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Effect of YouTube unboxing videos on viewers' perceptions and subsequent behaviours

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Abstract: Because videos play a key role in online marketing today, this study explored the effect of online social media marketing, (i.e., entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customisation, and word-of-mouth) on the perceived trust, perceived value, and sharing and purchase intentions of YouTube viewers. Data were collected through an online survey conducted through social media. The sample comprised 437 viewers who had watched unboxing videos on YouTube within the previous month. Structural equation modelling revealed that among the various effects of social media marketing on perceived trust, word-of-mouth had the strongest effect, followed by entertainment and trendiness. However, interactivity and customisation did not significantly influence perceived trust. When the perceived trust of viewers was higher, their perceived value increased, and they reported a greater willingness to share information and purchase the product. These findings have several implications for YouTubers and marketers that can inform their development of videos and product promotion strategies.

Keywords: social media marketing; perceived trust; perceived value; sharing intention; purchase intention.

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1 Introduction

The global online social media penetration rate is currently 59.4%, and users spend an average of approximately 151 min/day on online social media (Dixon, 2023). Among the world's most used social media platforms, the most popular platform is Facebook, followed by YouTube (Scott, 2023). Nearly 93% of marketers reported that they gained customers through social media videos. Approximately 54% of them reported that videos are the optimal type of content for achieving online social media goals (Scott, 2023). These statistics indicate that online social media influences the lives of people, and that marketer should focus on social media platforms, especially in the context of videos.

Unboxing videos are commonly used by influencers to introduce products to consumers. This remote interaction can influence various aspects of the consumer experience from product interest to final purchase. Unboxing videos allow consumers to vicariously experience a product, and relative to reviews, such videos enable consumers to form a stronger emotional connection with products. These videos are meaningful to viewers and consumers, making them a promising marketing tool for capturing consumer attention. Furthermore, the unboxing process has been codified as a consumption practice by the makers of unboxing videos, and they have been adopted by consumers for their own purchases. Vaudrey (2022) highlighted that unboxing, as a consumption practice, can be studied from two aspects, namely:

- 1 the role of unboxing videos from the perspective of consumers as viewers
- 2 how unboxing videos have become a part of the consumption and purchasing process. Furthermore, the connection between the two aspects can also be examined.

Research on unboxing videos has focused on the fundamental reasons underlying the enjoyment that they provide (Mowlabocus, 2020). Some researchers have examined the unboxing videos posted by YouTube influencers by employing interpretable deep learning techniques, extending beyond investigating text and images that influence viewers (Rajaram and Manchanda, 2020). Others have explored the effect of YouTube unboxing videos on the viewing motivations and purchase intentions of consumers by applying uses and gratifications theory (Kim, 2020). Subsequent studies have also examined various new social media platforms to explore whether unboxing videos influence the trust of viewers. Ismail et al. (2022) demonstrated that unboxing videos for beauty products that are posted on Instagram are perceived as being more credible relative to traditional methods involving the use of text and images. They also reported that social media influencers are perceived as being more credible than mainstream celebrities. Gu (2023) focused on clothing unboxing videos posted on Tik Tok, and their results revealed that the four dimensions of Tik Tok unboxing video content marketing, (i.e., informativeness, authenticity, engagement, and emotional appeal of content) had positive effects on trust and perceived value, which in turn positively influenced purchase intention.

The aforementioned findings indicate that from the perspectives of marketers and academic researchers, unboxing videos are a valuable tool of social media marketing and, ultimately, influence the purchase intentions of consumers. However, few studies have examined the characteristics of social media marketing to explore the effect of unboxing videos on the perceptions and subsequent behaviours of viewers. Social media marketing research can be traced back to a study on luxury fashion brands, which explored whether social media marketing campaigns improve customer equity (Kim and Ko, 2012). In that study, five dimensions of social media marketing were proposed, namely entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customisation, and word-of-mouth (WOM). Subsequent studies (Ebrahim, 2020; Godey et al., 2016; Khan, 2022) have applied these five dimensions to investigate social media marketing, and all them have discussed social media marketing in the context of brands or brand equity. Although researchers have reported the benefits of social media marketing, they have also highlighted the risks and uncertainties associated with online shopping. For example, information asymmetry can lead to the loss of consumer equity. A study indicated that the adequate implementation of social media marketing can enhance customer trust (Chen et al., 2016), improve customer perceived value (Mao et al., 2014), and increase customer purchase intention (Liu et al., 2021). When users have adequate trust in a social networking site, they become more willing to share information (Ghahtarani et al., 2020). This finding indicates that social media marketing can increase perceived trust and value, which in turn increases purchase and information-sharing intentions.

On the basis of the aforementioned discussion, the present study applied stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) as the theoretical basis for establishing a research framework. The five dimensions of social media marketing (Kim and Ko, 2012) were applied to explore various brands. Specifically, the present study expanded on these dimensions, namely entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customisation, and WOM, (i.e., marketing stimulus), to explore

the effects of social media marketing on YouTube unboxing videos. The influence of the perceived trust and subsequent perceived value of viewers, (i.e., cognitive state and organism) and their sharing and purchase intentions (i.e., behavioural response) were examined. The present study focused on YouTube content because the YouTube platform's main content format is video. In the context of the present study, individuals who upload their own videos on YouTube are regarded as YouTubers.

The present study addressed:

- 1 whether the entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customisation, and WOM of unboxing videos as perceived by viewers influence their perceived trust
- 2 whether the perceived trust of viewers in YouTubers influences their perceived value of unboxing videos
- 3 whether the value of unboxing videos as perceived by viewers influences their sharing and purchase intentions.

