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Rumor Sharing in the Marketplace: What Motivates the Consumer?

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RUMOR SHARING IN THE MARKETPLACE: WHAT MOTIVATES THE CONSUMER?

Rumors are often shared in the marketplace about products, services, brands or organizations. These rumors get communicated from consumer to consumer in the form of Word of Mouth (WOM). An exhaustive review of literature identified four motivations for consumers to share rumors in the marketplace; which included anxiety management motivation, information sharing motivation, relationship management motivation and self enhancement motivation. The review was not conclusive in identifying any scales for the measurement of these motivations. The paper tries to develop a measurement scale for these four motivations. Structured interviews were conducted to identify 33 items that motivate a consumer to share rumors. Based on an exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis four factors were identified and the results retained 21 items. The scale displayed good reliability scores.

INTRODUCTION

Word of Mouth (WOM) communications has been an integral part of marketing scholarship. *"WOM is a consumer-dominated channel of communication where the sender is independent of the market"* (Brown, Broderick and Lee; 2007). The initial work in the field of WOM started in the early 1950s and then the field has seen a flurry of research interests including the recent developments into e-WOM (e.g. Arndt, 1967; Sheth, 1971; Day, 1971; Stock and Zinsner, 1987; Engel et al., 1969; Richins, 1983; Mangold, 1987; Bolfing, 1989; Murray, 1991; Herr et al., 1991;Woodside et al., 1992; Webster, 1991; Zeithaml et al., 1993; Buttle, 1998;). The importance of WOM in marketing has been studied well throughout literature.

Rumors are a dominant form of WOM (Koenig, 1985).A rumor is defined as *"an unverified and instrumentally relevant information statement in circulation that arises in contexts of ambiguity, danger, or potential threat and that functions to help people make sense and manage risk"* (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007). In many situations WOM communication does not have any verifiable standard of evidence and thus characterizes itself as a rumor. Rumors can potentially affect perceptions about the product and brand images, rumors cause changes to the credibility of the brands and affect consumer loyalty (Kimmel, 2004; Kapferer, 1990; Koenig, 1985). The overload of commercially generated marketing communication confuses the consumer and guides the consumer to explore non-commercial forms of information aids (Meiners, et, al., 2010). Thus, marketplace rumors are fast propagated (Kimmel, 2008) especially through social networks (Kostka et al., 2008). In the recent years there have been many rumors that have emerged in the marketplace and have created drastic effects on the marketing scenario (Kimmel, 2004).But, despite the importance of rumors, there has been little attention paid to rumor

research in the marketing context (Kimmel and Audrain-Pontevia, 2010), although this stream of research is not totally new (e.g. Kamins et, al. 1997; Kimmel, 2004; Kimmel and Audrain-Pontevia, 2010).

Despite the importance of rumors in the marketing context, little is known about the psychological factors driving rumor propagation (Dubois, et, al., 2011). Although, there have been a few studies focusing on the motivations to share WOM (e.g. Dichter, 1966; Engel et al., 1993; Sundaram, Mitra and Webster, 1998; Hennig-Thurau et, al., 2004), there are hardly any studies looking at the motivations to share rumors in the marketplace and correspondingly there are inadequacies in the instruments to measure these motivations. The objective of this paper is to identify the motivations to share rumors in the marketplace and to develop appropriate scales to measure these motivations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1   Word of Mouth (WOM)

WOM has been defined as "*an oral, person-to-person communication between a perceived non-commercial communicator and a receiver concerning a brand, a product, or a service offered for sale*" (Arndt, 1967). There have been further definitions in literature (e.g. Westbrook, 1987; Stern, 1994; Hennig-Thurau et, al., 2004), but one of the simplest definitions is provided by WOMM (2008) as "*the act of consumers providing information to other consumers*". WOM has been identified to be more persuasive on consumer behavior than other sources of information that are marketer controlled (Buttle, 1998), neutral sources of information like market reports (Herr et al., 1991) and advertising (Sheth, 1971; Meiners et, al., 2010). WOM is found effective at changing negative or neutral attitudes into positive attitudes (Day, 1971). It has been suggested that WOM will influence the expectations and the perceptions of consumers (Lynn, 1987; Stock and Zinsner, 1987; Woodside et al., 1992; Webster, 1991; Zeithaml et al., 1993). WOM has also been mentioned to be one of the most influential methods to manage the expectations of consumers (Engel et al., 1969; Richins, 1983; Tybout et al., 1981; Bolfing, 1989; Mangold, 1987; Berger and Heath, 2007; Basuroy, Chatterjee, and Ravid, 2003; Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006). WOM increases sales and helps in the diffusion of new products (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006; Moe and Trusov, 2011; Godes and Mayzlin, 2009; Iyengar et, al., 2010).

