

# Apprehending Inspirational Persuasion Factors for Intention to use eWOM by Highlighting Mediation of Attitude towards eWOM: A Case of Social Network Sites

**Ishtiaq Ahmed Malik**

PHD Scholar,  
Department of Business Administration,  
Foundation University,  
Islamabad, Pakistan.

**Dr. Noor-Ul-Hadi**

Associate Professor,  
Department of Business Administration,  
Foundation University,  
Islamabad, Pakistan.

**Muhammad Ali Raza**

Lecturer,  
Department of Management Sciences,  
Comsats University,  
Islamabad, Pakistan.

**Dr. Rab Nawaz Lodhi**

Associate Professor,  
Department of Management Sciences,  
University of Central Punjab,  
Lahore, Pakistan.

**Sayyed Adnan Shabbir**

Assistant Professor,  
Faculty of Management Sciences,  
International Islamic University,  
Islamabad, Pakistan.

## Abstract

Despite the eWOM's mass expediency and its severity on decision making, attitude interceding part in explaining potential antecedents of eWOM usage by keeping motivation, belief and attitude as organized intellectual procedure have been specifically weathered by very few studies in social network sites perspective. In lieu to this, current study aimed to explicate the intention to use eWOM during online anonymous purchases by inspirational persuasion factors for eWOM mentioned on social network sites with the help of mediation in light of theory of reasoned action (TRA). It further expands the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to propose hypothetical model in order to explain the Pakistani clients' consideration for eWOM to accept and make appropriate intention of its use in order to cope up with emerging online shopping trend. Knowledge sharing motivation, perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use, trust and persuasive eWOM messages has been used as antecedent of intention to use eWOM. Data were collected with structured adapted questionnaire from 439 respondents through survey. PLS-SEM techniques have been used through smart PLS 3 for testing the measurement and structural model. Intention to use eWOM in Pakistan was significantly affected by perceived usefulness, perceived ease-of-use, trust and persuasive eWOM messages but knowledge sharing motivation (KSM) was insignificant to intention to use eWOM. Psychographic factor like attitude towards eWOM was found as significant mediator among perceived usefulness, trust, persuasive eWOM messages and outcome. The study contributes towards the better apprehension about the reliance on eWOM usage while making unseen online purchases in true letter and spirit for the growth of emerging online shopping concept in developing country like Pakistan.

**Keywords** – Social media, TAM, TRA, Knowledge sharing motivation (KSM), Trust, Persuasive eWOM messages, eWOM, Perceived usefulness (PU), Perceived ease-of-use (PEOU)

## Introduction

Since the internet was introduced in 1991 and expanded in the mid-1990s for business use, companies have many modern and skilled tools to make contact with customers simple, convenient, and viable (Ščeuľovs & Gaile-Sarkane, 2010). This synergistic potential also opened the new avenue for comment, advice, suggestions, and referrals (Dellarocas, The digitization of word of mouth: Promise and challenges of online feedback mechanisms, 2003). This building of

virtual networks and communities for the sake of facilitating the sharing of thoughts, ideas, and information via computer-based technology i.e., Web 2.0 is commonly known as social media (McAfee, 2006).

This topical social media system observes an unprecedented response in communication-setting transformation with rising internet usage numbers (Edwards, 2011). As the web is momentous for the worthwhile spread of product and service counsel instantly and globally, trending marketing tool available in shape of social media for reaching the niche cannot be overlooked. Many companies from various sectors, like the online stores' industry, are now making strategic use of social media as a way of targeting probable and current customers. This intelligent interactive concerted tool allows them to make swift changes in practicing marketing strategies over traditional tools (Leung, Generational differences in content generation in social media: The roles of the gratifications sought and of narcissism, 2013; Oakley & Salam, Examining the impact of computer-mediated social networks on individual consumerism environmental behaviors, 2014). This social media adoption has also expanded the choices available to consumers from traditional offline word-of-mouth (WOM) to geographically communicate with dispersed population through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Malik & Hadi, 2019). Customers may secure better deals during the generation and sharing of content in the shape of eWOM on social media (Yang, 2017). Thus, social media has been significant in removing curiosity by providing informed updated choices through peers' feedback which is updated continuously before, during, and after the purchase (Abubakar & Ilkan, 2016).

