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## What characterizes Vacationers' eWOM sharing behaviours? Unbundling Entertainment and Information Motives in Brand-related Social Media Sites

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### Abstract

eWOM has increasingly become one of the sources of information relied on by vacationers to decide on where to go and where to stay. This article examines the influence of motivation on electronic word of mouth (eWOM) behaviour among vacationers in Tanzania. Four motivation variables from motivational psychology literature (*information, altruism, social integration and entertainment*) and the Uses and Gratification Theory are examined along three eWOM dimensions, namely *giving, seeking* and *passing*. Data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire at three airports in Tanzania from 278 vacationers who had used social media for their trip. The data were analysed using structural equation modelling. The overall results indicate that vacationers' eWOM behaviours are positively related to entertainment motivation. Alongside entertainment, eWOM giving and seeking behaviours are positively related to information and social integration, respectively while eWOM passing is positively related to altruistic motivation. Thus, the study concludes that entertainment motivation is the main driver of social media eWOM behaviours, hence a deviation from the past research that associated people's participation in eWOM with information motives.

Key words: Motivation, Tourism related sites, Electronic word of mouth, Social media

### Introduction

The growing usefulness of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on social media among vacationers cannot be overstated. Existing literature indicates that vacationers increasingly rely on eWOM on social media platforms to plan their trips including their destinations, accommodation, and activities as per their needs and budgets (Gretzel, Yoo, & Purifoy, 2007; M. Jeong & Jeon, 2008; Litvin et al., 2008; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). eWOM refers to "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet" (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004: p. 37). Such eWOM has gained an upper-hand in tourism where products are rich in experience qualities, and difficult for users to evaluate before consumption, thus perceived as high risk purchases (Litvin et al., 2008). Vacationers increasingly rely on eWOM from experienced vacationers as credible first-hand information based on the assumption that the



source is organic and free from company influence (Meiners et al., 2010; Brown et al., 2007; Chu & Kim, 2011). In fact, it is evident that eWOM, which influences purchase behaviour, is an invaluable tourism marketing tool which has captured heightened attention from both practitioners and scholars.

Since its emergence in marketing, research on eWOM has mainly delved on its conceptualization and effect on business performance (Chu & Kim, 2011; Munar & Jacobsen, 2013). This research has produced adequate evidence that eWOM is beneficial to business performance. However, a new stream of research on the generation factors of eWOM has emerged (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Dolan et al., 2016). Research interest in eWOM generating factors has been triggered by what appears as under-provision of eWOM on social media platforms due to the anonymity and voluntary nature of its generation (King et al., 2014). Besides, eWOM constitutes a public good, the consumption of which does not necessarily consider those who produce it, thus leading to many free riders other than content contributors (Dellarocas, 2003). Evidence from previous studies indicates that inequalities in participation by users on eWOM platforms follows the well-known “90-9-1” rule (Nielsen, 2006), implying that about 90% of the users are lurkers who only consume eWOM, with 9% of the users contributing from time to time, and a paltry 1% of the users actively contributing content. However, eWOM platforms’ potentials stem from honesty, unbiased and up-to-date feedback from experienced consumers who serve as sources of information that prospective buyers can utilize for making decisions. In the tourism industry, the sharing of travel experiences by experienced travellers is invaluable in the provision of crucial information that others can use in planning their travels. Thus, there is a need to design strategies to ensure that experienced vacationers use eWOM to enrich tourism brand-related sites for them to serve as fertile platforms for travel information related to destinations and other tourism products.

Studies on eWOM motivations have taken divergent streams. As a result, understanding eWOM generation factors has remained fragmented with no convergence yet in sight. Though social media features enable users to transmit and retransmit eWOM through forwarding, the existing studies have focused on either transmission or retransmission independently. In other words, there is no single study that has enthusiastically examined both as a single concept since such behaviours can be elicited by a single person while on a social media platform. Thus, to capture a full picture of possible behaviours of social media users, all these sharing behaviours should be examined in a single study. For instance, some scholars have examined motivations for eWOM passing behaviour (Ho & Dempsey, 2010); others have examined motivations for eWOM seeking (Schindler & Eickart, 2003) and a handful have examined motives behind eWOM giving (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Sun et al., 2006; Dellarocas & Narayan 2007). The findings of these studies have contributed to the understanding of the motives for eWOM; however, understanding the interdependence of individual’s eWOM behaviours (seeking, giving and passing) relative to their motivations remains inaccessible (Shao, 2009). Since these behaviours can be performed by users of social media in a single interaction, it would be useful to find out the user motives behind them. Besides, although the existing brand-related social media sites differ from the general social networking sites in terms of levels of interaction, involvement, and feeling more of a member than a participant, many of the studies have focused on the general social media sites (Cheung et al., 2008). Such differences, however, may suggest different motivations for their use. Thus, the existing literature lacks empirical insights into the influence of individuals’

motives on their eWOM behaviours related to brand-related social media sites (Shao, 2009; Dessart et al., 2015). This raises the following research question:

*RQ: What motivates eWOM sharing behaviours on tourism-related social media sites?*

To answer this research question, a research framework was developed based on motivational psychology literature (Langens & Schmalt, 2008), and the Uses and Gratification Theory (Katz & Foulkes, 1962). Based on extant literature and the nature of the online environment associated with brand-related social media sites, four key motivations (information, altruism, social integration and entertainment) were identified and tested using empirical data from international vacationers in Tanzania against eWOM behaviours (seeking, giving and passing). Overall, it is imperative to understand both why vacationers contribute (give or pass along) eWOM in tourism related sites and why prospective vacationers consume (seek) eWOM from the same platforms for a holistic and coherent understanding of the drivers of particular tourism-related sites' dynamics among the actors.