Customers spread the word about products and services that they have used based on(i)dis/satisfaction from consumption (Anderson, 1998; Bowman and Narayandas, 2001), (ii) commitment and loyalty to the company (Dick and Basu, 1994), (c) length product usage (Wangenheim and Bayon, 2004) and (d) perceived novelty (Bone, 1992). WOM is integral in information-seeking behavior. The research on this area highlights the role of WOM engagement for (i)lack of expertise (Bansal and Voyer, 2000; Gilly et al., 1998), (ii) high risk in decision-making (Bansal and Voyer, 2000; Zeithaml and Bitner, 1996; Murray and Schlacter, 1990) and (c) high involvement decision-making (Beatty and Smith, 1987).

Research has also focused on the sources of WOM and its impact in instances like (i) expertise of the source (Bansal and Voyer, 2000; Petty and Wegner, 1998; Pornpitakpan, 2004), (ii) Tie strength (Brown and Reingen, 1987; Bakshy, et al., 2012), (c) Demographic similarity (Brown and Reingen, 1987; De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008; Forman et, al., 2008) and (d) Perceptual affinity (De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008).

1.2   Motivation to Share WOM

Research in WOM has looked at the motivation for people to engage in WOM. The research on this stream can be categorized into three domains (i) Self Enhancement Motivation, (ii) Emotion Motivation and (c) Information Exchange Motivation.

The Self Enhancement motivation to engage in WOM suggests the motivations of a consumer to engage in WOM for developing his/her self-image and thereby self enhancement. The self enhancement motivation of engaging in WOM includes (i)self-disclosure (Berger and Milkman, 2012; Wojnicki and Godes, 2011; Amabile, 1983), (ii)sharing interesting products and messages; which deals with sharing interesting, original, funny or controversial messages (Moldovan, Goldenberg, and Chattopadhyay, 2011; Heath, Bell, and Sternberg, 2001) and (c) impression management (Sengupta, Dahl, and Gorn, 2002; Argo, White, and Dahl, 2006).

The Emotional motivation of sharing WOM suggests that people share rumors to manage emotions. The emotional motivations include (i)anxiety reduction (Sundaram, et, al., 1998), (ii) arousal (Berger and Milkman, 2012; Heath, et al., 2001; Moldovan, et al., 2011), (c) need for vengeance (Richins, 1983; Sundaram et al., 1998) and (d) dissonance reduction (Engel et, al., 1993).

Information exchange motivation has been looked at in three different sub-themes; which include (i) sharing information useful to others (Chiu et al., 2007; Berger and Milkman, 2012),

(ii)Altruism (Dichter, 1966; Engel et al., 1993; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) and (c) seeking information to make and validate decisions (Engel et, al., 1993; Gatignon and Robertson, 1986).

1.3   Rumor

The first studies on rumor had been in the context of both the World Wars. Allport (1919) was the first to mention and study the construct of rumor in the World War I context. Prasad (1935) had reviewed close to 30 rumors in the context of an earthquake and then provided his early conclusions about rumor propagations. Later during the World War II, there was a great amount of interest in the field.Important research was conducted by Allport and Postman (1947), who focused on the spread of rumors among soldiers in the war (Rosnow and Foster; 2005). Rumor has been formally defined in many studies (e.g. Knapp, 1944; Allport and Postman, 1947; Peterson and Gist, 1951; Rosnow and Fine, 1976; Kapferer, 1990; Rosnow and Kimmel, 1990; DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007). For the purpose of this study use the definition of rumor as "*an unverified and instrumentally relevant information statement in circulation that arise in contexts of ambiguity, danger, or potential threat and that function to help people make sense and manage risk*" (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007).Rumor research has mostly looked at the role of isolated variables or their combinationssuch as uncertainty, involvement, credulity and anxiety as the factors affecting rumor spread (e.g. Prasad, 1935; Allport and Postman, 1947; Rosnow, 1991; Bordia and DiFonzo, 2004; Rosnow, 1991). Studies have partly mentioned a few other variables like ambiguity (uncertainty) (e.g. Allport and Postman, 1947), importance (Prasad, 1935), anxiety (Rosnow, 2001), credulity (belief) (Brodin and Roux, 1990; as cited Kimmel, 2004), fantasies (Jung, 1917; as cited Kimmel, 2004), rumors in consumer environments (Kimmel, 2004), source credibility (Kimmel, 2004), psychological control (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2002, Walker, 1996), valence (Kamins, Folkes, and Perner, 1997; Weenig, Groenenboom, and Wilke, 2001), belief (Rosnow et al., 1988), social acceptance (Allport and Postman, 1947; DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007), conscious spread (Kapferer, 1990), propaganda (Rosnow, 1991) and self-esteem /self-confidence (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007). Though there has been a flurry of research in the field of rumor research, therehave hardly been any studies that identify the motivations that bind these variables together.

