Satu Ståhlstedt
THE ROLE OF NON-COERCIVE INFLUENCE TACTICS IN ONLINE MARKETING

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the effectiveness of non-coercive influence tactics in the context of consumer online behaviour. The objective of this study is to develop a comprehensive understanding of consumer online behaviour and the role of information types in affecting the consumer’s cognitive responses and behavioural outcomes. The theoretical part of the study examines the academic literature on consumer online behaviour and influence tactics used both in traditional buyer/seller relationships as well as in relationships mediated by online technologies. The empirical part of the study is carried out with four experiments that utilise non-coercive influence tactics to affect online consumer behaviour. The consumers included in this study are 18-28 year-old structural and civil engineering students in Finland, United Kingdom, United States and India. The findings suggest that non-coercive influence tactics are applicable in the online marketing context and generate cognitive responses of site awareness, site involvement and exploratory behaviour which subsequently results in behavioural outcomes of compliance, eWOM and site abandonment.
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“Size matters not. Look at me. Judge me by my size, do you? Hmm? Hmm. And well you should not. For my ally is the Force, and a powerful ally it is.”

Yoda, Grand Jedi Master
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1 INTRODUCTION

Online marketing and digital relationships between companies and their customers have come a long way since their conception. Company websites are no longer static electronic brochures that simply introduce the company and their offering to potential customers surfing the web but rather interactive environments that aim to recreate the customer experience in the online environment. The introduction of social media and other Web 2.0 tools has increased the amount of ways companies can engage with their existing and potential customers in the online environment and made customers potential co-marketers through electronic word-of-mouth.

Yet, it is often argued that companies fail to exploit these new marketing assets effectively and that internet-based marketing endeavours fail to deliver and contribute to overall business objectives due the inability to understand how consumers behave online and what their real needs are (Lee 2002). Indeed, attracting, acquiring retaining and remaining relevant to customers has become increasingly difficult in the highly competitive online environment where the customer has an increased amount of bargaining power over companies (Porter 2001; Constantinides 2004; Garau 2008).

One of the most significant problems in understanding consumer online behaviour is the fact that consumers develop deeply rooted shopping habits, demonstrate complex and interrelated behaviours and engage with various motivators to make their purchasing decisions. Effective marketing and selling in the online environment means identifying and exploiting these motivators and presenting new ones to encourage consumers to transact with the company. (Kolesar and Galbraith 2000)

While the famous statement be online or be irrelevant is still true to this day, there is a need to understand what being online truly means for effective marketing and sales. Indeed, online marketing is starting to move away from the rhetoric about designing a visually appealing or technically superior websites and moving towards establishing a competitive customer-centric online presence and remaining relevant to online audiences. As Porter stated (2001, 64) “Companies should see the Internet for what it is: an
enabling technology that can be used wisely or unwisely as a part of almost any strategy.”

This study aims to contribute to the discussion around how consumer behaviour can be influenced effectively in the online environment by implementing and testing non-coercive influence tactics utilised in traditional buyer/seller relationships in online marketing activities and systematically studying their impact on consumer online behaviour.

1.1 Background of the Study

The present study was commissioned by Tekla Corporation as a part of its efforts to obtain new users for its Building Information Modelling (BIM) software “Tekla Structures” from technical universities and other technical schools in various countries (Puntila 2013). The global adoption rate for Building Information Modelling has increased rapidly in recent years and is viewed by many industry experts as an incremental part of future building and construction industry. Subsequently the demand for skilful BIM users is expected to increase, putting educational institutions under pressure to incorporate BIM in their curricula. (National BIM Library 2013; Kiviniemi 2014) Acknowledging the increasing adoption rate, Tekla’s objective is to offer tools for future industry professionals to learn BIM, while simultaneously raising awareness of Tekla’s BIM solution (Evans 2013).

The case company has launched a dedicated online service for this purpose called Tekla Campus. The primary target group for Tekla Campus are structural engineering, civil engineering and construction management students worldwide. Additionally, professors in related fields are recognised as an important, although secondary, target audience as they are viewed as strong influencers for the primary target group. (Puntila 2013) The service aims to offer Tekla Structures software to students, deliver e-learning that supports adoption of the software and create an education community for BIM users (Puntila 2013; Evans 2013). The online service consists of a student version of Tekla’s BIM software: Tekla Structures, a set of supportive educational material and an online user forum. Additionally, the service has its own Facebook page.
Tekla aims to significantly increase the amount of users globally by the end of 2014 via dedicated marketing initiatives. The key objectives are:

1) Raise awareness about Tekla Campus in the primary target group
2) Guide members of the target group to the Tekla Campus website
3) Increase Tekla Campus’s student user base
4) Have students commit to learning and using the software

(Evans 2013; Puntila 2013)

Baring these objectives in mind, this study has several practical ambitions. Firstly, identifying the needs, interests, characteristics and online behaviour of the target B2C audience are seen as an imperative for creating and managing well-targeted, customer-centric and successful marketing activities. The practical implication of this study is to strengthen Tekla’s understanding of the target group’s online decision-making process by identifying, creating and testing different topics, themes and influence tactics in the online environment and examining their influence on the target group’s online behaviour.

The theoretical and practical information created in this study can help Tekla to gain a better understanding of its potential student customers and their online behaviour which in turn enables it to acquire new users more efficiently through future marketing activities.

1.2 Research Objectives

The aim of this study contribute to the theoretical debate around consumer online behaviour and online marketing influence mechanisms by adapting and testing non-coercive influence tactics utilized in traditional buyer/seller relationships in the online environment and by determining their impact on consumer online behaviour.

The study follows the path laid out by Richard (2005), Hausman and Siekpe (2009) Mazaheri, Richard and Laroche (2011) and Mazaheri, Richard and Laroche (2012) who have discovered that information effectiveness, informativeness and information organisation are effective influence tactics
or atmospheric cues in the online environment that significantly influence customer behaviours such as site involvement, exploratory behaviour and purchase intentions on websites. The theoretical contribution aims to fill a research gap identified by Mazaheri et al. (2012), who point out that further research on the influence of different information types on consumer online behavioural responses is needed.

Furthermore, this study aims to contribute to the academic discussion around influence tactics, which have been studied quite extensively in traditional buyer/seller relationships. Yet, surprisingly few academic studies have examined their use in the online environment. This study attempts to address that gap by adopting non-coercive influence tactics introduced to marketing and sales literature by Frazier (1984) and Frazier and Summers (1984) and examining their ability to influence consumer online behaviour. More specifically, the objective is to determine the efficacy of Information Exchange, Inspirational Appeals, Recommendations and Rationality in online advertising and as website atmospheric cues.

Influence tactics as defined by Frazier (1984) fit well into Eroglu, Machleit and Davis (2001; 2003) description of online atmospheric cues as both aim to change the attitudes the consumer has about the company and its offering and to persuade the consumer to comply with requests presented at them. Given the different persuasion mechanisms of these tactics, they are regarded and examined as information types in this study.

Indeed, influence tactics identified in earlier literature can now be tested and implemented on the Internet in a fast manner due to interactive communication media and increasingly sophisticated tools to measure analyse consumer online behaviour.

1.3 Research Questions and Propositions

Based on the research gaps defined earlier and on the theoretical and practical objectives, the primary research questions are:

1) How non-coercive influence tactics manifest in the online environment?
2) How non-coercive influence tactics affect consumer online behaviour?

In order to gain a deeper understanding of the primary research questions and to create a link to different cognitive responses and behavioural outcomes identified from previous literature, the primary research questions are supported by the following propositions:

P1a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate site awareness in online consumers.

P1b: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate site awareness in online consumers.

P2: Non-coercive influence tactic type affects the online consumer's decision to continue navigating the site/abandon the site.

P3a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate site involvement/exploratory behaviour in online consumers.

P3b: Non-coercive influence tactic type affects the online consumer's preference for site involvement/exploratory behaviour over exploratory behaviour/site involvement.

P3c: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate site involvement/exploratory behaviour in online consumers.

P4a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate compliance in online consumers.

P4b: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate compliance in online consumers.

P4c: Site Involvement/Exploratory behaviour is more likely to lead to compliance than exploratory behaviour/site Involvement.

P5a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate eWOM in online consumers.
P5b: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate eWOM online consumers.

1.4 Key Definitions
The central concepts related to the objectives and research gaps of this study are discussed in this chapter.

1.4.1 Online Marketing
Online marketing aims to present the company and its offering to existing and potential customers or customer groups by using interactive internet technologies (Shaltoni and West 2010). As a marketing environment, the internet has both unique and common characteristics with other marketing channels. The characteristics include for example, the ability to store and distribute vast amount of information in various online locations at any given time and the ability to provide rich perceptual experiences independent from physical location. Furthermore, it allows the physical distribution of certain products/services (e.g. software and applications) and operates as a transaction medium for economic exchanges between buyers and sellers. (Peterson, Balasubramanian and Bronnenberg 1997) Online marketing is the creation and delivery of a web experience, which aims to influence the attitudes and behaviours of customers or customer groups towards the company. It is a mixture of providing cues, stimuli, information, functionality and products/services that evoke emotional and cognitive responses in customers and encourage them to purchase and use the company’s products or services. (Constantinides 2004; Eroglu et al. 2001; 2003)

1.4.2 Influence Tactics
According to Payan and McFarland (2005) influence tactics are the communicated portion of influence attempts that sales people use for gaining the compliance of customers. The tactics are used for persuading the customer to perform a desired action, which is usually a purchase. Traditionally, influence tactics are divided into two categories: coercive i.e. forceful influence tactics or non-coercive influence tactics (Frazier 1984; Frazier et al. 1984). Coercive influence tactics aim to motivate the target to take a desired action through promises and threats, while non-coercive
tactics aim to change the attitude the target has about the desirability of the intended behaviour via requests, information exchange, inspirational appeals, recommendations and rationality (Frazier et al. 1984; Payan et al. 2005). The effectiveness of these tactics is highly depended on the characteristics of the target and should be adapted accordingly in order to increase the likelihood of persuading the target to perform the desired action (McFarland, Challagalla and Shervani 2006).

1.4.3 Information Effectiveness
The internet allows consumers to reduce the costs of information search and decision-making efforts by offering a vast selection of information independent from time and location (Alba, Lynch, Weitz, Janiszawski, Lutz, Sawyer and Woods 1997). The role of information is highly important in the online environment, as the consumer is unable to physically examine the product before the purchase and has to base their decision-making on the available information. Thus, one of the key functions of commercial websites is to offer consumers with information that is relevant to their specific needs and on which to base their decisions (Ariely 2000; Kolesar et al. 2000).

The success of web-based information is based on the company’s ability to adapt it to meet the consumer’s information needs. The usefulness and effectiveness of the website information for the consumer depends on whether they can apply it to their decision-making or not. From the company’s perspective, the success depends on the information’s ability to effectively encourage the consumer to engage in approach behaviours on the company’s website while keeping them away from avoidance behaviours. Websites that fail to satisfy the consumer’s information needs is more likely to be abandoned for sites that satisfy them. (Kolesar et al. 2000; Park and Kim 2003)

1.4.4 Consumer Online Behaviour
The most common approach in marketing literature for understanding consumer behaviour is explaining it as a process of learning, information-processing and decision-making activities consisting of the following steps: 1) Problem identification 2) Information search 3) Evaluation of alternatives
4) Purchase decision 5) post-purchase behaviour (See e.g. Kotler 1988). Most academics agree that demographic, social, economic, cultural and psychological factors highly influence consumer behaviour and are beyond the control of the marketer (Constantinides 2004). These uncontrollable factors are present in the online environment as well. Although online shopping is “a global behaviour”, purchase habits and perceptions of website attractiveness are significantly influenced by characteristics such as culture. (Jin 2010, 254; Mazaheri et al. 2014, 254)

Most research does not make a distinction between traditional and online consumer behaviour. However, it is recognised that on the internet consumers are information technology users in addition to being mere shoppers (Cho and Park 2001). Furthermore, as consumer are often unable to physically touch products or communicate with company representatives, the need for building trust may be more important than in traditional channels (McKnight, Choudhury and Kacmar 2002).

On a general level, online decision-making and consumer behaviour embraces elements such as searching, browsing, finding, selecting, evaluating and comparing information as well as interacting and transacting with the commercial websites (Constantinides 2004).

1.4.5 Site Awareness

Park et al. (2003) define site awareness as the consumer’s perception about a website that is based on external information events such as advertising or word-of-mouth communication. Furthermore, they describe that site awareness refers to the consumer’s ability to recognise or recall that a site belongs to a certain service category. Research has linked factors such as, immediate relevance and the contents of online adverts significantly influencing the consumer’s attitude towards the ad and their word of mouth intention (Chatterjee et al. 2003; Patsioura, Vlachopoulou and Manthou 2009). More specifically, when the information provided by the ad is relevant or valuable to the consumer, they are more likely to click on the advertisement or engage in word-of-mouth behaviours such as “liking” or “sharing” on social media platforms.
1.4.6 Site Involvement

Site involvement refers to the consumer's task-related commitment to the website. According to Mazaheri et al. (2011) in the website navigational context, site involvement is considered to be a manifestation of situational involvement, which they compare to message involvement in advertising. Advertising message involvement is defined as a motivational state that induces message processing (Laczniak, Kempf and Muehling 1999). Highly message involved consumers are expected to make a short-term decision such as a purchase in the advertised product class (Wright 1973; 1975).

Research on consumer online behaviour suggests that highly site involved consumers find the web site to be important to them, worth remembering or paying attention to and relevant to their needs (Mazaheri et al. 2011; Mazaheri et al. 2012; Richard 2005; Richard et al. 2005).

1.4.7 Exploratory Behaviour

Bucklin and Sismeiro (2003) state that exploratory behaviour on a website consists of the following series of decisions: 1) whether to continue exploring additional pages on a website or to exit the site and 2) how long to view a page on the website. More specifically, exploratory behaviour aims to solely change ones stimulus field (Berlyne 1963). Previous literature has linked browsing and navigation to behaviours such as information acquisition and learning. Baumgartner and Steenkamp (1996) suggest that exploratory behaviour can be divided into exploratory acquisition of products and exploratory information seeking behaviour. Richard et al. (2005) state that exploratory information seeking behaviour takes place when consumers do not have accurate knowledge of the available information and are unsure whether their needs can be met or how their goals could be reached. Huang (2000) points out that according to the differences between experiential and information-processing views of consumer behaviour, exploratory behaviour should be divided into two categories. More specifically, exploring a site may be hedonic in nature with the exploratory behaviour being the end in itself, while in decision-making supportive problem-solving, exploratory behaviour is the mean for the purpose of
information acquisition (Huang 2000). Huberman, Pirolli, Pitkow, Rajan and Lukose (1998) suggest that users request pages views from a website when the value of viewing web pages exceeds the cost of viewing.

1.4.8 Compliance
Compliance refers to a consumer’s intention to follow request or claims put forward to their acceptance by a source of influence. More specifically, compliance manifests as an action, such as a purchase, that is in the best interest of the source company. (Frazier and Rody 1991) In the online environment compliance is referred to as a conversion, which is a “meaningful action” such as a sale or a sign-up (e.g. Google 2014b), that takes place on a website.

1.5 Literature Review
The key theoretical concepts in this study are based on previously published literature on online consumer behaviour and on influence tactics found both in traditional buyer/seller relationships and in online channels. Although a unified model for consumer online behaviour does not exist, the concept is far from being a novelty in academic research. Research on online consumer behaviour has strongly focused on identifying and analysing how decision-making and consumer behaviour manifests in the online environment and which factors influence this behaviour while consumers are searching, browsing, finding, selecting, evaluating and comparing information as well as interacting and transacting with websites related to their needs, interests and goals. This chapter identifies and reviews the selected academic papers on the chosen key concepts.

The theoretical concept of consumer online behaviour in this study relies heavily on research done by Eroglu, Richard, Mazaheri and Laroche. They affiliate websites to traditional shopping environments where consumers demonstrate emotional and cognitive responses to the different atmospheric cues and stimuli presented at them. The basic assumption behind this comparison is that consumer online behaviour is influenced more by different atmospheric cues or stimuli found on websites than other marketing inputs that are not present during online interactions (Mazaheri,
Richard, Laroche and Ueltzschy 2014). The earliest studies in this research paradigm focus mostly on three different aspects; namely identifying the manifestations of emotional and cognitive responses in online consumer behaviour, defining and categorising different atmospheric cues and stimuli influencing consumer behaviour and examining their relationship in evoking approach and avoidance behaviours in consumers. (Eroglu et al. 2001; 2003; Richard 2005; Richard and Chandra 2005; Hausman and Siekpe 2009) Although the findings have been somewhat contradictory, all seem to agree that consumer’s demonstrate emotional and cognitive responses when exposed to different website atmospherics, and that both emotional and cognitive states result in approach or avoidance behaviours towards the website, the company and its offering. Recently, studies in this paradigm have examined the moderating role of uncontrollable factors such as culture (Mazaheri, Richard and Laroche 2011; Mazaheri et al. 2014) as well as of product/service characteristics (Mazaheri, Richard and Larohe 2012; Mazaheri et al. 2014) on consumer behaviour.

The role of information as an influence tactic and decision-making aid is especially interesting as the Internet is considered to contain more information than any other media (Novak, Hoffman and Yung 2000). Indeed, Richard (2005), Hausman et al. (2009) Mazaheri et al. (2011; 2012) have established that website’s informativeness, information organisation and information effectiveness significantly affect consumer online behaviour and purchase intentions. However, their results do not make a distinction between different information types. In fact, Mazaheri et al. (2012) point out the need for further research on the influence of information type on consumer behaviour.

The existing literature on the different influence tactics in online marketing have mostly focused on studying consumers as information technology users and on identifying and categorising different factors influencing consumer online behaviour and decision-making. Constantinides (2004) has conducted a comprehensive literature review regarding the role different web experience components as inputs in the online consumer’s
decision-making process, while Shibrowsky, Peltier and Nil (2007) Pomirleanu, Schibrowsky, Peltier and Nil (2013) have identified the most popular topics and recent trends of online marketing research.

