Effect of Negative Customer Experience and Negative Confirmation on Electronic - Word of Mouth : A Case of Food Delivery Apps in India

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Abstract

Purpose : The present study explored a broad customer experience-disconfirmation-engagement framework by testing the effect of negative customer experience and negative confirmation on electronic word of mouth using customer engagement. The fact that negatively valenced customer engagement was seldom tested in such frameworks induced us to explore its effects.

Methodology : Data were collected from 329 respondents against "negative customer experience," "negative confirmation," "negative customer engagement," and "negative electronic word of mouth." A two-step methodology was used wherein the measurement model was evaluated with the help of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). After that, the proposed model was tested using structural equation modeling (SEM) using IBM SPSS AMOS 22.0. Bootstrapping was used to test the mediation effect.

Findings : We found that negative customer experience and disconfirmation significantly affected negative customer engagement, which in turn significantly affected electronic word of mouth. The results also showed that negative customer engagement mediated between both negative disconfirmation and electronic word of mouth and negative customer experience and electronic word of mouth.

Practical Implications : It was recommended that service managers should fill voids that pertain to the link between negative customer engagement and what may come thereafter. It would reduce the number of brand switchovers and lessen the dilution of service value.

Originality : It investigated how negative customer engagement occurs in online service relationships, a construct that has never been employed in the customer confirmation–customer experience–word-of-mouth paradigm.

Keywords : **negative customer experience, negative disconfirmation, negative customer engagement, electronic word of mouth, service value**

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Customer management has evolved progressively all these years. Different phases of the evolution of customer management are characterized by marketing focus on different aspects. Until 1990, businesses focused their efforts on generating consumer value through transactions. The marketing focus shifted from transactions to connections in the early 1990s. This perspective was termed relationship marketing (Berry, 2000). Firms all these years have worked hard to achieve customer satisfaction and customer loyalty through creating and sustaining profitable relationships. Customer lifetime value (CLV) gained prominence as a tool to identify customers with whom profitable relationships should be sustained. However, given the keen client participation in service encounters, technology advancement, and the current competitive environment, practitioners and academics acknowledge that relationship marketing is insufficient to attain customer happiness and loyalty (Kumar & Bhagwat, 2010).

Moreover, service encounters are not dyadic exchanges anymore (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). The interaction between all stakeholders distinguishes them as a value-creation system (Chandler & Lusch, 2015; Prasad & Sen, 2018). Service businesses can strategically engage clients thanks to this dynamic conversation (Chandler & Lusch, 2015). Additionally, it equips businesses with knowledge of the touchpoints with which customers interact and how to improve customer service experiences (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014).

Although there is not much agreement on the conceptualization of customer engagement, there is no denying that the nature of customer engagement is experiential, reciprocal, interactional, and value co-creating based on service-dominant logic and relationship marketing theory (Vivek et al., 2014). Customer engagement is theorized as a customer's investment of resources into a service brand interaction (Hollebeek et al., 2016). It is empirically proven as a tool to influence a firm's bottom line (Bijmolt et al., 2010). Relationship marketing research in the recent past suggested that customer engagement can help us understand underlying dynamics concerning customer retention and service encounters (Bowden, 2009). Furthermore, it is proven to lead to customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Bowden, 2009; Leckie et al., 2016), repurchase intention (Brodie et al., 2013), and positive word of mouth (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014). Given all this, it is not strange that customer engagement is listed as one of the Marketing Science Institute (MSI) research priorities.

Customer engagement can be positive or negative (van Doorn et al., 2010). But extant literature on customer engagement is dominated by positive customer engagement, which is found to be leading to positive word of mouth, enhanced brand image, consumer trust, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty (Islam & Rahman, 2016; Sashi, 2012; van Doorn et al., 2010). However, it is essential to assess negative customer engagement as customers pay more attention to negative stimuli than positive ones in service encounters (Sinclair et al., 2015). According to Fournier and Alvarez (2012), the average split between unfavorable and favorable consumer participation in service interactions is 55%/45%. Unfavorable brand-related behaviors result from unfavorable consumer interaction (Bawa, 2011; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014; Ubgada & Joshi, 2022). Some recent work found negative customer engagement to affect word of mouth and may lead to brand avoidance, rejection, and switching behavior (Dutta & Roy, 2014; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014).

