

From clicks to carts: exploring the role of Unboxing YouTube videos in driving the smartphone purchasing intention of Generation Z and Millennials in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

User-generated videos (UGVs), that is, videos generated by users as opposed to by manufacturers or sellers, have become increasingly popular, especially with Generation Zs and millennials. Using platforms like YouTube, UGVs create awareness and influence purchasing decisions through reviews. This study aims to better understand the effects of UGVs by focusing on their role in smartphone users' purchasing intention. The study draws on the uses and gratification theory, which contends that media users actively search for content that satisfies specific needs such as information seeking, social bonding, entertainment, and time passing. Data was sourced from an online survey involving 390 respondents from the Generation Z and millennial cohorts in Sri Lanka. Analysis revealed that viewing unboxing videos addresses all four gratification motives, while the information-seeking motive stood out as the primary driver. These findings provide valuable guidance for UGV creators and marketers in general on optimising content strategy.

Keywords: *Generation Z; Millennials; Purchase intention; Unboxing videos; Uses and Gratification theory; User-generated videos*

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Introduction

In the realm of media, social media platforms offer a distinct and unique space for content creation. Among them, YouTube stands out as a primary hub for user-generated video content, attracting a substantial and growing number of viewers (Nawarathna et al., 2021). A significant milestone in the evolution of YouTube occurred in 2006 when a user posted a video showcasing the unboxing of a Sony PlayStation3. The video aimed to not only share the user's excitement about their purchase but also to provide an authentic experience of the game to viewers (Steel and König, 2006). This video quickly gained viral status, accumulating nearly 71,000 views within its initial month on YouTube. This event marked the birth of the immensely popular 'unboxing' genre on YouTube, which has since witnessed explosive growth worldwide (Shields, 2014). Today, a staggering number of over 20 million search results can be found for unboxing videos on YouTube, solidifying its status as a global phenomenon. In Sri Lanka, by the beginning of 2022, YouTube ads successfully reached 58.9 per cent of the total internet user base (Sally, 2022). Moving forward, there is an expected surge in the popularity of online reviews that incorporate videos. Estimates from 2022 reveal that a remarkable 80% of web traffic consisted of online videos. The influence of video product reviews on purchasing decisions is undeniable, as 90% of consumers admitted that watching such videos could impact their buying choices (DataReportal, 2022).

According to Mowlabocus (2020), unboxing videos have emerged as valuable sources of information for consumers. These videos serve as a practical means for individuals to gain insights into the contents of a product, understand its operations, and gauge real-life user experiences, all without the influences of promotional efforts. Additionally, Neville (2021) highlights how unboxing videos have become a source of entertainment for consumers who enjoy exploring and testing exciting products. As the popularity of unboxing videos continues to grow,

marketers have recognised the opportunity to leverage this trend by creating promotional videos that mimic the format of unboxing videos, aiming to attract new customers (Kim, 2020). Interestingly, while these consumer-generated videos were initially intended for non-promotional purposes, they have now evolved into one of the most effective tools in the marketer's arsenal for product promotion.

The unboxing genre has evolved to encompass a wide array of objects, ranging from games and toys to audio-visual technologies and beauty products. However, unboxing videos featuring smartphones and other consumer technologies remain highly popular (Mowlabocus, 2020; Kim, 2020). Mowlabocus (2020) highlights the significance of smartphone unboxing videos, positioning them as a significant milestone in the lifecycle of a smartphone. He noted that these videos mark the 'beginning' of a new phone's journey, symbolising a fresh chapter in its existence. By focusing on smartphone unboxing videos, researchers can investigate the conventions and pleasures associated with this genre in a more data-rich setting. Moreover, this perspective allows us to appreciate the unique role that smartphone unboxing videos play and recognise their contribution to the wider realm of unboxing content.

Although unboxing videos have experienced a surge in influence among consumers as a crucial factor in their purchase considerations, academic exploration of unboxing videos remains limited (Kim, 2020; Mowlabocus, 2020). Past studies have focused mostly on analysing the content of unboxing videos, exploring the cultural perspectives surrounding their creation (Mowlabocus, 2020) and offering insights into toy unboxing videos targeted at young audiences (Marsh 2016; Craig & Cunningham, 2017; Nicoll and Nansen, 2018). However, there is a notable absence of investigation into consumers' perspectives on why they rely on these videos and how such videos inform their purchasing intentions. For instance, Mowlabocus (2020)