This study's findings contribute to the understanding of why users of tourism-related sites seek, share and give eWOM on these sites. Therefore, the study provides a composite picture of the interdependence of user motives in relation to these three eWOM behaviours (seeking, giving and passing).

Practically, providing insights into why vacationers use eWOM and why they share their experiences anonymously and voluntarily in tourism-related sites is very important to tourism marketers' crafting of digital marketing strategies. Indeed, marketers can be better placed to know what kind of appeals they should focus on to generate useful eWOM for uptake by prospective users (Chevalier & Mayzlin 2006; Hu, Pavlou, & Zhang, 2009) in the case of eWOM by capitalizing on addressing altruistic, entertainment and information motivations of vacations in the brand sites.

The subsequent section presents a literature review on the theoretical underpinnings of motivation and eWOM in social media and the asserted relationship. This is followed by a theoretical model and propositions.

## **Theoretical Background**

According to the Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT), individuals actively seek and use specific media to satisfy particular needs (Katz & Foulkes, 1962). In this regard, individuals play an active role in media choice, as they actively search for, identify with and employ media to satiate specific needs (Ku, Chu, & Tseng, 2013). UGT provides a user- (or customer-) level view of media use drives. Studies using UGT have revealed several motivations for engaging with general social media sites and eWOM communication Olutoyin in particular. These include information exchange, social interaction, relationship building, pleasure-seeking and entertainment, self-image enhancement and the need for self-expression, altruism and self-actualization (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2009; Shao, 2009). Therefore, certain individual motivations appear to drive users' desire to use tourism-related sites and their different eWOM behaviours of seeking, giving and passing on content.



Whereas previous studies applying UGT to predict motives behind social media use delved mostly in the general social media sites such as facebook, twitter and instagram (Leung & Zhang, 2016; Doty & Dworkin, 2014; Pornsakulvanich & Dumrongsiri, 2013), this study extends the application of the theory to brand-related social media sites. Usually, brand-related sites that are of “more membership” and high involvement may attract different motivations for their use with different weights (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004). However, more research is needed to investigate the motivational forces of eWOM behaviours in tourism-related social media sites for advancing knowledge and for practical application.

### **eWOM Behaviours on Social Media Sites**

The importance of social media information sharing behaviours as well as interactions among consumers on business performance has received considerable attention in academia and business (Breazeale, 2009). In this regard, opportunities for a new forms of communication technology known as Web 2.0 or social media (Gretzel, Kang, & Lee, 2008) offer interactive properties which have transformed consumers from passive information recipients to active content generators (Dolan, Conduit, Fahy, & Goodman, 2016). Users engage in eWOM by generating and sharing personal or product-related content in the form of text, pictures, or videos via social media (Dessart et al., 2015). Social media sites do not only provide an avenue for articulating own opinions and experiences but also offer an opportunity for consumers to interact with fellow consumers and share product-related knowledge and experience.

These information sharing and interactions constitute eWOM communication behaviours (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004). Although social media features allow for consumer interactions and information sharing to occur in multiple ways, prior research has only considered specific manifestations of such behaviours, such as writing product reviews (Henning-Thurau et al., 2004), blogging (Pan et al., 2007; Ekdale et al., 2010), tweeting (Henning-Thurau et al., 2015; Jansen et al., 2009), and forwarding emails (Chiu et al., 2007; Phelps et al., 2004). In fact, scholars conceptually discuss the wide scope of eWOM communications and advocate for broadening of the concept (Libai et al., 2010), yet research field lacks a full integration of the scope and various forms of eWOM interactions.

The eWOM sharing behaviour in transmitting information on online platforms has received attention among scholars (Hinz et al., 2011; Kozinets et al., 2010; Katz & Lazarsfeld, 2006) to account for the roles of the originator of an idea and the transmitter who passes it on to others. However, information sharing behaviours on social media do not end with the initial transmission as there is a possibility of retransmission behaviour over and above those of the traditional WOM of giving and seeking. Retransmission of eWOM or simply eWOM passing—has recently received heightened attention, following the features of social media which support multi-way interactions and information sharing among consumers (De Bruyn & Lilien, 2008; Hinz et al., 2011). Initial transmission involves content creation by individuals with direct experience with the product under discussion over which they share their own opinions with others (Stephen & Lehmann, 2009). Those who forward the eWOM are individuals without direct experience with the product but have heard from others (Stephen & Lehmann, 2009). They disseminate the information and amplify its reach by passing on another person’s opinion (Stephen & Lehmann, 2009). The recent understanding of the multiple roles an individual can perform while on social media sites has elevated the scope of eWOM behaviours into opinion

seeking, giving and passing (Stephen & Lehmann, 2009). An individual can perform all these three behaviours simultaneously, hence the triple aspects eWOM seeking, giving and passing behaviours, which constitute a holistic eWOM. Scholars at different times have called for the broadening of the eWOM scope to get a coherent understanding of the full concept (Libai et al., 2010; Chu & Kim, 2011). Thus, eWOM is operationalized in this article as eWOM seeking, giving and passing. This is important theoretically as it enhances the understanding of the full scope of the eWOM concept alongside its generation factors in the context of brand-related sites. Practically, aggregating the eWOM concept by including eWOM passing broadens the reach of and enhances marketing communication. Indeed, how many people are reached by marketing communication is one of the important parameters for its effectiveness, which implies that eWOM passing is one of the important ways through which content in social media is amplified to enhance its reach and become contagious.