Most of the work on customer engagement in the recent past suggests that the magnitude and the direction of customer engagement cannot be assumed as static as service encounters may well have both the valences of customer engagement (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). Moreover, both valences can potentially impact organizational outcomes in their ways (Sinclair et al., 2015). Positive and negative customer engagement may interplay in many service contexts and result in deteriorating customer relationships, and at times, the relationships can even get terminated (Bowden, 2009; Prasad & Verma, 2019). Despite recent studies in this field (Alalwan, 2020; Ismagilova et al., 2020; Lu et al., 2019) that suggest the development of a trend to explore negative and positive customer engagement regarding online service relationships, the work on the detrimental impact of negative customer engagement on organizational outcomes has picked up speed, though it is still insufficient.

The following voids in existing research have been identified based on exploratory research :

↳ Previous studies have not attempted to operationalize and measure negative consumer interaction's behavioral, affective, and cognitive components.

↳ Research has solely examined service encounters in a one-dimensional (online) servicescape. There hasn't been any investigation into service encounters encompassing offline and online servicescape.

This paper is unique in the following ways :

↳ Negative and positive customer engagement have been explored separately and in isolation. This study explores negative customer engagement and positive customer engagement concerning their outcomes.

↳ In India, the meal delivery industry is still very young. Most studies on both excellent and negative customer engagement focused on service interactions with online services. This study is a first-ever service experience related to the Indian food delivery industry.

So, this paper contributes to customer engagement literature in the following ways :

↳ It attempts to operationalize and quantify negative customer engagement using behavioral, affective, and cognitive elements of negative customer engagement.

↳ It adds to how negative customer engagement applies to online service relationships in the literature, which is overwhelmed by work on positive customer engagement.

↳ It explores how negative customer engagement manifests in online service relationships.

Theoretical Model and Hypotheses Development

The components of poor customer engagement are presented in this part so that a conceptual model can be built on them. Forming hypotheses then involves examining the interactions between determinants (customer participation) and the effects of positive and negative consumer engagement (e-word of mouth).

Negative Customer Engagement

Negative customer engagement is theorized as "consumers' unfavorable brand-related thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during focal brand interactions" (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014, p. 69). This theorization posits negative customer engagement as the opposite of positive customer engagement. However, Juric et al. (2015) distinguished negative customer engagement from positive customer engagement as a "negatively valenced customer engagement." They argued that it should not be seen only as an opposite form of positive customer engagement. Negatively valenced customer engagement is characterized by no intention whatsoever by the customer to cause any harm to the brand or firm. Instead, it should be comprehended as a mechanism to cocreate the value.

Nevertheless, there is substantial empirical support for how Hollebeek and Chen (2014) theorized negative customer engagement. For instance, Dolan et al. (2016) asserted that negative customer engagement destroys a service relationship. Although negatively engaged customers are committed to the brand and the firm, they can never extract value from service exchange (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). So, in this paper, we will go by Hollebeek and Chen (2014), who theorized negative customer engagement and clearly explained its characteristics using its cognitive, affective, and behavioral elements.

Negative customer engagement can destroy service relationships and negatively affect value co-creation (Bawa, 2016; Hollebeek & Chen, 2014; Srivastava & Fernandes, 2022). Its cascading consequences might also impact other service partnerships with the same brand. It becomes crucial to examine how its determinants and

effects interact with it. Consequently, poor consumer interaction has attracted the attention of both academics and industry professionals.

