

**What makes one spread the word online - A study on electronic word of mouth motivations on social networking sites**

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### **Abstract**

This main focus of the study is to understand what motivates a person to give electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on social networking sites. With the increasing popularity of social networking sites, lots of consumers check these sites for reviews of products and services. Based on the literature review, a scale of motives that lead to giving eWOM by means of writing comments on social networking sites was developed. The study used a sample of 81 students from the University of Stavanger to validate the eWOM motivation scale for social networking sites. Findings suggest that the consumers who spread eWOM on social networking sites are strongly driven by the following motives respectively; drive for enhancing themselves (extraversion), social benefits, the need of getting assisted by the platform operators (platform assistance) and their concern for other consumers (Altruism). The author has suggested segmentation based on the motives and number of comments written online for future research and managerial purposes.

*Key words:* Electronic word of mouth (eWOM), eWOM motivations, social networking sites

### **List of abbreviations**

WOM – Word of mouth

eWOM – Electronic word of mouth

SNS –Social networking sites

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

**Table of contents**

1	Introduction .....	10
1.1	Background .....	10
1.2	Research objective.....	11
1.3	Importance of the study.....	12
1.4	Structure of the thesis.....	12
1.5	Contribution of the research.....	13
1.6	Chapter summary .....	13
2	Theoretical review .....	14
2.1	eWOM.....	14
2.1.1	Traditional WOM vs. eWOM.....	15
2.1.2	eWOM Dimensions .....	15
2.2	Social networking sites.....	16
2.2.1	eWOM on Social Networking sites .....	17
2.3	eWOM motivations.....	19
2.4	Conceptual model and hypothesis.....	25
2.5	Chapter summary .....	26
3	Method.....	27
3.1	Research design.....	27
3.2	Measure .....	27

3.2.1	Purification of the scale items.....	28
3.2.2	Revised scale used in the final survey .....	28
3.3	Sampling.....	29
3.4	Data collection and analysis.....	29
3.5	Chapter summary .....	30
4	Results .....	31
4.1	Sample description.....	31
4.2	Data description.....	32
4.3	Reliability and validity analysis.....	33
4.3.1	Reliability analysis – Cronbach’s alpha.....	33
4.3.2	Validity .....	34
4.3.2.1	Face validity .....	35
4.3.2.2	Convergent validity .....	35
4.4	Factor analysis.....	37
4.4.1	Discriminant validity .....	39
4.5	Hypothesis testing .....	39
4.6	Motive based segmentation.....	41
4.6.1	Segment 1.....	41
4.6.2	Segment 2.....	42
4.6.3	Segment 3.....	42

4.7 Chapter summary ..... 43

5 Discussion and Conclusion..... 44

5.1 Conclusion..... 47

6 Implication, Limitations and Recommendations..... 48

6.1 Managerial implications..... 48

6.2 Limitations and recommendations ..... 48

6.3 Limitations ..... 48

6.4 Recommendation for future research ..... 49

7 References ..... 50

8 Appendices..... 54



**List of Tables**

Table 1 : List of eWOM motives .....	21
Table 2- Frequency - Number of comments .....	32
Table 3 - Descriptive statistics .....	33
Table 4 - Reliability test results .....	34
Table 5 - Total variance percentage.....	37
Table 6 -Factor Structure – Principal component analysis .....	38
Table 7- Regression analysis .....	40
Table 8 - eWOM motives based segmentation .....	41
Table 9 - Comparison on findings .....	46

**List of figures**

Figure 1- Conceptual Model .....	25
----------------------------------	----

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

The advent of internet based social media has made it probable for a person to give reviews or communicate about products and services to several thousand others. This in turn has influenced the market place to a great extent (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). An increasing number of organizations use social media as a fundamental component of their promotions as it allows the organization to have a healthy communication with their customers (Chu & Kim, 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Social networking sites, a component of social media have even surpassed email as a popular online activity and it is well liked by the users as it enables them to exchange information, seek opinions, provide opinions among its users (Chu & Kim, 2011; Nielsenonline, 2009). Given the increasing popularity of the social networking sites, this study primarily focuses on what motivates the consumers to spread electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on social networking sites.

Researchers and scholars have often recognized the importance of word of mouth and face to face communication and how they affect the consumer decision making behavior (Baber et al., 2016). However, in recent times, word-of-mouth communication has taken the online form. One of the main online channels experiencing immense growth in eWOM is social networking sites which is made up of websites with virtual communities of individuals who interact with each other (Erin & Lawrence, 2009). Presently the topic of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication is raising increased interest in business disciplines such as marketing, consumer behavior, economics, and information systems (Cheung & Lee, 2012)

Most academic studies have researched about the word of mouth communication than the electronic word of mouth. The existing researches on eWOM are largely about viral marketing which is about increasing brand popularity using consumer communication (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004). There is still not much research on what causes the consumers to spread eWOM on social network platforms. Therefore, this present study has been done with the main purpose of analyzing the various motivational factors behind the consumer's involvement in providing eWOM on social network platforms. From the author's perspective, one of the main reasons that lead the author to undertake this study is the prominent role that eWOM on social networking sites plays in her every single purchase decision, be it buying a day to day product or an expensive automobile. It would be interesting to know what motivates the user to provide eWOM. From an organizational perspective, understanding the eWOM motivations from the social media angle can help them get solid consumer feedback, create good marketing strategies which in turn can lead to great profits.

## **1.2 Research objective**

The main objective of the research is to examine the various motives of the social network users in providing the electronic word of mouth communication on social networking platforms. In addition to that, the study also aims in finding out the most important eWOM motive that influences the users in providing eWOM in social networking sites. To achieve the research objective, it is vital to understand the concepts of eWOM, eWOM motivations and social networking sites. The author has discussed the above mentioned concepts through peer reviewed studies and previous relevant literature.

To address the research question, the data were collected from students from the University of Stavanger through online questionnaire. Using college students as sample to achieve the

research objective seemed appropriate because a recent report by the Pew Internet & American Life Project states that more than 70% online users who use social networking sites are aged between 18 to 29 years (Chu & Kim, 2011, p. 49)

### **1.3 Importance of the study**

Word of Mouth communication has been increasing steadily since the current explosion of online tools, media usage and the social networking sites (Meuter, McCabe, & Curran, 2013). It has been found out that a total of 70 percent of consumers have checked the social media for information and reviews about a product, brand, service or corporation, with 49 percent of these consumers using the information they collect to make a purchase decision (Ahrens, Coyle, & Strahilevitz, 2013, p. 1036). In addition to that, these data shows how important the subject of eWOM is and thus the research objective to investigate what motivates the consumers to spread WOM online on social networking platforms is timely and required.

### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

The structure of the thesis in accordance with each chapter has been given follows.

Chapter 1 encompasses the introduction and also provides reason for the choosing the particular topic of research along with its importance.

Chapter 2 provides the literature review of the main concepts including social media, eWOM, eWOM in social media and eWOM motivations.

Chapter 3 consists of details about the method, research design, measure and sampling techniques

Chapter 4 documents the results of the analysis while chapter 5 and 6 contains Discussion, conclusion and Implications, limitations respectively. Appendix and a list of references are provided after chapter 6.

### **1.5 Contribution of the research**

This study will be relevant to the disciplines of marketing, consumer behavior and business strategy. Given the growing popularity of the social networking sites, this study can give an insight for the businesses on what eWOM of social networks users. In addition to that the study can be used as base for creating advertising strategies for better consumer management.

