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## Who and Where are My Complainers? Types of Online Complainers According to Motivations to Complain Online: A Segmentation Study

verfasst von / submitted by

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**1. Introduction**

With the advance of technology and the increase of social media usage, consumers are not shy to share their opinions and experiences online. These can be shared on different platforms, including social media, blogs and online review sites. In general, these communications are defined as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Electronic word of mouth is defined as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 39).

Previous studies have emphasized this importance. A cross-industry study showed that 80% of consumers are less likely to buy from a company that ignores online customer complaints (Drennan, 2011). Gesenhues (2013), stated that 38% of consumers will have a more negative attitude toward the brand when they do not get a timely response and 60% are more likely to take a negative action toward the brand like generating negative word-of-mouth, escalating complaints through other avenues and buying less from the company or switching brands.

A few studies investigated online complaints or complainers, especially regarding social media usage to complain. One of them was developed by Gregoire, Salle & Tripp (2015), who identified six different types of social media complaints: directness, boasting, badmouthing, tattling, spite and feeding the vultures. Within the six complaint types, he suggested how brand managers should address each of them. In the meantime, Moreover, Melancon & Dalakas (2018) identified through a Netnography eight dimensions of social voices on social media Facebook and categorized them by the strength of the relationship to the organization. Their results indicated that appropriate response strategies differ based on the social voice segment (Melancon & Dalakas, 2018). Alternatively, the consumers complaining behavior online was also investigated. Li (2019), examined how empowerment affects individual's likelihood of publicly punishing a company with which they had a bad experience through online

complaining behavior. Additionally, Goetzinger, Park & Widdows (2006), provided an initial framework regarding online third party complaining and complimenting behavior as consequence of online product or consumer service failure or success.

Moreover, companies need to be prepared when executing reparation online to answer these dissatisfied consumers as fast as possible. Nonetheless, how companies will know exactly what to offer in return for each type of complainer or how to answer those complaints without knowing what motivated these consumers to voice a complaint? Different types of customers look for different types of resolutions (Tripp & Gregoire, 2011). Therefore, it is important to investigate what is behind the action of different groups of online complainers and help marketers generating insights about the consumers and their behavior online.

With that being said, there is a research gap regarding the segmentation of online complainers based in their online complaining motivations. Thus, the present research will investigate what are the different types of complainers based on two motivations to complain online: revenge-seeking and reconciliation and reparation. As a classic market strategy, market segmentation separates a large number of customers into meaningful groups who share similar characteristics, requirements and behaviors (Smith, 1956; Dickson & Ginter, 1987; McDonald & Dunbar, 2004).

Additionally, this project intends to add to the existing knowledge regarding online complaining behavior and with that researchers can conduct new projects to investigate those groups and compare them with present empirical knowledge. Therefore, the present study will: (1) segment online complainers according to what motivated them to voice a complaint (revenge or reconciliation/reparation); (2) profile the segments according to the online complaining variables (webcare expectations: timeliness and compensation, risk perception, online channel choice and demographics); (3) develop a description of the specific characteristics of the segments regarding their online complaining habits. Finally, this study would like to identify segments of complainers and answer the following research questions:

**RQ 1: Are there differences between the segments regarding their motivations when online complaining?**

**RQ 2: Do the segments differ regarding their expectations when online complaining?**

**RQ 3: Does risk perception play a role when deciding to share a complaint online and are there differences within the segments?**

**RQ 4: What are the most used online channels to share a complaint from each segment?**

**RQ 5: What are the main characteristics of the different segments of online complainers?**

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1 Online complaining and webcare

A complaint has a broad definition as an articulation of dissatisfaction or resentment toward companies. The purpose of complaining can be to provide awareness for behavior that was experienced as harmful, to request any form of compensation and or to make a change in the criticized behavior (Strauss & Seidel, 2004). Additionally, complaints are a way for consumers to escape or attempt to change an unwanted situation (Fornell and Wernerfelt, 1987). Complaints can be made in a private or a public matter. Private complaining is when customers voice their problems directly and only to the firms. Furthermore, the online complaining context implicates customers going beyond companies' borders to alert the public about a service failure experience (Singh, 1988).

With the advancement of the web 2.0, consumers gained power and opportunities to use different channels to give voice to their opinions and complaints. Within a click and in seconds, consumers can share negative word of mouth with other consumers. One of the biggest reasons for not complaining is time and effort (Voorhees et al., 2006). Therefore, online complaining might increase since the customers look after convenience and this may stimulate the complaint

behavior (Berry et al., 2002). Additionally, the anonymity of the internet encourages consumers to spread negative sentiments among other users (Gelb & Sundaram 2002).

For this reason, knowing how often companies are being harmed online by consumers, webcare has become essential as part of the marketing strategy of companies (Grégoire, Tripp, & Legoux 2009; Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004; Hong & Lee 2005; Ward & Ostrom 2006). Webcare can be defined as: "The act of engaging in online interactions with (complaining) consumers, by actively searching the web to address consumer feedback (e.g., questions, concerns, and complaints)" (van Noort & Willemsen, 2012; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Hong & Lee, 2005).

Marketers often monitor and interfere in negative comments with 'marketer-initiated webcare' (MIW), which has the goal to repair and influence complaints failure perceptions (Weitzl & Hutzinger, 2017). Intensive webcare by the companies is also crucial because negative word of mouth can happen not only in brand generated-platforms and social media sites (Chiou and Cheng 2003; Yang, Kang, and Johnson 2010) but also in consumer-generated platforms as review sites, blogs, social network sites and recommendation sites (van Laer and de Ruyter 2010; Vásquez 2011). Nevertheless, companies eventually are hesitant to interfere and interact with negative commenters due to the lack of compression regarding webcare best practices (Noort & Willemsen, 2011).

## 2.2 Segmenting online complainers

In order to develop a more effective webcare, companies must understand what main factors are behind complainers' motivations and the triggers that influence the online complaining behavior.

### 2.2.1 Motivations for Online Complaining

When looking at what are the motivations that lead consumers to complain, recent studies found that some of these motivations include: seeking redress, seeking an apology, seeking compensation, requesting corrective action and expressing emotional anger (Heung &

Lam, 2003). The authors Mattilda & Witz (2004) agree that redress seeking is also a motivation to voice a complaint, but they add that venting of frustration is also a very important motive. According to the authors, redress seeking refers to looking for a remedy and rectification of a problem, when consumers try to correct a problem. Examples of redress seeking could be when consumers are seeking for an exchange, refund or repair. Additionally, venting is to give opening and to express. The aim of venting is to release frustration and discontent in order to make the customer feel better (Mattila & Wirtz, 2004).

