

# **“Watching toy unboxing videos on YouTube: How Dutch parents portray the experiences of their children”**

A Qualitative Research

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## **Preface**

After approximately four months of devoted hard work, my master thesis finally lies here before you. Over the past few years my personal research interests have consisted of the changing viewing behaviour of children from programmed to non-linear content and how parents experience and respond to such changes. About two years ago the phenomenon of toy unboxing videos grabbed my attention and immediately I was captivated by the simple yet wonderous world of unboxing toys and wondered how children would experience viewing these videos. Therefore, I wanted to investigate this matter during my master thesis, to capture the motivations and experiences of children through the eyes of their parents. By providing in-depth meaningful explanations into how the phenomenon is portrayed by adults.

I want to thank my thesis supervisor Nicoleta Bălău for providing very valuable and constructive feedback. I admire her capacity to flawlessly dive into my work and guide me to formulate proper research questions, interview guide and eventually results. Lastly, I also want to thank all parents who participated in my research. I really appreciate the valuable time they gave me and the authentic, personal and meaningful viewpoints they provided about their child(ren)s' experiences. Without the extensive input of the participants I would have never been able to accomplish these results.

I sincerely hope you will enjoy reading my master thesis, if you have any questions during or after the process of reading you can always contact me via [460608td@eur.nl](mailto:460608td@eur.nl) or +31630848802.

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“Watching toy unboxing videos on YouTube: How Dutch parents portray the experiences of their children”

**ABSTRACT**

*There is a large body of literature devoted to how parents mediate and influence the media consumption of their children, also in the area of user-generated YouTube videos. However, academics have yet to conceptualise how parents portray their children’s experience of watching user-generated content, and in particular of toy unboxing videos on YouTube. In these videos, adults or children open, assemble and demonstrate new purchases mostly related to toys, and the videos are targeted primarily at young children. This current study aims to understand how Dutch parents portray their children’s experience of watching toy unboxing videos on YouTube. By means of semi-structured in-depth interviews this qualitative-oriented research essentially aims to investigate how Dutch parents make sense of their children’s toy unboxing viewing experience, and how they perceive the potential consequences as a result of watching those videos to be for their children. Furthermore, this research also examines how parents monitor this behaviour, and lastly how they perceive the future consequences of watching these videos to be. The main findings showed that Dutch parents portrayed the videos as a simple, innocent yet rich media form. The implications of viewing those videos entail the notion of inspiration, as children seem inspired how to interact with specific toys through the videos. However, parents acknowledged children do not exactly copy the act of toy unboxing, because they do not make a connection between the unboxing in the videos and their own opening of received gifts. Also, parents portrayed that children do not experience similar emotions when they watch a toy unboxing video compared to when they open a new toy themselves, except once a child is ascertained to someday own the toy in the video the act of watching becomes a highly sensational exercise. Additionally, parents indicated their child may learn from the videos by understanding the multiple functions of the toys, increase their vocabulary or even improve their social status, which may enhance their future life events. Furthermore, parents apply a strategy of distant mediation to monitor their child’s toy unboxing viewing behaviour, and seek to find the right balance between freedom and protection. Overall, parents share the opinion that their children will adjust their viewing behaviour according to their personal interests, which will potentially drive them further away from viewing toy unboxing videos on YouTube. At last, this research elaborates on several theoretical and practical implications. For instance, in the future a shared online space could be created on which parents can convey about matters such as new YouTube viewing trends and how to respond to such new online phenomena. In addition, this research contributes to the fuller understanding of contemporary digitization of*

*early childhood, and cognitive scientists could use these insights to find out how children actually cognitively process toy unboxing videos.*

**KEYWORDS:** *User-generated YouTube videos; toy unboxing YouTube videos; viewing experiences; parents portraying experiences child; parental mediation of YouTube videos*

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## 1. Introduction

More than a decade ago scientists entered the realm of Web 2.0 and started exploring the production and consumption of user-generated content (UGC) in various contexts (Beer & Burrows, 2007). The discourse formed by academics regarding UGC often emphasizes on the power of ordinary users to shape the media landscape by creating own content and communicating directly with large audiences (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). Citizens publish, view and contribute to content on the digital social platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram or YouTube, since these platforms have an accessible architecture and allow consumers to easily produce and watch content in a customized space (Postigo, 2016). This research focuses on a relative new occurrence in the area of user-generated videos, namely the phenomenon of toy unboxing videos on YouTube. Within these videos adults or children open, assemble and demonstrate new purchases mostly related to toys, and the videos are targeted primarily at young children (Brown, 2016; Craig & Cunningham, 2017).