### **Motivations for eWOM**

As elucidated earlier, both general and brand-related social media sites empower consumers to engage in information sharing (eWOM) anonymously and voluntarily. This phenomenon has resulted in under-reporting bias on online platforms as those who consume eWOM do it at no cost (Chevalier & Mayzlin 2006; Hu, Pavlou & Zhang 2009). Ensuring a balanced and informative feedback that benefits all the stakeholders and, more importantly, eliciting honest feedback on tourism-related sites require understanding the factors that are important to consumers seeking eWOM in a bid to find better ways of enhancing the use of eWOM and management of under-reporting bias (King et al., 2014). Although understanding eWOM generation factors is crucial, empirical findings remain relatively scarce (Breazeale, 2009; Stephen & Lehmann, 2009; Dolan et al, 2016). Several studies have been separately carried out on eWOM giving, seeking and passing in general social media sites as well as a few on brand related sites (Ho & Dimpsey, 2009).

Motivations for eWOM giving behaviour in social media identified by previous studies include self-enhancement (De Angelis et al., 2012; Wojnicki & Godes, 2008), innovativeness (Sun et al., 2006), individuation (Ho & Dempsey 2010), and altruism (Dellarocas & Narayan, 2007; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Several other scholars (e.g. Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Dholakia et al., 2004; Stoćkl et al., 2007) suggest that individuals share their product-related experiences and opinions (eWOM) in social media for social bonding, inclusion, maintaining interpersonal interconnectivity, social benefits and community forum participation. In the context of hospitality and tourism, altruism is significant in creating motivation for posting eWOM on consumer opinion sites, including travel (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011) and dining (Jeong & Jang, 2011) experiences. Additionally, enjoyment was identified as an important motive for eWOM contributions in the context of travel (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2003). In addition, post-trip sharing of information often constitutes one of the joys of travel (Litvin et al., 2008).

Similarly, motivations for eWOM seeking behaviour in social media have been established in previous studies. For instance, consumers seek eWOM to reduce search and evaluation efforts (e.g., Dabholkar, 2006; Goldsmith & Horovitz, 2006) in both pre- and post-purchase evaluations (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011; Hennig-Thurau & Walsh, 2003); reduce risk (Bettman & Park, 1980;



Kim, Mattila, & Baloglu 2011); and find social assurance/reassurance (Bailey, 2005). Additionally, they seek eWOM as an informational input for specific purchase decisions (Schindler & Bickart, 2003), and as relevance and empathy generation (Bickart & Schindler 2001). Kim, Choi and Kim (2013) identified four kinds of motivations—self-expression, commenting, community forum participation, and information-seeking—as primary reasons for using SNSs for travel-related information-seeking among college students. In the context of tourism and hospitality, social integration serves as a driver for opinion seeking (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011). According to Maser and Weiermair (1998), in the tourism and hospitality context, seeking information can be treated as one of the most important factors influencing and determining travel behaviour. Generally, previous literature reveals that consumers seek eWOM not only during the evaluation stage of the decision-making process but also when there is not even a recognized need for a product (Mangold, Miller, & Brockway, 1999). Many times, eWOM consumption may be serendipitous and not goal-directed (Bailey, 2005; Goldsmith & Horovitz, 2006). This hints at other motivations for eWOM seeking beyond information motivation. Yet the same is aggravated by the fact that the reliance on information needs identified years and years ago may no longer be wholly relevant to today's knowledge society (Elly & Silayo, 2013).

In spite of the suggestions for broadening the eWOM concept being echoed in literature by scholars (Libai et al., 2010; Chu & Kim, 2011) and explosion of online information sharing through forwarding, some of the factors critical to the forwarding of eWOM remain unknown to both academics and practitioners (Ho & Dempsey, 2010). According to Huang, Lin and Lin (2009), the key to spreading online electronic content successfully lies in an individual recipient's forwarding of the messages to others. But the motivation determining the recipient's intention to do so is not explicitly made known in literature. eWOM forwarding is recognized as one of the dimensions for eWOM concept which should be examined simultaneously with the other dimensions namely seeking and giving opinions since they can be elicited simultaneously by an individual on social media sites. However, previous researches on motivations have principally examined the forwarding of electronic word-of-mouth independently without including the rest of components of eWOM, that is, seeking and giving (Hennig-Thurau, et al., 2004; Ho & Dempsey, 2010). Understanding the motivations for forwarding behaviours simultaneously with the counterpart eWOM behaviours (seeking and giving) provides understanding of the interdependence of motivations in relation to eWOM behaviours, thus constituting a core issue in the study of online eWOM behaviours. This article addresses this aspect by examining the influence of motivation (information, altruism, social integration and entertainment) on vacationers' eWOM behaviours (seeking, giving and passing) in tourism-related sites.

### **Hypothesis and Model Development**

Information motivation covers several information-related media gratifications such as surveying relevant events and conditions taking place in someone's direct daily environment and in society; seeking advice and opinions; and reducing risk. Previous studies assert that information motivation is related to eWOM behaviours. Hennig-Thurau and Walsh (2003) found that reading customer reviews is partly driven by need for information. Searching for and receiving information on a brand were found to constitute key gratifications of consumer participation in online brand communities (Muntinga et al., 2011; Raacke & Bonds- Raacke, 2008). Similarly,

the desire to seek information directly from brands motivates consumers to use social media (Dholakia, Bagozzi, & Pearo, 2004; Lin & Lu, 2011; Park, Kee & Valenzuela, 2009). From a tourism perspective, travellers search online WOM to decide on destinations, booking of hotels, flights and restaurants, and plan accordingly (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Based on previous studies which have identified information as a motivating factor for eWOM, it is hypothesized that:

**H1:** *Vacationers' information motivation to engage with tourism social media sites positively influences (H1a) eWOM seeking (H1b), eWOM giving, and (H1c) eWOM passing.*