Customer Experience as a Determinant of Negative Customer Engagement

Customer experience is not a new concept. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 630) introduced it as "Complete events experienced by a person, often affecting emotions, occur when the interaction takes place through the stimulation of consumed goods and services." Customer experience results from exposure to an event or a combination of events like a customer using a product/service or the brand, searching about it on different media, talking about it based upon his/her own experience, and getting to know about it through word of mouth. Customer experience is determined by intellectual, affective, sensory, and behavioral dimensions and varies based on brand facets like personality, attachment, involvement, and attitude. Therefore, instead of emotional relationships, they should be captured and assessed through behavioral responses, cognitions, and sensations (Brakus et al., 2009).

Chase and Dasu (2014) explored the association between customer experience and engagement. They argued that the effect of customer experience on customer engagement is more dominant in the case of product/service features, characteristics, and benefits compared to brand image. Although there is not much work on the interplay between negative customer engagement and its determinants, few studies have attempted to examine the nature of this relationship. For example, Bonifield and Cole (2007) found that negative customer experience leads to negative customer engagement (Bawa, 2017; Bonifield & Cole, 2007; Kar et al., 2022). They argued that customer experience concerning customer engagement should not be seen in totality as a buying stage may individually determine the magnitude and direction of customer engagement. Any attempt to connect the total customer experience to customer engagement will not capture the essence of this relationship. For example, Same (2014) showed that in the case of some customers, the prepurchase experience resulted in negative customer engagement.

However, depending on the service, some users' and users' post-usership interactions had a detrimental impact on customer engagement. Similarly, Gebauer et al. (2013) used customer involvement as a driver of customer experience. They explained that highly involved customers in the prepurchase process are more likely to engage with the brand or service, and any negative experience will lead to negative customer engagement. Research conducted recently concerning the interplay of customer experience and negative customer engagement concerning e-service relationships established that a negative customer experience would lead to negative customer engagement. For instance, Cheng and Khan (2017) reported that customer experience affects certain aspects of consumer behavior through customer engagement.

Moreover, not-so-good experience leads to negative customer engagement and vice versa. Similarly, Khan et al. (2016) found customer experience affecting customer engagement in their study concerning online brand communities. Considering the above literature, the following hypothesis is proposed.

↳ **H1 :** Negative customer experience leads to negative customer engagement (Positive beta).

Negative Disconfirmation is a Determinant of Negative Customer Engagement

Customers usually experience a service with some preconceived expectations as to how a service will be delivered. Customers use it as a standard against which they measure the actual service performance. Confirmation occurs if the actual service performance matches expectations. If perceived performance exceeds expectations, there is positive and negative disconfirmation if the performance recedes expectations. Plé and Chumpitaz Cáceres (2010) explored the role of customer expectations concerning customer engagement in service encounters. They argued that negative disconfirmation happens if a customer perceives that the firm has misused his/her resources, such as time, effort, and money while delivering the service. Negative disconfirmation

thus forms results in negative customer engagement in future service encounters. Explaining the same phenomenon, Smith (2013) asserted that negative disconfirmation results in anger, anxiety, and regret that demotivates a customer to engage with the brand, often leading to negative word of mouth.

Interestingly, customer trust also depletes due to negative disconfirmation, resulting in customer bias while evaluating offers by that firm. In the process, customer engagement goes down as the carryover effect of customer distrust negates any effort from the firm's side to engage the customer, and eventually, customer engagement diminishes (Bawa, 2016; Bhatnagar & Dheeraj, 2019; Darke et al., 2010; Tanwar et al., 2021). Many studies have explored the association between negative disconfirmation and disengagement through customer outrage. Liu and Keh (2015, p. 682) defined customer outrage as "a deep negative emotion caused by an unpleasant surprise or exceeding consumers' expectations negatively to a surprising degree."

Customer outrage is a feeling of anger and disgust that follows negative disconfirmation, and it is found that negative disconfirmation leads indirectly to negative customer engagement via customer outrage. Similarly, Pansari and Kumar (2017) proved that customer disconfirmation led to negatively valenced customer engagement through customer outrage. They argued that in comparison to the effect of dissatisfaction on disconfirmation and eventually on customer engagement, the effect of customer outrage is more prominent. Thus, the relationship between negative confirmation and negative engagement should be explored to understand better the interplay between negative customer experience and negative confirmation, which is not explored based on existing literature. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis.