emphasised that the notion of pleasure when viewing unboxing smartphone videos has remained largely unexplored. Indicating the need to uncover the motivations of unboxing video viewers and the impact of these videos on their intentions to make purchases. Moreover, the realm of research exploring the intrinsic motivations of diverse demographic groups who actively watch unboxing videos remains noticeably limited (Kim, 2020). More specifically, Kim (2020) underscored the necessity for future research to scrutinise the patterns of unboxing video watching and purchasing choices of younger consumers of Generation Z and millennials. These two segments are notably susceptible to digital influencers, which is attributed to their higher frequency of YouTube video viewership in comparison to other age cohorts. This emphasises the need for a deeper understanding of how digital platforms shape their consumer behaviour. Furthermore, in their (2020) study, Kim posited that exploration into how motivational factors differ across various categories of unboxing videos of high-tech products such as smartphones and toys would be interesting to study since consumers may have different motivations when purchasing these products. These research gaps become even more pronounced when considering the scarcity of studies conducted on unboxing videos in developing country contexts such as Sri Lanka. For instance, Sally (2022) contends that smartphone unboxing videos have emerged as a powerful influence in shaping consumer purchase decisions in Sri Lanka, but little is known about the motives associated with viewing such videos.

To bridge the existing knowledge gaps within the literature, this study seeks to investigate the motivations behind viewers' engagement with smartphone unboxing videos. The study draws on the uses and gratifications (U&G) theory (Rubin, 2009) to better understand the extent to which four motivations of 'information seeking', 'entertainment', 'connecting with others', and 'passing time' drive consumers to watch these videos and how they impact their purchase intentions.

This study focuses specifically on the viewing habits of Generation Z and millennials in relation to unboxing videos. Doersch (2020) highlight Generation Z's and millennials' notable influence in actively seeking out YouTube product reviews compared to other demographic groups. Hence, the study aims to specifically uncover the motivational factors behind unboxing video viewing in shaping Generation Z and millennials' intentions to purchase smartphones in Sri Lanka.

Thus, the primary research question of this study is:

What motivates Generation Z and millennials in Sri Lanka to watch smartphone unboxing videos, and to what extent such motives affect their purchasing intentions?

The findings of the study draw on an online survey conducted with 390 participants from a population comprising both Generation Z and millennials in Sri Lanka. The results of the study indicate that watching unboxing YouTube videos relates to all four motives identified in the U&G theory and that those motives positively and significantly affect the purchasing intention of smartphone users. Among the four motives, the information-seeking motive related to acquiring knowledge and understanding (i.e., cognition needs) of smartphones has the strongest association with the purchasing intention. This study contributes to the existing theoretical discussions on the relationship between social media content and purchasing intention and has practical implications for UGV creators and marketers in terms of optimising their message delivery.

Hypothesis Development and Research Framework

Purchasing Intention

According to Grewal, Monroe and Krishnan (1998), purchasing intention refers to the likelihood of consumers intending to purchase a specific product. Past studies have established that when consumers perceive products or services positively and



favourably, it increases their inclination to make a purchase, thereby shaping their purchase intention (Beatty & Ferrell, 1998; Hausman, 2000). Such consumer perceptions are likely to be influenced not only by their prior knowledge and purchase habits but also by the environmental context in which they receive information, evaluate alternatives and make decisions (Dodds et al., 1991; Lee et al., 2008). Schiffman and Kanuk (2009) further suggest that consumer decisions on product purchasing are significantly influenced by perceived product value and the recommendations shared by other consumers on different communication platforms. In this context, the unboxing genre is expected to enhance the purchasing intentions of consumers by offering them product reviews, a virtual window-shopping experience and a stronger sense of social presence and empowerment (Kim, 2020).

Unboxing Review Videos

Unboxing, as described by experts in the industry, encompasses a specific genre of user-generated videos where individuals showcase the process of unveiling and exploring consumer products (Kim, 2020). Ranging from sneakers to the latest iPhone, toys and even confectionery, these videos are designed to generate anticipation and theatricality (Shields, 2014). While industry professionals often perceive unboxing videos as a new form of advertising or product placement, scholars recognise them as more than mere advertisements. These videos offer unique avenues for engaging with consumers through the development of viewer-driven communities revolving around YouTube channels (Mowlabocus, 2020). This phenomenon thus holds a valuable theoretical implication for interactive advertising. Unboxing videos thereby possess distinctive characteristics and shooting styles that set them apart as a genre, attracting viewers and leveraging their persuasion.

Motivations for Viewing Unboxing Videos: Uses and Gratifications Perspective

The current study employs the U&G theory (Rubin, 2009) to examine the motivations of viewers who watch unboxing videos. Individuals proactively select and engage with media based on their specific needs and desires. They possess a conscious awareness of their requirements and purposefully choose their actions. The U&G theory seeks to explore how people use and consume media, particularly the functions it serves in meeting the needs of an active audience (Rubin, 2009). The primary objective of this theory is to elucidate the psychological needs and motivations that drive individuals' media usage and the gratifications they seek to fulfil through media consumption (Katz et al., 1973; Rubin, 2009). Through the U&G approach, we can gain insights into how people interact with media and understand the purposes they attribute to it rather than solely examining the effects that media exert on individuals. Unlike earlier theories like the "magic bullet" and "hypodermic needle", which posited a passive and easily manipulable audience, the U&G approach emphasises the positive motivations and active utilisation of media content to meet individuals' specific needs (Tanta et al., 2014).