Social interaction motivation has been associated with eWOM behaviours in both general and brand-related social media sites. The integration and social interaction motivation covers various media gratifications that are related to other people, such as gaining a sense of belonging; connecting with friends, family and society; seeking (emotional) support; and substituting real-life companionship. For instance, Alexandrov et al. (2013) and Kozinets et al. (2010) suggest that social interactions and community membership motives are important for WOM communication on the internet. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) argue that consumers post comments to receive social benefits from being part of a virtual community. These researchers also found that social benefits have the strongest influence on users' visitation of these communities, as well as on the number of comments they elicit. Burton and Khammash (2010) acknowledge that the reader may initially passively engage in scanning eWOM messages, but may start sharing opinions after becoming acquainted with other users. Based on these studies identifying social integration as a motive behind eWOM, it was hypothesized that:

**H2:** *Vacationers' social interaction motivation to engage with tourism social media sites positively influences (H2a) eWOM seeking, (H2b) eWOM giving, and (H2c) eWOM passing.*

Altruism describes an individual's desire "for doing something for others without anticipating any reward in return" (Sundaram et al., 1998, p. 529). According to Dichter (1966), some people have a desire to share or give something to others, or express their care by providing information to others. Similarly, in the current online environment, several authors have suggested that electronic word of mouth on Web-based opinion platforms could be driven by a concern for other consumers (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Sundaram, et al., 1998). Ho and Dempsey (2010) also found that altruism was a positive predictor of the electronic word of mouth seeking. Lee, Im and Taylor (2008) found that some consumers are motivated by a benevolent psychological need to share their information or knowledge with others. Munzel and Kunz (2014) suggest that altruism has to do with opinion transmission and retransmission in online review platforms. The account of these previous studies identifying altruism as a motive for eWOM led to hypothesizing that:

**H3:** *Vacationers' altruistic motivation to engage with tourism social media sites positively influences (H3a) eWOM seeking (H3b), eWOM giving and (H3c) eWOM passing.*

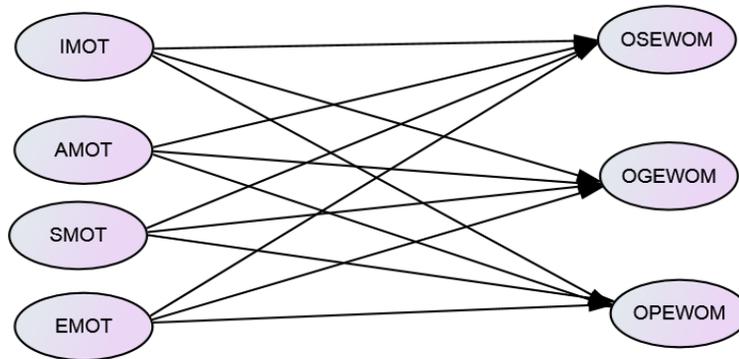
Extant literature has extensively argued that entertainment motivation is associated with the provision, sharing or consumption of WOM on social media sites. The entertainment motivation covers several media gratifications that are related to escaping or being diverted from problems or routine; emotional release or relief; relaxation; cultural or aesthetic enjoyment; passing time; and sexual arousal. Through the application of UGT, in the context of online brand communities, authors have demonstrated that consuming entertaining content is important in inducing



participation (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). Other studies indicate that entertainment is a relevant motivation for consuming user-generated content (Shao, 2009), participation in a virtual community (Sangwan, 2005), social networking site (Park et al., 2009) or uploading of content into social media sites (Courtois et al., 2009). Entertaining advertisements tend to cause users to consume, create or contribute to brand-related content online (Muntinga et al., 2011). Muntinga et al. (2011) found that entertainment motivation influences both eWOM seeking and giving. On this account, it was hypothesized that:

**H4:** Vacationers’ entertainment motivation to engage with tourism social media sites positively influences (H4a) eWOM seeking (H4b), eWOM giving and (H4c) eWOM passing.

**Figure 1: The Hypothesized Model of the Relationship between Motivation Variables and eWOM**



### Methodology

The locus of this study was Tanzania and the population comprised vacationers in Tanzania who had used tourism brand-related social media sites before and/or during their trip. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire from a sample of 278 vacationers who had used tourism brand-related social media sites for their trip to Tanzania between November 2017 and February 2018. To ensure content validity of the research instruments, the vacationers were given a description and examples of what tourism brand-related social media sites refer to (e.g. trip advisor, hotel.com, Airbnb, and individual tourism firms’ social media accounts). This was done to ensure that only those who used these particular sites filled out the questionnaire.

For screening purposes, two questions (one for using tourism social media sites during the trip and another for the purpose of travel) were asked prior to administering the questionnaires. This was done because the study targeted only vacationers who had used tourism-related sites before and/or during their trip. Data were collected at three airports: Abeid Aman Karume International Airport (AAKIA), Julius Nyerere International Airport (JNIA) and Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA), which are strategic exit points for international tourists in Tanzania.

As there were no differences in characteristics among the vacationers exiting on different days of the week and times of the day, a cluster sampling method was used to draw cases for the study. First, the researcher randomly selected two days from the seven days of the week on which data collection took place. Second, based on the peak hours of the day for major international flights, data collection was done twice a day from noon to 16:00hours and from 20:00 hours to midnight. Third, the researchers approached all the passengers at the departure lounge for international travellers and administered questionnaires to those who passed the screening test.