### **1.6 Chapter summary**

To summarize, the introduction chapter gives a brief description about the growing popularity of social networking sites and the significance of eWOM in social networking sites. This in turn makes it significant to understand what motivates the social network users to provide eWOM on SNS.

## 2 Theoretical review

This section contains peer reviewed literature which can help get a clear understanding of the chose subject. Findings of the previous studies and various literatures on eWOM have been included to investigate about eWOM and its various perspectives. The theoretical review discusses about three concepts in particular, eWOM, eWOM motivations and eWOM in social networking sites.

### 2.1 eWOM

Word of mouth has been identified by the researchers as an major influence of what people know, feel and do (Groeger & Buttle, 2014). Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), has described electronic or online word of mouth as “*any positive or negative statement made by a former, actual, or potential customer about a product or an organization to more than one person or institution via the internet*” (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 39). eWOM can also be described as “the exchange of product or service information among people who talk and text each other in the virtual world” (King, Racherla, & Bush, 2014; Wang, Yeh, Chen, & Tsydypov, 2016, p. 1034)

The advent of the Internet has extended consumers’ options for gathering unbiased product information from other consumers and provides the opportunity for consumers to offer their own consumption-related advice by engaging in electronic word-of-mouth (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Internet has become a dominant medium to transmit WOM, which in turn is a significant and dynamic part of interpersonal online communication (Sun, Youn, Wu, & Kuntaraporn, 2006).

Because of the Internet, eWOM reaches a larger audience than WOM. The opinions and remarks can exist for a long period and be found by anyone interested in the products, service or companies. These features allow internet users to gather together online and form virtual

communities that can exert power over a company (Yen & Tang, 2015). Social networking sites has been identified as one of the best venue for eWOM communication as consumers seek out and publicize information from their established social networks (Kim, Sung, & Kang, 2014).

Firms give importance to positive word of mouth communication for two very important reasons. First reason being, a friend or a relative is considered to carry more credibility than an advertisement or any other promotional activity. Secondly, it is does not require any expenditure unlike advertisement and other promotional activities (Ahrens et al., 2013).

### **2.1.1 Traditional WOM vs. eWOM**

eWOM differs from traditional WOM in many ways. Firstly, eWOM communications possess unprecedented scalability and speed of diffusion. Second, eWOM communications are more persistent and accessible than traditional WOM. Most of the text-based information presented on the Internet is archived and thus, in many cases, at least in theory, is available for an indefinite period of time (Cheung & Lee, 2012).

In addition to that, eWOM communications are more measurable than traditional WOM. The presentation format, quantity and persistence of eWOM communications have made them more observable. Lastly, the electronic nature of eWOM in most applications may dampen the receiver's ability to judge the sender and his or her message on factors such as credibility. People can only judge the credibility of the communicator based on the associated cues through online reputation systems (Cheung & Lee, 2012).

### **2.1.2 eWOM Dimensions**

Researchers have found out that eWOM communication comprises of three dimensions which are *Opinion leadership*, *Opinion passing* and *Opinion seeking*. Opinion leadership is when

people share information and influence other people's attitude and behavior. Opinion seeking happens when individuals look for information before making a decision and Opinion passing is nothing but the process of pass along behavior (Chu & Kim, 2011; Kim et al., 2014; Sun et al., 2006)

It has been researched and identified that eWOM consists of three main dimensions when it comes to the consumer purchase decision making process. The three dimensions are *motivation, source and content*. Motivation describes the elements that make the consumers to seek online information through eWOM. The dimension source is nothing but the origin of online communication otherwise called as the online reviews. It also describes the impact that certain elements of online review content, has on the reader. The third dimension, content identifies the importance of eWOM content, specially focusing on the certain elements sought by the consumers (Chen, Nguyen, Klaus, & Wu, 2015).

## **2.2 Social networking sites**

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61), describe social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content”. Social media cover a variety of online information-sharing formats including social networking sites (e.g. Facebook and MySpace) creativity works-sharing sites (e.g. YouTube), collaborative websites and micro blogging sites (e.g. Twitter). Social networking sites have received mounting attention from among the varied formats of social media, from researchers, educators, practitioners and policy makers (Chu & Kim, 2011, pp. 47-48).



Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 63) in their work, has described social networking sites as follows “*Social networking sites are applications that enable users to connect by creating personal information profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending e-mails and instant messages between each other*”. Social networking sites like facebook and myspace are very popular among the younger internet users, so much so that the word “facebook addict” has been coined by the urban dictionary. Many popular companies from the U.S:A like Warner brothers and adidas have created their own brand communities on social networking sites to improve their brand image (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

### **2.2.1 eWOM on Social Networking sites**

The section of the review gives a brief introduction about eWOM communication in social networking sites followed by a list various studies on eWOM in relation to social networking sites that were conducted previously by researchers. These studies throw light on eWOM from different perspectives.

Firstly, because of the potential in social networking sites, many companies have increased their advertising spending on social media tremendously. eWOM communication occurs in social networking sites when its user seeks or provides feedback about a particular product or service. One of the many ways includes becoming fan in one of the facebook brand pages. This helps the users to get information easily. One unique aspect of eWOM in social networking sites is that its ready availability of its users network (Chu & Kim, 2011)

Mangold and Faulds (2009), has argued that social media, of which social networking sites is an important component, is the new hybrid component of the promotional mix. The social media conversations occurring between customers are outside the control of the marketing managers with

respect to content and frequency which is in contrast to integrated marketing communication context where managers possess high degree of control (Mangold & Faulds, 2009).

Yeh and Choi (2011), have researched about eWOM in relation to consumer engagement. This work empirically examines a model of eWOM intention among online brand community members and the findings of this study propose that brand identification positively impacts eWOM intention by way of brand loyalty and community identification. In addition to that, trust in peer community members is found to be a significant mediation element in this study (Yeh & Choi, 2011)

Luo and Zhong (2015), in their study have analyzed the eWOM communication on social networking sites as a network based on social relationship. The results of their study shows that travel related eWOM communication relied on the existing social ties which can be categorized into strong, middling or weak strength (Luo & Zhong, 2015)

Another study using a survey of 238 social network users have found out that tie strength and innovativeness directly influence eWOM on social networks, wherein trust, shared language and self-disclosure does not have a significant influence (Wang et al., 2016).

Chen et al. (2015), in their study has explored the role of eWOM on consumer attitudes and their subsequent behavior through online reviews. The study also discusses about the implications of eWOM on the segmentation of tourism industry (Chen et al., 2015). Another study examines the ripple effect caused in virtual communities because of eWOM through uses and gratification theory combined with dual mediation hypothesis. A total of 599 facebook fan page members from Taiwan were recruited to test the hypothesis. The study identified that the hedonic

and utilitarian dimensions of attitude toward the facebook fan page resulted in eWOM intentions (Hsu, Wang, Chih, & Lin, 2015).

Chu and Kim (2011), in their study about eWOM in social networks, have found out that strength of the personal ties between social media users is positively related to their participation in word-of-mouth advertising from or to other users (Chu & Kim, 2011).

Xu (2014), for his research has conducted a between-participants experiment to explore how on social networking sites, two personal profile characteristics, reputation cue and profile picture, influence the trust towards the reviewer. The results of the study says that reputation cue and profile picture cue contributed differently to users' affective trust and cognitive trust towards the reviewer (Xu, 2014).

