A meta-analysis of antecedents and consequences of eWOM credibility: Investigation of moderating role of culture and platform type

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Abstract:

This paper investigates the antecedents and consequences of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) credibility using a meta-analysis technique. The extant literature provides inconsistent findings related to eWOM credibility. These inconsistencies are primarily because of methodological differences or heterogeneity among previous studies, which leads to confusion amongst researchers and managers. We resolve this inconsistency and provide a conclusive takeaway on the determinants and consequences of eWOM credibility by conducting a meta-analysis of the 51 primary studies comprising 124 effect sizes. Results show that both review and reviewer-related determinants have a significant positive influence on eWOM credibility while consequences, namely purchase intention, eWOM adoption, and attitude towards the product, have a significant relationship with eWOM credibility. Furthermore, results indicate that culture, product type, and platform type are the moderating factors. Results of the study can be used by researchers to address the issue of omitted variable

bias, while managers can use the findings to enhance the credibility of eWOM messages on various eWOM platforms.

Keywords: eWOM credibility, meta-analysis, online review credibility, online trust, online review

1. Introduction

With the advent of web 2.0, eWOM has emerged as a major source for consumers to share and seek product recommendations using digital platforms (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). According to Ismagilova et al. (2017), "eWOM is the dynamic and ongoing information exchange process between potential, actual, or former consumers regarding a product, service, brand, or company, which is available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet." User-generated product recommendations on social networking sites, online reviews on e-commerce platforms, and blogs are some of the major sources of eWOM (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Krishen et al., 2021; Tsao & Hsieh, 2015). The rapid adoption of e-commerce and social media platforms in the last decade led to a significant impact of eWOM on consumers' decision-making process (Ismagilova et al., 2020a; King et al., 2014). Studies suggest that more than ninety percent of consumers consider online recommendations before purchasing any product (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Further, eWOM has a significant impact not only on sales of products and services but also impacts the brand image (Floyd et al., 2014; Ismagilova et al., 2017). For example, a 10% improvement in hotel ratings increases hotel sales by 4.4% (Ye et al., 2009). However, the significant impact of eWOM on consumer behavior also led to the manipulation of online reviews by companies to promote their products (Hu et al., 2012; Zhuang et al., 2018). In this situation, eWOM credibility, defined as the extent to which consumers perceive the online reviews as believable, true, or factual, becomes an important factor for several reasons (Levy & Gvili, 2015). First, a growing problem of fake reviews has increased consumers' skepticism towards online reviews (Banerjee & Chua, 2021;

Choi et al., 2017). For example, anecdotal evidence and media reports suggest that many firms hire fake reviewers to write positive reviews on e-commerce platforms (Maheshwari, 2019). Thus, the higher credibility of eWOM messages is a critical factor that can enhance the consumers' confidence in eWOM messages (Cheung, Sia, et al., 2009; Tien et al., 2018). Second, eWOM platforms such (e.g., TripAdvisor) are also facing several challenges to protect consumers from fake and company-sponsored reviews (Hart, 2021). Thus, firms need to understand the factors which influence eWOM credibility. Third, a significant role of eWOM credibility on consumer behavior is well established in the extant eWOM literature (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Ismagilova et al., 2017, 2020a). Thus, it is evident that eWOM credibility is important for both consumers and firms. However, there are inconsistent findings regarding the relationship of eWOM credibility with its antecedents. For example, some studies (e.g., Cheung et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014) have established that recommendation sidedness positively influences the eWOM credibility, whereas another set of studies (e.g., Albon et al., 2018; Cheung, Sia, et al., 2009; Luo et al., 2015) posit that the relationship mentioned above as non-significant. Similarly, the literature suggests that 'source trustworthiness' adds to the eWOM message's credibility (Chih et al., 2020; Lis, 2013), whereas Albon et al. (2018) reported that it does not influence the eWOM credibility. Also, the moderating role of various contextual factors (e.g., product and platform type) has been established in the literature (Tsao & Hsieh, 2015; Yan et al., 2018). Further, the impact of eWOM credibility on various factors such as eWOM adoption, purchase intention, and attitude towards product has been found inconsistent across the literature (Ismagilova et al., 2020a; Qahri-Saremi & Montazemi, 2019). Such inconsistent findings lead to confusion among academic researchers and managers, making it difficult for them to get a conclusive takeaway regarding the relationship of eWOM credibility with its antecedents and consequences. Further, a clear and definitive understanding is also important for future research (King et al., 2014). Researchers suggest that meta-analysis

is a scientific and trustworthy technique to resolve inconsistent findings that arise due to methodological differences or heterogeneity among previous studies (Borenstein et al., 2010; Knoll & Matthes, 2017; Sarkar et al., 2020).

Meta-analysis uses statistical methods to provide more reliable conclusions by combining the results of previous studies (Khamitov et al., 2019; Rana & Paul, 2020). Multiple studies have applied the meta-analysis in the context of eWOM to reconcile the inconsistent findings (Hong et al., 2017; Ismagilova et al., 2020a; Wang et al., 2019). However, previous meta-analytic studies on eWOM have not paid much attention to eWOM credibility, as shown in Table 1. Ismagilova et al. (2020c) meta-analytic study investigated the impact of source expertise, source trustworthiness, and homophily on eWOM credibility. However, their study has several limitations. First, they failed to analyze the influence of reviewer-related antecedents (e.g., argument quality, recommendation sidedness) on eWOM credibility. Second, the exclusion of consequences of eWOM credibility and relevant moderators from conceptual model presents an incomplete picture of eWOM credibility. Third, inclusion of only limited number of studies (n=20) indicates that some of the relevant studies were not considered in the analysis. Therefore, in this study, we aim to fill this research gap by conducting a comprehensive meta-analysis to examine the all-major antecedents and consequences of eWOM credibility. Further, we also analysed the moderating role of various factors (e.g., product type, platform type, and culture). Selection of moderators is based on the theoretical relevance, extant literature, and data availability from primary studies. Our meta-analysis is guided by the two major theoretical perspective: Dual Processing and Source Persuasiveness. Further, we built our conceptual framework using the integrative model of eWOM communication suggested by Cheung & Thadani, (2012).

Accordingly, we investigate the following research questions:

(1) What are the predominant antecedents and consequences of eWOM credibility in the extant literature?

(2) What is the strength of association of these factors with eWOM credibility?

(3) Does the culture, product, and platform type moderate the relationship between eWOM credibility and these variables?

Response to these research questions will not only explain the mechanism behind consumers' assessment of eWOM credibility but also resolve the inconsistencies in the extant literature. Further, investigation of culture, product, and platform type as moderators will help us understand why some antecedents exert greater influence in a particular culture, product, and platform. Our study provides multiple recommendations to managers for the effective management of online reviews. For instance, results of moderator analysis suggest that eWOM platforms can recommend the relevant eWOM messages based on the culture of the consumers. Similarly, companies should pay special attention to the eWOM communication related to experience goods than search goods. We also discuss some possible changes which can be implemented by the eWOM platforms to improve the trustworthiness and reliability of the eWOM content. We conclude the paper by discussing the six major future research areas which can be explored by the researchers.

Table 1: Meta-analytic studies on eWOM

Study	**No of articles included**	**Focal Consequences**	**Focal Antecedents**	**Research Objective**	**Finding**
Floyd et al. (2014)	26	Retail Sales	Review valence Critics' reviews Third party reviews Frequency of purchase Product benefits	How does review valence and review volume impact the elasticity of retail sales?	Sales elasticities were found to be significantly higher for review valence than review volume.

Purnawirawan et al. (2015)	34	Attitude Perceived usefulness Recommendation intention Credibility Purchase intention	Review valence	How does review valence impact the psychological outcomes (attitudes and usefulness)?	Review valence exerts the strongest influence on recommendation intention, followed by attitude and purchase intention.
Babić Rosario et al. (2016)	96	Sales	Platform Product Volume Valence Variance eWOM sender	How do platform, product characteristics, and eWOM metrics influence eWOM effectiveness?	eWOM positively influences sales, but its effectiveness is moderated by platform, product, and other eWOM metrics.
Hong et al. (2017)	42	Review helpfulness	Review depth Review readability Review rating (Linear/Quadratic) Review age Reviewer information disclosure Reviewer expertise	What are the major determinants of review helpfulness?	Review depth, review age, reviewer disclosure information, and reviewer expert label significantly influence review helpfulness. In contrast, review readability and review rating have an insignificant impact on review helpfulness.
Ismagilova et al. (2020a)	69	Intention to buy	Argument quality Source credibility Source expertise Source trustworthiness Tie strength eWOM credibility eWOM usefulness	What are the eWOM factors which influence the consumers' intention to buy?	eWOM usefulness, attitude towards the website, and eWOM credibility are the strongest predictors of intention to buy.
Qahri-Saremi & Montazemi. (2019)	87	eWOM adoption	eWOM helpfulness, eWOM message quality, Source trustworthiness Source expertise eWOM message framing eWOM message credibility eWOM message consistency Source social connectedness	What are the factors that affect eWOM adoption?	eWOM message credibility has the largest total effect on eWOM adoption, while eWOM message framing exerts a lowest influence.

Wang et al. (2019)	53	Review Helpfulness	Review length Review volume Readability Review rating (Linear/Quadratic) Review age	What are the major antecedents of review helpfulness?	Review length, readability, review rating (Linear/Quadratic), and review age have a positive impact on review helpfulness, while review volume has a negative influence on review helpfulness.
Hu & Yang. (2020)	27	Review helpfulness	Review valence Review length Review readability Review age Reviewer expertise Profile disclosure	What are the major determinants of review helpfulness in the tourism and hospitality industry?	Review length, reviewer expertise, review age, and profile disclosure are the significant determinants of review helpfulness, while review valence and readability had an insignificant impact.
Li et al. (2020)	28	Product sales	Number of reviews Star rating Std Dev of ratings Review helpfulness Review length Review sentiment Reviewer's reputation Special shipping	What are the major factors which influence product sales?	Results indicate that apart from review length and special shipping, all other factors significantly impact product sales.
Ismagilova et al. (2020c)	20	eWOM usefulness eWOM credibility eWOM adoption Intention to buy	Source Expertise Source Trustworthiness Homophily	How do different source-related factors influence the perception of eWOM communication?	Source expertise, trustworthiness, and homophily significantly impact eWOM usefulness, eWOM adoption, eWOM credibility, and intention to buy.
Ismagilova, Rana, et al. (2020b)	51	eWOM providing behavior	Economic incentive Altruism Self enhancement Tie strength Involvement Customer satisfaction Opinion seeking Brand Attitude Homophily	What are the factors which influence the consumers' eWOM-providing behavior?	Brand attitude has the strongest influence on eWOM providing behaviour, while homophily exerts the least influence.