2   Conceptual Development - Motivation for Rumor Sharing

The review of literature from the context of rumor research shows four major motivational themes. These themes have been identified based on the motivations for people to engage in rumor sharing. These motivations become the foundation for this study. Literature suggests that

the major themes under rumor studies are (i) relationship management, (ii) anxiety management, (iii) information sharing and (iv) self enhancement.

2.1 Relationship Management Motivation

Rumor has been viewed in literature as a mechanism for social transaction and relationship management (Kamins, Folkes, and Perner, 1997; Weenig, Groenenboom, and Wilke, 2001). DiFonzo and Bordia (2007) mention that the rumor sharing activity would be motivated based on the effect it would have on the relationship goals. People will share rumors to enhance the chances of a long-term relation. A negative rumor will be shared with a friend if considered useful to the friend – in averting bad outcomes (Weenig et, al., 2001). In conditions of low information availability, people would share rumors with an objective to be socially accepted for possessing this information (Allport and Postman, 1947; DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007). People will share credible rumors to be considered as a valuable source of information and gain acceptance through the same (Guerin, 2003; Stevens and Fiske, 1995). Rumors are shared as they provoke anxiety and interest and hence become good conversation topics. This will in turn help in building better relationships (Guerin and Miyazaki, 2006). Relationship management motivation is one of the key drivers to sharing rumors in the marketplace. Consumers will share rumors about products, services, brands or organizations in the market with other consumers; as an act to maintain and manage their relationships. Relationship management motivation of rumor sharing in the marketplace refers to the motivation of a consumer to communicate a rumor to another consumer with a desire to manage their relationship.

2.2 Anxiety Management Motivation

The second motivation to share a rumor has been identified from literature as anxiety management. The anxiety management motivation suggests that the people share a rumor as a mechanism to manage their anxiety and to have a better control over the situation (Bordia and DiFonzo, 2004). In conditions of uncertainty and lack of formal information, people engage in informal information sharing and collective problem solving. Uncertainty is defined as "*a psychological state of doubt about what current events mean or what future events are likely to occur*" (DiFonzo and Bordia, 1998). In the lack of information from formal sources, people engage in transferring rumors as it helps in reducing uncertainties. Many researchers have suggested support for the role of uncertainty (e.g. Prasad, 1935; Allport and Postman, 1947; Shibutani, 1966; Rosnow, 1991 and Bordia and DiFonzo, 2004). In conditions with high uncertainty and involvement, it is suggested that people will have high anxieties and they will

thus use rumor sharing as a mechanism to reduce this anxiety (Allport and Postman, 1947; Rosnow, Esposito and Gibney, 1988; Rosnow, 1991).When there is a lack of psychological control, anxiety levels are raised which also leads to rumor sharing (DiFonzo and Bordia, 1998; Bordia and DiFonzo, 2002; Walker, 1996. The anxiety management motivation suggests that the people share a rumor as a mechanism to manage their anxiety and to have a better control over the situation (Bordia and DiFonzo, 2004). In a marketplace context rumors are shared with a desire to reduce anxieties about a product, service, brand or organization. A good example of rumor sharing to manage anxieties in the marketplace can be seen in the mobile phone industries; where frequent rumors about new products become dominant topics of conversation among consumers. Anxiety management motivation of rumor sharing in the marketplace refers to the motivation of a consumer to communicate a rumor to another consumer to manage his/her own anxiety.

2.3   Information Sharing Motivation

People often share rumors to engage in a process on sense making and finding explanations (Bordia and Rosnow, 1998; DiFonzo and Bordia, 1997). It is suggested that in situations where there is no formal explanation, people will share rumors to make sense of the situation, in many cases rumors act as a readymade explanation to the situation(Allport and Postman, 1947; Bordia, et, al., 1999; Bordia and Rosnow, 1998). Often rumors are used by small groups to share information and develop explanations of the uncertain situations (Bordia et, al., 1999; Bordia, 1996; Bordia and Rosnow, 1998). Rumor transmission is also a process to share valued information (Allport and Postman, 1947). People use rumors as a vehicle to share valued information (Rosnow, 1980; Rosnow and Fine, 1976). It can be easily understood in the information sharing contexts that rumor sharing is a mechanism to share information. Information sharing motivation is one of the most fundamental motivations to communicate a rumor among consumers. Information sharing motivation of rumor sharing in the marketplace thus refers to the motivation of a consumer to communicate a rumor with another consumer to share valued information.