↳ **H2 :** Negative confirmation leads to negative customer engagement (Positive beta).

Negative Customer Engagement and E-Word of Mouth (e-WOM)

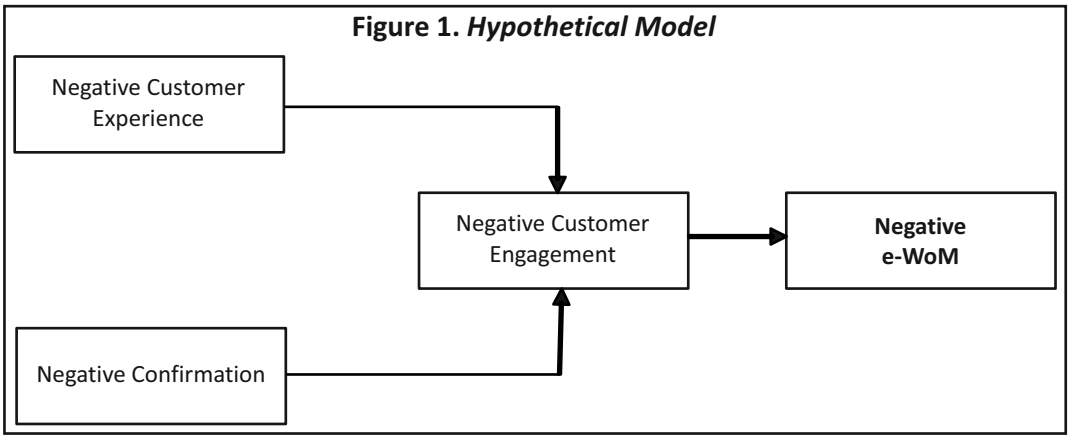
In this digital age, firms have moved most of their service delivery to online platforms. For example, food delivery apps like Zomato, Swiggy, Uber Eats, etc., through their mobile and web applications, have enabled customers to experience a significant chunk of service delivery wherein customers can involve and engage with the brand at distinct levels pre–post-delivery of food. Physical service encounters are restricted to the food being delivered. Therefore, the online customer experience and engagement have expanded the physical word of mouth to encompass e-WOM. Moreover, it is not just confined to mobile applications but is spanned across all digital platforms (Islam & Rahman, 2016). Negatively engaged customers tend to vent their anger and frustration. It is quite convenient to do that on such platforms as most of the service firms have their presence on all these platforms like Facebook, Twitter, mobile, and web applications. And it is well established that a negative word in the form of a review spreads way faster than a positive one.

Moreover, an outraged customer's review in the form of word-of-mouth sounds more authoritative and genuine in comparison to a positive customer review or a firm-driven communication (Dolan et al., 2019; Srivastava, 2019). A negatively engaged customer reacts differently on multiple online platforms using online blogs, reviews, and posting unfavorable comments on service providers' mobile applications and review websites. Such reactions in the case of food delivery applications can be triggered by dismal service quality, like delayed delivery, order rejection, and valet behavior (Azer & Alexander, 2018; Bawa & Bathurutheen, 2016; Joshi & Dabas, 2022). A wide array of work suggests that negative customer engagement leads to negative e-WOM (Dolan et al., 2016; Islam & Rahman, 2016; Juric et al., 2015; Sashi et al., 2019). Moreover, compared to positive customer engagement, negative customer engagement is a more vital driver of e-WOM (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014; Quynh, 2019; Sharma, 2020). Therefore, we propose the following hypotheses :

↳ **H3 :** Negative customer engagement leads to negative e-WOM.

↳ **H4 :** Negative customer engagement mediates the relationship between negative customer experience and negative e-WoM.

