

# The Influence of Gratifications Related to User-Generated Content on the Purchase Intention of Clothing of Young Consumers in Sri Lanka

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** This study examines the influence of user-generated content (UGC) on the purchase intentions of young consumers in Sri Lanka's online clothing market. With the rise of Web 2.0 and social media, consumer behavior is increasingly shaped by interactive content. The study explores how UGC impacts consumers' intentions by fulfilling various gratification needs, such as content, social relations, and self-presentation, within the digital landscape.

**Design/methodology/approach:** Adopting a positivist paradigm and a deductive research approach, this study employed a quantitative survey methodology. Data were gathered using self-administered online questionnaires from 250 young Sri Lankan consumers, aged 15 to 29, who used online platforms to purchase clothing. A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure the sample's relevance to the research objectives. The collected data were analyzed using regression analysis to examine the relationship between user-generated content (UGC) and consumer purchase intentions.

**Findings:** Results indicate that UGC positively influences purchase intention among young consumers through utilitarian and hedonic content gratification. Social relation gratification, including trust and homophily on platforms like Facebook, enhances consumer purchase intention by fostering community and in-group acceptance. Additionally, self-presentation gratification encourages purchase behavior by allowing consumers to project their desired identities and values through social media engagement.

**Originality:** This study contributes to the limited research on UGC's direct impact on purchase intentions within the clothing industry in Sri Lanka. It expands existing theories by applying the uses and gratifications theory to the online shopping context, offering insights into the specific types of gratifications that drive young consumers' purchasing decisions.

**Implications:** The findings provide valuable insights for clothing brands and digital marketers in Sri Lanka. By focusing on the utilitarian, hedonic, and relational aspects of UGC, brands can better tailor their social media strategies to engage young consumers effectively. This research emphasizes the importance of creating social media content that resonates with consumers' functional and identity-driven needs to enhance purchase intentions.

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Clothing, Content  
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Presentation, Social Relation,  
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## Introduction

The evolution of Web 2.0 and emerging social media trends has profoundly reshaped consumer behavior, emphasizing the active role of media users (Shang & Ya-Ling Wu, 2017). As individuals seek value-driven activities that integrate with their daily lives and address real needs, media research has increasingly focused on understanding these consumer-centric dynamics within the digital ecosystem (Chu & Kim, 2011). Thao (2021) stated that individuals often review comments and opinions shared on social media platforms before making a purchase decision. Users who interact with posts by liking them, commenting on them, and sharing them do so because they support the information that is provided by the product or service (Erkan & Evans, 2016).

The online information market is continuing to move toward a user-centric model, and marketers are interested in researching user-generated content (UGC) related phenomena in the context of digital marketing (Smith et al., 2012). Dixon (2019) stated that in the social marketing sector, the percentage of loyal fans has increased by 72 percent while traffic has increased by 90 percent. In Sri Lanka, around 7.6 million people actively use Facebook and 64.6 percent declared as male in their profile pages (Statista, 2022). Instead of believing in the content produced by the company, consumers who use social media platforms place a lot of trust in user-generated content (Demba, 2019). Most Sri Lankan online shoppers are educated and believe in the content created by themselves more than firms' content (Deyalage & Kulathunga, 2019).

Purchase intention aligns with the UGC within the context of uses and gratifications theory (Andrew & Ph, 2013). It was created in response to the social and psychological demands that gave rise to media expectations (Lee & Hancock, 2024). Media professionals may use several options for mass communication to engage audiences, stimulate audience selection, and fulfill their requirements, purposes, and pleasures (Smith et al., 2012).

According to Shang & Ya-Ling Wu, (2017) research, Content gratification, social relations gratification, and self-presentation gratification are the three categories of uses gratification. They consume material to satisfy their needs for knowledge and enjoyment and engage by interacting with it and other users to strengthen social connections and virtual communities (Sethna et al., 2017).

Previous studies have investigated user-generated content (UGC) to issues like consumer engagement (Chu & Kim, 2011), electronic word-of-mouth (Erkan & Evans, 2016), managing online brand reputation (Sethna et al., 2017) and social network analysis (Sethna et al., 2017). As online shopping has grown, consumer information processing has become more information-integrated, with product attributes, specifications, and information from images, videos, blogs, and reviews being used for consumer evaluation and to make a final decision about the brand that will best serve the needs of the consumer and the decision-making process (Dabija et al., 2024).

Although several studies have been conducted about user-generated content, only a little attention has been paid to the investigation of the impact of user-generated content on customer purchase intention. Rather many studies have been conducted to identify how user-generated content impacts consumer resonance, uses, and gratification, user-generated media (Gupta, 2023; Scholz et al., 2013; Sethna et al., 2017; Shang & Ya-Ling Wu, 2017; Smith et al., 2012). It is essential to investigate the influence of user-generated content on customer purchase intentions, as purchase intention significantly influences consumer decision-making and directly affects the likelihood of buying a product or service. Understanding this relationship is crucial in evolving customer behaviors, where user-generated content plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and choices.

Dixon (2019) stated that Facebook has an impact on 72% of social shoppers in at least one fashion category. This study investigates the purchase intention of clothing in terms of types of user generated and their influence on the intention to purchase. Smith et al. (2012) stated that customers create their content to express themselves and actualize their ideas and reviews that impact consumers' attitudes, decisions, and purchasing intentions that have emerged in the new social environment created by the internet.

Online consumer behavior and social network profiles have produced more data sources and a better understanding of customer interactions and behavior, which is crucial for e-marketing. When evaluating and passing judgment on a product or a topic in the internet world, material frequently reflects the emotional state. Additionally, emotional characteristics have a stronger effect on promotion, dialogue, and information sharing (Lu, 2024).

Hence keeping in view, the significance of user-generated content and consumer purchase intention, this study represents an effort to fill this gap in the literature by further analyzing how user generated content influences customer purchase intention in and around shopping behaviors in the younger generation. To address this specific gap, the following research questions are considered,

RQ 1- Does the content gratification related to UGC influence the online purchase intention of clothing of young consumers?

RQ 2- Does the social relation gratification related to UGC influence the online purchase intention of clothing of young consumers?

RQ 3- Does the self-presentation gratification related to UGC influence the online purchase intention of clothing of young consumers?

## **Literature Review**

In the clothing retail industry, various factors shape how user-generated content (UGC) influences consumer purchase intentions. Numerous studies have explored the primary elements that retailers and managers should consider when formulating marketing strategies aimed at impacting customer purchase behaviors (Chen et al., 2022; Dabija et

al., 2024; Teixeira et al., 2024). This study, therefore, aims to investigate The Influence of User-Generated Content on Purchase Intention in the Clothing Shopping Sector Among Young Consumers in Sri Lanka. The following sections delve into key definitions and empirical findings that elucidate this relationship.

### ***Uses and Gratification Theory and Consumer Online Shopping Behavior***

In the era of information technology, the internet has given an open new window for the globe to use internet technology to purchase and sell online things when physical interaction is not required (Al-Hattami et al., 2023). Because there is no physical touch between them in the online buying sector, it is critical to analyze customer behavior regarding product shopping and payment online (Chen et al., 2022). When it comes to online purchasing, online shopping behavior refers to an individual's overall view and assessment of a product or service, which can be negative or positive (Smith et al., 2012). Behavior has been characterized as a multi-dimensional entity in previous research and has been conceived in many ways (Gattol et al., 2011).

Researchers looked at how media impacts society as it started to penetrate it more deeply in the early 20th century. Early studies revealed that although media users actively engage with the media, they are still too passive and under the control of mass media. Uses and gratifications (U&G) aims to clarify why consumers select various media sources and the demands such selections aim to satisfy (Andrew & Ph, 2013).

Previous studies identified five kinds of uses and satisfaction demands in the social and psychological functions of mass media. These studies suggested that individuals utilized mass media to satisfy these needs, indicating that the utilitarian and hedonistic value of the content influenced consumer consumption, falling under the categories of cognitive and affective demands (Chu & Kim, 2011; Jahn & Kunz, 2014).

### ***User Generated Content***

UGC, which is typically used to define the different forms of media material that are publicly available and created by end users, can be thought of as the total of all how individuals utilize social media when web 2.0 is considered the technological underpinning (Santos, 2022). It must meet the following prerequisites: First, it must be posted on a website or social networking site that is open to the public. Next, it must demonstrate creativity, and finally, it must have been produced outside of standard working hours and procedures (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The procedure can be satisfying for content providers because it enables them to be acknowledged for their work (Pan et al., 2024). In addition to having the capacity to teach or entertain viewers, the content offers a glimpse into true data from other individuals that isn't sanitized by mainstream media (Lăzăroiu et al., 2020).

UGC is generally thought to be more reliable than content provided by marketers because it gives consumers the impression that they are hearing about someone's personal experience with the product, rather than what the product's manufacturer or marketer

has to say about it. (Gupta, 2023). Shang & Ya-Ling Wu (2017) identified three primary types of user-generated content: content gratification, social relation gratification, and self-presentation gratification.

### ***User Generated Content and Purchase Intention***

Smith et al., (2012) explained how purchase intention is more likely to occur due to satisfaction, and how individuals engaging with online environments are more likely to be affected by information while making purchase decisions. They do it before making a purchasing choice, they should interact with the information. According to Shang & Ya-Ling Wu, (2017), consumer purchase intention is more essential in drawing inferences about usage behavior.

Few researchers look at consumer-generated ads. For example, what motivates customers to create specific content and how they manage co-creation (Kankam & Charnor, 2023). The second analysis is how credible consumers find UGC and their goals engaging the content created by them, and finally, that focuses on the relationship between UGC and significant monetary outcomes as sales (Geng & Chen, 2021; Jain, 2022). The types of comments made by reviewers and their ability to influence sales, for example, Geng & Chen, (2021) investigated the correlation between product sales and the type of reviews that include more information and attraction of content, and they discovered that reviews mixed with subjective and objective judgments have less impact on product sales than reviews alone.

Over the last several decades, the theory of uses and gratifications has been adopted and developed from several perspectives, studying the use of various media ranging from traditional mass media to new media and mobile technology (Al-Hattami et al., 2023; Sichach, 2023). Although some academics have proved the efficacy of U&G in researching digital media, Sichach, (2023) contends that there is a need to "seriously integrate" the U&G method in any attempt to speculate on the future direction of mass communication theory. Since there is a research gap in knowledge and need a better examination on the Influence of User Generated Content on Clothing Shopping purchase intention of Young Consumers in Sri Lanka. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model for the research.

### ***Content Gratification and Purchase Intention***

In most of the research, content gratification was divided into hedonic and utilitarian needs (Sethna et al., 2017; Shang & Ya-Ling Wu, 2017). A utilitarian dimension, a method of assessing consumer attitudes, defines value as the process through which a customer gathers knowledge out of necessity rather than for enjoyment (Geng & Chen, 2021). Hedonic value refers to the intrinsic pleasure, enjoyment, or satisfaction derived from consuming a product or service. It is primarily associated with the emotional and experiential aspects of consumption, emphasizing how the product or service makes the consumer feel rather than its practical utility (Shang & Ya-Ling Wu, 2017). Sociology, psychology, and economics have all proposed looking into the utilitarian and hedonic

values of attitudes, and these many viewpoints all comprehend the hedonic and utilitarian components of attitudes which show as consumption mirrors to line with theoretical progress in marketing (Voss et al., 2003).

*H1: The content gratification related to UGC positively affects the online purchase intention of clothing of young consumers*

### ***Social Relation Gratification and Purchase intention***

Teenagers can identify with in-group members who act and look like them and contrast themselves with out-group members thanks to the media (Barker, 2020). In addition to encouraging interpersonal relationships, teenagers utilize social media to promote intergroup relationships (Winstone et al., 2021). Tie strength expresses the efficacy of the connection between the persons in a network or organization and makes links connecting them, which serves a crucial purpose (Tortoriello et al., 2012). On SNSs, the strength of relationships may be shown for strong and weak links (Barker, 2020). Customers' decisions in various product categories, when they browse on social networks, may be impacted by strong tie interactions and moderately linked weak ties based on user engagement and preference (Chu & Kim, 2011).

*H2: The social relation gratification related to UGC positively affects the online purchase intention of clothing of young consumers*

### ***Self-Presentation Gratification and Purchase Intention***

Perceived value, which was strategically significant for retailers and products in the 1990s, will continue to be significant in the twenty-first century (Jansri, 2018). It is defined as "the consumer's overall judgment of the utility of the product or service based on perception of what is received and what is given (Luo et al., 2022). Heyman, (2013) argued that value dimensions are independent, "relate additively, and gradually contribute to choose." However, earlier research suggested a connection between the hedonic and utilitarian determinants of attitude (Voss et al., 2003). The attraction of a product or service is most strongly influenced by an "amalgam of mental and emotional considerations," and emotion is a component in every buying decision (Kankam & Charnor, 2023). Scholz et al., (2013) stated that consumers may choose to join a fan page because they anticipate an effect on their image or status, deferring values for their identities by joining the page and participating in group activities that convey personal values. Facebook users actively project pictures of themselves through their profiles and updates, and fan sites may be used to do the same (Erkan, 2016).

*H3: The self-presentation gratification related to UGC positively affects the online purchase intention of clothing of young consumers*

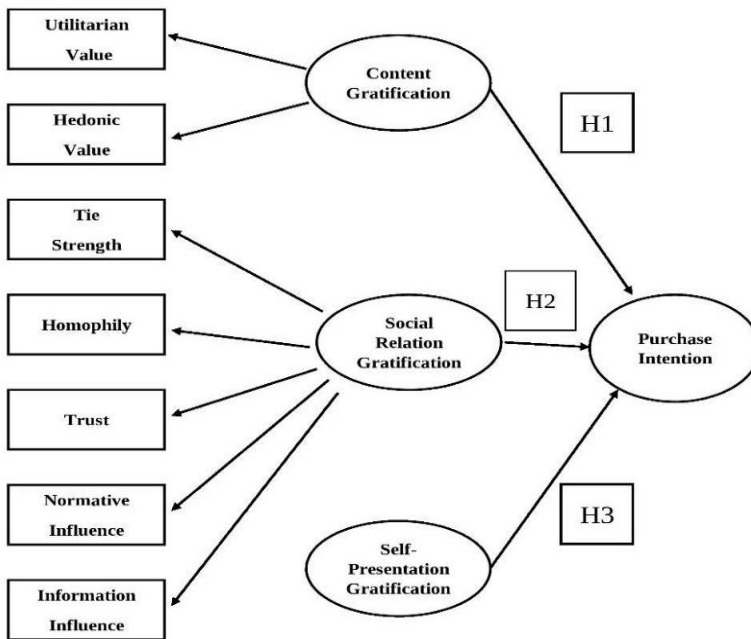


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework  
Source: Shang & Ya-Ling Wu, (2017)

## Methodology

The research philosophy underlying this study was based on beliefs and assumptions about the nature of the research. The study employed a deductive approach. Consequently, the survey method was used as the research strategy. Additionally, the survey method has been used to collect data using self-administered questionnaires. The study was carried out in a natural setting with minimal interference from the researcher in the regular course of business in the research environment.

The researcher delivered the questionnaire using an online web-based method (Google Forms). The target population for the study comprised all male and female customers in Sri Lanka who used online platforms to purchase clothes. This group represented the entire set of individuals, events, or elements of interest that the researcher aimed to investigate. To determine the sample size from the population, the researcher considered previous scholarly works and established statistical methods. Due to time and budget constraints, it was not possible to employ the entire population for the research. Therefore, the study selected 250 online shoppers as a sample.

A survey was conducted among customers who used online platforms to purchase clothes in Sri Lanka, including both male and female individuals. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants, focusing on individuals directly relevant to the study—specifically, those who considered online platforms for shopping. This approach ensured that the sample consisted of respondents with the necessary experience and insights into these products, thereby enhancing the relevance and accuracy of the information gathered. Before completing the questionnaire, participants received a brief explanation of the survey's objectives and procedures. Likert scale-type questions with five alternative answers were used to measure the dependent and independent variables. To analyze the direct impact of user-generated content on purchase intention and to obtain expected outcomes, the study used regression analysis.

### ***Operationalization***

The measurement items for each dimension must be recognized to test the hypotheses, and these are based on the established scales from the literature. Table 1 displays the measurement items associated with each variable investigated in this research together with the related literature sources.

Table 1  
Operationalization Table

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Measurement</b>	<b>Reference</b>		
User Generated Content	Utilitarian Value (UV)	The content on SNSs is useful.	Likert scale (1-5)	(Jahn & Kunz, 2014)		
		The content on SNSs beneficial.	1)Strongly disagree			
		The content on SNSs functional.	2) Disagree			
	Hedonic Value (HV)	The content on SNSs is practical.	3)Average		(Jahn & Kunz, 2014)	
		The content on SNSs is fun.	4)Agree			
		The content on SNSs is exciting.	5)Strongly agree			
	Tie Strength (TS)	Tie Strength (TS)	The content on SNSs pleasant.		Likert scale (1-5)	(Chu & Kim, 2011)
			The content on SNSs entertaining.		1)Strongly disagree	
			Approximately how frequently		2) Disagree	
		Do you communicate with the contacts on your friends list on this SNS?	3)Average			
		Overall, how important do you feel about the contacts on your friends list on this SNS?	4)Agree			
		Overall, how close do you feel about the contacts on your friends list on this SNS?	5)Strongly agree			



	Homophily (HO)	In general, the contacts on my friend list on the SNS think like Me.	Likert scale (1-5) 1)Strongly disagree 2) Disagree 3)Average 4)Agree 5)Strongly agree	(Chu & Kim, 2011)
	Trust (TR)	In general, the contacts on my friend list on the SNS behave like me. I trust most contacts on my friends list on the SNSs. I have confidence in the contacts on my friends list on the SNS. I believe in the contacts on my friends list on the SNSs.	Likert scale (1-5) 1)Strongly disagree 2) Disagree 3)Average 4)Agree 5)Strongly agree	(Chu & Kim, 2011)
	Normative influence (NI)	When I am buying products, I generally, purchase products online. I think others will approve of I often purchase the products that others buy. I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same products that others purchase.	Likert scale (1-5) 1)Strongly disagree 2) Disagree 3)Average 4)Agree 5)Strongly agree	(Chu & Kim, 2011)
	Informational influence (II)	If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my friends about the product. I often consult other people to help choose the best available alternative from the product class. I frequently gather information from a friend or family member about the product before I buy.	Likert scale (1-5) 1)Strongly disagree 2) Disagree 3)Average 4)Agree 5)Strongly agree	(Chu & Kim, 2011)
	Self-presentation gratification (SP)	On this platform, I can make a good impression on others. On this platform, I can improve the way I am perceived. On this platform, I can present who I am to others. On this platform, I can present who I want to be to others.	Likert scale (1-5) 1)Strongly disagree 2) Disagree 3)Average 4)Agree 5)Strongly agree	(Jahn, and Kunz, 2012)
Purchase Intention (PI)	Purchase Intention (PI)	Given the chance, I would consider purchasing products in the Future. I will likely purchase the product shortly. Given the opportunity, I intend to purchase products.	Likert scale (1-5) 1)Strongly disagree 2) Disagree 3)Average 4)Agree 5)Strongly agree	(Jahn & Kunz, 2014) (Shang, Wuand Sie, 2017)

### ***Validity and Reliability***

All criteria for validity and reliability were satisfactorily met. Factor loading values for each of the four indicators consistently surpassed the threshold of 0.7. Cronbach's alpha values for all significant variables exceeded the standard threshold of 0.7, thereby confirming the reliability of all variables in the questionnaire. Furthermore, each of the KMO values and AVE values exceeded 0.5, and all significance values for Bartlett's Test were below 0.05. The square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each variable also surpassed the corresponding inter-construct correlations, providing additional confirmation of construct validity.

### **Results**

Demographic information including gender, age, occupational status, and monthly income of the person, is collected to give more value to the final research findings. Frequency analysis is conducted for each demographic variable of this study such as gender, age, occupational status, and monthly income. Out of the total no of respondents (269), 96 respondents are males while there are 167 female respondents. A large proportion of respondents (100) represented the 18 – 29 years age group whilst it is accounting for 56.1%, a large proportion of respondents 185 are employed respondents as 68.8%. Most respondents earn Rs. 41,000 to Rs.60,001 per month and it is 95 respondents in number.

Table 2  
Model Summary

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
<b>1</b>	.729 <sup>a</sup>	.532	.526	.66399

a. Predictors: (Constant), SPG\_5\_point\_scale, CG, SRG  
Source: Survey Data

According to Table II, the R<sup>2</sup> value is 0.532 and it indicates that approximately 53.2% of the dependent variable which is the purchase intention of clothing shopping is explained by the independent variables namely content gratification, social relation gratification, and self-presentation gratification. Since the R<sup>2</sup> value is approximately 53%, it can be concluded that more variability is explained by the model.

Table 3  
ANOVA Table

<b>Model</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1	Regression	132.547	3	44.182	100.212	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	116.836	265	.441		
	Total	249.383	268			

a. Dependent Variable: PI\_5\_point\_scale

b. Predictors: (Constant), SPG\_5\_point\_scale, CG, SRG  
Source: Survey Data

According to Table III, the significance level is less than 0.05 (Sig.Val.= 0.000). Therefore, it can be concluded that the regression model is significant, and a model can be built to identify all the independent variables that affect the purchase intention of clothing shopping.

Table 4  
Coefficients Table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	
1	(Constant)	.880	.311		2.833	.005
	CG	.088	.054	.534	1.636	.005
	SRG	.153	.018	.646	8.431	.000
	SPG	.227	.058	.218	3.918	.000

a. Dependent Variable: PI\_5\_point\_scale  
Source: Survey Data

According to Table IV, the significance value of content gratification, social relation gratification, and self-presentation gratification is less than 0.05. It can be considered that all three variables have a significant impact on the dependent variable purchase intention of clothing shopping. Therefore, it can be concluded that content gratification, social relation gratification, and self-presentation gratification positively affect clothing shopping purchase intention.

Table 5  
Hypotheses After Testing

H1: The content gratification related to UGC positively affects the online purchase intention of clothing of young consumers.	Accepted
H2: The social relation gratification related to UGC positively affects the online purchase intention of clothing of young consumers.	Accepted
H3: The self presentation gratification related to UGC positively affects the online purchase intention of clothing of young consumers.	Accepted

## Discussion

The study explores the nuanced ways in which different types of gratification influence young consumers' clothing purchase intentions, particularly through the growing prevalence of User Generated Content (UGC) on social media in Sri Lanka. Content gratification, defined through utilitarian and hedonic values, reveals a significant, positive correlation with purchase intention, suggesting that consumers are more likely to shop if the content they engage with online provides functional benefits and enjoyable experiences (Karunanayake & Wanninayake, 2015; Sethna et al., 2017). As Sri Lankan clothing retailers increasingly move online, understanding content's value to consumers becomes essential to avoid unproductive investments in digital platforms (Simon, 2020). The study's findings align with Shang & Ya-Ling Wu, (2017), affirming that UGC not only resonates with consumers but also supports an increased likelihood of purchase by satisfying both practical and pleasure-driven needs.

Social relation gratification, which encompasses factors like tie strength, homophily, trust, normative influence, and informational influence, is also shown to positively affect purchase intentions among young consumers. Social media fosters these elements, enabling consumers to interact with like-minded peers and trusted sources, thus reinforcing in-group identification and acceptance. This study expands on Karunanayake & Wanninayake, (2015) findings by highlighting that, in contrast to previous conclusions, homophily and trust—especially through frequent Facebook interactions, comments, and shared information—have a substantial effect on purchase behavior. For brands, this means that crafting social media strategies around these relational elements can directly enhance consumer intent to buy, making Facebook and similar platforms valuable for engaging Sri Lankan audiences.

Lastly, self-presentation gratification significantly impacts purchase intention, as young consumers use online spaces like Facebook profiles to protect their identity and values. The study supports Shang & Ya-Ling Wu, (2017) view that consumers are drawn to social pages that reflect their desired social image, with self-presentation reinforcing confidence and social acceptance within peer groups. This form of gratification links clothing brands to consumers' self-expression, allowing consumers to showcase personality and style through social media engagement (Jahn & Kunz, 2014). Brands that tap into self-presentation motivations by encouraging user interaction, such as posting styled outfits or personalized content, can better connect with consumers on an identity level, thereby boosting purchase intentions.

### ***Theoretical Implications***

Purchase intention over a technological and low-involvement product like clothing brings a very complex situation for every customer. Yet there are limited insights provided by the existing theories to guide a proper consumption decision and create a need. Uses and gratification theory as it explains the social and psychological needs that generated expectations for media. The theory points out; that people have different gratification needs that result in media usage. With the emerging social technologies, many choices over mass communication such as the internet. Purchase intention is critical to predict usage behavior. Therefore, people who search and see content with higher volumes have a higher intention to purchase.

### ***Managerial Implications***

User-generated content is a relatively new orientation which is providing a contrast to traditional marketing. As a novel marketing theory, user-generated content is a significant contributor to customer purchase intention in terms of clothing brands. In other words, customer purchase intention is influenced by user-generated content formulated by clothing brands in Sri Lanka according to the findings of the research. With that, this research also has several significant implications for marketers. First This study finding will enable clothing brand marketers to make proper marketing strategies for their social media campaign while crafting strategies towards the intention to purchase. Hence,

digital marketing agencies should pay attention to user-generated content when deciding the social media campaigns. In addition, when deciding the content of the posts that are published on social media pages, they should pay attention towards the utilitarian value and the hedonic value.

Further, customers continuously compare their purchase intentions with others' opinions and their choices. Therefore, when making the purchasing decision they pay their prior attention to the information shared with friends, and reviews posted regarding the clothing brands. Most customers make their purchase decisions, based on others' reviews and recommendations according to the current study. Therefore, marketing managers have to maintain trust in the information they provide regarding the products and should maintain others' positive image regarding a particular clothing brand continuously.

Self-presentation gratification also leads to an effective purchasing decision and it enables to reach the consumers. Therefore, companies should put their effort into developing appealing and informative product content on social media and assist users of different kinds of products to manage their self-presentation and image management behaviors which would lead to consumer purchase decisions on Facebook. Consequently, this study will be advantageous for marketers to create brand recognition, develop a positive brand image, drive word-of-mouth marketing, increase brand loyalty, and so on. Additionally, this analysis is also intended to provide valuable insight into the creation of new strategies, and the redesign of the existing strategies adopted by clothing brands.

### ***Conclusion***

This research successfully explored the impact of content gratification, social relation gratification, and self-presentation gratification on young consumers' clothing purchase intentions in Sri Lanka, providing valuable insights into the influence of user-generated content on purchasing behavior in social media environments. Despite the study's contributions, several limitations were identified. First, the study's sample of 250 respondents from selected areas in Sri Lanka may limit the generalizability of results across the entire country, as logistical and time constraints prevented broader data collection. Additionally, limited prior research on user-generated content's impact on purchasing intention posed challenges in establishing a comprehensive background, potentially narrowing the study's scope. The study focused on eight specific gratification variables, but it is possible that other unexplored factors could also influence purchasing behavior. Moreover, response validity could be affected by issues like language barriers, varying mental conditions, and potential response biases in online surveys.

The findings of this study open pathways for future research to address these limitations. Future studies could consider larger, more diverse samples across Sri Lanka and explore additional variables such as perceived risk, which can significantly impact purchase decisions in online contexts. Examining the influence of user-generated content on other industries with high online engagement—such as supermarkets, tourism, and hotel bookings—could further expand the applicability of these findings. Overall, this research

provides a foundation for understanding the role of social media gratification factors in consumer purchase intentions and suggests that continued exploration could deepen insights into digital consumer behavior across sectors.

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