2 Literature review

2.1 Social media marketing and perceived trust

Social media marketing refers to the direct or indirect marketing activities conducted by marketers on social media. These activities are usually conducted to increase the popularity of a product, brand, enterprise, or individual and, subsequently, to enhance the willingness of customers to participate in activities linked to the entity being marketed (Mohammadian and Mohammadreza, 2012). The concept of social media marketing can be traced back to Kim and Ko (2012), who classified it into the five dimensions of entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customisation, and WOM. This study examined social media marketing using these five dimensions. Perceived trust indicates that consumers are confident in a trading partner and willing to rely on them (Moorman et al., 1993). Trust can reduce uncertainty (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), and when the levels of uncertainty and risk are high, the development of customer trust is crucial (Crosby et al., 1990). However, a study reported that a social media marketing company can develop trust-based relationships with potential customers and increase their awareness of a company's product value (Alharbie, 2015).

2.2 Relationship between social media marketing (entertainment) and perceived trust

Entertainment can attract consumers to a product and cause them to feel closer to the product and exhibit a positive attitude toward it (Jiang et al., 2015). The entertainment effect of Internet multimedia has a positive influence on the browsing time of internet users and their overall evaluation of a website (Moon and Kim, 2001). Bauer et al. (2005) reported that entertainment positively affects consumer acceptance of digital marketing and consumer trust (Luhmann, 2011). Khan (2017) concluded that entertainment motivates individuals to use YouTube. When users ascribe higher entertainment to a social media platform, they trust the platform more (Zhang et al., 2022). Research on live streaming, which is becoming increasingly popular, has produced similar findings. Wu

and Huang (2023) discovered that the hedonic value (which can be regarded as a type of entertainment) of e-commerce live streaming content positively influences consumer trust in streamers and products. Liu et al. (2022) also obtained a similar conclusion; that is, the entertainment value of e-commerce live streaming content positively affects customer trust. Therefore, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:

- H1 The entertainment of unboxing videos as perceived by viewers positively influences their perceived trust in the videos.

2.3 Relationship between social media marketing (interactivity) and perceived trust

According to Yang and Lin (2014), trust plays a key role in interactions, especially interactions on social media. Website operators can enhance consumer trust by enhancing website interactivity (McKnight and Chervany, 2002). Hampton-Sosa and Koufaris (2005) have noted that interactions between individuals and websites affect the trust of individuals by influencing their beliefs about websites. When the level of interaction between website operators and users is higher, the trust of users in website operators is higher. Valdez et al. (2018) reported a similar finding; that is, the level of website interactivity is positively associated with user trust. Jeon et al. (2017) and Khare et al. (2020) have reported that website interactivity is a prerequisite for establishing user trust. Individuals also develop trust when they watch video content produced by bloggers (Fischer, 2014). Ananda and Wandebori (2016) highlighted that YouTube viewers can obtain information through interactions to fulfil their personal needs and develop trust. Hanaysha (2022) confirmed that social media marketing features (interactivity) positively influence consumer trust in a brand. Liu et al. (2022) indicated that interactivity positively affects the trust of e-commerce live streaming consumers, and Song et al. (2022) also made a similar conclusion. Thus, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:

- H2 The interactivity of unboxing videos as perceived by viewers positively influences their perceived trust in the videos.

2.4 Relationship between social media marketing (trendiness) and perceived trust

Compared with traditional marketing communication tools, such as press releases and advertisements, social media are regarded by consumers as a more trustworthy source of information, and they believe that it can provide timely information on new brands and products (Foux, 2006). Trendiness refers to how much of highly innovative and trend-oriented information is disseminated for a brand or product (Kim and Ko, 2012). That is, the act of disseminating information on social media aligns with the concept of trendiness, and it can increase customer trust. He (2012) indicated that when a domestic brand with a long history is perceived as trendy, consumer loyalty toward the brand increases. Cervellon and Wernerfelt (2012) reported that if the labels of green products are changed to display more artistic designs, consumer trust in green fashion is enhanced. Researchers have also highlighted that for a fashion brand, conveying a higher level of trendiness through social media marketing results in a higher level of user trust (Ramadhani and Prasasti, 2023). Similar results were obtained for the fast-food industry,

with the trendiness of social media marketing having a positive effect on customer trust (Sadam et al., 2023). In a study on video streaming, Wongkitrungrueng et al. (2020) reported that when sellers delivered novel and trendy messages that align with consumer values during live streaming sessions, their audiences trusted them more. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H3 The trendiness of unboxing videos as perceived by viewers positively influences their perceived trust in the videos.

2.5 Relationship between social media marketing (customisation) and perceived trust

Customised mobile advertising increases consumer acceptance of information (Bauer et al., 2005), and the distinctiveness of customised content enhances the consumer experience (Franke and Schreier, 2008). When a strong link with consumers is established through customisation, consumers develop a sense of trust in the entity that is being promoted (Lovelock, 2011). Accordingly, Godey et al. (2016) suggested that social media should provide customised information search and service functions. When products are customised to meet consumer needs, customers become satisfied and thus develop trust in these products (Coelho and Henseler, 2012). However, building customer trust in a virtual network environment is difficult. Wu et al. (2022) reported that providing customised insurance services through an online network increases customers' trust in such services. This finding is consistent with the assertion by Olsen and Pracejus (2020) that customisation is an antecedent of trust in advertising. In the context of social media marketing, customisation has been verified to have a positive effect on trust (Althuaini, 2022; Ebrahim, 2020). Numerous consumers watch online videos on social media to collect information. To attract more viewers, video markers may provide their viewers with topic options for future videos, which is a form of customisation. Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

- H4 The customisation of unboxing videos as perceived by viewers positively influences their perceived trust in the videos.