In era of digitalization, variety of platforms enabled customers to team up and disseminate the content but among wide varied available platforms, social network sites (SNSs) are gaining vivacious attention (Silitonga, Fakhroazi, & Ikhsan, 2020). In fact, online word-of-mouth (eWOM) is the information that is shared through these social media sites (Ayeh, Au, & Law, 2013). eWOM is optimistic and derogatory assertion shared by experienced, probable or actual customers about the subject of discussion which are made available to others via internet (Zainal, Harun, & Lily, 2017). Several studies were carried out to determine their effect on behavioral behaviors, motivation movement and purchase intentions (Balakrishnan, Dahnil, & Yi, 2014; Gunawan & Huarng, 2015; Hajli, 2014; Dehghani & Tumer, 2015; Shiu, Walsh, Hassan, & Parry, 2015) but at the same time there are very few studies that deals with the mediating role of attitude towards eWOM from SNSs perspective in relationship of

hybrid inspirational persuasion factors of eWOM and intention to use eWOM during the purchases from virtual world (Zainal, Harun, & Lily, 2017; Saadeghvaziri, Dehdashti, & Askarabad, 2013; Lee & Choi, 2019; Yang, 2017). Absence of an identity while evaluating intangible products boosts the importance of intention in relation to motivation & persuasion in an online environment (Rosario, de Valck, & Sotgiu, 2020). The objective of this study is therefore is to examine the relationship between eWOM's inspiring persuasions, eWOM attitudes and their plan to use such eWOM during online shopping, as very little has been accomplished in the field of South Asia, especially Pakistan. The clear cut aim of this study is therefore to investigate the relationship between eWOM inspiration persuasion factors, eWOM attitudes and the plan to use such eWOM during online shopping, as very little has been accomplished on the subject in South Asia, especially in Pakistan.

### Literature Review

Spread of consumer generated media worldwide and related environmental concerns of technology versatility due to the developed, developing and under developed countries mind set, this study used theory of reasoned action (TRA) in which technology acceptance model (TAM) is implanted in order to apprehend the eWOM usage for purchases from virtual stores specifically in emerging market of Pakistan. TRA suggested by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) set forth three general constructs which are responsible for the ultimate formulation of behaviour i.e., personal and subjective norms, attitude and intention. They further urged that behaviour is purely the reflection of an intention which is purely shaped by attitude which in turn is purely the function developed by personal and subjective norms. Intention basically quantifies the overall quality of an individual's probability to play out a foreseen conduct. Moreover, as the basic objective of the study is to assess the mediating affect of attitude towards eWOM on ultimate intention for the use of eWOM during online purchases from virtual stores, TRA in the light of its definition, best explains that how and why user's beliefs change the way they act.

Further, authors of the study urged upon that as discussion is all about electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) usage which is the advanced form of communication technology because of its availability on social media platforms i.e., social network sites (SNSs) in study perspective, inculcation of TAM proposed by Davis (1986) in shape of its extension is instilled in TRA by adding other variables "knowledge sharing motivation (KSM) along with perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease-of-use (PEOU)". Secondly, as TAM is defined as information

systems theory that models how users come to accept and use a technology by forming behavioral intention, which is a factor that leads people to use the technology. In lieu to this, personal factors of TRA i.e., KSM, PU, and PEOU are taken into account by keeping in view the observations of TAM theory for technology adoption. Besides, in numerous studies the use of the TAM model in the eWOM settings describes the phenomenon of adoption of knowledge quite excessively (Ayeh, 2015; Elwalda, Lü, & Ali, 2016; Yang, 2017).

In other words while acknowledging the affirmation of rising web based business division in Pakistan, TAM in this study is going to be widened by extricating variables accordingly from TRA.

### **Intention to Use Electronic Word-of-Mouth for Online Purchases**

In deciding the ultimate purpose, TRA focuses on two main factors, namely human and subjective normal factors in determining of intention (Ajzen, 1985). Individual factors have been referred to as self-measurement of beneficial or detrimental acts, while the social factor refers to the experience of people who are associated with social forces that shape such behaviors into specific trends. Critical forecast about the shopping manners be done by means of intention as intention basically aims that a certain decision will be made in near future (Al-Gasawneh & Al-Adamat, 2020). Literature in this regards also facilitates intention in prediction of actual behavior (Munnukka, Karjaluo, & Tikkanen, 2015; Bataineh, 2015) and thus by this gives the sound reasoning to the authors for the incorporation of intention to use eWOM in the theoretical model.

### **Inspirational and Persuasion Factors of eWOM**

Inspiration or motivation in simple is the process that initiates, guides, and maintains goals oriented behaviors (Rheinberg & Engeser, 2018). In light to this definition, authors urged that personal knowledge sharing motivation is the variable that initiates the inclination towards eWOM; similarly personal perceived usefulness and perceived ease-of-use also facilitated in guiding and maintaining certain intention.

Besides, transmission of a message in an environment of free choice mechanism in which contact workers attempt to encourage others to alter their views or actions about a question is termed as persuasion (Allison, Davis, Webb, & Short, 2017). Keeping in view the consideration of this term, trust and persuasive eWOM messages are incorporated in the model as subjective norm factors of TRA.