According to the U&G theory, individuals engage with the media to fulfil four types of needs, namely, cognitive needs (seeking information), affective needs (seeking entertainment), social integrative needs (connecting with others), and tension-released needs (to pass the time) (Kartz et al., 1973). The next sections will describe these four motivations in detail.

Cognitive Need: Information Seeking Motive

The cognitive need refers to the motivation of consumers to seek product information by watching unboxing videos (Kim, 2020). Gathering information about products is often considered an essential initial step in the consumer purchasing process, applicable in both the traditional retail setting and the online shopping context (Detlor et al., 2003). Unboxing videos offer a unique value proposition by providing viewers with



tangible insights that conventional advertising methods often lack, including a genuine understanding of the product's size, shape and appearance in real-world conditions when handled by an average individual. Such videos cater to people's inherent curiosity and provide an authentic demonstration of how the product functions (Marsden, 2018). Moreover, unboxing videos are capable of emphasising key product features (Mowlabocus, 2018). For example, with smartphone unboxing videos' features such as microphone placement, front and rear cameras, light sensors, switches, volume control, and changing connectors are often explained. Given that unboxing videos frequently incorporate product reviews, it is likely that many viewers watch these videos with an active motive of seeking information. In support of this notion, Kim (2020) found a significant correlation between information seeking motives and viewers' increased propensity to purchase products featured in these videos. Therefore, this leads to the proposition of the following hypothesis.

H1: The information seeking motive will impact the smartphone purchase intention of Generation- Z and millennials in Sri Lanka.

Affective Needs: Entertainment Seeking Motive

The affective motivation revolves around the utilisation of media by individuals for entertainment purposes (Kartz et al., 1973). Entertainment is perceived as a stress-relieving tool, a means to unwind from daily stressors, and a way to engage during leisure periods. For example, Haridakis and Hanson (2009) highlight how a growing number of socially engaged young males have adopted YouTube as a convenient source of amusement and as a medium for satisfying their need for entertainment. However, other research findings reveal inconsistencies between the entertainment intent and purchase intent when transacting online. For instance, Lou and Yuan (2019) suggest that entertaining content from influencers does not necessarily translate to brand recognition. In contrast, Ducoffe (1995) contend that

advertisements that entertain can shape positive brand perceptions. Despite such mixed findings, there is a growing recognition of YouTube's mass communication prowess, with some researchers suggesting it to be similar to television channels in its entertainment capacity (Haridakis and Hanson, 2009; Shao, 2009). These include providing a platform for users to create, share and view user-generated videos for enjoyment. In their comprehensive literature review, Nguyen and Veer (2024) explored the motivations behind the viewership of user-generated videos and noted that the motive of entertainment is a predominant driver of this viewership. This observation aligns with the findings of Lie et al. (2021), who suggest that users frequently turn to these videos for rapid entertainment, particularly during brief intervals such as work breaks. These two studies highlight the paramount role of entertainment as a motivator for audiences on user-generated video platforms. Therefore, the significance of the entertainment value provided through YouTube unboxing videos cannot be underestimated, and further investigation of the entertainment motive behind unboxing videos is warranted. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2: The entertainment motive will impact the smartphone purchase intention of Generation Z and millennials in Sri Lanka.

Social Integrative Needs: Connecting with Others Motive

The U&G theory posits a third motive for individuals to use media, which is to fulfil their social integrative needs, particularly their desire to connect with others (Kartz et al., 1973). In this context, media audiences perceive media personalities as peers and, consequently, enhance their social interactions (Kim, 2020). YouTube's user-generated videos are characterised by a participatory culture that stems from the conversational style of vlogging (i.e., the practice of using short videos to share thoughts and experiences regularly) and the interactive nature of social platforms,



enabling audiences to engage with the content and each other. Notably, the interpersonal interactions that occur in these videos contribute to the development of a sense of community among YouTube users (Kim, 2020; Mowlabocus, 2020; Tolson, 2010). Hajli (2014) underscored the pivotal role of social interaction among users in generating social support, enhancing relationships and stimulating purchase intention. Similarly, Ghahtarani et al. (2020) emphasised that the continual enhancement of social engagement can foster a sense of familiarity, establish social capital among involved parties, and substantially influence a customer's intent to purchase. In the context of smartphone purchase, the decision-making process is significantly influenced by social interactions (Rahim et al., 2016). During these interactions, potential buyers actively seek suggestions, advice and firsthand experiences from individuals who have already purchased and used the smartphones in question. This exchange of information and personal experiences thereby plays a critical role in shaping the smartphone purchase decision of the consumers. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H3: The motive to connect with others will impact the smartphone purchase intention of Generation- Z and millennials in Sri Lanka.

