

# Factors Affecting Intention to Write Negative Electronic Word of Mouth (NEWOM) : A Meta-Analysis

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## Abstract

**Purpose :** The study examined the factors affecting customer intention to write a negative electronic word of mouth (NEWOM) online by synthesizing results from previous studies. More specifically, the study applied meta-analysis to investigate the number of studies conducted on various factors affecting NEWOM.

**Methodology/Approach :** To conduct meta-analysis, this study collected data from various scientific databases such as Scopus, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and EBSCO. After filtering the original 161 articles found by the search according to the effect size of NEWOM associations, the study found the 22 most pertinent research papers for the analysis. Based on the discovered papers, negative emotions such as wrath, remorse, desire for retribution, severity of failure, and frustration were found to be predictive of NEWOM.

**Findings :** The results of the meta-analysis showed that regret, the degree of failure, the desire for retribution, frustration, rage, and negative emotion variables significantly and favorably affected NEWOM.

**Practical Implications :** The findings of the research have some practical and theoretical implications. Practically, managers could leverage findings to understand consumers' NEWOM behavior and develop better marketing activities. Theoretically, meta-analysis advanced the knowledge of the NEWOM concept and provided significant research directions for future researchers.

**Originality/Value :** The research examined the literature and created a meta-analytical model to examine the factors influencing people's intent to disseminate NEWOM in contrast to earlier studies on the topic.

**Keywords :** negative electronic word of mouth (NEWOM), determinants of NEWOM, meta-analysis

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Communication in all its forms has important significance for humanity (Hiltz & Turoff, 1978). The Internet has revolutionized modern-day communication, leading to implications affecting businesses and consumers. It is known that organizations use the Internet to increase visibility, build their corporate image, enhance market offerings, distinguish their products, and promote better consumer interactions

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(Nandan, 2005; Singh & Dagur, 2022). Customers have started using online platforms in recent years to express their thoughts, provide feedback, take part in discussions about brands, and recommend goods and services. This has had an impact on other consumers' online decisions (Karakaya & Barnes, 2010). We call this type of communication “electronic word-of-mouth” or “eWOM.” e-WOM is denoted as the process of expressing positive or negative opinions by the consumer about a specific good or service or a firm, and usually, these statements are publicly available online to a more significant number of people (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Emails, blogs, social networking sites, online chat rooms, virtual communities, e-commerce websites, electronic newsletters, and online discussion boards are common electronic communication tools (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; Gheorghe & Liao, 2012; Kozinets, 2002; Liu et al., 2024). Despite the increasing number of studies on eWOM, most of the literature focused on positive eWOM rather than negative electronic word of mouth (NEWOM). NEWOM is denoted as a reaction to disappointment with the goods and services or brands reporting negative experiences and not recommending products or services to purchase by other customers (Kang & Sivadas, 2018; Luo, 2009).

Previous research has demonstrated that customers are more likely to respond to negative reviews than favorable ones (Sen & Lerman, 2007). However, the majority of empirical research has focused on examining the factors that influence adoption of NEWOM (Chang & Wu, 2014; Fang, 2014), outcomes (Bhandari & Rodgers, 2018; Kang & Sivadas, 2018; Nam et al., 2020a; Wen et al., 2018), or determinants (Balaji et al., 2016; Boo & Kim, 2013; Hu & Kim, 2018; Nam et al., 2020b). A number of studies (Gheorghe & Liao, 2012; Kaur & Singh, 2021; Rouibah & Al-Qirim, 2017; Sharma et al., 2022; Singh & Kunja, 2023a,b) carried out a qualitative study on NEWOM. There is a limited synthesis of studies or findings relating to NEWOM. More specifically, the existing literature lacks meta-analysis studies focusing on NEWOM.

No meta-analysis study examined negative eWOM behavior, despite the fact that previous studies concentrated on the concept of eWOM and covered topics such as adoption of eWOM (Qahri-Saremi & Montazemi, 2019; Rao et al., 2022), eWOM credibility (Ismagilova et al., 2020a), eWOM providing behavior (Ismagilova et al., 2020b), and eWOM outcomes like purchase intention (Albayrak & Ceylan, 2021), hotel performance (Hu et al., 2019), and sales (Babić Rosario et al., 2016; You et al., 2015). More precisely, no study has used meta-analysis to examine the variables influencing the desire to write bad e-worship. In light of this research gap, the current study uses meta-analysis to summarize the findings of previous studies on the variables influencing customers' intentions to write negative eWOM in order to answer the research question, “What are the factors that affect intention to write NEWOM?”

In social sciences, the study findings are typically not entirely conclusive. Hong et al. (2017), Ismagilova et al. (2020a), and Mahajan and Gadekar (2021) employed meta-analysis to find the common truth from several similar previous investigations. It is a statistical technique used to analyze and combine data from various multiple similar studies to get significant results (Gurevitch et al., 2018; Ismagilova et al., 2020b). The analysis procedure combines the findings from several independent studies on a similar relationship between variables into a single estimate, which is more significant than a single research finding (Hunter & Schmidt, 2004). The current study uses meta-analysis to investigate the many elements that influence customer NEWOM communication.