2.6 Relationship between social media marketing (WOM) and perceived trust

The present study applied the five dimensions of social media marketing as proposed by Kim and Ko (2012). The dimension of WOM refers to consumers generating and spreading brand-related information to their friends, peers, and acquaintances without constraints. However, the two items for measuring WOM contain the phrase 'pass information and upload', which is inconsistent with the context of the present study. A purpose of the present study is to explore the WOM messages conveyed by unboxing videos and how viewers perceive various aspects of these messages, such as positive or negative opinions and message intensity. Therefore, for WOM, the present study adopted the operational definitions and measurement items used by other studies.

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) defined WOM as the intensity of the opinions held by the members of a community (e.g., persuasiveness, tone, and attitude). Morgan and Hunt (1994) classified trust into three categories, namely trust based on intimidation, competition, and identification. Among them, trust based on identification is the strongest

because identification considerably affects the development of trust in organisations. That is, trust forms when the members of a community identify with the community. In the context of the internet, studies have concluded that online WOM (e-WOM) has a significant effect on trust in online communities (Awad and Ragowsky, 2008). Lee and Wu (2011) reported that message appeals resulting from e-WOM have positive effects on consumer trust. Eneizan et al. (2020) contended that a more positive e-WOM is associated with a higher level of customer trust in shopping websites. This finding is consistent with the conclusions reached by Atito et al. (2023) and Putri et al. (2023). In addition, Stefanny et al. (2022) discovered that e-WOM has a major effect on brand trust in the context of the video-on-demand platform Netflix. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- H5 The WOM of unboxing videos as perceived by viewers positively influences their perceived trust in the videos.

2.7 Relationship between perceived trust and perceived value

Perceived value refers to consumers' subjective evaluation of the net benefit (total benefit – total loss) of a product or service (Dodds and Monroe, 1985); this is directly related to the consumer's emotions and consumption experiences (Dumana and Mattila, 2005). Kim et al. (2012) reported that the more consumers trust online sellers, the less energy they commit to searching for seller information and performing online transactions. Perceived trust can reduce the non-monetary costs of transactions by reducing the time and effort spent on selecting online sellers (Chiles and McMackin, 1996) or by reducing the perceived risk of online shopping (Jarvenpaa et al., 2000). However, when the perceived trust of consumers reduces non-monetary costs, consumers report a higher perceived value when shopping online (Kim et al., 2012). Ponte et al. (2015) studied the intention to purchase travel packages online and reported that when the perceived trust of consumers was high, they reported higher perceived value. Hu et al. (2022) also noted that trust positively affects the perceived value of internet-of-things services. In a study on live streaming, Shang et al. (2023) verified that the perceived trust of consumers is positively associated with their perceived value of e-commerce live streaming. Similarly, Chong et al. (2023) discovered that trust in live streaming positively affects perceived value. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed in the present study:

- H6 The perceived trust of viewers in YouTubers positively influences their perceived value of unboxing videos.

2.8 Relationship between perceived value and sharing or purchase intention

When users sufficiently trust social networking sites, they are more willing to share information (Ghahtarani et al., 2020), and when the perceived trust of users is higher, they exhibit higher perceived value and, thus, higher purchase intention (Ponte et al., 2015). In a study of product characteristics, perceived value, brand trust, and purchase intention, Chae et al. (2020) reported that when customers had higher perceived value, they exhibited higher purchase intention. Bushara et al. (2023) and Song et al. (2022) have reported similar results in the context of social media marketing and fresh food live streaming, respectively. From a marketing perspective, customers' perceived value is a

major predictor of consumer behaviour (Hsiao and Chen, 2016). Ling et al. (2021) verified that the value of products or services as perceived by consumers is the most crucial determinant of consumer decision-making behaviour. Kim et al. (2023) asserted that the perceived value of Instagram advertisements has a direct and significant positive effect on behavioural intentions. Hence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H7 The value of unboxing videos as perceived by viewers positively influences their sharing intention.
- H8 The value of unboxing videos as perceived by viewers positively influences their purchase intention.

3 Methodology

The present study explored the effects of social media marketing by examining the effects of YouTube unboxing videos on the perceptions and subsequent behaviours of viewers. The present study enrolled viewers who had watched YouTube unboxing videos within the month preceding the start of the study. The present study was conducted in Taiwan and involved the administration of online questionnaires through social media platforms such as LINE and Facebook. Potential respondents were selected through convenience sampling; most of the respondents were from China, and a small number were from other regions where Mandarin is spoken.

A pretest for online questionnaires was conducted. In total, 40 pretest questionnaires were returned, all of which were determined to be valid. Reliability analysis was performed using SPSS Statistics 23.0. The results revealed that the overall Cronbach's α value for all variables and each dimension was > 0.7 (0.709–0.971), indicating the adequate reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was finalised after revisions to address unclear language or questions that were difficult to answer.

The finalised questionnaire was administered through the following procedure. First, the purpose of the questionnaire, relevant precautions, content, and definitions of topics related to the present study were explained to the respondents. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first part concerned the experiences of the respondents and comprised six single-choice questions, including 'Have you watched unboxing videos on YouTube?' (a screening question) and 'How long have you been using YouTube?' The second part comprised 47 questions relating to all the variables examined in the present study. The respondents answered questions that assessed their feelings regarding a YouTube unboxing video that they watched in the month preceding the start of the present study. All variables in the present study were measured on a seven-point Likert scale with endpoints ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The third part comprised six questions for collecting basic information from the respondents.

The questionnaire used in the present study was developed based on relevant concepts and variables adapted from other studies (see Table 1). Therefore, its measurement items are valid and suitable for the present research.