This Study	51	eWOM Credibility	Argument Quality Recommendation consistency Recommendation valence Recommendation sidedness Recommendation rating Source credibility Source expertise Source trustworthiness Tie Strength Homophily	What is the strength of association of eWOM credibility with its antecedents and consequences? Does the culture, product, and platform type moderate the relationship between eWOM credibility and various factors?	Source trustworthiness has the strongest impact on the eWOM credibility, while recommendation valence exerts the least influence. Culture, product type and platform type significantly moderate the relationship of eWOM credibility with some of the factors (e.g., Argument Quality)

2. Theoretical Foundation, Conceptual framework, and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Theoretical Foundation: Researchers have used multiple theoretical underpinnings to study the antecedents and consequences of eWOM credibility (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Ismagilova et al., 2017; 2020d). Thus, the use of one single theory to explain the influence of all variables in a meta-analytical model can be problematic (Ismagilova et al., 2020b). Therefore, we discuss the two major theoretical perspectives which can provide theoretical guidance to the meta-analysis: Dual Processing Perspective (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and Source Persuasiveness Perspective (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Ohanian, 1990). Researchers have used the dual processing model to explain the influence of review-related antecedents, while the source persuasiveness perspective explains the impact of the reviewer (source) related factors (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Ismagilova et al., 2017; Lis, 2013). However, the impact of some source-related variables can also be explained by the dual processing perspective (Cheung et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014). Thus, we believe that these two perspectives provide a more comprehensive theoretical understanding of eWOM credibility than a single theoretical model.

2.1.1. Dual Processing Perspective: Dual processing theories (i.e., Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and Heuristic Systematic Processing Model (Chaiken, 1980) suggest that consumers process the information via two routes: Central route/Systematic-processing route or Peripheral route/Heuristic-processing route (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Consumers use the central route/systematic-processing route when they have high ability and motivation to process information. In this route, consumers rely on the central cues (e.g., argument quality) to determine the eWOM credibility (Cheung et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014). In contrast, when consumers have limited ability and motivation to process the information, the peripheral route is likely to be used. In this scenario, consumers utilize the peripheral cues (e.g., review rating, review consistency, and source credibility) to assess the credibility of the eWOM message (Hong & Pittman, 2020; Thomas et al., 2019).

Various researchers have adopted a dual-processing perspective to explain the impact of review-related antecedents on eWOM credibility. For instance, extant studies have used ELM to validate the impact of argument quality (Cheung et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014), recommendation sidedness (Luo et al., 2014), recommendation consistency (Cheung et al., 2012), recommendation valence (Lo & Yao, 2019), and recommendation rating (Cheung, Sia, et al., 2009) on eWOM credibility. Further, various factors (e.g., culture) can moderate the impact of central and peripheral cues on eWOM credibility (Cheung et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014; Sussman & Siegal, 2003).

2.1.2. Source persuasiveness perspective: The source persuasiveness perspective suggests that consumers use various source-related dimensions to reduce the uncertainty associated with the eWOM messages (Ismagilova et al., 2020c; Pornpitakpan, 2004). For example, the source credibility model (Hovland & Weiss, 1951) suggests that source credibility significantly influences the consumers' opinion regarding the eWOM message (Cheung & Thadani, 2012).

Similarly, based on the three-component model (Ohanian, 1990), Lis (2013) argues that source expertise, source trustworthiness, and homophily are essential determinants of eWOM credibility. Further, many researchers argue that consumers are more influenced by those sources which share a similarity (homophily) or a close relationship (tie strength) with them (Chih et al., 2020; Tan & Lee, 2019; Yan et al., 2018). Multiple studies have utilized the source persuasiveness perspective to explain the relationship of reviewer-related factors (e.g., trustworthiness, homophily, and tie strength) with eWOM credibility (Ismagilova et al., 2020c; Lis, 2013).

2.2. Conceptual Framework: Based on dual processing and source persuasiveness perspective and following the integrative model of eWOM communication (Cheung and Thandani, 2012), figure 1 presents the conceptual framework which guides the meta-analysis. According to Cheung and Thandani (2012), integrative framework, eWOM is a form of social communication in which stimuli (review) delivered by the source (reviewer/communicator) to the receiver (consumer) evoke the main effects (response). Factors related to the review and reviewer directly impact the response to the eWOM communication, while variables associated with the receiver and context act as a moderator. Based on the above framework, we conceptualize the comprehensive model of eWOM credibility in which review and reviewer-related factors are the antecedents of the eWOM credibility, while response factors are the consequences of eWOM credibility (Cheung et al., 2012; Ismagilova et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2019). Further, context and receiver-related factors are included as the potential moderators (Luo et al., 2014; Tsao & Hsieh, 2015).

The inclusion of variables in our model is driven by the theory and data availability from primary studies. For instance, relationships that appeared in less than three studies were not included in the meta-analytic conceptual framework (Hong et al., 2017; Sarkar et al., 2020). Thus, our conceptual model could not include some variables related to review (e.g., review

attribution, review style) and reviewer (e.g., source attractiveness) due to the limited number of studies in the extant literature. Similarly, the selection of moderators is driven by the following criteria: (1) Theoretical relevance of the moderators based on the extant eWOM credibility literature (2) Moderators suggested by the previous meta-analytic studies in the context of eWOM communication (3) Required data for moderator analysis can be obtained from the primary studies. Following the above criteria, moderators can be grouped into three categories: contextual (product and platform type), cultural (individualism-collectivism index), and methodological (publication year, sample type, technique). For example, extant eWOM credibility literature and previous meta-analytic studies on eWOM communication (Hong et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2019) have validated the moderating role of individualism-collectivism (Luo et al., 2014), platform type (Tsao & Hsieh, 2015; Yan et al., 2018), and product type (Tan & Lee, 2019; Tsao & Hsieh, 2015; Yan et al., 2018). We have not included the methodological moderators in the proposed theoretical framework as these moderators are more closely associated with the research design of the study and have less implication for the theoretical framework. Thus, the results of the methodological moderators are reported in the web appendix rather than in the main text. Similarly, we have selected individualism collectivism orientation as it is the most significant and frequently used cultural dimension to explain the relationship between national cultures and eWOM communication (Dang & Raska, 2021). Also, we could not include other potential moderators (e.g., involvement and expertise) as these moderators cannot be coded from the primary studies.

Table 2 list the key constructs included in the analysis. In the following section, we briefly discuss the major elements of our model without formulating any specific hypotheses.

Researchers suggest that the major objective of meta-analysis is to find precise and accurate estimates of effect size rather than hypothesis testing (Charlton, 1996; Rosario et al., 2016; Turan, 2021). Thus, without defining any specific hypotheses, we solve the inconclusive

findings in the extant literature and conduct an exploratory analysis to find the moderating effect of various factors. A brief description of each major element and sub-elements are given below:

2.2.1. Review-related antecedents: Review-related factors are derived from the content (quality, sidedness, valence, consistency) and rating of the message. Dual processing perspective suggests that consumers use various factors as heuristics or cues to evaluate the eWOM credibility (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). For instance, according to ELM, consumers use argument quality as a central cue to determine the credibility of an eWOM message (Luo et al., 2014; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Similarly, recommendation consistency and recommendation rating exert a significant impact on eWOM credibility as these two factors have a strong normative influence on the consumers (Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Cheung, Sia, et al., 2009; Luo et al., 2015). High recommendation rating and consistency indicate that a large number of consumers endorse the eWOM content, due to which consumers use these factors as a peripheral cue to evaluate eWOM credibility (Fang, 2014; Filieri, 2015). Recommendation valence is another vital cue as consumers give more weightage to negative information than positive information (Cheung, Sia, et al., 2009; Lo & Yao, 2019). Further, negative information in the eWOM message indicates consumer dissatisfaction (Chiou et al., 2018; Hong & Pittman, 2020), while positive information is linked to product promotion (Ismagilova et al., 2017; Xue & Zhou, 2010). Similarly, the inclusion of negative information in a two-sided message increases the objectivity of opinion (Crowley & Hoyer, 1994), which enhances the positive impact of recommendation consistency on eWOM credibility (Chakraborty, 2019; Eisend, 2006; Jensen et al., 2013). Based on the above discussion, it is evident that review-related factors are an important part of consumers' decision-making when they evaluate eWOM credibility.

2.2.2 Reviewer-related antecedents: Reviewer-related factors are associated with the reviewer (source), such as source expertise, credibility, trustworthiness, homophily, and tie strength (Ismagilova et al., 2020c; Lis, 2013). According to the source persuasiveness perspective (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Pornpitakpan, 2004), expert sources have more knowledge, and they can provide more comprehensive information about the products than ordinary users (Shan, 2016; Willemsen et al., 2012). Consumers believe that eWOM messages posted by trustworthy sources are based on their personal experience, and they don't get any personal or monetary benefits from the eWOM message (Shamhuyenhanzva et al., 2016). Similarly, higher credibility of the source positively influences the communication's persuasiveness, enhancing information acceptance (Armstrong & McAdams, 2009; Pornpitakpan, 2004; Yin et al., 2018). Thus, source-related dimensions (expertise, credibility, and trustworthiness) significantly influence eWOM credibility. It is also important to note that source trustworthiness differs from source credibility, as it indicates the degree of confidence in the source's intent to communicate valid assertions without bias (Mumuni et al., 2020). Consumers utilize the various cues related to the reviewer's profile, such as special mentions on the reviewer's profile, number of followers, and comments on the reviewer's posts, to judge the source's credibility and expertise (Ismagilova et al., 2020c; Luo et al., 2013; Watts et al., 2008). Further, the extent of interpersonal relationship (tie strength) and degree of similarity (homophily) between reviewer (source) and receiver significantly impact the eWOM credibility (Lis, 2013; Tan & Lee, 2019).