### Measurements

A total of 23 measurement items were adopted from the literature, 14 of which measured four motivation variables and 9 measured electronic word of mouth (eWOM). In all, 4 measurement items were adopted from Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006) to measure information motivation whereas 4 items for altruism motivation were adopted from Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004). Three items for social integration were adopted from Park et al. (2009) and three other items were adopted from Yoo and Gretzel (2008). All the items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree). Electronic word of mouth was measured using 9 items all adopted from Chu and Kim (2011) for all the three dimensions of eWOM: *eWOM passing, giving and seeking*. Each of the subscales of eWOM was measured using three (3) items on a 7-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree). Table 4 shows the statements used for the five constructs:

**Table 1 Measurement Items**

Scale Items	Source
<b>Information Motivation</b>	Chu and Kim (2011) and Goldsmith and Horowitz (2006)
<i><b>Imot1:</b> I posted my trip experience on tourism-related site(s) because I expect to have access to contributions from other travellers</i>	
<i><b>Imot2:</b> I wanted to consult others in choosing the right destination and a good tourism product package in tourism site(s)</i>	
<i><b>Imot3:</b> I wanted to gather information about destinations and tourism product alternatives available from the tourism site(s)</i>	
<i><b>Imot4:</b> I wanted to hear about other members' trip experience on tourism site(s) to inform my choice</i>	



<b>Altruistic motivation</b>	Henning-Thurau et al. (2004)
<i>Amot1: I wanted to recommend to others on the tourism site about a company in support of their good services</i>	
<i>Amot2: I wanted to help others on tourism site with my own positive trip experiences</i>	
<i>Amot3: I shared my trip experience to give others on the tourism site an opportunity to choose good services</i>	
<i>Amot4: I shared my trip experience on tourism sites to help the tour operator and/or destination to be successful</i>	
<b>Social motivation</b>	Park et al. (2009)
<i>Smot1: I used tourism site to share my trip experiences with friends and like-minded people</i>	
<i>Smot2: I used tourism sites to stay in touch with other members on the platform</i>	
<i>Smot3: I used tourism site to talk to other members on the platform on the trip experience</i>	
<b>Entertainment</b>	Yoo and Gretzel (2008)
<i>Emot1: Posting communication in form of pictures, or videos about my trip experience on tourism sites is a fun activity on a supplier site</i>	
<i>Emot2: Posting (pictures, or videos) on tourism site about my trip experience gives an exciting and pleasant moment</i>	
<i>Emot3: I find review writing about my trip experience in tourism site an interesting activity</i>	
<b>eWOM seeking</b>	Chu and Kim (2011)
<i>Osewom1: Before making this tourism trip, I asked my contacts on the social media site for advice.</i>	
<i>Osewom2: I got my contacts' opinions on the social media site before I chose this destination.</i>	
<i>Osewom3: I felt more comfortable choosing this destination when I got my contacts' opinions on the social media site</i>	
<b>eWOM giving</b>	Chu and Kim, (2011)
<i>Ogewom1: I wrote reviews and/or posted pictures on tourism sites about my trip experience to share with other contacts.</i>	
<i>Ogewom2: I posted videos and/or pictures on tourism sites about my trip experience.</i>	
<i>Ogewom3: I wrote comments, ratings and/or recommendations on tourism-related sites to influence others on the choice of destinations.</i>	
<b>eWOM passing</b>	Chu and Kim,

**Opewom1:** *I passed on information or opinion about destinations to contacts on my “friends” list on the tourism related sites.*

**Opewom2:** *I passed along to my other contacts, comments containing information or opinions about the destinations that I like.*

**Opewom3:** *When I receive destination-related information or opinion from a friend, I pass it on to my other contacts on tourism related sites.*

### Analysis and Results

The sample consisted of 48.2% male and 51.8% female respondents, with 60.8% of the respondents aged above 40 years. Statistics reveal that 60.4% of the respondents had a package tour whereas the remaining 39.6% came for a non-package tour. Regarding the experience in travel, 65.5% were visiting for their first time whereas 35.5% were having their repeat-visit to Tanzania as a destination. The respondents’ sharing behaviour dominated during trip-experience by 62.12% followed by pre-trip experience (22%) and those who shared both during the pre-trip and the trip itself amounted to 15.88%. Previous studies, however, observed that social media use was predominant either before the trip (Cox et al., 2009) or after the trip experience (Fotis et al., 2012). The respondents indicated usage of the following tourism-related sites: Trip Advisor (56.2%), Expedia (20.2%), Hotel.com (12.3%) and Airbnb (11.3%).

### Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to test empirically the hypotheses developed from the literature review. A two-stage model building approach as recommended by Anderson and Gerbing (1988) was employed. Using a sample of n=278 cases (Heir et al., 2010), the study employed CFA to test the measurement model. Thus, CFA with 24 items representing 7 constructs (MOT, AMOT, SMOT, EMOT, SEWOM, GEWOM and PEWOM) was performed to verify the underlying factor structure. The result of the CFA showed a good fit ( $\chi^2=351.888$ ;  $df=209$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 1.684$ , GFI = 0.903, CFI = 0.982, TLI = 0.978, RMSEA = 0.050). The measurement’s reliability was assessed by Cronbach’s alpha. As Table 1 illustrates, the alpha values for the six constructs ranged from 0.8 to 0.94. All of them exceeded the minimum requirement of 0.7, hence denoting acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). Convergent validity was examined through composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE). Each construct had acceptable construct reliability, with the CR values ranging from 0.88 to 0.98, which was higher than the 0.7 threshold, as Table 2 denotes:

**Table 2: Results of Validity Test in Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

	M	SD	SL	TV
IMOT	4.66	1.28		
imot4			0.94	N/A
imot3			0.98	***
imot2			0.99	***
imot1			0.94	***