The above mentioned studies clearly show the reader the gaining prominence of eWOM on social networking sites among researchers. In addition to that, from an analysis of existing researches on eWOM, it is evident that most of the researches focus on the social capital aspect of eWOM and about the information seeking part of eWOM (Balaji, Khong, & Chong; Kasabov, 2016; Luo & Zhong, 2015; Wang et al., 2016). There are only a few studies describing what motivates the social network user to write comments (write eWOM) on social networking sites. The following section of the literature review eWOM motivations with respect to giving eWOM on social networking sites.

### **2.3 eWOM motivations**

This section of the literature review encompasses the main aspect of this study which is eWOM motivations. This section on eWOM on social networking sites revealed the importance of eWOM ad its importance for companies. Therefore the present study is vital in studying what

motivates the customers to spread the word online in social networking sites as a minority of the eWOM providers can affect the majority's perception of a product or brand. Understanding what drives this group of eWOM providers is essential for formulating strategies from the managerial point of view (Yen & Tang, 2015).

To summarize a total list of eWOM motivations, the present study is based on Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) seminal study on eWOM motivations in consumer opinion platforms and Yen and Tang (2015) study on eWOM motivations with respect to the hotel industry in relation to both consumer opinion platforms and social networking sites .

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), on their study have researched about eWOM motivations. In their study they have identified the following as the important motives leading to eWOM behavior in consumer opinion platforms.

- Consumer's need to engage in social interaction,
- Want for economic incentives
- Worry for other consumers and
- The possibility to enhance their own self-worth

One limitation of this study is that it was conducted in among the online users in Germany and it is not possible to generalize it for the other countries (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004).

Yen and Tang (2015), in their research has studied about eWOM motivation in the hotel industry. This study is primarily based on Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) study on eWOM motivations. They have studied eWOM motivation in relation to hotel attribute performance and media choice. The findings of their study suggest that eWOM motivational aspects like extraversion, social benefits and dissonance reduction are positively related to social network sites

and altruism and platform assistance are positively correlated with the consumer opinion sites (Yen & Tang, 2015).

The key difference between both the studies is that the first one is based on consumer opinion sites, while the second one discusses about the media choice and eWOM motivation which includes both consumer networking sites and social networking sites.

A summary of eWOM motivations found on both the studies mentioned above has been listed in **Table 1** given below.

**Table 1 : List of eWOM motives**

<b>Authors</b>	<b>eWOM motivation factors</b>
1. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) (Consumer of opinion sites)	Concern for other consumers Social benefits Economic incentives Platform assistance Venting negative feelings Extraversion Advice seeking
2. Yen and Tang (2015) (Consumer opinion sites and social networking sites with reference to hotel industry)	Altruism/concern for other consumers Social relationship development Economic incentives Platform assistance Dissonance reduction Extraversion

After carefully analyzing both the studies, the author chose to keep six motives which are relevant for the present study. For better understanding of each motives, a brief description of the eWOM motives along with the reason for adopting it in this particular study has been discussed in the below section. As stated previously, the six motives included for this present study are adopted from the above mentioned two studies (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Yen & Tang, 2015) and are listed as follows.

- 1. Altruism** – Altruism can be described as an act of doing something for others without anticipating any reward in return (Sundaram, Mitra, & Webster, 1998). In the consumption context, it is a desire to help the fellow consumers make their purchase decisions and at the same time helping the company by providing feedback (Yen & Tang, 2015). In simple words consumers write reviews on social network because the worry about other consumers, they care about the others in their social network. They want them to get benefited by their own experience. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), has used the factor name as “concern for other consumers” in his work as it is appropriate to use the same with respect to consumer opinion platforms. This factor is associated with both negative word of mouth and positive word of mouth. (Yen & Tang, 2015). This particular factor was found to have a positive impact on the eWOM behavior on consumer opinion platforms on both the studies. The author still decided to keep this factor for social networking sites, because of the different nature of the sample and study setting.
- 2. Extraversion 3. Venting negative feelings / dissonance reduction** – When the consumers are strongly affected by consumption experience be it negative or positive, they experience psychological tension and tend to restore to the balance state. They achieve this by expressing themselves on online opinion sites and social networking sites. Therefore

expressing positive feelings (extraversion) and expression negative feelings (dissonance reduction) are two motives for eWOM. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) uses the construct term as venting negative feelings for his study and Yen and Tang (2015) use the term dissonance reduction for the purpose of the study. The author has chose use the construct name as venting negative feelings as it's easier to understand and it means the same as dissonance reduction. (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Yen & Tang, 2015). These two factors are found to be positively correlated with the eWOM behavior on social sites (Yen & Tang, 2015). Hence it was appropriate to use these two constructs for the present study.

- **Economic incentives** – This is nothing but seeking monetary rewards and non monetary rewards which include free upgrades and reward points through eWOM communication(Yen & Tang, 2015). This motive had a significant effect on eWOM behavior on consumer opinion sites (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) and no effect on eWOM behavior on social networking platforms ((Yen & Tang, 2015). The present study chooses to still keep this factor because of the different sample and also there has been slow but steady growth for rewards or economic incentives in facebook and other social networking pages based on the authors own personal experience and on consultation with the pilot study respondents.
- **Social benefits** – This factor is an important factor in most of the empirical and theoretical studies on eWOM motivation. Consumers seek out activities get recognize by the important others a social function gives them opportunities to get connected with others. Yen and Tang (2015), has renamed the construct name as social relationship development with respect to their study and it was found to have a positive correlation on eWOM behavior on social networking sites. Therefore the author adopts this construct for the present study.

However, in the present study decides use the original construct as it is widely followed in other empirical studies. (Yen & Tang, 2015).

- **Platform assistance** - This is a distinctive motivation identified by (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) in their study. They argued that consumers might post eWOM on online platforms because it makes the act of complaining easier and it is easier for the consumers this way to negotiate with the company as they feel the social network platform in charge will convey the same to the company. However this factor did not have an impact on the eWOM behavior on consumer sites. But this factor had a positive correlation with consumer opinion sites on Yen and Tang (2015) study. Because of the contradicting results between the two studies the author decided to test the factor on her own in this present study.

To summarize, in simple terms for better understanding, social network users spread word mouth communication (through writing comments and posts) on social networking sites because of the following six motivational factors:

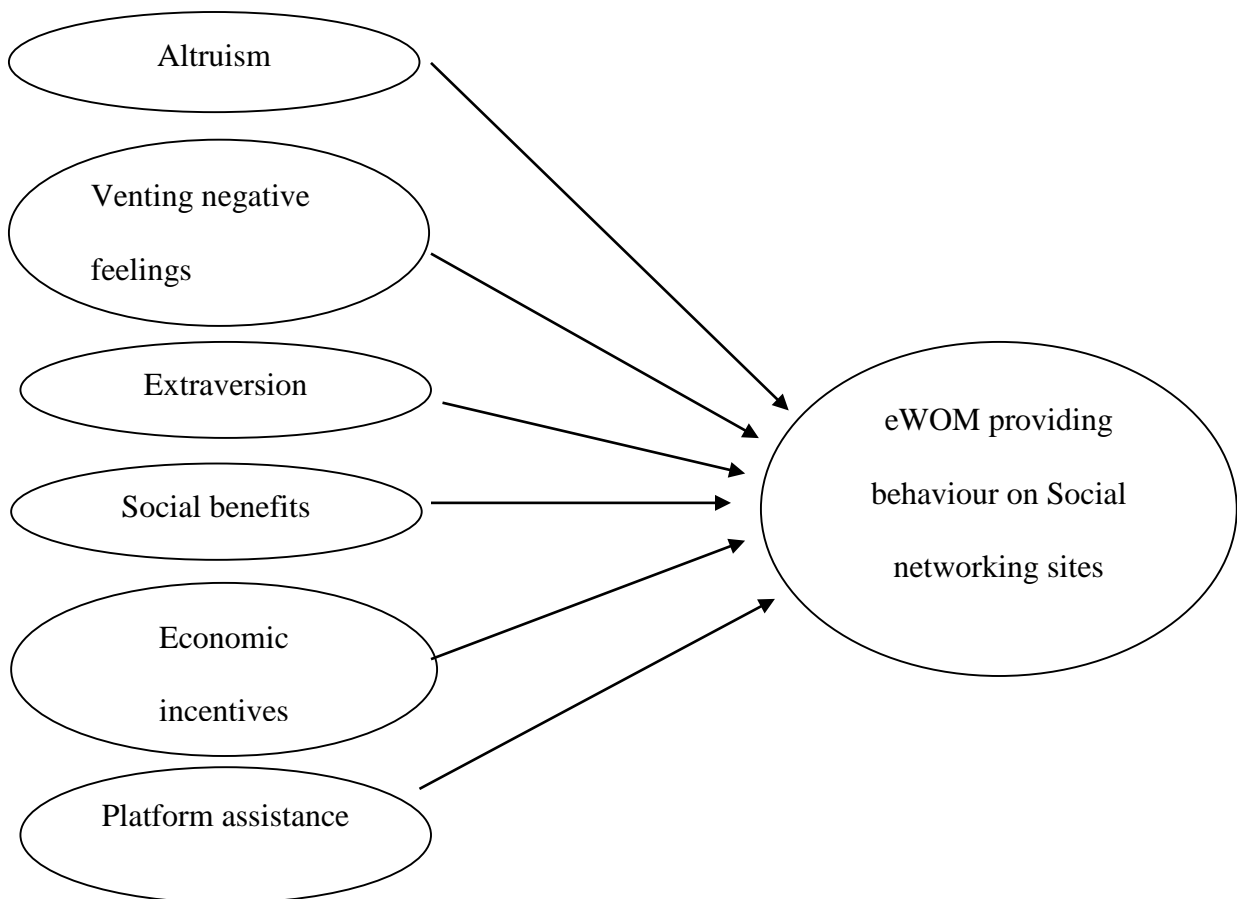
- Concern for other consumers (**Altruism**)
- To connect with other likeminded people (**Social benefits**)
- To get assistance from companies through platform operators (**platform assistance**)
- To express their negative emotions with respect to the product service (**Venting negative feelings**)
- To get recognized by others for their contribution and self enhancement (**Extraversion**)
- To gain economic benefits (**Economic incentives**)



## 2.4 Conceptual model and hypothesis

The author has formulated the hypothesis base on the previous reviews of literature and a conceptual model for the hypothesis has been created for better understanding. **Figure 1** based on (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Yen & Tang, 2015) portrays the conceptual model of the study

**Proposed hypothesis:** Altruism, extraversion, venting negative feelings, social benefits, economic incentives and platform assistance have a significant impact on eWOM giving behavior



**Figure 1- Conceptual Model**

## **2.5 Chapter summary**

To summarize, a detailed review on the key concepts of the study were given in this chapter and based on the review the author has formulated the eWOM motivation scale which includes six items ; Altruism, extraversion, venting negative feelings, social benefits, economic benefits and platform assistance

### **3 Method**

Based on the review of literature, six motives were identified which may make the consumers engage in eWOM communication. The motives are Altruism, extraversion, venting negative feelings, social benefits, economic incentives and platform assistance. To empirically analyze these motives, the study followed the below described design and method. This chapter discusses about the research design, measures, sampling technique and data collection

#### **3.1 Research design**

A descriptive research design has been used in this study as the main purpose of the study is to demonstrate the relationship between a dependent and independent variable. All the eWOM motivational factors are the independent variables and the eWOM behavior which is measured through the number of comments written on social networking sites is the dependent variable.

This present study follows a quantitative design by means of collecting data through self administered online surveys for collecting data. In addition to that, an explorative research design has been used in the early stage of this study by means of a pilot survey to test the quality of the scale items.

#### **3.2 Measure**

The questionnaire was created in English. One drawback could be that the questionnaire was not made available in Norwegian. From the authors own personal experience, who is a student herself at the University of Stavanger, the author assumed that students at the University of Stavanger could read and understand English. The final version of the questionnaire of the had two sections with 27 items altogether, first section had age, gender and number of comments written on social media platforms as questions and the second section had questions about eWOM

motivations. The eWOM motivation section had 6 constructs namely Altruism (5 items), venting negative feelings (4 items), economic incentives (3 items), extraversion (4 items), social benefits (4 items) and platform assistance (4 items). The final version of the online survey can be found in the **Appendix A** at the end of this document. The scale items were taken from the previous relevant studies mentioned in the literature review.

### **3.2.1 Purification of the scale items**

The initial scale adopted from the literature review had 6 constructs with 28 items altogether under the motivation constructs along with 2 items on demography and 1 item on eWOM behavior. A pilot study with 10 university students who are avid users of the social networking sites was carried out and the participants were asked to review the scale items. The inputs given by the pilot study participants were reviewed carefully and necessary changes were made to the questionnaire. In addition to that inputs from professor from the same university were also asked for and taken into account. The questionnaire was reworded and after a few addition and deletion of items, revised version of the questionnaire was sent by the author to the same respondents and at this time no changes were mentioned by the respondents. This helped the author to have a good face and content validity on the questionnaire.

### **3.2.2 Revised scale used in the final survey**

The revised scale consisted of 6 constructs with 24 items under the eWOM motivation construct, 2 items on demography which are age and gender and 1 item to measure the eWOM behavior of the users which was measured through the number of comments written. Altogether there were 27 items on the final survey. A five point likert scale was followed ranging from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree) asking the participants to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each measure. The items of the revised scale are primarily based on Hennig-

Thurau et al. (2004) , Yen and Tang (2015). A detailed version of the final online survey has been given the **Appendix A** towards the end of this thesis.

### **3.3 Sampling**

The study population is the entire student body at the University of Stavanger. The six motives for providing eWOM communication are studied using a sample of students from the University of Stavanger. Chu and Kim (2011), in their study has mentioned that majority of the online users between 18 and 29 use the social networking sites, which makes taking the students as sample for the purpose of this study is appropriate. A convenience sampling technique has been used in this study because of the limited time and resource. A link to the online survey created using Google docs was posted on the social networking pages of the university. This was found to be the best way to reach the target samples who are students of University of Stavanger, using social networking sites. The author was able to collect only 93 responses and out of which only 81 was found usable. It can be related to students having to come across many surveys such as this which can be a daunting task for them.