On the other hand, when considering the online complaints, Hennig-Thurau et al., (2004), stated that the primary motivations for online consumers to share their opinions and experiences online were desiring social interaction, economic incentives and the potential to improve their own worthiness within the virtual world. Additionally, the authors explained that within their study they could conclude that consumers are not a homogeneous group when considering their eWOM motivations (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

The two motivations for online complaining that this study will be looking into are revenge taking (negative motivation) and reconciliation or reparation (positive motivation). Firstly, a desire for revenge can be defined as customers need to seek punishment for the companies that caused them harm (Aquino, Tripp & Bies 2001; Bechwati & Morrin 2003; Grégoire & Fisher 2006). Revenge can take the form of direct or indirect complaining (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008). In the direct form, consumers might engage in vindictive complaining, when a consumer verbally accuses the company or its employees to cause inconvenience (Grégoire & Fisher, 2008; Hibbard et al., 2001). Indirectly, consumers can spread negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) or complain to a third party (e.g. the internet) with the aim of negatively advert the company's actions (Grégoire et al., 2010). Secondly, the other motivation to be considered, reconciliation is the extent to which a consumer is willing to accept a company's failure and extend acts of goodwill in hope of maintaining a relationship with the company (Aquino, Tripp

& Bies 2001). Moreover, reparatory behavior is when customers seek redress and resolve the problem caused by the company (Grégoire & Fischer, 2008).

Additionally, Singh (1988) stated that customers may mostly engage in two reparations behaviors. First, customers may share their complaints internally to the firm. Second, if this communication fails, the customer might engage in third-party complaining in order to seek a solution. Occasionally customers can seek both revenge and conciliation. It might occur that the client wants to "teach a lesson", which is a typical motive for revenge, but afterward want to "get on with business" (Tripp & Bies, 2009).

When studying the online complainers' behaviors based on their motivations, it is expected that four different segments of complainers with different levels within the motivations revenge and reconciliation/reparation will arise. In order to better understand the segments and describe it further, they will be pre-named as the following: The Unmotivated (low on revenge and low in reconciliation/reparation motivations), The Peacemakers (low on revenge and high on reconciliation/reparation motivations), The Vindictive (high in revenge and low in reconciliation/reparation motivations) and The Persevering (high in revenge and high in reconciliation/reparation motivations).

**Table 1.**

*Online Complainers Segments pre-named*

|         |      | Reconciliation Reparation | |
|---------|------|----------------|-----------------|
|         |      | Low            | High            |
|         | Low  | The Unmotivated | The Peacemakers |
| Revenge | High | The Vindictive | The Persevering |

The groups that originated from the present study can bring new insights to marketers when planning their online strategies, helping them to better target consumers based on the different segments that will originate from this study.

**2.3 Profiling online complaints**

In order to identify, fully describe and differentiate the clusters of complainers that will arise from this research, the following descriptives based on previous empirical knowledge, will be used in the analysis and explored following.

*2.3.1 Expectations Towards the Company (Webcare): Timeliness and Compensation*

As stated previously, webcare has become essential within companies in order to manage and answer customers online. But what are the expectations of these customers towards the companies? Consumers might differ regarding how fast they want companies to answer them and if they are already expecting compensation when voicing their complaints. It is possible that some consumers look for fast responses from the companies when addressing an online complaint. Nevertheless, it is also possible that other consumers rather wait a bit longer and get good compensation as an outcome. It is important to explore these expectations, so marketers know exactly what to expect from each type of complainer and what to provide consumers when planning their webcare strategies. Webcare satisfaction refers to the complainer's evaluation of how well the company dealt with their issue when complaining online (Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002).

According to Berry (1995), different complaint-handling actions can provide different types of benefits that can be distinguished between economic and social. Economic benefits are related to all tangible or material incentives (e.g., refunds, product replacement, time savings) and social benefits represent symbolic, psychological or emotional gains (e.g., providing apologies, explanations, showing the customer that the company cares). In the present study, we will discuss the two types of benefits that consumers may expect from the company and from their webcare efforts: timeliness and compensation.

**Timeliness.** This refers to the speed in which an organization responds or handles a complaint (Davidow, 2003; Liao, 2007) and it provided both economic and social benefits. It is known that beyond answering the customers, the speed on which the companies support team

respond to these customers' complaints are crucial for the service recovery (Davidow, 2003). Fast responses demonstrated to have a positive effect on satisfaction and repurchase intentions (Conlon & Murray, 1996) and practical justice, which also had a positive effect on recovery satisfaction (Smith, Bolton, & Wagner, 1999). The authors Stevens et al. (2018), recommend that companies should hire specialized people that then will daily monitor the online mentions of the brand, products, and service. Also, the team should promptly answer the online complaints with an apology and analyze for solutions.

**Compensation.** Compensation comprehends refunds, discounts, product replacements, repairs and payment of additional expenses that organizations provide to consumers after a service failure (Kelley, Hoffmann & Davis 1993). Material compensatory measures, increasing the economic gains of consumers, help improve the output-to-input ratio in the relationship (internal equity) as well as the balance between the output-to-input ratio of the customer and that of the company (external equity) (Estelami, 2000). Moreover, when companies offer material incentives, they provide economic benefits to the customer and help alleviate the loss caused by a service failure. Additionally, the authors Wirtz and Mattila (2004), establish that recovery outcomes, as for instance compensation and speed of recovery, have a combined effect on post-recovery satisfaction. Additionally, they stated that compensation might not enhance satisfaction when the recovery process is well-executed, with an immediate response and an apology. Likewise, compensation unsuccessfully decreased dissatisfaction when a poor recovery happened, with a delayed response without an apology. For the authors, compensation is a poor substitute for a good recovery process (Wirtz & Mattila, 2004). With that being said, the following sub-research question arises:

**Sub-RQ 2.1: Are there any differences between the segments in terms of their expectations of timeliness responses and compensation when online complaining?**

*2.3.2 Risk perception*

Risk is perceived differently within individuals, nevertheless, attitude towards risk is considered a stable property of his or her personality and culture (Mitchell & Boustani, 1993). Individuals who tend to take risks are defined as risk seekers and therefore engage in situations and activities where the outcomes could be negative or poor (Mitchell & Boustani, 1993). On the other hand, risk-averse individuals engage in behavior on which there is some certainty that the outcome will be positive or good (Keng et al., 1995). Nevertheless, since complaining outcomes are not always positive, such individuals may not take part in complaining actions. Risk-taking consumers tend to be more engaged in complaining actions since their main goal is to achieve a successful outcome regardless of the consequences (Bodey & Grace, 2007).