2.2.3. Response-related factors: Response-related factors are the consequences or outcomes influenced by eWOM communication (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). In our conceptual model, response factors represent the psychological reactions (attitudinal and behavioral) impacted by the eWOM credibility (Fang, 2014; Ismagilova et al., 2017). According to Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, eWOM credibility pertains to the cognitive state in which consumers

evaluate the eWOM message based on the review and reviewer's attributes (Fang, 2014; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). High credibility enhances consumer confidence in the recommendation, while low credibility increases consumers' skepticism towards the recommendation (Chih et al., 2020; Hsu et al., 2016). Also, credible eWOM messages are more helpful in reducing purchase-related risks because of unbiased and trustworthy opinions (Yan et al., 2018). Thus, the high credibility of the eWOM message enhances the consumers' willingness to accept and use the eWOM communication in their purchase decision, which is defined as eWOM adoption (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Hajli, 2018; Ruiz-Mafe et al., 2020). Extant literature also suggests that the credibility of the eWOM message significantly influences eWOM adoption and purchase intention (Bae et al., 2017; Kaur & Singh, 2020; Lis, 2013). Similarly, positive eWOM messages with high credibility create a favorable attitude towards the product. Conversely, eWOM messages with low credibility are considered biased and unreliable, negatively impacting the consumers' attitude towards the product (Chih et al., 2013; Wu & Lin, 2017). Thus, eWOM credibility significantly influences the consumers' response to eWOM communication.

2.2.4. Receiver-related moderators: Receiver-related factors are linked to receiver background, i.e., culture. Culture is an important element that influences the consumers' perception and assessment of online reviews (Dang & Raska, 2021; Luo et al., 2014; Park & Lee, 2009). According to Hofstede et al. (2005), individuals from different cultures differ in several dimensions such as power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femineity, and long-term orientation. According to the extant research, among the five dimensions, individualism-collectivism orientation is the most appropriate and robust dimension to explain the cross-cultural difference in business and organization research because of satisfactory reliability and unidimensionality (Cho et al., 1999; Daryanto & Song, 2021; Rodriguez Cano et al., 2004). Based on the extensive review of national cultures and

eWOM behavior, Dang & Raska (2021) also suggest that individualism collectivism is the most significant dimension that influences the evaluation and impact of eWOM communication. Consumers from individualistic cultures make their decisions more independently as they use their cognition and personal preferences in decision-making (Park & Jeon, 2018). In contrast, people from collectivistic cultures are more interconnected with society, and their decisions are primarily determined by social opinions (Kim et al., 2018). Therefore, factors that indicate consistent social opinions, such as information consistency and information rating, exert a greater impact on eWOM credibility in a collectivist culture than individualistic culture (Luo et al., 2014). Further, online reviews exert a stronger influence on consumers' decision-making in collectivistic cultures than in individualistic cultures (Kim, 2019; Leonhardt et al., 2020). Thus, reviews with relevant and credible content will strongly influence consumers' decisions in a collectivistic culture. For example, Park & Lee (2009) suggest that review usefulness exert a stronger influence on purchase intention in collectivistic culture than in individualistic culture. Thus, it is important to investigate the moderating effect of the individualism collectivism orientation (ICO) in the context of eWOM credibility.

2.2.5. Contextual moderators: Context is the environment or background in which eWOM conversation takes place. In our conceptual model, we explore the moderating effect of two contextual factors: product type and platform type.

2.2.5.1. Product Type: Online reviews reduce the product/service-related risk by providing additional information generally not provided by the firms (King et al., 2014). However, the need for additional opinions depends on the product type (Hong et al., 2017). Extant literature suggests that product type can be broadly classified into two types: Search and Experience (Girard & Dion, 2010; Nelson, 1970). Quality and attributes of search products (e.g., electronics) can be evaluated before purchase (Chua & Banerjee, 2016). In contrast, experience products (e.g., hotels) involve greater uncertainty; thus, their quality and attributes are difficult

to judge before purchase (Tsao & Hsieh, 2015). Further, search products can be evaluated using objective criteria, while the evaluation of experience goods is subjective (Zhu & Zhang, 2010). Therefore, online reviews are more important for experience products than search products due to the higher risk and uncertainty associated with the experience products (Hong et al., 2017; Li et al., 2020). Researchers suggest that the relationship between eWOM credibility and its determinants is moderated by product type (Pan & Chiou, 2011; Tsao & Hsieh, 2015). Similarly, meta-analytic studies on eWOM suggest that product type moderates the evaluation (e.g., helpfulness) and impact (e.g., sales) of eWOM communication (Li et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2019). Thus, we explore the moderating influence of product type on the relationships of the eWOM credibility with its antecedents and consequences.

2.2.5.2. Platform Type: Consumers use multiple online platforms to seek and share eWOM messages (Cao et al., 2018; Ismagilova et al., 2017). eWOM platforms can be broadly categorized into five main categories: (1) Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), (2) Online Discussion Forums (e.g., Zapak.com), (3) Online Review Websites (Epinions.com), (4) E-commerce Websites (e.g., Amazon.com), and (5) Blogs (Blogger.com) (Babić Rosario et al., 2016; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Each eWOM platform is perceived differently by consumers, which impacts the consumer's attitude toward the eWOM message (Gvili & Levy, 2016). For example, consumers have a greater level of interaction in social media platforms and online discussion forums than in other eWOM channels (Chen et al., 2011; Lima et al., 2019). Similarly, online reviews posted on social media platforms exert a greater normative influence on the consumers than on e-commerce platforms (Yan et al., 2018). Further, consumers can get more information about reviewers on social media platforms than on e-commerce platforms (Chu & Choi, 2011). Thus, consumers believe that reviews from third-party sources (e.g., discussion forums, review websites) are more trustworthy than seller-based channels (e.g., Amazon) (Cao et al., 2018; Hong et al., 2017).

Table 2: Constructs Definition

Construct	Common aliases	Definitions	Prior finding	Representative papers
Review related antecedents				
Argument Quality	Argument strength, information quality, review quality, eWOM quality, message quality	The extent to which consumers perceive eWOM message as valid and convincing to support its position (Chakraborty, 2019)	Significant Positive	Chakraborty, 2019; Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Cheung et al., 2012; Cheung, Sia, et al., 2009; Fang, 2014; Luo et al., 2014, 2015; Mazibuko & Dlodlo, 2020; Versteeg, 2020; Yin et al., 2018
Recommendation Consistency	Information consistency, review consistency, message consistency	The extent to which eWOM message is consistent with other recommendations (Cheung et al., 2009)	Significant Positive	Chakraborty, 2019; Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Cheung et al., 2009, 2012; Lo & Yao, 2019; Luo et al., 2014, 2015
			Non-significant	Mazibuko & Dlodlo, 2020; Thomas et al., 2019
Recommendation Valence	Recommendation framing, review valence	Defined by the orientation of the eWOM message (positive or negative) (Cheung & Thadani, 2012)	Significant Positive	Hong & Park, 2012; Hong & Pittman, 2020; Kusumasondjaja et al., 2012; Lee & Koo, 2012; Lo & Yao, 2019; Qiu et al., 2012; Xue & Zhou, 2010
			Significant Negative	Lim & Van Der Heide, 2015; Pentina et al., 2018
			Non-significant	Albon et al., 2018; Cheung, Sia, et al., 2009; Chiou et al., 2018; Hong & Pittman, 2020
Recommendation Sidedness	Two-sided reviews	The extent to which eWOM contains both positive and negative comments (Luo et al., 2015)	Significant Positive	Chakraborty, 2019; Cheung et al., 2012; Luo et al., 2014
			Non-significant	Albon et al., 2018; Chakraborty & Bhat, 2018; Cheung et al., 2009; Luo et al., 2015
Recommendation Rating	Customer rating, review rating, star rating	The overall rating given by other consumers to an eWOM recommendation (Cheung et al., 2009)	Significant Positive	Cheung, Sia, et al., 2009; Fang, 2014; Hong & Pittman, 2020; Lis, 2013; Luo et al., 2014; Wu & Lin, 2017
			Non-significant	Luo et al. (2015)
Reviewer related antecedents				
Source Credibility	Reviewer credibility	Receiver's overall perception of the credibility of the message source (Cheung & Thadani, 2012)	Significant Positive	Armstrong & McAdams, 2009; Cheung, Sia, et al., 2009; Chih et al., 2013; Luo et al., 2014, 2015; Yin et al., 2018

Source Expertise	Source competence, reviewer expertise	The extent to which a person is perceived to possess knowledge and skills to provide accurate information (Ohanian, 1990)	Significant Positive	Albon et al., 2018; Cheng & Zhou, 2010; Fang, 2014; Ho & Chien, 2010; Lis, 2013; Lo & Yao, 2019; Tan & Lee, 2019; Thomas et al., 2019; Tien et al., 2018; Vendemia, 2017; Xiaoping & Jiaqi, 2012
			Significant Negative	Mumuni et al. (2020)
Source Trustworthiness	Reviewer trustworthiness, trust in reviewer	The level of trust a recipient has in the reviewer's intention to provide accurate information without bias (Mumuni et al., 2020)	Significant Positive	Chih et al., 2020; Ho & Chien, 2010; Lis, 2013; Mumuni et al., 2020; Shamhuyenhanzva et al., 2016; Tien et al., 2018; Vendemia, 2017; Xu, 2014
			Non-significant	Albon et al. (2018)
Tie Strength		Represents the strength of the interpersonal relationships between sender and receiver of eWOM message (Tan & Lee, 2019)	Significant Positive	Chih et al., 2020; Tan & Lee, 2019; Yan et al., 2018
			Non-significant	Cheng & Zhou, 2010; Xiaoping & Jiaqi, 2012
Homophily	Source similarity	Degree of similarity between reviewer and reader of the eWOM message (Lis, 2013)	Significant Positive	Albon et al., 2018; Chih et al., 2020; Pentina et al., 2018; Xiaoping & Jiaqi, 2012
			Non-significant	Hoang, 2015; Lis, 2013
Response (Consequences)				
eWOM Adoption	Review adoption, CGC adoption, information adoption, recommendation adoption, intention to use/follow eWOM, social WOM adoption	Consumers' willingness to accept and use eWOM message for making a purchase decision (Cheung & Thadani, 2012)	Significant Positive	Bae et al., 2017; Cheung, Sia, et al., 2009; Chih et al., 2013, 2020; Fan & Miao, 2012; Fang, 2014; Hsu et al., 2016; Kaur & Singh, 2020; Lee & Koo, 2012; Lis, 2013; Luo et al., 2013; Tan & Lee, 2019; Tien et al., 2018
Purchase Intention	Intent to purchase, product/Service booking intention, behavioral intention to purchase	Consumer's plan or intention to purchase a product or service (Thomas et al., 2019)	Significant Positive	Chakraborty, 2019; Chiou et al., 2018; Grewal & Stephen, 2019; Hoang, 2015; Lee et al., 2011; Teng et al., 2017; Thomas et al., 2019; Tien et al., 2018; Yan et al., 2018
			Significant Negative	Grewal & Stephen, 2019; Xie et al., 2011
Attitude Towards Product	Attitude towards review/CGC/information	Receiver overall evaluation of the product (Cheung & Thadani, 2012)	Significant Positive	Chih et al., 2013, 2020; Teng et al., 2017; Wu & Lin, 2017