By conducting a meta-analysis, this study will provide important contributions to electronic word-of-mouth literature. Most of the meta-analysis is limited to positive eWOM. This study extends the comprehensive understanding of various determinants of NEWOM in various online platforms. As numerous customers use web-based platforms to share their negative opinions, the analysis of the various influencing factors of NEWOM will help marketing managers better understand customer behavior and disseminate marketing information. Furthermore, this project aims to respond to a recent request for research on systematic reviews of consumer behavior.

Furthermore, this investigation recommends the various elements that customers consider to communicate

NEWOM information on the Internet platforms. However, past studies have shown the NEWOM determining factors, which were only limited to individual relationships to the particular context. Consequently, this study considers multiple contextual studies in customer intentions to spread NEWOM information online. By examining the numerous components, this study will increase the understanding of NEWOM and provide implications for studies related to NEWOM. For the practitioners, the study will suggest managerial implications on detailed examinations of definite factors affecting customers' intention to write NEWOM in the online environment, which could improve their understanding of better marketing activities.

## **Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### ***Negative Electronic Word of Mouth (NEWOM)***

Customers express their feelings, encompassing their prior experience with goods and services or companies in many ways (Gheorghe & Liao, 2012). Generally, customers used to have face-to-face discussions regarding unfavorable experiences about products or services with friends and family members (Bougie et al., 2003). These negative experiences depict feelings like disappointment, shamefulness, irritation, anger, frustration, and dissatisfaction (Scher, 1997). The recent advancement of the Internet, smartphones, and social networking sites have influenced the way people express their negative opinions or experiences about products or services in the form of video, text, images, memes, and likes (Gheorghe & Liao, 2012; Venkataraman & Raman, 2016). This is referred to as NEWOM and is defined as customers' efforts to disseminate negative sentiments or feedback to people about a brand product or service, which are shared, posted, liked or disliked, and viewed on various online platforms (Maru & Vijay, 2024; Wetzer et al., 2007).

NEWOM communications can occur on online platforms like emails, blogs, social networking sites, online chatrooms, virtual communities, fan pages, e-commerce websites, electronic newsletters, and online discussion boards (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008; Gheorghe & Liao, 2012; Kozinets, 2002). NEWOM can reach out to a large number of people in a short period thanks to Internet platforms that reduce geographical and transitory limits. NEWOM can adversely affect firms' reputations since they do not have much control over online social media forums (Balaji et al., 2016; Mahadevan & Joshi, 2021). Hence, companies are more conscious about customer NEWOM communication. Therefore, it is important to examine the determining factors of NEWOM on virtual platforms for firms to develop effective online interactions.

Bambauer-Sachse and Mangold (2011) showed that NEWOM can adversely influence customer opinions on goods, services, or brands. Some scholars have argued that NEWOM is caused by various emotional reasons such as mistreatment (Bhāle & Tongare, 2018; Zhang et al., 2014), improper response (Weitzl et al., 2018), unfair favoring (Yeh & Choi, 2011), and service failure (Israeli et al., 2019). These experiences lead to frustration, anger, regret (Le & Ho, 2020), negative brand attitude (Fu et al., 2015), dissatisfaction (Das & Kunja, 2024; Weitzl et al., 2018), and intent to seek revenge on the service provider (Bhattacharjee et al., 2023; Rajak et al., 2021; Yeh & Choi, 2011). NEWOM studies have been conducted in different contexts like hotels (Hu & Kim, 2018), restaurants (Boo & Kim, 2013), website testimonials (Bachleda & Berrada-Fathi, 2016), foodservice sector (Zhang et al., 2017), and e-shopping (Bhandari & Rodgers, 2018; Bhandari et al., 2021). Despite the significance of NEWOM behavior in online platforms, there have been limited systematic review studies on the determinants of NEWOM.

### ***Anger***

Anger is associated with deeming an occasion hazardous (Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). Anger is typically combined with activity propensities like “Feeling like complaining,” “saying something dreadful,” and

“whining.” The motivation behind the anger is to hurt someone or get back to someone for some reason (Bougie et al., 2003; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). A dissatisfied, angry consumer always blames the service provider in the form of complaints. The consumer spreads negative feedback and writes negative reviews (Wetzer et al., 2007). Chung and Jiang (2017), Sato et al. (2018), and Wisker and McKie (2021) found that furious customers are more prone to engage in NEWOM. Thus, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

✍ **H1** : Anger is positively associated with NEWOM.

### ***Failure Severity***

The severity of a service failure is defined as the perceived difficulty with the process's service delivery. An excessive service failure will result in an apparent loss in client perceptions (Weun et al., 2004). It indicates that a higher level of failure in service leads to a greater level of perceived loss of customers. Prior research has noted that the failure severity implies the performance of the service provider (Smith et al., 1999; Weun et al., 2004). There is a direct relationship between failure severity in services and its outcomes (like NEWOM). Bitner et al. (2000), El-Manstrly et al. (2021), and Weun et al. (2004) have proposed and proved that the level of service failure severity leads to NEWOM. Thus, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

✍ **H2** : Service failure severity is positively associated with the intention to write NEWOM.