Table 1 Measurement of variables

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Definitions and measurement items</i>	<i>Source</i>
Entertainment	The degree of enjoyment and fun that viewers experience when watching YouTube unboxing videos. 1 Watching this unboxing video is entertaining. 2 The content of this unboxing video looks interesting.	Kim and Ko (2012)
Interactivity	The extent to which viewers interact with others while watching YouTube unboxing videos. 1 I can share information with others in the comment or discussion section of this unboxing video. 2 I can communicate or exchange opinions with others in the comment or discussion section of this unboxing video. 3 I can easily share my opinion in the comment or discussion section of this unboxing video.	
Trendiness	The sense of trendiness that viewers experience when watching YouTube unboxing videos. 1 The content presented in this unboxing video represents the latest product information. 2 Watching this unboxing video is cool.	
Customisation	The extent to which viewers perceive that YouTubers make videos based on their individual needs or interests. 1 I can easily find the product information I need in this unboxing video. 2 This YouTuber will make videos according to the needs or interests of the audience.	
Word-of-mouth (WOM)	The extent to which viewers perceive positive or negative opinions or intensity of messages from YouTubers while watching YouTube unboxing videos. 1 This YouTuber provides WOM message that is convincing. 2 This YouTuber provides a strong tone of WOM message. 3 This YouTuber provides a firm tone of WOM message. 4 The attitude of this YouTuber in providing WOM message is serious.	
Perceived trust	Viewers trust YouTubers to present products with integrity, kindness, competence, and predictability. 1 Based on experience, I believe this YouTuber is honest. 2 Based on experience, I believe this YouTuber cares about consumers. 3 Based on experience, I believe this YouTuber will not seek personal gain by improper means.	Gefen et al. (2003)

Table 1 Measurement of variables (continued)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Definitions and measurement items</i>	<i>Source</i>
Perceived trust	Viewers trust YouTubers to present products with integrity, kindness, competence, and predictability.	Gefen et al. (2003)
	4 Based on experience, I believe this YouTuber provides good information (e.g., entertainment or product message).	
	5 Based on experience, I believe the products introduced by this YouTuber are worth looking forward to.	
	6 Based on experience, I believe this YouTuber is trustworthy.	
	7 Based on experience, I believe this YouTuber is familiar with the product market.	
Perceived value	Viewers' perceptions of the quality of the unboxing videos, their feelings or emotional state, their perceived gap between benefits and cost, and the social self-realisation promoted by the product function.	Sweeney and Soutar (2001)
	1 I think the quality of the products described in this unboxing video is consistent.	
	2 I think the product presented in this unboxing video is well made.	
	3 I think the quality of the product presented in this unboxing video is acceptable.	
	4 I think the product presented in this unboxing video is exquisitely crafted.	
	5 I think the product introduced in this unboxing video is impressive.	
	6 I think this unboxing video introduces a product that seems consistent.	
	7 I think this unboxing video introduces a product that I would like.	
	8 I think the product introduction in this unboxing video makes me want to use that produce.	
	9 I think the product described in this unboxing video is relaxing to use.	
	10 I think the product that this unboxing video introduces would make me feel good.	
	11 I think the product introduced in this unboxing video is pleasing to me.	
	12 I think the price of the product presented in this unboxing video is reasonable.	
	13 I think the quality of the product described in this unboxing video matches its price.	
	14 I think the product presented in this unboxing video are excellent value for money.	

Table 1 Measurement of variables (continued)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Definitions and measurement items</i>	<i>Source</i>
Perceived value	Viewers' perceptions of the quality of the unboxing videos, their feelings or emotional state, their perceived gap between benefits and cost, and the social self-realisation promoted by the product function.	Sweeney and Soutar (2001)
	15 I think the product presented in this unboxing video is affordable.	
	16 I think the product introduced in this unboxing video would make me feel accepted by my family, friends, and colleagues.	
	17 I think the product introduced in this unboxing video would make me easily noticed by others.	
	18 I think the product introduced in this unboxing video would make a good impression on others.	
	19 I think this unboxing video introduces a product that would give me recognition from others.	
Sharing intention	Viewers' desire to share the unboxing videos with others after watching it.	Ajzen (2003)
	1 I may share this unboxing video.	
	2 I would love to share this unboxing video.	
	3 I am going to share this unboxing video.	
Purchase intention	The likelihood that viewers are willing to make a purchase after watching it.	Dodds et al. (1991)
	1 I may purchase the product featured in this unboxing video.	
	2 If I need to buy an item, I will consider buying the product introduced in this unboxing video first.	
	3 I would consider purchasing the product described in this unboxing video.	
	4 I have a very high probability of buying the product described in this unboxing video.	
	5 I would like to purchase the product described in this unboxing video.	

4 Data analysis and results

The present study received 471 questionnaire responses, of which 34 were excluded on the basis of their responses to the screening question ('Have you watched a YouTuber's unboxing video on YouTube?') or because of incomplete answers. The other 437 questionnaire responses were fully valid (effective questionnaire rate, 92.8%) and were included in subsequent analysis. The structure and reliability of the sample were analysed using SPSS Statistics 23, and its validity was analysed, and structural equation modelling was conducted using SmartPLS3.0. Tables 2 and 3 present information on the respondents' YouTube use and demographics.