### **Knowledge Sharing Motivation and Intention to use eWOM during online purchases**

There is no operational definition of knowledge sharing motivation. However, it is elaborated in terms of egoism and altruism (Yang, 2017). Egoism basically treats self-interest as the foundation of morality (Batson, 1994). Means, person who is sharing the review on the internet prior objective is that people know him, regard him, appreciate his or her knowledge where as altruism is totally the twist of egoism. Altruism is more associated with disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others (Mathwick & Mosteller, 2017). Researchers affirmed that motivation plays a central role in the arbitration of user manipulations for web use (Zhang, Liu, Deng, & Chen, 2017). In an effort to make victorious decision on online brand marketing, understanding of consumer inspirations when having a discussion on social media use is important (Ahmed et al., 2019). If broadly categorized there are two main types of motivation i.e., intrinsic and extrinsic (Ma & Chan, 2014). Intrinsic motivation is considered the act of having been inspired by intrinsic causes to carry out such acts and behavior. If the person performs or behaves because external influences such as incentives or penalties influence the person, the motivation is known as extrinsic motif (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In lieu to these descriptions, since the basis of discussion of the study is to apprehend the underlying phenomenon for building of an intention to use eWOM from SNSs perspective keeping in view the common user mind set during purchases from virtual world stores, authors take into consideration the motive for information sharing is the persons internal drive that induces an individual to conduct an online activity without further getting into the debate of egoistic review and or the altruistic review. The person who is more enthusiasts for sharing of the review is most probably the one who uses eWOM mention on SNSs during the purchases from virtual online stores because of the positive penetration towards eWOM in his mind. Similar significant relation between knowledge sharing and intention to use knowledge has also been revealed in the recent past study of Kim and Jang (2019). From the above, it can be hypothesized that:

H1: KSM significantly impacts intention to use eWOM for purchasing online

### **Perceived Usefulness of eWOM and Intention to use eWOM during online purchases**

This was defined by Davis (1989) as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance”. It means perceived benefits and sustainable advantages of eWOM mentioned

on SNSs during shopping from virtual online stores specifically in emerging online market culture of Pakistan are summarized as perceived usefulness (PU). The notion of presumed utility may lead to seeking different in-depth information in addition to the low internet search costs. Another aspect that reinforces the assumed utility is the lack of effort to equate one computer store with another (Hasan, Ali, & Mohammad Javad, 2013). Some services, may not be as convenient as in traditional market (e.g., immediate physical verification of eWOM mentioned on SNSs by testing, smelling or sensing). It is generally accepted that PU could change consumer intention to use an internet application (Moslehpour, Pham, Wong, & Bilgiçli, 2018). Significance among PU and intention was also revealed in study conducted by Tseng and Hsu (2010). Similar results in the recent past study of Yang (2017) also posited the enhanced relation among PU and intention while having the study on hotel website. Thus, following hypothesis is anticipated if summarized above:

H2: PU of eWOM on SNSs significantly impacts intention to use eWOM for purchasing online

#### **Perceived Ease-of-Use of eWOM and Intention to use eWOM during online purchases**

Davis (1989) defined this as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort". In other words, an innovation is better for utilizing over another technology if it is destined to be affirmed by potential user of SNSs (Moslehpour, Pham, Wong, & Bilgiçli, 2018). If it is easy to use IT software, consumers are less reluctant to use those (Mutahar et al., 2018). PEOU and PU are characteristics of technology acceptance and were seen in different contexts (Tan et al., 2016; Isaac et al., 2016; Mutahar et al., 2016; Abdullah et al., 2016). Similarly, authors in current study urged upon that perception about ease-of-use of wider spreads eWOM mention on SNSs in terms of its excess while reviewing the problem, in course of confusion and in stage of learning can enhance its utility by formulating an intention of their usage while making anonymous virtual world purchases or during the purchases by which you are not familiar of. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: PEOU significantly impacts intention to use eWOM for purchasing online

#### **Trust on eWOM and Intention to Use eWOM during Online Purchases**

Overall, trust is defined as to have confidence, faith or hope in someone or something (Punyatoya, 2019). Trust is not a personality trait however it is being shaped by the society by persuasion (Wu & Lin, 2017). For this reason authors

treat it in the study as subjective norms factor of TRA. The eWOM mentioned on SNSs is viewed by the user as a way of gathering information, which is a vital decision-making step before a purchase is made. The trust on eWOM mentioned on SNSs platform currently enables consumers to easily and widely exchange opinions with each other in shape of reviews. In the study of Zainal et al., (2017), trust was shown to have clear impact on intentions. Al-Gasawneh and Al-Adamat (2020) also showed that trust manipulated consumer intention in the Fast-Causal Restaurant. Furthermore, Lou and Yuan (2019) showed that how vital the role of trust is when it comes to persuading consumer decisions related to formulation of an intention. The current study as a result anticipated following hypothesis:

H4: Trust on eWOM significantly impacts intention to use eWOM for purchasing online

#### **Persuasive eWOM messages and intention to use eWOM during online purchases**

There is no operational definition of persuasive eWOM messages however message persuasion is attributed in terms of "argument quality, source credibility, source attraction, source perception and source style" (Teng, Khong, Chong, & Lin, 2017). In the study by Tsao and Hsieh (2015), it was shown that messages strongly influenced intention. The content in the messages full of these attributes allows eWOM to thrive through online sharing and discussion regarding the brand for the ultimate formulation of an intention to use the final reviews during online purchase decision. A study by Qahri-Saremi and Montazemi (2019) found that overall research model denoted how a persuasion in message was important for high social presence. This clearly stimulated consumers eWOM usage intention. Fan et al., (2018) stated that attraction by advertorials in the message sometimes was important when constructing loyalty and encouraging customers to formulate an intention to rely upon it. On the basis of above discussion, following hypothesis is put forward:

H5: Persuasiveness in eWOM significantly impacts intention to use eWOM for purchasing online

#### **Attitude towards Electronic Word-of-Mouth as a Mediator in between Inspirational Persuasion Factors of eWOM**

Attitude basically refers to a variety of emotions, beliefs and behaviors in relation to one particular entity, person, item or event. Attitudes are often the product of practice or schooling and can have a direct effect on behavior (Howe & Krosnick, 2017). In lieu to this, change in consumer



behavior with respect to attitude towards simple advertising had significantly enriched the literature (Wang & Sun, 2010) but definition over the period of time is now taking hold and indicates multiple connections between behaviors and attitudes in an online world (Malik & Hadi, 2019; Zhu & Kanjanamekanant, 2020). A study by Amawate and Deb (2019) showed that attitude was a binding of skepticism and patronage intention. Further, Septiari (2018) showed that attitude mediated the relationship between website quality and trust. This is similar to the findings of Malik and Hadi (2019) which also showed that attitude mediated the relationship between usefulness and online purchases. Using the above stated findings, this study puts forward the following hypotheses:

H6a: Relationship between KSM and Intention to use eWOM for purchasing online is mediated by attitude towards eWOM

H6b: Relationship between PU and Intention to use eWOM for purchasing online is mediated by attitude towards eWOM

H6c: Relationship between PEOU and Intention to use eWOM for purchasing online is mediated by attitude towards eWOM

H6d: Relationship between Trust on eWOM and Intention to use eWOM for purchasing online is mediated by attitude towards eWOM

H6e: Relationship between PERS eWOM and Intention to use eWOM for purchasing online is mediated by attitude towards eWOM

### Research Methodology

Pakistan registers an upward trend when it comes to use of technology and the majority of its population is under the age of 40. As information technology including its part and parcels are a new trend, so it is difficult to identify the exact population and sample however according to Pakistan telecommunication authority (PTA), number of internet subscribers in Pakistan swells to 58 million scattered throughout Pakistan. However, all the internet users were

not considered as part of sample rather those who had internet subscription and who have searched for product online keeping the essence of the research in consideration.

Deductive approach was used for the purpose of drawing inferences from the data collected. Quantitative data was collected using self-administered questionnaires and in order to get the right sample size, software G Power was used. 95% confidence interval with 3% margin of error was used giving a sample size of 520 so, 520 questionnaires were floated out of which 465 were received back giving a response rate of 89%. Out of these, 26 questionnaires were discarded due to incomplete responses consequent of which, 439 questionnaires were available for the purpose of analysis. Cross sectional data was collected using self-administered questionnaires in which questions related to the internet connection and online purchase made in the last six months were added at the start of questionnaire to make sure that appropriate respondents were selected for data collection and judgmental sampling was used for the purpose of data collection.

For the purpose of measurement, following instruments were used. For KSM Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh and Gremler (2004) seven item scale was used. For Perceived usefulness, Heinrichs, Lim and Lim (2011) four item scale was used. Perceived ease of use was measured using Davis et. al (1989) four items scale and Trust on eWOM was measured using McCroskey and Teven (1999) and Beltramini (1982) twelve item questionnaire. For measuring Persuasive e-WOM Messages, Cheung and Thadani (2012) twenty-nine item scale was used. Attitude towards e-WOM was measured using Crites et al., (1994) six scale item and three items of Cheung and Lee (2012) Ha and Jang (2010) Jeong and Jang (2011) were used to measure Intention to use e-WOM. The questionnaire was adapted according to the requirements and dynamics of Pakistani culture.