Figure 1. *Hypothetical Model*



↳ **H5 :** Negative customer engagement mediates negative e-WoM, poor customer experience, and negative confirmation.

Figure 1 depicts the model of the study.

Research Methodology

We used a descriptive research design wherein the probability sampling method (purposive sampling technique) was used to collect the data using a questionnaire. The sampling frame constituted all those users of online food delivery companies, namely Zomato, Swiggy, and Uber Eats, who recently reviewed and rated the service of these companies on online platforms like websites (www.g2.com, www.mouthshut.com, www.blog.grade.us), Facebook pages, and Twitter handles of these service providers. The sampling unit and element are users who reviewed the food mentioned above on the delivery apps. We sent the questionnaire to 2,000 such users, against which 329 (sample size) complete responses were received. The study was undertaken between November 2021 and March 2022.

Instrument

A scale that is combined from measures created by Hollebeek et al. (2016) and Vivek et al. (2014) is used to measure "negative customer experience." This scale included the statement, "Order is typically delivered late." The scale displays moderate but acceptable results with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.737 (George & Mallery, 2003) reliability. Negative confirmation is measured using a scale by Baharum and Jaafar (2015). An item of this scale is "the time taken to deliver the parcel is usually more than what I expected." The scale shows moderate but acceptable reliability (George & Mallery, 2003). Negative customer engagement is measured using a scale by Vivek et al. (2014). The statements are rephrased in terms of social media engagement. A rephrased item of this scale is "the brand takes regular feedback from me." The scale shows good validity (George & Mallery, 2003) with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.809. Negative e-WOM is measured using a scale by Goyette et al. (2010). The scale shows good reliability (George & Mallery, 2003) with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.818.

Data Analysis and Results

IBM SPSS AMOS 22.0 is used to examine the measurement and hypothetical model. A two-step methodology is

used wherein the measurement model is evaluated with the help of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). After the proposed model is tested using structural equation modeling (SEM), bootstrapping is used to test the mediation effect.

Examining the Measurement Model

Any violation of the normality assumption can badly affect the goodness of fit indices and standard error in maximum likelihood estimation (Curran et al., 1996). Data analysis reveals that skewness and kurtosis values are not in range. To bring these values in the range, outliers are removed. As a result, these values come in the range [skewness (–0.138 to 0.458), kurtosis (–0.268 to 0.498)]. Following Podsakoff et al. (2003), some procedural measures control the common method bias. First, the data collection for each construct is separated by a gap of 15 days. In addition, the construct items started with a note that the "data collection for this construct has nothing to do with the data collection of the data collected 15 days back." Also, unfamiliar items are thoroughly explained to avoid any chance of item ambiguity (Tourangeau et al., 2000). Being a cross-sectional design and collecting data using a self-administered questionnaire could increase the chances of common variance. However, as procedural remedies are undertaken, the chances of common method variance adversely affecting estimation parameters are negligible.

Construct Validity

Multiple conditions are prescribed by Hair et al. (2010) to establish convergent validity. For instance, all the factor loadings should be above 0.5. With respect to the factor loading values ($0.632 \leq \lambda \leq 0.888$), all factor loading is well above 0.5. Also, all R^2 values should be above 0.2 for strong linearity between latent and measurement variables, which is exactly the case ($0.243 \leq R^2 \leq 0.671$); so, this condition is also met. Moreover, all AVE values are also well beyond 0.5. So, convergent validity is established. Because all inter-construct correlations are less than the square root of AVEs, discriminant validity is also proven (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Therefore, construct validity has been established to satisfy all convergent and discriminant validity prerequisites. Tables 1 and 2 depict the construct and discriminant validity.