### **3.4 Data collection and analysis**

An online survey was created using Google doc and the link to the survey was posted in the social network pages of the university and on the various facebook groups of the student body. To ensure only the current students of university of Stavanger and students who have written comments on social networking sites are taking the survey, the author wrote the following note along with the survey link *“Only for the students currently studying at Stavanger and who have written comments about products or services on social networking sites”*. This helps the author in reducing the bias to certain extent. However, like every online survey, one drawback is that one cannot prove only the target sample has undertaken the survey, as the author cannot check in

person. The survey was an online one and the students click on the survey link, select the options and submit their responses. To avoid biases in responses, the respondents were assured that their responses would stay anonymous. Only one submission per respondent was allowed. The survey was accessible from May 2, 2016 to May 18, 2016.

The data collected were then entered into SPSS statistical tool for further analysis. The various analysis conducted includes regression analysis, factor analysis, cluster analysis, reliability analysis which are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

### **3.5 Chapter summary**

To summarize, a quantitative technique has been used in this present study. A self administered online questionnaire was sent as link through social networking sites and the students were asked to fill the questions. 81 samples were found usable in the end and the data collected from the 81 respondents have been analysis using SPSS statistical tool and the analysis conducted include regression, reliability, factor and cluster analysis.

## 4 Results

The chapter discusses the results of the various analysis conducted in detail. The chapter begins with the sample and data description followed by reliability and validity analysis and factor analysis. Hypothesis testing and motive based segmentation by the author can be found in the last section of the study.

### 4.1 Sample description

A total of 93 responses were collected out of which only 81 were found usable and the same was used as the data in the SPSS tool. The achieved sample size is therefore (N= 81). The achieved sample consisted of 53 percentage of female and 46 percentage of male respondents. The average age of the respondents were 27, with the minimum age of 20 and maximum age of 34. Out of 81 respondents, 32 respondents have written 1 to 10 comments, 23 respondents have written 11 to 35 comments, 18 respondents have written 36 to 99 comments and 8 respondents have written 100 or more comments contributing to 40%, 28%, 22%, and 10% respectively. **Table 2** clearly shows the details about the number of comments written on social networking sites by the respondents. A cross tabulation between the number of comments written and gender showed that men and women were almost equally distributed between the four options on number of comments written.

**Table 2- Frequency - Number of comments**

No of comments	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 to 10	32	39.5	39.5	39.5
100 or more	8	9.9	9.9	49.4
Valid 11 to35	23	28.4	28.4	77.8
36 to 99	18	22.2	22.2	100.0
Total	81	100.0	100.0	

## 4.2 Data description

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for the six constructs of the study. As the original contain scales 24 items it is difficult to represent them in the table therefore only the descriptive statistics of the constructs has been provided. The entire sample of 81 respondents has responded to all the items. The normality of the scales are analysed using the skewness and kurtosis test and was found to be satisfactory. Though there were outliers did not affect the scores in the serious way. Based on the descriptive statistics it can be said that the young internet users are highly altruistic and they have a very high concern for other consumers. In addition to that Extraversion is on the main motivating factors for the youthful consumers in Norway.



**Table 3 - Descriptive statistics**

Constructs	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Altruism	4.04	.802	.642	-1.247	.267	2.802	.529
Extraversion	3.65	.876	.767	-.728	.267	.530	.529
Platform assistance	3.54	1.086	1.179	-.580	.267	-.322	.529
Social benefits	2.73	1.137	1.292	.007	.267	-1.000	.529
Venting negative feelings	2.57	.981	.963	.118	.267	-.490	.529
Economic incentives	2.21	1.172	1.374	.642	.267	-.666	.529
Valid N (81)							

### 4.3 Reliability and validity analysis

#### 4.3.1 Reliability analysis – Cronbach’s alpha

Cronbach’s alpha is the widely accepted analysis to test the reliability and internal consistency of the scale. It is a known fact that the higher the Cronbach alpha is the higher the internal consistency among the items. A value of .6 or more is considered the best for the scale reliability (Nunnally, 1978; Pallant, 2011). **Table 4** shows the cronbach alpha value for each

construct, a detailed result of the cronbach analysis with alpha value when item deleted has been given in the **Appendix B**

**Table 4 - Reliability test results**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Cronbach alpha value</b>
Extraversion	.866
Platform assistance	.893
Venting negative feelings	.836
Altruism	.880
Social benefits	.902
Economic incentives	.904

All the constructs have satisfied the requirement of the reliability test with a higher cronbach alpha value of more than .8. However among all the constructs, Economic incentives (alpha value = .904), social benefits (alpha value = .902), have a higher internal consistency followed by platform assistance (alpha value = .893), altruism (alpha value = .880), extraversion (alpha value = .866) and venting negative feelings (alpha value = .836) respectively. To conclude, it can asserted that scale used for this study is highly reliable

#### **4.3.2 Validity**

The validity of a scale refers to the degree to which it truly measures the constructs that it is intended to measure (Churchill Jr, 1979). The validity of the overall scale has been tested using factor analysis. In addition to that convergent and discriminant validity has been tested in order evaluate the questionnaire completely.

#### **4.3.2.1 Face validity**

Face validity and content validity can be confirmed by the professional knowledge of the researchers through which they can measure if the scales measure what they are supposed to measure (Trochim, 2006). In the present study, the author has adopted the measure from the previous relevant studies and in addition to that a pretest of the study was also conducted. Hence it can be asserted that there is face and content validity in the questionnaire

#### **4.3.2.2 Convergent validity**

Convergent validity is widely tested using correlation analysis. Convergent validity can be demonstrated with the help of inter correlation between the items of the same construct. Cohen (1988), has given the clear guidelines for the R value in correlation analysis - small relationship ( $r=.1$  to  $.29$ ); medium relationship ( $r=.3$  to  $.49$ ) and large relationship ( $r=.5$  to  $1$ ). Pearson correlation analysis has been used to test the relationship between the items of the same construct. Due to higher number of items, a detailed table of the correlation can be found in **Appendix C** for reference. The author has mentioned the key values and the relationship level for each item of the same construct in this section.

**Extraversion** – Under this construct, there are four items Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4. The items exhibit very high correlation. The items Q3 and Q4 have highest  $r$  value of  $.953$  and the items Q2 and Q4 have the lowest  $r$  value of  $.499$ , when compared to the other items. However as all the  $r$  values are close and more than  $.5$ , convergent validity is present in this construct.

**Platform assistance**– There are four items. Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8 in this construct. The items exhibit very high correlation. The items Q7 and Q8 have highest  $r$  value of  $.967$  and the items Q5 and Q8 has the lowest  $r$  value of  $.512$ , when compared to the other items. Since all the  $r$  values are more than  $.5$ , convergent validity is present in this construct.

**Venting negative feelings**– Under this construct, there are four items Q9, Q10, Q11 and Q12. The items exhibit very high correlation. The items, Q11 and Q12 have highest r value of .953 and the items Q10 and Q11 have the lowest r value of .412, when compared to the other items. This construct has moderate to high correlation and one can still say that convergent validity is present in this construct.

**Altruism**–This construct consists of five items- Q13, Q14, Q15, Q16 and Q17. The items exhibit very high correlation. The items Q15 and Q17 have highest r value of .783 and the items Q14 and Q17 has the lowest r value of .461, when compared to the other items. However as all the r values are close to and more than .5, convergent validity is present in this construct.

**Social benefits**– Under this construct, there are four items Q18, Q19, Q20 and Q21. The items exhibit very high correlation. The items Q18 and Q19 have highest r value of .809 and the items Q118 and Q21 has the lowest r value of .631, when compared to the other items. Since all the r values are more than .5, convergent validity is present in this construct and it is stronger.