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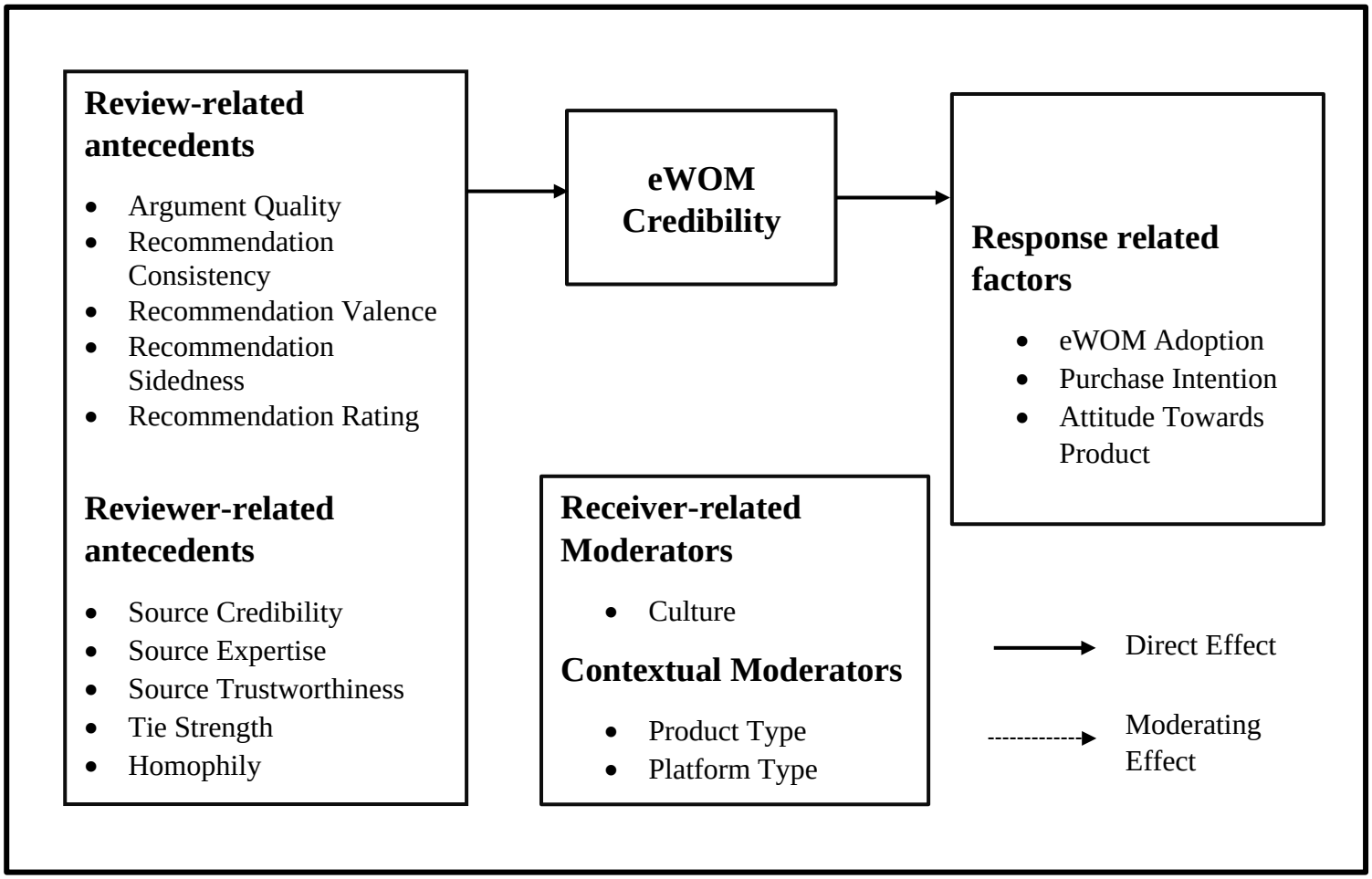

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

In a nutshell, each eWOM platform provides a different level of social interaction, reviewer information, and information richness which can moderate the impact of various factors on eWOM credibility (Levy & Gvili, 2015). For example, Tsao and Hsieh (2015) suggested that platform type moderates the relationship between eWOM credibility and argument quality. Researchers also suggest that the platform's perception and characteristics moderate the impact of eWOM on sales (Babić Rosario et al., 2016; Floyd et al., 2014). Thus, the impact of eWOM credibility on response variables can vary based on the platform type. Therefore, we explore the variation in the relationships of eWOM credibility with its antecedents and consequences based on the platform type.

Based on the above discussion, we present our conceptual model in Figure 1.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Retrieval and selection of studies: Based on the PRISMA guidelines (Liberati et al., 2009), we have adopted the following approach to identify relevant articles for this study. First, based on the previous studies (Ismagilova et al., 2020a; Ismagilova et al., 2020bc; Qahri-Saremi & Montazemi, 2019), the following combination of keywords were used to identify relevant articles : ("Electronic word of mouth" OR "Customer review" OR "User generated content" OR "Online Customer Review" OR "eWOM" OR "Online review" OR "Internet word of mouth" OR "Virtual word of mouth" OR "iWOM" OR "Online Recommendation") AND ("Credibility" OR "Trust"). The search query was performed on the major databases, including Web of Science, EBSCO, Emerald, Science Direct, SAGE, Wiley, and Taylor and Frances. After the initial extraction of 1757 articles, we have used the following steps to shortlist relevant articles. First, we have removed the 390 duplicate articles from the dataset. In the second step, we read the title/abstract of the extracted papers for further shortlisting and excluded the following articles: (1) Qualitative/review/ conceptual articles (2) Articles based on the secondary data (e.g., review data extracted from Amazon) (3) Articles which have not measured the eWOM credibility (4) Articles published in the other languages. After applying the above filtering criteria, 243 papers were qualified for the next stage of processing. After that, we read the full text of the articles to make sure: 1) the articles must have empirically investigated the determinants and consequences of eWOM credibility mentioned in the research model, 2) the articles must have mentioned the sample size and relevant statistics necessary for meta-analysis. After completing the identification procedure, a total of 51 articles were shortlisted for the study. The Flow chart in Figure 2 illustrates the literature identification and selection process. Web Appendix A provides the profiles and summary of studies used for the analysis.

3.2. Coding and Effect Size Integration: Relevant and descriptive information of all articles such as the title of the paper, independent, dependent, mediating, and moderating variables, authors details, publication year, sample size, country, product type, platform type, and other statistical information (correlation coefficient, t statistics, etc.) were extracted for the analysis. We selected correlation coefficient (r) as the common effect size to describe the relationship between the eWOM credibility and various constructs. The correlation coefficient has been widely used by researchers in meta-analysis studies (Dwivedi et al., 2019; 2021; Hooda et al., 2022; Ismagilova et al., 2020a; Jeyaraj & Dwivedi, 2020; Oesterreich et al., 2022; Sarkar et al., 2020). The correlation coefficient indicates the direction and strength of the relationship between eWOM credibility and various factors. For example, a positive correlation indicates that as the value of the variable increase, eWOM credibility also increase. In contrast, a negative correlation indicates the reverse relationship. For example, a positive correlation indicates that greater argument quality leads to higher eWOM credibility. Similarly, the relationship between eWOM credibility and other variables (e.g., source expertise, source trustworthiness) can be interpreted. However, in the case of recommendation valence, a positive correlation indicates that negative reviews have higher credibility than positive reviews. Similarly, for recommendation-sidedness, a positive correlation indicates that two-sided reviews have higher credibility than one-sided review. Further, other coefficients (Standardized regression coefficient, t statistics, F statistics) were converted into correlation coefficients using the methods suggested in the extant literature (Card, 2015; Lipsey & Wilson, 2001; Peterson & Brown, 2005; Qahri-Saremi & Montazemi, 2019; Wang et al., 2019). Web Appendix B provides the list of the formula used in the conversion. Further, the sign of the correlation coefficient was determined based on the study's results. For example, if negative reviews have higher credibility than positive reviews, then the sign of the correlation

coefficient was positive. Also, for articles that contain more than one independent study (e.g., Hong and Pittman, (2020)), we retained them as two separate effect sizes in our pool.