According to Lerman (2006), private action is seeing by the consumers to be the least threatening of the complaining behaviors since a consumer can share his dissatisfaction without having to confront or publicly humiliating the company. Even though third-party action may have severe consequences for a company than private complaints, the consumer doesn't directly confront the company. For the customer, complaining to a third-party is less risky because of third-party work as a mediator between the customer and the company.

Richins (1982), suggested that complaining attitudes were comprised of individual personal norms concerning complaining and the societal benefits that come with complaining. Bodey and Grace (2006), stated that consumers might feel reluctant, uncomfortable and show a lack of confidence to complain due to the risk of public complaints. Moreover, the authors stated that consumers who perceive a probability of success have positive attitudes when complaining and are more likely to complain more frequently (Blodgett et al., 1995; Bodey & Grace, 2006).

Along with that, it can be argued that complainers might act privately first when sharing a complaint because is perceived as less risky than going public. Additionally, third-party

websites are seen as good channels to share a complaint because of offer less public humiliation and risk for the complainers. Moreover, the following sub-research question was developed:

**Sub-RQ 3.1: Which segments have higher and lower risk perception levels when online complaining?**

*2.3.3 Channel choice - online complaining channels*

Consumers can share their opinions online in different channels and platforms. When they decide to voice their discontent, this can be done directly to the company, to a third-party and or spread negative word-of-mouth (Crié, 2003; Harrison-Walker, 2001; Singh, 1990).

Day and Landon (1977), divide consumer complaint behavior into two spheres. The first is regarding the action and no action taken. No action means that when the consumer experiences a deficit, they decided to not engage in complaining and remain loyal to the company. The second sphere is divided into either private or public action. Private action consists of boycotting the brand or the product engaging in negative word-of-mouth. On the contrary, public action would involve a third-party complaint or seek legal action. Singh (1989), went further and explored this thought by identifying three possible responses: voice, private and third-party. A voice response would be a customer that seeks for reparation, a private party response would be the customer engaging in negative word-of-mouth, and the third-party response would be taking legal action against the establishment (Butelli, 2007). Moreover, Hirschman (1970) categorized responses to service failure as voice, exit or loyalty. Voice attributes to active, constructive complaining to amend a situation. Exit arises when consumers do not complain and stop or reduce their transactions with the company. Finally, loyalty refers to a passive pattern response where consumers do not complain but continue to purchase from the business.

Susskind (2006), identified four types of complaints that are face-to-face with the manager, face-to-face with the employee, written (letter, e-mail, internet), and comment card. However, today the method that is growing exponentially is social media complaining.

Consumers may choose to complain online because they can avoid personal interaction, thus reducing the psychological costs of complaining (Lee & Cude, 2012; Zaugg, 2006). Mattila and Wirtz (2004), used the taxonomy of consumers responses to dissatisfaction by Dan and Landon (1977) and concluded that consumers who look for a problem solution opt for interactive rather than remote channels, while consumers looking for tangible compensation tend to perceive the face-to-face or phone channels because of the real-time interaction. Additionally, consumers that wanted to end their frustration, leaned towards remote channels such as written letters or e-mail. Moreover, Van Noort and Willemsen (2011), found that webcare interventions can attenuate negative brand evaluations engaged by negative word-of-mouth depending on the type of strategy (proactive vs. reactive) and the platform used (consumer-generated vs. brand-generated blog).

In the present study, we are interested in group consumers that voice or intend to voice, this means consumers which plan to take action and make a complaint within the different online channels available and learn about their channel choice according to their motivations for complaining. Among those are brand-generated, consumer-generated and third-party channels and for this study it is important to differentiate them.

**Brand-generated channels.** Often companies create a space on their webpage where consumers can enter in contact with the company if they have any enquires on their blogs and social media channels. Those are the brand generated channels where consumers can contact the company through an online chat or post comments, read most frequent questions, send messages or e-mails to the brand. Brand-generated platforms are often created and administered by a brand to comprehend "markets-as-conversations": conversational environments where brands have the goal to build collaborative relationships with their potential consumers rather than treating them as targets (Grunig & Huang 2000). Therefore, brand-generated platforms such as corporate blogs and brand-sponsored message boards allow the company to proactively engage in a dialog with consumers (Kelleher, 2009). However, research indicates that consumer

interactions with brand-generated content are minimal. According to Elliott (2014), only 0.1 percent of consumers interact with brand content for the top 2.500 brands on social media.

**Consumer-generated channels.** It is essential that companies look for consumer-generated channels since negative word-of-mouth doesn't happen only on brand-sponsored message boards and brand-generated blogs (Chiou & Cheng 2003; Yang, Kang & Johnson 2010) but in consumer-generated platforms as well, such as blogs, social network sites, recommendation sites, (micro)blogs and (anti)brand communities (van Laer & de Ruyter 2010; Vásquez 2011). According to a report by TNS NIPO (2011), 70% of consumers voice their complaints in consumer-generated platforms while 30% of them post complaints in branded environments.

The consumer complaint channels can be their own social media channels, where they have the option to share their discontent about a brand with other consumers in their personal pages/channels. Therefore, exposing the brand with negative word of mouth, which can lead to undesirable outcomes, such as brand image destruction and a decrease in sales, for instance (Balaji et al., 2016). Some of those channels are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. The public nature of social media opens to organizations the "customer sphere" of customer-to-customer interactions, and this "joint sphere" (Grönroos & Voima, 2013) allows organizations to recover.