### ***Negative Emotions***

Webb et al. (2012) defined emotions as a series of programmed and controlled cycles that initiate, support, and modify the occurrence, intensity, and duration of feeling experiences. Emotions are part of everyday life (Gross, 1998). Negative emotions are incurred owing to poor experiences, such as lack of knowledge, low degree of trust, failure to satisfy expectations, blame, and misbehavior (Järvi et al., 2018). Reynolds et al. (2006) found that a bad online shopping experience might cause negative emotions, and these feelings can incorporate sensations of dissatisfaction, aggravation, and outrage. Zeelenberg and Pieters (2004) explained that negative emotions significantly affect the intention to spread negative word of mouth through a detailed examination. Mattila and Ro (2008) proved that customer anger, frustrations, and negative emotions had a significant influence on negative online reviews. NEWOM is one of the minor exertion concentrated reactions among unhappy customers' behaviors (Moon et al., 2017). Empirical research has demonstrated in multiple studies (Dalzotto et al., 2016; dos Santos & Basso, 2012; Yeh et al., 2020) that the intention to write NEWOM is a direct result of unfavorable customer feelings. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

✍ **H3** : Customer negative emotions have a positive effect on NEWOM.

### ***Frustration***

Frustration includes a profoundly adverse feeling that happens when a conceivably remunerating act or succession of conduct is obstructed (Tronvoll, 2011). Frustration results from unfavorable circumstances (Gelbrich, 2010). A negative feeling is often denoted as a very disagreeable emotion. Frustration is explained by the sensation of being vexed or irritated, particularly because of the powerlessness to change or accomplish something. Failures in services are generally denoted as a frustrating experience for the service provider and customer (Gelbrich, 2010). A study found that when customers experience dissatisfaction frequently, they tend to write negative reviews or look for social support to reduce their distress in online forums (Menon & Dubé, 2007). Le and Ho (2020) found a strong link between frustration and intention to write negative reviews. The proposed hypothesis is as follows:

⇒ **H4** : Customer frustration is positively associated with the intention to write NEWOM.

### ***Desire for Revenge***

From a clinical psychology standpoint, revenge is defined by Baron (1988) as retaliation that results from unpleasant emotions and manifests as harmful criticism directed at the target subject. The term “revenge” describes actions committed in response to wrongdoing by others (Osgood, 2017). It could be the activity of harming or hurting somebody as a trade-off for a physical issue or wrong endured at their hands. Customers typically expect that organizations ought to be penalized and pay for the mischief they cause (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). According to Fitzgibbons (1986), the pursuit of revenge involves an emotional component, such as wrath, and a negative retribution object, which is mental and intensely bad behavior.

Customer retaliation behavior can take many different forms, such as verbal insults and physical aggression (Li & Stacks, 2017). A customer's desire for revenge is motivated by a dissatisfied customer's intent to seek revenge on the brand or service provider. Many studies have hypothesized that negative emotions with services prompt customer revenge behavior, leading to the spread of negative word of mouth (Balaji et al., 2017; Dalzotto et al., 2016; Yeh et al., 2020). For instance, negative client experiences with the service provider in the travel industry may increase the desire to use NEWOM in an online setting as retaliation against the company (Grégoire et al., 2009; Yeh et al., 2020). The proposed hypothesis is as follows:

⇒ **H5** : The desire for revenge has a positive effect on intentions to write in NEWOM.

### ***Regret***

Regret is referred to as a critical inner undesirable feeling that is associated with self-blaming (Bonifield & Cole, 2007) and further leads to coping strategies (Yi & Baumgartner, 2004). Bonifield and Cole (2007) noted that it is a feeling of disappointment of customers over a wrong occurrence, where a customer would think of their sinful actions. Individuals frequently experience misery, disgrace, humiliation, sorrow, inconvenience, or blame after acting in a specific way and later wish to fix their activities (Tsiros & Mittal, 2000). There is a strong association between feeling regret and negative WOM. One typical behavioral effect is that customers are more likely to participate in negative WOM if they do not receive better quality service than they had anticipated (Le & Ho, 2020; Zeelenberg & Pieters, 2004). Wu and Wang (2017) suggested that regret directly affects NEWOM and indirectly through anger and sadness. Wen-Hai et al. (2019) found that service failure enhances negative emotions by which customers indulge more in NEWOM. Thus, the proposed hypothesis is as follows:

⇒ **H6** : Customer regret is positively associated with intentions to engage in NEWOM.

## **Research Method**

The methodology of the present study consists of three sections. The first section deals with the meta-analysis procedure. The second one explains the data collection procedure, and the third one deals with the coding process for conducting the meta-analysis.

### ***Procedure of Meta-Analysis***

A meta-analysis is a procedure that combines various relevant study results and analyses them using statistical techniques. We use it to combine multiple scientific empirical studies results instead of qualitative studies'



findings (Vaske & Shelby, 2008). It measures the collective effect size of the specific association between the variables by taking into consideration each effect size from the prior empirical studies. Rosenthal (1991) and Rosenthal and DiMatteo (2001) believed that meta-analysis is an attentive method for other qualitative studies. Wirtz et al. (2018) stated that effect size calculates how strong a particular link is. Usually, correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) odds ratios or normalized mean differences are taken into account while estimating it. Meta-investigation comprises of reviewing the relevant literature, coding the study relationship variables to know the effect size, and finding the causal effect of variables after data analysis (Osbaldiston & Schott, 2012). Meta-analysis is widely applied in several research areas, including humanities, medical, engineering research, social sciences, and management (Albayrak & Ceylan, 2021; Ismagilova et al., 2020a; Janakiraman et al., 2016; Vaske & Shelby, 2008).