Table 2 YouTube use of respondents

<i>Question</i>	<i>Option</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
How long have you been using YouTube?	Less than one year	5	1.1%
	Between 1 and less than three years	37	8.5%
	Between 3 and less than five years	93	21.3%
	Between 5 and less than seven years	128	29.3%
	Between 7 and less than nine years	53	12.1%
	Nine or more years	121	27.7%
How many days a week do you watch YouTube videos on average?	Less than one day	27	6.2%
	One day	17	3.9%
	Two days	37	8.5%
	Three days	33	7.6%
	Four days	35	8.0%
	Five days	36	8.2%
	Six days	20	4.6%
	Daily	232	53.0%
How much time do you spend watching YouTube videos on an average day?	Less than 1 h	136	31.1%
	Between 1 and less than 2 h	165	37.8%
	Between 2 and less than 3 h	66	15.1%
	Between 3 and less than 4 h	36	8.2%
	4 h or more	34	7.8%
What type of unboxing videos do you watch most frequently?	Food-related videos	112	25.6%
	Cosmetics-related videos	101	23.1%
	Toy-related videos	41	9.4%
	Electronic product-related videos	125	28.7%
	Daily necessities-related videos	36	8.2%
	Others	22	5.0%
Do you follow or subscribe to any YouTubers who produces unboxing videos?	Yes	291	66.6%
	No	146	33.4%

In accordance with the procedure proposed by Podsakoff and Organ (1986), Harman's single-factor analysis (Malhotra et al., 2006) was performed to evaluate common method bias, and the results confirmed that the first factor explained only 32.47 % of the total variance. Thus, common method variance was a non-significant problem in the present study. Additionally, multicollinearity was evaluated by calculating variance inflation factor (VIF) values, and the results indicated that all VIF values were less than the recommended threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2017). Therefore, multicollinearity was also a

non-significant problem in the present study. Furthermore, the present study used Q-Q plots (Huang et al., 2015; see Appendix) to visually assess the distribution of all observations for normality. The present study also calculated skew and kurtosis coefficients to further demonstrate that the survey data were appropriate for analyses, and that they were normally distributed. As per the thresholds recommended by Kline (2005, pp.49–52), the absolute values of all skew coefficients were < 3 , with the highest being 1.857, and the absolute values of all kurtosis coefficients were < 7 (with the highest being 1.793).

Table 3 Demographics of respondents

<i>Question</i>	<i>Option</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender	Male	209	47.8%
	Female	228	52.2%
Marital status	Married	73	16.7%
	Unmarried	364	83.3%
Age	Less than 20 years	161	36.8%
	21–30 years	186	42.7%
	31–40 years	26	5.9%
	41–50 years	35	8.0%
	51 years and older	29	6.6%
Educational background	Primary school	1	0.2%
	Junior high school	1	0.2%
	High school	27	6.2%
	Undergraduate	341	78.0%
	Master's degree or higher	67	15.4%
Occupation	Student	304	69.6%
	Service industry	46	10.5%
	Military, government employee, or faculty member	37	8.5%
	Business	12	2.7%
	Manufacturing	10	2.3%
	Information and technology	9	2.1%
	Homemaker	8	1.8%
	Agriculture, forestry, fishery, and husbandry	5	1.1%
	Self-employed	4	0.9%
	Others	2	0.5%
Monthly disposable income	NT\$ 10,000 or less	205	46.9%
	NT\$ 10,001–20,000	81	18.5%
	NT\$ 20,001–30,000	54	12.4%
	NT\$ 30,001–40,000	46	10.5%
	NT\$ 40,001–50,000	16	3.7%
	NT\$ 50,001–60,000	7	1.6%
	More than NT\$ 60,001	28	6.4%

A reliability analysis was conducted, and the Cronbach's α values for all dimensions of all variables were between 0.751 and 0.974, indicating that the questionnaire had good reliability. A convergent validity analysis revealed that all items had a factor loading of > 0.6 , a composite reliability of > 0.8 , and an average variance extracted (AVE) of > 0.6 (see Table 4). These indicator results all met the standards recommended by scholars (Henseler et al., 2016), demonstrating that all items in the finalised questionnaire had good convergent validity.

Table 4 Convergence validity

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Entertainment (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.852$)	1	0.922	0.932	0.873
	2	0.946		
Interactivity (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.847$)	1	0.866	0.908	0.767
	2	0.923		
	3	0.837		
Trendiness (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.820$)	1	0.926	0.917	0.847
	2	0.915		
Customisation (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.751$)	1	0.904	0.890	0.802
	2	0.887		
Word-of-mouth (WOM) (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.913$)	1	0.857	0.939	0.793
	2	0.913		
	3	0.906		
	4	0.885		
Perceived trust (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.953$)	1	0.786	0.977	0.687
	2	0.829		
	3	0.841		
	4	0.862		
	5	0.801		
	6	0.842		
	7	0.854		
Perceived value (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.974$)	1	0.839	0.962	0.783
	2	0.858		
	3	0.863		
	4	0.837		
	5	0.846		
	6	0.871		
	7	0.875		
	8	0.828		
	9	0.805		
	10	0.744		
	11	0.789		
	12	0.761		

Table 4 Convergence validity (continued)

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Perceived value (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.974$)	13	0.883	0.962	0.783
	14	0.870		
	15	0.859		
	16	0.919		
	17	0.909		
	18	0.925		
	19	0.826		
Sharing intention (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.933$)	1	0.938	0.957	0.882
	2	0.940		
	3	0.939		
Purchase intention (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.951$)	1	0.890	0.963	0.837
	2	0.886		
	3	0.937		
	4	0.927		
	5	0.932		

In the present study, the correlation coefficient matrix of each variable was used to test whether each variable had discriminant validity. The results revealed that the square root value of each variable's AVE was higher than the square of the pairwise correlation coefficient of each variable (Table 5). Thus, all variables were determined to be distinct, thereby confirming that each variable in the present study had adequate discriminant validity.