2.4   Self Enhancement Motivation

The final motivation that had been identified from the review of literature is the motivation for self enhancement. The self-enhancement goal refers to the need to feel good about oneself (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007). Literature mentions that people would act in a way to feel good about them. Sharing a rumor has been seen in literature to have similar goals. The self

enhancement motivation has been underemphasized in literature (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007), but a few studies have highlighted this aspect. Kapferer, (1990) and Rosnow (1991) have highlighted the role of conscious spread of rumors as well as rumor spread for propaganda. Many of the studies have highlighted the role of propaganda studies at times of elections or war (DiFonzo and Bordia, 2007). It is clear that these rumors are used to attain the goal of the person engaged in rumor sharing. Rumor sharing has also been established to be enhancing self-esteem or self-confidence. DiFonzo and Bordia (2007) suggest that "*spreading rumors may boost one's self-esteem by boosting one's social identity. Groups prefer interpretations that portray the in-group in a favorable light and are derogatory of the out-group. It is not surprising then that rumors derogating the out-group are much more prevalent than are rumors negatively portraying the in-group*". Though, the previous quote is in the context of organizations the same is relevant in the marketplace. Consumers at times can act in a way to boost one's social identity and hence boost the self-esteem. Consider for example the case of a consumer propagating a rumor in favor of a brand he is currently in use. This will help boost his self-image and self-esteem. Self enhancement motivation has been studied in the context of spreading rumors for propaganda fulfillment. Research has indicated that sometimes rumors are generated and transmitted to achieve some propaganda related to political agenda, sales targets, to demoralize opponents etc. (Airport and Postman, 1947; DiFonzo and Bordia, 2004; Kapferer, 1990; Rosnow, 2001). Studies have also focused on rumors being consciously spread to mislead or misguide someone (Kapferer, 1990) and the fact that sometimes people fantasize and share such fantasies as rumors (Brodin and Roux, 1990). Self enhancement motivation of rumor sharing refers to the motivation of a consumer to communicate a rumor with another consumer to enhance his own self-image and thereby his self-esteem.