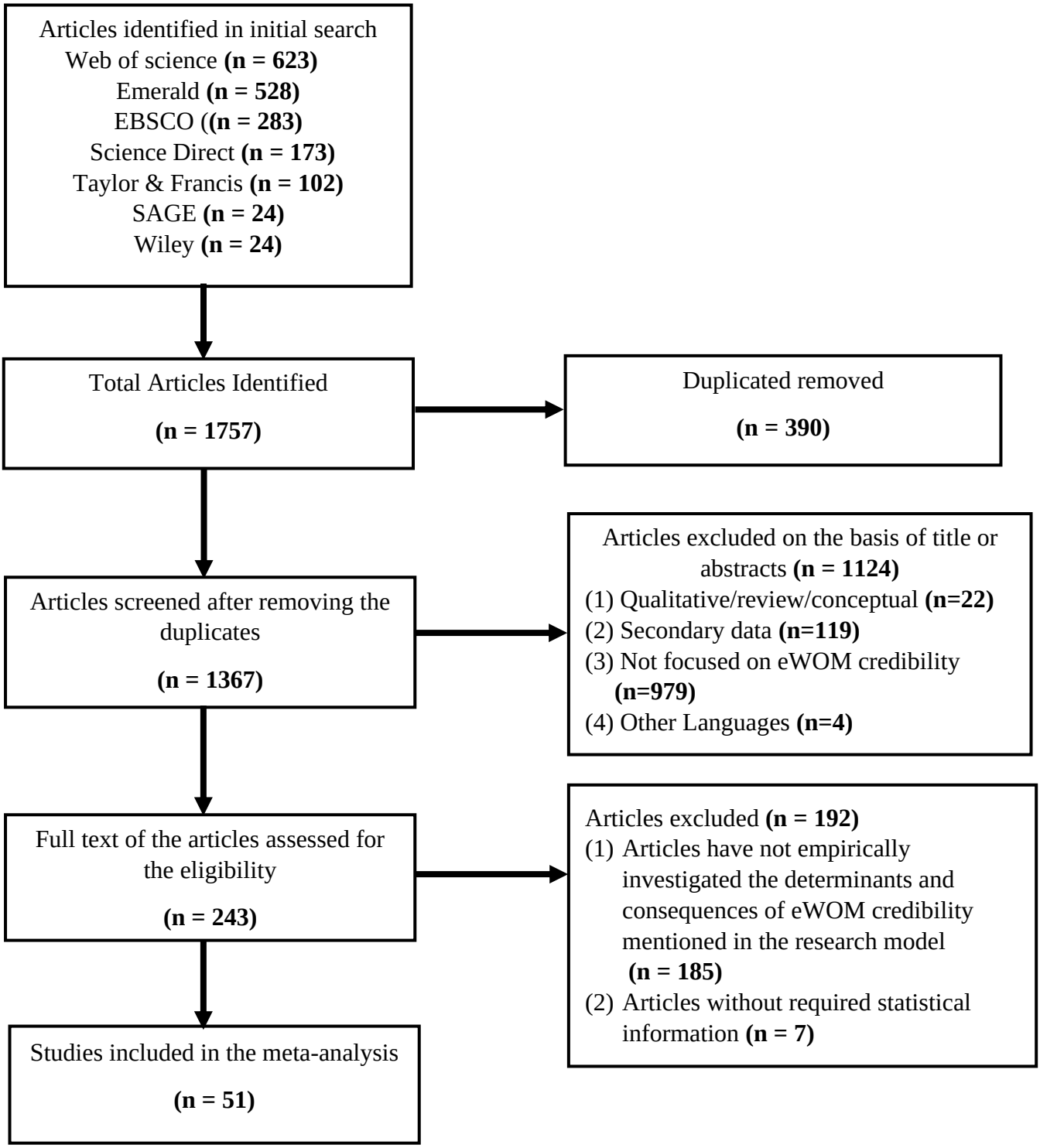

Fig. 2 Flow chart for studies identification and selection

Further, when one study provided multiple effect sizes for the same relationship, we calculated the weighted average as suggested by Card (2015) to get a single estimate. This procedure eliminated the problem of the interdependence of effect sizes and ensured that the data set includes one effect size per relationship per sample. Further, some of the studies used different terminology for the same constructs. Thus, similar constructs were grouped and labeled as a single construct, as shown in Table 2. For example, review consistency was combined with recommendation consistency, reviewer trustworthiness was combined with source trustworthiness, and two-sidedness was combined with recommendation-sidedness. After completing the coding process, we obtained a total of 124 effect sizes from 51 studies.

3.3 Moderator Coding: We have selected culture, product type, and platform type as the potential moderators in our study. Table 3 provides a description and operationalization of moderator variables.

Table 3: Moderator coding

Moderator	**Description**	**Operationalization**
Culture	Country where the study was conducted	**Individualistic-collectivism orientation** as defined by Hofstede et al. (2005) cultural dimensions. A high score indicates an individualistic culture, while a low score indicates a collectivistic culture.
Product Type	Product type in the research context	**Search product:** the products whose quality can be evaluated before purchase
		Experience product: the products whose quality is difficult to judge before purchase
		Other: The information on the product type was not available
Platform Type	Platform type in the research context	**E-commerce platforms:** Online websites which allow individuals to buy and sell products on the internet (e.g., Amazon. Com)
		Online Review Website: Online platforms which allow consumers to share their opinion about products, services, and companies (e.g., TripAdvisor.com)
		Online Discussion Forum: A virtual platform utilized by people to receive and share their opinions, usually for a particular product/service (e.g., https://hoteltalk.app/)
		Social Media: A web-based communication service that enables individuals to have a conversation and share content (e.g., facebook.com)

		Blogs: A medium or platform that allows individuals to publish and share opinions in the form of a journal (e.g., Blog.com)
		Others: The information was not available

3.4. Meta-analysis procedure: We used the correlation coefficient as an effect size metric to conduct a meta-analysis. Meta-analysis can be conducted using a fixed-effect or random-effect model. The fixed-effect model assumes that all studies included in the analysis share a common effect size, while in the random effect model, the true effect size could differ across studies (Borenstein et al., 2010). Studies included in our analysis differ in their context and nature. Thus, we used the random-effect model to calculate the combined effect size. Previous meta-analysis studies conducted in the context of eWOM also used the Random-effect model (Hong et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2019). Before performing the meta-analysis on the effect sizes, we corrected individual correlations for the measurement error using the Cronbach alpha or composite reliabilities. When reliability was not reported in the study, we used weighted reliability as a substitute (Chang & Taylor, 2016; Wang et al., 2019). After correcting the correlation coefficient, we applied the random effect model (Hedges, 1986; Hedges & Olkin, 2014). In the approach of Hedges et al., coefficients are converted into Fisher Z before combining the effect size. We have used *dmetar* package in R studio for our meta-analytic calculations (Harrer et al., 2021). The detailed method is given in Web Appendix C. We also tested our assumption of the Random effect model using the heterogeneity test. Heterogeneity between studies was accessed using the Q statistics and I^2 index. Further, we tested the publication bias using the fail-safe N test. Publication bias occurs due to the exclusion of studies with non-significant results (Hong et al., 2017; Sarkar et al., 2020). There are various approaches to calculate the fail-safe N. We used the method suggested by Orwin (1983), which uses mean effect size to calculate the fail-safe N. Previous studies also used this method because of more accuracy and easy interpretation of the test results (Hamari & Keronen, 2017).

Further, the moderating role of culture (individualism-collectivism orientation) was investigated using the meta-regression, while the moderating role of product and platform type was tested using subgroup analysis. We have adopted this approach because of limited observations for some moderators. For example, the relationship of homophily with review credibility is not investigated in the context of e-commerce platforms. Similar observations can be made for other variables as well. Therefore, following the previous studies (Franke & Park, 2006; Schepers & van der Borgh, 2020), we tested the moderator effects separately to maximize the number of usable observations. Further, some relationships contained less than three samples for a particular subgroup due to limited data availability. However, following the guidelines in extant literature (Card 2015; Chang & Huang, 2020), we have conducted the subgroup analysis even if the number of samples for a particular subgroup is less than three. Further, we also conducted a post hoc analysis to find out which groups differ from one another, as suggested by Card (2015). This approach is similar to the Fisher Least Significant Difference test in ANOVA. The post hoc test results are given in Web Appendix I and J.

4. Meta-Analysis Results

We organized our findings into three main sections. First, we provide the results of heterogeneity and publication bias tests. Second, we present the main findings of our study. Third, we report the results of the moderator analysis.

4.1. Heterogeneity and publication bias: We tested the heterogeneity between studies using Q statistics and I^2 values for each relationship. The significant values of Q statistics and higher values of I^2 (more than 80%) are used as benchmarks to confirm the heterogeneity among studies (Hamari & Keronen, 2017; Sarkar et al., 2020). As reported in Table 4, Q-estimates for all relationships were significant at $p < 0.01$. Further, I^2 values were also above 80% for twelve out of thirteen relationships, which shows that heterogeneity exists between studies. Results of

the heterogeneity test also confirm our assumption of the random effect model. We also assessed the level of publication bias using the fail-safe N test. The value of fail-safe N represents the number of additional studies with the non-significant result that could make a significant relationship non-significant (Hamari & Keronen, 2017; Sarkar et al., 2020). Researchers suggest that the ratio of fail-safe N and the number of studies (k) should be greater than a threshold value of 2.0 to minimize the impact of publication bias (Hamari & Keronen, 2017). As depicted in Table 4, twelve relationships out of thirteen pass the fail-safe N test as the ratio value exceeds the threshold value of 2.0. Thus, we can conclude that there is a negligible impact of publication bias on our results.

4.2. Main Results: As reported in Table 4, all antecedents have a significant positive impact on the eWOM credibility. Further, eWOM credibility exerts a significant positive impact on all consequences. However, there is a large variation in combined effect size (r), which indicates the difference in the strength of the relationship between eWOM credibility and various constructs.

Table 4: Meta-analytic effect sizes, heterogeneity, and publication bias tests of antecedents and consequences of eWOM Credibility

Factor	k	Sample Size	I2	Q	fsN	N/k	Combined ES	95% L(r)	95% H(r)
Argument Quality	12	4743	98.1	575.76***	59.64	5.0	0.597***	0.441	0.718
Recommendation Consistency	9	3995	98.5	529.83***	37.8	4.2	0.520***	0.301	0.687
Recommendation Valence	13	3021	91.9	147.33***	24.83	1.9	0.291***	0.169	0.404
Recommendation Sidedness	7	3147	90.8	65.29***	18.62	2.7	0.366***	0.251	0.472
Recommendation Rating	8	2255	89.9	69.2***	31.68	4.0	0.496***	0.386	0.592
Source Credibility	8	2378	90.2	71.55***	45.28	5.7	0.666***	0.583	0.735
Source Expertise	12	4757	98.1	579.91***	69.36	5.8	0.678***	0.548	0.777
Source Trustworthiness	9	3901	99.2	1055.25***	53.964	6.0	0.700***	0.459	0.845
Tie Strength	5	1653	97.3	150.58***	15.4	3.1	0.408**	0.132	0.625

Homophily	6	1965	98.3	299.65***	24.9	4.2	0.515**	0.213	0.727
eWOM Adoption	14	4623	97.0	440.31***	90.58	6.5	0.747***	0.662	0.813
Purchase Intention	17	5826	96.9	521.26***	57.97	3.4	0.441***	0.312	0.553
Attitude Towards Product	4	1136	77.2	13.14**	16.68	4.2	0.517***	0.419	0.603

Note: *** p-value < 0.001; ** p-value < 0.01; k: number of studies; ES – effect size*; *L(r) & H(r) = lower and upper boundaries of 95% confidence interval

Results indicate that source trustworthiness has the strongest impact (r = 0.700***) on the eWOM credibility, while recommendation valence exerts the least influence (r = 0.291***). Also, there is particular strong relationship between eWOM credibility and source credibility (r = 0.666***), source expertise (r = 0.678***), argument quality (r = 0.597***), and recommendation consistency (r = 0.520***), and homophily (r = 0.515**) based on the Cohen classification (Cohen, 1977; Sarkar et al., 2020). However, recommendation rating (r = 0.496***), tie strength (r = 0.408**), and recommendation sidedness (r = 0.366***) has a moderate influence on eWOM credibility. Further, eWOM credibility has a greater impact on eWOM adoption (r = 0.747***) as compared to attitude towards product (r = 0.517***) and purchase intention (r = 0.441***).