AMOT	5.56	0.93		
amot4			0.82	N/A
amot3			0.98	***
amot2			0.96	***
amot1			0.89	***
SMOT	5.13	1.18		
smot3			0.93	N/A
smot2			0.92	***
smot1			0.65	***
EMOT	5.16	1.1		
emot3			0.95	N/A
emot2			0.61	***
emot1			0.97	***
OSEWOM	4.31	1.42		
osewom3			0.99	N/A
osewom2			0.96	***
osewom1			0.99	***
OGEWOM	4.96	1.2		
ogewom3			0.98	
ogewom2			0.91	***
ogewom1			0.87	***
OPEWOM	5.13	1.1		
opewom3			0.86	N/A
opewom2			0.81	***
opewom1			0.96	***

*Note:  $X^2=351.888$ ;  $Df=209$ ;  $X^2/df=1.684$ ;  $GFI=0.903$ ;  $TLI=0.978$ ;  $CFI=0.982$  &  $RMSEA=0.050$ ;  $SL$ =standardized loadings;  $M$ =Factor mean;  $SD$ =standard deviation and  $TV$ =t-values;  $OGEWOM$ =eWOM giving,  $IMOT$ =information,  $OPEWOM$ =eWOM passing,  $OSEWOM$ = eWOM seeking,  $EMOT$ = entertainment,  $SMOT$ = social integration and  $AMOT$ = altruism. The itemized abbreviations under each construct refer to measurement items falling under each specific construct as indicated in Table 1 above.*

On the account of the validity tests done, convergent validity was assured as all the AVE values ranged from 0.79 to 0.93, hence exceeding the 0.5 minimum requirements (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & William, 1998). Besides, all the measurement items had standardized factor loadings of 0.5 or above at a significance level of <0.001, which assured convergent validity. Finally, discriminant validity was assured by comparing squared root of AVE with the correlation between constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As the data in Table 3 demonstrate, the squared root of AVE for each construct was greater than the correlations between it and other constructs, which signals discriminant validity.

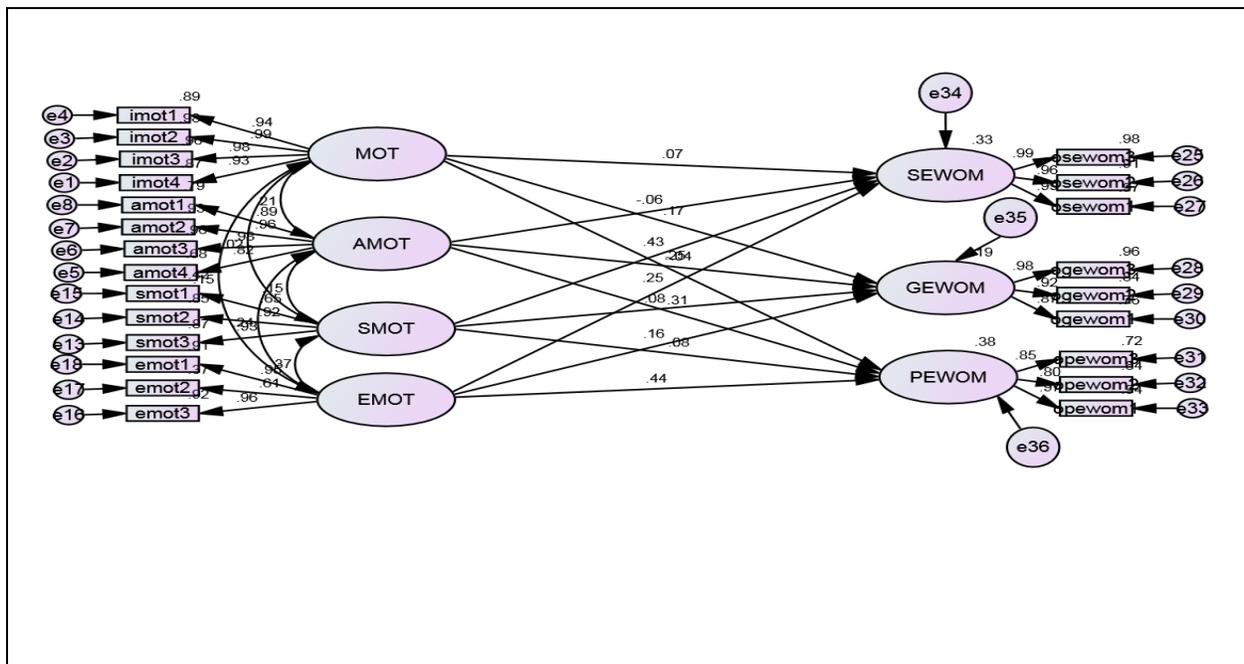
**Table 3: Test Results of Discriminant Validity**

	CR	AVE	GEWOM	MOT	PEWOM	SEWOM	EMOT	SMOT	AMOT
<b>GEWOM</b>	0.944	0.850	<b>0.922</b>						
<b>MOT</b>	0.980	0.926	0.248	<b>0.962</b>					
<b>PEWOM</b>	0.908	0.769	0.484	0.082	<b>0.877</b>				
<b>SEWOM</b>	0.985	0.955	0.391	0.087	0.438	<b>0.977</b>			
<b>EMOT</b>	0.888	0.734	0.270	0.145	0.529	0.399	<b>0.857</b>		
<b>SMOT</b>	0.880	0.714	0.166	-0.016	0.273	0.512	0.372	<b>0.845</b>	
<b>AMOT</b>	0.954	0.838	0.341	0.210	0.413	0.082	0.251	0.156	<b>0.916</b>

CR=composite reliability, AVE=average variance extracted, GEWOM=eWOM giving, MOT=information, PEWOM=eWOM passing, SEWOM= eWOM seeking, EMOT=entertainment, SMOT= social integration and AMOT= altruism. The bold diagonal figures are the square root of the variance extracted shared between the constructs and their measures. Off-diagonal figures are the correlations between constructs.