**Economic incentives** – Under this construct, there are three items - Q22, Q23 and Q24. The items exhibit very high correlation. The items Q23 and Q24 has highest r value of .796.and the items Q22 and Q24 has the lowest r value of 7.12, when compared to the other items. However as all the r values are more than .7, convergent validity is very strong in this construct.

Overall, based on above data from the correlation analysis, it can be asserted that the questionnaire is valid with respect to convergent validity.

#### 4.4 Factor analysis

To test the validity of the motive structure and to check the dimensionality of the scales the author performed factor analysis, to be precise principle component analysis. Based on the Kaiser's Eigen value criterion, six factors were extracted using the varimax rotation. As we know all already from the reliability analysis test, the constructs are strongly reliable

The extracted six factors contributed to close to 77 percentage (**Table 5**) of the total variance which is a highly satisfactory value. These six factors corroborated strongly to the six factors derived from the theoretical literature. The factors are as follows ; Factor 1 – Altruism, Factor 2- Economic incentives, Factor 3-Venting negative feelings, Factor 4- Platform assistance, Factor 5 - Social benefits and Factor 6 –Extraversion.

Detailed results of the factor analysis is given below in **Table 6**

**Table 5 - Total variance percentage**

Factor	% of variance	Cumulative %
1. Altruism	15.522	15.522
2. Economic incentives	13.007	28.529
3. Venting negative feelings	12.259	40.788
4. Platform assistance	12.240	53.028
5. Social benefits	12.067	65.095
6. Extraversion	11.872	76.967

**Table 6 -Factor Structure – Principal component analysis**

	Component					
	Factor 1 Altruism	Factor 2 Economic incentives	Factor 3 Venting negative feelings	Factor 4 Platform assistance	Factor 5 Social benefits	Factor 6 Extraversion
Q1						.743
Q2						.807
Q3						.782
Q4						.755
Q5				.627		
Q6				.628		
Q7				.890		
Q8				.860		
Q9			.823			
Q10			.802			
Q11			.745			
Q12			.806			
Q13	.811					
Q14	.759					
Q15	.668					
Q16	.712					
Q17	.682					
Q18					.775	
Q19					.842	
Q20					.582	
Q21					.606	
Q22		.870				
Q23		.875				
Q24		.825				

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 9 iterations.

#### **4.4.1 Discriminant validity**

In order to establish the difference between constructs and to test the discriminant validity, a bivariate correlation analysis was conducted with factor scores extracted from the factor analysis.

It was concluded from the analysis that there no relationship between the factors and hence discriminant validity is present in the study. A detailed result of the correlation analysis can be found in the **Appendix D**.

#### **4.5 Hypothesis testing**

The proposed hypothesis of the study which was that the 6 constructs of eWOM motivation impact the eWOM giving behaviour (measured through the number of comments written on social network sites) were tested using Regression analysis. The author took factor scores of the motives from the principle component analysis as independent variables and the number of comments written on social networking sites as dependent variable. The author assigned values to number of comments written for computational purposes; 1 to 10 (assigned the value of 1), 11 to 35(2), 36 to 99 (3), and 100 or more (4). The results of the analysis are mentioned in Table 6.

**Table 7- Regression analysis**

Factor	Number of comments written (Regression coefficient standardized)
Altruism	.075*
Economic incentives	-.201
Venting negative feelings	-.020
Platform assistance	.197**
Social benefits	.288**
Extraversion	.387**
R Square value	.300

\*significant at  $p < .01$  \*\*significant at  $p < .001$

It can be identified from **Table 8** that the Extraversion, social benefits, platform assistance strongly impact the number of comments written on social networks with a beta value of .387, .288, .197 respectively and all of these three motives was significant at  $p < .001$ . It was followed by altruism with .075, which was significant at  $p < .01$ . However the interesting to be noted is economic incentives and a venting negative feeling have negative values and does not impact the number of comments written by the users on social network sites.

Hence, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is only partially proven. A more detailed discussion regarding the hypothesis is to be given in the discussion section. A detailed version of the regression analysis results can be found in **Appendix E**.



## 4.6 Motive based segmentation

The author segmented the young internet users based on their motives and the number of comments written for the managerial and research purposes. A two step cluster analysis was followed and the analysis resulted in three clusters. The author has labelled each cluster as per their characteristics. Throughout the three clusters, altruism and extraversion was found high. Findings of the cluster analysis have been summarized in **Table 8**. Detailed results of the cluster analysis can be found in **Appendix F**.

**Table 8 - eWOM motives based segmentation**

	<b>Segment 1</b>	<b>Segment 2</b>	<b>Segment 3</b>
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Social bugs</b>	<b>Consumer activists</b>	<b>Attention seekers</b>
Extraversion	4.07	3.27	3.78
Social benefits	3.04	2.49	2.73
Platform assistance	3.60	3.16	4.10
Altruism	4.31	3.77	4.10
Venting negative feelings	2.65	2.33	2.56
Economic incentives	2.29	2.18	2.23
	36 -99 (N=18)		
No of comments	100 or more (N=8)	1 to 10 ( N = 32)	11 to 35 (N = 23)

### 4.6.1 Segment 1

Young social network users who write anything more than 36 to 100 or more comments fall under this category. This segment is strongly motivated by the desire to help others and enhance themselves respectively. In addition to that they score the highest in social benefits among

the three clusters. They equally love helping themselves or to help others. They love making acquaintances and comment about any product or service they use be it excitement or not worth it. I have labelled this segment as *Social bugs*, given their nature of being highly active on writing comments and on scoring highly on extraversion, social benefits and altruism. In terms of size they contribute to 33 percent of the respondents.

#### **4.6.2 Segment 2**

Respondents who have written 1 to 10 comments fall under this category. The main motive that drives them to give eWOM is altruism or concern for other consumers especially to their known ones. The very motive that drives them to spread is eWOM is their thirst to help others. Hence, I have labelled this segment as *consumer activists*. Even though they write comments rarely (1 to 10), they write comments with the sole purpose of helping other consumers. When they do comment, their prime motive is altruism. They contribute to 39 percent of the respondents.

#### **4.6.3 Segment 3**

Respondent who have written 11 to 35 comments, fall under this segment. They have the highest value for platform assistance among all three clusters. In addition to that they also rank high on venting negative feelings. This makes it clear that the members of this segment seek attention from the company in terms of complaints and feedback. I have labelled this segment as *Attention seekers*, as their main motive to write reviews and comments on social networking sites is based on the belief that company will solve the issues and give attention to their feedbacks. They express their dissatisfaction immediately. This segment contributes to 28 percent of the population.

Among the three segments it can be seen that that consumer activists contribute highly to the population followed by social bugs and attention seekers. A detailed discussion how this segmentation can be used by the companies is described in the managerial implication section.

#### **4.7 Chapter summary**

To summarize on the result chapter, the scale was tested for reliability, face validity, convergent validity and discriminant validity and the scales satisfied all the requirements for validity and reliability analysis. A factor analysis was conducted by the author to check the dimensionality of the scale and six factors were extracted which was found to be in line with the previous studies. The hypothesis was only partially proven in the current study and three segments have been identified by the author using the cluster analysis method and the author has labelled the segments as Social bugs, Consumer activists and Attention seekers.

## 5 Discussion and Conclusion

This section discusses the results of the study with the respect to the concept and relevant literature from the literature review.