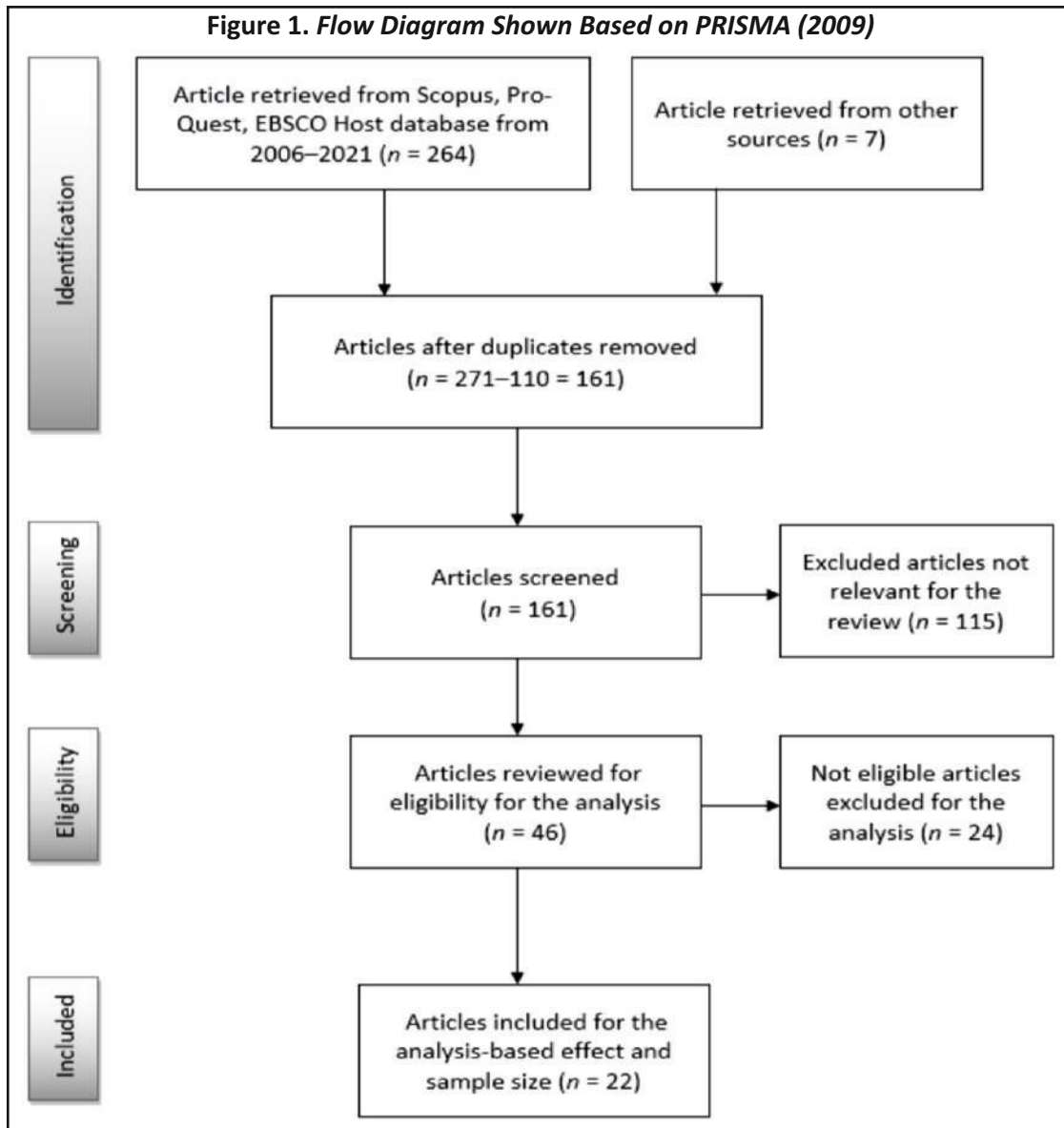
### **Data Collection**

To conduct the meta-analysis, the study collected data from various scientific databases such as Scopus, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and EBSCO. The keywords that were used to search for relevant papers include “negative eWOM,” “negative e-WOM,” “Negative Electronic Word-of-Mouth,” “negative online reviews,” “negative online recommendations,” “negative user-generated content,” “negative UGC,” “NWOM,” “NEWOM,” and “intention to write NEWOM.” In the beginning, 161 pieces from 2006 to 2023 were found in the search for electronic word-of-mouth literature. Later, a manual search was conducted to find the factors affecting the intention to write or spread negative word of mouth, and we came up with 46 studies. We refined articles that contained the required statistical details such as correlations ( $r$ ), sample size ( $N$ ), and the significance of the variable relationships. We finally considered 22 articles for further meta-analysis. According to Valentine et al. (2010), a meta-analysis requires a minimum of two studies for the analysis. Prior scholars have conducted a meta-analysis in the field of marketing, such as Ismagilova et al. (2021) and Qahri-Saremi and Montazemi (2019). Twenty-two studies are taken into consideration for analysis in our study (see Figure 1).

### **Coding Procedure**

Once data collection was done from various sources, studies were grouped into six categories based on the relationships between the variables, such as Regret → NEWOM, Anger → NEWOM, Desire for revenge → NEWOM, Failure severity → NEWOM, Frustration → NEWOM, and Negative Emotions → NEWOM. These were the most common variables that impacted NEWOM in the identified studies. In addition, these studies' sample size, effect size ( $r$ ), and significant relationships were considered for every relationship between factors.