As individuals are starting to form emotional ties with websites, similar to those between individuals (Brown, Broderick and Lee 2007; Parvinen, Tiainen, Salo, Pöyry, and Blakaj 2011) and as the rise of web 2.0 applications have introduced new marketing channels to companies, there seems to be a need for more personalized and intimate approach to online marketing. Recent literature has investigated topics such as customer engagement and social media as influence tactics in online marketing (e.g. Sashi 2012; Park, Lee, Kim, Chung 2013; Pöyry, Parvinen and Malmivara 2013)

1.6 Methodology
In this chapter, the research methods chosen for this study are presented. The chosen research method in this study is exploratory research design. Considering the research questions and prepositions of this study and the scarcity of previous research on the effect of non-coercive influence tactics on consumer online behaviour the exploratory design was seen as appropriate for this study. (Labaree 2014) The empirical part of this study consists of experiments conducted in the case company’s Facebook page and website. Following the method used in several previous studies on consumer online behaviour, observable clickstream data is used for examining the selected target group’s cognitive responses and behavioural outcomes to the experiments. Each experiment was constructed based upon the non-coercive influence tactic characteristics identified from previous literature. The experiments consisted of two phases, representing different stages in a typical online marketing process, namely attracting new visitors to a website through external online channels and converting these visitors into customers.

The first phase was conducted on Facebook by targeting Facebook users from Finland, United Kingdom, United States and India who study structural or civil engineering and are between the ages of 18-28. In order to increase
the likelihood of reaching the previously defined target audience: structural engineering and civil engineering students, the target audience was further narrowed to individuals who have listed Building Information Modelling and Structural or Civil engineering as their interests but are presumed to be unaware of the case company and its offering. This brought the potential audience size to 1.530.000 individual Facebook users fitting the above descriptions.

The first phase consisted of 4 different advertisements, which were displayed to the target audience in the course of 14 days. Each advertisement contained a non-coercive influence tactic to persuade the viewer to click the advertisement and subsequently visit the case website. By clicking the message, the viewer was directed to a landing page on the case website that provided more information related to the advertisement and an opportunity to register to the website and consequently download the software.

The first phase had several objectives. Firstly, the aim was to determine which type of non-coercive influence tactic is the most effective in getting the selected target audience to visit the website i.e. raising site awareness in the target audience. The second objective was to examine which non-coercive influence tactics generate eWOM behaviour in the target audience.

The second phase of the experiment was conducted on the case website. The observations consisted of individuals who found the company’s website through the previously discussed advertisements. The second phase included 4 separate landing pages, each dedicated to the following non-coercive influence tactics: Information Exchange, Inspirational Appeals, Recommendations and Rationality. The selected non-coercive influence tactics were designed to provide persuasive information to the target audience and encourage them to register to the website and download the software.

The aim was to test the effectiveness of the selected non-coercive influence tactics in gaining the compliance or conversion to download of the website
visitors who were exposed to the message. Furthermore, other behavioural responses such as site involvement, exploratory and avoidance behaviours or site abandonment were examined to gain a deeper understanding of the target group’s behaviour on the website.

1.7 Delimitations
This study is limited to examining consumer online behaviour in B2C environment. The examination of consumer online behaviour is limited to measurable behavioural responses obtained from site-centric clickstream data. More specifically, the study examines different cognitive responses and subsequent behavioural outcomes to high-task relevant atmospheric cues, while emotional responses and low-task relevant cues are out of the scope of this study. The study of cognitive responses is limited to site awareness, electronic word-of-mouth, exploratory behaviour, site involvement, while the behavioural outcomes in this study are: site abandonment and compliance. The consumers included in this study are students in Finland, United Kingdom, United States and India who are currently studying structural or civil engineering. Furthermore, coercive influence tactics, namely promises and threats, which have been linked to previously established buyer/seller relationships are left out of this study. The empirical part of this study is limited to the online environment.

1.8 Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework of this study utilises Eroglu, Machleit and Davis’s (2001; 2003) Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework to study the effects of information and information types or non-coercive influence tactics on consumer online behaviour. The SOR model assumes that websites can be compared traditional shopping environments, where the consumer’s emotional and cognitive states are influenced by the different atmospheric cues presented at them. Consequently, consumers demonstrate emotional and cognitive responses which then lead to various approach or avoidance behaviours towards the website, the company and their offering.

Furthermore, this thesis incorporates non-coercive influence tactics introduced by Frazier (1984) and Frazier et al. (1984), Payan et al. (2005)
and McFarland et al. (2006) to examine the effects of information type on consumer online behaviour. Influence tactics have been recognised as effective methods by which sales people gain customer compliance in traditional sales settings (Payan et al. 2005; McFarland 2006). In this study, influence tactics are defined as high-task relevant atmospheric cues, which are directly related to the consumer’s goal-attainment and/or aim to change the consumer’s perception about the desirability of the action proposed to them. In accordance with Richard (2005) and Mazaheri (2012) information effectiveness is assumed to lead to positive emotion and cognitive responses, which consequently result in various approach behaviours towards the website, the company and their offering. Cognitive responses in this study are defined as site awareness, site involvement and exploratory behaviour. Approach behaviours are defined as the consumer’s compliance to the influence tactic which takes place through 1) sharing personal information with the case company and registering to the website 2) downloading the case company’s software. Furthermore, eWOM behaviours towards the influence tactics are seen as approach behaviour as it can be regarded as a measurable response of the information’s effectiveness. The avoidance behaviour examined in this study is visitor site abandonment before they demonstrate any approach behaviours.

Figure 1 illustrates relationships of high-task relevant cues, cognitive responses and approach and avoidance behaviours in the online environment. The elements presented in the theoretical framework are discussed thoroughly in the following chapters.
Figure 1 Theoretical Framework

1.9 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is structured as follows. First, the chosen theoretical concepts are examined based on the previous literature and publications. The theoretical part first discusses the influence of online atmospheric cues on consumer online behaviour and then examines influence tactics utilised in traditional interpersonal relationships. The second part of the study introduces the case environment and describes the data collection and analysis methods used for testing the impact of the selected influence tactics on consumer online behaviour. Next, the results of the empirical study are analysed and discussed. Finally, the conclusions and proposals for further research are presented.
2 **Influencing Online Consumer Behaviour**

This chapter reviews the existing literature related to consumer online behaviour and different influence mechanisms utilised in the online environment. The aim is to identify and examine the key concepts from different viewpoints and to answer research question 1, resulting in a broad understanding of customer online behaviour and online marketing’s role in influencing behavioural outcomes.

2.1 **Consumer Online Behaviour and Decision Making**

Understanding consumer behaviour and how purchasing choices and decisions are made has always been an intriguing topic to both marketing practitioners and academics. This area of research can be viewed as complicated as consumer behaviour and decision making are strongly influenced by multiple factors simultaneously such as personality traits, environmental influences and product/service/vendor characteristics.

Traditionally, consumer behaviour is seen as consequent steps of learning, information-processing and decision-making, which aim for achieving a result that has the most optimal level of benefit or utility for the consumer. (Constantinides 2004; Yan and Dai 2009) The most accepted consumer behaviour model, the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell model, consists of 5 stages of decision making: problem recognition, search, alternative evaluation, purchase and outcomes (also referred as post-purchase behaviour). (Engel Kollat and Blackwell 1978; Engel, Blackwell, Miniard 1986)

The Engel-Kollat-Blackwell steps of consumer decision-making can be viewed as a prominent and comprehensive model for understanding and explaining the underlying process of how consumers find, select and use products or services that satisfy their needs in the online environment (e.g. Smith and Rupp 2003). However, when comparing to traditional purchasing activities, the internet entitles unique characteristics which are seen to have such an impact on the consumer’s psychology that that traditional consumer behaviour models may not be sufficient enough to effectively explain how consumers behave online and which factors influence decision-making and
purchase intentions (See Figure 2). (Constantinides 2004; Yan and Dai 2009; Smith et al. 2003; Cheung, Kwong, Chan and Limayem 2003)

Figure 2 Factors Influencing Consumer Online Behaviour (Adapted from Constandinides 2004)

One of the most cited differences are the factors that encourage online transactions over traditional ones, e.g. the increased availability of information during search and alternative evaluation as well as freedom from constraints of time and location during purchasing (e.g. Park et al. 2003; Mazaheri et al. 2011). These factors have given the consumer more control over their decision-making process as they can decide when, where and how long to engage with websites (Richard 2005).

Another notable difference often highlighted in literature is the risk and uncertainty increasing elements that are highly prominent in the online environment. Internet security issues and the inability to physically examine products or talk to company representatives pre-purchase are seen to increase the consumer’s perceived risk and uncertainty towards the web-based vendors, their offering as well as towards using the internet as a transaction medium. High perceived risk and uncertainty in turn can negatively influence decision-making and purchase intentions. (e.g. Lieberman and Stashevsky 2002; McKnight et al. 2002; Yan et al. 2009) Additionally, as the consumer is also an information technology user rather than a mere shopper (Cho et al. 2001), consumer attitudes and behaviour
are influenced by different website characteristics (e.g. Contantinides 2004; Eroglu et al. 2001; 2003; Mazaheri et al. 2012).

Indeed, literature has noted the online environment characteristics and website atmospherics having a notable effect on the consumer's psychology, behaviour and purchase intentions, while personality traits, culture, environmental influences, product/service/vendor characteristic play a moderating role (Eroglu et al. 2001; Constantinides 2004; Richard 2005; Mazaheri et al. 2014). As websites and other online platforms offer an effective communications medium between consumers and companies and as online transactions are becoming more common, the focus on satisfying human needs is more important than emphasising technology. This entitles the imperative of developing and testing systematic models of the internet’s role as a communications tool. (Porter 2001; Richard 2005)

While it is true that the internet can cater to many aspects of problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation and purchasing, it has to be noted that not all steps of the decision-making process necessarily take place in the online environment. To give an example, consumers may search information about products and compare different alternatives on the Internet but then make the actual purchase in a physical store or get the incentive to purchase a specific product "off-line" and then make the actual purchase in an online store (Darley, Blankson and Luethge 2010).

2.2 Consumer Online Behaviour Model

Although there is no unified model for analysing the behaviour of the online consumers, literature has identified several behavioural elements/responses that are relevant in understanding consumer behaviour in the online environment (Eroglu et al. 2001; 2003; Hausman et al. 2009; Richard 2005). On a general level, online decision-making process embraces elements such as searching, browsing, finding, selecting, evaluating and comparing information as well as interacting and transacting with commercial websites (Constantinides 2004). Interaction and transaction can refer to behaviours such as: 1) intention to follow the company’s advice, 2) intention to share personal information with the
company and 3) intention to purchase from the company’s website (McKnight et al. 2002).

Eroglu, Machleit and Davis (2001; 2003) compare websites to the physical environment in a traditional retail store. They state that just like in retail stores, certain elements in the online environment are likely to impact the consumer’s internal states and result in emotional and cognitive responses which in turn result in different approach/avoidance behaviours towards the website, the company and their offering. Their model of consumer online behaviour is based on a Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework originally proposed by Mehrabian and Russel (1974). The model conceptualises the effects of different atmospheric cues in the online environment (Stimulus) on the consumer’s emotional and cognitive states (Organism) that then alter the aspects of transaction outcomes (Response) (Eroglu et al. 2001; Richard 2005). Research has identified a relationship between atmospheric cues, consumer psychology and consumer behaviour (e.g. Turley and Milliman 2000; Hackman, Gundergan, Wang and Daniel 2006; Hausman and Siekpe 2009) and confirmed empirically the usefulness of Eroglu et al.’s (2001) model (Eroglu et al. 2003; Mummalaneni 2005; Richard 2005; Richard and Chandra 2005; Mazaheri, Richard and Laroche 2011; 2012; Mazaheri et al. 2014). Figure 3 presents the key concepts and findings from previous studies on online consumer behaviour using the SOR framework.
Figure 3 Stimulus-Organism-Response model of Consumer Online Behaviour (Adapted from Eroglu et al. 2001; 2003; Richard 2005; Richard et al. 2005; Mazaheri et al. 2011; 2012)

The key constructs of SOR framework are presented in the following paragraphs.

2.2.1 Stimulus: Online Atmospheric Cues

Research has shown that the website’s overall quality influences the consumer’s perceptions of product quality which in turn affects purchase intentions (e.g. Wells, Valaicich and Hess 2011). Websites allow consumers to make assumptions about the quality of the product/service as well as reduce perceived risks associated with online purchasing by offering proofs of product/service quality (Zeithamal, Parasuraman and Malhotra 2002; Eggert 2006).

Academics have pointed out that websites should be regarded as a service (Kolesar and Gabraith 2000), an experience (e.g. Constantinides 2004) or as an environment that is comparable to a traditional retail store (Eroglu et al. 2001; 2003) rather than as static online brochures. Websites should therefore include different atmospherics, which aim to influence the consumer’s internal states and decision-making.

Web atmospherics are a conscious design of online environments which aim to create positive experiences, emotions and cognitive states in website visitors in order to affect the consumer’s perception about the company, its offering and most importantly the final outcome of the online interaction.
(Dailey 2004; Constantinides, Lorenzo-Romero and Gómez 2010). Eroglu et al. (2001) state that, web atmospherics are the sum of all the visible and audible cues presented at the consumer in the web environment. They divide web atmospherics into two categories: 1) High Task-Relevant cues, which entitle verbal and pictorial elements that facilitate and enable the consumer’s goal attainment and 2) Low Task-Relevant cues which are unrelated to the completion of goals.

*High Task-Relevant Cues* include elements such as product descriptions and reviews, price, terms of sale as well as pictures/video of products and navigational cues towards making a transaction (Eroglu et al. 2003; Richard 2005). More specifically, cues that are highly task related, entitle anything that encourages the consumer to purchase a specific product from a website. Hence, the majority of web atmospherics on commercial websites are high task-relevant. Website’s informational features have been validated to be an important factor determining the consumer’s decision-making and purchase behaviour as well as their site loyalty (Park et al. 2003; Richard 2005; Mazaheri et al. 2012), this is because consumers have to base their decision-making on the available information as they are unable to physically examine the product or talk face-to-face to company representatives.

*Low Task-Relevant* cues consist of elements that aim to create an atmosphere that makes the web experience more pleasurable or entertaining. Colours, fonts and other non-task-related visual or auditory aesthetics are examples of cues that do not directly affect the completion of the consumer’s task but rather evoke emotions such as pleasure and arousal. Although, the role of commercial websites lean more towards offering product/service related information and encouraging the consumer’s goal attainment, the importance of low task-relevant cues cannot be ignored. For example, visual appeal can be seen as an important factor influencing consumer’s web experience and perceptions of website and product quality, especially during the first visit to the site and when consumers have high information asymmetries. (Jennings 2000; Tractinsky,
More importantly, according to Lindgaard, Fernandes, Dudek and Brown (2006) the visual appeal of the website can be effectively evaluated within 50 milliseconds. This means that visual appeal may determine whether consumers continue to explore the site further or simply click away.

2.2.2 Information Effectiveness

Online marketing practitioners often state that in the online environment "content is the king and distribution is the queen (See e.g. Pollitt 2013), meaning that successful commercial website constantly offer valuable information to both current and potential customers. Indeed, the internet allows consumers to reduce the costs of information search and decision-making efforts by offering a vast selection of information independent from time and location (Alba et al. 1997). One of the main objectives of commercial websites is to offer consumers with information that is relevant to their specific needs and on which to base their decisions (Ariely 2000; Kolesar et al. 2000). Information also plays a vital role in trust and confidence building towards the company and their offering (e.g. McKnight et al. 2002; Lee 2002). Since the consumer is unable to physically examine the product before the purchase and has to base their decision-making on the available information, increasing the consumer's perceived benefits and mitigating any perceived risks with website information is highly important for encouraging them to engage with the company and reduce their risk of post-purchase dissatisfaction (Yan et al. 2009; Kolesar et al. 2000). In fact, information usefulness, accuracy and bias have been reported to have an impact on how users evaluate the credibility of a website (Fogg, Sohoo, Danielson, Marable, Stanford and Tauber 2003).

Information quality influences the consumer's emotional and cognitive responses (e.g site attitudes and site involvement), keeps them away from avoidance behaviours (Richard 2005) as well as results in better purchasing decisions and consumer satisfaction (Peterson et al. 1997; Chen, Clifford and Wells 2002). Chen et al. (2002) describe effective website information as entertaining, informative and well-organised. Informativeness means
accurate, up-to-date, useful, relevant, knowledgeable information which helps consumer’s to make a choice with less effort. (Park et al. 2003; Richard 2005; Hausman and Siekpe 2009) Mazaheri et al. (2012; 2014) point out that although informativeness is an important atmospheric cue on websites, the way information is provided and the type of information are also significant determinants of information’s value to consumers. Entertainment refers to the site’s ability to be “exciting”, “enjoyable” and “imaginative”. (Chen et al. 2002; Richard 2005; Hausman et al. 2009) Organisation refers to how effectively the information presents itself and how it guides the consumer towards making a transaction. Poor organisation leads to irritation and frustration while lowering the consumer’s attitude and involvement towards the site (Chen and Wells 1999; Richard 2005). Additionally, Kolesar et al. (2000), point out that effective website’s do not only display high-task relevant information but appeal to the consumer’s self-image and higher values. Although the website’s ability to influence the consumer’s abstract values and goals is limited, the consumer’s perception of how these goals and values can be obtained may be influenced. Kolesar et al. (2002) state, that by appealing to higher values marketers can influence the consumer’s purchase decisions and increase perceived value of a product.