Table 5 Discriminant validity

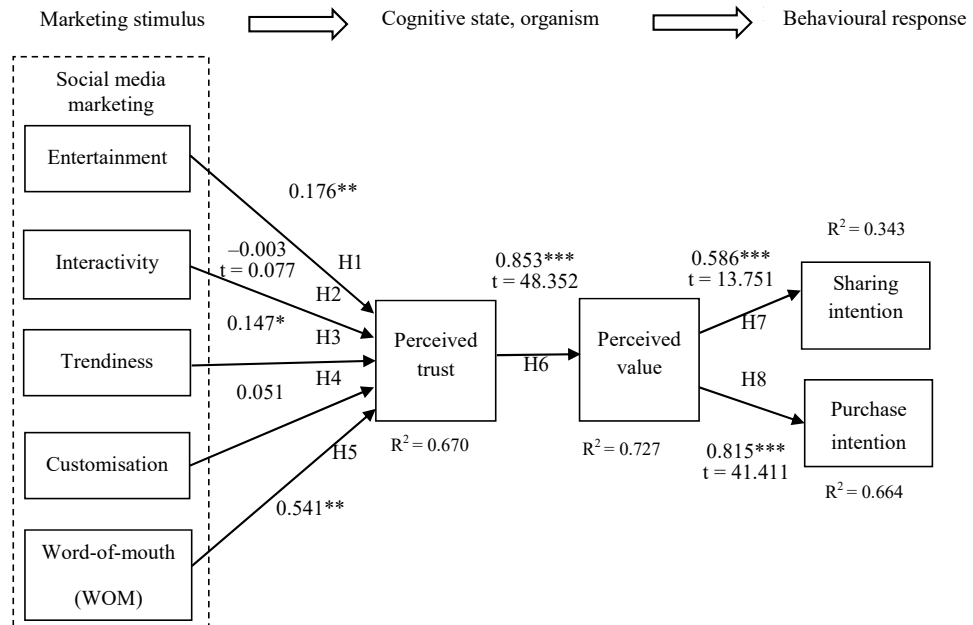
<i>Variables</i>	<i>(A)</i>	<i>(B)</i>	<i>(C)</i>	<i>(D)</i>	<i>(E)</i>	<i>(F)</i>	<i>(G)</i>	<i>(H)</i>	<i>(I)</i>
Entertainment (A)	0.934								
Interactivity (B)	0.258	0.876							
Trendiness (C)	0.321	0.358	0.920						
Customisation (D)	0.347	0.308	0.526	0.896					
Word-of-mouth (E)	0.382	0.386	0.513	0.605	0.890				
Perceived trust (F)	0.387	0.289	0.448	0.462	0.629	0.885			
Perceived value (G)	0.365	0.348	0.476	0.484	0.630	0.728	0.829		
Sharing intention (H)	0.092	0.235	0.116	0.115	0.213	0.203	0.343	0.939	
Purchase intention (I)	0.204	0.245	0.285	0.339	0.440	0.429	0.664	0.348	0.915

Notes: 1. All diagonal values are the square root of the AVE.
2. The numbers in the triangle below are the square of the correlation coefficients for the pairwise comparisons.

Henseler et al. (2016) recommended an SRMR value of < 0.08 and an NFI value of > 0.8 as thresholds. The model in the present study had an SRMR value of 0.055 and an NFI value of 0.8, indicating that it had adequate fit. The results of the structural model path analysis are presented in Figure 1. The standardised path coefficients indicate the direct

influence of each latent variable, with a higher value indicating greater influence. Figure 1 reveals that the standardised path coefficients for the relationship between interactivity and perceived trust ($\beta = -0.003$, $t = 0.077$) and that between customisation and perceived trust ($\beta = 0.051$, $t = 0.899$) did not reach significance; therefore, H2 and H4 are not supported. By contrast, the other relationships were all significant; therefore, H1, H3, H5, H6, H7, and H8 are supported. In addition, the standardised path coefficients pertaining to the effects of social media marketing on perceived trust indicated that WOM had the greatest effect, followed by entertainment and trendiness.

Figure 1 Structural model



Note: $^*p < 0.01$, $^{**}p < 0.005$, $^{***}p < 0.001$.

5 Discussion and implications

The present study applied SOR theory as the theoretical basis for establishing a research framework. The five dimensions of social media marketing proposed by Kim and Ko (2012) were used to explore the context of brands. Specifically, the present study focused on extending this five-dimension framework to unboxing videos. To explore the effects of social media marketing, as characterised by entertainment, interactivity, trendiness, customisation, and WOM, [i.e., stimulus (S)], on YouTube viewers' perceived trust and value, [i.e., organism (O)] and, consequently, their sharing and purchase intentions [i.e., response (R)]. In this section, the relevant findings are discussed, and the relevant research and practical implications are provided.

The results indicate that among the five dimensions, WOM had the greatest effect on perceived trust, followed by entertainment and trendiness. The significant and positive

effect of WOM on perceived trust indicates that the perceived trust of viewers in YouTubers was greater when they had stronger perceived positive/negative opinions or under higher message intensity while watching YouTube unboxing videos. This finding is consistent with that of Stefanny et al. (2022), who discovered that e-WOM has a major effect on brand trust on the video-on-demand platform Netflix. Moreover, entertainment had a significant and positive effect on perceived trust. That is, the entertaining nature of unboxing videos effectively enhanced the perceived trust of consumers in YouTubers. This finding is consistent with those of Liu et al. (2022) and Wu and Huang (2023), who focused on studying live streaming. Trendiness also had a significant and positive effect on perceived trust, with novel and trendy video content enhancing consumers' perceived trust in YouTubers. This finding is consistent with that of Wongkitrungrueng et al. (2020), who reported that consumers had more trust in sellers who conveyed novel and trendy values through live streaming. The present study also revealed that the perceived trust of viewers had a significant and positive effect on their perceived value, thereby supporting the findings of Chong et al. (2023) and Shang et al. (2023), who asserted that trust in live streaming positively affects perceived value. Finally, the perceived value of viewers had a significant and positive effect on their video-sharing intention and product purchase intention, confirming the finding of Kim et al. (2023) that the perceived value of Instagram advertisements has a positive effect on behavioural intentions.