Tension-released Needs: To Pass the Time

The fourth and final motivation proposed by the U&G theory is the motivation to consume media for leisure or to 'pass the time'. Kim (2020) describes the motive to pass the time

with media as often related to the stress-relief intent of individuals. In the context of this study, passing time revolves around the use of social media platforms as a means to alleviate boredom and seek gratification. The origin of the 'pass time' theme can be traced back to a study on television viewing habits and pleasure conducted by Palmgreen in 1979. Papacharissi and Rubin (2000) explored this theme further, focusing on the internet as a pass-time activity. Their study revealed that individuals often resort to internet use as a way to occupy their time when they are bored. This observation was substantiated by statements such as "I use the internet when I have nothing better to do" and "I spend my time on the internet". The user-created content, including YouTube videos, falls under the umbrella of entertainment media, and hence, individuals may engage with unboxing videos as a leisure activity or as a way to pass the time. Further, Kim (2020) pointed out that the desire to pass time is closely linked with the pursuit of entertainment and that individuals who view unboxing videos as a leisure activity may be persuaded to make a purchase if they find the content and the individuals unboxing the items engaging and amusing. Based on such arguments, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H4: The motive to pass the time will impact the smartphone purchase intention of Generation- Z and millennials in Sri Lanka.

The relationships discussed above are shown graphically in Figure 01.



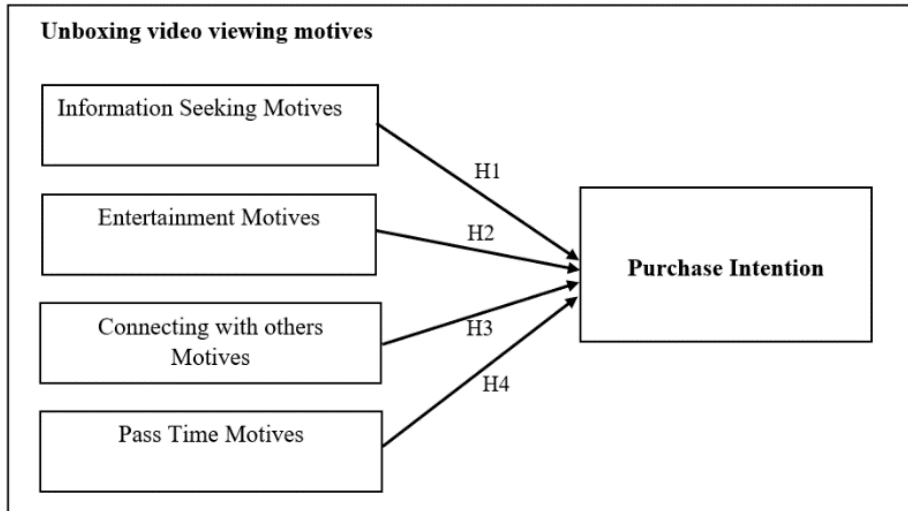


Figure 01: Research Framework

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative research design to test the validity of the four hypotheses (Collis & Hussey, 2013; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). A survey method was selected as the chosen research strategy as the study's objective was to elucidate individual behaviours related to the viewing of unboxing videos (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As for the time horizon, a cross-sectional perspective was adopted, with the survey conducted between October and November of 2022.

Population and Sample

The population of interest in this study includes consumers belonging to Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2010 (ages 12-27), and millennials, born between 1981 and 1994 (ages 28-41) (Dolot, 2018), across all nine provinces of Sri Lanka. As for the population estimates made by the Department of Census and Statistics, there is approximately 6.6 million population that belonged to Generation Z and millennials in Sri Lanka in 2018.

Using a convenient sampling method, the study distributed approximately 800 questionnaires through an online survey,

from which 390 responses were found to be valid. In line with the sample size determination table provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of 384 is considered adequate for the purpose of this study from a population exceeding one million.

Data Collection and Analysis

This research employed a questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. The distribution of the questionnaire was facilitated through digital channels, including email and social media platforms like Facebook, targeting a sample of both male and female participants between the ages of 18 and 41 residing in Sri Lanka.

The questionnaire was divided into three distinct sections. Section A was aimed at gathering demographic data about the respondents, including factors such as gender, age, educational attainment, subscription status and the frequency of viewing. Section B aimed to gain insights into the respondent's attitudes towards each of the independent variables of the study, namely, the information seeking motive, entertainment motive, connecting with others motive, and pass time motive. All measurement scales related to the independent variables were adapted from



previously employed scales by Papacharissi and Rubin (2000), Haridakis and Hanson (2009), and Kim (2020). Lastly, Section C focused on the dependent variable - the purchase intention by drawing on four questions proposed by Yüksel (2016). All questions in Sections B and C used a 5-point Likert scale, which ranges from “strongly agree” (score of 5) to “strongly disagree” (score of 1).

Given the quantitative nature of this study, the acquired data was processed and interpreted utilising SPSS-26 software. The analytical procedure involved various stages, including assumption testing, correlation analysis and regression analysis. These steps are seen as adequate in rigorously testing the proposed hypotheses of the study.