The number of identified studies for each relationship is as follows: nine studies for anger and NEWOM, four studies for desire for revenge and NEWOM, four studies for failure severity and NEWOM, four studies for regret and NEWOM, six studies for frustration and NEWOM, and three studies for negative emotions and NEWOM. Each relationship category's identified studies are listed in Tables 1 through 6. Inclusion of the identified studies in the meta-analysis. The study also assessed publication bias for each relationship using fail-safe  $N$  analysis with the assistance of Jamovi software (Version 1.2). The results of the fail-safe  $N$  analysis are presented in Table 7. The fail-safe  $N$  analysis value addresses publication bias by accounting for the total number of missing studies in the relationships between specific variables. The examination results reveal that the fail-safe  $N$  is exceptionally high for each relationship between factors compared to the number of studies used in the evaluation. For example, the relationship between anger and NEWOM relationship value is 1,852, which is greater than the number of studies related to this relationship, equivalent to 9, as given in Table 1. Subsequently, the study results indicate that the issue of publication bias doesn't emerge in this investigation.



**Table 1. Studies Included for the Anger – NEWOM Relationship (H1)**

S. No.	Study Name	Sample Size	Effect Size	Country	Sample
1	Chebat et al. (2020)	150	0.500	Japan & Canada	Students
2	Le & Ho (2020)	404	0.419	Vietnam	Consumers
3	Wu & Wang (2017)	55	0.230	China	Students
4	Chung & Jiang (2017)	252	0.57	USA	Consumers
5	Wen-Hai et al. (2019)	226	0.479	Taiwan	Consumers
6	Sato et al. (2018)	180	0.250	USA	Students
7	Hoang (2020)	587	0.521	Vietnam	Passengers
8	Gelbrich (2010) Study 1	311	0.460	Germany	Hotel Customers
9	Gelbrich (2010) Study 2	512	0.400	Germany	Hotel Customers

**Table 2. Studies Included for the Failure Severity – NEWOM Relationship (H2)**

S. No.	Study Name	Sample Size	Effect Size	Country	Sample
1	Weitzl et al. (2018)	812	0.22	Austria	Consumers
2	El-Manstrly et al. (2021)	257	0.352	UK	Students
3	Schoefer et al. (2019)	486	-0.06	UK	Customers
4	Tsarenko & Tojib (2012)	165	0.38	Australia	Customers

**Table 3. Studies Included for the Negative Emotions – NEWOM Relationship (H3)**

S. No.	Study Name	Sample Size	Effect Size	Country	Sample
1	dos Santos & Basso (2012)	253	0.46	Brazil	Students
2	Yeh et al. (2020)	601	0.535	Taiwan	Hotel Customers
3	Balaji et al. (2017)	305	0.16	Malaysia	Students

**Table 4. Studies Included for the Frustration – NEWOM Relationship (H4)**

S. No.	Study Name	Sample Size	Effect Size	Country	Sample
1	Le & Ho (2020)	404	0.478	Vietnam	Consumers
2	Hoang (2020)	587	0.615	Vietnam	Passengers
3	Gelbrich (2010) Study 1	311	0.03	Germany	Hotel Customers
4	Gelbrich (2010) Study 2	512	-0.06	Germany	Hotel Customers
5	Gilal et al. (2018) Study 1	22	0.166	China	Customers
6	Gilal et al. (2018) Study 2	35	0.197	Pakistan	Customers

**Table 5. Studies Included for the Desire for Revenge – NEWOM Relationship (H5)**

S. No.	Study Name	Sample Size	Effect Size	Country	Sample
1	Hancock et al. (2020)	231	0.62	USA	Customers
2	Yeh et al. (2020)	601	0.899	Taiwan	Hotel Customers
3	Wen-Hai et al. (2019)	226	0.408	Taiwan	Consumers
4	Tan et al. (2021)	299	0.62	UK	Consumers

**Table 6. Studies Included for the Regret – NEWOM Relationship (H6)**

S. No.	Study Name	Sample Size	Effect Size	Country	Sample
1	Wen-Hai et al. (2019)	226	0.48	Taiwan	Consumers
2	Wu & Wang (2017)	55	0.13	China	Students
3	Le & Ho (2020)	404	0.556	Vietnam	Consumers
4	Hoang (2020)	587	0.586	Vietnam	Passengers

**Table 7. Fail-Safe N Values**

Hypotheses	Relationship	Fail Safe-N Value
H1	Anger → NEWOM	1,852
H2	Failure Severity → NEWOM	91
H3	Negative Emotions → NEWOM	234
H4	Frustration → NEWOM	301



H5	Desire for Revenge → NEWOM	1,595
H6	Regret → NEWOM	517

## Analysis and Results

After coding each relationship, the study performed a meta-analysis using Jamovi software, taking into account both the sample size and effect size. The effect size selected was based on the correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) between the variable relationships, including regret, anger, desire for revenge, failure severity, frustration, negative emotions, and emotions. In addition, for the analysis, a random effect model was chosen in the Jamovi software. The random-effects model shows the adjusted weights of the studies so that weights are more balanced if a small number of studies or a larger number of studies are not dominated and suppressed. Meta-analysis results are shown in Table 8. Table 8 shows the relationship between independent and dependent variables relationships, the number of studies on that relationship, an average of correlation values [Avg ( $r$ )], standard deviation ( $SD$ ) values [Z-value], effect sizes [ $p$ (ES)], Confidence Intervals [CI], and upper bound and CI lower bound.

