead or not to participate in the creation of E-WOM. Therefore from the literature it has been identify the principal aspects that influence the consumers' decision-making process and the schemes below summarize the main concepts of the literature review showing diverse authors' point of view on the different themes.

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Authors and concepts	
Thorsten Hennig-Thurau F., Gwinner K., Walsh G. and Gremler D., 2004	
"E-WOM communication can be defined as any positive or negative comment made by potential, actual, or previous customers about a product, a service, or a company, which is made available to a multitude of people on the Internet."	
Liang S.W.J., Ekinci Y., Occhiocupo N. and Whyatt G., 2013	
"E-WOM is more powerful that traditional WOM."	
Chen Y., Fay S. and Wang Q., 2011	
"E-WOM has a significant influence on purchase behaviour."	
Bansal H.S. and Voyer P.A., 2000	**Litvin S.W., Goldsmith R.E. and Pan B., 2008**
Consumers, when making purchase decision, rely more on personal communication and information source, like online communities, than to sources like advertising campaign or organizational information.	

Figure 9 – Literature summary of E-WOM.

Authors and concepts	
Litvin S.W., Goldsmith R.E. and Pan B., 2008	
"E-WOM in the travel industry has been identified as very influential tool in the decision-making process."	
Ayeh, Au and Law, 2013	
Travellers are becoming more and more independent: they search their own information to make the best decision for the travel about the destination and all the relative services avoiding the involvement of travel intermediaries.	
Litvin, Blose and Laird, 2004	
Consumers' selection of restaurant is predominantly conditioned by E-WOM recommendations.	

Figure 10 – Literature summary of E-WOM in travel industry.

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Authors and concepts

	González, Gidumal and Valcárcel, 2013
QUANTITY OF E-WOM	The quantity measures the total amount of E-WOM interaction. The number of on-line reviews of a product or service may be defined as a product's popularity. The review quantity may be explained by the high satisfaction or to the high dissatisfaction of the product or service.
	Zhang, Ye, Law and Li, 2010
	The quantity of reviews can increase the interest in visiting the restaurant's website.
	Park D.H., Lee J. and Han I., 2007
	The decision-making process is positively influenced when the quantity of reviews increase. If a large number of reviews is present for a single product or service and the majority recommend it, the reader will believe to the suggestion and will follow the advice of the E-WOM

Figure 11 – Literature summary of quantity of E-WOM.

Authors and concepts			
Lee M. and Youn S., 2009	**Gretzel, Yoo and Purifoy, 2007**	**Qiu, Pang and Him, 2012**	**Sun-Jae Doh and Jang-Sun, 2009**
They divide the quality of the E-WOM between positive and negative feedback			
Lee M. and Youn S. 2009			
Consumers pay greater attention to negative review			
Gretzel, Yoo and Purifoy, 2007			
E-WOM in travel community are more useful when they maintain a balance between positive and negative comments			
Qiu, Pang and Him, 2012			
The presence of a conflicting rating decrease the credibility of E-WOM			
Sun-Jae Doh and Jang-Sun, 2009			
The consensus in E-WOM is important to define the persuasiveness of E-WOM			
Park D.H., Lee J. and Han I., 2007			
"The quality of on-line reviews is explained in terms of content of the message (…) There are two differ kinds of review content: subjective or objective."			

Figure 12 – Literature summary of quality of E-WOM.

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Authors and concepts
Cheung, Luo, Sia and Chen, 2009
Credibility of E-WOM as the extent to which consumers feel that the product information, comment and review are factual, true or believable.
Park, Lee and Han, 2007
For consumers, E-WOM in online community is more credible than information provided by travel intermediaries or agencies.
Reichelt, Sievert and Jacob, 2014
Perceived expertise of the reviewer is a tool to assess the credibility of the reviewer: if a person shows itself credible trough a deep and extensive knowledge and experience with the topic it may give to the reader the feeling of trust.
Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu, 2011
The perceive usefulness is a tool to assess the trustworthiness of the review. The perceived usefulness of the comment, which is estimated by the rating of the review, assist travellers in their decision-making process for the most relevant solution.

(CREDIBILITY OF E-WOM)

Figure 13 – Literature summary of credibility of E-WOM.

Authors and concepts
Gretzel and Yoo, 2008
Motivations to write online travel review: to help a travel-service provider, to inform other travellers and to satisfy the desire of self-enhancement.
Boo S. and Kim J., 2013
Unsatisfactory experience at a restaurant generate high inclination to engage in negative e-WOM.
Chen, Fay and Wang, 2011
High satisfaction experience leads to a high consumer rating and posting, implying a high level of engagement.
Liang, Ekinci, Occhiocupo and Whyatt, 2013 / **Casalo, Flavian and Guinaliu, 2011**
Engagement in e-WOM is strictly related to the perceived usefulness that a consumers have about the online travel community.

(ENGAGEMENT IN E-WOM)

Figure 14 – Literature summary of engagement in E-WOM.

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Chapter 3 – Research Aim and Methods

3.3.2 Conceptual framework and Hypotheses

Through the literature review, six variables (quantity of review, rating of the restaurant, credibility of the reviewer, trustworthiness of the review and engagement) were identified and these variables constitute the cardinal points of the conceptual framework. Nine hypotheses were figured out, from the complete review of the previously discussed literature, and are used for the development of the conceptual framework. Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 are the main hypotheses and are used to answer to the research questions of this thesis; therefore to analyse which aspect of the E-WOM on TripAdvisor influences more during the reservation process of a restaurant. H1a, H2a, H3a, H4a and H5a are used to define the most influential factor in the assessment of every the E-WOM aspects. Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: The quantity of E-WOM influences consumers' decision-making process.

H2: The rating of the restaurant influences consumers' decision-making process.

H3: The credibility of the reviewer influences consumers' decision-making process.

H4: The trustworthiness of the review influences consumers' decision-making process.

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H1a: The high number of reviews on a restaurant depends more on the restaurant's popularity than on the high satisfaction/dissatisfaction of consumers' on the restaurant.

H2a: Objective and detailed e-WOM message are more influential than subjective and emotional ones.

H3a: The credibility of the reviewer of the E-WOM message depends more on the perceived expertise of the reviewer than on the number of other comments that the reviewer has posted.

H4a: The trustworthiness of the review depends more on rating of the review than on the date of post of the review.

H5a: Consumers' engagement in E-WOM is due to the need to help others rather than to the need to belong to a virtual community.

Figure 15 shows the conceptual framework, which is the result of the combination of the main concept of the literature, of the formulated hypotheses and considering the objective of this research.

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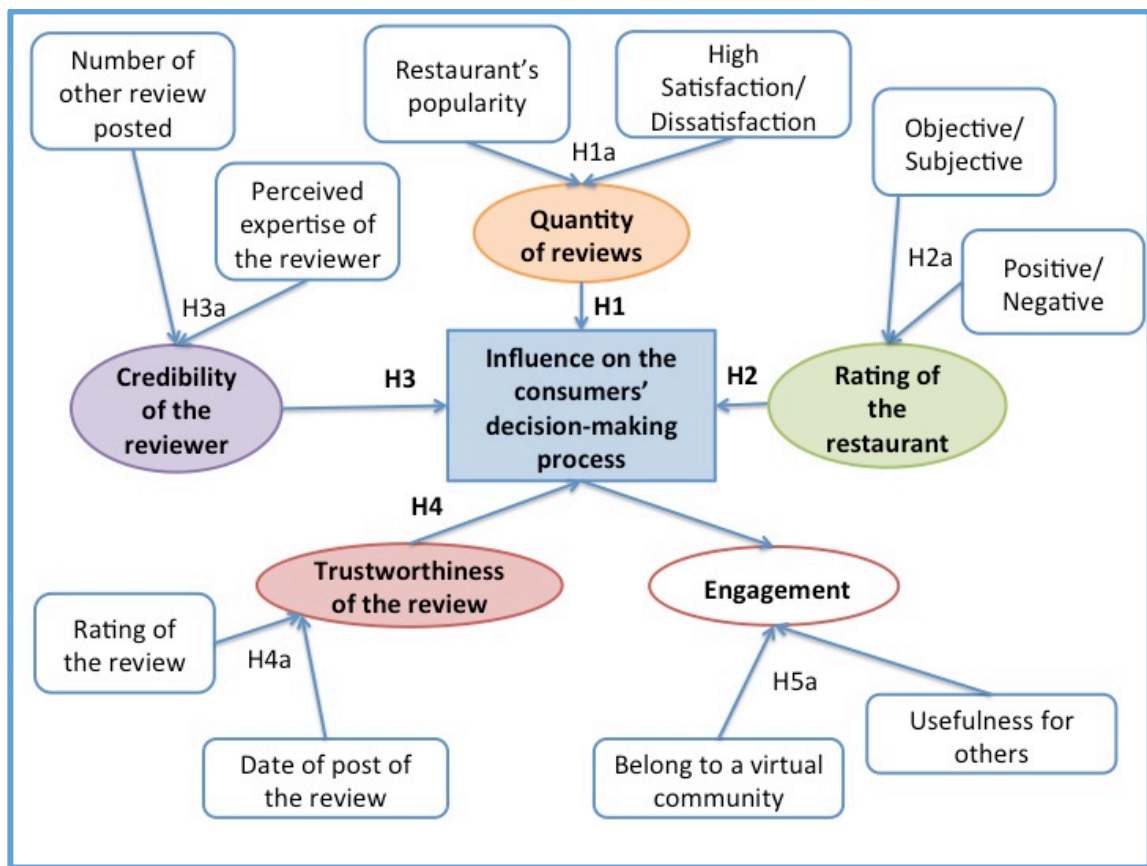
Chapter 3 – Research Aim and Methods

Figure 15 – Developed conceptual framework and hypotheses path.

3.3.3 Methodology

In order to answer to the research questions, assess objectives and test hypotheses it has been developed a questionnaire. And the data analysis of the questionnaire has been done via a descriptive analysis of the findings and also via regression analysis.

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3.3.4 Sampling methods and procedures

The questionnaire was distributed by GN-Research, a European group providing advanced marketing research and innovative analytics tools, based in Italy, France and Germany, during one week period between the 5th and the 12th of August 2014. In order to guarantee the representativeness of the sample used in this study on the Italian population, GN-Research has drawn a stratified sample directly from their sampling frame. It included Italians adults from 18 to 64 years old. The web-based survey comprehends 26 questions and pre-tests were conducted with survey experts to test the survey questionnaire and the overall research design. The data analysis has been done via a descriptive analysis of the findings of the questionnaire that answers the research questions and also via regression analysis.

A total of 153 Italians have participated in the study answering to the questionnaire. The sample consisted of 49,0% males and 51,0% females. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 65 (M = 42). The 31,4% from South Italy; 30,1% from North-West of Italy; 20,3% from the Center of Italy and the remaining 18,3% from North-East of Italy.

3.3.5 Questionnaire design

The survey starts with general and demographic information to define the respondent's profile and then the body of the survey is dived in two. The first part contains questions related to general restaurant planning behaviour, questions to identify the on-line information sources used and other for the classification of the

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profile of TripAdvisor's users. While the second part of the body of the survey contains question related to the identification and evaluation of factors that plays influence on consumers' decision-making process.

The questionnaire has been developed started from the examination of existent questionnaires from the literature. Most of the questions have been take from these questionnaires and have been modified and adopted to fit in this research. Other questions have been implemented with the help of research's expert from GN research.

In Table 1 is possible to see how the questionnaire has been structured considering the information that the question gives, to which hypothesis or objective it refers and, if it is the case, from which questionnaire is has been taken.

3.4 Field research

During the field research has been done the data collection and the analysis of the finding. Next chapter will analyse this step in depth.

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Information	Hypotheses (H) and Objectives (O)	Question's number and items	References
Sample characteristics		A1: Age A2: Gender A3: Residence in Italy 21: Level of education 22: Internet skills	
Restaurant planning behaviour		1: Number of eats out 2: Information sources for restaurant's decision 3: Time of advance for dinner reservation 4: Perception of the restaurant's reservation 5: Restaurant's decision-making style 6: Frequency of Internet's usage to get restaurant's information	Gretzel U., Yoo K.H. and Purifoy M., 2007.
Online information source		7: Online activities when searching restaurant's information 8: Online community used	Chen Y., Fay S. and Wang Q., 2011
TRIPADVISOR users' characteristics	O1 O2 O3	9: Phase in which TripAdvisor is used 10: Circumstances in which TripAdvisor is used 11: Place where TripAdvisor is used	
Quantity / Quality	H1a H2a	12: Review number influence 13: Review quality influence	Zhang Z., Ye Q., Law R. and Li Y., 2010. Park D.H., Lee J. and Han I., 2007
Credibility of E-WOM	H3a H4a	14: Credibility of the reviewer 17: Trustworthiness of the review	Gretzel U., Yoo K.H. and Purifoy M., 2007.
Influence on consumers' decision-making process	H1 H2 H3 H4	15: TripAdvisor's use reasons 16: TripAdvisor influence 16b: Influence of factors	
Engagement in E-WOM	H5a O4	18: Engagement 19: Motivation to write online reviews 20: Motivation not to write online review	Gretzel U., Yoo K.H. and Purifoy M., 2007.

Table 1 – Items of the survey and references.

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Chapter 4 – Data Analysis

CHAPTER 4 - DATA ANALYSIS

The influence of E-WOM on consumers' decision-making process: the TripAdvisor case.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis

The research for the topic of this thesis collected primary data through the quantitative survey described in Chapter 3. In this chapter it will be presented the field research with the presentation of the data collected and the analysis of the finding, which are based on results of the questionnaire.

4.1 Sample characteristics

The first part of the questionnaire was used to collect general information on the respondents, in order to obtain a profile of the sample used in the research. The questionnaire was competed by 153 people that are split as shown in the following table:

	Gender		Class age				Italian geographic area			
	Men	Women	18-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	North-West	North-East	Center	South
Respondents	75	78	41	41	41	30	46	28	31	48
%	49%	51%	27%	27%	27%	20%	30%	18%	20%	31%

Table 2 – Respondents' distribution.

The respondents are 51% female and 49% of male. The sample has been dividend into four age groups. There are 41 respondents (26,8%) for each of the 18-34, 35-44 and 45-54 years age groups, while only 30 respondents (19,6%) for the 55-64 years age group. Moreover Italian regions have been grouped into four clusters: the 31,4% of respondents are from South Italy (Calabria, Campania, Puglia, Sicilia, Molise,

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Basilicata); 30,1% from Northwest of Italy (Liguria, Lombardia, Piemonte, Val D'Aosta); 20,3% from the Center of Italy (Lazio, Marche, Sardegna, Toscana, Umbria, Abruzzo) and the remaining 18,3% from Northeast of Italy (Emilia Romagna, Friuli, Trentino, Veneto). The majority of the respondents have high school diploma (51,6%), the 28,1% are graduates, 13,1% have completed the middle school and only the 6,5% have a master's degree. Lastly, the 68,6% of respondents declare that their Internet skills are very good, the 27,5% that are good and the remaining 3,3% that their Internet skills are scarce.

4.2 Restaurant planning behaviour

Number of meals out: During the year, the 41,2% of the respondents declare that go out for meals more than once a month. The 34,6% goes out for meals from 7 to 12 times during the year; 15% from 4 to 6 times during the year; 7,2% from 1 to 3 times during the year, while 3 respondents (2%) declares that never goes out for a meal during the year. Those, which never go out for meal, exit from the questionnaire. Therefore 150 respondents have answered to the following questions. Graph 1 shows, in percentage, how many times respondents have eaten out during the last year.

Information sources for restaurant's decision: Friends and family represent the most important information source when making restaurant's decision. Internet represents the second class of information source while radio, brochures/flyers, magazines and guidebook are used only sometimes or never. Graph 2 shows how often the respondents use the different sources of information.

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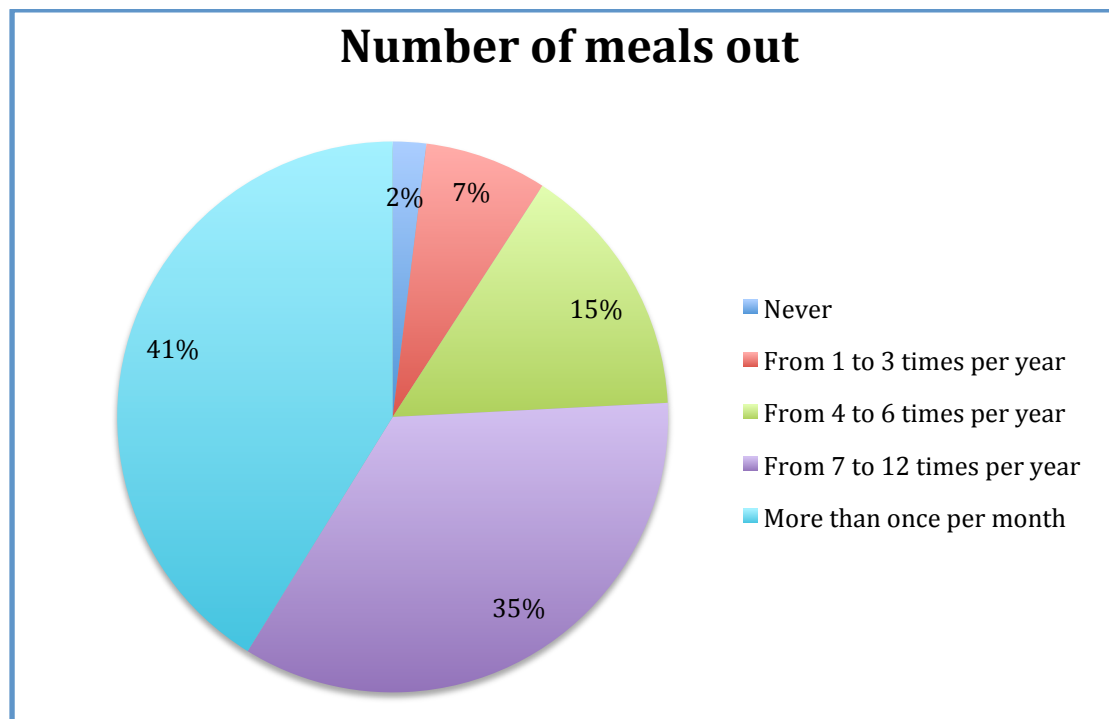
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Dinner reservation: The majority of respondents state that they reserve a restaurant the same day or 1-2 days before. Only the 3% reserves with 7-14 days of advance, while the 13% states that never reserve a table at the restaurant. Results are shown in Graph 3.

Perception of the restaurant's reservation: In the definition of what represent the restaurant reservation for respondents, the majority of them agree that it is something necessary and that they like to do. Moreover, 8% of respondent add its personal perception of the reservation and their answers highlight the importance of the reservation both for the restaurateur and the client's point of view. Graph 4 shows the mean and the standard deviation of each perception of the restaurant reservation. On the horizontal axis, 1 represent strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree.

Restaurant's decision-making style: To the question: "What drives your decision of the restaurant?" the most state that the advice of friends or relatives and their taste are very important are the most important drivers in the decision of a restaurant. Also the price class of the restaurant have a great importance, while the option "impulsive decision" has not a great importance in the decision of the restaurant. Graph 5 shows the drivers of the restaurant's decision for respondents.

Frequency of Internet usage to get restaurant's information: The highest percentage of Internet's usage, when searching restaurant's information, is "often" (with the 37,3%). The 12% of respondents declare to always use Internet, 30% sometimes and 16% rarely. Only the 4,7% of respondents declares that never use Internet to get restaurant's decision. Graph 6 displays the frequency of Internet's usage to get restaurant's information.

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Looking at Graph 7 it is interesting to point out that of the 18 people who state that they always use the Internet, 8 belong to the age group between 35 and 44 years. While among the 56 respondents who mention often, as a response of the use of the Internet to search for information about a restaurant, 17 belong to the age group between 18 and 34 years. Instead the more relevant age group that has indicated sometimes or rarely, as the frequency of Internet usage, is the one of 55-64 years' age group. This question is a filter question because those that declare that never use Internet to get restaurant's information exit from the questionnaire. Considering that 7 respondents (4,7%) declare never, 143 respondents continue the compilation of the survey.

Graph 1 – Number of meals out during the year.

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Information sources for restaurant's decision

Graph 2 – Information sources for restaurant's decision.

How much time in advance do you make a restaurant reservation?

Graph 3 – Time of advance for dinner reservation.
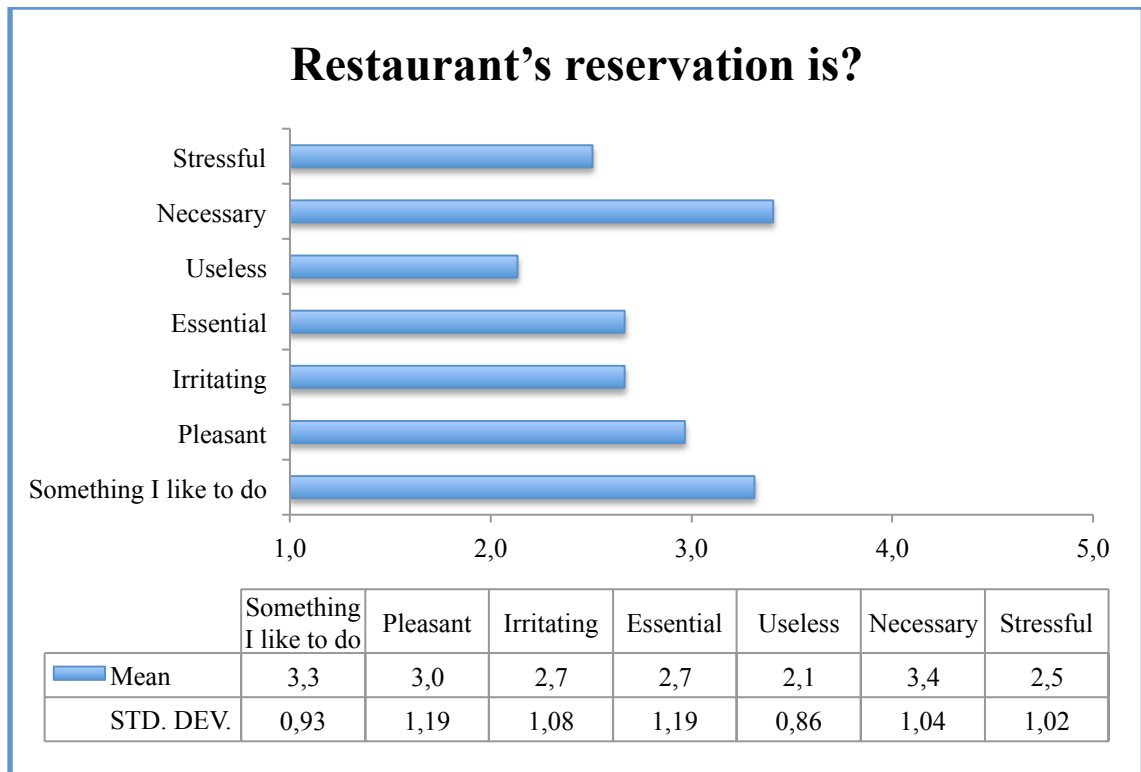
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Restaurant's reservation is?

	Something I like to do	Pleasant	Irritating	Essential	Useless	Necessary	Stressful
Mean	3,3	3,0	2,7	2,7	2,1	3,4	2,5
STD. DEV.	0,93	1,19	1,08	1,19	0,86	1,04	1,02

Graph 4 – Perception of the restaurant's reservation.

What drives your decision of the restaurant?

Graph 5 – Restaurant's decision-making style.

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Graph 6 – Frequency of Internet's usage to get restaurant's information.
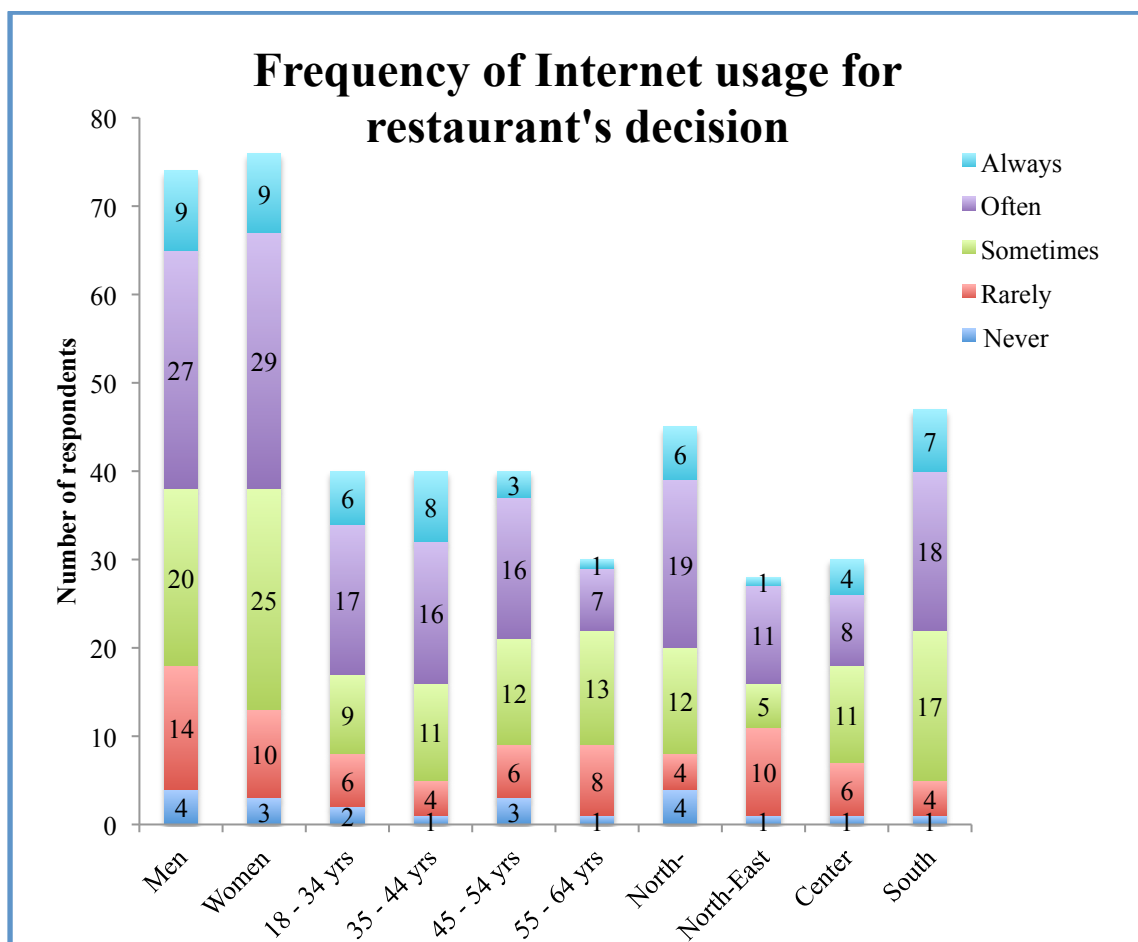
Graph 7 – Frequency of Internet's usage to get restaurant's information by cluster.

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4.3 On-line information source

Online activities when searching restaurant's information: "Read restaurant's website", "Watch imagines online" and "Look at other's comment/materials" are the activities that are more executed by the respondent of the questionnaire, when they search restaurant information on Internet. Of those who often read the restaurant's website, the majority belong to the age group between 45-54 years. Of those who often look at pictures online mostly are women between 35 and 44 years. While among those who often "Look at other's comment/materials", belong to the age group between 35 and 44 years, without distinction of gender. Instead activities such as "read restaurant related blogs" or "use virtual community" have been defi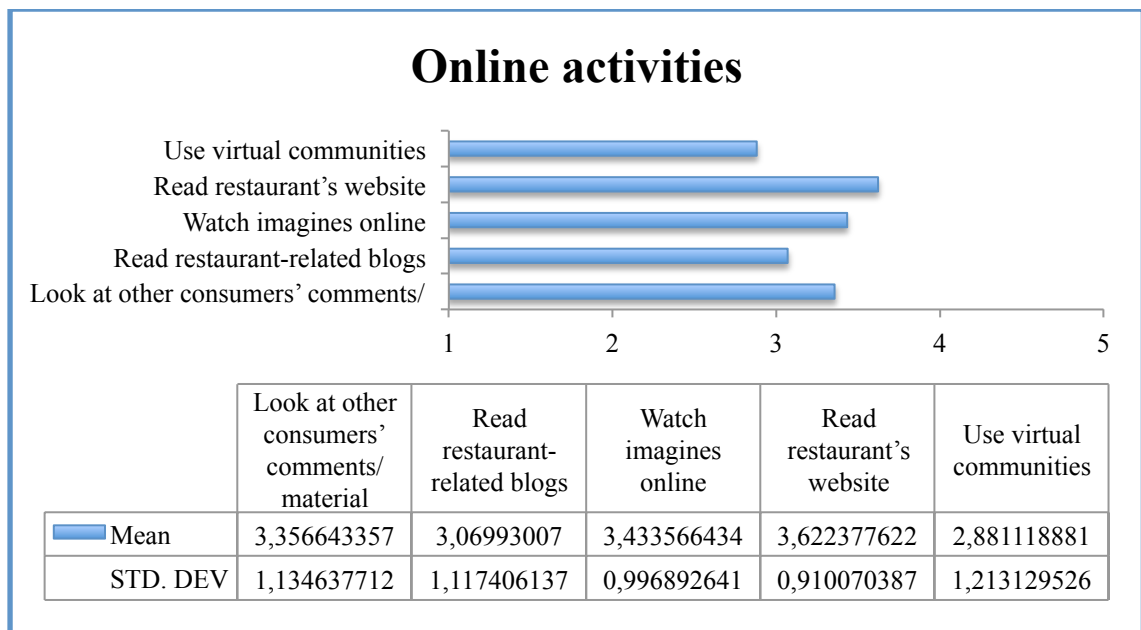ned by most respondents as activities done sometimes, when searching for information online about a restaurant. Of those who sometimes use virtual communities, most are part of the age group between 18 and 34 years. Graph 8 shows the mean and the standard deviation of the online activities during the research of restaurant's information. On the horizontal axis, 1 represent never and 5 always.

Online community used: Virtual communities most used, when searching for information on a restaurant, were TripAdvisor and PagineGialle. While for the other virtual communities of restaurants' reviews, like oraviaggiando, qristoranti 2spaghi, the majority of respondents have indicated that they never use them. Graph 9 displays the frequency of the virtual communities usage to get restaurant's information and Table 3 reports data, in number of respondent, to the question in which it was sought how often they consult TripAdvisor. The majority of the respondents often or sometimes use TripAdvisor. The 22% say they use it always, while 19% never use it. This is an

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important data and deserves further analysis. As we can see from Table 3, considering responses according to the age group respondents belong to, in the age group between 35 and 44 years old we find the highest percentage of respondents who declared they always use TripAdvisor. While between 18 and 34 years and between 45 and 54 years, the strongest trend has been to use TripAdvisor sometimes or often. Indeed 37.9% of respondents belonging to the age group between 55 and 64 years have indicated that they never use TripAdvisor. Another information to be drawn from these results is that, according to the geographic distribution, among respondents who live in the North-East, we find the highest percentage of people who have never use TripAdvisor. Graph 10 shows the TripAdvisor' usage of respondents when they search restaurant information of Internet.

This is another filter question because those that declare that never have used TripAdvisor to get restaurant's information exit from the questionnaire. Considering that 28 respondents (19,6%) declare never, 115 respondents continues the compilation of the survey.

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Online activities

	Look at other consumers' comments/ material	Read restaurant-related blogs	Watch imagines online	Read restaurant's website	Use virtual communities
Mean	3,356643357	3,06993007	3,433566434	3,622377622	2,881118881
STD. DEV	1,134637712	1,117406137	0,996892641	0,910070387	1,213129526

Graph 8 – Online activities when searching restaurant's information.

How often do you consult the following virtual communities for choosing a restaurant?
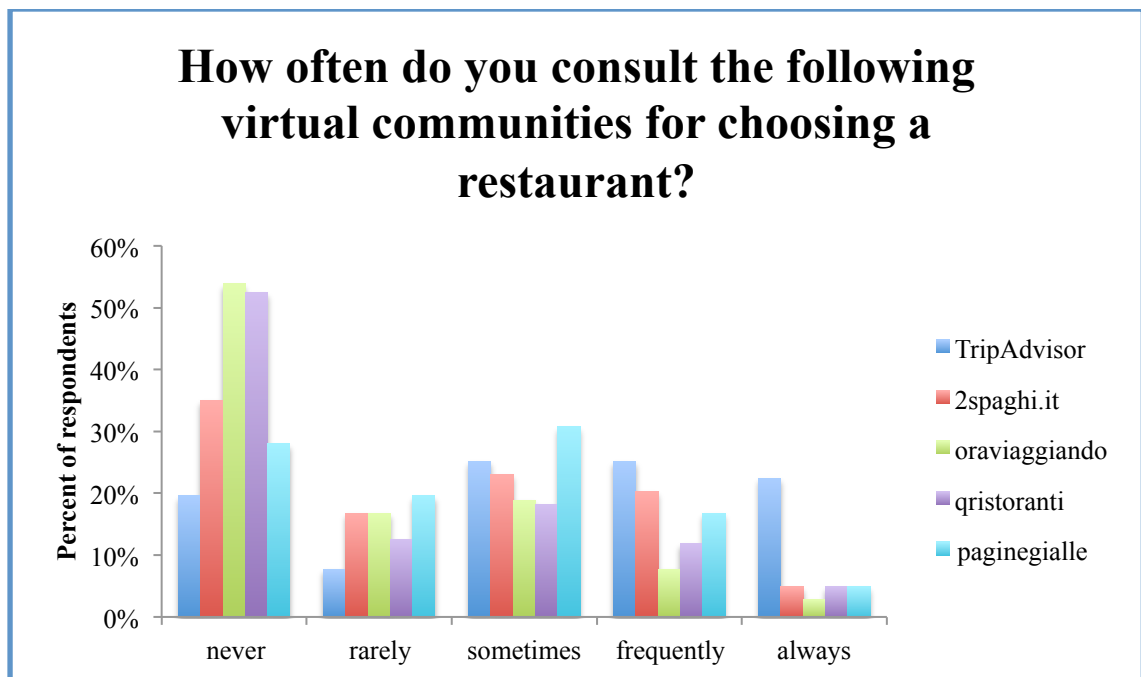
Graph 9 – Online community used.

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Frequency of TripAdvisor usage:	n. of respondents	Gender		Class age				Italian geographic area			
		Men	Women	18-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	North-West	North-East	Center	South
Never	28	15	13	2	5	10	11	8	11	6	3
Rarely	11	5	6	3	2	2	4	1	4	2	4
Sometimes	36	20	16	12	8	11	5	9	5	8	14
Often	36	17	19	12	7	11	6	14	2	7	13
Always	32	13	19	9	17	3	3	9	5	6	12

Table 3 – Distribution of TripAdvisor's usage.
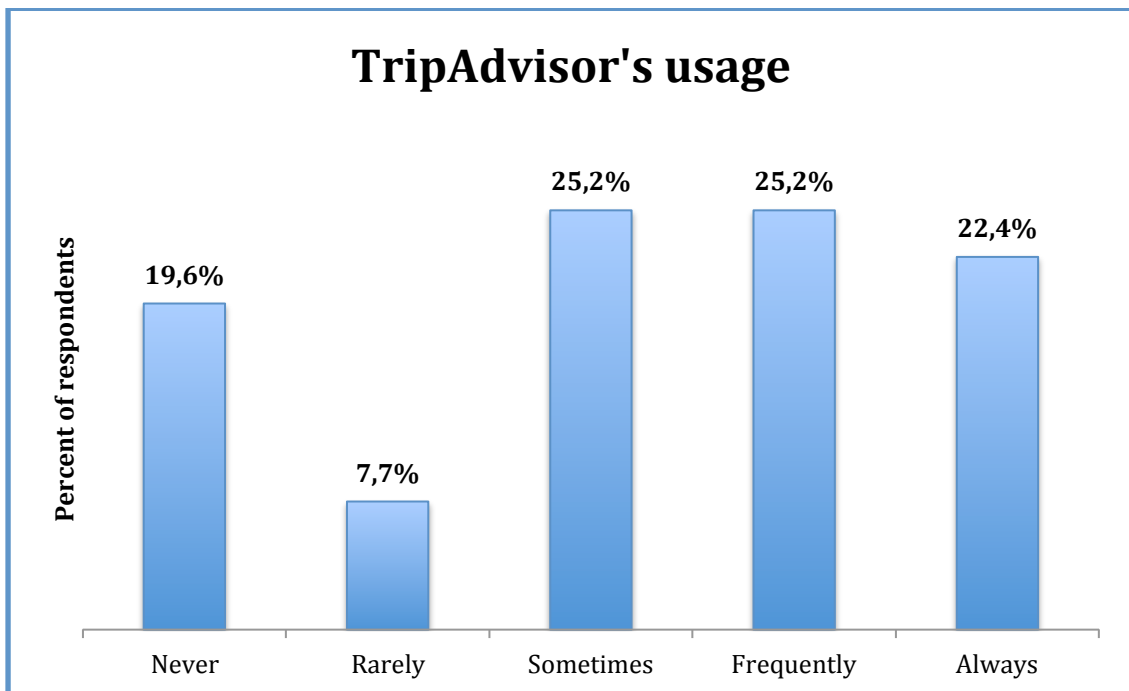
Graph 10 – TripAdvisor's usage.

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4.4 TRIPADVISOR users' characteristic

From now on, only respondent that have used TripAdvisor at least ones have responded to the following questions. Considering that 153 respondents have participated to the questionnaire and 115 respondents stated that they use TripAdvisor when seeking information about a restaurant, the 75.16% of the respondents of the questionnaire use TripAdvisor to search for information about a restaurant. In Table 4 it is possible to see the subdivisions of those who use TripAdvisor according to the three groups: gender by age group and geographical distribution. The data that stand out is that, according to the geographical distribution, respondents who live in the North-East of Italy are those that use less TripAdvisor while the majority of those who use it live in the south. It is possible to note that there is a not big difference between age classes, although the one between 55 and 64 is the group with less respondents using TripAdvisor. Graph 11 shows the distribution of respondents who use TripAdvisor.

Phase in which TripAdvisor is used: As Graph 12 shows, the phase during which TripAdvisor is most used is at the "beginning, to get an idea" in fact, 56% respondents choose it. The second phase mentioned by respondents is "after dinner/lunch, to compare and share experience".

Circumstances in which TripAdvisor is used: Most of the people who use TripAdvisor to get information about a restaurant, use it when the decision regard dinner with friends or with family. The results are display in Graph 13.

Place where TripAdvisor is used: Respondents indicated that the two places where they mostly use TripAdvisor are: when they are on holiday (26%), when they are in a city where they are not used to (24%). But also the 21% use it in their own city, and

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16% said they use TripAdvisor regardless where they are. Graph 14 shows, in percentage, places in which respondents use more TripAdvisor.

Total of TripAdvisor's users	Gender		Class age				Italian geographic area			
	Men	Women	18-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	North-West	North-East	Center	South
115	55	60	36	34	27	18	33	16	23	43
100%	48%	52%	31%	30%	23%	16%	29%	14%	20%	37%

Table 4 – TripAdvisor's users distribution.
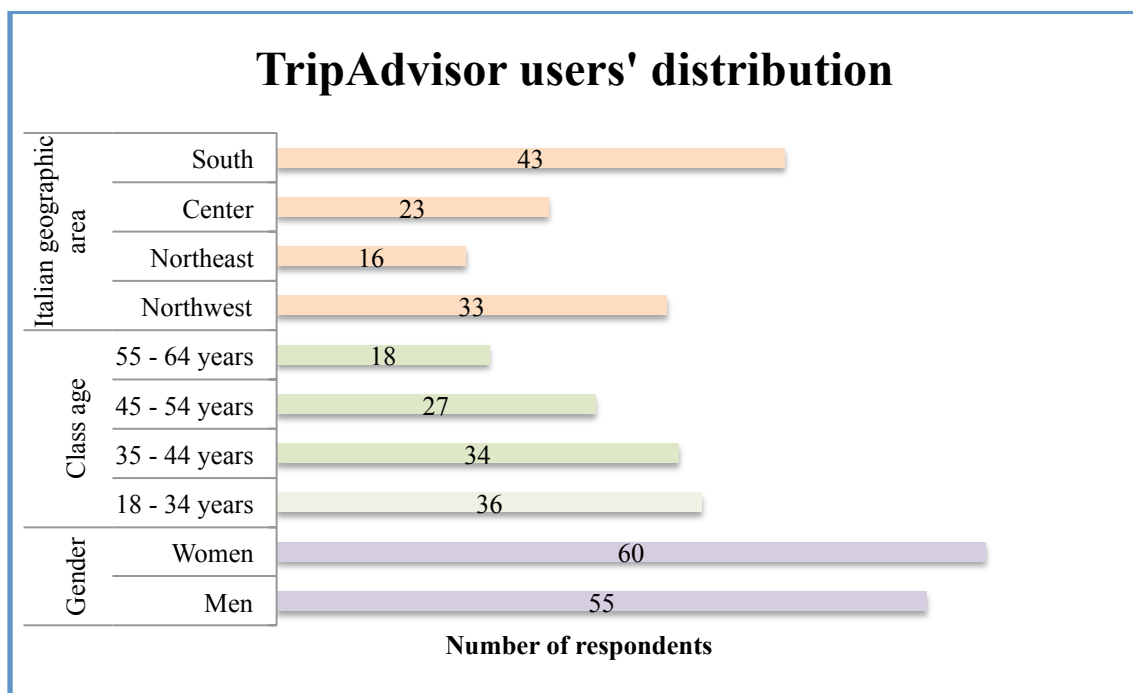
Graph 11 – TripAdvisor users' distribution graph.

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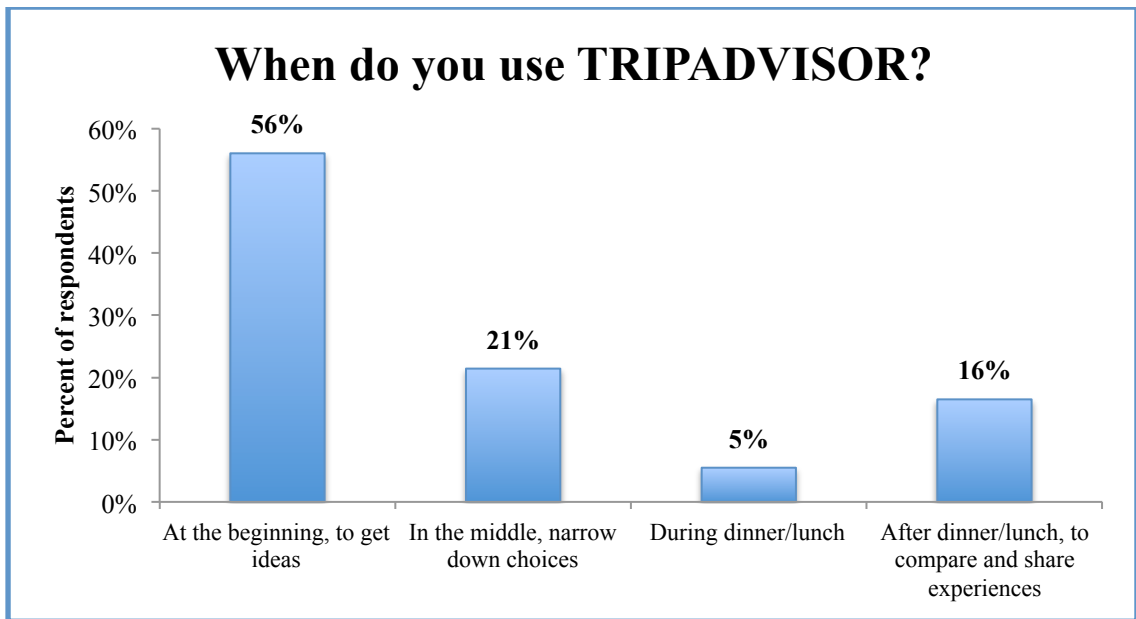
Graph 12 – Phase in which TripAdvisor is used.
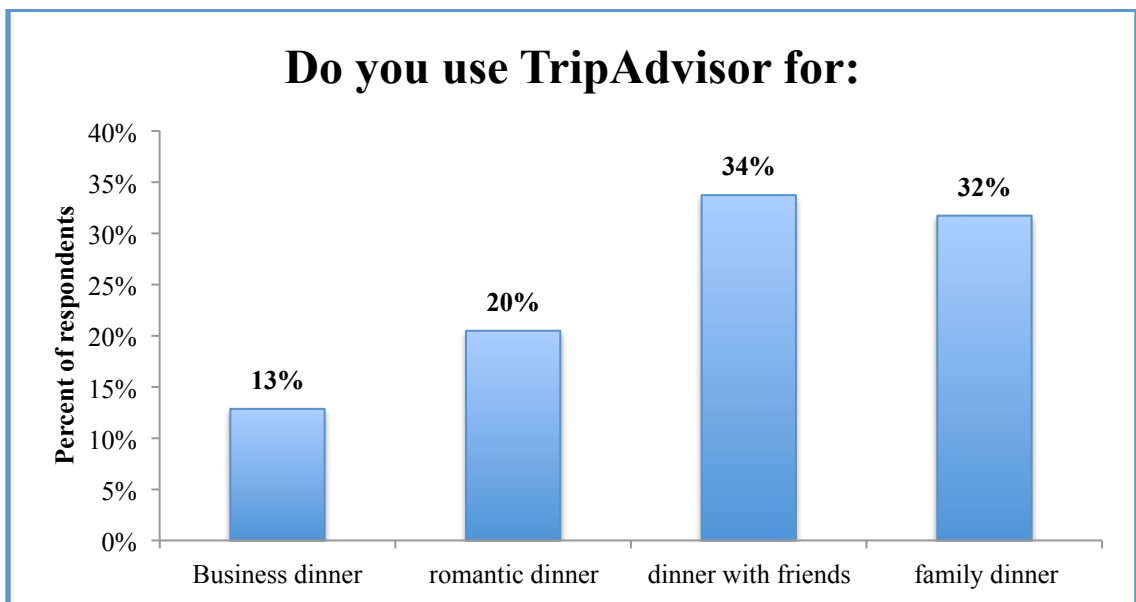
Graph 13 – Circumstances in which TripAdvisor is used.

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Do you use TripAdvisor when you are:
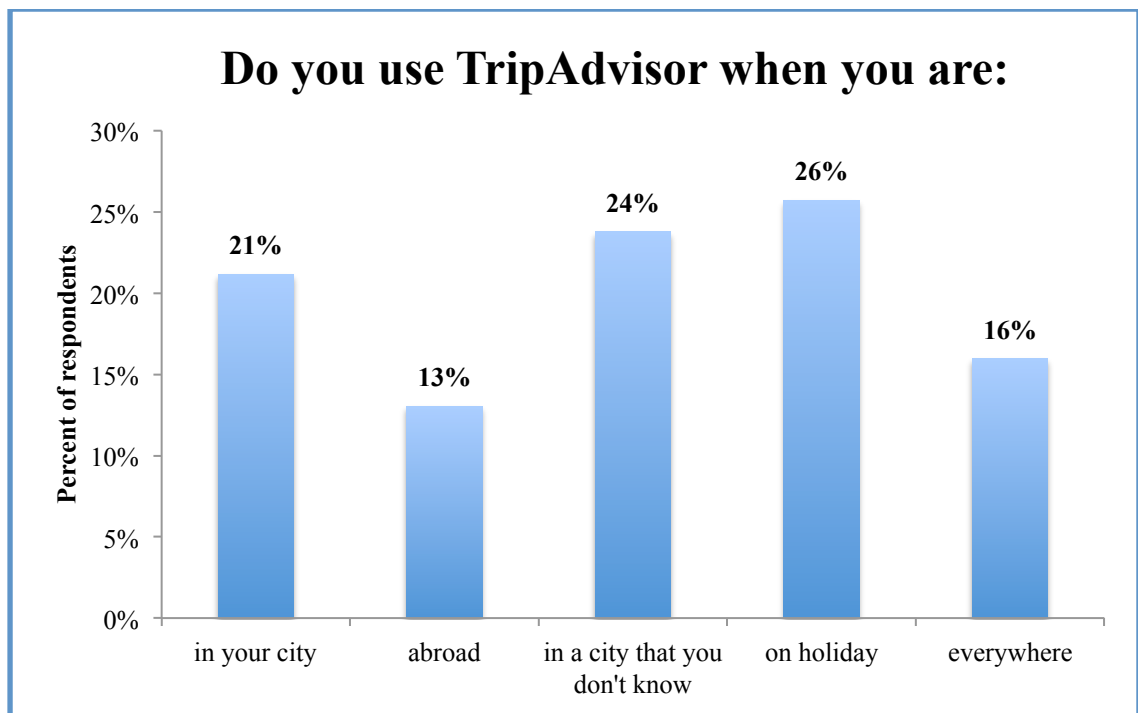
Graph 14 – Place where TripAdvisor is used.

4.5 Quantity and Quality of E-WOM

Reviews number influence: In order to identify what evokes a high number of review on a specific restaurant, we look at the mean and standard deviation that comes from the findings of the question where is sought to specify what evokes a high number of review on a specific restaurant (see Graph 15). On the horizontal axis of the Graph 15, 1 represent strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. The restaurant's popularity option has the highest mean of agreement therefore we can argue that for the majority of the respondents a high number of review is a symptom of popularity when choosing for a restaurant. Furthermore, looking at the standard deviation, it emerges that there is a high volatility among the respondents. This can be explained analysing this results through a cross tabulation to test whether differences exist among respondents with different TripAdvisor' usage (see Table 5). As visible from the Table 5, the more

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TripAdvisor is used, the more a high number of reviews implies that the restaurant is popular. This positive correlation is also found in the other variables that where tested together with the review numerousness. Therefore, it can be argued that users with more familiarity with the virtual community tend to give a stronger significance to the quantity of the E-WOM. No particular differences emerged running a cross tabulation analysis for different gender, age or geographic distribution.

In addition, the 9.5% of respondents have write in more answers to this question, arguing for example that "If there are too many reviews, I doubt that is true, unless it is a very popular restaurant" or "we need to do a careful analysis of the reviews because some are written to improve / worsen the rating of the restaurant and are not true" or "even that might not be real"; or "sometimes I wonder if people close to the restaurateur fill out the reviews." It is interesting to note that all these comments put in doubt the trustworthiness of reviews, and this occurs when the number of reviews is very high for the restaurant. Other comments reinforce the thesis that a high number of reviews suggest that the restaurant is popular. In fact, some respondents wrote "it is a well-attended restaurant" or "restaurant is a very popular and well known" or "the restaurant is 'trendy'". While others comments support the view that a high number of reviews imply that customers of that restaurant were very satisfied or very dissatisfied. Such as the high number of review implies that "a restaurant that certainly stimulates interest, for good thinks or for the bad ones..." or "to the fact that they were satisfied of the quality of the restaurant." Finally, it is interesting to note that a respondent has analyzed this fact from a social point of view writing in that when there is a high number of reviews is due to "the need for people to judge whatever and always, due to the recent syndrome 'Masterchef's jury' ".

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Reviews quality influence: Among all the factors that influence the quality of the review (subjectivity, objectivity, credibility, understandability and argumentation) respondents indicated that the most important factor in a review is the credibility. After the credibility, factors that are important or very important are the argumentation then the understandability and the objectivity of the review. While the subjectivity is denoted as the least important factor to assign the quality of a review. The bar graph 16 shows the mean and the standard deviation of the importance of the characteristics of the E-WOM. On the horizontal axis, 1 represent not important at all and 5 very important.

Quantity influence

	Restaurant's popularity	Encourage to try the restaurant	Express reviewers' high satisfaction/ dissatisfaction
Mean	3,9	3,6	3,7
STD.DEV	0,9	0,9	0,9
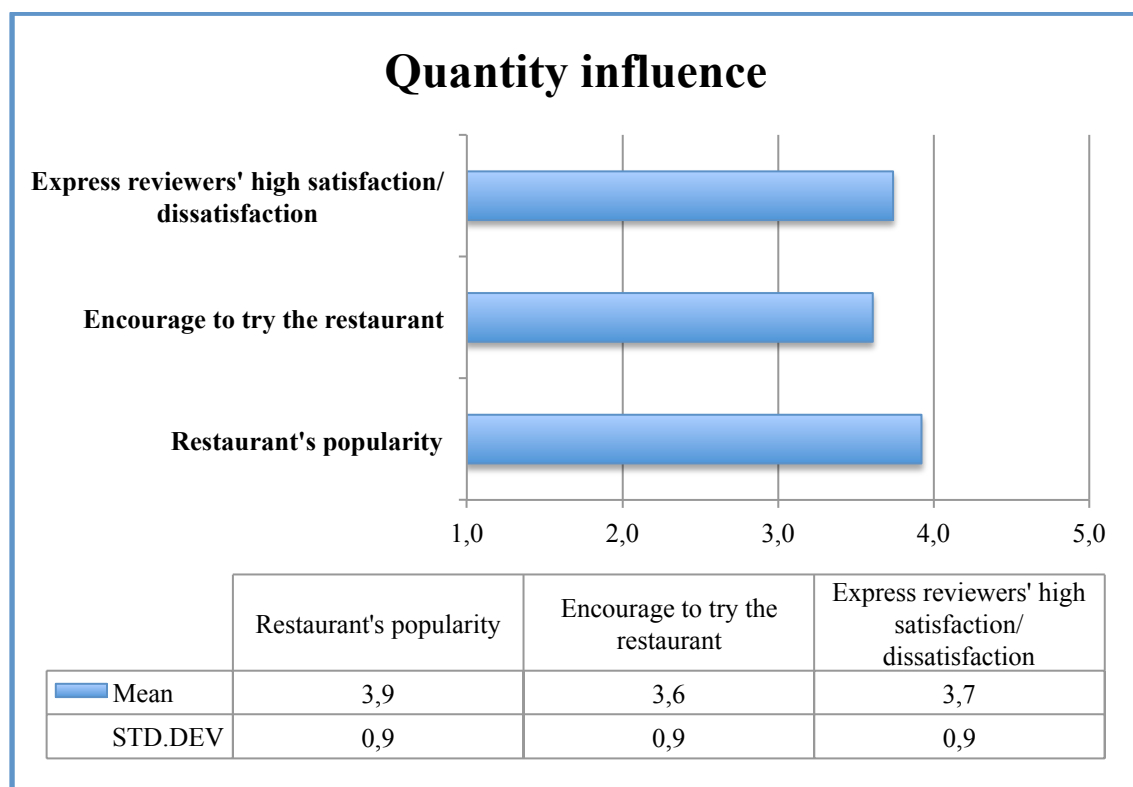
Graph 15 – Reviews number influence.

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	TripAdvisor Usage			
	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Popularity	3,000	3,888	3,916	4,281
A restaurant to try	3,272	3,583	3,555	3,812
High Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction	3,000	3,499	3,777	4,218

Table 5 – Cross tabulation review quantity

	Subjectivity	Objectivity	Credibility	Understandability	Argumentation
Mean	3,61	4,45	4,56	4,38	4,40
STD: DEV	1,05	0,80	0,75	0,77	0,71
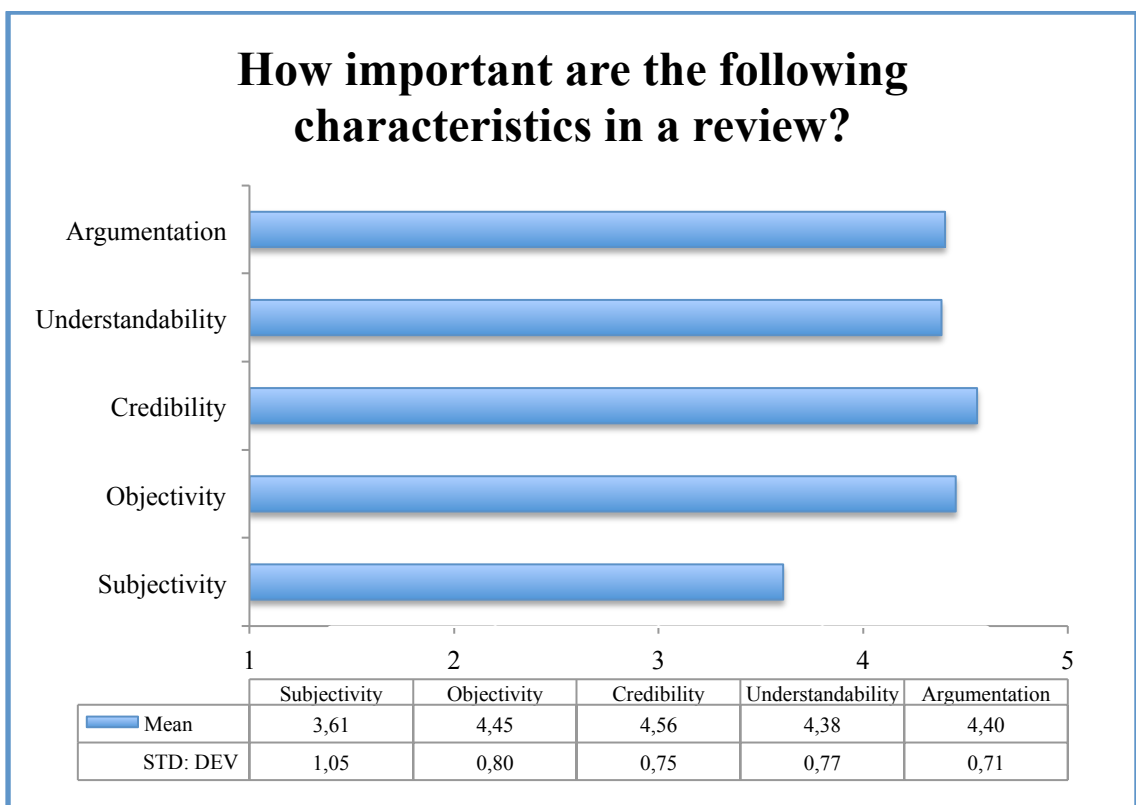
Graph 16 – Reviews quality influence.