Analysis

Demographic Profile

The study sample consisted of 390 respondents, comprising 276 males and 114

females, indicating a gender distribution of 71% and 29%, respectively. Notably, the age distribution of the sample demonstrated a dominant representation of Generation Z (aged 18-27) at 77%, with millennials (aged 28-41) accounting for 23% of the sample. Regarding the geographic representation, the respondents residing in the Kurunegala district constituted the largest proportion, accounting for 16% of the sample. In comparison, the Colombo district stands out as second with 14% and Gampaha district housed the third largest percentage of individuals, which was 13%. Concerning the respondents' educational attainment, the study revealed that 77.18% possessed a bachelor's degree, 10.26% had completed their advanced level education, and 4.10% held either a master's or a doctoral degree. In terms of unboxing video consumption, of the 390 participants, 311 individuals (80%) reported viewing unboxing videos. Among those who watched unboxing videos, 35% mentioned doing it rarely, while 28% reported viewing such content once a week.

Table 01: Demographic Profile

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender	Male	276	70.77%
	Female	114	29.23%
Age of the respondents	Generation Z (between 18-27)	302	77.44%
	Millennials (between 28-41)	88	22.57%
District of respondents	Colombo	56	14.36%
	Gampaha	52	13.33%
	Kalutara	19	4.87%
	Galle	22	5.64%
	Matara	21	5.38%
	Hambantota	08	2.05%
	Monaragala	26	6.67%
	Badulla	20	5.13%
	Kurunegala	61	15.64%
	Puttalam	08	2.05%
	Anuradhapura	17	4.36%
	Polonnaruwa	05	1.28%
	Rathnapura	24	6.15%
	Kegalle	15	3.85%
	Nuwara Eliya	09	2.31%
	Kandy	20	5.13%
Matale	06	1.54%	
Other*	01	0.26%	
Educational level	Ordinary level	29	7.44%
	Advanced level	40	10.26%
	Bachelor's Degree level	301	77.18%
	Professional Qualifications	04	1.03%
	Masters/PhD	16	4.10%
Employment status	Employed	235	60.26%
	Unemployed	145	37.18%
	Entrepreneurs	10	2.56%
Likability of subscribing to unboxing videos	Yes	311	79.85%
	No	79	20.15%
Viewing frequency	Once a day	72	18.46%
	Once a week	108	27.69%
	Several times a day	75	19.23%
	Rarely	135	34.62%

*Killinochi, Mannar, Ampara, Batticaloa, Vavuniya and Trincomalee

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to provide a clear and concise summary of the fundamental attributes present within the dataset. According to Table 2, the mean values of the variables, information

seeking, entertainment, connecting with others, pass-time and purchase intention, respectively, were 1.93, 2.09, 2.14, 2.27 and 2.01. These variables also have standard deviations of 0.52, 0.69, 0.63, 0.75 and 0.56, which were within the acceptable range.

Table 02: Descriptive Statistics

	<i>N</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Purchase Intention	390	3.75	1.00	4.75	2.0103	.56649	.321
Information seeking	390	3.00	1.00	4.00	1.9323	.52175	.272
Entertainment	390	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.0974	.69162	.478
Connecting with others	390	3.43	1.00	4.43	2.1480	.63358	.401
Pass-time	390	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.2795	.75219	.566
Valid N (listwise)	390						



Reliability Tests

A reliability test was undertaken to measure the consistency of the data. With regard to the independent and dependent variables, information seeking, entertainment, connecting with others, pass-time and

Purchase Intention, had the following Cronbach's Alpha values 0.833, 0.861, 0.921, 0.901 and 0.858, respectively. As shown in the table, all those values are greater than the threshold of 0.7, indicating very good internal consistency.

Table 03: Reliability Test

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>No of items</i>	<i>Internal Consistency</i>
Information seeking	0.833	5	Good
Entertainment	0.861	3	Good
Connecting with others	0.921	7	Excellent
Pass-time	0.901	3	Excellent
Purchase Intention	0.858	4	Good

Assumption Testing

Normality Test

In order to assess the suitability of the dataset for further analysis, the researcher undertook a normality test to identify the skewness and kurtosis of each of the variables. As

identified in the table below, the skewness values of all the variables were less than 3 and the kurtosis values were less than 10. Thus, it can be concluded that the data set is normally distributed.

Table 04: Normality Test

	<i>Purchase Intention</i>	<i>Information seeking</i>	<i>Entertainment</i>	<i>Connecting with others</i>	<i>Pass-time</i>
N Valid	390	390	390	390	390
Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Skewness	.755	.605	1.376	.942	.979
Kurtosis	2.532	1.926	3.777	1.493	1.629

Multi-collinearity Analysis

Multicollinearity refers to a situation where independent variables are highly correlated. If high multicollinearity exists among the

variables, removing the highly correlated variables is essential to ensure a reliable analysis. Table 5, shown below, presents the statistics related to the multi-collinearity of the variables.