It is important to acknowledge that consumers do not value one type of information collectively but rather differ in their information needs and preferences (Kolesar et al. 2000). For example, culture can influence the online consumer’s information needs and information’s role in their decision-making (Mazaheri et al. 2014). Similarly to human persuaders who read their individual customers and determine their messages and behaviours in order to increase their persuasion effectiveness, online marketing efforts should utilize customer behaviour data to tailor messages to different audiences (Kaptein and Eckles 2012). The success of web-based information is based on the company’s ability to tailor it to meet the consumer’s information needs. The usefulness and attractiveness of the website information for the consumer depends on whether they can apply it
to their decision-making or not. From the company’s perspective, the success depends on the information’s ability to effectively encourage the consumer to engage in approach behaviours on the company’s site while keeping them away from avoidance behaviours. Websites that fail to satisfy the consumer’s information needs is more likely to be abandoned for sites that satisfy them. (Kolesar et al. 2000; Park et al. 2003)

In recent years the amount of marketing information in the online has increased rapidly (Pollitt 2013). As consumers have become more skilful in avoiding information overload, information personalization has become a necessity for effective online marketing and selling (Huang 2000). Additionally, information effectiveness is becoming even more prominent in the early steps of consumer decision-making as search engines like Google have updated their algorithms to ensure its search results are helpful, precise and up-to-date.

### 2.2.3 Information Organisation

As stated earlier, information organisation refers to how effectively the information presents itself and how it guides the consumer towards making a transaction (Chen et al. 1999). Since in the web environment consumers are in control of which sites to browse, for how long and as competitors are only “a click away”, creating comprehensive paths towards transactions can be viewed as an imperative for successful commercial websites. (Constantinides 2004; Bucklin and Sismeiro 2003; Richard 2005) Indeed, poorly organised websites, according to Richard (2005), create feelings of confusion and irritation, while well-organised sites support site involvement.

Constantinides (2004) refers to these factors as *functionality factors*, which include elements such as site findability, navigation, information architecture and ordering/payment process. Functionality factors are important as in the online environment consumers are information technology users in addition to being shoppers (Cho et al. 2001). Bucklin et al. (2003) suggest that reducing the number of pages views required for completing a transaction is an important factor in site design. This is because they found that visit duration has a negative effect of exploratory
behaviour. More specifically, effective websites should emphasize making individual pages richer with relevant information, reducing the number of pages required for making a transaction while simultaneously including navigational cues that indicate where high task-relevant information can be found and how to make a transaction or purchase. Richard (2005) found that clear navigational cues result in exploratory behaviour and positive attitudes towards the site. Furthermore, clearly presented comprehensive navigational cues are more likely to keep the consumer away from avoidance behaviours. According to Richard (2005) website with well-designed navigational cues are easy to use, have limited amount of navigational problems, and include clear keywords under which information can be found.

Consumer behaviour research has indicated that argument structure has an impact on the effectiveness of advertising messages. The messages which contain all elements of a complete argument structure have a stronger positive influence on consumer beliefs and message acceptance than the advertisements that do not. (Payan and McFarland 2005) A complete argument structure contains all three of the following elements: **claim, data** and **warrant**. A claim is a request or a demand presented for acceptance. Data consists of information or evidence that aim to support the claim. The warrant is the conclusion that links the claim and the data together, prompting a course of action. (Payan et al. 2005) Payan et al. (2005, 68) exemplify a message with a complete argument structure as follows: “I’d like you to promote the product only in these specific territories (claim). This 5-year forecast indicates that the target market will continue to grow in these territories (evidence). Therefore, you would gain more profit if you promoted the product on in these territories (A concluding statement or linkage between the evidence and the request)”.

Complete argument structure can be viewed as a highly useful tool for creating more effective high task-relevant cues. It could be compared to the concept of website information organization which evaluates how the site presents itself and guides visitors towards desired destinations. (Chen et al.
In fact, online marketing practitioners note that web pages which include attention grabbing headlines, clear and compelling information, minimal distractions and a call-to-action are more likely to encourage website visitors to engage in specific approach behaviours (Lockwood 2013; Georgieva 2012).

**Claim** - In online marketing context, a website headline could be equivalent to a claim. According to Lockwood (2013) the first element visitors are likely to see on a specific page during the first visit is the headline. A compelling headline is more likely to capture the visitor’s attention and pursue them to be more engaged with the site (Georgieva 2012).

**Data** - The information presented on a website could be compared to evidence. When consumers view the information as clear and compelling, they are more motivated to take the action requested by the company (Lockwood 2013). Furthermore, given the fact that consumer’s need to follow the company’s advice, share personal details and make a transaction on the website (McKnight et al. 2002), the evidence should also increase the consumer’s perceived benefits and mitigate their perceived risks. This is because consumers are more likely to provide personal details when benefits and value-received are perceived as high (McKnight et al. 2002), while up-to-date knowledgeable information, which appeals to the visitor’s needs and values and supports the claims made by the company leads to higher site involvement, exploratory behaviour and approach behaviours. (Park et al. 2003; Richard 2005; Kolesar et al. 2000)

**Warrant** – According to Lockwood (2012) effective web pages always include a Call-to-Action i.e. a statement or a request of specific action the vendor would like the visitor to take. A Call-to-action indicates what the visitor needs to do in order to obtain the benefits and values presented in the evidence. Thus, a call-to-action serves as the warrant in the online environment. Consistent with Richard’s (2005) findings regarding site organization, effective call-to-actions are more likely to result in higher site involvement, exploratory behaviour and lead to purchase activities.
2.2.4 Organism: Emotional and Cognitive Responses

Environmental psychology suggests that consumers react to physical surroundings emotionally and cognitively and that these reactions influence the consumer's behaviour within that environment (Mehrabian and Russel 1974). Emotional/Affect responses entitle feelings such as pleasure, arousal and dominance. Cognitive responses include how consumers interpret information and choose from alternatives. (Eroglu et al. 2001) Mazaheri et al. (2011, 2012) state, that consumer’s emotional responses precede cognitions and propose that low task-relevant cues evoke their emotions at initial exposure to the site. While according to Smith and Rupp (2003) psychological factors such as motivation, perception, personality, attitudes and emotions inherent in each individual affect how various web atmospherics or stimuli influence the consumer’s need recognition, search of decision-making supporting information and evaluation of different alternatives. More specifically, depending on the emotional response from the initial exposure to the site, consumers may perceive atmospheric cues differently (Mazaheri et al. 2012). The positive responses result in approach behaviours, which entitle all positive actions that could be directed towards a specific setting. While negative responses lead to avoidance behaviours which are the opposite of approach behaviours (Eroglu et al. 2001).

According to Kolesar et al. (2000) the elements against which consumer’s form their perceptions about the online vendor can be divided into five main categories: tangible, responsiveness, empathy, assurance and reliability. Tangibles are the physical evidence appealing to the consumer’s senses when they engage with websites. Affective tangible evidence reassures the consumer that the service experience/website encounter will be satisfactory. Responsiveness refers to the consumer’s perceptions regarding the vendor’s willingness and ability to react to the consumer’s needs and desires, while empathy entitles the commitment to satisfy the consumer’s needs. Assurance includes elements such as trust and confidence towards the company, their offering and the ability of which to satisfy the consumer’s needs. Reliability is refers to the consumer’s
evaluation of the total website experience and whether the realized service matches the perceptions created during the web experience. Kolesar et al. (2000), state that consumers are likely to be attracted to service offerings that exhibit depth and caring. Effective websites offer memorable and favourable experiences to consumers and satisfy their higher order needs.

The literature on Stimuli-Organism-Response framework in the online context suggests that emotional and cognitive responses manifest as e.g. site attitudes (Hedonic and Utilitarian) (Mazaheri et al. 2011, 2012; Richard 2005; Richard et al. 2005; Siepke et al. 2009) site involvement (Mazaheri et al. 2011, 2012; Richard 2005; Richard et al. 2005), site commitment (Park et al. 2003) and exploratory behavior (Richard 2005; Richard et al. 2005). Consistent with the role of emotional and cognitive responses during initial exposure to external atmospheric cues (e.g. online advertisements) it could be said that site awareness may be an interesting manifestation to investigate in the SOR framework context as practitioners need to first attract consumers to the website.

2.2.5 Site Awareness
Park et al. (2003) describe site awareness as the consumer’s perception about a website that is based on external information events such as advertising or word-of-mouth communication. Traditionally, online adverts are seen as atmospheric cues located outside the actual website. Clicking through such an advert usually takes the consumer to another website where more detailed information about the company, product or the service can be found (Bucklin and Sismeiro 2009). Examples of commonly used online adverts are banners, paid-search and more recently social media advertising tools. Park et al. (2003) define site awareness as the consumer’s ability to recognise or recall that a site belongs to a certain service category. This construct entitles the consumer’s perception of external information cues about a website and suggests that it may impact the consumer’s subsequent responses. (Park et al. 2003) More specifically, the consumer’s positive emotional and cognitive perceptions about the external information may prompt the consumer to visit the website.
Even though, online adverts, especially banners seem to suffer from low click rates (Chatterjee, Hoffman and Novak 2003), research has linked factors such as, immediate relevance and the contents of online adverts significantly influencing the consumer’s attitude towards the ad and their word of mouth intention (Chatterjee et al. 2003; Patsioura, Vlachopoulou and Manthou 2009). More specifically, when the information provided by the ad is relevant or valuable to the consumer, they are more likely to click on the ad or engage in word-of-mouth behaviours such as “liking” or “sharing” on social media platforms.

2.2.6 Site Involvement

Site involvement refers to the consumer’s task-related commitment to the website. According to Mazaheri et al. (2011) in the website navigational context, site involvement is considered to be a manifestation of situational involvement, which they compare to message involvement in advertising. Advertising message involvement is defined as a motivational state that induces message processing (Lacznak, Kempf and Muehling 1999). Highly message involved consumers are expected to make a short-term decision such as a purchase in the advertised product class (Wright 1973; 1975).

Previous research on consumer online behaviour has treated site involvement by examining the consumer’s situational involvement with the website as a whole. In fact, research states that, consumers with high level of involvement are more likely to interact with a website in-depth, explore new stimuli presented to them and demonstrate cognitive and affective responses (e.g. van Noort, Voorveld and van Reijmersdal 2012; Yoo and Stout 2001). They spend more time seeking task-relevant information before making a purchase (Richard et al. 2005).

Novak, Hoffman and Yung (2000) refer to in-depth site involvement as a state of flow, which is a cognitive state experience during site navigation. Flow is determined by high levels of control, skill, challenge and arousal, focused attention and is enhanced by telepresence and interactivity. Consumers who have achieved a state of flow on the web are intensively involved with navigating on the web site to an extent that irrelevant thoughts
and perceptions are filtered out. In order for the consumer to achieve a state of flow during goal-directed behaviour, the web experience needs to include atmospherics which are easy to use or navigate through, support the consumer’s extrinsic motivations, demonstrate utilitarian benefits, appeal to emotions and create opportunities of interaction. (Hoffman and Novak 1996; Novak et al. 2000) Research on consumer online behaviour suggests that highly site involved consumers find the website to be important to them, worth remembering or paying attention to and relevant to their needs (Mazaheri et al. 2011; Mazaheri et al. 2012; Richard 2005; Richard et al. 2005).

According to Richard (2005) and Hoffman et al. (1996) highly involved consumers have a more positive attitude towards the site, demonstrate exploratory and participatory behaviours, and are more involved in purchase decisions and more likely to make a purchase. This is because the more consumers interact with the site, the more familiar they become with it (Mazaheri et al. 2011). Hoffman et al. (1996) propose that state of flow is important for successful commercial websites and providing flow opportunities is an imperative for effective online marketing efforts.

2.2.7 Exploratory Behaviour

Berlyne (1963) defines exploratory behaviour as behaviour which aims solely to change one’s stimulus field. Bucklin et al. (2003) conceptualise that exploratory behaviour on a website consists of the following series of decisions: 1) whether to continue exploring additional pages on a website or to exit the site and 2) how long to view a page on the website. Previous literature has linked browsing and navigation to behaviours such as information acquisition and learning. Baumgartner and Steenkamp (1996) suggest that exploratory behaviour can be divided into exploratory acquisition of products and exploratory information seeking behaviour. Huberman, Pirolli, Pitkow, Rajan and Lukose (1998) suggest that users request pages views from a website when the value of viewing web pages exceeds the cost of viewing. Since the value of the subsequent site is often unknown, Huberman et al. (1998) propose it is stochastically related to the
current page. More specifically, when users find a web page to be valuable for example to their decision-making process, they are more likely to examine the website more thoroughly, interact with different elements presented at them on the website and request more page views on the given site. However, browsing and extensive navigation has also been linked to web users learning to use the site (e.g. Johnson, Bellman and Lohse 2003; Bucklin and Sismeiro 2003). More specifically, website visitors are likely to spend more time browsing and navigating different pages on the website during their first visit, while decreasing such behaviours on subsequent visits. Bucklin et al.’s (2003) results indicate that repeat visit decrease the likelihood of additional page views while having no impact on page view duration. According to Richard et al. (2005) exploratory information seeking behaviour takes place when consumers do not have accurate knowledge of the available information and are unsure whether their needs can be met or how their goals could be reached. Huang (2000) points out that according to the differences between experiential and information-processing views of consumer behaviour, exploratory behaviour should be divided into two categories. More specifically, exploring a site may be hedonic in nature with the exploratory behaviour being the end in itself, while in decision-making supportive problem-solving, exploratory behaviour is the mean for the purpose of information acquisition (Huang 2000).

On the internet browsing and scrolling are components of exploratory behaviour. It could be said that in a traditional sales setting, navigation and browsing behaviours manifest as asking questions from the company representative in order to acquire additional information which supports the consumer’s decision-making process.

2.2.8 Response: Behavioural Responses

Approach behaviours refer to all positive behaviours towards a website, while avoidance behaviours are the opposite (Meharabian et al. 1974; Eroglu et al. 2001). Huang (2000) defines three types of approach/avoidance behaviours existing in the online environment. The first concerns with a desire to stay or leave the site which is indicated by
navigation duration or stickiness (Bhat, Bevans and Sengupta 2002). The second involves the desire to explore the site or avoid investigating the site beyond the first page seen or interacting with the site. The third deals with the willingness to make a purchase or repurchases on the site versus avoiding making purchases all together (Eroglu et al. 2001; Song and Zinkman 2003). Additionally, word-or-mouth behaviour such as willingness to recommend a website to others can be seen as a positive behavioural response to a particular website or an indication of satisfying online experience (Song et al. 2003; Hackman, Gundergan, Wang and Daniel 2006) especially in the era of social media and other web 2.0 applications. Particularly, interesting approach behaviours that are strongly tied to purchasing behaviour and intentions are 1) following the company’s advice, 2) sharing personal information with the company and 3) making a purchase on the website (McKnight et al. 2002). These behaviours are likely to succeed each other. For example, the company’s advice can be viewed as the influence tactics utilised on the website, while sharing information with the company is often a compulsory step in order to make an actual transaction.

Many studies have identified factors such as site attitude, online service quality and online service satisfaction having a strong influence on online behavioural intentions. (See e.g. Koufaris 2002; Hackman et al. 2006; Hausman et al. 2009) More specifically, the more positive experience the visitor has while interacting with a website, the more likely they are to engage in approach behaviours. Hausman et al. (2009) propose that useful, informative and entertaining websites lead to a state of flow and create positive attitudes towards the website which in turn leads to purchase intentions and return intentions.

2.2.9 Purchase Intentions
Although website’s ability to attract traffic is an important metric for measuring the performance of online marketing, purchase conversion rates (visitor-to-purchase) are the primary focus of attention for many companies offering products/services online (Moe et al. 2004a). However, often only a
small percentage of total website traffic converts into buyers. Low-conversion rates set an imperative for companies to predict and understand online buying behaviour as a small improvement in conversion rates can translate into significant improvements in e.g. revenue (Bucklin and Sismeiro 2004).

On the internet, purchases can take place at the same time as being exposed to ads or within a short time after the exposure as consumer can request more information instantly with a click of a mouse. Before consumers develop purchase intentions, they are likely to engage in exploratory behaviours and be highly involved with navigating through the site. (Richard 2005) However, online purchases are often a sequence of tasks, which must be completed before a purchase can take place. (Bucklin et al. 2004) More specially, consumer must complete tasks such as register to websites, share personal details or make online payments before they are able to purchase products or services. Therefore, measuring purchase intentions as a buy/no-buy scenario may not provide a complete picture of purchase intentions as other situational factors may influence the completions of the required steps. Bucklin et al. (2004) suggest that each step required for a purchase should be examined as it takes into account conditional probabilities for task completion, each of which is higher than the common visit-to-purchase examination.

2.2.10 eWOM

The interest for electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has increased with the proliferation of Web 2.0 and social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter. eWOM is defined as “a positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customer about a product or a company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet.” (Henning-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, Gremler 2004, 39).