Table 1. ***CFA Results for Construct Validity***

Construct	(λ)	R^2	AVE	Sqrt. (AVE)	CCR
NCE			0.577	0.759	0.905
NCE1	0.727	0.254			
NCE2	0.737	0.354			
NCE3	0.678	0.354			
NCE4	0.803	0.633			
NCE5	0.723	0.454			
NCE6	0.839	0.283			
NCE7	0.799	0.565			
NCF			0.546	0.738	0.877
NCF1	0.691	0.324			
NCF2	0.888	0.354			
NCF3	0.632	0.263			

NCF4	0.812	0.658			
NCF5	0.676	0.666			
NCF6	0.705	0.34			
NCEG			0.643	0.801	0.926
NCEG1	0.786	0.545			
NCEG2	0.843	0.567			
NCEG3	0.712	0.671			
NCEG4	0.873	0.545			
NCEG5	0.861	0.442			
NCEG6	0.782	0.624			
NCEG7	0.743	0.444			
NeWM			0.523	0.723	0.867
NeWM1	0.645	0.281			
NeWM2	0.851	0.243			
NeWM3	0.704	0.434			
NeWM4	0.683	0.534			
NeWM5	0.694	0.546			
NeWM6	0.744	0.346			

Table 2. ***Correlation Matrix (Discriminant Validity)***

	NCE	***NCF***	***NCEG***	***NeWM***
NCE	0.702			
NCF	0.655	0.728		
NCEG	0.674	0.662	0.782	
NeWM	0.693	0.671	0.689	0.642
Sqrt. (AVE)	**0.759**	**0.738**	**0.801**	**0.723**

Testing the Hypothesized Model

With values as [χ^2 = 287.134 ($p < 0.001$); CFI = 0.987; TLI = 0.876; GFI = 0.902; RMR = 0.023; NFI = 0.914; RMSEA = 0.021], all major fit indices are in permissible range (Hair et al., 2010). The SEM results show that "negative customer experience" and "negative disconfirmation" explain a variance of 67.4% and 64.8% in negative customer engagement, respectively. Negative customer engagement explains a variance of 63.7% in "electronic word of mouth." Structural model statistics and estimated path coefficients are reported in Table 3.

Table 3. ***SEM Results***

Hypotheses	Relationship	Standardized Path Coefficients	*t*-values	Result
H1	*NCE-NCEG*	0.287	4.173	Accepted
H2	*NCF-NCEG*	0.217	3.872	Accepted
H3	*NCEG-NeWM*	0.315	3.486	Accepted

Table 4. *Bootstrapping Results*

		95% Confidence Intervals		
	Effect Sizes	**Lowers**	**Uppers**	***p*-values**
Total Effects				
NCE	0.588	–0.311	–0.129	0.025
NCF	0.484	–0.148	–0.267	0.034
Direct Effects				
NCE	0.423	–0.158	0.113	0.032
NCF	0.142	–0.289	–0.182	0.021
Indirect Effect				
NCE	0.165	–0.277	–0.142	0.031
NCF	0.342	–0.145	–0.075	0.026

Structural model statistics show that negative customer experience positively and significantly affects negative customer engagement [($\beta1 = 0.287$; $t = 4.173$; $p < 0.05$)] lending support to H1, so H1 is accepted. Negative confirmation [($\beta2 = 0.217$; $t = 3.872$; $p < 0.05$)] positively and significantly affects negative customer engagement. So, H2 is accepted. Negative customer engagement is also found to positively and significantly affect "electronic word of mouth" [($\beta3 = 0.315$; $t = 3.486$; $p < 0.05$)] ; so, H3 is also accepted.

The bootstrapping results reveal that the direct effect of negative customer experience and negative confirmation on electronic word of mouth is significant [(effect size = 0.423, $p = 0.032$), (effect size = 0.142, $p = 0.021$), respectively]. Similarly, the indirect effect of negative customer experience and negative confirmation on electronic word of mouth is significant as well [(effect size = 0.165, $p = 0.031$), (effect size = 0.342, $p = 0.026$), respectively]. The direct effect of negative customer experience and negative confirmation on electronic word of mouth is found to be significant too [(effect size = 0.588, $p = 0.025$), (effect size = 0.484, $p = 0.034$), respectively]. So, it is inferred that H4 and H5 are accepted. Table 4 depicts the bootstrapping results.