Table 05: Multi-collinearity Analysis

<i>Model</i>		<i>Collinearity Statistics</i>	
		<i>Tolerance</i>	<i>VIF</i>
1	Information seeking	.588	1.700
	Entertainment	.413	2.422
	Connecting with others	.368	2.714
	Pass-time	.534	1.873

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention



According to Weisberg & Britt (2013), a model that displays a tolerance value of less than 0.20 and a variance inflation factor (VIF) value exceeding 10 is indicative of serious multicollinearity. In the context of the present study, all the independent variables exhibit a tolerance level greater than 0.20, and all reported VIF values are less than 10. Consequently, it can be concluded that the independent variables under consideration do not suffer from multicollinearity issues.

Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was undertaken to ascertain the strength, direction, and

relationships among the variables used in the study. Table 6 presents Pearson’s correlation values pertaining to each independent variable, information seeking, entertainment, connecting with others, and pass-time, which were 0.641, 0.611, 0.633 and 0.561, respectively. These values reveal that there exists a statistical relationship between the dependent and independent variables of the study and evidence that there exists an interdependence between the dependent and independent variables within the study’s context.

Table 06: Correlation Analysis

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)	Purchase Intention	Information seeking	Entertainment	Connecting with others	Pass-time	Sig. (2-tailed)
Purchase Intention	1	.641**	.611**	.633**	.561**	.000
Information seeking	.641**	1	.612**	.557**	.347**	.000
Entertainment	.611**	.612**	1	.709**	.561**	.000
Connecting with others	.633**	.557**	.709**	1	.666**	.000
Pass-time	.561**	.347**	.561**	.666**	1	.000

Regression Analysis

Model Summary

In the model summary, the R squared value represents the Coefficient of Determination, reflecting the proportion of variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables. As shown in Table 07, the R-squared value of the model is 0.567, corresponding to 56.7%. This percentage reflects the fact that the model’s independent

variables- information seeking, entertainment, connecting with others, and pass-time account for 56.7% of the variance of the dependent variable, purchase intention. Concurrently, this statistic indicates that 43.3% of the variation is unexplained within the model, representing a segment of the variance not accounted for by the variables under investigation.

Table 07: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.753 ^a	.567	.562	.37483

a. predictors: (Constant), Pass-time, Information seeking, Entertainment, Connecting with others.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

As indicated in Table 08, the P-value is recorded as 0.000, which is less than the

commonly accepted significance level of 0.05. This value substantiates the fact that the overall model applied is statistically



significant in predicting the dependent variable. Further examination of the table reveals a total sum of squares equal to 124.834, of which 70.743 can be explained by the regression. The remaining 54.091 of the variation in the dependent variable, purchase intention, is accounted for by the

residual. Thus, these statistical findings collectively support the conclusion that the model fits the data appropriately, as evidenced by the relatively large proportion of the variation that is explained by the regression.

Table 08: ANOVA

	<i>Model</i>	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1	Regression	70.743	4	17.686	125.881	.000 ^b
	Residual	54.091	385	.140		
	Total	124.834	389			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

b. Predictors: (Constant), Pass-time, Information seeking, Entertainment, Connecting with others

Coefficients

Table 09: Coefficients

<i>Model</i>	<i>Unstandardised Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardised Coefficients</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>		
(Constant)	.243	.082		2.968	.003
Information seeking	.425	.047	.392	8.952	.000
Entertainment	.092	.043	.112	2.146	.032
Connect with others	.152	.049	.170	3.073	.002
Pass-time	.187	.035	.249	5.420	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Table 09 depicts the beta (β) and significance (p) values of each independent variable towards purchase intention, where Information seeking (β = 0.425, P = 0.000), Entertainment (β = 0.092, P = 0.032), Connection with others (β = 0.152, P = 0.002), and Pass-time (β = 0.187, P = 0.000), which are the independent variables, all have positive values, and all the significance values lie within the accepted range, that is P<0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that unboxing video viewing motivations have a significant and positive relationship with the dependent variable, smartphone buyers' purchase intention. Therefore, the regression model can be articulated as follows.

$$Y = a + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + \epsilon \quad (1)$$

Dependent variable = Purchase Intention (PI)

X1 = Independent Variable 1= Information seeking motives. (IM)

X2 = Independent Variable 2= Entertainment motives. (EM)

X3 = Independent Variable 3= Connect with others motives. (CO)

X4 = Independent Variable 4= Pass time motives. (PM)

a = Constant value

ε = Error

β1, β2, β3.... represent the coefficients.

$$Y = 0.243 + 0.392X_1 + 0.112X_2 + 0.170X_3 + 0.249X_5 + \epsilon$$

$$PI = 0.243 + 0.392(IM) + 0.112(EM) + 0.170(CO) + 0.249(PM) + \epsilon \quad (2)$$

Hypothesis Testing

For the purpose of evaluating the hypotheses



formulated in this study, multiple regression was adopted. The verification of these hypotheses was conducted through an examination of the P-values (significance level) and the Coefficient (B) values extracted from the multiple regression table. As depicted in Table 10 below, these summarised results of the regression analysis serve to delineate the statistical relationships that underpin the variables of interest.