There is a large body of literature devoted to how parents mediate and influence online behaviour of their children. For instance, as reported by Zaman, Nouwen, Vanattenhoven, de Ferrerre and Van Looy (2016), parents are often the monitors of the online habits of their children and take on a strategy of participatory learning and distant mediation. Livingstone, Masheroni, Dreier, Chaudron and Lagae (2015) claim socioeconomic variations play a key role in parental strategies. However, academics have yet to conceptualise how parents make sense of their children's experience of watching UGC and in particular toy unboxing videos on YouTube. In order to explore these concepts the following research question was posed: "*How do Dutch parents portray their children's experience of watching toy unboxing videos on YouTube?*". By means of semi-structured in-depth interviews this qualitative-oriented research investigates how Dutch parents speak about their children's experiences, and how they perceive the potential consequences of watching these videos to be for their children. Based on previous literature potential results were analysed. For instance, some studies touched upon the extent to which parents encountered that their children copy what they watch, which may result in that children change their own toy unboxing behaviour to the standards of unboxing toys in the videos (e.g., Loewenstein & Prelec, 1993). Other studies touched upon whether parents notice their children experience a larger desire to watch toy unboxing videos more frequently due to the surprise structure of the videos (e.g., Sukalla, Shoenberger & Bolls, 2016).

It can be argued that this research opens up a dialogue with previous research as well, in order to understand how parents monitor their children's viewing behaviour of toy unboxing videos on YouTube, which may contribute to detect if and how parents feel this behaviour would influence their children's (viewing) behaviour. Moreover, it provides insights

into parents' perception of the future implications of watching unboxing videos for their children. For instance, parents may think that over time their children might watch less or more frequently toy unboxing videos. Or, their children may develop a larger desire to own the products portrayed in the videos, or parents think in the future their children will retrieve more pleasure from the act of unboxing toys themselves.

## **1.1 Research Objective**

The aim of this research is to gain in-depth understanding of how parents make sense of their children's experience of watching toy unboxing videos on YouTube by conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with Dutch parents. The aim of this research is not to firmly establish how children experience toy unboxing videos, but to gain a better understanding in how the habit of viewing these videos came to life and how this is perceived through the eyes of their parents. In-depth conversations with parents can explore how they perceive their children's digital skills and online habits and how this may affect their digital monitoring. Moreover, how parents personally feel about unboxing videos and how they perceive possible future implications of watching those videos to be for their children. In this regard, how do parents feel if their children would watch less or more frequently unboxing videos over time, or how they relate to the possibility that their children may develop a larger desire of owning the products portrayed in the videos in the future.

No emphasis is placed on the video producers, yet the perspective of the parent of the video viewer was taken, to eventually help outline how children experience user-generated videos on YouTube. Contribution to future research can be informed once the data is analysed, meaning that in the conclusions section will be outlined and reflected on how future research can be informed based on the gained research findings. Potentially, it can be used to increase social knowledge on the topic of toy unboxing videos, in order for parents to increase their understanding of the phenomenon, their child's behaviour and the potential implications of viewing the videos. It may potentially benefit future researchers, for instance in the field of cognitive viewing behaviour, to explore how children cognitively process toy unboxing content. In the next section the research relevance will be discussed more extensively.