Finally Structural equation modeling (SEM) using PLS 3.0 latest version was carried out to evaluate the mediation effect between the I.V's and D.V's.

### Analysis

*Table 1 demographics*

#### **Gender**

	n	%
Male	288	65.6
Female	151	34.4
Total	439	100

***Age***

	n	%
18-24	136	31.0
25-34	98	22.3
35-44	47	10.7
45-54	85	19.4
55-64	21	4.8
65 or more	52	11.8
Total	439	100

***Marital Status***

	n	%
Married	268	61
Unmarried	171	39
Total	439	100

***Education***

	n	%
Matric	1	.2
Intermediate	16	3.6
Bachelors	159	36.2
Masters	212	48.3
Doctorate	51	11.6
Total	439	100

***Profession***

	n	%
Doctor	45	10.3
Engineer	17	3.9
Banker	46	10.5
Academician	55	12.5
Armed Forces Personal	51	11.6
Student	44	10.0
Others	181	41.2
Total	439	100

***Income Level***

	n	%
0 - 24,999	60	13.7
25,000 - 49,999	45	10.3
50,000 - 74,999	99	22.6
75,000 - 99,999	155	35.3
100,000 – 149,999	77	17.5
150,000 or more	3	.7
Total	439	100

Above tables show the demographics of sample for analysis which proved that sample comprised of fair mix of respondents selected for analysis. Distribution of sample was uniform across age, gender, education, profession and education level.

**Convergent and discriminant validity tests**

Before running the mediation analysis, convergent and

discriminant validity tests were run on the measurement model using PLS-SEM (Partial least Square Structural equation modelling) to validate that the association of indicators with endogenous variables. The results have been given in table 2

*Table 2*  
*Validity and Reliability analysis*  
*Standardized regression weighs for Knowledge sharing motivation*

Items	Loadings	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted
Ksm1	0.779	<b>0.853</b>	<b>0.542</b>
Ksm2	0.816		
Ksm3	0.784		
Ksm4	0.706		
Ksm5	0.768		

*Standardized regression weighs for Perceived Usefulness of eWOM*

Items	Loadings	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted
Pu1	0.875	<b>0.919</b>	<b>0.740</b>
Pu2	0.857		
Pu3	0.837		
Pu4	0.872		

*Standardized regression weighs for Perceived Ease of Use of eWOM*

Items	Loadings	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted
Peou1	0.830	<b>0.848</b>	<b>0.586</b>
Peou2	0.712		
Peou3	0.850		
Peou4	0.752		

*Standardized regression weighs for Trust on eWOM*

Items	Loadings	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted
Trust1	0.706	<b>0.944</b>	<b>0.501</b>
Trust2	0.749		
Trust3	0.790		
Trust4	0.738		
Trust5	0.705		
Trust6	0.728		
Trust7	0.739		
Trust8	0.684		
Trust9	0.763		
Trust10	0.709		
Trust11	0.685		
Trust12	0.656		
Trust13	0.662		
Trust14	0.657		
Trust15	0.675		
Trust16	0.659		
Trust17	0.706		

*Standardized regression weighs for Persuasive eWOM messages*

Items	Loadings	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted
Persu1	0.682	<b>0.918</b>	<b>0.505</b>
Persu2	0.680		
Persu3	0.718		
Persu4	0.678		
Persu5	0.721		
Persu6	0.702		
Persu7	0.748		
Persu8	0.722		
Persu9	0.712		
Persu10	0.746		
Persu11	0.707		

*Standardized regression weighs for Attitude towards eWOM*

Items	Loadings	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted
Attitude1	0.770	<b>0.899</b>	<b>0.598</b>
Attitude2	0.709		
Attitude3	0.803		
Attitude4	0.786		
Attitude5	0.734		
Attitude6	0.831		

*Standardized regression weighs for Intention to use eWOM*

Items	Loadings	Composite Reliability	Average variance extracted
Intention1	0.855	<b>0.873</b>	<b>0.696</b>
Intention2	0.803		
Intention3	0.845		

Results in table 2 shows that all the items loaded sufficiently on their respective endogenous variables. For factor loadings and composite reliability,  $.7 >$  is considered to be a good value. So all the items with loadings above  $.7$  were used while items having loadings lower than  $.7$  were

dropped for all variables. Composite reliability (CR) was good for all the variables and Average variance extracted (AVE) cut off value which is  $.5 >$  was also met by all the variables.