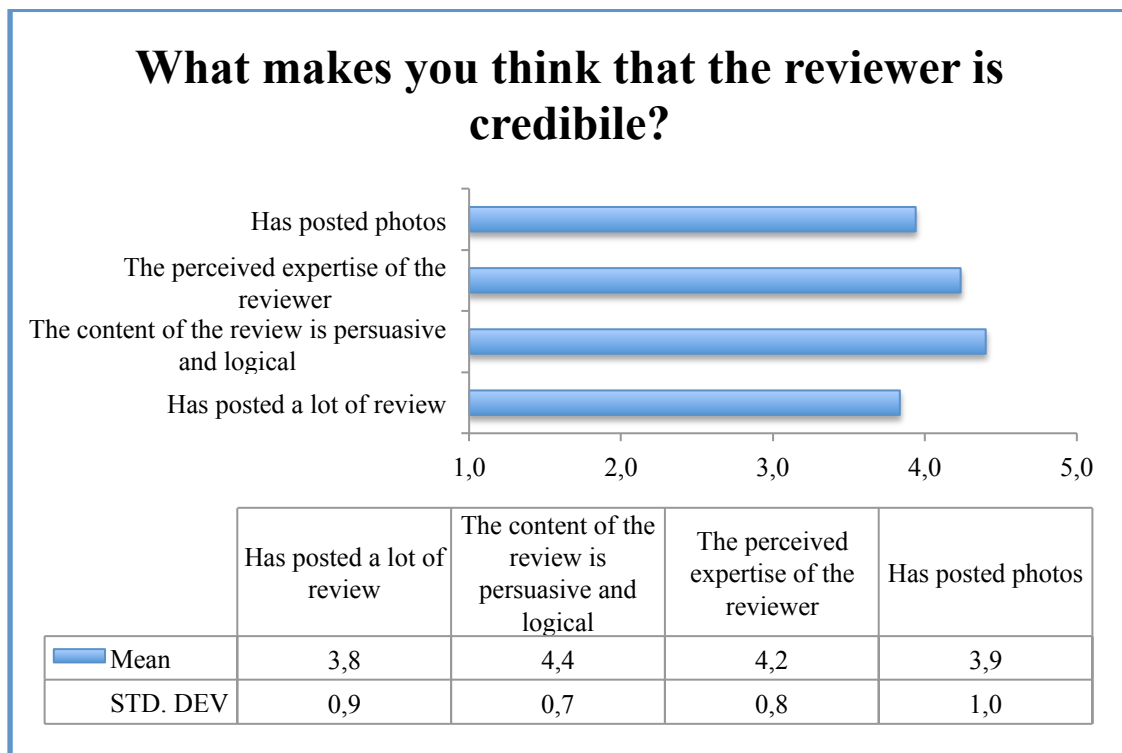The influence of E-WOM on consumers' decision-making process: the TripAdvisor case.
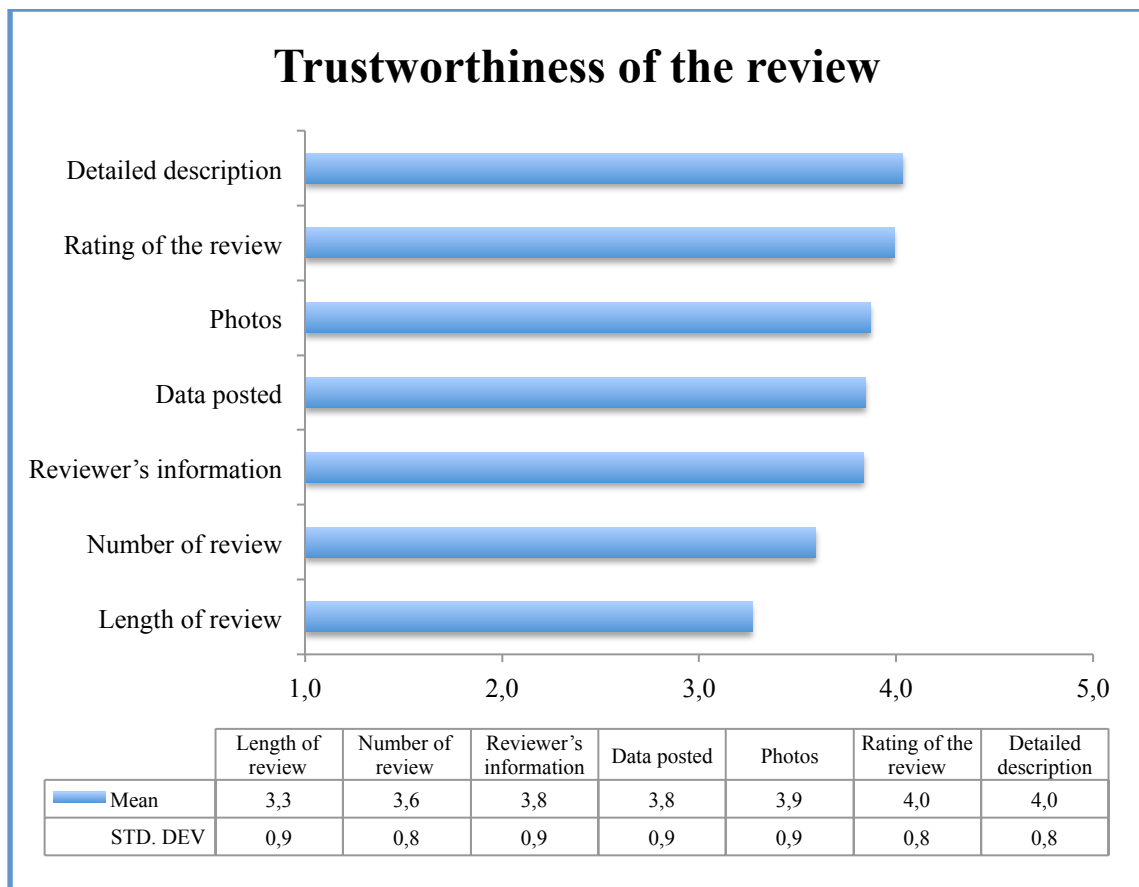
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4.6 Credibility of E-WOM

Credibility of the reviewer: To the question in which is sought which are the factors that make you think that the reviewer is credible, the most important factor is "the contents of the review is convincing and logical." Indeed the factor that affects less the credibility of the reviewer is the fact that, whether or not, the reviewer has published other reviews. The second place of importance to define the credibility of the reviewer, is held by "the perceived expertise of the reviewer" while the third factor by importance is the fact that the reviewers have posted photos with the review. In addition, some respondents write in and say that they base the credibility of the reviewer also considering the response of the restaurateur of the review, or considering if the review has been defined by others user of TripAdvisor as helpful review. One respondent said that assigns the credibility of the reviewer considering the country of origin of the reviewer. And another respondent assesses the credibility of the reviewer also contextualizing the claims of the reviewer on that restaurant. The bar graph 17 shows the mean and the standard deviation of the importance of the characteristics of the reviewer. On the horizontal axis, 1 represent not important at all and 5 very important.

Trustworthiness of the review: In the question, in which it is sought to establish to what extent the factors influence the trustworthiness of the review, the factors that have been defined as important or very important turn out to be the details of the review and rating of the review assesses by others users. In order of importance, the third and the fourth factor that determines the trustworthiness of the review determined by respondents are the presence of photos, published together with the review, and the date of publication of the post. Following, respondents give importance

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or great importance to the information of the reviewer and to the number of reviews that the reviewer has published in the past. While the length of the review was defined as the least important in the assignment of the trustworthiness of the review, in fact 64.3% defined it as unimportant. The bar graph 18 displays the mean and the standard deviation of the factors that determine the trustworthiness of reviews. On the horizontal axis, 1 represent not important at all and 5 very important.

What makes you think that the reviewer is credibile?

	Has posted a lot of review	The content of the review is persuasive and logical	The perceived expertise of the reviewer	Has posted photos
Mean	3,8	4,4	4,2	3,9
STD. DEV	0,9	0,7	0,8	1,0

Graph 17 – Influence of reviewer's characteristics.

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Trustworthiness of the review

	Length of review	Number of review	Reviewer's information	Data posted	Photos	Rating of the review	Detailed description
Mean	3,3	3,6	3,8	3,8	3,9	4,0	4,0
STD. DEV	0,9	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,8	0,8

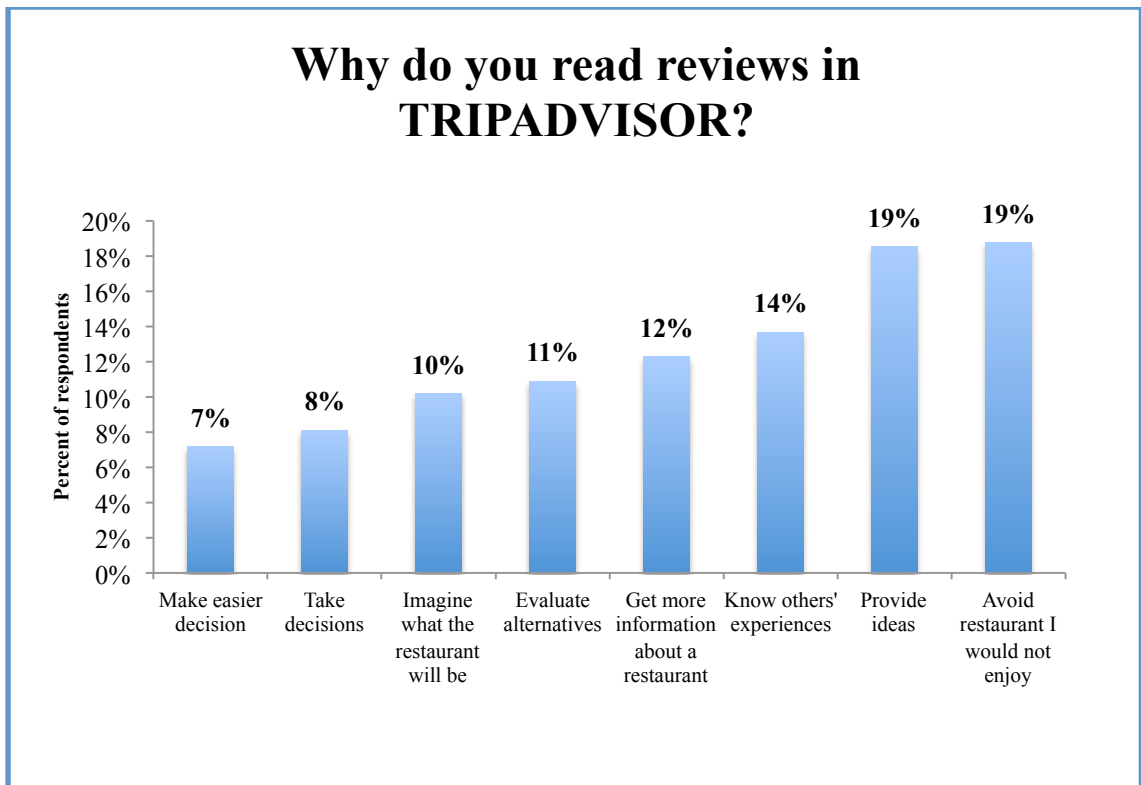**Graph 18 – Trustworthiness of the review.**

4.7 Influence on consumers' decision-making process

Reasons of TripAdvisor's use: Among the major reasons why respondents read reviews on TripAdvisor there are to avoid bad experiences and to form an idea about the restaurant. While it is interesting to note that only 8% of respondents indicated that they read reviews on TripAdvisor to take a decision or to make easier the decision of the restaurant. Another important fact, for which TripAdvisor is used, is to discover the experiences of other people who tried the restaurant. In addition the 12% of respondents indicated that they read reviews on TripAdvisor to get more information about the

The influence of E-WOM on consumers' decision-making process: the TripAdvisor case.
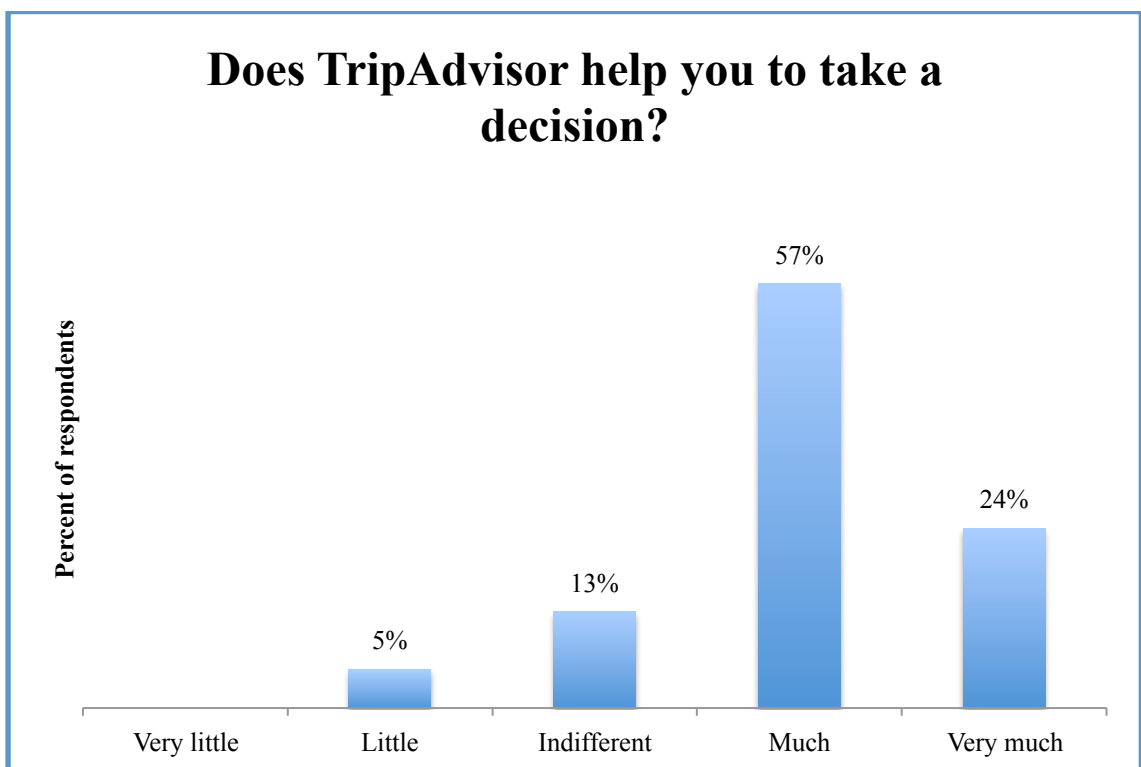
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restaurant and the 11% to evaluate alternatives of restaurants. Graph 19 shows in percentage what are the reasons why respondents read reviews on TripAdvisor.

Influence of TripAdvisor: In the question where is asked to indicate in which measure TripAdvisor helps to take the decision about the restaurant to go, the 82% of respondents indicates that it helps very or very much during the decision making process, and only the 18% indicated that TripAdvisor helps a little or that it does not help. The results are visible in Graph 20.
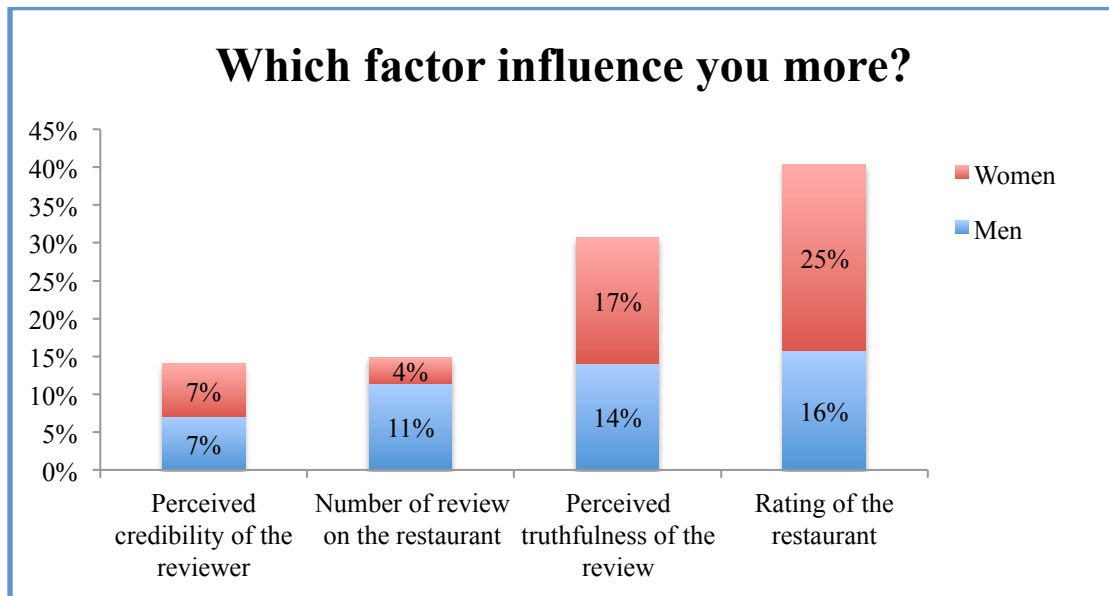
Influence of factors: The E-WOM factor that influence the most the decision-making process of a restaurant when consumers read reviews on TripAdvisor, appears to be the rating of the restaurant (40% of respondents). The second factor is the perception that the reviews are true (31% of respondents). While the perceived credibility of reviewers and the number of reviews on a restaurant influences less on the decision-making process. As visible in Graph 21, the rating of the restaurant influences more women than men, while the number of reviews on a restaurant influence more men than women. Graph 22 displays results considering the age group of belonging, and we can see that member of the age group from 18 to 44 are more influenced by the rating of the restaurant, while indeed the age group from 45 to 64 is more influenced by the perceived trustworthiness of the review.