## **1.2 Relevance**

### *1.2.1 Societal relevance*

To start with, the phenomenon of toy unboxing videos is rather new and many Dutch citizens may be unaware of the growing video channels. For this reason it can contribute to all Dutch parent's understanding of their child's viewing behaviour of YouTube videos. Parents could



gain a clearer and unbiased understanding of the concept of toy unboxing videos on the microblogging platform YouTube. It may help Dutch parents to reflect on their child's viewing behaviour of toy unboxing videos, and the effects the videos may have for their child or the entire family. Parents may use the research insights to gain a better understanding of their own parent-child relationship, and use the outcomes as a form of comparison between their monitoring habits and others' viewpoints. It may trigger a dialogue between different households regarding the viewing behaviour of their child, by placing toy unboxing videos and other user-generated videos under the loop. The latter relates to the second point of relevance for society, as this research could inform public debate regarding the monitoring of the digitalization of young children. This debate may not always be positive as many groups of parents share contradicting opinions, but it could inspire media policymakers or institutions to provide a platform on which parents can openly debate about the changing online behaviour of young children. Lastly, this research can shed light on the cultural context in which the phenomenon exists, as exclusively the standpoints of Dutch parents are provided.

### *1.2.2 Scientific relevance*

The past decades research has been conducted on review videos and the act of game modifying (Hong, 2013). However, the performance of unboxing toys is not identical to reviewing products, and therefore should be approached in a different manner. While online customer review videos relate to the evaluation of video, toy unboxing relates to opening, assembling and demonstrating new purchases, mainly targeted at children (Brown, 2016; Craig & Cunningham, 2017). Current research on toy unboxing videos focuses slightly on pessimistic approaches of user-generated videos and the increase in children's digital material culture (Marsh, 2016). Only a scarce qualitative research is devoted to exploring how parents make sense of their children's viewing experience. In this hopefully increasing line of research, several valuable qualitative studies are focused on which strategies parents apply to monitor their children's digital behaviour, and how socioeconomic variations may affect their supervision (Livingstone et al., 2015; Zaman et al., 2016). While these studies may be valuable to gain a general understanding to how parents perceive their children's digital media use, it lacks insights into how parents actually make sense of their children's viewing experiences of YouTube videos, and how they understand the world of toy unboxing videos by analysing their children's experiences. Building on this understanding, family communication studies may greatly benefit from this research. Lastly, even though research aiming to understand how children themselves experience unboxing videos would be more targeted and informative, current research aims to gain equally relevant information on the topic of toy unboxing videos while also avoiding the (methodological and ethical)

complexities that research with children most of the time brings (Christensen & James, 2008). It may, however, potentially inspire future research directly targeting children to explore how they experience watching the YouTube videos in a more informed way. In addition, this research is relevant for business research. It does not show an immediate connection between the consumer and corporate concerns, however it may contribute in detecting how children experience branded-entertainment videos through the eyes of their parents. Television corporations may use this research to gain insights into the changing non-linear viewing behaviour of young children.

### **1.3 The Research Question**

Building on the practical and theoretical elements mentioned above, the following research question is formulated in order to gain an understanding in how Dutch parents make sense of their children's experience of watching toy unboxing videos. Thus, the main research question reads as follows:

*“How do Dutch parents portray their children's experience of watching toy unboxing videos on YouTube?”*

In turn, this main research question is divided into four sub-research questions. The first question touches upon the concept of sense-making, namely how Dutch parents formulate their discourse of toy unboxing videos and their child's watching habits. The second question entails the potential current implications of watching toy unboxing videos for their child. Furthermore, the third question focuses on which mediating strategies Dutch parents apply to monitor their child's toy unboxing viewing behaviour. The last question is formulated to gain an understanding in how Dutch parents see the potential future results for their child when it comes to toy unboxing videos.

### **1.4 Outline of research**

The first chapter involves an overview of previous research and highlights firstly how YouTube emerged in the lives of young children, and the concept definition of toy unboxing videos on YouTube. It also raises the subject of how toy unboxing is a separate phenomenon apart from reviewing videos, the potential motivations for watching toy unboxing videos, and lastly parental mediating strategies of children's media usage. In this chapter also the sub-research questions are identified and supported by literature. The second chapter provides insights into the research design, it addresses the sampling approach, the steps taken in the collection of interview data, the operationalization process, how the data is analysed, and discusses matters of trustworthiness and authenticity of the research results and ethical considerations. The third chapter presents the results retrieved from the interview data,

which are outlined and discussed per individual sub-question. It provides a thick description of the various viewpoints of the participants, and reflects on previous established theories. In addition, the fourth chapter provides a conclusion of the overall research outcomes and takes it to a higher level perspective. The last chapter takes on a critical stand, by reflecting on the research results, addressing the strengths and limitations and pointing out recommendations for future research.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