The meta-analysis results reveal that six proposed hypothesis relationships were found to be significant. There are especially significant positive correlations between NEWOM and anger ( $r = 0.478$ ), desire for revenge ( $r = 0.840$ ), failure severity ( $r = 0.228$ ), frustration ( $r = 0.272$ ), negative emotions ( $r = 0.420$ ), and regret ( $r = 0.517$ ). Figure 2 represents the proposed individual relationships between the independent and dependent variables results.

## Discussion of the Findings

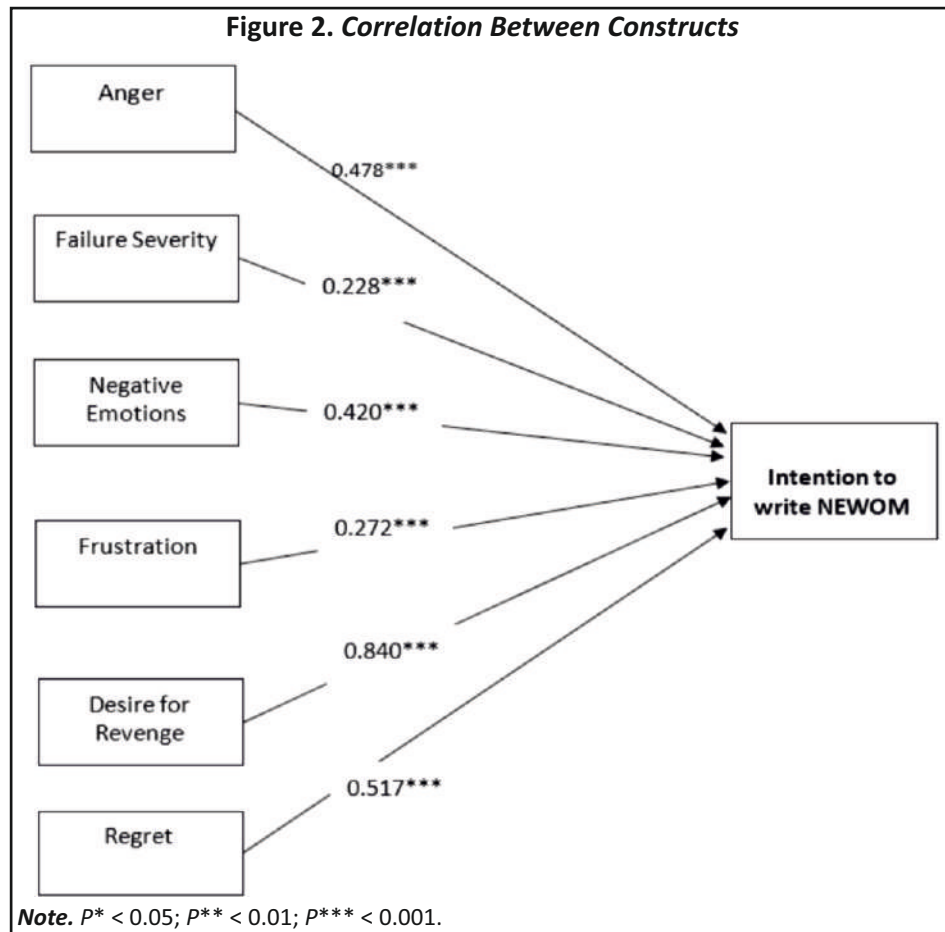
This study has explored the collective factors affecting NEWOM in online environments using meta-analysis. Rana et al. (2015) stated that if a predictor variable is given more weight than the dependent variables, the results of a meta-analysis are significant. The majority of the suggested correlations between variables and intention to compose NEWOM were determined to be significant, according to the study's findings.

Hypothesis H1 proposes the relationship between anger on NEWOM, and the analysis identifies a significant association between these two variables. Thus, the higher the level of customer anger, the greater the intention to spread NEWOM. This finding is in line with past studies (Chebat et al., 2020; Chung & Jiang, 2017; Gelbrich, 2010; Le & Ho, 2020; Sato et al., 2018; Wen et al., 2018; Wu & Wang, 2017). For example, Chebat et al. (2020) examined the relationship between anger and the intention to spread NEWOM on social media when a customer

**Table 8. Results Obtained After Meta-Analysis**

Hypotheses Relationships	Number of Combined Studies	Effect Size [Avg( $r$ )]	Lower Limit CI	Upper limit CI	Z	Q	df	$I^2$	p-value
H1: Anger → NEWOM	9	0.478	0.399	0.556	12	27.57	8	73.72	<0.001
H2: Failure Severity → NEWOM	4	0.228	0.021	0.434	2.16	46.171	3	93.94	<0.001
H3: Negative Emotions → NEWOM	3	0.42	0.161	0.679	3.18	38.52	2	94.57	<0.001
H4: Frustration → NEWOM	6	0.272	0.009	0.534	0.043	208.168	5	96.35	<0.001
H5: Desire for Revenge → NEWOM	4	0.84	0.405	1.274	3.78	241.615	3	98.37	<0.001
H6: Regret → NEWOM	4	0.517	0.31	0.723	4.91	15.959	3	91.29	<0.001

**Note.** Avg ( $r$ ) = average of correlation values; Z-value = Standard deviation values;  $p$ (ES) = effect sizes ; Confidence Intervals of CI upper bound and CI lower bound;  $df$  = Degrees of freedom;  $Q$  = homogeneity,  $I^2$  = the percentage of variation.



experiences service failure. Similarly, Le and Ho (2020) found that service failure affects blaming behavior that heightens anger in the service provider, leading to the spread of NEWOM.