According to Table 10, the β coefficient for the variable representing the information seeking motive is 0.392. This signifies that a one unit increase in the information seeking

motive, with the other variables held constant, leads to a 39.2% positive increase in consumers' purchase intention. Similarly, the entertainment motive's β coefficient is valued at 0.112, illustrating that a one unit increase in this motive, while keeping the other variables constant, results in an 11.2% increase in consumers' purchase intention. The coefficient for the connect with others motive is 0.170, indicating that if this motive increases by a single unit while the other variables are held constant, there is a corresponding increase of 17% in consumer purchase intention.

Table 10: Summary of Hypothesis Testing

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Justification</i>
H1: The information seeking motive will impact the smartphone purchase intention of Generation- Z and millennials in Sri Lanka.	Positive significant	Accepted	P-value = 0.000 Coefficient= 0.392
H2: The entertainment motive will impact the smartphone purchase intention of Generation- Z and millennials in Sri Lanka.	Positive significant	Accepted	P-value = 0.032 Coefficient= 0.112
H3: The motive to connect with others will impact the smartphone purchase intention of Generation- Z and millennials in Sri Lanka.	Positive significant	Accepted	P-value = 0.002 Coefficient= 0.170
H4: The motive to pass the time will impact the smartphone purchase intention of Generation- Z and millennials in Sri Lanka.	Positive significant	Accepted	P-value = 0.000 Coefficient= 0.249

The pass time motive's β value is 0.249, demonstrating that a one unit increase in this motive, while maintaining the other variables constant, enhances consumer purchase intention by 24.9%. Moreover, the P-values associated with these variables are less than the 0.05 significance level. This denotes statistically significant relationships and leads to the conclusion that all the study's hypotheses have been accepted. The results collectively demonstrate the nuanced relationships between different consumer motives and smartphone purchasing intention of Generation Z and millennials, providing support for the theoretical constructs underpinning the study.

Discussion

The results of the present study contribute substantially to the previously articulated proposition that unboxing videos have the capacity to transform passive consumers into active shoppers (Mowlabocus, 2020; Kim,

2020; Marsh, 2016). However, the interesting part of our results is that this study empirically supports the argument of Kim (2020), who suggested that unboxing viewing motivations may vary based on product types, such as techno products and toy products. As the researcher predicted, the findings of this study underline that in technology products such as smartphones, the information seeking motive serves as a pronounced predictor of purchase intention in comparison to the entertainment motive, which dominates toy unboxing videos. This study offers empirical support by illustrating that the information seeking motive, when juxtaposed with three other motivational factors, exerts a more significant influence on the purchase intention for technology-unboxing videos such as smartphones.

Moreover, the current research reveals that among Generation Z and millennial consumers, motives related to entertainment, social connection and passing the time



directly influence smartphone purchase intentions. Such findings contradict the work of Kim (2020), who noted that entertainment and connecting with others' motives did not directly influence purchase intention, and the time passing motive had an inverse association with purchase intention among YouTube unboxing viewers aged 18 and over. On the other hand, the findings of the present study corroborate the research of Hermawan et al. (2023), who stress that younger consumers often engage in viewing YouTube videos primarily for entertainment and time passing and that such motivations can sway their purchasing decisions. In addition, O'Connor (2016) underscores the importance that millennials place on engagement through activities such as commenting on and sharing videos, which facilitates social connections through YouTube video viewing. Such behaviours may shape their purchase decisions, given that their intentions are more often influenced by trust in individuals' comments rather than brand allegiance. Thus, this research identifies the motivations behind Generation Z and millennial consumers' unboxing video viewing that are directly congruent with their purchase intentions of smartphones in Sri Lanka.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This study reveals the influence of the smartphone unboxing video reviewing motivation on purchase intention among Generation Z and millennials in Sri Lanka. The findings of the study provide the following theoretical and managerial implications.

First, the study contributes to the theory by identifying factors that influence the purchasing behaviour of consumers in a modern business environment. More specifically, the findings of the study highlight how information seeking, entertainment, connecting with others, and pass time motives significantly explain the purchasing intentions of consumers. This finding is based on the evidence that

Generation Z and millennials in Sri Lanka are motivated by those four factors in viewing smartphone unboxing videos and that such motives strongly influence their purchasing intentions. These findings echo Kim's (2020) suggestion that unboxing videos play a crucial role in purchase considerations and further contribute to the literature by identifying how different motives underlying unboxing videos translate to purchasing behaviour.