In the following section, findings from previous studies are reviewed. To begin with, background information is provided focused on how YouTube videos emerged into the lives of households and young children, and also on contemporary toy unboxing channels. Thereafter, the concept of toy unboxing videos is defined and integrated into the current scientific debate, followed by the transition of reviewing videos to toy unboxing videos and the associated research relevance. In addition, motivations for children to watch toy unboxing videos are outlined. As well as parental monitoring strategies to mediate children's digital media use. Eventually, based on the displayed literature, four sub-research questions are formulated.

### **2.1 Background information**

This section serves as an introduction of the diverse world of YouTube videos and its presence in the lives of families and young children. Secondly, it provides descriptive insights on various toy unboxing channels, by showing its diversity and volume.

#### *2.1.1 The emergence of YouTube into households*

The ways of how citizens are exposed to information has shifted over the past years. Only several decades ago information was retrieved mainly through printed text or images, spoken dialogue, or visual programmed television content. However, nowadays online media has merged into our lived from an early age, as almost everyone is able to retrieve information through various online sources. Already in primary school online videos are used to communicate information at a deeper level of understanding by touching the students emotions. According to Goleman (1998) emotional intelligence is tied to viewing videos, such as interpersonal intelligence which stimulates behaviour of cooperating, connecting with others and empathizing. The form of transferring information through videos has grown even more since the launch of the microblogging platform YouTube in 2005, which immediately became one of the most successful internet platform by offering new ways of short video sharing. One may question if the content found on YouTube is primarily informative but it may stimulate interpersonal intelligence, in fact Strangelove (2010) defines the content found on YouTube as 'home videos' as it often provides the audience a window into the home in a domestic household. Those videos capture the distinctive character of ourselves and our local culture, and the audience then often identifies with this presentation. According to Strangelove (2010), YouTube acts as a storehouse for shared experiences and collective memories. Within these amateur home videos mundane activities are portrayed, and physical arrangement of decorations, toys and technology can be viewed in the background of those videos. These videos may lead to new experiences of liveness, which refers to real-

time co-presence of the activity displayed in the video. However, these home videos may also allow a large group of individuals to influence one's personal perception, and manipulate otherwise private memories.

Similar to adults, children likewise became a significant part of the online audience, and even the youngest members within a family are creating internet content (Livingstone, 2009). Besides potential negative influences, informational and entertainment content also stimulates positive skills for children as it motivates them to reflect on their current state and to sympathize with the situation in which they find themselves. A large body of work has been devoted to these positive skills, in particular the power of para-social relationship of children with media characters. For instance, para-social relationships have shown to enhance children's learning from media characters (Lauricella, Gola, Richards & Calvert, 2013). These relationships can start once the video personality shares specific attributes, such as certain preferences. According to the social cognitive theory children can learn from these video characters, by acquiring information through attention, retention, and motivation to perform the media character's behaviour. In fact, Rideout, Vandewater and Watella (2003) argue parents report that almost 97% of children under the age of six own toys or other products associated with their favoured media character. They are seen as play characters, because they are part of children's everyday home experiences. These interactions are triggered once the onscreen video character talks directly to the viewer (Lauricella et al. 2013). Consequently, the more children are exposed to the character, the more they take on a more special meaning to children. One form of user-generated content targeted at children are toy unboxing videos. While these videos are extensively explained in the following paragraphs, first a brief overview of contemporary toy unboxing video channels are provided.