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Graph 19 – Reasons of TripAdvisor's use.

Graph 20 – TripAdvisor influence.

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Graph 21 – Influence of factors by gender.
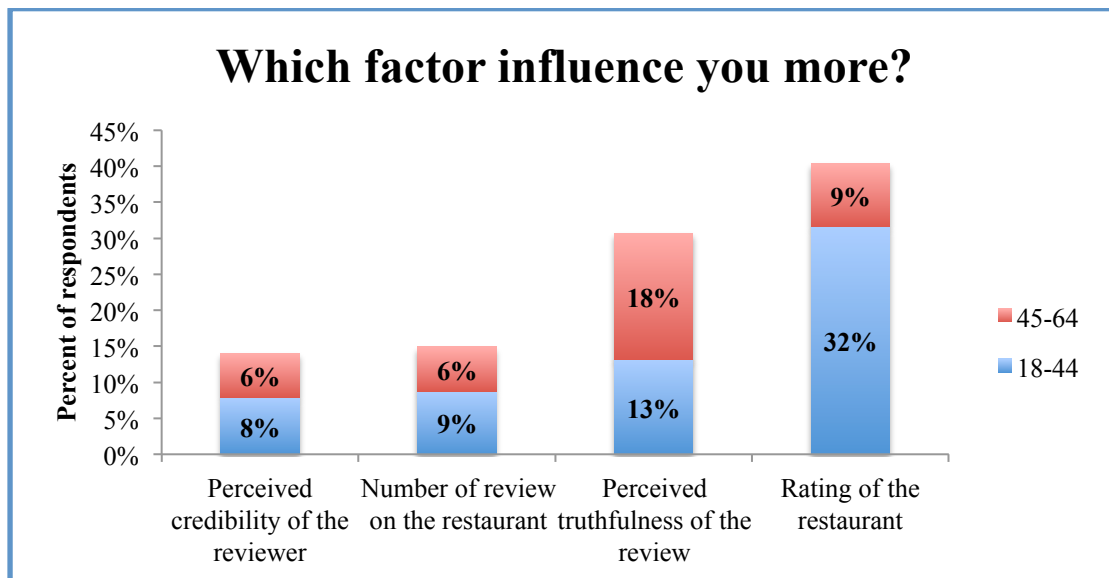
Graph 22 – Influence of factors by age group.

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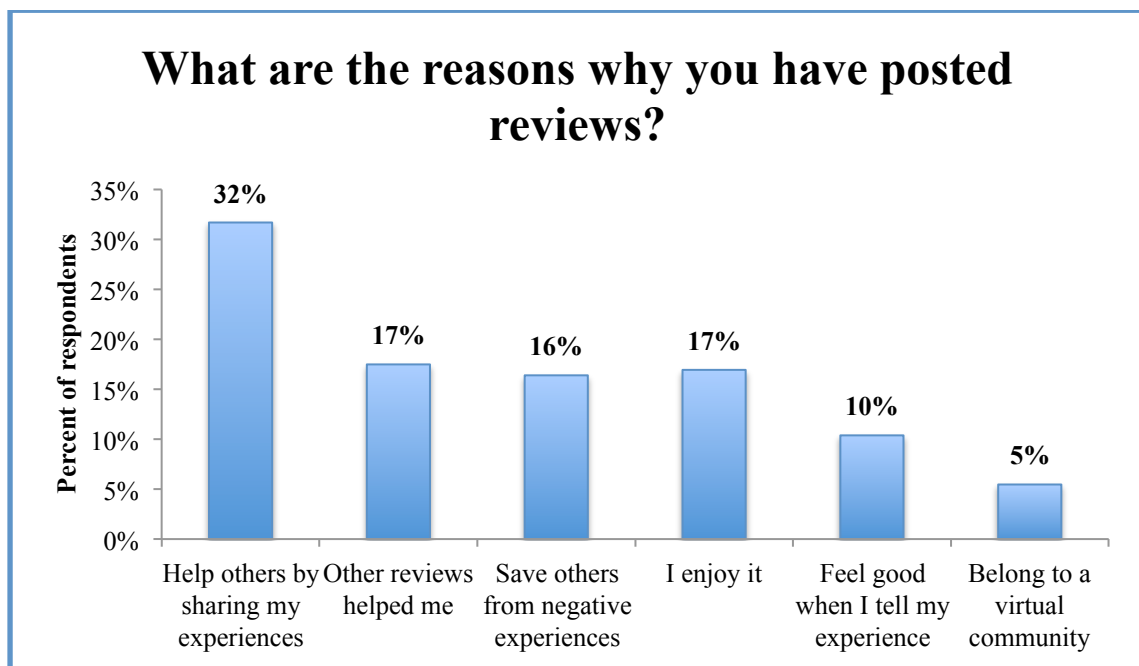
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4.8 Engagement in E-WOM

Engagement: Among the respondents to the questionnaire, 60% said they had published at least once a review. The majority of those are women and belongs to the age group from 18 to 44 years. Moreover it is interesting to note that the majority of those who have posted at least once a review are from the North-West of Italy while the major cluster of those who have never written a review are from South of Italy. Table 6 displays the data.

Motivation to write online reviews: One of the most important reason why respondents have wrote at least one review is the need to share their experience to help others, but also because "Other reviews helped me" or "Save others from negative experiences" and lastly because "I enjoy writing my experience". While only the 5% of respondents said they wrote a review on TripAdvisor to belong to a virtual community (see Graph 23).
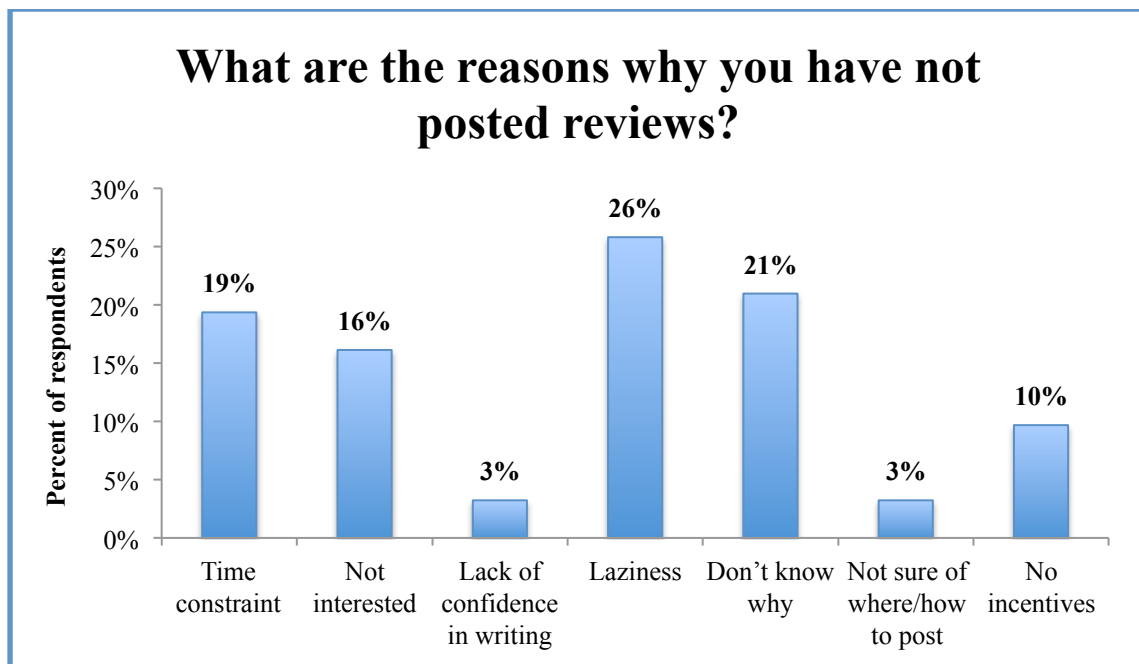
Motivation not to write online reviews: Among the major reasons why the respondents have stated that they have never posted a review on TripAdvisor we find laziness, or that they do not know how to define the reason why they have never written, others said they had time constraint or because they are not interested in sharing their experience. Graph 24 displays the results.

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Have you ever posted online review?										
	Gender		Class age				Italian geographic area			
	Men	Women	18-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	North-West	North-East	Center	South
YES - 61%	43%	57%	33%	33%	23%	11%	33%	11%	24%	31%
NO - 39%	56%	44%	29%	24%	24%	22%	22%	18%	13%	47%

Table 6 – Engagement distribution.

Graph 23 – Motivation to write online reviews.

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What are the reasons why you have not posted reviews?

Graph 24 – Motivation not to write online reviews.

4.9 Summary of data analysis

From the questionnaire it is possible to identify and describe the concerns and pre-occupations of Italians regarding restaurants and dining. 41% of respondents declare that they go out for a meal more than once per mouth whilst a further 35% of respondents declare that they go out for a meal once a month. Therefore, from this survey we can extrapolate that 76% of the Italian population eat out at least once a month. This data confirms the importance of investigating the Italian behaviour during their decision-making process when choosing a restaurant. The majority of respondents agree that the restaurant's reservation is something necessary and that they enjoy doing it. The survey identified that they reserve a table in a restaurant the same day or 1-2

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days before, indicating that the time of involvement for the choice of a restaurant is short. The decision when choosing the restaurant depends on their own taste and also economically by the price classification of the restaurant. Respondents declare that when they have to decide which restaurant to go to, major information sources are represented by family, friends and the Internet. Internet is used often from respondents when they search restaurant's information. From the results it is possible to discern there is no disparity between gender for Internet usage when searching the Internet for information. While considering the division by age group, the majority of those who always use the Internet belong to the age group of 35-44 years. The majority of those who often uses Internet belong to the age groups of 18-34 years and 45-55 years. Finally the age group that sometimes or rarely use Internet is the 55-64 years age group. The activities that are most undertaken when searching restaurant's information on Internet, are reading the restaurant's website, browsing through imagines online and reading other's comments/materials (E-WOM). Between the virtual communities asked in the questionnaire, TripAdvisor represents the one used the most. Although, as stated earlier, from the survey results it is possible to discern there is no disparity between gender for Internet usage women are those that use TripAdvisor the most. Of those women who use TripAdvisor, the most were found to belong to the age group from 18 to 44 years old, from the south and northwest of Italy. Focusing on this group specifically that use TripAdvisor the most, the majority are women, between 35-44 years old and from the south of Italy. Whilst from the ones that uses TripAdvisor often they belong to the age group of 18-34 years old and are from the North-West of Italy. Indeed from those who say that they never use TripAdvisor, the majority belongs to the age group of 55-64 years old and is from the North-East of Italy.

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Considering that 153 respondents have participated in the survey and 115 respondents stated that they use TripAdvisor, we can derive the majority (the 75.16% of respondents) uses this online travel community to search for information about a restaurant, confirming the importance and the spread use of it. The phase during which TripAdvisor is most used is at the beginning, to get an idea or inspiration when organizing a dinner with friends. It is most used when respondents are on vacation and when they are in a city they have not visited before. The high number of reviews present for a restaurant implies, for TripAdvisor's users, that the restaurant is popular, while the most important quality in a review is defined as the credibility that the review gives to the reader. This credibility is assessed by the reader when the content of the review is convincing and logical. Indeed the factor that least affects the credibility of the reviewer is whether or not the reviewer has published other reviews. Moreover the factors that have been defined as important or very important to assess the trustworthiness of the review turn out to be the details of the review and rating of the review assessed by others users. When asked directly, the majority of respondents stated that TripAdvisor helps them to make a decision on the restaurant to go to. The key question is to define the reason why they read TripAdvisor; among the majority of reasons, the main reasons were to avoid bad experiences and to form an idea about the restaurant. While it is interesting to note that a low percentage of respondents indicated that they read reviews on TripAdvisor to make a decision or to ease the decision making process to decide in which restaurant to go. Finally, among the respondents to the questionnaire, 60% said they had published at least one review online while 40% have never done so. The majority of those who have posted reviews belong to the age group from 18 to 44 years old. It is interesting to note that the majority of those who have

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posted are from the North-West of Italy, while the majority of those who have never written a review are from South of Italy. It is interesting to notice that despite the respondents from the south claim to be the highest users of TripAdvisor, on the other hand, they seem to be the less engaged with the E-WOM.

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Chapter 5 – Results Validation and Discussion

CHAPTER 5 – RESULTS VALIDATION AND

DISCUSSION

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Chapter 5 – Results Validation and Discussion

After the preliminary analysis of the findings, this chapter will be used to verify, through the regression analysis, the validity of the thesis's hypotheses, answer the research questions and describe in details how this thesis reaches the objectives. Finally, the summary of the findings will be described according to the conceptual framework.

5.1 Hypotheses validation

The aim of this thesis is to validate the following main hypotheses:

H1: The quantity of E-WOM influences consumers' decision-making process.

H2: The rating of the restaurant influences consumers' decision-making process.

H3: The credibility of the reviewer influences consumers' decision-making process.

H4: The trustworthiness of the review influences consumers' decision-making process.

Regression analyses are used in order to validate hypotheses. The aim is to find the relationship between independent variables, characteristics of the E-WOM, and the dependent variable, that is the influence on the consumers' decision-making process. Therefore, a linear regression model is used to answer to Hypothesis 1, Hypothesis 2, Hypothesis 3, Hypothesis 4, investigating the influence that the quantity, the rating, the credibility of the reviewer and the trustworthiness of the review have on the decision-making process; in order to answer to the research question.

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Hypothesis 1: The linear regression is used to find the relationship between the quantity of reviews and the influence on the consumers' decision-making process, and results are visible in Table 7:

Dependent Variable: TripAdvisor Influence

Independent Variable: Influence of the Quantity of reviews

		Coefficients				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		1,5320	0,2030		7,5330	0,0000
Influence of Quantity		0,6900	0,0550	0,7620	12,5100	0,0000
R	0,762					
R Square	0,581					
Adjusted R Square	0,577					
Std. Error of the Estimate	0,499					
F	156,509					

Table 7 – Regression result hypothesis 1

As indicated in Table 7, the R value represents the simple correlation and is 0,762 which indicates a high degree of correlation: this value can be from zero to one, the more is near to one the more the dependent variable is correlated with the independent variable. The regression model has an adjusted R^2 value of 0.581, indicating that 58,1% of the variance of the influence that TripAdvisor has on consumers' decision-making process is accounted by the quantity of review present for a single restaurant. The F-value is also significant, this suggest a linear regression between variables. The statistical significance (Sig. = 0,0000) of the regression between

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the quantity of reviews and the influence that TripAdvisor has on the consumers' decision-making process is less than 0.05, and indicates that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcomes. The t-statistic is used for testing whether the independent variables influence the dependent variable. The t-statistic of 12,510 is a positive value, suggesting that positive quantity of reviews positively influence the decision-making process of consumers when they have to make a decision on the restaurant to go. The Beta coefficient is used to indicate the impact, thus, the impact of the quantity of review on the influence is (Beta = 0,7620) 76,2%. The significance of these results is Sig. = 0,000, (p<0,05) meaning that there is a 95% probability that the relationship between variables is not random. Therefore, this result is statistically significant.

With the linear regression analysis it is possible to answer to the Hypothesis 1, affirming that the number of review present for a single restaurant impact the influence that E-WOM has on consumers' decision-making process for the 76,2%.