**Third-party channels.** Third-party channels or corporate hate sites are websites where consumers can post their discontent and warn other consumers about a brand or company (Bailey, 2004). Some of these channels are created by discontent customers or are even supported by various consumer protected agencies. Some examples of third-party complaint channels are: http://www.complaints.com, http://www/allstatessucks.com, http://www.consumergripes.org., http://www.econsumer.gov/english/ (Bailey, 2004). Moreover, these forums or websites provide consumers with a "cyber-voice" to express their opinions in the form of compliments or complaints, which act as a powerful recommendation

agent available to consumers (Swaminathan, 2003). Additionally, third-party complaining can be characterized by consumers which take their dissatisfaction with media or customer associations as well as making legal actions taken by attorneys (Singh, 1988; Harrison-Walker, 2001).

After learning regarding the possible online channels which consumers might decide to voice their discontent, the following sub-research question arose:

**Sub-RQ 4.1: Do complainers channel choices differ according to what motivates them to voice a complaint online?**

Finally, the complainers will be described according to their socio-demographic characteristics as gender, age, education, income and country of residency. Those characteristics will be essential to differentiate the segments and check whether certain online complaining behaviors can be tracked according to the consumer socio-demographics. For instance, revenge complainers might be within a certain age group and reconciliation and reparatory behavior could be tracked according to how educated the consumer is. Therefore, the final sub-question was developed:

**Sub-RQ 5.1: Are there any age, income and education level differences between the segments The Unmotivated, The Peacemakers, The Vindictive and The Persevering complainers?**

**3. Methodology**

To answer the research questions of this study, an online survey was built and shared to find the four groups of online complainers, which was then further analyzed through a segmentation analysis and profiled accordingly.

**3.1 Questionnaire and measurement scales**

A structured questionnaire was built with the following constructs: socio-demographic variables, failure experience, channel choice when online complaining, complaining motivations, expectations when online complaining, risk perception, and channel choice before

complaining online. The items of the questionnaire were developed based on previously established scales from the literature and they had a multiple-choice, single choice and 5-point Likert scales. Before sharing the survey online with the participants, the questionnaire was pre-tested with six randomly chosen participants. After the pre-test, some accommodations were made, and the survey was shared online.

To ensure the participants would use a real complaining story and be consistent, they were asked at the beginning of the survey to write a summary about a time they had to complain publicly online and in the following questions they were reminded to think about that situation they previously described. The motivations to complain online were measured with a 5-points Likert scale (1= strongly disagree and 5= strongly agree) and the constructs used were revenge taking (Bronner & Hoog, 2011), helping the company (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Yen and Tang, 2015) and reconciliation reparation (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

## 3.2 Sample

The target population of this study was consumers who already shared a public complaint online. The collected sample was a convenience sample, consisting of international participants since the survey was shared in different online channels like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Survey Circle. The survey had a total of 452 participants. The questionnaire contained a filter question, which ensured that only participants who already made a public online complaint before could continue to participate in the survey. With this 39% of the participants were filtered out.

After data cleaning, which consisted of deleting participants who did not complete the full questionnaire, the total of valid participants was 204. The final sample was very homogeneous regarding the age of the participants with 39,7% of the participants being between 20 to 29 years old, 25,6% with ages from 30 to 39 years old and 24,5% with 40 to 60 years old. However, most of the sample was composed of female participants (80,8%) and male

participants were the minority (19,2%). Regarding their countries of residency, 46,8% of participants lived in Austria, 34,5% in Brazil and 18,7% lived in other countries for instance Germany, Italy, India, United Kingdom, and the United States. The survey was available in the English and Portuguese languages.

**3.3 Data analysis**

The analysis involved several procedures. First, factor analysis and Cronbach's Alpha were assessed to check the reliability of the motivations of revenge and reconciliation/reparation. Second, segmentation was performed according to the four pre-named groups at the beginning of this study. The participants were separated into the four groups according to their scores (high or low) in the variables revenge motivation and reparation and reconciliation motivation. Finally, the groups were described according to their social demographics, type of failure, expectations, risk perception and channel choice when complaining online.

**Factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha of complaining motivations.** Firstly, factor analysis was conducted to ensure that the constructs for the motivations to complain online of revenge and reconciliation/reparation were significantly valid. Generally, statement loadings on a factor that is greater than 0.50 are considered moderately meaningful, and greater than 0.70 highly meaningful (Hair et al., 2010). Cronbach's alpha was also analyzed to provide the reliability of each factor.

**Segmentation.** The four groups were pre-defined in the introduction of the research project and pre-named as the following: The Unmotivated (low on revenge and low in reconciliation/reparation motivations), The Peacemakers (low on revenge and high on reconciliation/reparation motivations), The Persevering (high in revenge and high in reconciliation/reparation motivations) and The Vindictive (high in revenge and low in reconciliation/reparation motivations). The participants were assigned to their groups according to how they scored on the survey when answering the questions related to their motivations

when publicly complaining online. It accessed if what primarily motivated them was revenge-taking (high or low) or if reparation/reconciliation (high or low) with the brand was their main goal.

**Segments Profiling.** To profile the segments and seek what differentiates them, firstly their social demographics were accessed. Secondly, the characteristics of the complaint as the type of failure, the severity of the failure suffered and from each industry the brand that caused the problem belongs. Third, it was explored what were the expectations the participants had with their public online complaint. Regarding the timeliness, if they did or did not expect a fast answer from the brand and if they had any expectations of getting compensation, like discounts or refunds. The fourth step was then to check whether the participants perceived any risks when complaining online in front of other users. And finally, the last step was to check for what was their channel choice online if they rather use consumer-generated channels, brand-generated channels or third-party channels and compare those with their motivations.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Factor analysis – motivations

Thirteen questions related to motivations to complain publicly online were factor analyzed using principal component analysis with Varimax rotation. The analysis yielded three factors explaining a total of 63.800% of the variance for the entire set of variables. Factor 1 was labeled as reparation due to high loadings by the following items: help to improve the company (.614), give the company the opportunity to solve the problem (.679), achieve a solution as a product placement (.604). The first factor loading explains 29.770% of the variance. The second factor was labeled as revenge due to the high scores on the revenge items such as: the brand harmed me so I wanted to harm the brand (.797), I wanted vengeance (.810), I wanted to punish the brand (.731) and I thought about ways of sabotaging the brand (.751). This factor explains 22.870% of the total variance. The third factor was called reconciliation and it contained the smallest scores. The only item that had a superior score was: I wanted to help he company to

improve (.407) and this factor explained 11.160% of the variance. Due to the similarities with reconciliation and reparation and the high scores, they were combined as one variable and used to segment the participants into the groups.