### *2.1.2 Contemporary toy unboxing video channels*

The volume of toy unboxing videos has exploded the past recent years (Kelly, 2014). In 2015, the Guardian announced that 'DC Toys Collector' was the second best viewed YouTube channel in 2014 (Dredge, 2014). This YouTube channel currently has over 10 million subscribers which is nowadays almost an accepted standard, as most toy unboxing channels have millions of followers. For instance, Ryan's ToyReview has over 14 million subscribers, CKN Toys over 6 million, and EvanTube over 5 million subscribers. The YouTube channels grow daily with thousands of followers, as example, CKN Toys gained the last 30 days around more than 512 thousand followers. The creators of the videos get paid per 'monetized' view, this means that viewers have to watch enough of the video for advertisements to appear. However, since 2017 YouTube made a change in their partner program, as creators will only be able to turn on monetization until they reach the 10.000 views (Popper, 2017). Though, this does not seem hard to reach for popular unboxing

channels as EvanTube, since he obtained only in the month May 2018 almost 46 million views (Socialblade, June 2018). Furthermore, Ryan's ToyReview is currently rated 3<sup>th</sup> place on the YouTube video rank and number 107<sup>th</sup> place on the global subscriber rank. On top of that, his estimated yearly earnings are between 139.9 thousand to 2.2 million euros. This data indicates the large interest of viewers to watch those videos. However, when analysing Dutch toy unboxing videos on YouTube these have significantly less subscribers. This may be due to the fact less citizens speak the Dutch language, compared to the English language. For instance, the Dutch toy unboxing channel ByJill currently has over 19 thousand YouTube subscribers. However, Dutch toy unboxing channels in which adults demonstrate the act of unboxing seem to have a higher number of subscribers. For instance, Family Toys Collector has over 134 thousand, Speel met Mij over 53 thousand, and Juf Jannie over 83 thousand subscribers (Socialblade, June 2018). The upcoming section will explain the content of the toy unboxing videos more extensively.

## **2.2 Concept definition of toy unboxing videos on YouTube**

At first glance, the concept of toy unboxing videos seems to be rather self-explanatory and refers to the literal process of unboxing a specific toy. In the academic field scientists have defined the act as the process of opening, assembling and demonstrating new purchases, mostly related to commercial products such as toys or gadgets (Brown, 2016; Craig & Cunningham, 2017; Marsh, 2015). Even the Oxford Dictionaries accepted the word 'unboxing' in 2015, by referring to: "An act or instance of removing a newly purchased product from its packaging and examining its features, typically when filmed and shared on a social media site" (Oxford Dictionary 2018). This indicates the term is widely accepted and directly associated with filming and uploading the act to a social media platforms. Generally speaking, the YouTube videos are mainly targeted at toddlers in the two-to-five-year-old age range, also to be referred to as pre-schoolers, whom are also the initial target group for the toys. The videos often follow a typical structure, namely the performer describes the toy while unboxing it for the first time and discusses matters such as the packaging, the colours, the smell, hidden toys, and the unboxer often expresses the thrill he or she experiences. When looking more closely at the various channels on YouTube, two distinctions can be made between particular types of toy unboxing videos. The first toy unboxing video category contains a rather simplistic setting, mainly consisting of a pair of disembodied hands with no on-camera host. This type is intentionally filmed from the viewpoint of the child viewer (Thompson, 2016), creating a setting where it almost seems as if the viewing is opening the toy him or herself. The video is narrated often by an adult or a combination of an adult and a child, and some quiet background music is played. One popular video channel of this type

are videos featuring chocolate Kinder Surprise Eggs, and the gifts inside these eggs. These channels are amongst the most popular toy unboxing channels, with several millions of views daily. The second type of toy unboxing videos contains a visible on-camera child or adult host who is unboxing the toy. One of the most popular video channels of this type is Ryan's ToyReview, where the child host opens a toy presented by his or her parents, who also record and upload the video to YouTube. On the whole, citizens who specialize in the videos are usually ordinary people, with no specific relationship to the brand whose produce they display. Nevertheless, the LA Times claimed that children are more difficult to reach through traditional media, and for that reason YouTube is the new territory for toy companies to master (Li, 2015). In like manner, groups of parents are concerned the toy unboxing videos are a form of advertising, and that toy brands sponsor free toys in order to increase brand exposure (Brown, 2017). Despite these assumptions, this does not always seem the case or the host does not always disclose this in the videos.