### ***Discriminant Validity***

*Table 3*  
*Fornell & Larcker Criterion*

	ATT	INT	KSM	PEOU	PERS	PU	TRUST
ATT	<b>0.772*</b>						
INT	0.627	<b>0.832*</b>					
KSM	0.386	0.375	<b>0.734*</b>				
PEOU	0.426	0.454	0.538	<b>0.762*</b>			
PERS	0.675	0.574	0.434	0.440	<b>0.710*</b>		
PU	0.489	0.493	0.596	0.710	0.504	<b>0.861*</b>	
TRUST	0.549	0.498	0.364	0.475	0.669	0.481	<b>0.707*</b>

Discriminant validity is defined as how much a variable is distinguished of other constructs (Hair et al., 2014). Cross loadings and Fornell Larcker are the usual criterion used in order to assess the discriminant validity in PLS. Higher level of discriminant validity explains that the constructs are far different than other respective variables and phenomena is not going to be explained by them as proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981). Square root of AVE of constructs are taken into account in order to ascertain the discriminant validity in present study and thus by this, values of correlation among latent constructs are low then these values in order to prove discriminant legitimacy (Hwang & Min, 2015). The values above 0.70

show the significant discriminant validity of the constructs.

### ***Mediation analysis***

As discussed in literature five independent variables categorized as inspiration and persuasion factors for eWOM were taken which included KSM, PU, PEOU, trust on eWOM and persuasive eWOM messages available on social networking websites (SNSs). Attitude towards eWOM was taken as a mediator and intention to use eWOM for online purchases was taken as a dependent variable. In the first phase of SEM analysis using PLS, I.V's and D.V's were added and direct impact was evaluated to understand I.V → D.V relationship.

*Table 4*  
*Results of direct effects*

Path	( $\beta$ )	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Va lues
KSM → INT	0.017	0.020	0.048	0.350	0.727
PU → INT	0.161	0.158	0.063	2.545	0.011
PEOU → INT	0.121	0.123	0.062	1.971	0.049
TRUST → INT	0.127	0.135	0.058	2.190	0.029
PERS → INT	0.349	0.346	0.062	5.663	0.000
KSM → ATT	0.025	0.026	0.043	0.588	0.557
PU → ATT	0.137	0.140	0.061	2.247	0.025
PEOU → ATT	0.038	0.035	0.057	0.672	0.502
TRUST → ATT	0.125	0.126	0.054	2.316	0.021
PERS → ATT	0.495	0.496	0.056	8.794	0.000
ATT → INT	0.371	0.369	0.065	5.742	0.000



Results in table 4 show that KSM had an insignificant impact on intention to use eWOM for making e-web purchases ( $\beta = 0.017$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ) consequent of which hypothesis 1 was rejected. Results also proved that PU had momentous blow on intention to use eWOM while making e-purchases ( $\beta = 0.161$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) which led to the acceptance of hypothesis 2. Results given in table 4 also show that perceived ease-of-use had a significant impact on intention to use eWOM for making online purchases ( $\beta = 0.121$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) which corroborated hypothesis 3. Results

also showed that trust on eWOM also had a significant impact on intention to use eWOM for making online purchases ( $\beta = .127$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and these results were in support for hypothesis 4. For the last direct impact, results showed that persuasive eWOM message had a significant impact on intention to use eWOM for making online purchases ( $\beta = .349$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) which were in support for hypothesis 5. After the evaluation of direct impact, indirect impact through mediator was evaluated and results for it are given in table 5.