To summarize the findings, the eWOM motivation scale that was used by the author to test the eWOM behavior on social networking sites was highly reliable and in other words had high internal consistency between the items. The scale was also proved to be highly valid with face, convergent and discriminant validity.

To talk about the hypothesis testing, as per the proposed hypothesis which was formulated in line with previous studies, all the six motives must have an impact on the eWOM behavior. However, the hypothesis was satisfied only partially. Extraversion, social benefits platform assistance and altruism had strong effect on the eWOM behavior respectively. Economic incentives and venting negative feelings did not have an effect.

This clearly shows us that the main motives of social network site users are their possibility to enhance themselves (extraversion), chance to develop social relationships (social benefits), possibility of getting assisted by the platform operators (platform assistance) and their concern to help other consumers in their network (altruism), The motive of economic incentives did not have an impact and it can be because the concept of giving economic incentives is not hasn't gained popularity in social networking sites. In addition to that people use social networking sites to get in touch with others, and for entertainment which might be a reason why they do not want vent their negative feelings. This might be why the motive of venting negative feelings also didn't have an impact on eWOM providing behavior.

A comparison between the base studies taken into account for developing the scale and the present study has been given in the **Table 9**. **Table 9** clearly shows that Extraversion and social benefits are two relevant eWOM motivations that are relevant for both consumer opinion and social networking sites. In addition to that economic incentives did not have an effect on the eWOM behavior in all the three studies. Hence the findings of the current study are corroborated partially to the previous studies.

Platform assistance and altruism which were found to be a strong motivating factor for eWOM in social networking sites in the present study, were found to be a strong motivating factor in consumer opinion platforms in Yen and Tang (2015). This difference could be purely due to the growing and ready availability of help on the platform operators' side on social networking sites. For instance, on facebook, one can find a new addition on brand pages of products and services, which are highly supportive of the consumers, a statement called "*highly responsive to queries*". This could be a reason why more people give eWOM, motivated by the platform assistance factor. The motive of altruism having an impact on eWOM behavior on social networking sites can be attributed to the reason that social networks are made of friends, relatives, acquaintances and the tendency to have concern about each other in the network and worry for them is high.

From a general point of view it can also be said that, non affective motives like altruism, social benefits, platform might change based on the consumer demographics, experience and their inbuilt attitudes (Westbrook, 1987; Yen & Tang, 2015)

**Table 9 - Comparison on findings**

Study	Consumer opinion platforms – Strongly influencing motives	Social networking sites - Strongly influencing motives
Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004)	Social benefits Economic incentives Concern for other consumers/ Altruism Extraversion	Not applicable
Yen and Tang (2015)	Altruism Platform assistance	Extraversion Social benefits Dissonance reduction
Present study	Not applicable	Extraversion Social benefits Platform assistance Altruism

The differences in findings can also be attributed to the different methodology among the three studies. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), have based their study on consumer opinion sites like trip advisor etc and the present study focuses on social networking sites. Yen and Tang (2015), have done their analyses on the hotel industry with their sample age varying from 18 to 65 years of age. Therefore their findings cannot be generalized for the present study. The present study does not target on any special industry and have students with the average age of 27 as sample as they contribute to the majority of the social network users. From the above facts, it can be

concluded that the findings of study is still valid with respect to eWOM motivations of young consumers and social networking sites. The findings can be generalized to a major extent and can be used as a base for further researches.

Coming to the eWOM motive based segmentations part, the segments are to a certain extent in line with the eWOM motive based segment done by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004). However the eWOM motive based segmentation of the present study is more relevant to social networking sites. The segmentation clearly shows there are different motives for low level commenter (1to10), moderate level commenter (11 to 35) and high level commenter (36 and above). This motive based segmentation can be highly useful for the companies with respect WOM marketing and advertising on social networking sites and for getting feedback from consumers.

## **5.1 Conclusion**

In this era of social media, consumers are in control. Consumers have high control on the dissemination of information and content on the social media platforms of which social networking sites are main element. This limits the control that marketing managers have on such information (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Therefore the contemporary marketing managers should observe the dissemination information by the consumers, identify the cause or motives and shape their marketing strategy accordingly. The findings of the study can help the present-day marketing managers to serve this purpose.

## **6 Implication, Limitations and Recommendations**

### **6.1 Managerial implications**

The advertising spending on the social networking sites has highly increased over the years (Chu & Kim, 2011). The marketing managers can use the findings of the study, understand the eWOM motivations of different segments and cater to their needs accordingly. For example, the companies can specially target the moderate level commenter or the attention seeker segment, to get feedback. At the same time solving their queries and complaints related to products and services can help them to have a better consumer satisfaction. At the same time, this will help in reducing the negative feelings of this segment.

In addition to the platforms operators or the owners of the company's brand page on social networks can create discussions, quizzes and polls, which will attract the social bugs, as they love contributing and meeting new people and consumer activist, as they tend to give feedback in order to help other consumers. The current generation of consumers aged between 18 to 29 years is very demanding and are highly active on social network. Understanding their motives can help the company tap a wide market and have great customer satisfaction index.

### **6.2 Limitations and recommendations**

#### **6.3 Limitations**

The main limitation of this study is its sample size which was only 81. In addition to that the questionnaire was made available only in English and not in Norwegian which could be a drawback. Also the study was conducted among students in Norway, though the findings can be generalized to western countries, the generalization of the findings to third developing and underdeveloped countries is still questionable.



#### **6.4 Recommendation for future research**

The author has suggested the following recommendation for future research purposes

1. An interesting area to research would be analysis the motives of people who read eWOM in social networking sites.
2. eWOM motivational differences between the different types of social networks (e.g. Face book, LinkedIn, MySpace) can be analyzed.
3. eWOM motives leading to positive and negative eWOM can be identified through research having the present study as a base.
4. The study can be applied to any particular industry, to check the eWOM motivation on social networking sites for that particular industry.

Companies need to tap the benefits of eWOM on social networks to stay competitive. This study can be step towards helping them achieve this objective.

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## Appendices

Appendix A – Questionnaire .....	55
Appendix B – Reliability analysis results for each construct .....	58
Appendix C – Correlation analysis results.....	61
Appendix D - Correlation analysis to test discriminant validity.....	64
Appendix E – Regression Analysis.....	65
Appendix F – Cluster analysis .....	66

## Appendix A – Questionnaire

### What makes you spread the word online?

**Note: Survey only for students who are currently studying at the University of Stavanger and who have written comments about products or services on social networking sites.**

**Others please ignore. Thanks**

Hi ! I'm currently pursuing my masters' degree in the field of hospitality and tourism management and for my masters thesis i'm researching about the various motives behind giving electronic word of mouth communication on social networking sites

It would be of great help if you could fill this quick survey and express your opinion.

Your responses will stay anonymous.

### Personal Information

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age \_\_\_\_\_

**Number of comments written about the product/service on social networking sites (Please do not continue the survey if you have not written any comments)**

- 1 to 10
- 11 to 35
- 36 to 99
- 100 or more

Rate the below questions from 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly agree to 5 being strongly disagree

**Indicator**

**\*I write comments on social network platforms because**

**Extraversion**

Q1 ...this way I can express my joy about a good buy

Q2...I feel good when I can tell others about my buying successes

Q3...I can tell others about a great experience

Q4...My contribution show others that I'm a clever customer

**Platform assistance**

Q5... I believe the platform operator knows the person in charge within the company and will convey my message

Q6...I believe companies are more accommodating when I publicize the matter

Q7...It is more convenient than writing to or calling the company

Q8...One has more power together with others than writing a single letter of complaint

**Venting negative feelings**

Q9... The company harmed me, and now I will harm the company!