Managerial and Theoretical Implications

Customer engagement literature is overwhelmed by the evaluation of its positive manifestation, which is positive engagement. However, a wide body of research tests and proves that brand relationships are more prone to be adversely affected by negative engagement (Chandler & Lusch, 2015; Dessart et al., 2016; Dwivedi et al., 2016). This study finds not only a partial answer to this question but also builds on studies that proved that a negative experience is more likely to result in negative customer engagement. A pertinent question that can be raised here is that negative customer engagement must do more with the brand if one follows its definition. A great deal of work suggests that the antecedents of customer engagement have, to a great extent, a direct relationship with the brand/company (Hogreve et al., 2019; Hooper et al., 2008). One explanation of this dual valance relationship of customer engagement with the brand and the customer can be the quality and quantity of customer engagement efforts by the brand/company in terms of how these efforts persuade and sometimes manipulate a customer to get engaged. For a brand/company to engage with customers, a lot depends on the number of touchpoints a brand offers, as not all touchpoints customers prefer to get engaged. For example, (a) the pattern implies that in the recent past, customers on YouTube have switched from longer videos to shorter videos (YouTube Shorts); therefore, there are more opportunities to engage customers on YouTube Shorts. The same is true for Instagram reels (user growth in reel viewing is more than on YouTube) ; (b) demographic considerations significantly impact the use of

a given social media. As a result, the only way to avoid bad consumer involvement is to avoid negative client experiences.

This study proves that negative confirmation positively and significantly leads to negative customer engagement. A wide body of work has examined the interplay between negative disconfirmation and customer satisfaction and proves that negative disconfirmation leads to customer dissatisfaction (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014; Juric et al., 2015). Technically, the nature of the relationship between negative disconfirmation and negative customer engagement is the same as between negative disconfirmation and dissatisfaction. Still, the other relationship is unique in two different ways. First, as explained earlier, customer engagement has to do with both the brand and the customer and the antecedents of both. Secondly, it has not so far established that there are some factors that may moderate the relationship between negative disconfirmation and negative customer engagement, probably due to a strong relationship between these two constructs already. Moreover, past research on the interplay between these constructs has revealed that the gap between the perceived service performance and the service expectation requires heightened engagement efforts from the brand's side (Leckie et al., 2016). Although it should be easier considering multiple touchpoints across social media, the literature proves otherwise, which is the scope for further research concerning the interplay among these constructs.

On the other hand, negative customer engagement leads to negative electronic word of mouth. Apart from other reasons, one obvious reason is the availability of multiple touchpoints to communicate and disseminate the anger, displeasure, and dissatisfaction as the brand could not engage the customer enough. Although there is enough time between the situation arising from the negative experience, negative disconfirmation, and subsequent e-WOM, the ever-increasing virtual efforts are sometimes less effective than non-virtual (human intervention) efforts.

The findings of this study can help draw some managerial implications. First, the results offer an insight into what leads to negative confirmation and engagement. Not only that, but it touches on what may lead to as a result of negative engagement. Thus, managers should fill voids that pertain to the link between negative customer engagement and what may come thereafter. It will reduce the number of brand switchovers and lessen the dilution of service value. Service managers should also develop a mechanism to reward customers who are extensively involved right from the beginning of service encounters and are engaged positively more than others. But that does not mean that the customers who are negatively disconfirmed and engaged should not be dealt with. The time to reach such customers is reduced considerably so that the cases converted from negative disconfirmation to negative engagement can be reduced. Theoretically, this paper contributes in two ways. First, it presents the disconfirmation as a dual-balanced construct that leads to multi-balanced customer engagement. The study has contributed to the literature by attempting to explore customer engagement in a cross-contextual fashion. Secondly, the study not only proves that negatively valenced customer engagement exists but highlights the significance of negatively valenced customer engagement for physical and online service encounters. It will motivate researchers to explore negative customer engagement concerning other service and service value constructs.