Second, this research provides valuable insights for UGV creators and marketers alike to shape their content and communication strategies. In more recent times, there has been an upsurge of content creators who view UGVs as a commercially lucrative avenue, and businesses appear to be increasingly tapping into such content creators to increase public knowledge of their goods and services. The findings of the study therefore highlight the need for both content creators and businesses to not only engage with unboxing videos to satisfy customer cravings towards knowledge and information but also cater to social bonding, entertainment, and time passing motives.

Furthermore, with the information seeking motive being identified as the most significant factor influencing smartphone purchase intention among Generation Z and millennials in Sri Lanka, marketers targeting these demographics should prioritise the provision of better information within unboxing videos used to promote smartphones. Specifically, the content should encompass key aspects such as usability, size, camera quality, processor specifications, sensor capabilities, pricing and other relevant information that would cater to the information seeking tendencies of the audience. By focusing on such elements, marketers can more effectively align their promotional efforts with the discerning needs and interests of Generation Z and millennial consumers, potentially enhancing the influence of unboxing videos on purchase decisions within this demographic segment in Sri Lanka.



When evaluating the pass time motive, identified as the second most influential factor, marketers can strategically leverage platforms commonly used for leisure browsing, such as Facebook. Unlike YouTube, which may be more oriented towards intentional content seeking, Facebook often serves as a venue where people engage in casual browsing or browse to pass the time. By posting unboxing videos and similar content on Facebook, marketers can tap into these casual engagement patterns, aligning with the pass time motive. This approach could foster greater visibility and influence among audiences who frequent these platforms primarily for entertainment and leisure, thus creating opportunities to guide purchasing decisions subtly.

Since the motive of connecting with others directly influences purchase intent, marketers should facilitate engagement among consumers. This can include enabling comment sections, making content shareable, and implementing other interactive features that allow for conversations and connections among individuals. Through fostering an environment where people can engage with one another, marketers can potentially influence buying behaviours, leveraging the social aspect of consumption to drive sales and enhance consumer experiences. This approach underscores the importance of community engagement in shaping purchasing decisions and offers a strategic avenue for enhancing marketing effectiveness.

Finally, instead of relying on overly direct or blunt messaging, marketers may find success in crafting creative and enjoyable content, especially as entertainment motives have been shown to influence purchasing decisions through satisfying affective needs. By embracing an approach that emphasises entertainment and appeals to viewers' desires to engage in visually stimulating content, marketers can create a more resonant connection with potential customers. This strategy recognises the value of entertainment as a central component in influencing purchasing intention and

positions creativity and enjoyment as the key drivers in shaping consumer responses to promotional content.

Conclusions, limitations, and further research

This study was conducted to measure the impact of unboxing video viewing motivations on consumer purchase intentions, with special reference to Generation Z and millennials in Sri Lanka. The gathered data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the regression analysis show that the independent variables of the study, information seeking motive, entertainment motive, connect with others motive, and pass time motive, have significant positive impacts on the dependent variable, consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, all four hypotheses of the study were accepted. The implications of the study provide a source of knowledge to content creators and marketers. In addition, the study functions as an important literature source for future researchers on the subject.

As with any research, the findings of the study should be interpreted whilst being conscious of the limitations of the study. The scope of the study is confined to measuring the impact of YouTube unboxing video viewing motivations on consumer purchase intention, specifically within the context of smartphones and targeting the demographic groups of Generation Z and millennials of Sri Lanka. Consequently, the findings derived from this research may not be directly applicable to unboxing videos related to other products or to other age groups or other countries. These limitations underscore the importance of contextualising the results within the specific parameters of the study, recognising that the insights gained may not be readily transferable to other products or demographic segments without further investigation. In addition, the sample size of the study was limited to 390 respondents, a limitation that might constrain the ability to obtain accurate outcomes reflective of the larger population. Furthermore, the



utilisation of the convenience sampling technique in this study introduces another limitation, as it may be susceptible to the researcher's biases. This method, which often involves selecting a sample that is easiest to obtain rather than one that is representative of the population, can lead to biases that may affect the validity and generalizability of the study's findings. Therefore, this aspect of the research design should be recognised as a constraint that could potentially influence the interpretation and application of these results.

Future research can draw on the findings of the present study in several ways. While the present study found the reasons behind why people watch unboxing videos and highlighted the potential of the unboxing genre with purchasing intention, the role of

YouTubers within this genre was not the main focus of this study. Therefore, the impact of para-social interactions on watching unpacking videos and their impact on purchase intention can be examined further. With unboxing videos proliferating within YouTube covering various product types and services, future research may benefit by applying the U&G Theory to different product types and services. Such findings may further validate the findings of the present study. Furthermore, it would be interesting to know how the four motivational factors behind unboxing videos may influence the purchasing intention of different age groups other than Generation Z and millennials and also whether there are differences between Generation Z and millennials themselves.



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