The interactive nature web 2.0 and social networking technologies not only allows companies to share and distribute information with their customers but also allows customers to share and distribute information to other customers and non-customers. More specifically, customers can add value
to marketing activities by generating their own content or by expressing their favourable attitudes towards marketing messages and content created by others (Sashi 2012; Swami, Milne and Brown 2013) Customer-generated content (or user-generated content) consists of authentic words, thoughts, ideas or images that users voluntarily submit to an online entity in order to endorse companies, products or services (Faeth 2013). Expressing favourable attitudes towards content created by others on the other hand means endorsing it by commenting, “liking” or passing it along to social connections through online entities (Chu and Kim 2011; Swani et al. 2013). Furthermore, by “liking” messages or content, consumers automatically exposes members of their social networks to it, making consumer “co-marketers” and increasing the messages reach to new groups of individuals (See Figure 4)

Figure 4 Spread of eWOM on Social Media (Adapted from Swami et al. 2013)

Because eWOM is seen as one of the most important drivers of traffic to commercial websites (Novak et al. 2000), has been initially linked to increased brand awareness and sales revenue (Kumar and Mirchandani 2012), claimed to be a crucial driver for new product success and found to be more effective than advertising (López and Sicilia 2013), understanding,
the antecedents of eWOM, more specifically what makes information "sharable", may provide valuable insights for online advertising and content strategies (Chu et al. 2011). eWOM can be viewed as an approach behaviour towards the information companies provide on their websites or social networking channels, as internet users tend to share content they find valuable. More specifically, research has shown that online content which appeals to the viewer’s ego (Golan 2008), emotions, imagination (Doble, Lindgreen, Beveraland, Vanhamme and van Wijk 2007), sense of humour (Hsieh, Hsieh, Tang 2012) is more likely to encourage eWOM behaviours. Thus, eWOM behaviour can be viewed as an indicator of information quality, effectiveness or informativeness.
3 INFLUENCE TACTICS FOR ONLINE MARKETING

The chapter examines the characteristics and underlying mechanisms of influence tactics in interpersonal relationships. The aim is to gain a comprehensive understanding of different alternatives sources of influence have at their disposal to influence attitudes and behaviours of targets of influence, and to create a link to previously identified online atmospheric cues. The underlying assumption is that influence tactics can act as high-task relevant atmospheric cues, more specifically they represent different information types.

3.1 Influence Tactics

As shortly described earlier, influence tactics are the communicated motivational portion of influence attempts that a source of influence (e.g. sales people) uses for changing the behaviour, the attitudes or beliefs of a target of influence (e.g. buyers) during interpersonal interactions (Frazier et al. 1984; Payan et al. 2005; McFarland et al. 2006). More specifically, influence tactics represent the different alternatives companies have at their disposal for pursuing different channel members to take actions that are in the best interest of the source company (Frazier and Rody 1991). Influence tactics were introduced to marketing literature by Frazier and Summers (1984) and have been since examined in contexts such as organisational buying of professional services (Farrell and Schroder 1996), inter- and intrafirm relationships (e.g. Yukl and Tracey 1992; Hu and Sheu 2005; Payan et al. 2005; Lai, 2009; Hausman and Johnston 2010) and personal selling (McFarland et al. 2006)

Frazier et al.’s (1984) original model consists of six different influence tactics: information exchange, requests, recommendations, threats, legalistic pleas and promises. Since then research has proposed additional tactics to complement Frazier et al.’s (1984) original model as the context of influence tactics has extend from interorganisational firm-to-firm relationships to personal selling. The later contributions have emphasized emotional utilities (McFarland et al. 2006) as behaviour and relationships include an emotional dimension. In accordance with this realisation, authors
such as Farrel et al. (1996), Payan et al. (2005), Payan and Nevin (2006) and McFarland et al. (2006) have extended the original framework with tactics such as *inspirational appeals, ingratiation and rationality*. (See Table 1)

Traditionally, influence tactics are divided into two categories based on their underlying influence mechanism (Frazier et al. 1984). Threats, legalistic pleas and promises are categorised as *coercive influence tactics* as they aim to motivate the target to take a desired action by implying that a source-controlled reward or punishment ensues from obedience/disobedience. Information exchange, requests, recommendations, inspirational appeals, ingratiation and rationality are categorised as *non-coercive influence tactics* as they aim to change the target’s attitudes and beliefs regarding the desirability of the intended action. (Frazier et al. 1984; Frazier and Summers 1986; Payan et al. 2005). Table 1 provides a short review of influence tactics definitions found in previous literature.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Influence Mechanism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Exchange</td>
<td>Consists of exchanging general information, discussing operating procedures and asking questions. The aim is to try to alter the general perceptions the source has about the seller and their offering without making any specific recommendations towards what is expected from the source. The tactic is based on the assumption that information exchange influences the target indirectly and translates into desired behavioural responses. (Frazier et al. 1984, 46; Payan et al. 2005; McFarland et al. 2006)</td>
<td>Non-Coercive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Recommendations are arguments that outline the benefits the source acquires if they take the action suggested by the source. These benefits can be either obtaining positive consequences or avoiding harmful ones that result from complying with the sources request. Unlike in information exchange, recommendations tend to include clearly identified and communicated guidelines for the target to follow. (Frazier et al. 1984, 46; Payan et al. 2005; McFarland et al. 2006)</td>
<td>Non-Coercive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promises</td>
<td>The source promises the target a reward if they comply with the sources request. The basic assumption here is that, unlike in recommendations, the reward i.e. the positive consequence is directly mediated by the source. (Frazier et al. 1984, 46; Payan et al. 2005; McFarland et al. 2006)</td>
<td>Coercive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats/Legalistic Pleas</td>
<td>Threats are implications of negative sanctions that result if the target should fail to comply with the sources request. As with promises, threats usually consist of consequences which are directly mediated by the source. These sanctions can be e.g. relational, financial or legal. (Frazier et al. 1984, 46; Payan et al. 2005; McFarland et al. 2006)</td>
<td>Coercive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requests</td>
<td>Requests are a direct appeal for the target to take the action the source requires. The source simply states the actions they would likely the source to take without discussing any specific consequences of obedience or disobedience. (Frazier et al. 1984, 46; Payan et al. 2005)</td>
<td>Non-Coercive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Appeals</td>
<td>Requests or proposals that arouse enthusiasm by appealing to target audiences higher values, ideals and aspirations or by increasing the the target’s confidence towards achieving a desired goal. The aim is to arouse a positive affective response in the target, encourage them to attach emotional relevance to a product and motivate them to comply. (Yukl et al. 1992; Farrel et al. 1996; McFarland et al. 2006)</td>
<td>Non-Coercive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingratiation</td>
<td>Involves using tactics that are aimed to enhancing one’s interpersonal attractiveness and improving the relationship with the target of influence. (McFarland et al. 2006)</td>
<td>Non-Coercive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>The source presents reasons accompanied with supportive evidence for target to comply with a request. (Payan et al. 2005)</td>
<td>Non-Coercive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to McFarland et al. (2006) influence tactics operate through three underlying processes of interpersonal influence: internalisation, compliance...
or identification. More specifically, personal influence in sales situations is based on the seller’s ability to form a meaningful connection with the customer and convince them to comply with the seller’s requests through:

1) **Internalisation**: proposing that the indented action is in the customer’s best interest
2) **Compliance**: implying a favourable reward or reaction if the customer complies
3) **Identification**: making the customer more responsive to influence by establishing a meaningful relationship with them. (Kelman 1961; McFarland et al. 2006)

Payan et al. (2006) suggest that although tactics that rely on changing the target’s attitudes and beliefs will result in positive outcomes, the attitude change may not always result in similar positive levels of compliance. In fact, the target has to recognize that compliance is the best response to the motivations and reasons conveyed by the source in an influence attempt. They suggest that for the target to accept compliance as the best response, the influence tactic is assessed on the basis of the following three request dimensions, described by Payan et al. (2006, 457) as “the nature of the request.”

1) **Legitimacy**: The target perceives the source’s proposal rightful and therefore feels obligated to comply.
2) **Imposition**: The target feels that complying will be costly (e.g. implementing the proposal will take a notable amount of time, effort or resources) and therefore is likely to be resistant.
3) **Importance**: The target perceives that the proposal will have a notable impact on achieving their goals. Proposals that are high in importance or relevant to their goals are more likely to result in compliance. (Payan et al. 2006)

Based on Frazier et al.’s (1984) categorisation, literature has identified that the influence tactics which aim to change the attitudes and beliefs of the target i.e. non-coercive influence tactics are more likely to positively effect
decision outcomes (Farrell et al. 1996; Payan et al. 2005; Yukl et al. 1992). More specifically, rational persuasions which aim to address the benefits gained from compliance have been identified as one of the most frequently used and most effective of influence strategies. Additionally, tactics which appeal to the target’s values and aspirations are more likely to lead to positive attitude change, commitment and consequently compliance. (Yuik et al. 1992; Farrel et al. 1996) Coercive tactics tend to be ineffective in gaining compliance, less effective in securing commitment (Farrell et al. 1996) and even deteriorate the relationship between the source and the target. (Yulk et al. 1992; Payan et al. 2005) Tactics which rely on power, authority and pressure are more likely to be less effective as they do not generate favourable attitude change (Farrel et al. 1996). Payan et al. (2005) and Lai (2009) state that, coercive influence tactics lead to compliance only when the target is highly depended on the source. Thus, it could be said that the source complies only to avoid punish or to receive rewards not because they necessarily find source’s influence content appealing (Payan et al. 2006).

Payan et al. (2005) discovered that the argument structure of influence tactics may be related to their effectiveness. Their claim is based on consumer behaviour research, which has indicated that argument structure has an impact on the effectiveness of advertising messages. The messages which contain all elements of a complete argument structure have a stronger positive influence on consumer beliefs and message acceptance than the advertisements that do not. Influence tactics with incomplete argument structures may lead to the target’s faulty interpretation about the missing elements. (Payan et al. 2005) More specifically, when an influence tactic includes all the elements of a complete argument structure (a request, data or evidence to support the request and a concluding statement that links the request to the evidence), it is likely to be more effective than tactics that contain only one or two elements (Payan et al. 2005).

McFarland et al. (2006) highlight the importance of adapting influence tactics to different buyers. Buyers who are highly goal/task oriented are
more likely to comply with information exchange and recommendations, buyers who are interested in forming social connections tend to react more positively on ingratiation and inspirational appeals, while buyers who are motivated by their own welfare are inclined to be positively influenced by promises and ingratiation. However, it is important to acknowledge that buyers often have multiple orientations. (McFarland et al. 2006) In fact, McFarland et al. (2006) state, that only one-third of buyers have a single orientation, while two-thirds have multiple orientations.

Literature is fairly abundant with research that examines the use of influence tactics in various interfirm/intrafirm setting (e.g Frazier et al. 1984; Frazier and Sheth 1985), the effect of influence tactics on different relational outcomes e.g. satisfaction (Frazier, Gill and Kale 1989), the antecedents such as power of different influence strategies (Venkatesh, Kohli and Zaltman 1995) and the moderating role of variables such as shared norms and values (Lai 2009). However, surprisingly, very few authors (e.g. Payan et al. 2005; Farrell et al. 1996) address the effectiveness of different influence tactics in reaching their ultimate objective: target compliance. Another significant gap in current literature is the lack of research on influence tactics in online channels. This is surprising as it is commonly acknowledged that marketing and sales efforts take place more often over internet channels and as human-computer interaction is starting to resemble that of between individuals. (Brown et al. 2007) However, Parvinen et al. (2011) and Pöyry, Parvinen and McFarland (2013) have attempted to address this gap by identifying key interactivity cues in online selling (Parvinen et al. 2011) and empirically testing non-coercive influence tactics (recommendations and inspirational appeals) in the online marketing context (Pöyry et al. 2013).

3.2 Non-Coercive Influence Tactics
The following chapter reviews non-coercive influence tactics based on existing literature. Coercive tactics will not be discussed further as they are not in the scope of this study.
3.2.1 Information Exchange

Information exchange tactics consist of exchanging general information, discussing operating procedures and asking questions. The aim is to try to alter the general perceptions the source has about the seller and their offering without making any specific recommendations towards what is expected from the source. The tactic is based on the assumption that information exchange influences the target indirectly and translates into desired behavioural responses. (Frazier et al. 1984; Payan et al. 2005; McFarland et al. 2006) Payan et al. (2005) propose that information exchange tactics are likely to include one element out of three from a complete argument structure, namely evidence or data regarding the influence attempt, or its source. They discovered that information exchange has the least association with compliance as it lacks a direct request and a concluding statement.

According to McFarland et al. (2006) the target accepts the influence attempt via information exchange because they believe the content of the influence to represents a useful solution or because it is aligned with their own orientations such as approach to solving problems. Thus, information exchange tactics are likely to be effective with task oriented buyers. (McFarland et al. 2006) This is because buyers who are task/goal oriented and purposeful wish to achieve their current objectives as efficiently as possible and are intolerant to activities that distract them from achieving their goals. (Sheth 1976; McFarland et al. 2006)

3.2.2 Recommendations

Recommendations are logical arguments that outline the benefits the source acquires, if they take the action suggested by the source. These benefits can be either obtaining positive consequences or avoiding harmful ones that result from complying with the sources request. Unlike in information exchange, recommendations tend to include clearly identified and communicated guidelines for the target to follow. (Frazier et al. 1984; Payan et al. 2005; McFarland et al. 2006) According to Payan et al.’s (2005) analysis of influence tactic structures, recommendations consist of direct
requests or claims and concluding statements while evidence that supports the claim is absent. They discovered that recommendations have a negative effect on compliance contrary to previous research which supports the positive effect recommendations have on relational outcomes which in turn are assumed to positively influence compliance. They state that trust may act as an intervening variable to explain these mixed results.

McFarland et al. (2006) discovered that recommendations are most likely to appeal to buyers with a high task orientation. Influence tactics that are loaded with recommendations providing appropriate suggestions and arguments for the buyer to make a purchasing decision can be seen as valuable to highly task oriented buyers as they help them to compare different solutions effectively (McFarland et al. 2006, 106).

3.2.3 Requests
Requests are a direct appeal for the target to take the action requested by the source. The source simply states the actions they would like the source to take without discussing any specific consequences of obedience or disobedience. (Frazier et al. 1984; Payan et al. 2005) Studies that have followed Frazier et al.’s (1984) original model tend to argue against the validity of requests as an actual influence tactic. For example, Payan et al. (2005) state that, requests are simply a directly stated claim or a demand devoid of any additional information. Thus, the influence mechanism of requests is depended on the target’s inference. More specifically, in the case of pure requests the target may make their own interpretations whether the request is coercive or not in nature. As the evidence or explanation is missing, a simple request may lead to faulty interpretations and thus have a negative impact on compliance. McFarland et al. (2006) dismiss requests altogether as in the preliminary study of sales influence tactics it was discovered to be implicit.

3.2.4 Inspirational Appeals
Inspirational appeals are requests or proposals that arouse enthusiasm by appealing to target audiences higher values, ideals and aspirations. They aim to arouse a positive affective response in the target, encourage them to
attach emotional relevance to a product and consequently motivate them to comply. (Farrel et al. 1996; McFarland et al. 2006) Inspirational appeals also aim to increase the target’s confidence that “you can do it” (Yulk et al. 1992, 526). Previous studies suggest that inspirational appeals are an effective influence tactic and even motivate the target to go beyond their personal interest in the benefit of “greater good” as they appeal to higher-order psychological needs (Yulk et al. 1992). Taylor (1999, 12) suggests that emotional and ego-related communication strategies are especially applicable to purchase decisions which are emotionally significant to the consumer and “allow them to make a statement to themselves about who they are.” The role of communication is to indicate how a product/service fits within the consumer’s definition of who they are. (Taylor 1999)

Although, Payan et al. (2005) did not include inspirational appeals in their analysis of influence tactic structures, based on scale items used by Farrel et al. (1996) and McFarland et al. (2006) it could be said that inspirational appeals entitle at least two of the three elements of a complete argument structure. These are:

1) Claim: “argued that it would be an exciting opportunity to work with a particular agency”, “stated that a particular agency would produce outstanding results” (Farrel et al. 1996, 302). “Argued you had an exciting opportunity to help your company/business” (McFarland et al. 2006, 115)

2) Evidence: “Described the work of one particular agency with enthusiasm and conviction” (Farrel et al. 1996, 302). “Described the use of his/her products/services with enthusiasm and conviction” (McFarland et al. 2006, 115).

According to McFarland et al. (2006) inspirational appeals are likely to be most effective with socially oriented buyers. This may be due to the fact that inspirational appeals aim to make the source of influence more attractive or likable toward the target and as socially oriented buyers are interested in forming and fostering personal relationships. (McFarland et al. 2006)
Indeed, inspirational appeals are likely to lead to commitment and favourable attitude change (Farrel et al. 1996).

### 3.2.5 Ingratiation

Ingratiation involves using tactics that are aimed to enhancing one’s interpersonal attractiveness and improving the relationship with the target of influence. They consist mainly of praising the target for their achievements, sympathising with them and expressing similar attitudes or interests or simply getting the target on a good mood (Yukl et al. 1992; McFarland et al. 2006) McFarland et al. (2005) and Yukl et al. (1992) state that ingratiation is likely to be an effective emotional utility in personal sales or downward relationships. The basic assumption is that if the target of influence has positive feelings about the target, their behaviour can be influenced more effectively. Ingratiation serves a dualistic role in influencing the target’s behaviour as it provides the target with the validation they seek and supports their belief of self-importance. (McFarland et al. 2005)

Ingratiation tactics are likely to be most effective in persuading self-oriented and engagement-oriented buyers. Self-oriented buyers are often self-absorbed, they like to receive positive attention and show off their accomplishments, thus any tactic that satisfies these psychological needs is likely to resonate with this type of buyers. Similarly, engagement-oriented buyers seek to form relationships that are personally satisfying and therefore expected to react positively to tactics that support this aim. (McFarland et al. 2006)

### 3.2.6 Rationality

Rationality or rational persuasion takes place then the source of influence presents reasons accompanied with supportive evidence to the target in order to get them to comply with a request (Yukl et al. 1992; Payan et al. 2005). The tactic relies on hard evidence, convincing arguments, facts and logic to make a persuasive case. (Farrell et al. 1996) Studies (e.g. Farrel et al. 1996) have shown that rational persuasion is one of the most commonly used and most effective influence tactic as it is believed to support attitude change efficiently and consequently lead to influence. Farrell et al. (1996)
suggest that rational appeals are likely to especially effective in buying situations where the level of perceived risk is high.