Conclusion

No consumer behavior can be more dynamic than the behavior about services, and that too of an online nature concerning social media. When that is the case, the brand's efforts in terms of both quantity and quality must be the best; otherwise, the brand will be left with almost no time even to react before the negative message about the brand reaches all those customers that need a push to be switched to other service providers. Brands must understand there is not much they can do to improve customer loyalty as the nature of service is not conducive to customer loyalty, as almost all customers have subscribed to all major food delivery apps. Switching is a daily affair, and business depends on value for money, which eclipses the brand image. So, a negative experience and

disconfirmation will lead to negative engagement. The best a brand can do is consistently engage a customer in more than one way daily, even when there is no business.

Limitations of the Study and Scope for Future Research

The study uses a cross-sectional descriptive research design considering the dynamic nature of service encounters. However, customer loyalty is not dynamic and takes time to develop. Thus, future research should attempt to use a longitudinal research design to see how the relationship between customer disconfirmation and customer engagement shapes in the long run so that managers may develop strategies to develop a CRM mechanism that caters to customers' disconfirmation based on short- and long-term trends. There is also a scope to enhance the scope of this study by exploring constructs that result in negative disconfirmation and negative customer engagement. Moreover, the data on how much a subscriber is active and how many touchpoints is hard to collect and rely upon as most social media trends are short-lived (McColl-Kennedy et al., 2015).

Authors' Contribution

Dr. Pardeep Bawa Sharma conceived the idea and explored the significant constructs. He, after that, developed the hypothetical model based on an extensive literature review. Dr. Rasna Pathak chose the sampling design and partially contributed to data collection. Diksha Ahuja and Dr. Pardeep Bawa Sharma ran statistical tests, analyzed the data, and wrote the analysis part. Dr. Pardeep Bawa Sharma and Dr. Rasna Pathak thereafter wrote a discussion, limitations, and conclusion. Diksha Ahuja and Dr. Rasna Pathak compiled the references. Dr. Pardeep Bawa Sharma finally corrected the paper based on the reviewers' suggestions.

Conflict of Interest

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

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Appendix

Construct	
NCE	**Negative Customer Experience**
NCE1	The application does not get updated regularly.
NCE2	The application is not user-friendly.
NCE3	The application lacks detailing.
NCE4	The application gives a bit too many notifications.
NCE5	The application, at times, lags even on a fast internet connection.
NCE6	The "Help me" section is cluttered with information I do not need.
NCE7	Order is usually delivered late.
NCF	**Negative Confirmation**
NCF1	There is a gap between what I perceive about the level of customer care and actual care.
NCF2	The time taken to deliver the parcel is usually more than what I expected.
NCF3	There is a probability of getting a wrong order.
NCF4	The effective discount is always less than what is shown in the beginning.
NCF5	At times, the order delivery associates require assistance.
NCF6	No. of orders that are canceled is more than what it is in other applications.
NCEG	**Negative Customer Engagement**
NCEG1	The application does not send notifications related to discounts.
NCEG2	The brand does not send me coupons.
NCEG3	The brand does not encourage me to write reviews for all orders.
NCEG4	The brand does not take regular feedback from me.
NCEG5	The brand does not encourage me to be a part of the consumer community.
NCEG6	The application is not interactive.
NCEG7	The application design is not conducive to customer involvement.
NeWM	**Negative Electronic Word-of-Mouth**
NeWM1	I often write negative reviews due to a deficient service.
NeWM2	I do not hold myself back from rating the experience poor due to deficient service.
NeWM3	I often write negative reviews due to deficient service on other social media platforms.
NeWM4	I often encourage others on social media not to use food delivery apps when I encounter a deficient service.
NeWM5	I often share my negative experiences with my colleagues and in my reference groups, encouraging them to write negative reviews on social media platforms.
NeWM6	I do not fail to email the company in case of a deficient service.

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