Hypothesis 2: To test the Hypothesis 2 it is relevant to make a regression between the rating of the restaurant and the influence on the consumers' decision-making process. Results are visible in Table 8.

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Dependent Variable: TripAdvisor Influence

Independent Variable: Influence of the Rating of the restaurant

		Coefficients			
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		0,8250	0,1760		4,6740	0,0000
Influence of Rating		0,7980	0,0430	0,8660	18,4240	0,0000

R	0,866
R Square	0,75
Adjusted R Square	0,748
Std. Error of the Estimate	0,385
F	339,444

Table 8 – Regression result hypothesis 2

The R value in this regression is 0,866 which indicates a high degree of correlation between the independent and dependent variable. The regression model has an adjusted R^2 value of 0,75, indicating that 75% of the variance of the influence that TripAdvisor has on consumers' decision-making process is accounted by the rating of the restaurant. The F-value is also significant and the statistical significance (Sig. = 0,0000) of the regression between the rating of the restaurant and the influence that TripAdvisor has on the consumers' decision-making process is less than 0.05, therefore this regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcomes. The t-statistic of 18,424 is a positive value suggesting that positive rating of the restaurant positively influence the decision-making process of consumers when they have to make a decision on the restaurant to go. The Beta coefficient is 0,8660. Thus the impact of the rating on the influence is very high and it is the 86,6%. The significance of these results is Sig. =

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0,000, (p<0,05) meaning that there is a 95% probability that the relationship between variables is not random. Therefore, this result is statistically significant.

So, to answer to the Hypothesis 2, it is possible to state that the rating of the restaurant influence the decision-making process for the 86,6%.

Hypothesis 3: The linear regression is also used to define the relationship between the credibility of the reviewer and the influence on the consumers' decision-making process, in order to test Hypothesis 3, and results are visible in the table below:

Dependent Variable: TripAdvisor Influence

Independent Variable: Influence of the Credibility of the reviewer

		Coefficients				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		2,0810	0,2640		7,8770	0,0000
Influence of Credibility		0,5030	0,0670	0,5760	7,4840	0,0000
R	0,576					
R Square	0,331					
Adjusted R Square	0,325					
Std. Error of the Estimate	0,63					
F	56,009					

Table 9 – Regression result hypothesis 3

The R value in this regression is 0,576 which indicates a medium degree of correlation between the independent and dependent variable. The regression model has an adjusted R^2 value of 0,331, demonstrating that 33,1% of the variance of the influence that TripAdvisor has on consumers' decision-making process is accounted by the

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credibility of the reviewer. The F-value is also significant and the statistical significance (Sig. = 0,0000) of the regression between the credibility of the reviewer and the influence that TripAdvisor has on the consumers' decision-making process is less than 0.05, and shows that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcomes. The t-statistic is 7,4840 and because it is a positive value implies that the credibility of the reviewer positively influences the decision-making process of consumers when they have to make a decision on the restaurant to go. The Beta coefficient is 0,5760. Thus the impact of the credibility of the reviewer on the influence is medium and it is represented by the 57,6%. The significance of these results is Sig. = 0,000, (p<0,05) meaning that there is a 95% probability that the relationship between variables is not random. Therefore, this result is statistically significant.

Consequently, to answer to the Hypothesis 3, it is possible to state that the credibility of the reviewer impact the decision-making process for the 57,6%.

Hypothesis 4: In order to define the relationship between the trustworthiness of the reviews and the influence on the consumers' decision-making process, the linear regression is used and results are visible in Table 10.

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Dependent Variable: TripAdvisor Influence						
Independent Variable: Influence of the Trustworthiness of the review						
		Coefficients				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)		2,3840	0,2930		8,1330	0,0000
Influence of Trustworthiness		0,4230	0,0740	0,4710	5,6750	0,0000

R	0,471
R Square	0,222
Adjusted R Square	0,215
Std. Error of the Estimate	0,679
F	32,207

Table 10 – Regression result hypothesis 4

As indicated in table 10, the R value indicates a low degree of correlation (R = 0,471). The regression model has an adjusted R^2 value of 0.222, signifying that 22,2% of the variation of the influence that TripAdvisor has on consumers' decision-making process is accounted by the trustworthiness of the reviews. The F-value is significant and the statistical significance (Sig. = 0,0000) indicates that the regression model statistically significantly predicts the outcomes. The t-statistic (t = 5,675) is a positive value thus the trustworthiness of the reviews positively influences the decision-making process of consumers when they have to make a decision on the restaurant to go. The Beta coefficient, that indicates the impact, is 0,4710. Therefore the 47,1% of the decision-making process is influenced by the trustworthiness of the reviews. The significance of these results is Sig. = 0,000, (p<0,05) therefore, this result is statistically significant.

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With the linear regression analysis it is possible to answer to the Hypothesis 4, affirming that the 47,1% of the decision-making process is influenced by the trustworthiness of the reviews.

After the validation of the primary hypotheses, secondary hypothesis are tested, in order to define which factor is most important in the determination of all the variables that characterize the electronic word of mouth and that influence the decision-making process:

H1a: The high number of reviews on a restaurant depends more on the restaurant's popularity than on the high satisfaction/dissatisfaction of consumers' on the restaurant.

H2a: Objective and detailed e-WOM message are more influential than subjective and emotional ones.

H3a: The credibility of the reviewer of the E-WOM message depends more on the perceived expertise of the reviewer than on the number of other comments that the reviewer has posted.

H4a: The trustworthiness of the review depends more on rating of the review than on the date of post of the review.

H5a: Consumers' engagement in E-WOM is due to the need to help others rather than the need to belong to a virtual community.

Hypothesis 1a: In order to identify what evokes a high number of reviews on a specific restaurant, Graph 15 demonstrates that TripAdvisor's users when they face

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many reviews on a restaurant they think that the restaurant is very popular. Therefore a high number of reviews on a restaurant depends more on the popularity of the restaurant than on the high satisfaction or dissatisfaction of those who have tried the restaurant.

Hypothesis 2a: Graph 16 shows that objective reviews are more influential than subjective ones. Furthermore, the subjectivity is denoted as the least important factor to assign the quality of a review.

Hypothesis 3a: The credibility of the reviewer depends more on the perceived expertise of the reviewer, which is given by the persuasiveness and the consistency of the content of the review. While the number of other reviews posted by the reviewer is the least important factor to assign the credibility of the reviewer.

Hypothesis 4a: The trustworthiness of the review depends more on rating that the specific review scored than on the date of post of the review (see Graph 18).

Hypothesis 5a: One of the most important reason why respondents have wrote at least one review is the need to share their experience to help others (see Graph 23). While only 5% of respondents said they wrote a review on TripAdvisor to belong to a virtual community.

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5.2 Research questions and objectives validation

The main purpose of this thesis is to answer to the following questions:

- **Does E-WOM on TripAdvisor influence the consumer decision-making process for a restaurant?**
- **Which aspect of the E-WOM on TripAdvisor influences more during the decision-making process of a restaurant?**

In order to answer the first research question, to investigate if TripAdvisor can influence the decision-making process of consumers, this study firstly has analysed the phase in which consumers use this virtual community. As seen in Graph 12, the 77% use TripAdvisor prior to their visit to the restaurant, proving that, the information gained through E-WOM are consulted during the decision-making process. As it is visible from Graph 20, the 82% of respondent declared to be influenced by TripAdvisor, or that at least that it helps to take a decision. However, when asked directly, only the 15% of respondents declare that they use TripAdvisor in order to decide in which restaurant make a reservation (see Graph 19). Therefore it can be claimed that despite not being the most influencing source of information when selecting a restaurant (see Graph 2), TripAdvisor, when consulted, influences the final decision of the restaurant.

After the regression analysis of all the variables that characterize the electronic word of mouth, with the influence on the decision-making process, it is possible to answer to the second research question in which is sought which is the most influencing factor of the E-WOM on the decision-making process of consumers for the decision of a restaurant. The aspect that influences more the decision-making process of a restaurant,

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when reading E-WOM on TripAdvisor, is the rating of the restaurant. In fact in the regression analysis the impact of the rating is 86,6%. Between all the E-WOM aspects, the rating has the highest level of impact and therefore it is perceived as the most influencing factor in the decision-making process. The rating is followed by the quantity of the reviews present for a single restaurant because it impacts for the 76,2%. Consequently the rating and the quantity of reviews are the most influencing factor when a consumer is consulting E-WOM on TripAdvisor to take a restaurant decision. Despite the fact that, when asked directly, the perceived trustworthiness of the review was identified by the 31% as the most important factors and the credibility of the reviewer by the 14% of respondents (see graph 21), the regression analysis demonstrate that the decision-making process is influenced by the 57,6% from the credibility of the reviewer and by the 47,1% from the trustworthiness of the review, representing the two factors that influence less the decision-making process.

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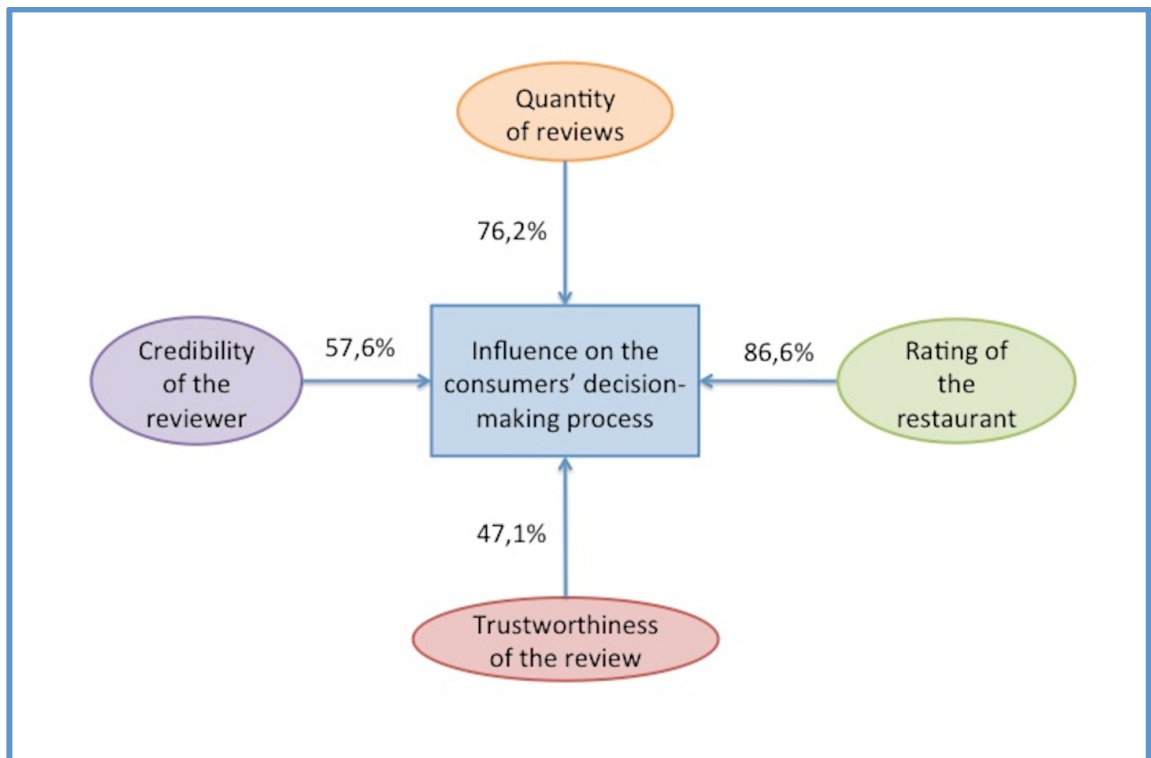
Figure 16 – Factors influence on the decision-making process.

From the analysis of the results of Chapter 4 is possible to achieve the objective that this thesis wants to reach. The first objective aims to define the TripAdvisor incidence usage, and data demonstrate that the 75.16% of respondents of the questionnaire use TripAdvisor to search for information about a restaurant. No particular differences emerged for gender differences. The majority belongs to the age group from 18 to 44 years. The age group between 35 and 44 years old we find the highest percentage of respondents who declared they always use TripAdvisor. While in the class ages of 18-34 and 45-54 years, the strongest trend has been to use TripAdvisor sometimes or often. Among those that use more TripAdvisor, the majority are from the South or the North-West of Italy, while respondents who live in the North-East of Italy are those that use less TripAdvisor.

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The second and the third objectives point to discover in which circumstances and in which place TripAdvisor is used. The majority use it for decision of the restaurant for dinner with family or with friends, while emerged that TripAdvisor is used in the same way when persons are in their own city or on holiday.

The fourth objective wants to evaluate the engagement level in the electronic word of mouth. The 60% of respondents declare they had published at least once a review; the majority of those are women and belong to the age group from 18 to 44 years.

5.3 Summary of findings

The summary of the results, obtained from the questionnaire and through the regression analysis, is made according to the scheme of the conceptual framework. First of all, this thesis found that the TripAdvisor use, through the Italian population, has an incidence usage of the 75% of the population. The Italians who stated that they always use it are those between 35 and 44 years, who live mainly in the South or the North-West of Italy. Italians between 18 and 34 years and those between 45 and 54 years, declare that they use it sometimes or often. While the group age that use it rarely or never is the one between 55 and 64 years. The results showed no particular differences among the gender usage. Also among those using TripAdvisor, the 60% declared to have posted at least once a review on this virtual community and the reason that prompted them to write a review was the need to help others as they have benefited from the use of other

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reviews. This research has shown that the Italian population is influenced by the Electronic word-of-mouth when they have to make a decision on which restaurant to go. Therefore, in the specific, that the Italians are influenced by the comments read on TripAdvisor. Following the conceptual framework and through a regression analysis, this thesis has shown that the factor of the E-WOM that most influence the choice of a restaurant is the rating that the restaurant has on TripAdvisor. The second factor that influences the choice of a restaurant is the number of the reviews present on that particular restaurant. The high number of reviews shows that the restaurant is very popular and that, if it has a high rating, it implies that most of the people who have been in that restaurant had a high degree of satisfaction of their experience. Instead the factors that not significantly influence the consumer decision-making process of a restaurant are the credibility of the reviewers and the trustworthiness of the reviews. The credibility of the reviewer is determined by the perceived expertise of the writer, while the trustworthiness of the review is given by the rating that the review has, more than the date of post of it.

For this reason, we can say that Italians between 18 and 44 years old always or often use TripAdvisor to make a decision on which restaurant to go and that the factors that influence their decision the most are the rating of the restaurant and the number of the reviews that the restaurant has.

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Chapter 6 - Conclusions

CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS

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This chapter will provide a summary of this thesis and its findings. Moreover it will be done the analysis of the managerial implications of the findings and there will be the discussion of the limitations of this thesis and a series of recommendations for future researches.

6.1 Conclusions

The progress of Internet has given the opportunity to everyone to share their opinions and any kind of contents, and this has modified the channels by which consumers search, obtain and collect information. In this context, the decision-making process tends to be more influenced by the Internet and this is empowered by the spread of devices that make these researches available at any time. Persons have learned to use the Internet to find information on the product and to collect the experience of other consumers, reading electronic word-of-mouth. Electronic word-of-mouth communication is defined as any positive or negative comment made by potential, actual, or previous customers about a product, a service, or a company, which is made available to a multitude of people on the Internet. (Thorsten Hennig-Thurau F., Gwinner K., Walsh G. and Gremler D., 2004). Therefore the use of electronic word-of-mouth provides important helps and suggestions to consumers when they are making a purchase decision. In light of this context, the aim of this thesis is to investigate the influence that electronic word of mouth has on consumers' decision-making process and analyse which aspects of the E-WOM influence more. In particular this work has analysed the Italian's decision-making process of restaurants when they use E-WOM on TripAdvisor, which is considered the most high-profiled example of online travel

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communities.