3   Method – Scale Development

Developing the measures for the four motivations to share rumors in the marketplace was done in accordance to the guidelines mentioned byChurchill (1979), Gerbing and Anderson, (1988)and Rossiter (2002). These authors have clearly identified a procedure to develop scales in marketing. Figure 1 shows the steps undertaken in the development of the scale.
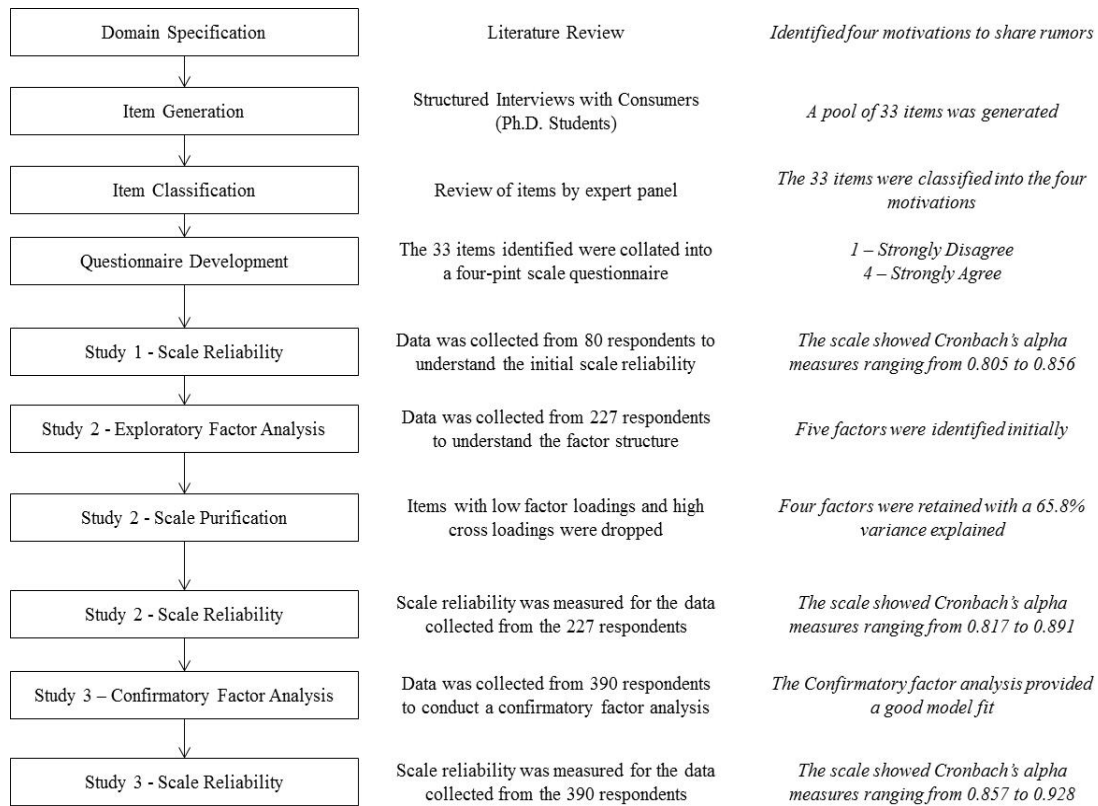
Domain Specification	Literature Review	*Identified four motivations to share rumors*
Item Generation	Structured Interviews with Consumers (Ph.D. Students)	*A pool of 33 items was generated*
Item Classification	Review of items by expert panel	*The 33 items were classified into the four motivations*
Questionnaire Development	The 33 items identified were collated into a four-pint scale questionnaire	*1 – Strongly Disagree* *4 – Strongly Agree*
Study 1 - Scale Reliability	Data was collected from 80 respondents to understand the initial scale reliability	*The scale showed Cronbach's alpha measures ranging from 0.805 to 0.856*
Study 2 - Exploratory Factor Analysis	Data was collected from 227 respondents to understand the factor structure	*Five factors were identified initially*
Study 2 - Scale Purification	Items with low factor loadings and high cross loadings were dropped	*Four factors were retained with a 65.8% variance explained*
Study 2 - Scale Reliability	Scale reliability was measured for the data collected from the 227 respondents	*The scale showed Cronbach's alpha measures ranging from 0.817 to 0.891*
Study 3 – Confirmatory Factor Analysis	Data was collected from 390 respondents to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis	*The Confirmatory factor analysis provided a good model fit*
Study 3 - Scale Reliability	Scale reliability was measured for the data collected from the 390 respondents	*The scale showed Cronbach's alpha measures ranging from 0.857 to 0.928*

Figure 1 – Steps in the scale development

The steps involved in the development of the scale for motivations to share rumors in the marketplace have been shown above. The subsequent sections will illustrate and elaborate these steps.

3.1   Item Generation and Classification

The review of literature identified four motivations to share rumors in the marketplace. Specific items for the development of the scale were initially identified from literature on WOM motivational studies (Dichter, 1966; Engel, Blackwell and Miniard, 1993; Sundaram, Mitra and Webster, 1998; Goyette et al., 2010). Based on these items and the directions provided in the review of literature, structured interviews were conducted with 16 Ph.D. scholars. Each of the interview respondents were provided with a rumor message and prompted for their motivations to share these rumors. Interviews were open-ended and the respondents were free to think and respond to their motivations to share the rumor. In total 33 non-repetitive items were collated from these interviews.

These 33 items that were identified from the interviews were then subjected to an expert evaluation. A panel of three experts was approached, each of them was provided with the 33 items and definitions of the four motivations. The experts were asked to review each item and

then classify them into the four motivations. The conflicting items were then revised and a consensus was achieved. Table 1 provides the summary of these 33 items and their classification.

Table 1 – Motivational Items identified from literature and interviews.

Motivation		Items
Relationship Management Motivation	1	This message will give me opportunities to communicate with others.
	2	Sharing this message will make others want to talk to me more often.
	3	Others will consider me an expert if I share this message.
	4	I will share this message to be in touch with others.
	5	Others will respect me more if I share this message.
	6	Sharing this message will help me communicate with others.
	7	I share this message to inform others that I care about them
	8	I am motivated to share this message as it would be entertaining to others.
	9	The message is interesting and will interest others too.
Anxiety Management Motivation	1	I will feel relaxed after sharing this message.
	2	I am motivated to share this message and reduce my anxiety about the product.
	3	Sharing this message will make me feel confident.
	4	Sharing this message will make me feel in control of the situation.
	5	I am worried about others and sharing this message will help keep them safe.
	6	Sharing this message will create a pleasant mood in me.
Information Sharing Motivation	1	I am motivated to share the message to communicate about the product.
	2	I will share this message as it will be useful to others.
	3	I will share this message to inform others.
	4	I will be able to help others by sharing this message.
	5	By sharing the above message I will be able to help others make wise choices.
	6	People will share information with me in future if I share this message now.
	7	This information is hard to find and hence I will share this message.
	8	I will share this message to get feedback on the message.
	9	I am motivated to find out if this message is true or not.
	10	I am motivated to share news by sharing this message.
Self Enhancement Motivation	1	Sharing this message will make me feel good about myself.
	2	Others will feel good about me if I share this message.
	3	I will be able to influence others by sharing the message.
	4	Sharing this message will help others know about my interests.
	5	I will share this message to let others know about my activities.
	6	I will share this message because it's enjoyable to me.
	7	I will share this message to pass time.
	8	I will be able to showcase to others that I am resourceful.