4.3 Moderator Analysis: The purpose of our moderator analysis is to examine the difference in the strength of the relationship between eWOM credibility and various factors across cultures, product and platform type. Results indicate (Table 5) that individualism-collectivism orientation negatively moderates the relationship of argument quality (β = -0.750*), recommendation consistency (β = -0.667*), recommendation rating (β = -0.853*), and tie strength (β = -0.893*) with eWOM credibility. Negative moderation indicates that the positive impact of these variables on eWOM credibility is stronger in collectivistic culture (low score in individualism collectivism dimension) as compared to individualistic culture (high score in individualistic collectivism orientation). Further, the individualism collectivism dimension only changes the strength of relationship, not the nature (positive/negative) of the relationship. The impact of individualism-collectivism orientation on other relationships was not significant.

Table 5: Meta-analysis for moderating effect of culture

Relationship	k	b	β	95% L(r)	95% H(r)
Argument Quality ↔ eWOM Credibility	12	-0.011*	-0.750*	-0.0018	-0.004
Recommendation Consistency ↔ eWOM Credibility	9	-0.014*	-0.667*	-0.027	-0.001
Recommendation Valence ↔ eWOM Credibility	13	-0.000	-0.001	-0.004	0.004
Recommendation Sidedness ↔ eWOM Credibility	7	0.001	0.077	-0.009	0.011
Recommendation Rating ↔ eWOM Credibility	8	-0.005*	-0.853*	-0.008	-0.002
Source Credibility ↔ eWOM Credibility	8	-0.002	-0.194	-0.01	0.006
Source Expertise ↔ eWOM Credibility	12	-0.000	-0.023	-0.009	0.008
Source Trustworthiness ↔ eWOM Credibility	9	-0.001	-0.052	-0.016	0.014
Tie Strength ↔ eWOM Credibility	5	-0.184*	-0.893*	-0.336	-0.032
Homophily ↔ eWOM Credibility	6	-0.001	-0.028	-0.018	0.017
eWOM Adoption ↔ eWOM Credibility	14	-0.006	-0.449	-0.013	0.002
Purchase Intention ↔ eWOM Credibility	17	-0.003	-0.296	-0.008	0.002
Attitude Towards Product ↔ eWOM Credibility	4	0.002	0.554	-0.005	0.009

Note: * p-value < 0.05; k: number of studies; L(r) & H(r) = lower and upper boundaries of 95% confidence interval;* β *= standardized estimate,* b *= unstandardized estimate.

With regard to the subgroup analysis, significant value of Q statistics (Table 6) indicates that product type (s = search, e = experience, o = others) significantly moderates the relationship between eWOM credibility and argument quality (r_s=.294* vs r_e=.444* vs r_o=.738*), recommendation consistency (r_s=.117* vs r_e=.637 vs r_o=.602*), recommendation sidedness (r_s=.152* vs r_e=.267* vs r_o=.437*), recommendation rating (r_s=.259* vs r_e=.401* vs r_o=.563*), tie strength (r_s=.171* vs r_e=.528* vs r_o=.437), and eWOM adoption (r_s=.705* vs r_e=.744* vs r_o=.759*). In particular, post hoc analysis (Web Appendix I) reveals that positive influence of recommendation sidedness (r_s=.152* vs. r_e=.267*, Qs=7.750. p=.0054), and tie strength (r_s=.171* vs. r_e=.528*, Qs=36.140, p<.0001) is stronger in experience products as compared to search products. However, the impact of argument quality (Qs=.560, p=.4523), recommendation consistency (Qs=1.050, p=.3055), and recommendation rating (Qs=1.000, p=.318) on eWOM credibility are similar in search and experience products as there is no

significant difference in the strength of the relationship. Therefore, post hoc analysis reveals that moderating impact of product type can be driven by the difference between any pair (Search vs. experience or search vs. others, or experience vs. others). All possible pairwise comparisons are given in Web Appendix I.

Regarding the platform type (odf = online discussion forum, orw = online review website, ec = e-commerce, sm = social media, bl = blogs, ot = others) results indicate (Table 7) that platform type significantly moderates the relationship between eWOM credibility and argument quality (r_{odf} =.760* vs r_{orw} =.657* vs r_{sm}=.470*), recommendation consistency (r_{odf} =.601* vs r_{orw} =.681* vs r_{sm}=.124*), recommendation rating (r_{odf} =.550* vs r_{sm} =.611* vs r_{ec} =.401* vs r_{orw} =.559* vs r_{ot}=.259*), source credibility (r_{odf} =.738* vs r_{orw} =.557* vs r_{sm}=.755* vs r_{bl}=.605*), source expertise (r_{odf} =.426* vs r_{orw} =.670* vs r_{sm}=.787* vs r_{bl}=.640* vs r_{ot}=.376*), source trustworthiness (r_{odf} =.464* vs r_{orw} =.701 vs r_{sm}=.774* vs r_{bl}=.801*), tie strength (r_{odf} =.528* vs r_{orw} =.337* vs r_{sm}=.736* vs r_{ot}=.151*), homophily (r_{odf} =.397 vs r_{orw} =.385* vs r_{sm}=.711), and attitude towards product (r_{odf} =.540* vs r_{orw} =.331* vs r_{ot}=.607*). In particular, post hoc analysis reveals the relationship of eWOM credibility with argument quality (r_{odf} =.760* vs. r_{sm}=.470*, Qs=8.51, p=.0035), and recommendation consistency (r_{odf} =.601* vs. r_{sm}=.124*, Qs=47.72, p<.0001) is significantly stronger in online discussion forum than social media. However, the impact of argument quality (Qs=1.62, p=.2026) and recommendation consistency (Qs=.68, p=.4098) is similar in the online discussion forum and online review website. Further, positive influence of source expertise (r_{odf} =.426* vs r_{sm}=.787*, Qs=11.47, p=.0007), source trustworthiness (r_{odf} =.464* vs r_{sm}=.774* Qs=14.45, p=.0001), and tie strength (r_{odf} =.528* vs r_{sm}=.736* Qs=22.74, p<.0001) on eWOM credibility is significantly stronger in social media as compared to online discussion forum. Further, all the pairwise comparisons are given in Web Appendix J.

Table 6: Meta-analysis for moderating effect of product type

Relationship	Moderator	k	Combined ES	95% L(r)	95% H(r)	Q_S	p(Q)
Argument Quality ↔ eWOM Credibility	Search	2	0.294*	0.064	0.494	24.75	0.000
	Experience	4	0.444*	0.089	0.699		
	Others	6	0.738*	0.677	0.789		
Recommendation Consistency ↔ eWOM Credibility	Search	2	0.117*	0.067	0.166	102.16	0.000
	Experience	2	0.637	-0.432	0.962		
	Others	5	0.602*	0.534	0.662		
Recommendation Valence ↔ eWOM Credibility	Search	4	0.193*	0.013	0.361	4.14	0.126
	Experience	6	0.392*	0.226	0.536		
	Others	3	0.205*	0.115	0.291		
Recommendation Sidedness ↔ eWOM Credibility	Search	1	0.152*	0.092	0.211	15.40	0.001
	Experience	1	0.267*	0.211	0.320		
	Others	5	0.437*	0.286	0.567		
Recommendation Rating ↔ eWOM Credibility	Search	1	0.259*	0.134	0.375	13.26	0.001
	Experience	2	0.401*	0.138	0.612		
	Others	5	0.563*	0.450	0.659		
Source Credibility ↔ eWOM Credibility	Experience	2	0.603*	0.564	0.639	1.82	0.178
	Others	6	0.688*	0.564	0.782		
Source Expertise ↔ eWOM Credibility	Search	2	0.473	-0.006	0.776	3.14	0.182
	Experience	3	0.800*	0.621	0.899		
	Others	7	0.664*	0.452	0.805		
Source Trustworthiness ↔ eWOM Credibility	Search	3	0.701	-0.132	0.954	3.33	0.190
	Experience	4	0.759*	0.602	0.859		
	Others	2	0.537*	0.291	0.717		
Tie Strength ↔ eWOM Credibility	Search	1	0.171*	0.080	0.260	36.28	0.000
	Experience	1	0.528*	0.454	0.595		
	Others	3	0.437	-0.037	0.750		
Homophily ↔ eWOM Credibility	Experience	3	0.318*	0.007	0.573	1.37	0.242
	Others	3	0.672*	0.069	0.915		
eWOM Adoption ↔ eWOM Credibility	Search	2	0.705*	0.500	0.836	440.31	0.000
	Experience	5	0.744*	0.604	0.840		
	Others	7	0.759*	0.609	0.857		
Purchase Intention ↔ eWOM Credibility	Search	3	0.457*	0.318	0.577	3.35	0.187
	Experience	12	0.406*	0.236	0.553		
	Others	2	0.597*	0.443	0.716		
Attitude Towards Product ↔ eWOM Credibility	Search	1	0.607*	0.519	0.683	3.05	0.081
	Experience	3	0.485*	0.363	0.590		

Note: * p-value < 0.05; k: number of studies; ES: effect size; L(r) & H(r) = lower and upper boundaries of 95% confidence interval; p = significance value; Q_S: Heterogeneity test between subgroups

4.4 Additional Analysis: First, we conducted the permutation test to check the robustness of meta-regression results (Higgins & Thompson, 2004). A permutation test is a specific type of resampling method which assess the robustness of a statistical model using different data sampled from the same source and recalculate the p values based on the many randomly selected permutations of the original data set (Gagnier et al., 2012; Higgins & Thompson, 2004). A comparison of the p values obtained from the meta-regression and permutation test (Web Appendix H) indicates the robustness of our result as there is only a slight change in p values. Further, there is no change in the significance of the results.