According to Payan et al. (2006) rationality represents a noncoercive influence tactic with a complete argument structure including all three elements: claim, evidence and concluding statement. In consistent with argument structure theory, they suggest that for this reason rationality is likely to have the strongest positive effect on compliance.
4 EMPIRICAL STUDY

This chapter describes the empirical study conducted to answer research questions 2 and the supportive propositions. The purpose of this thesis is to examine how the selected non-coercive influence tactics affect consumer online behaviour. The empirical research aims to answer this question by utilising the non-coercive influence tactics derived from previous literature as high-task relevant cues and systematically studying their effect on consumer online behaviour using site-centric clickstream analysis. The analysis is done by modelling visitor page-level movements and actions through the website. The aim is to examine the different behaviours the website visitors demonstrate while interacting with the case company’s website and to determine the effectiveness of the chosen influence tactics in terms of getting the visitors to comply with the request put forward for their acceptance.

Given the environment and the delimitations of the study, clickstream data are seen as the most appropriate approach in reaching the objectives and answering the proposed research questions and propositions. Furthermore, examining a natural situation may produce more authentic reactions from the consumers than a lab environment utilised by previous consumer online behaviour studies in the SOR paradigm. Additionally, a natural situation contains similar opportunities and challenges faced by marketing practitioners on a daily basis in their attempts to acquire and retain customers with online marketing activities.

4.1 The Case Study Website

The context of this study is a website that functions as an educational service to individuals interested in learning Building Information Modelling (BIM). The website is mainly targeted, although not limited to, to structural engineering, civil engineering, structural engineering and construction management students. The site allows visitors to download a free-of-charge learning edition of the case company’s BIM software: Tekla Structures, access educational materials that support its use, and join an online community of Tekla Structures Learning Edition users.
Tekla Structures and other BIM software can be seen as professional software with multiple tools and features, which can initially overwhelm new users (Salminen 2013). Thus, it could be said that although acquiring the software is free-of-charge, users new to BIM are required to invest time and effort into learning how to use it. According to Salminen (2013) the amount of different novel functions found in Tekla Structures can undermine the user’s motivation to learn the software and subsequently continue its usage. For this reason, the case company has implemented gamification elements into the service. The different gamification elements aim to improve user commitment and retention. More specifically, the service incorporates gamification elements such as *study points*, which are rewarded for successfully completing tasks presented in the learning material and *karma points*, which are acquired by contributing to the Tekla Campus user community (Salminen 2013).

The website is relatively new and small, receiving approximately 6000 to 8000 visits per month. After arriving on the site, the visitor has three options: to continue exploring the site as an anonymous visitor, to create a user account by registering to the site, or to login to the site if they have previously registered (See Figure 5). Majority of the website content is visible to both anonymous and logged-in users. However, only logged-in users are able to download the actual software, participate in the site’s discussion forum and experience the site’s gamification elements.
Currently the website content can be divided into six different categories based on what they offer to the website visitor (see Table 2).

**Table 2 Tekla Campus Page Categorisation** (Adapted from Moe 2003; Montgomery et al. 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>Front page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product Information</td>
<td>Tekla Campus product sheet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Software Acquisition</td>
<td>Download, Registration/Login (hosted on a separated domain), Thank you for downloading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Material</td>
<td>Learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Community</td>
<td>Discuss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>Opportunities, News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account Management</td>
<td>User profile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The home page is the most frequently visited page on the website. Thus, a starting point to multiple tasks the visitors can perform on the site. The home page contains calls-to-action and a main navigation which aim to guide the visitors towards registering to the site, downloading the software, exploring
the educational material and other information and joining or participating in
the user forum.

The download page consists of information about the software and contains
a technical product sheet. Additionally, the page has a list of software
extensions and country settings. However, in order to download the
software users are required to register to the site. The actual download
takes place on a separate site: “Thank you for downloading”, once the visitor
has successfully created a user account. The download file is located on a
separate domain.

The Learn page contains the educational material for Tekla Structures.
Once logged-in, a visitor can make a choice between two learning paths
and start earning study points to showcase their progress in the chosen
path. The Opportunities page harbours content more hedonic in nature,
such as interviews and case studies.

The user forum and a news section can be found under the Discuss page.
As stated earlier, the user forum acts as a message board for users.
Logged-in users can post content on the forum and communicate with each
other and with the Tekla Campus team. The news section contains up-to-
date information and news related to Tekla Campus.

Furthermore, logged-in users are able to manage their account on Campus
site. Account management includes activities such as modifying personal
details, adding BIM-models to personal portfolio, following progress of
different learning paths and sending invitations to others to join Tekla
Campus.

4.2 The Purchase Process

The purchase process is relatively linear although spread across multiple
domains (See Figure 6). The actual Campus website is the starting point for
the download process and contains the product information. In order to
download the software, website visitors are first required to register to the
site by providing personal information such as name, email and country of
origin. The registration takes place on a separate domain. After filling in their
personal details, the visitor is required to confirm their registration by clicking a link sent to them via email. After a successful registration, the visitor is directed back to the Campus site, where they are required to state their user role (student, teacher, current Tekla Structures User, evaluating Tekla Structures/Other), their organisation (university, school or company) as well as accept terms and conditions. Then the visitor can download the software. Although, the download takes place on the Campus site, the installation file is located on an external domain. After successfully downloading the installation file, the visitor can install the software on their personal computer.

Figure 6: Tekla Campus Acquisition Process

4.3 Research Method

This study consists of 4 individual experiments each representing one of selected non-coercive influence tactics. The aim of the experiments was to utilise non-coercive influence tactics to arouse different cognitive responses, and subsequently approach/avoidance behaviours in target group members. The experiments had two phases: The first one aiming to gain the awareness of the potential customers on Facebook and encouraging them to visit the case website and the second one aiming to convert them into customers on the case website. From the target audience’s viewpoint, the experiments follow the navigational path or compliance process described in Figure 7.
The first phase was conducted on Facebook as a set of 4 individual advertisements. There were several reasons for choosing Facebook as the primary medium to conduct the first phase of the experiments. Firstly, Facebook’s position as the most popular social networking site, especially among individuals between the ages of ages of 18-24 and 25-34 (Nierhoff 2013) was expected to allow reaching a larger number of the potential target audience members, namely structural engineering students between the ages of 18-28. Secondly, Facebook was seen more suitable than other online advertising tools such as banners or paid-ads due to its ability to reach and target a more specified audience who may not be actively seeking services Tekla Campus offers. More specifically, Facebook allows targeting individuals based on e.g. their age, education and interests (Facebook 2014). Lastly, one of the biggest advantages of social media is that unlike traditional websites, social media networks are organised around users, thus allowing companies to benefit from user interconnectedness in order to reach larger audiences with relatively low-costs (Mislove, Marcon, Gummadi, Druschel, Bhattacharjee 2007; Pöyry et al. 2013).

The selected target audiences for the experiments consisted of university students between the ages of 18-28 in Finland, United Kingdom, United
States and India who have demonstrated interest towards concepts such as structural engineering, construction engineering and building information modelling. The focus of the campaigns was primarily on individuals who were assumed to be unaware of Tekla Campus. Utilising Facebook’s advertising targeting tools; the audience was narrowed down based on age, country, education and interests related to BIM and structural engineering. Table 3 represents the size of the potential audience in each of the selected target countries.

**Table 3 Target Audience Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Location</th>
<th>Potential Audience Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>1,280.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>1,020.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>3,800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,530.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aim of the adverts was to prompt potential customers to visit a landing page on the case website which elaborated the given influence tactic in more detail. Each advert was constructed based on previous literature on influence tactics, although some adjustments were needed due to constraints of the utilised media and the nature of the internet as a marketing medium. The structure of the adverts followed the complete argument structure, originally suggested by Payan et al. (2005). More specifically, the headline of the advert represented a claim put forward to acceptance, the body text consisted of evidence supporting the claim and the call-to-action entitled a request to visit the case website to learn more. Each advert was supported by an image related to the given influence tactic as it’s been stated by practitioners (see e.g. Goswami, Chittar and Sung 2011) that images can improve click-through-rates. The basic assumption is that as internet users are unable to “touch” and “feel” products online, good quality images can compensate this inability by providing users “an idea of the product features and conditions”, thus leading to higher click-through-rates.
(Goswami et al. 2011, 45). Figures 8 and 9 represent the four adverts utilised in the first phase of the study.

**Figure 8 Information Exchange and Inspirational Appeals Adverts**

**Figure 9 Recommendations and Rationality Adverts**

The second phase of the experiment was carried out on the case website. As stated earlier, a dedicated landing page was created for each of the selected influence tactics. The aim of these pages was to encourage approach behaviours or compliance in visitors, namely registering to the site and downloading the software.

The pages were constructed based on the influence tactic characteristics identified in earlier literature. Furthermore, the information content presented on each page was based on Building Information Modelling related topics and each piece was reviewed by industry experts in the case
company prior to publishing. Secondly, the information organisation on the pages followed Payan et al.’s (2005) definition of a complete argument structure (See Table 4) as it was seen fitting to online environment, where it is important to provide website visitors strong incentives and navigational cues to remain and engage with the site instead of abandoning the site.

Each landing page included a claim related to the selected influence tactic, which was followed by evidence to support the claim. The evidence proportion was kept relatively short (each roughly 500 words) in order to ensure the reader would scroll to the bottom of the page where the warrant or a call-to-action was found. The warrant, represented as a link, formed a connection between the claim and the evidence and encouraged visitors to download the software. If the visitor followed the advice put forward in the warrant, they were taken to the download page where they were encouraged further to register to the site and download the software. Thus, beginning the compliance process described earlier in Figure 7. Table 4 describes the information structure in each of the landing pages.
Table 4 Structure of Landing Pages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Claim/Heading</th>
<th>Evidence/Body Text</th>
<th>Warrant/ Call-to-action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Exchange</td>
<td>Exchanging general information about BIM and the construction industry</td>
<td>4 BIM facts structural engineers should take a look at</td>
<td>A list of four BIM related trends.</td>
<td>Why don't you give BIM a try – Download Tekla Structures Learning Edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Appeals</td>
<td>Inspiring examples of future construction projects and challenges and proposals how students can leave their mark in society with building information modelling</td>
<td>Leave your mark in society (in the most literal sense possible)</td>
<td>3 examples of futuristic construction projects based on existing Tekla customer case studies.</td>
<td>Most of us dream about leaving a mark in society. Make your dream come true! - Download Tekla Structures Learning Edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Arguments outlining BIM’s benefits for students and how it can be used in studies</td>
<td>Spice up structural engineering courses with BIM</td>
<td>Examples of how BIM tools can be used in structural engineering studies.</td>
<td>Spice up your course and start learning BIM tools today - Download Tekla Structures Learning Edition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>Arguments regarding the type of skills needed from structural engineers in the future and how BIM can be used for developing those skills</td>
<td>Start building your future as a structural engineer</td>
<td>A list of skills structural engineers need in their career and their relevance to BIM.</td>
<td>Start building your BIM skills today - Download Tekla Structures Learning Edition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Clickstream Analysis as a Research Method

Clickstream data offers a method to study consumer online behaviour and the effectiveness of online marketing actions empirically as it provides information about the sequence of pages viewed and actions taken by
consumers as they navigate a website (Montgomery, Li, Srinivasan and Liechty 2004; Bucklin and Sismeiro 2009).

Clickstream data is defined as an electronic record of internet usage collected by a website’s web server log or by third-party services. Clickstream analysis involves analysing the requests internet users send to a server of a website. Requests are usually made by clicking visual objects, e.g. buttons or links, presented on a website. The data collected present a path a visitor takes when navigating on websites and reflects the choices the visitor makes while interacting with the website. (United States Patent Application Publication 2004; Bucklin et al. 2009)

Past literature suggest that in an online marketing context, collecting and analysing clickstream data helps in understanding e.g. 1) browsing and site usage behaviour on the internet, 2) the efficacy of online channels as an advertising, persuasion and engagement media, 3) consumer purchase or transaction behaviour on the internet and 4) in identifying different buyer groups and user goals. (Moe 2003; Montgomery et al. 2004; Bucklin et al. 2009) Indeed, clickstream data offer opportunities to create better targeted marketing and sales activities in the online environment by personalising online atmospheric cues and product offerings according to visitor behaviour (Montgomery et al. 2004; Bucklin et al. 2009). Although encompassing delimitations, clickstream data are usually collected in the user’s own interruption-free environment, which makes clickstream data a feasible resource for practitioners and researchers to examine and understand the behaviour and choices of individual internet users (Bucklin et al. 2009).

Bucklin et al. (2009) divide clickstream data into two categories: site-centric data and user-centric data. Site-centric data is collected from an individual website and represent the activities and behaviours taken by the visitor on the given website. However, the key limitation of site-centric clickstream data is the lack of information regarding the activities and behaviours of site users on other websites. User-centric data are usually collected by internet service providers and provide information about the user’s activities across
multiple websites. User-centric data can offer the advantage of creating a profile of online behaviour across multiple online channels. Key limitations of user-centric data are that it is often tracked at the device level which creates a challenge of identifying activities of an individual user. This is because an individual can use multiple devices or multiple individuals can use a single device to navigate the web. Additionally, recorded user-centric data often shortens the URL of individual web pages making it difficult to match the recorded information to specific page content or to activities taken by the visitor on a website. Although, site-centric data has the advantage of offering a more complete coverage of user activity within a given site, the data can also similarly suffer from device/user matching problem unless the user is forced to register and login to the site. (Bucklin et al. 2009)

Yet, clickstream data has come a long way since its conception. To mention a few developments, many online application providers now offer tools to collect and identify clickstream data about consumer migration across channels. As companies are increasingly using multiple channels for marketing and sales, being able to connect consumer actions across multiple channels could present a notable advantage for understanding how to exploit the strengths in each one. (Bucklin et al. 2009) Another significant development is the ability to study electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) behaviour. Although, using clickstream data to study eWOM has its challenges, the ability to track eWOM behaviour and link it to sales or other outcomes may provide insights into the effectiveness of online marketing. (Bucklin et al. 2013)

4.5 Data Collection and Analysis
This study adopts site-centric data collected from Facebook’s Advertising tools and from Google Analytics. The data consist of the natural operations conducted by individuals who responded to the company’s non-coercive influence attempts on Facebook and consequently navigated and interacted with the case company’s website. In order to examine each non-coercive influence tactic individually, the Facebook advertisements were assigned with an individual UTM-parameter, which helps Google Analytics to identify
from which advertisement each visit originated. After the experiments ended, the data were divided into four groups based on the advertisement the visits originated from. The cognitive responses and behavioural outcomes were identified by mapping the pageview sequence of each visit (See Appendix 1). In order to compare the selected influence tactics and examine their effect on consumer online behaviour, the data were analysed with Two-Proportion Z-test and Chi-Square Test. The analyses were done with Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

Table 5 summarizes the cognitive responses, behavioural outcomes, units of observation and statistical tests utilised to examine the differences between the four non-coercive influence tactics. The units of observation have been drawn from previous clickstream data literature and codified accordingly against the cognitive responses and behavioural outcomes presented in earlier online consumer behaviour literature.
Table 5: Description of Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural Response</th>
<th>Units of Observation</th>
<th>Statistical Test Utilised</th>
<th>Research Proposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Awareness</td>
<td>Impressions</td>
<td>Two-Proportion Z-test</td>
<td>P1a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate site awareness in online consumers. P1b: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate site awareness in online consumers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visits/Clicks to website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CTR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial Behavioural Responses</td>
<td>Pagesviews &gt;2 Bounces</td>
<td>Chi-Square Test for Independence</td>
<td>P2: Non-coercive influence tactic type affects the online consumer’s decision to continue navigating the site/abandon the site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploratory Behaviour</td>
<td>Pageviews &gt;2 CVR</td>
<td>Chi-Square Test for Independence</td>
<td>P3a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate site involvement/exploratory behaviour in online consumers. P3b: Non-coercive influence tactic type affects the online consumer’s preference for site involvement/exploratory behaviour over exploratory behaviour/site involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Two-Proportion Z-test</td>
<td>P3c: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate exploratory behaviour in online consumers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Involvement</td>
<td>Pageviews &gt;2 CVR</td>
<td>Chi-Square Test for Independence</td>
<td>P3a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate site involvement/exploratory behaviour in online consumers. P3b: Non-coercive influence tactic type affects the online consumer’s preference for site involvement/exploratory behaviour over exploratory behaviour/site involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Two-Proportion Z-test</td>
<td>P3c: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate site involvement in online consumers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Conversions (Register and Download)</td>
<td>Chi-Square Test for Independence</td>
<td>P4a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate compliance in online consumers P4b: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate compliance in online consumers P4c: Site Involvement/Exploratory behaviour is more likely to lead to compliance than exploratory behaviour/site Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eWOM</td>
<td>Facebook Shares/Likes/Page Likes</td>
<td>Two-Proportion Z-test</td>
<td>P5a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate eWOM in online consumers P5b: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate eWOM online consumers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5.1 Site Awareness

Bucklin et al. (2009) suggest that clickstream data provide a method to examine the effectiveness of online advertising. More specifically, the data allow tracking exposure to internet advertising and the consumer’s subsequent responses to individual adverts. As stated earlier, if an individual clicks external links or advertisements, they are likely to associate it with a certain service/product category or find it valuable or interesting.

The key metric for understanding consumer reactions towards online advertisements is the click-through-rate (CTR). Chatterjee et al. (2003) suggest that CTR is a more explicable measurement in comparison to mere exposure or impressions as CTR is a countable behavioural response. More specifically, the consumer is likely to have acknowledged the ad, found it valuable and thus clicked the ad in order to find more information. CTR represents how many individuals clicked on an advertisement out of those exposed to it. A unit of exposure is often referred to as an impression. Thus, CTR=Clicks on advertisement/impressions. (e.g. Google 2014a) CTR is a good indicator of whether those exposed find the advertisement “helpful” and “relevant” (e.g. Google 2014a) and how much traffic individual advertisements generated to a website. However, it could be argued that in order to gain a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of online advertisements, a link to subsequent behaviours and more importantly to approach behaviours should be established (Chatterjee et al. 2003). In the online marketing context, approach behaviours or compliance is often referred to as conversions, which are “meaningful actions” such as a sale or a sign-up (e.g. Google 2014b). Thus another valuable metric of online advertisements is the conversion rate (CVR). CVR describes how often clicking an advertisement or a visit to website results in a conversion (Montgomery et al. 2004; Google 2014b), meaning CVR=clicks on an advertisements/conversions.