3.2 Questionnaire Development

A questionnaire was developed with the 33 items that were identified. The questionnaire was self-administrative in nature. The respondents were required to read a rumor at the beginning of the questionnaire and then respond to the 33 items. Responses were measured in a four point scale (1 – *Strongly Disagree* to 4 – *Strongly Agree*).Four rumor messages were used in the questionnaire. Appendix 1 provides the four rumor messages used in the questionnaire.

3.3 Study 1 – Scale Reliability

The first statistical step in the development of the scale was to check if the items that have been identified from literature are reliable to form a scale. The 33 items that were identified and classified earlier were subjected to a reliability analysis. Data for the study 1 was collected from 80 participants who volunteered to participate in the study. The participants of study 1 were students completing their graduation in engineering or participants in an executive MBA program. These participants were provided the Message 1 shown in the Appendix 1 and were required to complete the questionnaire.

SPSS 20 was used to measure the scale reliability of the four motivational scales. The Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for the four motivational scales. This was conducted to arrive at an initial reliability score before proceeding further with the scale development and to have a sufficient clarity on the reliability of the scale. The results of the reliability analysis showed good Cronbach's alpha scores for all four motivations (relationship management – 0.811, anxiety management – 0.856, information sharing – 0.805 and self enhancement – 0.846). Based on these reliability scores we can assume that the items are reliable for an initial stage and we can proceed to the next stages of developing and validating the scale.

3.4 Study 2 – Exploratory Factor Analysis

The second study was conducted with the objective of conducting an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The data for study 2 was collected from 227 MBA, Executive MBA and Ph.D. students. The respondents were each given a rumor message and then asked to complete a questionnaire about their motivation to share the rumor. These participants were provided the Message 1 shown in the Appendix 1 and were required to complete the questionnaire. All participants volunteered to participate in the study.

3.4.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis -1

The data collected from the second data set was used to conduct a principal component analysis (PCA). The PCA was conducted as an exploratory factor analysis procedure to explore the factor structure (Churchill, 1979; Anderson and Gerbing, 1988). The PCA was conducted with the data from the 227 questionnaires. The PCA was conducted on SPSS 20.0. The Kaiser's eigenvalue criterion was used to identify the factor structure. The initial solution identified five factors based on a Varimax rotation. But, many of these items have factor loadings which were not acceptable.

3.4.2 Scale purification

The initial factor exploratory factor analysis based on the PCA identified five factors. A few items were dropped in order to arrive at an accepted solution. The items were dropped if items had factor loadings less than 0.4, items had cross loading of more than 0.4 and based on expert evaluation of the items.In total 12 items were dropped based on the scale purification criterion.

3.4.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis - 2

Based on the item purification criterion a total of 12 items were dropped. The PCA was rerun after dropping each item till an acceptable factor structure was arrived at (using a Varimax rotation).Subsequently after removing 12 items an acceptable factor structure was achieved. The remaining factors showed good factor loadings (greater than 0.4) and low cross loadings (less than 0.4); apart from two factors that had cross loadings of 0.4 and 0.41. These two factors were retained based on an expert evaluation due to their high factor loading (greater than 0.6) on the original factors. Table 2 gives the results of the PCA. The Keyser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy reported was 0.938 which is deemed to be adequate. The final exploratory factor analysis results indicated that relationship management motivation to have five items, anxiety management motivation to comprise of six items, information sharing motivation to have six items and self enhancement motivation to comprise of four items. The 21 items explained 65.8% Variance.

3.5   Study 2 - Scale Reliability

The scale reliability was measured for the items retained from the exploratory factor analysis. SPSS 20 was used to measure the scale reliability of the four motivational scales. The

Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for the remaining 21 items under four motivational scales. The results of the reliability analysis showed good Cronbach's alpha scores for all four motivations (relationship management – 0.876, anxiety management – 0.891, information sharing – 0.817 and self enhancement – 0.855).

