

## Research on the Marketing Effect of Postprints

**Authors:** Zhang Tianqi

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### Abstract

In recent years, short video platforms have evolved from their initial role as entertainment services into a symbiotic content ecosystem encompassing live streaming and paid content. However, due to intense industry competition, issues such as content homogenization continue to undermine the industry environment, leading to a decline in users' video viewing experience, among other problems. In response to this phenomenon, some short video creators have chosen to present themselves through immersive “unboxing” vlogs. This study investigates the phenomenon of immersive “unboxing” vlogs, drawing upon immersion theory after reviewing relevant domestic and international literature. Through questionnaire distribution and data analysis conducted on active user groups across social media platforms, the research findings demonstrate that three independent variables—potential consumers' liking for immersive “unboxing” vlogs, their sense of immersion, and the level of detail presented—exhibit a significant positive correlation with purchase intention.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

#### Research on the Marketing Effect of “Unboxing” VLOGs from the Perspective of Immersion

#### Zhang Tianqi

Communication University of China, Advertising Institute  
Corresponding author E-mail: [ztq863149615@163.com](mailto:ztq863149615@163.com)

**Abstract:** In recent years, short video platforms have evolved from initial entertainment services to a symbiotic content ecosystem encompassing live streaming and content monetization. However, fierce industry competition and content homogenization continue to erode the industry environment, leading to a decline in users' video viewing experience. In response, some short video creators have adopted the format of immersive “unboxing” vlogs. This study examines

this phenomenon through the lens of immersion theory, drawing upon relevant domestic and international literature. Through questionnaire distribution and data analysis among active social media user groups, the research demonstrates that three independent variables—potential consumers’ liking for creators, immersion level, and detail richness of immersive “unboxing” vlogs—show significant positive correlations with purchase intention.

**Keywords:** Flow theory, unboxing vlog, willingness to buy, fan economy

## 1 Introduction

With the advancement of Internet technology and the proliferation of mobile devices, social media platforms centered on short videos have become integrated into public life. This development has empowered ordinary users to shoot and publish videos, transforming short videos into a means for the public to document their lives and even earn a livelihood. On platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Douyin, we observe a cohort of creators who primarily publish product “unboxing” vlogs. Most of these creators film from a first-person consumer perspective, comprehensively displaying purchased goods while providing evaluations or demonstrating usage effects. These videos often focus on niche products such as blind boxes and handbooks, exhibiting a pronounced “planting grass” effect (generating purchase desire) among audiences. This phenomenon raises several questions: What specific effects do “immersive unboxing” vlogs have on consumers’ purchase intentions? What factors influence their marketing effectiveness? And through what mechanisms do these effects operate?

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 “Unboxing” Vlog

As a distinct video blog category, the original purpose of “unboxing” vlogs was product documentation by consumer-creators. As vlogs gained influence on short video platforms, their promotional and consumption-guidance functions became increasingly prominent, attracting video producers to transition from individual consumers to product promoters. This shift led to purposeful adjustments in “unboxing” vlogs to achieve superior marketing outcomes. Consequently, contemporary “unboxing” vlogs essentially function as product display methods—visual presentations of products (Gonzalez, 2021).

Existing research on product visual presentation has categorized display methods from various perspectives. Foreign scholar Roggeveen (2015) divides product display methods into static presentation (pictures) and dynamic presentation (videos) based on vividness theory. Yoo and Kim (2012) categorize online product display methods into coordinated display and incongruous display according to the degree of coordination. Coordinated display presents products alongside complementary items, while uncoordinated display features only a single product.

Regarding the impact of product display on purchase intention, domestic researcher Huang Jing (2017) found that consumers evaluate statically presented search products or dynamically presented experience products more positively. Additionally, factors such as consumer characteristics, product type, and brand type moderate the relationship between product display and purchase intention. Gong Yanping (2020) investigated the interaction effect of time accuracy and product display mode on product attitudes, revealing that for experience products, high time accuracy combined with usage scenario pictures generates more positive consumer attitudes, whereas for search products, low time accuracy with product images produces more favorable attitudes. He Xueting (2020) demonstrated that warm brand display using scenario pictures yields higher advertising click intention than product-only pictures, while ability brand product display methods show no significant impact on advertising click intention.

## 2.2 Flow Theory

M. Csikszentmihalyi coined the term Flow Theory in 1975, later emphasizing in 1988 that people act according to psychological drives, with immersive experience representing the manifestation of conscious motivation. He posited that immersion occurs when challenges and skills achieve balance—when user challenge and skill are balanced, individuals enter a state of immersion. Immersion experiences are subjective and temporary, which explains why individuals willingly continue certain activities. The definition of flow has since deepened and evolved, with researchers worldwide reaching consensus that the most crucial aspect of immersion experience is its ability to generate positive mood, attentional experience is typically obtained through specific skills, and challenges maintain stability. Jackson and Roberts (1992) proposed through sports immersion research that the emotional feelings experienced when making intrinsic rewards the goal itself constitute immersive experiences. Kimiecik and Stein (1992) argued that immersion represents the transformative process from difficulty and skill at one level to a balanced state. Webster and Trevino (1993) conceptualized immersion as a temporary, subjective experience. Clarke and Haworth (1994) maintained that when individuals experience balanced challenge and skill, immersion represents the feeling of transcending pleasure to achieve complete satisfaction. Jackson and Mars (1996) described immersion as an exceptionally pleasant state of positive performance outcomes.

However, previous research has not examined the marketing effects of “unboxing” vlogs from this perspective, leaving questions about their impact on potential consumers’ purchase intentions unanswered. Therefore, this article employs immersion theory to address three key questions: Do “immersive unboxing” vlogs affect potential consumers’ purchase intentions? If so, what motivational factors drive this effect? And how do these drivers influence marketing effectiveness through “immersive unboxing” vlogs?

## 3 Method

### 3.1 Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, we propose the following hypotheses:

**H1:** The stronger the consumer's liking for the creator, the more likely they are to purchase the product.

**H2:** The higher the audience's immersion while viewing "immersive unboxing" vlogs, the more likely they are to purchase the product.

**H3:** The more detailed the display in "immersive unboxing" vlogs, the more inclined consumers are to purchase the product.

To test these hypotheses, this study employed a questionnaire method, sampling the population and developing measurement scales. The first section collected basic demographic information and included screening questions. The second section utilized a five-level Likert scale to measure relevant independent and dependent variables, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," scored using the Likert 5-point method (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

### 3.2 Study Subject

This hypothesis corresponds to a study of college students for two primary reasons. First, college students represent a group with discretionary income and are active social media users, making them highly representative. Second, this group is more accessible to researchers and offers strong operational feasibility.

The data collection, collation, and analysis process for this survey was completed on February 13, 2023. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed-ended questions, totaling 12 items including 6 multiple-choice questions, 1 multiple-answer question, and 11 scale items. Using a combination of online and offline methods through WeChat Moments, QQ Space, Questionnaire Star Sample Library, and offline distribution, the questionnaire was officially launched on April 1, 2023. Over five days, 233 questionnaires were collected, yielding 180 valid questionnaires after removing invalid responses, for an effective rate of 77.25%.

Sample characteristics revealed higher proportions of seniors, females, and respondents with monthly living expenses of 1000-2000 yuan. Specifically, 48.33% were seniors; 68.89% were female and 31.11% male; 64.44% reported monthly living expenses between 1000-2000 yuan. Regarding viewing contexts, 55% watched unboxing vlogs during nighttime breaks. Among unboxing vlog categories, 69.4% viewed evaluation and comparison types.

## 4 Results

Since this study measured independent and dependent variables using a five-level Likert scale, we summed and averaged measurement statements for each

variable to generate composite scores for subsequent analysis. Descriptive analysis revealed that respondents' average preference for "unboxing" vlogs was 3.9 points, average immersion while watching was 3.6 points, average perception of product detail was 3.8 points, and average purchase intention was 3.7 points.

Pearson correlation coefficient analysis demonstrated significant positive correlations between all independent variables (favorability, immersion, fineness) and the dependent variable (purchase intention). Specifically, favorability showed significant positive correlation with purchase intention ( $r = 0.567$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), immersion correlated significantly with purchase intention ( $r = 0.600$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), and fineness exhibited significant positive correlation with purchase intention ( $r = 0.618$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). These results indicate that higher user liking and immersion in "unboxing" vlogs strengthen willingness to purchase featured products, and more detailed creator introductions regarding product functions, appearance, purchase channels, and other information enhance user purchase intention. Consequently, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 are all supported.

## 5 Discussion

### 5.1 Creator Popularity Is Directly Proportional to Consumer Purchase Intention

Consumers frequently translate their affection for creators into positive feelings toward promoted products. This study found that consumers' average liking for "unboxing" vlog creators was 3.9 points, with Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.567$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) demonstrating significant positive impact on purchase intention. Notably, especially among young consumers, greater attention may be paid to creators' appearance, personality, and personal charm—factors that more effectively stimulate purchase willingness. Consumer engagement and interactive behaviors reveal a fan economy between consumers and creators. The fan economy represents a business model that obtains economic and social benefits through enhanced user stickiness and word-of-mouth marketing. Moreover, fans willingly invest substantial time and energy in favored objects to satisfy personal emotional needs, with their unpaid labor constituting the primary value source of the networked new economy. Currently, the user-led Web 2.0 model predominantly relies on fans (users) to contribute popularity, traffic, and content. Fans' "eyeballs" and "engagement" have become key factors in the development and growth of "unboxing" vlogs. Creators gather friends and fans through shared interests, provide diversified and personalized products and services, and ultimately convert these relationships into consumption and profits.

### 5.2 Immersion Directly Affects Consumers' Willingness to Purchase Products

When consumers become immersed in watching "unboxing" vlogs, they demonstrate greater willingness to purchase products. Mu Sheng, a postdoctoral fellow in business administration at Peking University's Guanghua School of Manage-

ment, argues that creators, users, and products interact based on constructed scenes, forming a “field” according to plotlines controlled by established scripts to facilitate numerous transactions. These artificially created scenes both cater to consumer curiosity and distinguish the live streaming field from other domains. This study found that consumers’ average immersion in “unboxing” vlogs was 3.6 points, with Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.600$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) demonstrating direct impact on purchase intention. Early flow theory posited that challenges and skills were primary elements affecting immersion. If challenge goals are too high, subjects feel unable to control the environment, resulting in anxiety or frustration; if challenge goals are too low, subjects feel bored. Immersion exists in a balanced, harmonious state between these extremes, with skill being the factor that ensures this equilibrium. By mastering this technique, “unboxing” vlog creators artificially construct scenes that immerse consumers, thereby directly influencing purchase willingness.

### 5.3 Detailed “Unboxing” Vlog Displays Strengthen Consumer Purchase Intention

Creators can more effectively display product information through “unboxing” vlogs, with more detailed product information yielding stronger consumer purchase intention. This study found that users’ average perceptual value of product detail in “unboxing” vlogs was 3.8 points, with Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.618$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) demonstrating significant positive impact on purchase intention. Testing confirms that more detailed “unboxing” vlog displays strengthen consumer purchase intention. Generally, better product appearance presentation, more complete functional introductions, and more detailed information regarding sales channels, manufacturers, delivery timeliness, and related issues enhance consumer purchase willingness. However, it is worth noting that more displayed information results in longer “unboxing” vlog duration, requiring creators to maintain consumer immersion throughout the video to enhance purchase intention.

## 6 Conclusion

This study investigates the relationship between “unboxing” vlogs and potential consumers’ purchase intentions through immersion theory using questionnaire surveys. It addresses three questions: Do “immersive unboxing” vlogs affect potential consumers’ purchase desire? If so, what motivational factors drive this effect? And how do these drivers influence marketing effectiveness?

The findings support H1, H2, and H3. Pearson correlation coefficient analysis reveals significant positive correlations between independent variables (favorability, immersion, fineness) and dependent variable (purchase intention). When video creators maintain positive interactive atmospheres with users and users exhibit high affection for creators, attention is captured and curiosity stimulated. When users experience sufficient immersion, viewing duration increases. When creators present more detailed product information, users gain greater

product knowledge. Therefore, likability, immersion, and meticulousness are crucial factors enabling potential consumers to immerse themselves in “unboxing” vlogs. Only through careful control and quality viewing experiences can creators effectively capture users and promote purchase intention generation.

This study both illuminates the development of “unboxing” vlog phenomena and their immersive communication with potential consumers, and provides reference for short-video e-commerce in China’s new media context. It offers guidance for future research on “immersive unboxing” vlogs. However, due to limitations in knowledge, resources, and data access, this study has several shortcomings requiring development and improvement: (1) Restricted by the student status of research subjects, there may be issues such as low income levels or insufficient social experience; future studies will collect broader data for further investigation. (2) The research method is limited, as questionnaire surveys are affected by individual differences that may influence measurement accuracy. Future research should incorporate additional methods such as interviews and psychological experience sampling to deeply analyze the relationship between “immersive unboxing” vlogs and potential consumers’ purchase intentions.

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