We conducted additional moderator analysis for the methodological variables for the publication year, sample type (Student/Non-student), and technique (Experiment/Survey). However, we have not discussed the effect of methodological moderators in the conceptual model, as most of the relationships comprised non-student samples (e.g., only one student sample for argument quality and recommendation rating). Similarly, the majority of studies have utilized the survey technique than experiment. Thus, moderating analysis of methodological variables has limited applicability due to data constraints. Web Appendix D, E, and F report the results of moderator analysis for publication year, sample type, and technique, respectively. Further, we conducted the moderator analysis (Web Appendix G) for other cultural dimensions (power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femineity, long-term orientation, and indulgence) to reasonably rule out the alternative moderators.

Table 7: Meta-analysis for moderating effect of platform type

Relationship	**Moderator**	**k**	**Combined ES**	**95% L(r)**	**95% H(r)**	**Q_S**	**Q (p)**
Argument Quality ↔ eWOM Credibility	Online Discussion Forum	1	0.760*	0.686	0.819	8.89	0.012
	Online Review Website	6	0.657*	0.465	0.789		
	Social Media	5	0.470*	0.22	0.663		

Recommendation Consistency ↔ eWOM Credibility	Online Discussion Forum	1	0.601*	0.491	0.692	68.73	0.0001
	Online Review Website	5	0.681*	0.497	0.807		
	Social Media	3	0.124*	0.086	0.161		
Recommendation Valence ↔ eWOM Credibility	E-commerce	3	0.203*	0.051	0.345	2.52	0.471
	Online Review Website	8	0.344*	0.175	0.494		
	Online Discussion Forum	1	0.172*	0.017	0.319		
	Social Media	1	0.217*	0.065	0.36		
Recommendation Sidedness ↔ eWOM Credibility	Online Discussion Forum	1	0.291*	0.142	0.428	1.32	0.516
	Online Review Website	3	0.440*	0.219	0.619		
	Social Media	3	0.324*	0.149	0.479		
Recommendation Rating ↔ eWOM Credibility	Online Discussion Forum	2	0.550*	0.176	0.785	32.72	0.0001
	Social Media	1	0.611*	0.549	0.666		
	E-commerce	2	0.401*	0.138	0.612		
	Online Review Website	2	0.559*	0.500	0.613		
	Others	1	0.259*	0.134	0.375		
Source Credibility ↔ eWOM Credibility	Online Discussion Forum	3	0.738*	0.558	0.647	17.94	0.0005
	Online Review Website	3	0.557*	0.460	0.64		
	Social Media	1	0.755*	0.689	0.809		
	Blogs	1	0.605*	0.558	0.647		
Source Expertise ↔ eWOM Credibility	Online Discussion Forum	1	0.426*	0.360	0.488	40.99	0.0001
	Online Review Website	5	0.670*	0.380	0.84		
	Social Media	4	0.787*	0.617	0.886		
	Blogs	1	0.640*	0.584	0.691		
	Others	1	0.376*	0.258	0.483		
Source Trustworthiness ↔ eWOM Credibility	Online Discussion Forum	2	0.464*	0.380	0.541	75.11	0.0001
	Online Review Website	3	0.701	-0.132	0.954		
	Social Media	3	0.774*	0.652	0.857		
	Blogs	1	0.801*	0.766	0.831		
Tie Strength ↔ eWOM Credibility	Online Discussion Forum	1	0.528*	0.454	0.595	149.99	0.0001
	Online Review Website	1	0.337*	0.219	0.445		
	Social Media	1	0.736*	0.682	0.781		
	Others	2	0.151*	0.076	0.224		
Homophily ↔ eWOM Credibility	Online Discussion Forum	2	0.397	-0.005	0.689	299.65	0.0001
	Online Review Website	2	0.385	-0.134	0.739		
	Social Media	2	0.711	-0.41	0.976		
eWOM Adoption ↔ eWOM Credibility	E-commerce	3	0.761*	0.665	0.832	4.65	0.199
	Online Discussion Forum	4	0.641*	0.397	0.800		
	Online Review Website	3	0.743*	0.520	0.871		
	Social Media	4	0.818*	0.755	0.865		

Purchase Intention ↔ eWOM Credibility	E-commerce	2	0.447*	0.118	0.687	2.21	0.698
	Online Discussion Forum	1	0.522*	0.442	0.594		
	Online Review Website	8	0.405*	0.134	0.619		
	Social Media	3	0.502*	0.122	0.754		
	Others	3	0.439*	0.331	0.536		
Attitude Towards Product ↔ eWOM Credibility	Online Discussion Forum	2	0.540*	0.484	0.592	11.99	0.003
	Online Review Website	1	0.331*	0.181	0.467		
	Others	1	0.607*	0.519	0.683		

Note: * p-value < 0.05; k: number of studies; ES: effect size; L(r) & H(r) = lower and upper boundaries of 95% confidence interval; p = significance value; Q_S: Heterogeneity test between subgroups

5. Discussion and Implications

5.1. Discussion: Our meta-analytic study attempts to resolve the inconsistent findings of extant eWOM credibility literature and provide a conclusive take-away. For example, empirical validation of higher credibility of two-sided reviews resolves the contrast findings regarding the impact of recommendation-sidedness. Based on our conceptual framework, we discuss the five major themes which emerged from our study.

First, our study reveals that reviewer (source) related factors, especially source expertise, trustworthiness, and credibility, play an important role in determining eWOM credibility. Extant studies have already established the importance of source characteristics in offline word of mouth (Hou Wee et al., 1995; Mak & Lyytinen, 1997; Slater & Rouner, 1996). Thus, our study extends the findings of previous studies by establishing the positive impact of source characteristics on eWOM credibility. Further, the dominant role of source-related variables indicates that the source persuasiveness perspective provides an excellent theoretical background to explain the consumers' rationale behind the eWOM credibility assessment. The higher strength of reviewer-related antecedents with eWOM credibility also shows that source-related peripheral cues are more influential than review-related peripheral cues (e.g., recommendation sidedness and recommendation rating). These findings support the decision

of eWOM platforms to provide special identification tags to reviewers (e.g., *'verified reviewer,' 'verified purchase,' 'verified profile,'* etc.), which can minimize the cognitive load of consumers during eWOM processing. Similarly, many eWOM platforms highlight the source expertise in various forms such as top 10 reviewer, top 100 reviewer, etc. Furthermore, the significance of homophily and tie strength established that even in a virtual environment, the perceived social relationship is an important cue through which consumers assess the information's credibility.

The second theme that emerged from our findings suggests that, among the review-related factors, argument quality is the strongest predictor of eWOM credibility while review valence exerts the least influence. It indicates that in the absence of source-related cues (i.e., expertise, credibility, and trustworthiness), consumers give more weight to the central cue (i.e., argument quality) than review-related peripheral cues (i.e., recommendation sidedness and recommendation rating). However, the significant impact of recommendation consistency and recommendation rating suggests that high ratings and consistency help consumers evaluate eWOM messages with little cognitive effort. Thus, when consumers don't have the motivation to use central cues, they use these two factors as heuristics to determine eWOM credibility.

The third theme which emerged from our study indicates that eWOM credibility is a significant factor that influences the consumers' willingness to use eWOM messages in their purchase decision. This shows that the credibility of reviews is an integral part of consumers' decision-making, and credible eWOM messages can improve consumers' purchase intention. These findings confirm the findings of previous meta-analytic studies on eWOM, which established the positive impact of eWOM credibility on eWOM adoption and purchase intention (Ismagilova et al., 2020a; Qahri-Saremi & Montazemi, 2019).

The fourth theme which emerged from our analysis is the significant role of receiver culture. Consistent with the extant literature, the impact of normative factors (e.g., recommendation consistency, recommendation rating) on eWOM credibility is stronger in collectivistic culture than in individualistic culture (Luo et al., 2014). However, the weaker impact of argument quality in individualistic culture is contrary to the general expectation; as extant literature suggests, consumers from highly individualistic culture use their judgments and rely more on the arguments of the message to determine the eWOM credibility (Dang & Raska, 2021). Although, a study done by Luo et al. (2014) also found the insignificant impact of individualism collectivism orientation on the relationship between argument quality and eWOM credibility.

The fifth theme which emerged from our findings is the moderating role of context in eWOM communication. For instance, interactive design and detailed profile of reviewers in social media channels reduce the ambiguity and uncertainty around the reviewers. Therefore, the influence of reviewer-related factors (source expertise, source trustworthiness, tie strength, and homophily) on eWOM credibility are stronger in social media platforms than other platforms. Further, the weaker relationship of eWOM credibility with antecedents (i.e., recommendation sidedness, tie strength) and consequence (i.e., eWOM adoption) search products as compared to experience and other product types is consistent with the extant literature that eWOM messages are more influential for experience products as compared to search products (Floyd et al., 2014; Hong et al., 2017).

5.2. Theoretical Implications: The present study uses the theoretical lens of the dual processing perspective and source persuasiveness perspective to investigate the antecedents and consequences of eWOM credibility. By using meta-analysis as a statistical tool, we not only resolve the contrasting findings of the previous studies but also test the moderating role of culture, platform, and product type. This study is one of the first attempts to investigate the difference in eWOM credibility across five types of eWOM platforms. Most previous studies

have focused on social media and e-commerce platforms and did not pay much attention to other eWOM platforms. Against this background, our study provides several theoretical implications.

First, our paper incorporated a dual-processing perspective and source persuasiveness perspective to provide a more comprehensive theoretical foundation for future studies. Focusing on the five elements of eWOM credibility (Review, Reviewer, Response, Receiver, and Context), our study empirically synthesizes the antecedents, consequences, and moderators of eWOM credibility in one integrative model. Empirical validation of the conceptual model will help researchers to address the model specification error, which may occur when some of the relevant variables are excluded from the model. Our findings confirm that consumers use both review and reviewer-related determinants to assess the eWOM credibility. Thus, exclusion of any determinants in the model can result in model specification error which may lead to inconsistent and biased results (Greene, 2003; Qahri-Saremi & Montazemi, 2019). Some empirical studies have not paid much attention to this issue, which led to contrasting findings in the extant eWOM credibility literature. This meta-analytic study can help the research community to resolve this issue.

Our study also contributes to eWOM literature by investigating the moderating role of culture platform and product type. Results of moderating effects provide a more insightful and conditional understanding of the eWOM credibility and help us in explaining why some antecedents are more influential in a particular culture and context. For example, results show that source-related determinants exert a greater influence on social media platforms than other platforms. This result is consistent with the source identity theory (Tajfel et al., 1979) and social support theory (Cobb, 1976) which suggest that the large number of social cues and self-declaration in social media platforms enhance the influence of source-related antecedents on eWOM credibility (Yan et al., 2018). Similarly, Hofstede (1980) cultural dimensions (i.e.,

individualism and collectivism) can explain the greater impact of recommendation rating and recommendation consistency in collectivist culture than in individualistic culture. Further, the moderating role of product type indicates that evaluation and influence of eWOM credibility are influenced by the product type. Thus, our study illustrates the critical boundary conditions of eWOM credibility. Moderating results also indicate that contextual and cultural factors play an important role in determining the effectiveness of central and peripheral cues. Thus, it is important to take contextual and cultural factors in to consideration when researchers apply the dual processing theories to build conceptual model. Besides, our study indicates that a general theoretical conclusion about the antecedents is difficult to obtain as factors related to receiver and context can moderate their influence.

5.3. Managerial Implications: Several important implications arise from our study for the eWOM platforms and marketing managers. First, our study confirms that eWOM credibility positively influences eWOM adoption, purchase intention, and attitude towards the product. Thus, companies should encourage consumers to post reliable and trustworthy reviews on various eWOM platforms. Companies can provide special discounts or coupons to customers whose reviews are rated high on eWOM platforms. Also, companies should report the fake and misleading reviews to the concerned platform to make sure that they are removed from the eWOM platforms.

Second, our study presents the most important factors which influence the consumers' perception of eWOM credibility. The significant influence of reviewer trustworthiness and reviewer credibility on eWOM credibility suggests that the eWOM platform should promote credible and trustworthy reviewers. For example, eWOM platforms can give special badges or tags to credible and trustworthy reviewers so that consumers can easily differentiate between credible and non-credible sources. Reviews written by credible sources should be promoted on the first page so that consumers can quickly locate credible reviews with minimum cognitive

effort. eWOM platforms can also create a special section where trustworthy and credible sources can solve the consumers' doubts related to products and services being sold. eWOM platforms should ensure that only genuine buyers can post reviews to offset the chances of fake reviews or company-sponsored reviews. eWOM platforms can use big data or machine learning techniques to identify trustworthy and credible sources.

Our study also suggests that expert reviewers provide more credible reviews than non-expert sources. Thus, firms should pay greater attention to the reviews written by expert reviewers. Any negative comments written by the expert reviewers should be addressed on an urgent basis. eWOM platforms can specifically display the reviews written by expert reviewers, as it will help consumers resolve the inconsistency that arises due to mixed opinions. eWOM platforms can add additional filters to their websites so that consumers can quickly sort or filter the reviews written by expert reviewers. The positive influence of homophily suggests that detailed information about reviewers such as age, gender, and location can also enhance the credibility of eWOM messages.

Results of the meta-analysis indicate that apart from source attributes, consumers also use content-related cues to determine eWOM credibility. Online reviews supported with facts, customer purchase history, and detailed experience enhance the argument strength of the message. Thus, online platforms can provide a short guide to the customers, which can help them to write high-quality reviews. Additionally, e-commerce vendors can provide standardized templates so that consumers do not include unnecessary and irrelevant information in online reviews, which can have a negative impact on review credibility.

Further, eWOM platforms should encourage consumers to include both negative and positive aspects of the products in their reviews, as two-sided reviews are considered more credible than one-sided reviews. Our results confirm that negative reviews are considered more credible than

positive ones. However, negative reviews can hamper the brand image and also reduce the purchase intention of consumers. Thus, companies should provide a quick response to the negative reviews so that the negative review doesn't get escalated. eWOM platforms should also allow the company or seller to "Respond Publicly" to the review, which can provide a 360-Degree perspective to a potential buyer.

With the growing volume of eWOM content, review rating becomes an important parameter that helps consumers evaluate the eWOM message with little cognitive effort. In most eWOM platforms, a recommendation rating reflects the likeability and helpfulness of the review, but it fails to indicate the number of people who trusted it. Thus, a recommendation rating can also indicate the number of people who found the recommendation rating credible and trustworthy. Also, users should be given choices to mark a particular review as misguiding or fake so that consumers can quickly identify the non-credible reviews.

Moderating role of culture, product, and platform type also provides significant insights to the researchers. For instance, eWOM platforms can recommend the relevant eWOM messages based on the culture of the consumers. Similarly, eWOM messages for experience products are more valuable for consumers than search goods. Thus, companies should pay special attention to the eWOM communication related to experience goods. Furthermore, the addition of more interactive features and source-related information in e-commerce platforms can enhance the influence of reviewer-related determinants, which will positively influence the eWOM credibility.

6. Future Research Directions and Limitations

Our study has limitations due to limited statistical data in the extant literature. For instance, we could not test the comprehensive model using the meta-analytic structural equation modeling. Similarly, data limitation prevented the investigation of the simultaneous impact of

all moderating variables on eWOM credibility. Further, some researchers suggest that Hofstede's cultural dimensions may not account for the cultural variations within a country (Schepers & van der Borgh, 2020; Zhang et al., 2018). Thus, the findings of our moderation analysis may be conservative. Researchers can explore a more appropriate method to measure the cultural values at the individual level.

Researchers suggest that one of the primary objectives of any meta-analytic study is to provide directions for future research (Rubera & Kirca, 2012). Thus, based on the findings and limitations of our research, we provide several avenues for future research directions.

6.1. Understanding the influence of external factors: Most of the research on eWOM credibility has focused on the internal factors (e.g., review and reviewer related), but anecdotal evidence suggests that consumers consider multiple factors when they evaluate the information credibility (O'Reilly & Marx, 2011). For example, recommendations from the offline social network (friends, families) play an important role in consumers' decision-making. Similarly, consumers also consume the information from traditional sources (e.g., news, advertising, corporate websites, product packaging) during their search process. Thus, contradiction/similarity between eWOM and external information sources can influence the perceived eWOM credibility. Further, consumers' encounters with the firm employees (e.g., hotel staff, customer representatives) can support or contradict the content of the eWOM message, which may impact eWOM credibility. Thus, there is a need for more studies that can provide a deeper understanding of the influence of external factors on eWOM credibility.

6.2. Identifying Boundary Conditions: Extant research has analyzed the effect of various moderators; however, there is a need to investigate the contingencies of the proposed relationships. Most researchers have focused only on the platform type, but they paid little attention to the moderating impact of platform-specific characteristics. For example, if an e-

commerce platform implements the interactive features of social media (e.g., share, comment, like), will it influence the perceived eWOM credibility? Similarly, most of the primary studies in our meta-analysis have adopted the search-experience criteria for product classification. Researchers can use the other product classification (e.g., Luxury vs. necessity, hedonic vs. utilitarian, low price vs. high price, mainstream vs. niche, new vs. old) to investigate the moderating role of product type. For example, the opinion of experts can be more credible for niche/new products due to a limited number of reviews. Similarly, other factors related to the firm (e.g., firm type (B2B or B2C), image, and age), consumers (knowledge, experience with the brand/organization, and search motives) can also moderate the relationship of eWOM credibility with its antecedents and consequences.

6.3. Identifying Longitudinal effects: Studies on eWOM credibility are primarily based on cross-sectional data, limiting the conclusions about the longitudinal effects. For example, most extant studies have conceptualized the source perception (e.g., expertise, credibility) as a static concept. However, consumers' perceptions of the reviewers can change over time due to many factors such as frequent social interactions, changes in the number of followers, and the quality of the content. Similarly, most virtual communities start with a small number of members, but then it grows over time in terms of the number of members and volume of the discussion. Thus, consumers' perceptions about the credibility and expertise of the members may also change over time. Similarly, consumers encounter a large amount of both positive and negative information over time which can also influence the eWOM credibility. Further, the long-term impact of eWOM credibility on information adoption and purchase intention can be assessed only through longitudinal empirical research.

6.4. Extension of Model: Researchers should attempt to extend the conceptual model by determining which aspects or dimensions influence the antecedents of eWOM credibility. For example, several dimensions (e.g., timeliness, comprehensiveness) can affect the argument

quality of the eWOM message. Similarly, consumers use several cues (e.g., number of followers, contribution, special badge) to determine the source's credibility and expertise. However, very few studies have examined the factors which can impact the antecedents of eWOM credibility; thus, we could not include them in our study. Investigation of the direct and indirect impact of these factors will provide a more comprehensive conceptual framework of eWOM credibility.

6.5. Impact of technology on eWOM credibility: Most of the studies included in our analysis were based on textual reviews and very few on visual eWOM (pictures, video). However, none of the studies has investigated the impact of new technologies (e.g., virtual reality, 360-degree video, augmented reality) on eWOM credibility. However, sensory information and immersion provided by these technologies can significantly influence the perceived eWOM credibility. Therefore, researchers should investigate the influence of new technologies on perceived eWOM credibility.

6.6. Understudied consequences of eWOM credibility: Researchers have focused mainly on the two major consequences of eWOM credibility: eWOM adoption and Purchase intention. However, considering the strong influence of online reviews on consumer behavior, researchers should give more attention to the other aspects as well. For example, researchers have paid no attention to the relationship between eWOM credibility and responses to the brand (i.e., brand love and brand hate).

7. Conclusion

In this study, we reconciled the contradictory findings regarding the relationship of eWOM credibility with its determinants and consequences using meta-analysis. Results indicate that source trustworthiness is the most effective predictor of eWOM credibility, while recommendation valence exerts the least impact on eWOM credibility. Further, the identified

relationships between eWOM credibility and various consequences were significant. We also discussed the moderating role of culture, product and platform type. Our study provides a conclusive takeaway on the determinants and consequences of eWOM credibility, which will help researchers in setting future research directions. Marketers can utilize this study to enhance the effectiveness of eWOM communication, which will help them to improve the purchase intention of the consumers.

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