Furthermore, several researchers aimed to explore the phenomenon of toy unboxing videos related to a broad scope of research questions. For instance, case studies are conducted of how the videos are consumed (Marsh, 2016; Thompson, 2016), how popular toy unboxing channels function as influencers of brands (Ramos-Serrano & Herrero-Diz, 2016), or how new approaches should be created to regulate the forms of creator labour in toy unboxing videos (Craig & Cunningham, 2017). Nevertheless, very limited scholarship is devoted on the issue of grasping the viewing experience of children of toy unboxing videos, and none on portraying the experiences through the viewpoint of the parents. According to Marsh (2015) the videos could be interest-driven and reflect the interests in toys and artefacts of children, children could retrieve pleasure from the act of watching others opening presents, and there may be emotional pulls towards the opening sound of the paper, the hands unwrapping and the sound of the toy being played. However, she argued several points are speculations and it is our duty to try to understand the phenomenon, and to understand how this practise related to children's everyday lives.

## **2.3 From reviewing to unboxing videos on YouTube**

This section describes how toy unboxing videos have become a distinctive form of user-generated videos apart from product reviewing videos. What is the added value for consumers to watch such videos and what makes toy unboxing videos important for society.

### *2.3.1 The purpose of product reviewing videos*

On a daily base large numbers of videos are placed on social media, which makes the internet a boundless information source. The most popular user-generated videos on YouTube are video blogs, music videos (such as fan videos), live materials (performances), or informational content such as product reviews (Burgess & Green, 2009). During the past

several years, the phenomenon of product reviewing videos has attracted a significant amount of research in the field of media, telecommunications, cultural industries, policies and practice, with often varying and sometimes contradicting results. Overall, one could conclude that reviewing videos are often produced by ordinary citizens and uploaded on social video sharing platforms, including YouTube. For instance, customer review videos are rather popular amongst adults especially in the field of electronic games (Hong, 2013). This phenomenon has been identified by academics as 'game modding' and can be referred to as the performance of "demonstrated interest in the activity of modifying existing game content and sharing their alternations online" (Hong, 2013, p. 984). Furthermore, besides the factor of demonstrated interest, reviewing videos are mainly created to help users conduct research on specific products or services. As within these videos, opinions, ratings and tests are displayed, with the main purpose to inform others and has the potential to influence purchase decisions. Therefore, reviewing videos have the ability to minimize uncertainty of consumers towards specific products and its performances, since they can visually see how it performs in real life (Xu, Chen, Santhanam, 2015).

However, then why are user-generated customer reviews endorsed over traditional advertisements or text reviews. If one would take the Media-Richness Theory (MRT), it is argued that richer and more personal communication media are more effective for communication of complex messages than less rich media (Draft & Lengel, 1983). This theory also states that no form of communication media is similarly in their function to communicate or even to change the users' understanding. While it is negotiable if the demonstration and explanation of product performances are of complex nature, it can be used to impact the viewers understanding of the product. According to Draft and Lengel (1983) the more knowledge can be integrated through the medium, the richer it is. In their research they determine face-to-face communication as the richest media form because it can provide immediate feedback. Also, it allows the viewer to observe multiple cues, such as body language, facial expression and tone of voice, which transfers a meaning transcending the mere spoken message. Based on this theory, review videos are encompassed as important because the video performer speaks in a direct manner to the viewer. Although there is no immediate way to provide feedback in spoken language, the platform YouTube does allow the viewer to place comments underneath the video. Furthermore, the notion of helpfulness can be important to our society, since in the videos much learning can be pumped by means of providing meaningful insights about the product. Simultaneously, the viewer can observe the personal opinion of the performer through the various cues, hence the videos are a powerful and helpful tool to motivate the viewer to purchase a product or discourage him or her to buy it.



### *2.3.2 The growing importance of toy unboxing videos*

Even though product unboxing videos are rather popular amongst the adult population for years, children also seem to endorse such user-generated videos. Generally speaking, children are the primary target group for toy brands, and therefore it may be unsurprising that the interests of children are rather focused on videos containing toys. Hence various YouTube channels contain the act of toy unboxing, often created, uploaded and performed by adults with childlike voices or children (Craig & Cunningham, 2017). Even though the uploading of content to sharing platforms is currently done by a small group of children, there is a growing area of interest and children are longing for online content created by their peers (Marsh, 2015). According to Marsh (2015), in this transmedia play world the favoured media characters in children's lived imaginations are currently self-made YouTube celebrities instead of traditional celebrities in the past. Even though children have most likely always produced ideas for other children, online communities such as YouTube enhance this peer-to-peer sharing to be more rapid and universally focussed. Hence the sharing of toy unboxing ideas taps into a whole new area of interest for children.