**Results of the Structural Analysis**

The structural analysis results' path coefficients and the *t* values for the hypothesized relationships are as shown in Table 4. The overall model presents a good fit on all the indices ( $\chi^2=429.639$ ;  $df=212$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 2.027$ , GFI = 0.880, CFI = 0.972, TLI = 0.967, RMSEA = 0.061).



**Figure 2: The Structural Model of the Relationship between Motivation and eWOM**



The research hypotheses were tested using the path coefficients, critical ratios (t-values) and p-values. An examination of the structural path coefficients revealed that hypotheses one, two and three were partially supported whereas hypothesis four was fully supported (see Table 43 below). Findings indicate that information motivation has a positive and significant influence on vacationers' eWOM giving behaviour. Additionally, social integration motivation has a positive and significant influence on vacationers' eWOM seeking behaviour. Altruism was found to have a positive and significant influence on vacationers' eWOM giving and passing behaviours whereas entertainment motivation revealed a positive and significant influence on vacationers' eWOM seeking, giving and passing behaviours. The path coefficient values show that social integration motivation was the strongest significant predictor of eWOM seeking behaviour ( $\beta=0.432$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) followed by entertainment motivation ( $\beta=0.253$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Similarly, eWOM giving behaviour is significantly influenced by altruism, entertainment and information motivation whereas social integration was found not to be a significant predictor. From the path coefficient values, altruism is the strongest predictor of eWOM giving behaviour ( $\beta=0.254$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) followed by information motivation ( $\beta=0.174$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). eWOM passing behaviour was found to be influenced by entertainment and altruistic motivation. More specifically, given the paths' coefficient values, entertainment motivation is the strongest predictor of eWOM passing behaviours ( $\beta=0.437$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) followed by altruism ( $\beta=0.306$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

**Table 4: Overall Structural Model Hypothesis Testing Results**

Independent Variable	Dependent		Beta		Results	
eWOM (Opinion Seeking)	Information	H1(a)	0.069		Not Supported	0.33
	<b>Social</b>	<b>H2(a)</b>	<b>0.432</b>	<b>&lt;0.00</b>	<b>Supported</b>	
	Altruism	H3(a)	-0.057		Not	
	<b>Entertainmen</b>	<b>H4(a)</b>	<b>0.253</b>	<b>&lt;0.00</b>	<b>Supported</b>	
eWOM (Opinion Giving)		<b>H1(b)</b>				0.19
	<b>Information</b>	)	<b>0.174</b>	<b>&lt;0.05</b>	<b>Supported</b>	
	Social	H2(b)	0.083	<0.05	Not	
	<b>Altruism</b>	<b>H3(b)</b>	<b>0.254</b>	<b>&lt;0.00</b>	<b>Supported</b>	
eWOM (Opinion Passing)	<b>Entertainmen</b>	<b>H4(b)</b>	<b>0.165</b>	<b>&lt;0.05</b>	<b>Supported</b>	0.38
	Information	H1(c)	-0.043		Not	
	Social	H2(c)	0.077	<0.00	Not	
	<b>Altruism</b>	<b>H3(c)</b>	<b>0.306</b>	<b>&lt;0.00</b>	<b>Supported</b>	
	<b>Entertainmen</b>	<b>H4(c)</b>	<b>0.437</b>	<b>&lt;0.00</b>	<b>Supported</b>	

\*Fit Statistics:  $\chi^2=429.639$ ;  $df=212$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 2.027$ , GFI = 0.880, CFI = 0.972, TLI = 0.967, RMSEA = 0.061; P value=Significance level; R<sup>2</sup>=Squared Regression Weights; eWOM=electronic word of mouth behaviour.

## Discussion

Results generally reveal that entertainment motivation is the main driver of vacationers' overall eWOM behaviours. The results are surprising when compared with previous research on eWOM which indicates that vacationers engage in eWOM behaviours primarily for *information* needs (Litvin et al., 2007; Gretzel et al., 2008). For instance, people who write product reviews (*eWOM giving*) often do so to yield conversations through which they may likely gain information

(*eWOM seeking*) they need to fulfil their motive (Bronner & De Hoog, 2011), like making their decisions regarding where to go and where to stay (Litvin et al., 2007). Impliedly, vacationers or travellers engage in *eWOM* behaviours to satisfy their information motives. The current study results, however, reveal that *entertainment motivation* is the overriding motivation behind all vacationers' *eWOM seeking, giving* and *passing* behaviours in tourism related sites. Entertainment motivation includes needs such as enjoyment, hedonic relaxation and escapism needs. Previous research indicated that entertainment motivation was dominant mainly in the post-travel experience sharing (*eWOM giving*) on the premise that many people simply enjoy sharing their travel experiences and expertise and such post-trip sharing can be one of the joys of travel (Litvin et al., 2007). In this case, *eWOM giving* behaviour as manifested by sharing of travel experiences and expertise is part and parcel of the enjoyment a vacationer derives from the consumption of tourism products. However, this article's findings demonstrate that the joys of consumption of tourism products include the tourism information searching behaviours (*eWOM seeking*) and the experience sharing behaviours (*eWOM giving and passing*) performed by vacationers in tourism related sites. Similarly, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) found that brand-related WOM on tourism brand-related sites is used for hedonic recreation and entertainment. Thus, entertainment motivation is positively related to the vacationers' *eWOM seeking, giving* and *passing* behaviours on tourism-related sites.