Hypothesis H2 investigates the link between the failure severity and negative eWOM. The results indicate that service failure severity has a positive effect on NEWOM. These results are in line with past studies by El-Manstrly et al. (2021), Schoefer et al. (2019), and Weitzl et al. (2018). Weitzl et al. (2018) found that failure severity strongly affects NEWOM in web care sites. El-Manstrly et al. (2021) surveyed restaurant customers and found that severe service failures with restaurant services affect online vindictive eWOM. Schoefer et al. (2019) found that dissatisfactory service experiences affect negative word-of-mouth. The overall results show that service failure severity affects the intention to write NEWOM.

Hypothesis H3 examines the relationship between negative emotions and NEWOM. The results reveal that negative emotions are strongly associated with NEWOM. These results have also been supported by past studies (Balaji et al., 2017; dos Santos & Basso, 2012; Yeh et al., 2020). For instance, dos Santos and Basso (2012) showed that clients' emotions affected satisfaction, which ultimately affects the intention to write NEWOM. Balaji et al. (2016) showed that negative emotions on customer satisfaction led to NEWOM.

Hypothesis H4 examines the relationship between frustration and NEWOM. The results indicate that frustration has a positive effect on NEWOM. Collective studies on the link's relationships align with earlier studies (Gelbrich, 2010; Gilal et al., 2018; Le & Ho, 2020). For instance, Le and Ho (2020) found that frustration with service failure strongly affects NEWOM. In addition, Gelbrich (2010) found that frustration is an emotion that occurs when a high level of service failure enhances vindictive NEWOM.

Hypothesis H5 examines the relationship between the desire for revenge and NEWOM. It was found that the desire for revenge had a positive influence on NEWOM. This finding is consistent with the findings of other previous studies (Hancock et al., 2020; Tan et al., 2021; Wen-Hai et al., 2019 ; Yeh et al., 2020). For instance, Hancock et al. (2020) found that revenge-seeking behavior is influenced by jealousy or envy that leads to NEWOM. Wen et al. (2018) showed that the desire for revenge has a strong association with NEWOM. Tan et al. (2021) revealed that customer disappointment or betrayal feeling with a brand or service causes a desire to take revenge and spread NEWOM. This denotes that a customer's negative experience with a service heightens that desire for revenge and NEWOM.

Hypothesis H6 tests the relationship between regret and NEWOM. The results indicate that regret has a strong relationship with NEWOM. This link was also in line with previous studies (Le & Ho, 2020; Wen-Hai et al., 2019; Wu & Wang, 2017). For example, Wen-Hai et al. (2019) found that regret is a significant predictor of NEWOM, backed by anger and desire for revenge. Further, Le and Ho (2020) found that service failure leads to regret, anger, and frustration, leading to NEWOM in an online environment. In conclusion, the proposed findings suggest that regret, anger, dissatisfaction, desire for revenge, frustration, negative emotions, and failure severity significantly influence consumers' perceived intentions to spread NEWOM about a product, service, or brand. These insights enhance our understanding of the relationship between these factors and NEWOM.

## **Theoretical Contributions**

The findings of the current study provide some theoretical contributions. The meta-analysis contributes to the literature on the impact of various factors that influence the intention to spread NEWOM. In light of this examination, we can conclude on the factors to be considered for examining the effect of various variables of NEWOM. In addition, the present findings can help further studies evaluate these variables to assess the impact on customer NEWOM behavior in multiple contexts. This will permit the creation of future questions that can be explored in different settings. This study also provides a consolidated view of various components that affect perception and NEWOM communications in different contexts (regret, anger, desire for revenge, failure severity, frustration, and negative emotions). Furthermore, it contributes to a deeper understanding of consumer behavior in information processing. The meta-analysis findings will allow researchers to explore the convergence and divergence of NEWOM, facilitating further investigation in various contexts.

Although numerous studies have explored the eWOM concept, few have specifically focused on positive eWOM, and only some have examined NEWOM. More specifically, literature reviews and meta-analysis studies have primarily concentrated on positive eWOM, eWOM credibility, or eWOM provision behavior. As per our knowledge, no research has focused on factors affecting intention to write negative eWOM using the meta-analysis approach. Therefore, considering this research gap, the present study examined the link between factors influencing customer intention to write negative eWOM and contributes to the existing theory of knowledge.

## **Implications**

With the rise of the Internet, customers can easily share their negative experiences with a large audience. Social media platforms enable users to spread content rapidly and efficiently. It will enable customers to read negative online reviews and form an opinion on the service provider, which ultimately affects the firm's reputation and future. Therefore, monitoring of *online* reviews is essential for marketing managers to build a good reputation for the firm. The study's findings could offer valuable practical insights for both practitioners and academicians.

