

# The Influence of User Generated Content on Purchase Intention of Automobiles in Sri Lanka

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study to identify the influence of user generated content on purchase intention of automobiles in Sri Lanka. The said study is based on the theory of Uses and Gratification and supportive findings. This study has been addressed the survey type research method and structured questionnaire was used to collect data and utilize sample frame of automobile followers on Facebook. Measuring the influence of user generated content on purchase intention through developed hypotheses. Researchers have used analysis technique of descriptive analysis, regression, and frequency test where statistical package for social science (SPSS) was used as the main analytical software.

The results of the study discuss the main eight element affect the purchase intention of automobiles, but the two elements not strongly affect the purchase intention which were namely, homophily and trust. These two elements have weak relationship with the purchase intention. Mainly consumer resonance mediating the user generated characteristics to purchase intention of automobiles. Hence this study has been significantly contributing to the existing knowledge explaining the need, motivation (users and gratification) - consumer resonance-intention linkage in customer behaviour.

**Keywords:** purchase intention, uses and gratifications, consumer resonance, user generated content, automobiles in Sri Lanka, social relation, self-presentation

## 1. Introduction

The development of web 2.0 and new trends in the social media environment that change on a consumer's behaviour and media research is moving, its focus to a greater extent on the media users. This situation to be investigated by marketing researchers to understand, how consumer make decisions regarding a purchase, and making purchase starts a chain reaction of value creating actions. Consumers are seeking activities which creating value that takes place as people go about and attempting to address real needs (Kim & Rao, 2008; Kim, 2012; Hazari & Sethna, 2016). Though consumer motivates by needs, they find ways in which to meet this need and the process involves the multiple psychological events which include thinking, feeling and behaving the entire process generates in value (Hazari, 2016). It could be found that the processes mentioned been used to get an idea about the customers and persuade them to get into social circles while make an impact on their perceptions towards goods and services (Hazari, 2016; Shang, Wu, & Sie, 2017). By social media environment, consumers are influenced when they retrieved information to make their purchase intention. It has also identified that people do read content on social media before they making a purchase intention (Hazari, 2016). Once the people into put like, replying and sharing the content in the social media gives a sign that they have read the content and also agree on the content given by the product or a service.

This paper considers that, the consumer's intention is very much important to count on the usage behaviour and people who search and see content which higher volume of resonance behavior lead to a higher purchase intention of product and services (Shang, 2017; Shao, 2009). In this new digitized era marketing communication craft new opportunities to address customers. In this context Social media plays a vital role in creating a buzz with digital content targeted at customers. With this immersing social media networks, users tend to share their ideas relating to product and services. This content created by users in these social media platforms pave the way to identified the concept of "User Generated Content" (UGC). The online information market continues to shift to user centric model and the use of consumer engagement and participation in virtual communities has been