Alongside entertainment motivation, this article's results reveal other motivations in relation to the vacationers' *eWOM* behaviours. Social integration motivation is also related to vacationers' *eWOM seeking* behaviour on tourism-related sites. Vacationers using tourism-related sites searching for *eWOM* do so for the purpose of socializing and interacting with like-minded others on the social media platform. These results replicate the work by Munzel and Kunz (2014) who suggest that social bonding motives are associated with consuming reviews on review sites. Other than the need for information on which to base their purchase decisions, users engaging in *eWOM seeking*, do so for social gains, including social bonding. Consistent with the existing literature, social integration involves bridging and bonding social capital. Bridging social capital plays an essential role in a wide range of information exchange and idea sharing (Granovetter, 1982) especially accessing diverse information and knowledge from external groups to personal networks (Pigg & Crank, 2004; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). Chu (2009) suggests that social networking site users exhibiting a higher level of bridging social capital are more likely to seek advice from others. Based on social capital formation as an essence of social integration, the need to bridge social capital by social media users may trigger them to seek *eWOM*. As review sites and (virtual) opinion platforms (e.g. tourism-related sites) are organized around customer opinions and experiences, and are mostly content-driven, they tend to focus less on social interactions and integration (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), which amounts to a weakness. After all, social integration needs and particularly the need for bridging social capital relates positively to the vacationers' *eWOM seeking* behaviours.

Consistent with previous studies (see, for example, Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004), altruistic and information motivations were found to be positively related to *eWOM giving* behaviours. Opinion leadership (*eWOM giving*) is influenced by the desire to help other prospective vacationers with their good and fulfilling trip experiences or in support of a good destination,



tour operator or hotel. Though there is no economic reward, the eWOM giving behaviour is performed to enrich the platform with product experience and opinions which serve as recommendations and advice to other users without experience. Similarly, the finding that information motivation influences eWOM giving behaviours lends support to Stephen and Lehmann (2009) who suggest that well-connected people, by virtue of having many associates, are exposed to (on average) more sources of information and, therefore, might serve as information “hubs”. As such, they enrich sources for getting new information (or validate the existing information), hence they are worth talking to in order to benefit from such invaluable information. Thus, it is suggested that information motivation and altruism positively influence the vacationers’ eWOM giving behaviours on tourism-related sites.

Apart from entertainment motivation, vacationers’ eWOM passing behaviour is related positively to altruistic motivation. This finding is consistent with previous studies on the motivation for forwarding online content to other users such as Ho and Dempsey (2009) who found a positive relationship between altruism and eWOM passing intentions. Munzel and Kunz (2014) also support these findings as they established that altruism-related motives are positively related to eWOM retransmission (passing) in public opinion online environment. Thus, vacationers’ eWOM sharing behaviour of passing the content on to others on tourism-related sites is driven by their altruistic needs.

Lack of support on the influence of information and altruistic motivations on vacationers’ eWOM seeking behaviour on tourism brand-related social media sites is backed by explanation. Although this study captured the vacationers’ eWOM behaviours for the pre- and during- trip experiences, most of the respondents indicated their usage to have occurred during the trip. This is the moment when the vacationers were excited by the trip’s experiences and, probably, the use of the social media sites was then not necessarily for information search. At that time, they were making decisions on where to go or where to stay as they had already had their travel package or itineraries. Lack of support on the influence of altruism on opinion seeking behaviour is not surprising since in most cases opinion seekers are always people who are less knowledgeable and may not have some information to help others or the company. This finding is consistent with Hohanadel (2014) and Gunn (2015) who found that the hypothesized relationship between altruism and eWOM behaviour in social networking sites was insignificant.

## **Conclusion**

To this end, the study concludes that, eWOM behaviours in terms of seeking, giving and passing-on product-related opinions in tourism related social media sites like TripAdvisor, hotel.com and others are largely driven by entertainment motives. Alongside entertainment motive, it is concluded that, vacationers who seek product-relation opinions are largely motivated by social integration motives and altruism for those who pass-on opinions. Similarly, those who provide product-related opinions on the platforms are largely driven by information and altruistic motives.

## **Theoretical and Practical Implication**

Findings of this study contribute to the understanding of the interdependence of vacationers’ eWOM behaviours (*seeking, giving and passing*) in relation to their motivations. This contributes to the current understanding of the eWOM concept in social media by integrating

eWOM *passing* into the traditional *seeking* and *giving* aspects of the concept and, empirically, examining their relationships with the vacationers' motives. Practically, it provides useful insights into why vacationers use eWOM and why they share their experiences anonymously and voluntarily. As such, marketers need to know why customers/vacationers provide and use eWOM, particularly when it comes to digital marketing strategy design and development, especially for the service industry where eWOM is a vital input among buyers in their buying decision-making process. Although vacationers seek eWOM for entertainment and social integration needs, the provision or sharing of their travel experiences via eWOM has been determined to be for altruistic, entertainment and informational motives. Thus, understanding these dynamics is an important input for architecture and content design of websites, brand-related social media accounts for tourism firms and review sites to entice the participation of users.

The study also enlightens marketers interested in harnessing the value of eWOM platforms on ways for managing under-reporting by capitalizing on addressing altruistic, entertainment and information motivations of vacations on the brand sites which drive the generation of content on social media sites. Altruistic and entertainment content will bolster and amplify eWOM's reach by enticing eWOM passing among vacationers using the tourism sites.

Practitioners have increasingly been showing interest in fostering favorable customer-to-customer communication (Hinz et al., 2011; Kumar et al., 2010; Ryu & Feick, 2007). Identifying motives behind giving and passing on of eWOM on tourism sites is essentially a milestone towards effective use of social media to tap the opportunities stemming from increasing numbers of vacationers using social media for their travel planning.

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