This thesis has covered the literature review of the main aspects around which the current knowledge on E-WOM is constructed. The factors that may influence the decision-making process are the quantity, the quality, considered as the rating, and the credibility that is divided into the credibility of the reviewer and the trustworthiness of the review. In addition the engagement is considered to understand the motives that lead or not to participate in the creation of E-WOM.

The quantity is the number of on-line reviews that a product or a service has, that it can depends from the product's popularity or from the high satisfaction or high dissatisfaction about the product (González, Gidumal and Valcárcel, 2013). The second characteristic of the E-WOM is the quality of on-line reviews, which can be explained by two different points of view. The first look at the quality of E-WOM considering the content of the message: if the content has a subjective approach or an objective one (Park D.H., Lee J. and Han I., 2007). The second point of view considers the quality of E-WOM as the rating that the product or service has, and it is the result of the relation between all positive and negative reviews. The third factor is the credibility, which is divided between the credibility of the reviewer, and in the trustworthiness of the review. The credibility of the reviewer is determined by the perceived expertise of the reviewer (Reichelt, Sievert and Jacob, 2014) and by the number of reviews that the reviewer have posted. The trustworthiness of the review is determined by the date of the post of the review or by the "helpfulness" of the comment, as a feedback of the usefulness of that comment, obtained with other's rating on the review. Lastly it has been analysed the engagement and Gretzel and Yoo, 2008 stated that motivations to write online travel review are to help a travel-service provider, to inform other travellers or to satisfy the

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desire to belong to a virtual community.

The aspects analysed in the literature review, and the connected hypotheses, have built the conceptual framework that this thesis have tested to analyse which aspect of reviews on TripAdvisor influences more during the reservation process of a restaurant. In order to answer the research questions, assess objectives and test hypotheses it has been necessary to develop a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed by GN-Research, a European group providing advanced marketing research and innovative analytics tools, based in Italy, France and Germany, during one week period between the 5th and the 12th of August 2014. In order to guarantee the representativeness of the sample used in this study on the Italian population, GN-Research has drawn a stratified sample directly from their sampling frame. It included Italians adults from 18 to 64 years old. The web-based survey comprehends 26 questions and pre-tests were conducted with survey experts to test the survey questionnaire and the overall research design. The data analysis has been done via a descriptive analysis of the findings of the questionnaire that answers the research questions and also via regression analysis.

Results of the questionnaire demonstrate that the TripAdvisor is the most used online communities in Italy, it has an incidence of the 75% on the 18-64 population. It is mainly used by young adults between 18 and 44 years old that predominantly live in the South or in the North-West of Italy. Despite the high usage still almost half of the users declared to have never posted a review mainly due to laziness or lack of time available. On the other hand the main reason that prompted users to write a review was the necessity to help others, as they have benefited from the use of other reviews, demonstrating an high commitment with the community.

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The research ultimately has shown that the Italian population is influenced by the electronic word-of-mouth when they have to make a decision on which restaurant to visit. Avoid a bad experiences and choice reassurance appeared to be the key reason why respondents consulted TripAdvisor. It can be then argued that TripAdvisor is more a quality check tool rather than a traffic builder for restaurants.

Through the linear regression, this research demonstrated that the E-WOM factor that most influences the restaurant choice is the rating that the restaurant has on the online community. The second factor that influences the choice of a restaurant is the number of the reviews present on that particular restaurant. Alternatively the factors that do not significantly influence the consumer's decision-making process are the credibility of the reviewers and the trustworthiness of the reviews.

From these results it can be argued that Italians are more incline to be influenced by numerical and quantitative variables like the rating and number of reviews rather than the qualitative aspect of the comments find on online communities. This can be owed by the fact that Italian users have low involvement with E-WOM and therefore prefer to base their judgement on the quick assessment done through checking of rating and number of reviews.

To conclude, this research has proved that E-WOM is an important influencing factor in the choice of the restaurant since the 81% of the respondents declared to be influenced by TripAdvisor. Furthermore the research has clearly identified that the most influencing factors are rating and reviews' number. At the same time, it demonstrated that the credibility of either the reviews or the reviewers are considered to be not important in the decision of the restaurant, demonstrating that there is an high rate of trust within the community. To corroborate this outcome, the research also found that

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the community engagement can be considered very high since the majority of TripAdvisor users have posted at least one review on the portal.

6.2 Managerial implications

The results that have been drawn by this thesis generate suggestions and recommendation that can be utilised by restaurant' managers, but also by any firm, that wants to improve their online popularity on any consumers opinion platform. With the growing popularity of online communities, virtual interaction among consumers have become commonplace and prolific, thus it is logical to assert that E-WOM plays a vital role in the acquisition and retention of consumers (Litvin, Goldsmith and Pan, 2008). Indeed, this study has proposed a conceptual model of the influence that electronic word-of-mouth has on consumers' and has discussed which aspects of E-WOM most influences during the decision process of a restaurant.

This research provides useful implications for restaurateurs, but also more in general to any manager that works in the hospitality sector. As restaurateurs face intense competition, they need to improve their marketing strategies to enhance the online attractiveness of their restaurants. Marketers should recognise that the majority of their guests went on the Internet to obtain more information on their product/services in order to analyse the feedback of those who already bought that product or used that service. It is also likely that these guests will go online again, to write a review about their experience. Marketers would be wise to take into account that their guests are exposed to, and likely influenced by, E-WOM, through the various numbers of sites and web

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communities devoted to the selling or discussion of their services. Therefore it is fundamental for them to start to proactively manage these online communities in order to be aware of the image that their firm has online influencing customers for positive reviews, rather than purely be critiqued and subjected to it.

Considering that this thesis has shown that consumers are influenced by the number of reviews and the rating that a given structure has; a way to improve business would be to keep in mind that every guest is a potential reviewer. This would foster an ethos in their business that every customer should get the best service and the best care possible. In addition, marketers can incentive their guests to write reviews on their products or on the services that they have tried. For example, many hotels already carry out this strategy. In fact, after a visit in a receptive structure, nowadays it is quite common to receive an email from the structure's management asking kindly to leave a comment about your experience on TripAdvisor. This is simply a 21st century upgrade of the 'Comments' book found in any hotel lobby throughout the 20th century.

Another strategy that restaurateurs could adopt is an "eat-review-reward" policy, to motivate consumers to describe their experiences of dining in their restaurant. A reward for posting could be discounts or membership points; this would be helpful in transforming guests into loyal customers and then advocates of the restaurant. This strategy can and should be implemented by most businesses offering a service. As this thesis has investigated, consumers increasingly seek information online before making a purchase or reservation, it is also recommended, a way to mitigate the negative impact from negative E-WOM. Marketers should actively respond to the negative comments left by customers in a constructive and professional manner, in order to be able to manage controversy and potential customer loss due to poor reviews. In conclusion

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marketers need to understand how to control this new and efficacious force if they want make their business to flourish.

6.3 Limitations and future research directions

Some limitations are associated with this research, which can improve the direction for future research. Firstly, the internet-based questionnaire was distributed by GN-research to a restricted sampling frame, therefore the ability of the collected data to generalise the population is reduced because sample is statistically representative of the Italian population between 18 and 64 years old that already use the Internet, not of the entire population. Thus, future research could extend the current study to improve the external validity and examine the differences across heterogeneous social and cultural segments.

Secondly, the current research is not based on direct observation of the reality, but all the conclusion are derived from what respondents claimed. Therefore, future direct researches on the effectiveness of TripAdvisor on the decision making process are recommended in order to establish the extent of this influence and the impact that these can have on restaurants performance.

Thirdly, this research has proved that rating and number of review are the most influencing factors on the decision making process. However the research has not establish to which extent a consumer will decide to take/change decision. Furthermore, it would be very interesting to see whether the difference in performance among restaurant that do manage proactively E-WOM and other that are not active on this online communities.

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Chapter 6 - Conclusions

Finally, this thesis as focused only on TripAdvisor users and on the restaurant decision making process. Therefore, in order to get a broader understanding on E-WOM on other sectors/areas it will be recommended to conduct more extensive research also on other product or services across other online platform.

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Appendix

APPENDIX

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Il seguente questionario ha lo scopo di analizzare il processo decisionale dei consumatori nella scelta di un ristorante.
Il questionario è completamente anonimo e richiede circa 10 minuti per la sua compilazione.
Vi ringrazio in anticipo per la partecipazione all'indagine e per il tempo dedicato al

questionario.

A1) **Quanti anni hai?** ☐

A2) **Sei?**

Uomo ☐

Donna ☐

A3) **In quale regione d'Italia risiedi?**

1) **Durante l'anno, in media, quante volte consumi un pasto al ristorante?**

Mai	☐	filtro: esce dal questionario
Da 1 a 3 volte l'anno	☐	
Da 4 a 6 volte l'anno	☐	
Da 7 a 12 volte l'anno	☐	
Piu di una volta al mese	☐	

2) **Quale delle seguenti fonti di informazione utilizzi per la scelta di un ristorante?**

	mai	raramente	qualche volta	spesso	sempre
Internet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Guide gastronomiche	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Famiglia / Amici	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Riviste	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Brochure / Volantini	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Radio	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Altro, specificare.					

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Appendix

3) Con quanto anticipo prenoti il ristorante?

Non prenoto ☐

Lo stesso giorno ☐

1-2 giorni ☐

3-6 giorni ☐

7-14 giorni ☐

15-30 giorni ☐

4) La prenotazione del ristorante è:

	per niente d'accordo	non sono d'accordo	nè d'accordo né disaccordo	d'accordo	completamente d'accordo
Qualcosa che mi piace fare	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Divertente	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Seccante	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Necessaria	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inutile	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Indispensabile	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stressante	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Altro, specificare.					

5) Come ti orienti nella scelta del ristorante?

Mi fido del mio istinto ☐

Chiedo consiglio ad amici/parenti ☐

Cerco informazioni da altri ☐

Scelgo impulsivamente ☐

Mi affido ai miei gusti ☐

In base al prezzo ☐

Altro, specificare

6) Quanto spesso utilizzi internet per ottenere informazioni sui ristoranti?

Mai ☐ filtro: esce dal questionario

Raramente ☐

A volte ☐

Spesso ☐

Sempre ☐

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Appendix

7) Con quale frequenza svolgi le seguenti attività?

	mai	raramente	qualche volta	spesso	sempre
Guardo i commenti / materiale di altri consumatori	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leggo i blog	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Guardo immagini on-line	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Leggo il sito web del ristorante	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Utilizzo le comunità virtuali	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8) Quanto spesso consulti le seguenti comunità virtuali per la scelta di un ristorante?

	mai	raramente	qualche volta	spesso	sempre
TripAdvisor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2spaghi.it	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
oraviaggiando	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
qristoranti	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
paginegialle	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Altro, specificare					

> filtro: esce dal questionario

IMPORTANTE: d'ora in poi rispondi alle domande considerando il tuo atteggiamento nella lettura di recensioni del ristorante su TRIPADVISOR.

9) In quale fase utilizzi TRIPADVISOR?

All'inizio, per farmi un'idea	☐
Nel mezzo, per restringere le alternative	☐
Durante il pranzo/la cena	☐
Dopo pranzo/cena, per confrontare e condividere la mia esperienza	☐
Altro, specificare:	

10) Utilizzi TRIPADVISOR per cene:

di lavoro	☐

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Appendix

romantiche	☐
fra amici	☐
di famiglia	☐
Altro, specificare:	

11) Utilizzi TRIPADVISOR quando sei:

nella tua città	☐
all'estero	☐
in una città che non conosci	☐
in vacanza	☐
ovunque	☐
Altro, specificare:	

12) Un elevato numero di recensioni su un ristorante a cosa ti fa pensare?

	per niente d'accordo	non sono d'accordo	nè d'accordo né disaccordo	d'accordo	completamente d'accordo
Il ristorante è molto frequentato	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Invita a provare il ristorante	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Esprime un elevato grado di soddisfazione o di insoddisfazione	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Altro, specificare:					

13) Quanto sono importanti i seguenti aspetti in una recensione?

	Per niente importante	Poco importante	Né Importante né non importante	Un po' Importante	Molto Importante
Soggettività	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Obiettività	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Credibilità	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comprensibilità	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Argomentazione	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

14) Quanto valuti importanti questi aspetti per determinare la credibilità del recensore?

	Per niente importante	Poco importante	Né Importante né non importante	Un po' Importante	Molto Importante
Ha pubblicato tante recensioni	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Appendix

Il contenuto della recensione è convincente e logico	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
La percezione della competenza del recensore	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ha inserito delle foto	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Altro, specificare:					

15) Perchè leggi le recensioni su Tripadvisor?

Avere un'idea	☐
Immaginare come sarà il ristorante	☐
Conoscere le esperienze altrui	☐
Evitare brutte esperienze	☐
Avere ulteriori informazioni su un ristorante	☐
Prendere una decisione	☐
Valutare le alternative	☐
Rendere più facile la decisione	☐
Altro, specificare:	

16) Quanto ti aiuta TripAdvisor nella scelta del ristorante?

Molto poco	☐
Poco	☐
Indifferente	☐
Molto	☐
Moltissimo	☐

16b) Quale dei seguenti fattori ti influenza maggiormente?

Numero di recensioni sul ristorante	☐
Valutazione/Rating del ristorante	☐
La credibilità percepita del recensore	☐
Veridicità percepita delle recensioni	☐

17) Quanto ti influenzano i seguenti elementi?

	molto poco	poco	indifferente	molto	moltissimo
Descrizione dettagliata	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Numero di recensioni	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Data di pubblicazione del post	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Foto	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Valutazione della recensione	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Informazioni del recensore	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lunghezza della recensione	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18) **Hai mai pubblicato una recensione?**

Si ☐ vai alla domanda n.19

No ☐ vai alla domanda n.20

19) **Quali sono i motivi per cui hai scritto recensioni?**

Aiutare gli altri condividendo la mia esperienza	☐
Altre recensioni mi hanno aiutato	☐
Salvaguardare gli altri da esperienze negative	☐
Mi fa piacere	☐
Mi fa sentire bene raccontare la mia esperienza	☐
Appartenere ad una comunità virtuale	☐
Altro, specificare:	

20) **Quali sono i motivi per cui non hai mai scritto recensioni?**

Poco tempo a disposizione	☐
Non sono interessato	☐
Non ho dimestichezza con la scrittura	☐
Pigrizia	☐
Non so perchè	☐
Non sono sicuro di dove o come scrivere	☐
Assenza di incentivi	☐
Altro, specificare:	

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Appendix

21) **Indica il tuo livello di istruzione.**

Diploma di scuola media	☐
Diploma di scuola superiore	☐
Laurea	☐
Master	☐
Altro, specificare:	

22) **Come definiresti la tua dimestichezza ad utilizzare Internet?**

Scarsa	☐
Buona	☐
Molto buona	☐
Altro, specificare:	

Grazie per il tuo tempo

Se desideri ricevere il rapporto dei risultati del questionario inserisci il tuo indirizzo email.