The results indicated that interactivity and customisation did not have significant effects on enhancing perceived trust, which is inconsistent with previous findings. First, although YouTube enables viewers to comment on videos, some viewers may watch videos without interacting with others. The concept of interacting with social media marketing should not be limited to the operational definition proposed by scholars (e.g., the extent to which viewers interact with others while watching YouTube unboxing videos). This is because other factors may also be relevant, such as interactions between the video and the viewer, (e.g., virtual reality effects) and dimensions such as timeliness and synchronicity. These factors may explain the conclusion by Liu et al. (2022) and Song et al. (2022) that interactivity positively affects the trust of consumers in live streaming. However, YouTube unboxing videos are prerecorded, and even videos that were originally produced as interactive or virtual-reality videos still cannot be regarded as real-time videos.

Second, video customisation had no significant effect on the perceived trust of viewers. It may be difficult for YouTubers to customise the content of their videos before releasing them, even if the themes of their videos meet viewer expectations. The theme of a video should meet the expectations of viewers, but YouTubers may prefer to maintain the novelty of their YouTube unboxing videos by independently exploring novel video themes and content. That is, even when a video theme meets the expectations of viewers, it is still impossible to customise standard video content. This may explain why the results of the present study are inconsistent with those of other studies. Most studies have explored contexts such as advertising (Olsen and Pracejus, 2020), insurance services (Wu et al., 2022), and banks (Althuwaini, 2022), whereas the present study primarily examined unboxing videos. Furthermore, in a live streaming environment, a streamer can adapt their style in real time to changing circumstances, and customisation may influence the perception of viewers and their subsequent behaviour. These findings can inform future research on social media marketing and research in other related fields.

The findings of the present study have practical implications for YouTubers and marketers, serving as a valuable reference for developing videos and product promotion strategies. For example, the entertainment of social media marketing has a positive effect on the perceived trust of viewers; this result indicates that YouTubers who produce unboxing videos can use their tone, behavior, props, clothing, music, lighting, and special effects to create entertainment. An increase in the perceived trust of viewers enhances the perceived value of products and the intention of viewers to share videos and purchase products. Additionally, the trendiness of social media marketing has a positive effect on perceived trust; specifically, the products introduced in unboxing videos should be new on the market or popular and trendy. Such products are attractive to viewers; such trendiness enhances their perceived trust and increases their intention to purchase products or share videos. Furthermore, YouTubers should share product information in a strong, positive, convincing, and serious tone, (i.e., WOM) to increase viewers' trust in the products that they show in videos. This increases viewers' tendency to share videos and purchase products, thereby increasing the traffic of YouTubers and the profit potential of products being promoted by advertisers or marketers.

6 Future research directions

Although the present study provided useful results, it has several limitations. First, it focused on individuals who watched unboxing videos on YouTube. In total, 79.5% of the respondents in the present study were aged less than 30 years, and 69.6% were students; that is, most of the respondents were born between 1990 and 2010 (Generation Z). To obtain results that are more representative of and generalisable to the general population, future studies should collect samples through stratified sampling or focus on investigating specific groups.

Second, the purpose of the present study was to explore the effect of social media marketing on viewer perception and behaviour. However, numerous factors can affect social media marketing, such as community recognition and the willingness to use a product. Other related variables may interfere with the effectiveness of social media marketing, such as flow experience, level of involvement, and viewer personality traits. These variables should be incorporated into research to explore more factors influencing social media marketing.

Finally, the present study only discussed YouTube unboxing videos, and YouTube differs from other social media platforms in terms of the characteristics and functions. For example, Facebook allows users to post status updates and to share their thoughts and feelings with their friends, Instagram emphasises the popularity of photos and short-form videos among young people, and Twitter limits the number of characters that a user can post. Because of the differing functions of various social media platforms, different types of social media may have different psychological or behavioral effects on users. In addition, the sharing or reposting of YouTube unboxing videos on other social media platforms is beyond the scope of the present study. Future research can adopt a differentiated cross-platform perspective to explore the effect of social media marketing on users.

