

ABSTRACT

Word of Mouth (WoM) has been recognized as one of the most influential resources of information transmission and with the passing of time it has been developed into electronic word of mouth, also known as eWoM which has a significant impact on customers' purchasing intention in present market context. This study examines the impact of eWoM on purchase intention of newly introduced automobile brands in Sri Lanka. The theory of planned behavior (TPB) is utilized to investigate what is the impact of eWoM on purchase intention. The main objective of this study is to identify the impact of electronic word of mouth communication (eWoM) on purchasing intention of automobiles in Sri Lanka, while secondary objective is to identify different effects of electronic word of mouth communication (eWoM) on purchasing intention of automobiles in Sri Lanka. In research design, Positivism was adopted as the research philosophy and a Deductive approach was used, Survey was the research strategy. Quantitative data were collected for the study by deploying a structured questionnaire among the sample of hundred and fifty selected through non probability convenience sampling approach among an infinite population of users of newly introduced automobile brands in Sri Lanka. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 was utilized to analyze the data while Sobel test calculator was applied to check the impact of mediating variables. The results of the study disclosed that Independent variable (eWoM) has weak positive correlations with Dependent variable (Purchasing Intention) and Mediator variables (Attitude toward purchasing, Subjective Norms toward purchasing and Perceived Behavior toward purchasing). Further, the results of the Regression analysis explained that the Independent variable, eWoM, has affected significantly on all three Mediators as well as Dependent variable. However it was found that all three models were weak. Moreover, the Sobel test statistics revealed that all three Mediators have significantly mediates the effect of Independent variable, eWoM, on Dependent variable, purchasing intention of newly introduced automobile brands. Convenience sampling method restricts the representativeness of results across all customers of newly introduced automobile brands in Sri Lanka and therefore the generalizability of the research findings is limited. The findings of this study will give an insight to importers and marketers of newly introduced automobile brands in Sri Lanka to realize that using eWoM is becoming a major trend which can significantly influence on the purchasing intention.

Keywords: eWoM, Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Purchase Intention