**4.2 Reliability analysis – motivations and profiling constructs**

Two motivations to complain publicly online were measured within the online survey: Revenge Taking and Reconciliation and Reparation. The single items for the motivations were adapted from previous research. Croanbach's alpha for Revenge Taking was 0.894 and for Reconciliation and Reparation was 0.813 (Appendix A). And thus, passing the threshold of a minimum recommended critical value of 0.7.

Moreover, to profile the segments and describe them further, eight constructs were developed: expected timeliness, expected compensation, expected apology and excuse, expectation regarding other online users, risk perception, brand channel, consumer channel and third-party channel usage (Appendix B). Croanbach's alpha for the eight items was .629, which is considered a questionable value. The constructs expected apology/excuse and expectation regarding other users is not present in this study research questions, nevertheless were used to give further insights and enrich the analysis.

**4.3 Segments profiling – finding out about the different types of online complainers**

The research objective of this study was to find four types of groups of online complainers according to their motivations to complain publicly online. Firstly, a priori segmentation was performed and to assign the participants into their respective groups. Two new variables were created for the motivations to complain online: revenge median and reparation median. With the medians of the participants from both motivations, two new variables were created defining the scores of each participant: revenge (high or low) and reparation (high or low). Finally, the group variable was created where the participants were assigned into the four groups conform their scores on revenge and reparation motivations. One-way ANOVA was conducted to profile the groups according to their expectations, risk

perception and channel choice. Additionally, a cross tabulation was performed with the variables of social demographics and failure characteristics as type of failure, severity of failure, recurrence of failure and industry of the brand.

**Table 2**

*Segments Profiling Means*

| Profile Variable | One-way ANOVA Cluster mean value (n) | | | | Sig. |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | 1 (n =158) | 2 (n= 18) | 3 (n= 23) | 4 (n= 5) | |
| | The Peacemakers | The Unmotivated | The Persevering | The Vindictive | |
| Expectation Timeliness | 3.17 | 2.50 | 3.04 | 2.40 | .001 |
| Expectation Compensation | 2.97 | 2.22 | 3.33 | 1.66 | .006 |
| Expectation Apology/Excuse | 3.51 | 2.69 | 3.58 | 2.90 | .008 |
| Expectation Other Users | 2.90 | 2.86 | 3.60 | 4.20 | .001 |
| Risk Perception | 2.60 | 2.67 | 2.45 | 2.00 | .384 |
| Brand Generated Channel | 3.06 | 2.11 | 3.38 | 2.55 | .000 |
| Consumer Generated Channel | 1.85 | 1.37 | 2.34 | 1.95 | .005 |
| Third-Party Channels | 2.12 | 1.84 | 2.25 | 1.55 | .481 |

Furthermore, to answer the research questions from this study, in the following paragraphs the segments will be profiled according to: motivations to complain publicly online; social demographic aspects of participants of each group (Appendix C); characteristics of the complaint as industry of the brand, type of failure, severity of the failure; expectations of the complainers regarding timeliness, compensation, apology/excuse and other users participation; risk perception when complaining publicly online in front of other users; channel choice when complaining online and channel choice before deciding to complain online.

**The Peacemakers (77,5% of respondents)**

The biggest segment of online complainers with 158 participants is highly interested in reparation and reconciliation when complaining publicly online about a brand, product or service. These online complainers are not interested in vengeance against the company or taking revenge of them, they seek solving their problems with the brand and at the same time want to allow the brand to improve their services and products. Moreover, The Peacemakers look forward to informing other online users and friends to not make the same mistakes they did.

The Peacemakers is composed mostly of females (63.5%), a minority of males (13.8%) and they are mostly young having between 17 – 29 years old (27.7%) and 30 to 44 years old (34%). Most of the participants reside in Austria (37.9%), Brazil (26.6%) and other countries (12.8%). The Peacemakers are a highly educated group, with most of participants having a bachelor's degree (36.8%) and a master's degree (24.9%). The net income of The Peacemakers is very distributed, where 13.5% of participants make between 500 to 1.000 euros a month, 10% stated that makes 1.000 to 1.500 euros, 13% earns 1.500 to 2.000 euros and 10.5% makes around 2.000 to 3.000 euros per month.

This group of complainers has high expectations when it comes to how long companies will take to answer them enquires (M= 3.17) and they also expect to hear from the company a good apology and excuse justifying the failure (M= 3.51). Moreover, The Peacemakers rather communicate their discontent directly on brand generated channels (M= 3.06), allowing the company to create a peaceful communication interaction. Finally, this group is not willing to go to their own social media channels or third-party websites and cause harm to the company.

Moreover, The Peacemakers shared that they decided to complain online because they found differences between bought services or products delivered (24%), problems with quality, returns and technical assistance (23,5%) and encountered excessive delays (15.7%). This group also disclosed that the brand failure caused them a major problem (16.7%) and big inconvenience (28.9%). Along with that, they revealed that the industries from which they suffered the failure were mostly from fashion (15,2%), transportation (13,2%), home and electronic stores (13,2%) and others (11,8%) like vacation related companies, hotels, gyms, e-commerce and delivery services. Finally, when asked if this was the first failure they suffered from the company, 52,7% of the participants said yes and 14,7% said no.

**The Unmotivated (8,8% of respondents)**

In contrast with the first segment, The Unmotivated group of complainers is very small with 18 participants and these complainers are not very interested in revenge and neither in

reparation since they scored low on both motivations. They are not worried about the outcome of their complaint and are satisfied with whatever it comes. The Unmotivated complainers are mostly female (5.4%), their minority is male (3.4%) and their ages range from 17 to 29 years old (6%) and 30 to 44 years old (1%). They are also highly educated with bachelors (4,5%) and master's (3.5%) degrees. Moreover, their net income ranges from 1.500 to 2.000 euros (2.5%) per month and 2.000 to 3.000 euros (3%) per month. Concerning their country of residency, 3% of the complainers have their residency in Austria, 2.5% live in Brazil and 2.9% reside in other countries.