The results indicate that most of the proposed relationships have found a significant effect on NEWOM. In light of this investigation, we can deduce the kind of factors to be chosen for analyzing customer intention to write

negative reviews in eWOM studies. The results of the meta-investigation for variables influencing NEWOM can be considered for further exploration of other variables' relationships. These meta-findings could also help researchers visualize the uniformity and divergent relationship between the variables, which will permit further inquiries for examination in the overall setting. For example, the study finding from the meta-analysis showed that anger, desire for revenge, failure severity, frustration, negative emotions, and regret were found significant, while trust and brand attitude were terrible indicators that were found insignificant. This meta-analysis could help marketers emphasize the best indicators of NEWOM to develop a better marketing program to improve sales based on study results.

The findings confirm the consequences of customer emotion and negative behavior after service failures. For instance, failure severity had a strong association with NEWOM. This indicates that a greater level of service failure affects negative customer emotions. For example, prior studies found that service failure has a substantial effect on distress (Panayiotou et al., 2014), anger and frustration (Gelbrich, 2010), and negative expectations (Hess et al., 2003). Therefore, it is a crucial factor for consideration and retaining existing customers.

Furthermore, marketers should consider better pre- and post-service failure strategies to quickly fix service failure problems. In order to describe the service breakdown and other potential recovery methods, they might communicate in detail. When a service fails, businesses should use online media platforms to sincerely apologize to consumers and provide an explanation for the issue. It is contended that accepting a service failure and resolving efforts builds trust and goodwill in the service provider (Balaji et al., 2016). Bloemer et al. (2002) noted that the lower response after failure causes dissatisfaction, low quality of products, poor customer service, and rude staff. Dissatisfied customers from a hotel service perspective often complain about tangible aspects such as furnishing (Berezina et al., 2016). In order to prevent damage from occurring, managers must take appropriate action against latently disgruntled customers and view them as an early warning sign.

The study results also confirm that anger, frustration, regret, negative emotions, and desire for revenge have significant effects on NEWOM. These elements result from inadequate service delivery and insufficient service recovery efforts. The results also show that the degree of failure of service providers leads to feelings of remorse, wrath, frustration, and desire for vengeance. The findings assist marketers in better understanding customer behavior and developing post-service failure measures, such as anticipating future negative events and avoiding online reviews that blame customers.

The study suggests that managers must build online feedback platforms to provide reviews from consumers. Accordingly, managers should explain un-usual business services to customers and mitigate customer frustration, anger, and regret. In addition, managers should implement post-service failure recovery strategies like apologizing for service failures, acting swiftly, solving problems, problem and following up with customers to prevent customer anger, frustration, regret, negative emotions, and desire for revenge. This will help in reducing the intention to write NEWOM. Furthermore, because of the mounting number of online negative fake reviews and posts that can diminish the validity of eWOM correspondences about firm services, we suggest that marketing managers should develop better fake review detection software to avoid any suspicious reviews.

Most of the customers do not share complaints directly with firms. Hence, it is the responsibility of the service providers to develop a tool to detect NEWOM and start contact with disappointed customers (Balaji et al., 2016). Consequently, firms should devote their finance and human resources to monitoring user-generated content on various online platforms like Facebook fan page posts, Twitter tweets, Instagram pictures, and online brand community interactions. To prevent potential public embarrassment and varied results of NEWOM contact, companies could watch negative reviews and promptly address the issue by investing in online early warning systems. In light of the findings, marketers should develop more effective marketing plans to spread information that affects consumer behavior.

## Conclusion

This exploration gives a synthesis of findings from past investigations on customer NEWOM behavior by applying the meta-analysis method. Specifically, this research examines the various factors that influence intention to spread negative word of mouth, such as anger, regret, desire for revenge, failure severity, frustration, and negative emotions. The results indicate that the proposed relationships are significant, and dissatisfaction has a significant effect on NEWOM. The present research has some limitations. This meta-analysis is limited to available publications from the explored databases. The study proposes and analyzes the hypothesized factors (anger, regret, desire for revenge, failure severity, frustration, and negative emotions) and their effects on NEWOM behavior. However, individual relationships are combined from various studies and analyzed from the proposed research model. Further, researchers can test the determinants of NEWOM using sophisticated analysis techniques like meta-regression analysis. This study cannot be considered to assess the mediating or moderating effects on the proposed relationships because of insufficient information on those effects to conduct a meta-analysis.

## Limitations of the Study and the Way Forward

Although this study uses weights (correlations and sample sizes of each variable relationship) to conduct a profound analysis, some constructs are omitted due to the non-availability of related studies for examination. Examples include sadness, anxiety reduction, embarrassment, emotional exhaustion, and moral judgment. Hence, future research may consider employing these predictor variables for further exploration. This study has undertaken meta-analysis by considering only a few databases like Scopus, EBSCO, Web of Science, and JSTOR. These databases might be available for a limited number of studies for conducting the meta-analysis. Further studies may explore more databases for the same. Despite the stated limitations, this study is one of the first studies to conduct a meta-analysis that examines the effects of various attributes on NEWOM in the online environment. The study has provided significant implications for future researchers and practitioners.

## Authors' Contribution

Dr. Sambashiva Rao Kunja has mainly contributed to the manuscript in terms of writing – the original draft, validation, methodology, formal analysis, reviewing and editing, and conceptualization. Dr. Ramanjaneyulu Mogili extracted research papers of high repute and filtered these based on keywords and codes relevant to the study design. Dr. Lisma Rout extracted research papers from the Scopus database, verified the documents, and helped in data analysis using JMOVI. Prof. G. V. R. K. Acharyulu made the language corrections and helped in addressing the reviewers' comments in consultation with the other authors.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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