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Appendix

Figure A1 Q-Q plots of observations

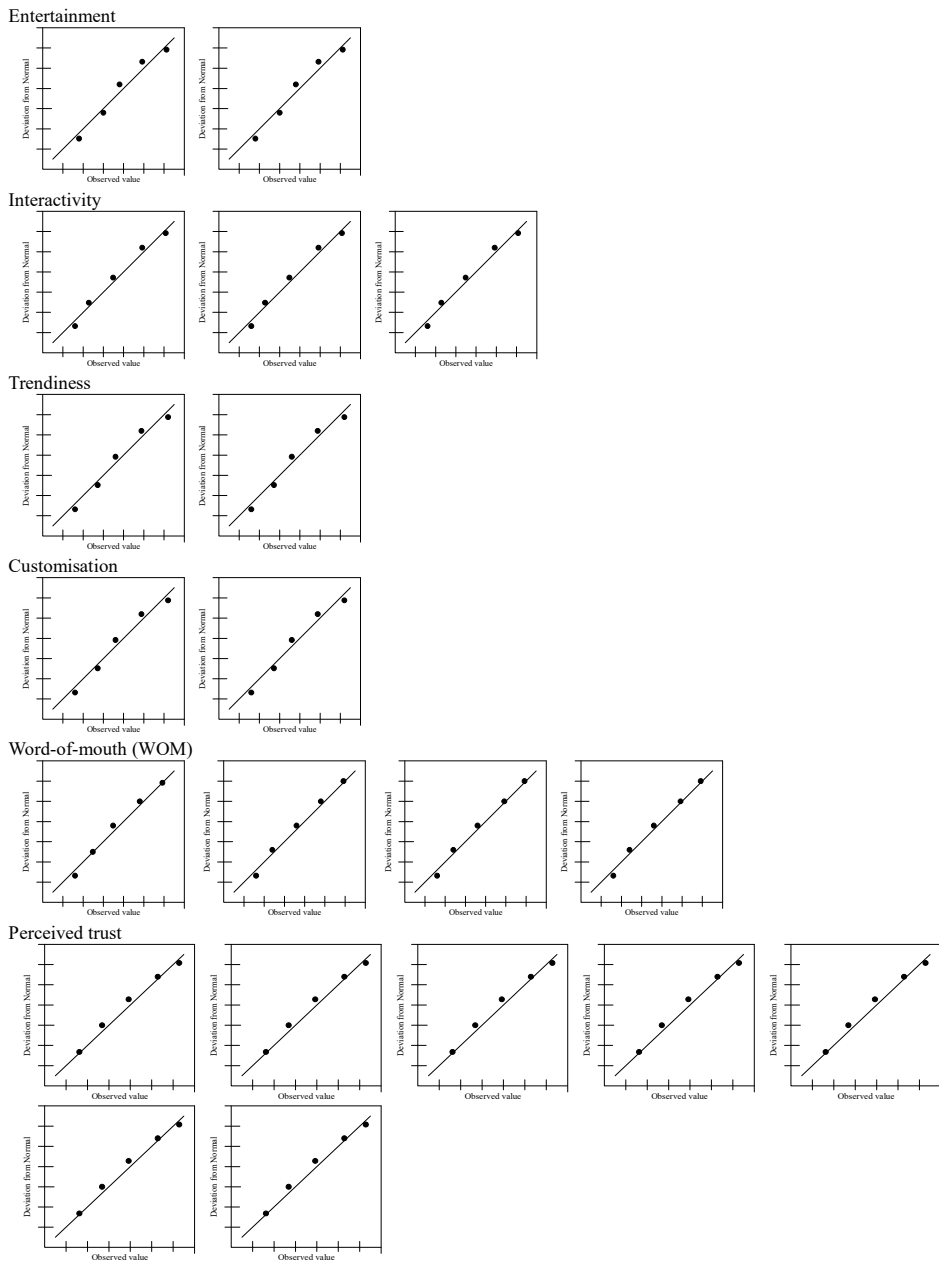
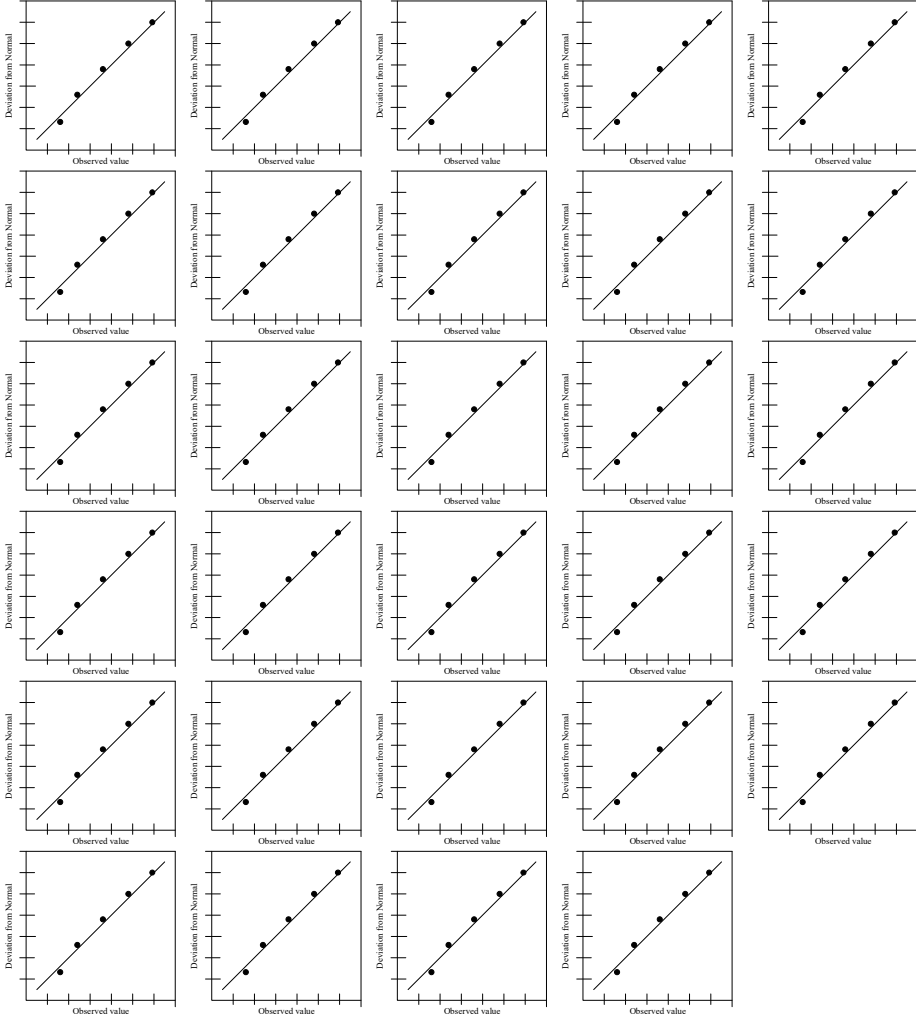
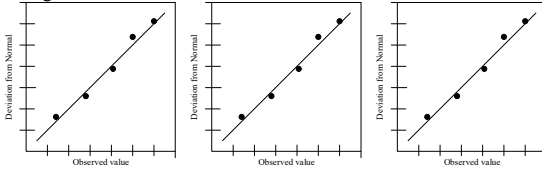


Figure A1 Q-Q plots of observations (continued)

Perceived value



Sharing intention



Purchase intention