However, one may therefore question the added value of toy unboxing in comparison to reviewing a product. The act of unboxing is often already an element of the product reviews, yet in the unboxing videos this process seemed to be stretched. One clear difference is that reviews need to be credible, by means of providing expertise and trustworthiness to the viewer (Ohanian, 1990). For instance, expertise could be provided by the reviewer by presenting an authentic and adequate evaluation of a particular product, and trust can be gained by appearing to create with the main purpose to present the product attributes instead of persuading the viewer for commercial interests. However, for unboxing the notion of credibility seems to be of less importance to children, as the video performer only superficially shows how the toy works, instead of technically reviews the product's pros or cons. In terms of the MRT a concrete message within the toy unboxing videos seems to be lacking, however the videos may be helpful for children to formulate a specific discourse regarding the toy. In addition, in the videos where a child host visibly unboxes toys the video viewer may be influenced by the body language and tone of voice of the child, to transfer the message of approval or disapproval. Due to the lack of certainty, the research to investigate how parents portray their children's toy unboxing viewing experience is of high importance. It can help outline as what exact tool and purposes the videos serve, and how this is experienced by children through the eyes of their parents.

## **2.4 Unboxing Therapy: motivations for children to view toy unboxing videos**

This section presents two main perspectives regarding how parents may give reason to their children's motivation to view toy unboxing videos on YouTube. The first perspective entails that toy unboxing videos are watched to improve children's future life events, and the second perspective entails that viewing toy unboxing videos is an exercise of sensation and curiosity.

### *2.4.1 Viewing unboxing videos to improve future life events*

The motivation to why citizens view unboxing videos could be related to what critics in media refer to as 'unbox therapy'. By offering online citizens comforts only through watching the unboxing video, it would feel as the viewers likewise owns the (expensive) products (Morrison, 2015). However, there is little empirical evidence to support this line of argumentation. One could consider Loewenstein and Prelec's (1993) research to help identify how parents make sense of their children's viewing of toy unboxing videos on YouTube, and how this process might lead to specific outcomes spaced over time. The scholar's statement regarding the 'preference for improvement' could apply to this phenomenon. In their research the authors explored how citizens make intertemporal choices affecting certain life events, and the preference of improvement entails that people generally prefer events that improves over time. Correspondingly, it may be that the following life events of children may improve over time as their curiosity of watching unboxing videos on YouTube may be translated to other behaviour in the future. For instance, they may be more eager to complete certain responsibilities on school, as they are curious to learn more about new subjects. Therefore, parents may take on this assumption that their children view the videos to improve their future life events. Hsee and Abelson (1991) claimed that improvement does not rely merely on the amount of improvement but also on the speed of improvement. They identified that once individuals played a game in which their probability of winning increased over time they rated the activity more satisfying than those in the position with decreasing probabilities. Hence once children view toy unboxing videos and in a fast pace several toys are opened, parents may make sense of this process that their children derive a satisfying feeling from this. Helson (1964) argued that within this process the term 'adaptation' also leads to a preference for improving series of events. He claimed people adapt to ongoing stimuli over time, thus people imagine themselves experiencing the event and adapt to the standards of the experience. Based on this assumption, parents may perceive that once children watch unboxing videos, they adapt to the standards of the experience, and react negative or positive on deviations from such standards. For instance, children may adapt to the standard of feelings of ownership of the product, and therefore desire to own the product in their real life as well.