Q10...I want to take vengeance upon the company

Q11...My contributions help me shake of the frustration about bad buys

Q12...I like to get anger off my chest



**Altruism**

Q13...I want to warn others of bad products

Q14...I want to save others from having the same negative experiences as me

Q15...I want to help others with my own positive experiences

Q16...I want to give others the opportunity to buy the right product

Q17...In my opinion good product or service should be supported

**Social benefits**

Q18...I believe a chat among likeminded people is a nice thing

Q19...I meet nice people this way

Q20...I think others will approve of my postings

Q21...I achieve a sense of belonging by posting an experience that others also experienced

**Economic incentives**

Q22...I receive a reward for the writing

Q23...I get discounts on products and services

Q24...I get free coupons and reward points on products and services

## Appendix B – Reliability analysis results for each construct

### Extraversion

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.866	.872	4

**Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1	11.222	7.300	.671	.504	.847
Q2	11.284	6.931	.649	.530	.862
Q3	10.901	7.215	.804	.919	.796
Q4	11.000	7.375	.767	.914	.811

### Platform assistance

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.893	.894	4

**Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q5	10.827	9.795	.769	.931	.861
Q6	10.815	9.928	.784	.932	.854
Q7	10.617	10.564	.770	.939	.860
Q8	10.630	10.636	.736	.936	.872

**Venting negative feelings**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.836	.836	4

**Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q9	7.568	8.348	.710	.514	.772
Q10	7.901	9.690	.619	.409	.812
Q11	7.160	9.236	.676	.478	.788
Q12	7.444	8.975	.664	.461	.793

**Altruism**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.880	.881	5

**Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q13	16.138	10.500	.658	.531	.868
Q14	16.050	11.061	.629	.506	.873
Q15	16.138	9.943	.763	.673	.842
Q16	16.200	10.339	.761	.653	.843
Q17	16.175	10.627	.764	.694	.843

**Social benefits**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.902	.903	4

**Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q18	8.469	12.127	.798	.692	.867
Q19	8.210	11.543	.789	.686	.871
Q20	8.025	12.424	.793	.665	.869
Q21	8.222	12.525	.746	.619	.885

**Economic incentives**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.904	.904	3

**Item-Total Statistics**

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q22	4.543	6.326	.782	.615	.886
Q23	4.481	5.378	.842	.709	.834
Q24	4.407	5.669	.809	.663	.862

## Appendix C – Correlation analysis results

### Correlation analysis – Extraversion

		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Q1	Pearson Correlation	1	.646**	.551**	.560**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q2	Pearson Correlation	.646**	1	.575**	.499**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q3	Pearson Correlation	.551**	.575**	1	.951**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q4	Pearson Correlation	.560**	.499**	.951**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	81	81	81	81

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation analysis – Platform assistance**

		Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Q5	Pearson Correlation	1	.965**	.544**	.512**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q6	Pearson Correlation	.965**	1	.555**	.522**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q7	Pearson Correlation	.544**	.555**	1	.967**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q8	Pearson Correlation	.512**	.522**	.967**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	81	81	81	81

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation analysis – Venting negative feelings**

		Correlations			
		Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12
Q9	Pearson Correlation	1	.610**	.593**	.566**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q10	Pearson Correlation	.610**	1	.479**	.488**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q11	Pearson Correlation	.593**	.479**	1	.623**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q12	Pearson Correlation	.566**	.488**	.623**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	81	81	81	81

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation analysis – Altruism**

	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	
Q13	Pearson Correlation	1	.687**	.505**	.532**	.508**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	80	81
Q14	Pearson Correlation	.687**	1	.504**	.480**	.461**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	80	81
Q15	Pearson Correlation	.505**	.504**	1	.739**	.783**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	80	81
Q16	Pearson Correlation	.532**	.480**	.739**	1	.766**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	80	80	80	80	80
Q17	Pearson Correlation	.508**	.461**	.783**	.766**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	81	81	81	80	81

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation analysis – social benefits**

Correlations					
	Q18	Q19	Q20	Q21	
Q18	Pearson Correlation	1	.809**	.680**	.631**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q19	Pearson Correlation	.809**	1	.673**	.628**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q20	Pearson Correlation	.680**	.673**	1	.769**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	81	81	81	81
Q21	Pearson Correlation	.631**	.628**	.769**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	81	81	81	81

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Correlation analysis – Economic incentives**

	Q22	Q23	Q24
Pearson Correlation	1	.763**	.718**
Q22 Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
N	81	81	81
Pearson Correlation	.763**	1	.796**
Q23 Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
N	81	81	81
Pearson Correlation	.718**	.796**	1
Q24 Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
N	81	81	81

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Appendix D - Correlation analysis to test discriminant validity**

	REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 3 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 4 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 5 for analysis 1	REGR factor score 6 for analysis 1
Pearson Correlation	1	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Sig. (2-tailed)		1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Pearson Correlation	.000	1	.000	.000	.000	.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000		1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Pearson Correlation	.000	.000	1	.000	.000	.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	1.000		1.000	1.000	1.000
Pearson Correlation	.000	.000	.000	1	.000	.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	1.000	1.000		1.000	1.000
Pearson Correlation	.000	.000	.000	.000	1	.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000		1.000
Pearson Correlation	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	



**Appendix E – Regression Analysis**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.565 <sup>a</sup>	.320	.258	.8908

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
(Constant)	2.045	.102		20.050	.000	1.841	2.248			
REGR factor score 1 for analysis 1	.076	.102	.075	.748	.457	-.127	.280	.077	.089	.075
REGR factor score 2 for analysis 1	-.207	.103	-.201	-2.008	.048	-.413	-.001	-.182	-.233	-.201
REGR factor score 3 for analysis 1	-.021	.102	-.020	-.201	.841	-.224	.183	-.029	-.024	-.020
REGR factor score 4 for analysis 1	.203	.103	.197	1.970	.053	-.002	.408	.179	.229	.197
REGR factor score 5 for analysis 1	.295	.103	.288	2.874	.005	.090	.499	.273	.325	.287
REGR factor score 6 for analysis 1	.401	.104	.387	3.864	.000	.194	.609	.370	.419	.386

a. Dependent Variable: comments

**Appendix F – Cluster analysis**

**Centroids**

	Extroversion		Platform assistance		Economic incentives		Venting negative feelings		Altruism		social benefits	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cluster 1	4.07	.636	3.60	1.042	2.29	1.271	2.65	.921	4.31	.769	3.04	1.224
Cluster 2	3.27	.954	3.16	1.104	2.18	1.125	2.33	1.052	3.77	.895	2.49	1.182
Cluster 3	3.78	.647	4.10	.689	2.23	1.201	2.80	.934	4.10	.563	2.73	.970
Cluster Combined	3.66	.853	3.56	1.048	2.23	1.177	2.56	.989	4.02	.802	2.72	1.149

**No of comments**

	1 to 10		100 or more		11 to 35		36 to 99	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Cluster 1	0	0.0%	8	100.0%	0	0.0%	18	100.0%
Cluster 2	32	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Cluster 3	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	23	100.0%	0	0.0%
Cluster Combined	32	100.0%	8	100.0%	23	100.0%	18	100.0%