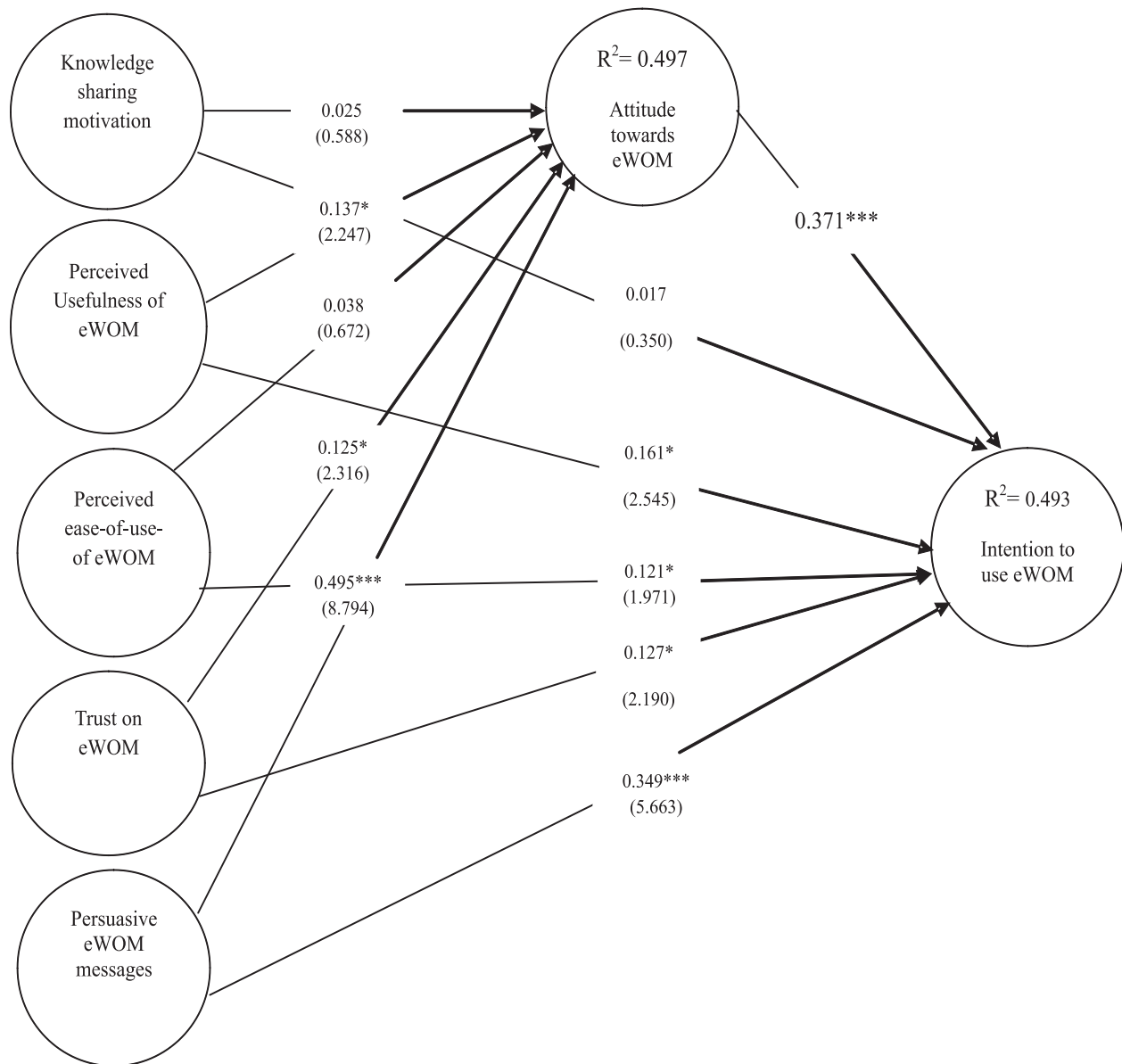
*Table 5*  
*Indirect effects through mediator*

Hypothesis	PATHS			( $\beta$ )	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H <sub>6a</sub>	KSM	ATT	INT	0.009	0.010	0.017	0.566	0.571	Not Supported
H <sub>6b</sub>	PU	ATT	INT	0.051	0.052	0.025	2.012	0.045	Supported
H <sub>6c</sub>	PEOU	ATT	INT	0.014	0.012	0.021	0.673	0.502	Not Supported
H <sub>6d</sub>	TRUST	ATT	INT	0.046	0.046	0.021	2.233	0.026	Supported
H <sub>6e</sub>	PERS	ATT	INT	0.184	0.183	0.039	4.712	0.000	Supported

Table 5 shows results for indirect effects with attitude towards eWOM as a mediator. Results show that attitude towards eWOM did not mediate the relationship between KSM and INT ( $\beta = .009$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ). The t value was also below the acceptable value ( $t = 0.566$ ) which didn't provide support for hypothesis 6a as per which ATT mediates KSM – INT relationship. Results also showed that ATT mediated relationship between PU and INT with ( $\beta = .051$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) values and t value was also significant ( $t = 2.012$ ) which provided support for hypothesis 6b as per which ATT mediate relationship between PU and INT. The next mediation effect in question was ATT between PEOU –

INT relationship and the results did not support hypothesis 6c. Results showed that ATT didn't mediate the relationship ( $\beta = .014$ ,  $p = \text{n.s.}$ ) and t value was also insignificant ( $t = 0.673$ ). Results in table 5 also show that ATT mediated the relationship between Trust and INT with ( $\beta = 0.046$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) which supported hypothesis 6d and the t value was also significant ( $t = 2.233$ ). The last mediation tested was between PERS and INT with ATT as a mediator and the results showed that mediation was significant with ( $\beta = .184$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) and ( $t = 4.712$ ) which was in support of hypothesis 6e.

Figure 1 PLS-SEM Structural Model



Note: \*\*\*Significant at .001 level (two tailed), \*\*significant at .01 level (two tailed) and \*significant at .05 level (two tailed)

## Discussion

Upshots proved that motivation of individuals to share knowledge does not affect the intention of individuals to use information available online to make online purchases. Word of mouth especially electronic WOM is still in its infancy time and people are not motivated enough to share their online experiences and knowledge for making purchase. Moreover, due to lack of check and balances, it is difficult to single out the experienced reviewers from inexperienced ones which ultimately diminish the importance and motivation for using the information. This result is similar and consistent with previous study on restaurant industry conducted by Yang (2017).

Research also revealed PU of eWOM had significant impact on intention to use eWOM for purchasing online. Individuals behold of belief that information available online is useful and it can help them to improve their purchase decision tend to use it for making online purchases thereby increasing the utility of eWOM during web shopping. Results also revealed that the ease with which information can be ingress on online platforms does influence the intent of individuals to use it while making e-purchases. Customers are drawn towards simplicity and they tend to give high ratings to platforms that make it easier for them to share information related to their experience for making online purchases. The same effect the intent of potential customers to use this information for making purchases because of the reason discussed prior that customers give more weightage to simplicity and utility over customization and complexity which has a positive impact on intent to use information for making online purchases. Moslehpour et al., (2018) and Mutahar et al., (2018) also revealed similar results.

Results also proved that trust on information being shared online increases the probability of this information being used during scrolling from virtual world purchases and are consistent with the previous study of Lou and Yuan (2019). In the world of Google and Youtube, individuals always look out for reviewers that are credible. Although Youtube does not officially support it but individuals who tend to buy certain products online evaluate the credibility of individual providing review of the product and same goes for other online platforms. Whether the information available online is going to be used or not depends upon the trust that people have on that word of mouth. In today's digital word where it is very easy for anyone float information online, a lot of emphasis is put on the credibility of the information and potential customers do tend to evaluate the source of eWOM before considering it for making online purchase. In addition to trust, the above-mentioned factors also add to the persuasive ability of the

message which has a positive influence on intention to use eWOM for making purchases. Source of information, packaging of it and credibility all add to the quality of information being shared with ultimately impacts the intent to use it for e purchasing and results are similar with the previous study findings of Tsao and Hsieh (2015).

The impact of attitude towards eWOM was evaluated as a mediator in next part of the study. Results revealed that attitude towards eWOM mediates only the relationship of PU, trust and persuasive eWOM messages with the outcome variables and are in line with the findings of previous literature (Malik & Hadi, 2019; Zhu & Kanjanamekanant, 2020). Emotions and feelings predominantly affect the orientation of individuals towards the intent of individuals to use eWOM for purchasing online. Individuals with positive attitude towards eWOM are more inclined to share information and this information is used for making online purchases. In addition, people who perceive positive usefulness of eWOM have constructive attitude for eWOM which helps them to use the information available online for making purchases. It is because customers believe that the information available online helps to shape the decision for making online purchase and consequently positive attitude if formed towards eWOM which helps to make use of this information for making online purchases.

Including usefulness, ease of use also shapes the attitude of individuals towards eWOM for making online purchases. Information that is considered useful helps to build positive image towards eWOM which in turn constructively reinforces the intent to use eWOM for online purchasing. Lastly trust and persuasiveness also shape attitude towards eWOM which means that positive orientation of trust and persuasiveness both build positive attitude towards eWOM because of which, the intent of the individuals to use information for making online purchases is increased.

## Conclusion

Technology has come of age and users have adapted to it in ways that products and their information is available online on massive scale for the potential customers. Internet makes it possible for people to go online and search for their desired product in less time however, unlike the physical appearance; customers during e-purchases rely heavily on eWOM instead of ascertaining its origin and facilitated themselves by taking sound anonymous decisions regarding web purchases. Since eWOM plays such a vital role in purchase decision of individuals, it is important that the information available online should not only be easily accessible and available but it should be credible and trust worthy as well especially in the sectors of

emerging online markets. The role of eWOM in intent to make online purchase is also affected by the trust and credibility on the source from which the information is available as customers emphasise on checking the background of information available for making purchase decision. In addition, attitude acts as a major contributor in shaping individual behaviours to make use eWOM for making online purchases.

Moreover, important contribution of this study is the comprehensive theoretical model enriched with inspirational persuasion factors of eWOM engagement essential for the survival of emerging online sectors which basically councils that how online reviews presence impacts on eWOM usage intention while making web purchases in an uncertain environment by highlighting the intervening role of attitude towards eWOM in enhancement of online shopping trend.

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