Motivation	Items	Factor Structure				Cronbach's Alpha
		1	2	3	4	
Anxiety Management Motivation	I will feel relaxed after sharing this message	.796				0.891
	I am worried about others and sharing this message will help keep them safe	.706				
	Sharing this message will make me feel in control of the situation	.684				
	Sharing this message will create a pleasant mood in me	.677				
	Sharing this message will make me feel confident	.662				
	I am motivated to share this message and reduce my anxiety regarding the product	.653				
Information Sharing Motivation	I will share this message to inform others		.770			0.817
	I will share this message as it will be useful to others		.765			
	By sharing the above message I will be able to help others make wise choices		.706			
	I am motivated to find out if this message is true or not		.665			
	I will share this message to get feedback on the message		.648			
	I will be able to help others by sharing this message		.635			
Relationship Management Motivation	I will share this message to be in touch with others			.803		0.876
	Sharing this message will make others want to talk to me more often			.781		
	Sharing this message will help me communicate with others			.740		
	Others will consider me an expert if I share this message			.607		
	Others will respect me more if I share this message			.596		
Self Enhancement Motivation	I will share this message to pass time				.769	0.855
	I will share this message to let others know about my activities				.750	
	Sharing this message will help others know about my interests				.737	
	I will share this message because it's enjoyable to me				.680	

Table 2 – Results of Principal Component Analysis

3.6 Study 3 - Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The third study was conducted with data collected from 390 respondents from Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk). Buhrmesteret. al. (2011) evaluated Mturk as a potential data collection source for psychological and social psychological studies, and reported favorably for the platform's usability. The respondents were provided with an online form of the questionnaire previously used. One of the three identified messages (Message 2, Message 3 and Message 4 in Appendix 1) was provided in random to each respondent. The data collected from these respondents was used for conducting a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to assess the goodness of these measures.

The results of the CFA were promising. The results indicated a CMIN/DF (ratio of chi-square to degrees of freedom) of 2.332, GFI (goodness of fit index) of 0.913, CFI (comparative fit index) of 0.960 and RMSEA (root mean square error of approximation) of 0.059 indicating a good model fit (Bagozzi and Yi, 1988; Bentler, 2005) as all the values were acceptable. The CFA shows that the model is adequately accurate and can be accepted.

3.7 Study 3 – Scale Reliability

The scale reliability was measured for the items retained from the exploratory factor analysis. SPSS 20 was used to measure the scale reliability of the four motivational scales. The Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for the remaining 21 items under four motivational scales. The results of the reliability analysis showed good Cronbach's alpha scores for all four motivations (relationship management – 0.928, anxiety management – 0.888, information sharing – 0.862 and self enhancement – 0.857). Table 3 provides the Cronbach's alpha scores from all the three studies.

Table 3 - Cronbach's alpha scores from the three studies

Motivation	Cronbach's alpha from Study 1 33 Items N = 80	Cronbach's alpha from Study 2 21 Items N = 227	Cronbach's alpha from Study 3 21 Items N = 390
Relationship Management Motivation	0.811	0.876	0.928
Anxiety Management Motivation	0.856	0.891	0.888
Information Sharing Motivation	0.805	0.817	0.862
Self Enhancement Motivation	0.846	0.855	0.857

DISCUSSION

The literature review had identified four motivations for consumers to share rumors in the marketplace. Based on a reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis the numbers of items corresponding to the four factors were reduced to 21 from 33 which were initially identified from the interviews.

The first motivation that was identified from literature and further established from the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis is the relationship management motivation. Relationship management motivation has identified five items. These five items showed good reliability with Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.811, 0.876 and 0.928 in the three studies. The items that were identified as part of the relationship management motivation are "*I will share this message to be in touch with others*", "*Sharing this message will make others want to talk to me more often*", "*Sharing this message will help me communicate with others*", "*Others will consider me an expert if I share this message*", and "*Others will respect me more if I share this message*". The relationship management motivation basically is the drive for the consumer to manage and maintain relationships and the rumor acts as a tool to manage long term relationships.

The second factor identified was anxiety management motivation. The anxiety management motivation has been identified to have six items. The items that fall into the Anxiety Management Motivation mostly deal with the uncertainty in the situation and how sharing the message will help the individual deal with this anxiety. The items are "*I will feel relaxed after sharing this message*", "*I am worried about others and sharing this message will help keep them safe*", "*Sharing this message will make me feel in control of the situation*", "*Sharing this message will create a pleasant mood in me*", "*Sharing this message will make me feel confident*" and "*I am motivated to share this message and reduce my anxiety regarding the product*". Each of these statements deals with how sharing the message will make the consumer more comfortable about the situation and thus reduce his uncertainty about the situation. The factor had a very high reliability in all the three studies with Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.856, 0.891and 0.888.