This study assumes that by clicking on an external advertisement, the viewer is likely to have recognised it belonging to a category relevant to their interests or found it valuable enough for further examination. This behaviour
is measured by examining impressions, visits to the website and click-through-rates each advertisement receives. The aim is to determine the effectiveness of each non-coercive influence tactic in encouraging site awareness.

4.5.2 Exploratory Behaviour

Bucklin et al. (2009) state that clickstream data allow researchers to examine how users browse and navigate on websites and how they respond to atmospheric cues such as site design and structure. Page views, a recording of a website visitor’s exposure to a given page on a website, are seen as a key metric for understanding visitor browsing and navigation behaviour (Bucklin et al. 2003, 2009). Together with on-page click-throughs, they form a clickstream of behavioural responses that are suitable for modelling (Chatterjee et al. 2003). The number of page views, page view duration and visit depth are key metrics for identifying and understanding different patterns demonstrated by visitors while interacting with a website (Bucklin et al. 2003).

In this study, the key unit for analysing exploratory behaviour are pageviews or more specifically a sequence of pageviews visitors explore while visiting the website. Following the concept of exploratory information seeking behaviour and Richard et al.’s (2005) proposal, this study assumes that visitors are likely to demonstrate exploratory behaviour in order to gather more information about the case company’s offering or if they unsure whether their needs can be met by the case company’s offering. More specifically, they do not comply with the influence tactic directly but rather explore additional pages on the website before demonstrating compliance or site abandonment. The aim is to identify whether the influence tactic was effective by itself or whether the visitors needed to seek further information before complying with the original influence tactic.

In order to separate exploratory behaviour from site involvement and to identify subsequent approach/avoidance behaviours a pageview sequence is mapped out for each individual visit (See Appendix 1 for a detailed list). Furthermore, following Bucklin et al.’s (2003) model, visits with less than
two page views are removed from the analysis of exploratory behaviour because a single page view does not constitute as browsing but rather as an avoidance behaviour (Bucklin et al. 2003).

4.5.3 Site Involvement

Similarly, to exploratory behaviour clickstream data allow the examination of consumer site involvement as it allows examining whether consumer’s respond directly to links or requests presented to them. More specifically, by forming a clickstream of behavioural responses, the consumer’s involvement with an individual page can be modelled and examined. (Chatterjee et al. 2003). Unlike the exploratory behaviour introduced earlier, this approach focuses on modelling the website visitor’s progress past critical points in the tasks required for compliance. (Bucklin et al. 2004)

In this study site involvement refers to the consumer’s direct response to the presented influence tactic. More specifically, highly site involved consumers are expected to comply with the influence tactic directly by following the navigational path laid in front them in each influence tactic. For the purpose of the analysis, visitors who reach at least the 2nd stage of the compliance process i.e. the register page (See Figure 7) before demonstrating compliance/avoidance are considered to be site involved.

4.5.4 Compliance

According to Bucklin et al. (2009) purchase behaviour has been modelled with clickstream data using multiple approaches. Past literature has, for example, used clickstream data to predict the likelihood of online purchases based on visitor behaviour (Moe and Fader 2004a; Moe and Fader 2004b) and on different stages of online buying process on e-commerce sites (Bucklin et al. 2004), and identified behaviours related to different shopping strategies (Moe 2003). Furthermore, as clickstream data presents a path website visitors took prior to purchase, it may contain information about their goals and interests as well as which decision aids they used prior to purchase (Montgomery et al. 2004: Bucklin et al. 2009).
As stated earlier, compliance or conversion rate is seen as an important metric of approach behaviours. This is because conversion (e.g. a sign-up or a purchase) can be seen as a measurable behavioural outcome to e.g. different atmospheric cues and influence tactics. However, Bucklin et al. (2004, 306) suggest that a purchase is often a “completion of sequential nominal user tasks” which must be completed before a conversion can take place. Therefore, rather than measuring buy/no-buy directly, each task required for a purchase should be examined. This approach allows the modelling of conditional probabilities for task completion, each of which is higher than the common visit-to-purchase conversation rate. More specifically, website visitors are exposed to several conversion opportunities before they can make a purchase. They for example, convert by 1) following the advice given to them on a website or complete product configurations, 2) completing inputting personal information and finally 3) making the actual purchase. (McKnight et al. 2002; Bucklin et al. 2004)

In this study the key approach behaviour is defined as the visitor’s compliance towards the influence tactic they were originally exposed to. The compliance can take place through site involvement or through exploratory behaviour. For example, visitors may explore the site before demonstrating compliance in order to gather more information about the company and its offering instead of demonstrating site involvement by following the compliance process shown in Figure 7. This study examines whether these behaviours leads to compliance by examining the use of decision aids and the level of information collection demonstrated by the visitor prior to approach behaviours. (Bucklin et al. 2004) Thus, the model links what visitors actually do on the website with the atmospheric cues or influence tactics they have been exposed to on the case company’s website while completing each sequential step towards purchase conversion.

4.5.5 Avoidance Behaviours

Avoidance behaviours in this study are defined as the opposite of approach behaviours. More specifically, avoidance behaviours manifest as site abandonment or visitors leaving the website either directly after being
exposed to the influence tactic or after navigating the website beyond the original landing page.

In this study, avoidance behaviours are examined alongside with corresponding approach behaviours when applicable. The aim is to identify the point where the visitors abandon the website.

4.5.6 Electronic Word-of-Mouth

As stated earlier, eWOM behaviour can be considered as approach behaviour towards messages and content companies distribute in the online environment. Especially in social media, messages become truly effective once consumers add value and meaning to it through eWOM behaviours (Berger and Milkman 2012; Swani et al. 2013). Given the wide proliferation of platforms where eWOM can occur and the consequences of eWOM behaviour (e.g. increased brand awareness or sales), understanding what type of messages and adverts generate eWOM may provide a valuable implications to marketing efforts and online consumer behaviour (Swani et al. 2013)

In accordance with recent studies on eWOM (Berger et al. 2012; De Vries, Gensler and Leeflang 2012; Swani et al. 2013), this study examines eWOM behaviour through so-called one-click social plugins (e.g. Like, Share, Retweet). One-click social plugins can be found on social media platforms and other websites, and allow consumers to demonstrate favourable attitudes towards content or messages they encounter with a click of a mouse. In fact, “Likes”, “Shares” or “Retweets generated through one-click social plugins have been cited as one of the most popular eWOM behaviours, occurring more frequently than other types of eWOM (e.g. reviews, ratings or blogs) (De Vries et al. 2012; Swani et al. 2013). This is because it is considered to be a frictionless, low cognition process, requiring users to simply click, compared to reviews or ratings which require a more high cognition process (Swami et al. 2013)

When consumers click social plugins, they usually automatically share it with their social networks. Thus, consumers add value to marketing efforts
by promoting messages as personal referrals or endorsements to their network of friends and peers (Swani et al. 2013).

This study focuses on examining eWOM generated through Facebook as it was selected as the primary channels to distribute the selected influence tactics. More specifically, the aim is to identify which type of influence tactics generated eWOM behaviours such as post/page “likes” and “shares”. The basic assumption is that the content, the targeted audience finds the most valuable, generates the most “likes” and “shares”.
The aim of this study was to examine how non-coercive the influence tactics of Information Exchange, Inspirational Appeals, Recommendations and Rationality affect consumer online behaviour. This chapter examines and discusses the findings of the study through the key concepts outlined in the theoretical part and reflects them against the research questions and propositions.

The data consist of observed behavioural responses demonstrated by individuals who were exposed to the Facebook advertisements and who clicked on the advertisement in order to visit the case website. The individuals were divided into 4 separate groups according to which influence tactic brought them to the case website, namely Information Exchange (IE), Inspirational Appeals (IA), Recommendations (RE) and Rationality (RA). The appropriate measures for different cognitive responses and behavioural outcomes were adapted from the literature reviewed in the theoretical part of this study. More specifically, the examined cognitive responses in this study are: Site Awareness, Site Involvement, Exploratory Behaviour, while the behavioural outcomes are Compliance and Site Abandonment. Figure 10 summarises the different behaviours the online consumers demonstrated during the experiments. The responses are examined through appropriate statistical tests in the following paragraphs.
5.1 Site Awareness

In accordance with P1a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate site awareness in online consumers and P1b: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate site awareness in online consumers, this paragraph examines each advertisements ability to generate site awareness in online consumers. The four advertisements were displayed to the selected target group in the course of 14 days. The units of observations for measuring Site Awareness are the impressions received by the advertisements and the subsequent visits to the case website. The impression data was obtained from Facebook’s Advertisement tools, while the number of visits to the case website were obtained from Google Analytics. The impressions and visits were used for calculating a click-through-rate for each advertisement, which were then used for the chosen statistical test.
The potential audience size for each advertisement was 1,530,000 individual Facebook users. Out of those 1,530,000 individuals IE and IA received 158,565 and 74,895 impressions, while RE and RA received 54,477 and 139,338 impressions respectively. IE led to total of 2,585 visits to the case website, meaning a total click-through rate (CTR) of 0.0163. IA led to a total of 137 visits to the site meaning a CTR of 0.0018. RE generated 99 individual visits to the website thus having a CTR of 0.0018, while RA amounted to total of 2,433 individual visits to the site, meaning CTR of 0.0175. Approximately half of the impressions and visits came from mobile devices (See Appendix 2 for more details). In order to download the software, visitors are required to visit the site with the personal computers. Hence, mobile visits are excluded from the later analyses.

The descriptive results for further analysis are reported in Table 6.

### Table 6 Site Awareness Descriptive Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Impressions</th>
<th>Visits</th>
<th>CTR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>158,565</td>
<td>2,585</td>
<td>0.0163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>74,895</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>0.0018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>54,477</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>0.0018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>139,338</td>
<td>2,433</td>
<td>0.0175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>427,275</td>
<td>5,254</td>
<td>0.0123</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to determine whether the non-coercive influence tactics used in the advertisements differ in their ability to generate site awareness, one-tailed two-proportion z-tests was conducted to compare each non-coercive influence tactic with each other. The two-proportion z-test is appropriate as the samples are independent are obtained through simple random sampling. Furthermore each sample contains at least 10 success (a visit to the website) and 10 failures (no visit to the website) and each population is at least 10 times as big as its sample. (Stattrek 2014a) The level of significance is 0.05. The results were calculated in Excel.

Table 7 shows the results for Table 7 shows the results for the two-proportion z-test.
The results indicated that IE is significantly more effective at generating site awareness in online consumers than IA and RE. When comparing the effectiveness of IE and RA, the results show that RA is significantly better than IE at generating site awareness. As shown in Table 7, IA and RE are not significantly different in their effectiveness to generate site awareness in the observed individuals. The test revealed that RA is significantly more effective in generating site awareness in the observed online consumers than IA or RE.

To conclude, influence tactics were discovered to generate site awareness in online consumers. The results show a statistically significant difference between influence tactics in their effectiveness to get visits to the case website. Furthermore, RA was seemingly better at generating site awareness than the other tactics, followed by IE. The results show that IA and RE were the least effective of the examined tactics.

### 5.2 Initial Behavioural Responses

In accordance with P2: Non-coercive influence tactic type affects the online consumer’s decision to continue navigating the site/abandon the site, P3a:
Non-coercive influence tactics generate site involvement/exploratory behaviour in online consumers and P3b: Non-coercive influence tactic type affects the online consumer’s preference for site involvement/exploratory behaviour over exploratory behaviour/site involvement, this paragraph examines the initial behavioural responses between the online consumers who visited the case website by clicking the earlier described advertisements.

When online consumers first arrive on a website, they are likely to demonstrate two different behavioural responses: abandon the site immediately or continue navigating the site further (Huang 2000). The basic assumption is that if visitors find the first page they encounter valuable, they are likely to request additional pageviews and navigate the website beyond the initial landing page (e.g. Huberman et al. 1998). The data consist of measurable behavioural responses demonstrated by individuals who visited the website via previously described advertisements. The data was gathered from Google Analytics and includes only visits from personal computers, thus excluding mobile visits. The cognitive responses and behavioural outcomes were divided into 3 different categories: Site Involvement, Site Abandonment and Exploratory behaviour based on sequence of pageviews collected from Google Analytics. The observations were divided into four different groups based on the originating advertisement. Thus, the following analyses aim to determine if one influence tactic is better at encouraging the online consumers to navigate the site beyond the initial landing page (LP) than the other.

Table 8 represents the descriptive results of the visitors’ initial reaction to the website after they clicked the advertisement. Overall, each of the selected non-coercive influence tactics generated behavioural responses of site involvement, site abandonment and exploratory behaviour par from RE which did not induce any site involvement in the examined online consumers. The majority of the observed online consumers (~ 81%) abandoned the website immediately after arriving on the landing page, while
3.5% and 15.35% of visitors continued navigating the website by demonstrating site involvement or exploratory behaviours, respectively.

Table 8 Descriptive Results for Behavioural Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Landing Page (LP) (Visits)</th>
<th>Site Involvement</th>
<th>Site Abandonment</th>
<th>Exploratory Behaviour</th>
<th>Total Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>% of LP Visit</td>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>% of LP Visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE (n=1057)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>88.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA (n=94)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>89.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE (n=74)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>83.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA (n=977)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>72.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1787</td>
<td>81.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to examine the differences between the four groups Chi-Square Test for Independence was conducted to compare the proportions of remain/abandon the website between the four groups. For this purpose, site involvement and exploratory behaviours were pooled to together to represent the visitors who remained on the website, while visits direct avoidance visits represent visitors, who left the website without exploring the website beyond the initial landing page. The tests was conducted by using SPSS.

The observations are independent and collected with random sampling, with all expected counts ≥5, while the examined behavioural responses are binominal variables with two potential outcomes as the visitor can display to only one of the two behavioural responses, thus justifying the Chi-Square Test of Independence (Stattrek 2014b). The results are presented in Table 9.
Table 9 Chi-Square Test Results for Initial Behavioural Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Navigates Site</th>
<th>Abandons Site</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>123 (11.6%)</td>
<td>934 (88.4%)</td>
<td>1057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>199.21 (18.8%)</td>
<td>857.79 (81.2%)</td>
<td>1057.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>10 (10.6%)</td>
<td>84 (89.4%)</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.72 (18.9%)</td>
<td>76.28 (81.1%)</td>
<td>94.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>12 (16.2%)</td>
<td>62 (83.8%)</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.95 (18.9%)</td>
<td>60.05 (81.1%)</td>
<td>74.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>270 (27.6%)</td>
<td>707 (72.4%)</td>
<td>977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>184.13 (18.5%)</td>
<td>792.87 (81.5%)</td>
<td>977.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>1787</td>
<td>2202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes
Chi-Square= 89.7448, df =3, Numbers in parentheses indicate column percentages
p<.05 = 7,815

The results reveal a significant difference in influence tactic’s efficacy to convince the visitor to remain on the website. The probability associated with the chi-square statistic of 89.7448 is less than .01 meaning that there is a strong relationship between the visitors decision to remain/leave the site and the page they initially landed on.

Although the Chi-Square Test for Independence revealed a significant difference between the tactics, it did not specify which of the proportions differ significantly. To answer this question, a multiple comparison procedure, such as the Marascuilo Procedure is needed. The procedure allows the comparison between the different groups in terms of site approach behaviours at initial exposure. (Berenson, Levine, Krehbiel 2005)

Table 10 presents the results for the Marascuilo Procedure, which compares the proportions of visitors who continued navigating the website by demonstrating site involvement or exploratory behaviour between the four different groups.
Table 10 Comparison of Groups for Site Involvement and Exploratory Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Absolute Difference</th>
<th>Critical Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IE/IA</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE/RE</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE/RA</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA/RE</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA/RA</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE/RA</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Level of Significance 0.05
Sample proportions IE=0.116, IA=0.106, RE=0.162, RA=0.276

The results indicate that with a 95% level of confidence RA (0.276) was significantly better at encouraging visitors to remain on site than IE (0.116) or IA (0.106), while the difference between RE (0.162) and RA was not statistically significant. Furthermore, the procedure revealed that the differences between IE and IA, IE and RE and RE and RA were not statistically different.

As stated earlier, visitors who remain on the site were divided into two categories: site involved visitors and exploratory visitors (See Table 8). Overall, majority of the visitors decided to explore the website instead demonstrating site involvement (See Table 8).

To examine, P3b: Non-coercive influence tactic type affects the online consumer’s preference for site involvement/exploratory behaviour over exploratory behaviour/site involvement, a Chi-Square Test for Independence was conducted to compare the proportions of the two behavioural responses between the 4 groups. The observations are independent, collected with random sampling. The dependent variable is binominal and categorical, thus justifying the use of Chi-Square for Independence. As some cells have an expected value less than 5, the results are interpreted through Fisher’s Exact Test. The data was collected from Google Analytics. The tests was conducted by using SPSS. The results are presented in Table 11.
Table 11 Chi-Square Test Results for Site Involvement/Exploratory Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Site Involvement</th>
<th>Exploratory Behaviour</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Expected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>18 (14,6%)</td>
<td>105 (85,4%)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22,82 (18,6%)</td>
<td>100,18 (81,4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>1 (10,0%)</td>
<td>9 (90%)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,86 (18,6%)</td>
<td>8,14 (91,4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>12 (100%)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,23 (18,6%)</td>
<td>9,77 (91,4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>58 (21,5%)</td>
<td>212 (78,5%)</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50,10 (18,6%)</td>
<td>219,90 (81,4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 77 338 415

Notes:
Chi-Square= 5,9997, Fisher’s Exact Test= 5,431, df =3, Numbers in parentheses indicate column percentages. p<.05 = 7,815

The results shown in Table 11 indicate that in this sample the preference for site involvement/exploratory behaviour is not statistically significant between the different groups. More specifically, online consumers prefer to explore additional pages on the website instead of demonstrating site involvement as it is defined in this study.

5.3 Site Involvement

In order to test P3c: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate site involvement/exploratory behaviour in online consumers, this paragraph examines each non-coercive influence tactics ability to generate site involvement in online consumers. As stated earlier each influence tactic is represented as a landing page to the online consumer. In order to examine the differences between the non-coercive influence tactics, a sequence of pageviews corresponding to earlier defined criteria for site involvement was identified from data obtained from Google
Analytics. More specifically, visitors who demonstrated site involvement respond directly to the influence tactic by following the navigational path laid in front of them and advanced at least to the register page. The total number of visits received by the landing page and site involvement visits were used for calculating a site involvement conversion rate (CVR), which were then used for the chosen statistical test.

The descriptive results for Site Involvement are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12 Descriptive Results for Site Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Visits</th>
<th>Site Involvement</th>
<th>CVR to Site Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Exchange</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.0170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Appeals</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0.0594</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To determine whether the non-coercive influence tactics used on the landing pages differ in their ability to generate site involvement, one-tailed two-proportion z-tests was conducted to compare each non-coercive influence tactic with each other. The two-proportion z-test is appropriate as the samples are independent are obtained through simple random sampling. Furthermore each sample contains at least 10 success (a visit to the website) and 10 failures (no visit to the website) and each population is at least 10 times as big as its sample. (Statrek 2014a) The level of significance is 0.05. The results were calculated in Excel. The results for the two-proportion z-test are displayed in Table 13.
Table 13 Results of Two-Proportion Z-test for Site Involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Pooled Sample Proportion</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Z-value</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IE/IA</td>
<td>0.0165</td>
<td>0.0137</td>
<td>0.4660</td>
<td>0.319318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE/RE</td>
<td>0.0159</td>
<td>0.0150</td>
<td>1.1316</td>
<td>0.12924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE/RA</td>
<td>0.0374</td>
<td>0.0084</td>
<td>-5.0299</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA/RE</td>
<td>0.0060</td>
<td>0.0120</td>
<td>0.8899</td>
<td>0.18673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA/RA</td>
<td>0.0551</td>
<td>0.0246</td>
<td>-1.9777</td>
<td>0.02385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE/RA</td>
<td>0.0552</td>
<td>0.0275</td>
<td>-2.1563</td>
<td>0.01539</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of Significance 0.05

When comparing IE and RA, the results indicate RA is significantly more effective at generating site involvement in online consumers than IE. Similarly, as shown in Table 13, RA is significantly more effective at generating site involvement than RE or IA. The results show that IE and IA, IE and RE and IA and RE were not significantly different in their effectiveness to generate site involvement in the observed online consumers.

Overall, only RA was confirmed be more effective at encouraging site involvement in visitors than the other tactics. The analysis could not confirm a significant difference between the other three groups at .05 level of significance.

5.4 Exploratory Behaviour

In order to test P3c: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate site involvement/exploratory behaviour in online consumers, this paragraph examines each non-coercive influence tactics ability to generate exploratory behaviour in online consumers. As stated earlier each influence tactic is represented as a landing page to the online consumer. In order to examine the differences between the non-coercive influence tactics, a sequence of pageviews corresponding to earlier defined criteria for exploratory behaviour was identified from data obtained from...
Google Analytics. More specifically, visitors who demonstrated exploratory behaviour requested additional pageviews on the website instead of following the navigational path put forward to them on the landing page. The total number of visits received by the landing page and exploratory behaviour visits were used for calculating a site involvement conversion rate (CVR), which were then used for the chosen statistical test. The descriptive results are shown in Table 14.

Table 14 Descriptive Results for Exploratory Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Visits</th>
<th>Exploratory Behaviour</th>
<th>CVR to Exploratory Behaviour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Exchange</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>0.0993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Appeals</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.0957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.1622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>0.2170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To determine whether the non-coercive influence tactics used on the landing pages differ in their ability to generate exploratory behaviour, one-tailed two-proportion z-tests was conducted to compare each non-coercive influence tactic with each other. The two-proportion z-test is appropriate as the samples are independent are obtained through simple random sampling. Furthermore each sample contains at least 10 success (a visit to the website) and 10 failures (no visit to the website) and each population is at least 10 times as big as its sample. (Stattrek 2014a) The level of significance is 0.05. The results, shown in Table 15 were calculated in Excel.
Table 15 Results of Two-Proportion Z-test for Exploratory Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Pooled Sample Proportion</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>z-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IE/IA</td>
<td>0.0990</td>
<td>0.0322</td>
<td>0.1118</td>
<td>0.4562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE/RE</td>
<td>0.1034</td>
<td>0.0366</td>
<td>-1.7155</td>
<td>0.04272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE/RA</td>
<td>0.1559</td>
<td>0.0161</td>
<td>-7.3088</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA/RE</td>
<td>0.1250</td>
<td>0.0514</td>
<td>-1.2923</td>
<td>0.09853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA/RA</td>
<td>0.2063</td>
<td>0.0437</td>
<td>-2.7744</td>
<td>0.0028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE/RA</td>
<td>0.2131</td>
<td>0.0494</td>
<td>-1.1104</td>
<td>0.1335</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of Significance 0.05

The results indicate that the difference between IE and RE and RA is statistically significant with RE and RA inducing more exploratory behaviour in visitors than IE. Similarly, the difference between IA and RA was statistically significant with RA being more likely to convert visitors to exploratory behaviours than IA. The difference between IE and IA, IA and RE and RE and RA was not statistically significant.

Although the results are somewhat mixed, the test revealed that non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate exploratory behaviour in consumers.

5.5 Compliance/Site Abandonment

This paragraph aims to examine P4a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate compliance in online consumers, P4b: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate compliance in online consumers and P4c: Site Involvement/Exploratory behaviour is more likely to lead to compliance than exploratory behaviour/site Involvement.

The online consumers who register to the website and download the software are considered to have demonstrated approach behaviours or compliance towards the influence tactics represented in the landing pages.
In this study compliance takes place through site involvement or exploratory behaviour (See Appendix 1). Overall, IE and RA were the most effective non-coercive influence tactics in inducing compliance in the examined online consumers with 22 and 45 downloads, respectively. IA and RE were the least effective tactics with 1 and 0 downloads, respectively. The descriptive results are shown in Table 16.

Table 16 Descriptive Results for Compliance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Visits</th>
<th>Compliance</th>
<th>CVR to Compliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IE</td>
<td>1057</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.0208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.0461</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to compare the effectiveness of non-coercive influence tactics in generating compliance/site abandonment in online consumers, a Chi-Square Test for Independence was conducted to compare the proportions of compliance/site abandonment behaviours in 4 different groups. The data was obtained from Google Analytics and divided into four different groups based on sequence of pageviews that led to registration and download or to site abandonment. More specifically, the groups in the analysis are site involvement visit and exploratory behaviour visits from Information Exchange (IE_SI and IE_EXB respectively) and site involvement and exploratory visitors from Rationality (RA_SI and RA_EXB, respectively). IA and RE are left out of the analysis as close to none of the visitors in the two groups demonstrated compliance behaviours.

The observations are independent, collected with random sampling. The dependent variable is binominal and categorical, thus justifying the use of Chi-Square for Independence. The test was conducted with SPSS. The results are presented in Table 17.
Table 17 Chi-Square Test Results for Response Behavioural via Site Involvement and Exploratory Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Compliance</th>
<th>Site Abandonment</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Observed</td>
<td>Expected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE_SI</td>
<td>11 (61.1%)</td>
<td>3.07 (17.1%)</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (38.9%)</td>
<td>14.93 (82.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA_SI</td>
<td>24 (41.4%)</td>
<td>9.89 (17.1%)</td>
<td>58.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34 (58.6%)</td>
<td>48.11 (82.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE_EXB</td>
<td>11 (10.5%)</td>
<td>17.90 (17.1%)</td>
<td>105.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>94 (89.5%)</td>
<td>87.10 (82.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA_EXB</td>
<td>21 (9.9%)</td>
<td>36.14 (17.5%)</td>
<td>212.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>191 (90.1%)</td>
<td>175.86 (82.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-Square= 59.8466 , df =3, Numbers in parentheses indicate column percentages 
p < .05 = 7.815

As shown on Table 16, the proportions of compliance/site abandonment between site involved visitors and visitors who demonstrate exploratory behaviours is statistically significant. The probability associated with the chi-square statistic of 59.8466 is less than .01 meaning that there is a strong relationship between the visitors decision to demonstrate compliance/avoidance and whether they previously demonstrated site involvement or exploratory behaviours.

In order to compare which of the proportions differ significantly, Marascuillo Procedure was conducted to compare the compliance behaviours between the above mentioned 4 groups. The results are presented in Table 18.
Table 18 Comparison of Groups for Compliance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Absolute Difference</th>
<th>Critical Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IE(SI)/RA(SI)</td>
<td>0,1973</td>
<td>0,3687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE(SI)/IE(EXB)</td>
<td>0,5060</td>
<td>0,3320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE(SI)/RA(EXB)</td>
<td>0,5120</td>
<td>0,3264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA(SI)/IE(EXB)</td>
<td>0,3090</td>
<td>0,1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA(SI)/RA(EBX)</td>
<td>0,3147</td>
<td>0,1897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE(EXB)/RA(EXB)</td>
<td>0,0057</td>
<td>0,1014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Level of Significance .05
Sample proportions IE(SI)= 0,6111, RA(SI)=0,4137, IE(EXB)=0,1047, RA(EXB)=0,0990

As shown on Table 18, with 95% confidence it can be said that site involved visitors regardless of their original landing page demonstrated more compliance behaviours than individuals who explored additional pages after landing on the website. More specifically, site involved IE visitors (0,6111) demonstrate more compliance behaviours than exploratory visitors from IE (0,1047) or RA (0,0990). Similarly site involved RA visitors (0,4137) demonstrate more compliance behaviours and exploratory visitors from IE or RA. However, when comparing the two site involvement groups with each other, the results indicate that they do not differ significantly. Similarly, the two exploratory groups do not differ significantly from each other.

To conclude, the results show that non-coercive influence tactics generate compliance in online consumers with the exception of Recommendations, which did not generate compliance in the examined individuals. Additionally, non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate compliance and compliance takes place through site involvement and exploratory behaviour. Furthermore, site involved online consumers are more likely to demonstrate compliance than online consumers who explore additional pages on the website.
5.6 eWOM

This paragraph examines P5a: Non-coercive influence tactics generate eWOM in online consumers and P5b: Non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to generate eWOM online consumers.

As stated earlier, eWOM can be viewed as an approach behaviour towards the content and messages companies share online. More specifically, the eWOM received by content or messages provide an indicator of its effectiveness, informativeness and quality. As the advertisements were distributed in Facebook, each influence tactic received “page likes”, “post likes” and “post shares to a varying degree. Table 19 represents the page likes, post likes and post shares received by individual influence tactic adverts. Post likes and shares are pooled together under eWOM as both behavioural responses are directed towards the message itself, while page likes are directed towards the case company’s Facebook page. More specifically, as seen on Table 19, Information Exchange received total of 340 shares/likes and 445 new page likes, Inspirational Appeals generated 4 post likes/shares and 12 page likes. The likes/shares received by Recommendations and Rationality amounted to 15 and 461 respectively. Recommendations did not result in new page likes, while Rationality resulted to 533 new page likes. The data includes behavioural responses from both mobile devices and personal computers and were collected from Facebook’s advertising tools.

Table 19 eWOM Descriptive Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reach</th>
<th>eWOM</th>
<th>eWOM rate</th>
<th>Page Likes</th>
<th>Page Like Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Exchange</td>
<td>158565</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>0,21 %</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>0,28 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Appeals</td>
<td>74895</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0,01 %</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0,02 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>54477</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0,03 %</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0,00 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>139338</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>0,33 %</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>0,38 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To determine whether the non-coercive influence tactics used on advertisements differ in their ability to generate eWOM, one-tailed two-proportion z-tests was conducted to compare each non-coercive influence tactic with each other. The two-proportion z-test is appropriate as the
samples are independent are obtained through simple random sampling. Furthermore each sample contains at least 10 success (a visit to the website) and 10 failures (no visit to the website) and each population is at least 10 times as big as its sample. (Stattrek 2014a) The level of significance is 0.05. The results, shown in Table 20 were calculated in Excel

Table 20 Results of Two-Proportion Z-test for eWOM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Pooled Sample Proportion</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>z-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IE/IA</td>
<td>0.0015</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
<td>12.2939</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE/RE</td>
<td>0.0017</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
<td>9.2266</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE/RA</td>
<td>0.0027</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
<td>-6.1230</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA/RE</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>-3.2525</td>
<td>0.00058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA/RA</td>
<td>0.0022</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
<td>-15.4373</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE/RA</td>
<td>0.0025</td>
<td>0.0003</td>
<td>-12.1274</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of Significance 0.05

As seen in Table 20, IE was significantly more effective than IA or RE in generating eWOM in the observed online consumers, while RA was discovered to be more effective than RA. When comparing IA with RE and RA, the results indicate that IA is significantly less effective in generating eWOM than RE or RA. The results show that RA is significantly more effective in generating eWOM in online consumers than RE.

Overall, non-coercive influence tactics generated eWOM behaviour in the examined online consumers. Furthermore, the selected non-coercive influence tactics differ in their effectiveness to induce eWOM, with Rationality generating the most likes/shares than any other examined tactic, followed by Information Exchange, while Recommendations and Inspirational Appeals generated the least amount of like/shares with Recommendations being better of the two.
To determine whether the non-coercive influence tactics used on advertisements differ in their ability to generate page likes, one-tailed two-proportion z-tests was conducted to compare each non-coercive influence tactic with each other. The two-proportion z-test is appropriate as the samples are independent and are obtained through simple random sampling. Furthermore, each sample contains at least 10 successes (a visit to the website) and 10 failures (no visit to the website) and each population is at least 10 times as big as its sample. (Stattrek 2014a) The level of significance is 0.05. The results, shown in Table 21 were calculated in Excel.

**Table 21 Results of Two-Proportion Z-test for Page Likes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence Tactic</th>
<th>Pooled Sample Proportion</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>z-value</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IE/IA</td>
<td>0.0020</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
<td>13.5027</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE/RE</td>
<td>0.0021</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
<td>12.3776</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE/RA</td>
<td>0.0033</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
<td>-4.8504</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA/RE</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>2.9545</td>
<td>0.00159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IA/RA</td>
<td>0.0025</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
<td>-16.0580</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RE/RA</td>
<td>0.0028</td>
<td>0.0003</td>
<td>-14.4555</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of Significance 0.05

Information Exchange is significantly better than IA or RE at generating pages likes, while RA generated significantly more page likes than IE. IA was more effective in generating page likes from the observed online consumers than RE, while RA was better than IA. When comparing RE with RA, the results show that RA is significantly more effective in getting page likes than RE.

Overall, RA was discovered to encourage the most page likes, followed by IE and IA. RE, getting 0 page likes, was the least likely influence tactic to get new page likes in this sample.
6 Discussion and Conclusions

The current study aims to extend the understanding of online consumer behaviour by examining the effects of non-coercive influence tactics on cognitive behavioural responses and the subsequent behavioural outcomes. This chapter represents a summary of the theoretical and empirical parts of the thesis and reflects the findings to the research questions, propositions and research gaps of the study. The summary is followed by a discussion of the study's theoretical contributions and managerial implications. Finally, the limitations of the study are discussed followed by propositions for future research.

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

By following Mazaheri et al. (2012) call for research on the influence of information types on consumer online behaviour; this study investigates the effect of Information Exchange, Inspirational Appeals, Recommendations and Rationality on the consumer’s cognitive behavioural responses and the subsequent behavioural outcomes of compliance and site abandonment. The investigation is based on the conceptual model originally introduced by Mehrarabian and Russel (1974) and later adopted to the online environment by Eroglu, Machleith and David (2001). The presumption was that online consumers would demonstrate different cognitive responses when exposed to non-coercive influence tactics in the online environment, and that these cognitive responses would results in approach or avoidance behaviours towards the website.

This chapter provides answers to the research questions by discussing the key findings from the chosen academic literature and the empirical study.

*How non-coercive influence tactics manifest in the online environment?*

In traditional buyer/seller relationships, influence tactics are seen as the communicated motivational portion of influence attempts, meaning their closest online atmospheric cue equivalent is the information companies provide to their potential and existing customers over the internet. As companies have many information-rich online marketing channels such as
the website, the company blog and social media pages at their disposal, non-coercive influence tactics have various potential applications in the online environment. Furthermore, the presence companies maintain over the internet has moved away from the rhetoric of static online brochures towards a more interactive collection of online-based customer touchpoints. As marketing and sales activities on the internet often rely on different types of compliance or conversion behaviour from the consumer, understanding how to effectively convert them to such behaviours is an imperative in the highly competitive online environment.

The examination of previous literature regarding online atmospheric cues and non-coercive influence tactics used in traditional buyer/seller relationships reveal that the two concepts share similar characteristics and ambitions. Both aim to positively influence the consumer’s perceptions and attitudes about the company and its products/services, and most importantly make compliance behaviours, such as a purchase an attractive option for the consumer. Information Exchange, Recommendations and Rationality share similar qualities with high-task relevant cues as each aim to discuss information that is related to the consumer’s goal attainment and needs, as well as how companies can help the consumer to meet them. While ingratiation and to some extent inspirational appeals share characteristics with low-task relevant cues, as each aim to increase the personal attractiveness of the source of influence or appeal to the consumer’s emotions, values or ideals.

Webpages that distribute information about the company, its operating procedures, products, services and prices are comparable to the way Information Exchange aims to positively influence consumer attitudes and ultimately behavioural outcomes without directly prompting or suggesting a course of action for the target of influence to follow. Similarly, Recommendations and Rationality can also be viewed as high task-relevant cues as they aim to encourage buyers to perform a specific action by outlaying the benefits the buyer obtains by complying with the source of influence. As stated earlier, Recommendations and Rationality often include
clearly identifiable and communicated guidelines for the online consumers to follow. This characteristic is more important in the online environment, where consumers, who remain anonymous for the most part decide when, where and how long to engage with websites. Therefore, complimenting online influence tactics with calls-to-action, links and other navigational cues that include a claim, an appeal or a statement for the consumer is imperative for actionable online influence attempts. In the online marketing context, different types of company blogs or social media strategies correspond closely to what earlier literature has stated about inspirational appeals and ingratiation as influence tactics. First of all, commercial blogs often reflect the company’s values and ideals and aim to build a more intimate relationship with customers. (e.g. Lee, Hwang and Lee 2006) Secondly, although not always directly selling products/service, blogs tend to build emotional relevance towards the company and its offering. Social media channels provide a more opportunities to build closer, deeper and more meaningful and sustainable relationships with existing and potential customers (Sashi 2012). It can be seen as a suitable channel for utilising ingratiation as an influence tactic as ingratiation is aimed at enhancing one’s interpersonal attractiveness and improving the relationship with the target of influence (McFarland et al. 2006).

As online marketing practitioners are under increasing pressure to execute intimate yet effective online marketing activities, non-coercive influence tactics could provide a method for the realisation of both. The ability to gather and examine behavioural responses through clickstream data provides practitioners opportunities to adapt their online based influence attempts to different buyer types, similar to sales people in traditional buyer/seller relationships who adapt their influence attempts to suit different buyer types.

Yet some adaptations are needed in respects to the differences between traditional relationships and relationships that are mediated by online technologies. Identifying and providing decision-making aids that mitigate perceived risks, increase perceived benefits and help consumer’s to make
a decision with less effort is more important in the online environment where consumers are unable to physically examine products to evaluate characteristics such as quality or talk to company representatives to ask questions. Furthermore, in the online environment, where consumer’s remain anonymous to a large extent and decide when, where and how long to engage with websites, including a complete argument structure to website information or online advertisements could help practitioners to create a stronger influence on anonymous online consumers and decrease the likelihood of faulty interpretations about missing information elements that lead to frustration and website abandonment.

*How non-coercive influence tactics affect consumer online behaviour?*

The most interesting findings of this study were the effects of non-coercive influence tactics as information types on consumer online behaviour. The effects were studied through different research propositions which were based on previously identified online cognitive responses and behavioural outcomes: site awareness, site involvement, exploratory behaviour, compliance and site abandonment.

Firstly, the examined influence tactic types were significantly different in terms of inducing site awareness in online consumers from external atmospheric cues such as online advertisements. In fact, Rationality and Information Exchange were significantly better at attracting online consumer’s from Facebook to the website, while Inspirational Appeals and Recommendations were the least effective tactics in getting new visits to the website.

Secondly, although the results were somewhat mixed, influence tactic type impacts the visitors decision to remain/leave the website. More specifically, Rationality resulted in keeping significantly more visitors encaged with the website through site involvement and exploratory behaviours and keeping them away from abandoning the website after viewing the page they originally landed on. This notion supports findings from Richard (2005), who stated that if visitors view information on websites as effective, they are likely
engage in thorough information search on the website. The mixed results could be explained by the fact that some of the visitors may have not read the entire information displayed on the landing pages or read it through but not being able to remain on the site for reasons such as lack of time. The reason for the mixed results could be examined in future studies with supportive research methods such as interviews or webpage heatmap data.

Interestingly, the decision between site involvement and exploratory behaviour seemed to be universal between the influence tactics. More specifically, the majority of visitors decided to explore the additional pages on the website rather than demonstrating site involvement as it is defined in this study. While both behavioural responses can be viewed as approach behaviours towards the website as per Richard (2005) and Huberman et al. (1998), site involvement could be viewed as a more desirable response in respects to the way the influence tactics were built in this study. This result could be explained by the fact that the observed individuals are assumed to be visiting the website for the first time, thus more aligned to exploratory information seeking behaviours than exploratory acquisition of products (Baumgartner et al. 1996) or as stated by Johnson et al. (2003) and as stated by Bucklin et al. (2003) simply learning to use the site. Again, this notion could be examined in future research by complementing the method used in this study with supportive methods such as interviews.

Yet, the number or visitors converting to site involvement behaviours or exploratory behaviours was significantly different between the examined influence tactics. More specifically, in accordance with Richard (2005), the results show that when information content is effective, visitors are more involved with the site. Overall, Rationality was significantly better than the other influence tactics at encouraging visitors to be involved with the influence tactic page by clicking the links guiding them towards registering to the site and downloading the software. Surprisingly, Information Exchange, the tactic that effectively induced site awareness in the observed individuals, did not significantly encourage more site involvement in visitors than Inspirational Appeals or Recommendations, which were the least
effective tactics at getting new visitors to the website. The reason behind this could be the fact that Information Exchange did not outline the benefits of compliance to the visitor nor directly request visitors to register to the site and download the software. Whereas Rationality included clearly stated reasons and a request to download the software. Information Exchange was aimed towards attitude change and consequently compliance by exchanging general information about the industry and BIM. However, confirming this notion is something for future consumer online behaviour and influence tactic studies.

The influence tactics that converted most exploratory visits were Rationality and Recommendations, while Information Exchange and Inspirational Appeals had the smallest conversion rate to exploratory behaviours. The reason for this could be that both Rationality and Recommendations discussed the benefits the visitors could obtain from downloading and learning the software, thus encouraging them to acquire more information by exploring additional pages, while Information Exchange and Inspirational Appeals discussed the industry and BIM as a concept, thus not giving a clear incentive to learn more about the company and its offering. Yet again, this is something that future studies could confirm.

Finally, non-coercive influence tactics by themselves do not significantly differ in their ability to induce compliance in visitors. Rather, similarly to findings from Richard (2005), atmospheric cues such as information effectiveness influence approach behaviours through cognitive behavioural responses such as exploratory behaviour and site involvement. Interestingly, the study showed that visitors who demonstrate site involvement were more likely demonstrate compliance and register to the site and download the software than visitors who demonstrated exploratory behaviours. This is surprising as one would expect that visitors who acquire more information about the company and their offering would be more prone to comply with the original influence tactic than those who did not explore the website beyond the compliance path. It could be that the additional pages did not contain a desired quantity or quality of information required
for a visitor to demonstrate compliance. However, this should be confirmed with further studies.

Overall, Rationality was significantly better than the other influence tactics in encouraging the visitors to engage with the website and ultimately demonstrating compliance. This finding is consistent with observations from Yukl et al. (1992) and Farrel et al. (1996) who state that rational persuasions are most effective in gaining compliance in influence attempts. Additionally, the results are somewhat consistent with Payan et al.’s (2005) findings regarding Recommendations effectiveness on compliance. More specifically, they discovered contrary to previous findings that Recommendations have a negative effect on compliance and cite trust as an intervening variable to explain the mixed results. In this study, Recommendations was one of the two least effective influence tactics. The result could be explained by the fact that the observed individuals do not see a relevance between the offering and their studies but rather related it with their career development as shown by the effectiveness of Rationality which addressed this issue. Another important reason for the ineffectiveness of Recommendations in this study could be the fact that BIM is not fully implemented if at all to university curricula and courses. Hence, the observed individuals do not see a reason to acquire BIM software to support their studies. The results might be different if BIM was a consistent and fully implemented part of structural engineering courses in universities.

Inspirational Appeals was the second of the least effective influence tactics in this study. The results are contrary to Yukl et al.’s (1992), who state Inspirational Appeals to be an effective influence tactic. This contradiction could be explained by the fact that Yukl et al. (1992) investigated non-coercive influence tactics in previously established upward and downward intrafirm relationships, where as in this study the source and target of influence are unknown to each other, with no previously established relationship. However, as shown in earlier studies Inspirational Appeals may be effective in changing the target’s attitudes and making the source of influence more attractive to the target, meaning Inspirational Appeals may
be more effective in more long-term influence attempts and in brand building. Another reason for this result could be the fact that the observed individuals may not be familiar enough with BIM to be inspired by this tactic or to find enough emotionally significant for the tactic to be effective.

The behavioural responses demonstrated by Information Exchange visitors are yet another interesting finding. More specifically, it did not convert as many visitors to site involvement, exploratory behaviours and ultimately compliance as its ability to attract visitors to the site would let assume. This finding partially reflects Payan et al.’s (2005) statement that Information Exchange has the least effect on compliance as it only contains the evidence element from a complete argument structure. Although, the Information Exchange landing page in this study included a request to download the software, it was not directly supported by the evidence portion.

eWOM behaviours were examined in this study in order to gain a deeper understanding of information effectiveness. Overall, the results are fairly aligned with the other behavioural responses. More specifically, Information Exchange and Rationality generated the most shares/likes and page likes in the observed individuals, while Inspirational Appeals and Recommendations generated the least amount of such behavioural responses. The ineffectiveness of Inspirational Appeals in this context is surprising when reflecting it to McFarland et al.’s (2006) findings that state Inspirational Appeals being effective with socially oriented buyers. Based on this one could assume that Inspirational Appeals would at least generate more page likes.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

The theoretical ambition of this study was to contribute to the academic discussion around online consumer behaviour and influence tactic efficacy. The research reflects on the studies by Eroglu et al. (2001; 2003), Mazaheri et al. (2012; 2011; 2014), Richard (2005) and Richard et al. (2005), who have successfully confirmed the applicability of the SOR framework in the online environment and that online atmospheric cues influence the internal
states of online consumers which then lead to different approach/avoidance behaviours towards the website. This study is the first to examine the SOR model with clickstream data, meaning the responses from the observed individuals took place in a natural situation which may provide a more authentic reaction from the consumers compared to a lab environment.

The main theoretical contribution of this study is the empirical investigation of information type on online consumer behaviour and influence tactic efficacy in online marketing. The study confirmed that the effectiveness of information differs between information types, thus providing further empirical evidence to Richard’s (2005) findings showing that when information content is effective consumers are more likely to be more involved with the website and engage in exploratory acquisition of information and products which then result in approach or avoidance behaviours. Furthermore, the empirical investigation confirmed that influence tactics are applicable in the online environment but need to be supported with adequate decision-making aids as the consumer is not able to ask questions from a company representative to acquire the needed information, which would occur naturally in traditional buyer/seller relationships and influence attempts.

More importantly, the study investigated online consumer migration from external online channels to a corporate website through the SOR model, which has not been done in previous studies. The study provides evidence that different information or non-coercive influence tactic types can help in raising consumer site awareness and that their effectiveness in doing so is significantly different between the non-coercive influence tactic types. Furthermore, the findings provide evidence that effectiveness of external atmospheric cues such as online advertisements should not only be examined through click-through-rates but a link to subsequent behaviours should be established. More specifically, as shown with Information Exchange, high click-through rates do not always convert to desired approach behaviour in the same magnitude. This supports Bucklin et al.’s (2004) claim that measuring purchase intentions as a buy/no-buy scenario
does not provide a complete picture of purchase intentions as other situational factors are likely to influence the consumer willingness to demonstrate approach behaviours.

Furthermore, this is the first study to link influence tactics to online atmospherics cues, and investigate their efficacy through the SOR model. Thus making it easier for future studies to investigate influence tactics effect on online consumer behaviour and compliance

6.3 Managerial Implications

This study provides online marketing practitioners a workable method to utilise the Stimulus-Organism-Response model to understand the online behaviour of their customers and the effectiveness of their online marketing activities through clickstream data. The evidence provided in this study shows that non-coercive influence tactics can be utilised for attracting potential customer to visit their corporate website and converting them to into behaviours such as site involvement and exploratory behaviours which subsequently result in approach or avoidance behaviours. Furthermore, the results of this study show that exchanging general information and providing rational appeals are more likely to lead to positive behavioural responses and compliance than Inspirational Appeals or Recommendations.

More importantly, the study shows that non-coercive influence tactics need to be supported with sufficient decision-making aids and information that both mitigate the perceived risks and increase the perceived benefits as the consumer is unable to physically examine the product to confirm its quality or suitability or ask questions from company representatives when the information readily available does not need their information need form making a decision to buy. Furthermore, the model examined in this study provides practitioners with method to examine which type of decision-making aids are needed to support the original non-coercive influence tactic in order to improve them in the future and increase their effectiveness in gaining the compliance of their online customers.
Although, this study is limited to the B2C environment and to a product that can be acquired directly on the website, the method is applicable to for example to B2B companies as well as to more traditional e-commerce websites.

6.4 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This study has several limitations. Firstly, this thesis did not examine the emotional responses of online consumers towards the examined non-coercive influence attempts. As the emotional states have been found to significantly influence online consumer behaviour, further studies should deepen the understanding of online-based influence attempts by examining how non-coercive influence tactics affect the online consumer's emotional states and induce behavioural responses such as pleasure, arousal, site and service attitudes. By examining the emotional responses through methods such as interviews could shed light on some of the mixed results found in this study. For example, understanding the emotional states of the consumers when they are exposed to influence attempts could deepen the understanding of why the majority of visitors demonstrated site abandonment over exploratory behaviour or site involvement during their initial exposure to the influence tactic and website as well as their preference for exploratory behaviours over site involvement. Furthermore, the deductions of influence tactic effectiveness in this study is based on measurable behavioural responses obtained from clickstream data, thus the study was unable to determine how the consumers felt about the actual information content presented at them. Future studies could for example, investigate what type of information is the most valuable and satisfying for the online consumer to apply in their decision-making.

Secondly, this study included only the non-coercive influence tactics from Frazier et al.'s (1984) model. Future studies should focus on investigating the effect of coercive influence attempts on online consumer behaviour.

Another notable limitation of this study was the inability to examine whether the observed individuals who abandoned the website without demonstrating compliance behaviours during their first visit returned later to the website to
download the software. It is possible that the consumer first arrived to the website at inconvenient time or in an inconvenient place thus postponing exploring the site or demonstrating approach behaviour till the situation is more suitable for them. This is especially interesting as a significant amount of the original visits came from mobile devices, making compliance as it is defined in this study impossible for the visitor.

As the acquisition process examined in this study was spread in three separate domains, certain conversion points could not be assessed effectively. For example, the registration page which requires the consumer to provide personal information could not be examined in terms of site abandonment. More specifically, the analysis was unable to identify visits from the non-coercive influence tactics campaigns to the register page and determine the rate of site abandonment at this stage of the acquisition process. This type of analysis could have provided evidence whether the influence tactic sufficiently increased the perceived benefits for the consumer to provide personal information to the case company. Future studies could investigate whether information type influences the consumer’s willingness to provide the personal information required for making a transaction on the website.

Another notable limitation of this study relates to the mediating role of personal characteristics such as culture or buyer orientation on the effectiveness of influence tactic types. Although, the observed individuals came from four different countries, the amount of observations varied so significantly between the cultures that a feasible comparison could not be conducted (See Appendix 3). Future studies could therefore investigate whether the effectiveness of influence tactic types and subsequently behavioural responses varies between cultures or buyer orientations as already established in previous studies on online consumer behaviour and influence tactics in traditional buyer/seller relationships.

Another suggestion for future studies relates to exploratory information acquisition and the role of supportive decision-making aids. More specifically, as the majority of visitor preferred to explore additional pages
on the website instead of demonstrating site involvement, future studies could determine which type of information is needed for increasing the effectiveness of different influence tactic types.
LIST OF REFERENCES


Effectiveness of Influence Strategies in Gaining Channel Member Compliance. *Journal of Marketing* 69, 66-79.


## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Navigational Patterns

**Information Exchange – Visits leading to Compliance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Behavioural Response</th>
<th>Visit</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>% of Total Visits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td>Site Involvement</td>
<td>IE, DL, RP, TDL</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploratory Behaviour</td>
<td>IE, H, DL, H, H, DL, RP, TDL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IE, DL, H, DL, H, DL, RP, TDL</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IE, DL, H, DL, RP, TDL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IE, DL, H, I, L, DL, RP, TDL</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IE, DL, L, DL, H, DL, RP, TDL</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IE, H, DL, RP, TDL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IE, H, I, H, H, DL, PS, DL, RP, TDL</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>IE, DL, IE, DL, RP, TDL</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IE= Information Exchange Landing Page H=Home DL=Download TDL=Thank Your for Downloading UC=User Community I=Information L=Learning Material RP=Register PS=Product Sheet E=Exit
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Abandonment</th>
<th>Site Involvement</th>
<th>IE, DL, RP, E</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>0.66</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Site Abandonment</td>
<td>IE, E</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>934</td>
<td>88.36</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IE, DL, PS, DL, L, E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IE, DL, H, DL, RP, E</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IE, DL, H, I, IE, E</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IE, DL, IE, E</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IE, DL, PS, DL, L, L, E</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IE, DL, PS, I, H, I, L, L, DL, E</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IE, H, DL, E</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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IA= Inspirational Appeals Landing Page H=Home DL=Download TDL=Thank Your for Downloading UC=User Community I=Information L=Learning Material RP=Register PS=Product Sheet E=Exit

### Inspirational Appeals – Visits leading to Site Abandonment

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### Recommendations Visits leading to Site Abandonment

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RE= Recommendations Landing Page H=Home DL=Download TDL=Thank Your for Downloading UC=User Community I=Information L=Learning Material RP=Register PS=Product Sheet E=Exit
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**Total** 191 19,55
## Appendix 2 Impressions and Visits per Device

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## Appendix 3 Facebook Ad Performance per Country

### Information Exchange - 4 BIM Facts

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### Inspirational Appeals - Leave Your Mark in Society

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### Recommendations - Spice Up Your Structural Engineering Courses

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### Rationality - Start Building Your Future as a Structural Engineer

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