The Unmotivated complainers are not willing to go very far to share their discontent publicly online, nevertheless, they do look forward to hearing some sort of excuse or apology from the company (M= 2.69) concerning the failure they suffered. Additionally, these complainers consider important that other users participate and support them (M= 2.86) in case they decide to post a complaint online. The Unmotivated complainers might not be willing to go all the way when complaining publicly online because they do perceive risks (M= 2.67) when sharing their opinion in front of other peers. Finally, these complainers can be found occasionally on brand-generated channels (M= 2.11) when they cannot find solutions to their problems.

Regarding the type of failure these consumers suffered, they shared that they had problems with quality, return and technical assistance (3.4%), lack of correct information (2.5%), and differences between bought and delivered service or product (2.5%). The industries from each The Unmotivated consumers suffered a failure were mostly from food (2.5%), fashion (1%), and stores of home and electronic products (1%). When asked if this was the first time they suffered a failure from this company, 7.4% of respondents of this group said yes and 1.5% stated no.

**The Persevering (11,3 % of respondents)**

The second biggest group with 23 complainers is The Persevering group. These complainers are highly motivated to pursue reparation, reconciliation, and revenge when complaining online. They are mostly composed of female complainers (9.4%) and with a minority of males (2%). Their ages range from 17 to 29 years old (6%) and 30 to 44 years old (4%). Like the other groups, The Persevering is also highly educated, where most of the participants own a bachelor's degree (5%) and a master's degree (4.5%). With incomes ranging from 500 to 1000 (2%) and 1000 to 1500 euros (2.5%), this group is economically active. Most of The Persevering complainers also live in Austria (4.9%) and in Brazil (4.9%).

The Persevering complainers have high expectations when complaining publicly online. They expect the company will give them compensation (M= 3.33) for the damage and also wait to hear an excuse and apology from the brand (M= 3.58). In addition, these highly motivated complainers expect that the other online users that see their posts will also participate (M= 3.60) and support them concerning their discontent. When it comes to the online channels these complainers choose to voice their problems, mostly of The Persevering complainers choose to complain directly on brand-generated channels (M= 3.38) or in their own consumer-generated channels (2.34).

Finally, The Persevering shared that the failures they suffered from the companies were related to excessive delays (M= 3.4%), problems with quality, return and technical assistance (3.9%) and products or services not delivered (2.9%). Additionally, they stated that these issues caused them major problems (5.4%), big inconvenience (3.4%) and a major aggravation (2.9%). Most of the companies that caused those inconveniences were from fashion (2.5%), transportation (3.4%) and stores of home and electronics products (2%) industries. When asked if this was the first time they suffered a failure from those companies, The Peacemakers mostly affirmed yes (7%) and the minority stated that this wasn't the first time they suffered a failure from the company (3.4%).

**The Vindictive (2,5% of respondents)**

The smallest segment of online complainers is The Vindictive. With only five participants, this group is very driven to seek revenge at all costs, even if they do not get any benefit at the end of their complaining journey. They are not interested in reparation and reconciliation with the company they suffered the failure from, and they probably would not make any purchase from this brand again. This group is composed only of females (2.5%) and with ages ranging from 17 to 29 years old (2.5%). They carry a bachelor's degree (1%), a master's degree (1%) and earn around 250 to 500 euros (1%). Most of The Vindictive complainers live in Austria (1%) or in other countries (1%).

The Vindictive complainers do not have a big expectation when complaining online. This can be explained by the fact that they also do not expect anything from the company they are complaining about since their goal is just to cause harm and damage to the brand. Nevertheless, when venting their discontent online, they have high expectations concerning the participation of other users (M= 4.20). They do want other consumers engaging and supporting them going after the brand for the damage caused. When doing so, The Vindictive complainers do not see the risks of voicing their frustrations publicly online. Finally, these consumers choose to share their complaining histories directly on the brand generated channels (M= 2.55) in order to call the attention of other consumers from the same company.

The Vindictive complainers stated that they shared their discontent online because they encountered problems finding correct and complete information (2%), lack of flexibility and options for the customer (1%) and that they had a product or service that was not delivered (1%). Those issues caused them a major problem, big inconvenience and major aggravation (1,5%) and the companies which caused them discontent came from the medical industry (1%), food industry (0.5%) and services industry (0.5%). Most of them stated that this was the first time they suffered a failure from the company (1%) and the minority indicated that this was not the first time (0.5%).

While using chi-squared tests, it was found that the segments did not significantly vary in either in gender ($\chi^2(3)$=5.920, $p$>.05), age ($\chi^2(123)$=99.978, $p$>.05) and education ($\chi^2(15)$ = 15.869, $p$=>.05). These findings confirm that demographic variables are not particularly useful to differentiate between consumers segments, as other segmentation studies previously affirmed (e.g., Schoefer & Diamantopoulos, 2009; Walsh, Hassan, Shiu, Andrews, & Hastings, 2010).

Using one-way ANOVA were found significant differences in the motivation of revenge (F(3200)=78.958, $p$ <.001) and in the motivation of reparation and reconciliation (F(3200)=99.226, $p$ <.001) within the segments (table 3).

**Table 3**

*Segments Motivations ANOVA results*

|  | Sum of Squares | *df* | Mean Square | F | *p* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Revenge | 142.139 | 3 | 47.380 | 78.958 | .000 |
| Reparation and Reconciliation | 107.875 | 3 | 35.958 | 99.226 | .000 |

Additionally, all of the expectations when online complaining constructs were found to be statistically significant within the different segments. The expectation of timeliness (F(3200=5.508, $p$ =.001), expectation of compensation (F(3200)=4.309, $p$ <.01), expectation of apology and excuse (F(3200)=4.087, $p$ <.01) and expectation of other users participation (F(3200)=5.720, $p$ =.001).

Finally, two constructs of channel choice when complaining online were also found to be statistically significant within the groups of complainers. The brand generated channels (F(3200)=6.476, $p$ <.01) and the consumer generated channels (F(3200)=4.412, $p$ <.01). All the segments profiling constructs results are presented following on table 4.

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**Table 4**

*Segments Profiling ANOVA results*

|  | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Expectation Timeliness | 9.889 | 3 | 3.296 | 5.508 | .001 |
| Expectation Compensation | 21.057 | 3 | 7.019 | 4.309 | .006 |
| Expectation Apology/Excuse | 12.945 | 3 | 4.315 | 4.087 | .008 |
| Expectation Other Users | 17.516 | 3 | 5.839 | 5.720 | .001 |
| Risk Perception | 2.309 | 3 | .770 | 1.023 | .384 |
| Brand Generated Channel | 19.135 | 3 | 6.378 | 6.476 | .000 |
| Consumer Generated Channel | 9.740 | 3 | 3.247 | 4.412 | .005 |
| Third-Party Channels | 2.652 | 3 | .884 | .825 | .481 |

## 5. Discussion

This study investigated whether complaining motivations can be related to complainers' decisions and behavior when complaining publicly in online channels. At the moment we live in a time where consumers are all connected and share their opinions online about the brands and products they love and hate, marketers have the opportunity to create tailor-made strategies for the different types of complainers. Therefore, the goal of this research was to be able to find four segments of online complainers according to their level of motivations (high and low) of revenge and reparation/reconciliation when voicing a discontent online and check for differences within the groups and shed a light to marketers about what types of complainers there are online. After analyzing the data, some very interesting findings were discovered.

### 5.1 Summary of findings

First, the motivations for public online complaining of revenge and reparation/reconciliation have shown statistical significance within the four groups. Therefore, it was found that complainers do have different behaviors when complaining online according to what first motivated them. Regarding the expectations when complaining online, all of the constructs shown to be statistically significant and one group demonstrated to have higher scores in all expectations. The Persevering group, the group of complainers who scored higher on both motivations (revenge and reparation), had also high scores regarding the expectations

of getting compensation, receiving some sort of excuse or apology from the company and expectation of participation of other users in the online complaint. Additionally, three out of the four groups shown that they have higher expectations when it comes to receiving some sort of compensation for their online complaint. This finding can be connected with the statement of Estelami (2000), which asserts that economic compensation helps to improve the output in the consumer and company relationship. Moreover, The Vindictive group was shown to have high expectations that other users will participate and support them in their complaining posts, showing that they need other consumers to be on their side and that the other consumer's opinions matters online. Meanwhile, The Unmotivated group which is a group of complainers who have low motivations for revenge and reconciliation, shown to also have low expectations when online complaining.

Second, the groups also statically significantly differed concerning their channel choice when complaining online. With this showing that depending on what motivates complainers to go online for a complaint can help to determine the type of channel they will share their discontent. Most of the groups that scored higher on the expectations of compensation or apology/excuse also scored higher on the brand generated channel choice. This finding goes along with what was stated by Matilla and Wirtz (2004), which is that when consumers look for compensation, they choose to go to interactive brand channels and communicate directly with the brand. Additionally, the group Persevering seemed to also be interested in sharing their discontent on their consumer-generated channels and going all the way to solve their problems using the third-party website's resources. Nevertheless, according to Balji et al. (2016) consumers looking for spreading negative word-of-mouth and cause damage to the brand, are more likely to use their own social media channels. Therefore, it was expected that The Vindictive complainers would score higher on consumer-generated channels, nevertheless, they scored very low on most channels and slightly higher on the brand generated channel.

Finally, The Unmotivated group of complainers displayed having a perceived risk associated with complaining publicly online, which could explain why they are so unmotivated to go further to sharing their discontent online because they are afraid of what other consumers will think of them and if they will be disapproved. Nevertheless, The Vindictive complainers see low risks when complaining online, they are not worried about the outcomes of their complaint or with other consumers' opinions of them. This can be related to the fact that these complainers are sharing their failure stories only to bad mouth and damage the image of the brand to take revenge for the damage they suffered. For the Vindictive complainers, the ideal outcome of a complaint would be having a post on one of the brand online channels, where many other consumers participate and engage in the negative comments against that company. These findings can be related to the affirmation from Bodey and Grace (2007), where they state that risk-taking consumers tend to be more engaged in complaining since their main goal is to achieve a successful outcome regardless of the consequences.

## 5.2 Managerial implications

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that online complainers do differ according to their motivations to complain online. Marketers should work on segmenting their consumers and create different strategies of webcare according to what these consumers expect from the company as an outcome of their complaint. For instance, prepare some compensation offers like discounts, vouchers, be ready to offer a refund and instruct employees to have prepared texts of apology and excuse depending on the types of failures.

Additionally, different channels ask for distinct actions and some channels ask for more urgency concerning the time of response from the brand. According to the type of complaint and channel used, companies can identify if the consumer is looking for a reparation action or just revenge taking. Distinguishing these complainers in early stages is essential and applying the right webcare strategies in later stages of the complaining process can repair the image of the brand in front of other consumers.

Finally, this study also has shown that the biggest group of complainers are looking for a solution to their problem and have a reconciliation with the brand. This gives a good opportunity for companies to repair the failure, retain this customer and improve the chances of having consumers recommending the brand and spreading positive word-of-mouth within their peers.

## 5.3 Limitations and future research

Although this research has provided some very interesting findings concerning the types of online complainers, it should be noted that the project presents some limitations. Firstly, the sample was not representative and therefore the results aren't generalizable. It was a convenience sample, not a randomly distributed one, which means that these results cannot be easily applied to the general population of online complainers. The sample was also quite small and composed mostly of female participants, which limits the generalizability of the results even more.

Since online complaining behavior is a new topic and in constant change due to the newly available channels, there are infinite possibilities of studies within this subject. Based on the present study findings, future research could look into other types of complaining motivations and compare within the profiling variables as channel choice, risk perception and expectations when complaining online. Additionally, to identify and profile even further the online complainers, future research could use the multi-method approach and investigate the behavior of online complainers thru qualitative methods as well, as for instance Netnography and in-depth interviews.

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TYPES OF ONLINE COMPLAINERS ACCORDING TO MOTIVATIONS

# APPENDIX A

**Table A1**

*Online Complaining Motivations Constructs*

| Items | Loadings | $\alpha$ |
|---|---|---|
| **Revenge Taking** – Bronner and Hoog (2011). | | .894 |
| I made a negative comment about the brand online because... | | |
| The brand earlier harmed me – now I wanted to harm the brand. | .797 | |
| I wanted to take vengeance upon the brand. | .810 | |
| I wanted to punish the brand in some way. | .731 | |
| I thought about ways to sabotage the brand. | .751 | |
| | | |
| **Reconciliation and Reparation -** Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004); Yen and Tang (2015); Bronner & de Hoog, (2011). I complained online because... | | .813 |
| I wanted to help the company to improve. | .614 | |
| I wanted to give the company the opportunity to resolve the problem. | .653 | |
| I wanted to give the company the opportunity to demonstrate their customer service quality publicly. | .447 | |
| I wanted to inform the company about my negative experience. | .591 | |
| | | |
| I made a negative comment about the brand online because... | | |
| I wanted to help the brand to improve. | .601 | |
| In my opinion, brands should receive feedback from consumers. | .577 | |
| I wanted a solution for my problem from the brand. | .572 | |
| I wanted to give the brand the opportunity to resolve the problem. | .679 | |
| I wanted to achieve a solution (e.g., product replacement). | .604 | |

# APPENDIX B

**Table B1**

*Profiling Constructs Validity*

| Items | Mean | Std. Deviation | $\alpha = .629$ |
|---|---|---|---|
| Expectation Timeliness | 3.08 | .79 | |
| Expectation Compensation | 2.91 | 1.30 | |
| Expectation Apology Excuse | 3.43 | 1.05 | |
| Expectation Other Users | 3.01 | 1.04 | |
| Risk Perception | 2.58 | .86 | |
| Brand Channel | 3.00 | 1.03 | |
| Consumer Channel | 1.86 | .87 | |
| Third Party Channel | 2.12 | 1.03 | |

## APPENDIX C

**Table C1**

*Segments Demographics*

| | 1<br>The Peacemakers | 2<br>The Unmotivated | 3<br>The Persevering | 4<br>The Vindictive |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Sample (%) | | |
| **Gender** | | | | |
| Male | 13.8 | 3.4 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| Female | 63.5 | 5.4 | 9.4 | 2.5 |
| | | | | |
| **Age (years)** | | | | |
| 17-29 | 27.7 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 2.5 |
| 30-44 | 34.0 | 1.0 | 4.0 | 0.0 |
| 45-60 | 14.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| >60 | 1.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| | | | | |
| **Education** | | | | |
| Middle School | 1.00 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| High School | 10.9 | 1.0 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 36.8 | 4.5 | 5.0 | 1.0 |
| Master's Degree | 24.9 | 3.5 | 4.5 | 1.0 |
| Ph.D or higher | 2.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Prefer not to say | 1.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.5 |
| | | | | |
| **Net Income** | | | | |
| Less than 250 € | 5.0 | 0.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| 250 € up to 500 € | 7.5 | 1.0 | 2.0 | 1.5 |
| 500 € up to 1000 € | 13.5 | 0.5 | 2.0 | 0.0 |
| 1000 € up to 1500 € | 10.0 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 0.5 |
| 1500 € up to 2000 € | 13.0 | 2.5 | 1.5 | 0.5 |
| 2000 € up to 3000 € | 10.5 | 3.0 | 1.5 | 0.0 |
| 3000 € up to 4000 € | 4.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 4000 € up to 5000 € | 4.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 5000 € or more | 1.5 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| I do not wish to answer | 8.0 | 0.5 | 1.5 | 0.0 |
| | | | | |
| **Country of residency** | | | | |
| Austria | 37.9 | 3.0 | 4.9 | 1.0 |
| Brazil | 26.6 | 2.5 | 4.9 | 0.5 |
| Others | 12.8 | 2.9 | 1.5 | 1.0 |

**Abstract**

Different types of complainers might have distinct motivations and expectations when complaining publicly online and is essential that companies can identify these complainers. Therefore, this study investigates four different groups of online complainers based in two motivations to complain online and further describe these groups according to their behavior when posting a complaint. What are the main characteristics of each group of complainers? Do they differ concerning their expectations when complaining online? There are any perceived risks of sharing discontent publicly? What are the online channels the different segments use to share their complaints? Through a segmentation analysis, the complainers are assigned to four segments according to their scores in the motivations of revenge taking and reconciliation/reparation. Finally, the four segments are profiled and described according to: (1) expectations of timeliness and compensation; (2) risk perception when complaining publicly online; (3) channel choice: brand generated, consumer generated and third-party channels; (3) failure type, severity of failure and industry; and (4) socio demographic characteristics. Findings suggest that complainers differ according to the motivations to share publicly discontent online and that marketers should create strategies for the different types of complainer's expectations and use the channels to recognize the types of unsatisfied consumers.

*Keywords: online complaining; motivations; segmentation analysis; marketing; revenge; reconciliation*

**Abstrakt**

Verschiedene Arten von Beschwerdeführern können unterschiedliche Motivationen und Erwartungen haben, wenn sie sich öffentlich online beschweren, und es ist wichtig, dass Unternehmen diese Beschwerdeführer identifizieren können. Daher untersucht diese Studie vier verschiedene Gruppen von Online-Beschwerdeführern, basierend auf zwei Motivationen, sich online zu beschweren, und beschreibt diese Gruppen entsprechend ihrem Verhalten beim Posten einer Beschwerde. Was sind die Hauptmerkmale jeder Gruppe von Beschwerdeführern? Unterscheiden sie sich hinsichtlich ihrer Erwartungen, wenn sie sich online beschweren? Gibt es ein wahrgenommenes Risiko, Unzufriedenheit öffentlich zu teilen? Über welche Online-Kanäle teilen die verschiedenen Segmente ihre Beschwerden? Durch eine Segmentierungsanalyse werden die Beschwerdeführer gemäß ihrer Punktzahl in den Motivationen für Rache und Versöhnung / Wiedergutmachung vier Segmenten zugeordnet. Schließlich werden die vier Segmente nach folgenden Kriterien profiliert und beschrieben: (1) Erwartungen an Aktualität und Vergütung; (2) Risikowahrnehmung bei öffentlichen Online-Beschwerden; (3) Kanalwahl: Markengenerierte, Verbrauchergenerierte und Drittanbieter-Kanäle; (3) Fehlertyp, Schwere des Fehlers und Branche; und (4) soziodemografische Merkmale. Die Ergebnisse legen nahe, dass sich Beschwerdeführer je nach Motivation unterscheiden, öffentlich Unzufriedenheit online zu teilen, und dass Vermarkter Strategien für die verschiedenen Arten von Erwartungen der Beschwerdeführer entwickeln und die Kanäle nutzen sollten, um die Arten von unzufriedenen Verbrauchern zu erkennen.

*Schlüsselwörter: Online-Beschwerde; Motivationen; Segmentierungsanalyse; Marketing; Rache; Versöhnung*