The third motivation identified from the exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis is the information sharing motivation. The information sharing motivation was identified with six items. The items under the information sharing motivation mostly deal with the construct of altruism. Altruism and the need to help others has been suggested to be a reason for people to

share the WOM messages (Dichter, 1966; Engel et al., 1993; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Price et al., 1995) and the Information Sharing Motivation establishes the same for rumor messages. The items that were identified as part of the information sharing motivation are "*I will share this message to inform others*", "*I will share this message as it will be useful to others*", "*By sharing the above message I will be able to help others make wise choices*", "*I am motivated to find out if this message is true or not*", "*I will share this message to get feedback on the message*" and "*I will be able to help others by sharing this message*". This factor again has shown a good reliability with Cronbach's alpha scores of 0.805, 0.817 and 0.862.

The final motivation identified was the self enhancement motivation. The self enhancement motivation was identified to have four factors. These factors are "*I will share this message to pass time*", "*I will share this message to let others know about my activities*", "*Sharing this message will help others know about my interests*" and "*I will share this message because it's enjoyable to me*". The items under self enhancement clearly indicate that this is the motivation for people to share the rumor and enhance their own self-image or for self-centered goals. The four items showed good reliability scores of 0.846, 0.855 and 0.857 from the three studies.

The scale has displayed good indices of reliability, validity and unidimensionality. The scale can be assumed to be a good measure of the motivations for consumers to share rumors in the marketplace. In the three studies that were conducted, the scale showed consistent Cronbach's alpha values of greater than 0.8; which is a very good indicator of the scales reliability.

CONCLUSION

The study identified four motivations to share rumors in the marketplace. These factors were identified to be relationship management motivation, anxiety management motivation, information sharing motivation and self enhancement motivation. Based on the data collected in three different studies from 697 respondents the factor structure was assessed and the validated based on an exploratory factor analysis and a confirmatory factor analysis. The results indicate good reliability for the scales and the 21 item scale can be assumed to be a good measure of the motivations for consumers to share rumors in the marketplace.

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APPENDIX 1

Message 1

As per reports the AAA brake pedal tends to get hard on persistent braking, at low speeds of around 10-30 km/hr. This causes safety concerns for drivers in congested city traffic conditions. There is lot of concern from customers regarding the safety of using the AAA. It is not new that there have been technical issues regarding the AAA; there was a recall of around 1.09 lakh Swift hatchback worldwide to repair a defect with petrol leakage. Reports suggest that there has been no action from AAA on the issue of brake failures and it is believed that AAA may not be a safe car

Message 2

The famous cosmetic brand manufacturer XXX loses its license in India due to an ordered case by the Food and Drug Administration after 15 batches of baby powder products was found sterilized by an irritant and cancer-causing component. The Maharashtra Food and Drug Administration have cancelled the license to manufacture cosmetics at XXX's plant after it found its baby talcum powder to have cancer causing substance.

Message 3

Rumors suggest that people should not consume YYY products. "For the next few days don't drink any product from YYY Company like YYY-1, YYY-2, YYY-3, YYY-4 etc., as a worker from the company's production department has added his blood contaminated with Aids (HIV +^{ve}) in the product during production".

Message 4

There are unconfirmed reports doing rounds on the internet that a new smart phone will be launched by ZZZ in June, 2013. Reports indicate that this flagship device will be priced around Rs. 25,000/-. ZZZ is rumored to have developed a "floating touch" feature on the phone that will allow users to navigate their phones without ever touching the display. The feature would be especially helpful in situations where it would be easier to wave your hand or finger above your screen than actually touch it. ZZZ is rumored to be provided the phone with 20 megapixels resolution camera and will have EXMOR RS sensor with 1/1.6 inches size. This makes it huge for any smart phone till now, and surely very advanced technology for cheap prices.

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Abstract:

Rumors are often shared in the marketplace about products, services, brands or organizations. These rumors get communicated from consumer to consumer in the form of Word of Mouth (WOM). An exhaustive review of literature identified four motivations for consumers to share rumors in the marketplace; which included anxiety management motivation, information sharing motivation, relationship management motivation and self enhancement motivation. The review was not conclusive in identifying any scales for the measurement of these motivations. The paper tries to develop a measurement scale for these four motivations. Structured interviews were conducted to identify 33 items that motivate a consumer to share rumors. Based on an exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis four factors were identified and the results retained 21 items. The scale displayed good reliability scores.

Key Words/Phrases:
Referencing Style Followed: