

## **Abstract**

Despite the increasing popularity of Digital Marketing and E – Word of Mouth communication (eWOM), the determinants critical to such a new communication medium remain largely unknown. In order to understand the surface level issues researcher conducted a pilot study with fifty respondents and explored that most of the Sri Lankan Social Network Sites (SNSs) users have different motivations to engage in eWOM communication. However, these motivations have been largely ignored to explain using a theoretical framework. Having identified it a rigorous literature review was performed to identify the research gap. Literature review suggested that internet has leapfrogged the eWOM marketing and social networking media have contributed heavily for the growth eWOM. Further, the changing pace has attracted much attention from both researchers and practitioners. However, Most of the researchers of eWOM communication have focused on the consequences of eWOM communication rather than the antecedents. On the other hand researchers of SNSs have much focused on the platform than the user behaviours. Hence, the clear theoretical and empirical gap lead the author to examine one of the critical behavioral factors, motivation of Social Network Site users' to engage in eWOM communication.

In order to conceptualize motivations author identified four potential motivations from a Socio Psychological theory , FIRO theory of William Shutz (1966). They are the need to be part of a group, need to be individualistic, need to be altruistic and the need for personal growth. Further author also tested the moderated impact from the SNS platform for the relationships using the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Eight hypotheses were developed based on the conceptual model. Author examined the motivations to engage in eWOM communication using a mixed methodology by adopting a survey with 406 respondents by using judgmental sampling and a netnography approach with six users and with two brand pages. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to test hypotheses and data were triangulated by using the netnography approach.

Researcher used the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test hypothesis and AMOS 18.0 software was used while employing the procedure given by Hair *et al* (2006). Researcher found that the need to individuation and need for personal growth are the motivations to engage in eWOM communication and ease of use strengthen the relationship between need to individuation and eWOM communication.

In conclusion, the study suggested that the need to individuation or stand out from a crowd as the most prominent motivation to engage in eWOM communication which is on par with the consumer culture theory of symbolic consumption. However, the need to belong and altruism are not considered as motivations to engage in eWOM communication in SNSs. It also suggested that female, teenagers are much more engage in eWOM communication than other groups.