#### *2.4.2 Experiencing the toy unboxing story*

Furthermore, when it comes to unboxing videos, how parents feel information is experienced by their children could be analysed through pre-established models. For instance, Lang (2000) developed an information-processing model which is appropriate for analysing how mediated messages are experienced during television viewing. Two presumptions are taken, first that people are information processors themselves, and secondly a person is able to process information only in a limited manner. How viewers encode television content first starts with the constant selection of information (both consciously and unconsciously) and encoding it into short-term memory. They claim that two types of information are most prominently selected by individuals for encoding. First, information which is significant for the goals of the viewer. Meaning that parents may perceive that once their child watches the unboxing video it leads up to reaching a specific goal, for instance for their child to gain knowledge on the product. Secondly, information that is either “novel, unexpected, or representative of change in the environment” (p. 52). The latter connects to Sukalla et al.’s (2016) perspective. To help identify how parents make sense of their children’s experience of toy unboxing videos, one could investigate how parents may think their child experiences the story within the unboxing video. While the videos generally involve the process of showing, opening and demonstrating the toy, each individual may respond differently to the narrative within the unboxing videos. Therefore, to analyse how parents may construct their children’s experience one could use Sukalla et al.’s (2016) research on how humans respond to sensational stories in general. Parents may perceive that their child experiences the performance of toy unboxing as an exciting, surprising or sensational exercise. According to the researchers the response to sensational content can also be called the ‘orienting response’ or in a simpler form the ‘what is it’ response (p. 847). They claim that once a program involves a sudden surprising event, the viewer will be alerted to pay closer attention. The viewer develops a new relationship with the protagonist in the novel, or in the case the demonstrator within the video. The scholars suggest that the process of understanding how surprise is structured in one’s mind can be examined to a wide spread of research questions, thus this perspective could be related to the unboxing phenomenon. For instance, parents may perceive that their children are surprised by the toy inside the box, or surprised by the response of the demonstrator. Parents may thereupon take on the discourse that the surprise structure in the narrated videos is a motivating factor for their children to view the videos.

The unboxing viewing behaviour is relevant to study because the actual motivations and implications for watching those videos are not academically outlined yet. If Loewenstein and Prelec’s (1993) assumptions would be followed one could say children are cognitively involved by having specific reasoning for watching these videos on YouTube. If children view

these videos to improve their future life events it is relevant to detect how their choices may affect other behaviour in the future. They may also adapt to the toy unboxing experience in various ways by expressing a specific attitude to their observers. Secondly, children's viewing behaviour can be related to the surprising and sensational scenes within those videos. They may be emotionally involved with the products and characters within the videos. While children are less capable to reproduce and reflect on this behaviour to others, it is proper to retrieve the viewpoints from their closest everyday bystanders, or in other words their parents. Parents can have the function to translate their behaviour into meaningful and extensive observations. The two main perspectives outlined in the literature could be supported by the gathered parents as they witness cognitive and emotional involvement of their children with the videos, or turn down the assumptions by asserting contradictory behaviours of their children.

## **2.5 Parents' sense-making about their children's digital media use**

Considering that technology is increasingly adopted into the lives of both millennials and young children, parents play an important role in the use of technology. The following section involves studies which are conducted on the involvement of parents in their children's digital media use. According to O'Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011), how parents understand technology affects the monitoring and perception of their children's online behaviour, hence this may also affect how parents make sense of their children's toy unboxing viewing experiences. The relevance of the perspective of the parents are outlined below, and the four sub-questions are introduced with the reasoning and purpose behind these questions.

### *2.5.1 Influences on parental mediation of online habits of children*

Parents or guardians of children are often accountable for what children watch on YouTube (Boyd, Hargittai, Schultz & Palfrey, 2011). In the results of multinational research network EU kids online (2012) is concluded that parents are the monitors of the online habits of their children. Namely, 85% of the parents restricted children to disclose personal information, 63% restricted them from uploading and 57% from downloading content (Livingstone, Haddon, Görzig & Ólafsson, 2012). Moreover, parents are advised not to allow young children under the age of thirteen to watch video content on YouTube, because children's personal information is at risk. Even though many parents are capable to use the technology that their children are using, there are also parents who lack basic understanding of social communication platforms. This is due to a shortage of technical abilities or lack of time to keep up with the fast changing internet landscape. In consequence, children are also likely to influence their parents, and are even considered active agents influencing their parents' media use. Nelissen and van Den Bulk (2018) argue children guide their parents how to use

digital media, especially for newer media forms and devices. Despite this, O’Keeffe and Clarke-Pearson (2011) claim children of a young age are still in need of parental involvement to determine if they use reliable online resources and interpret information correctly.

Livingstone et al. (2015) took these assumptions into consideration and investigated the concept more in-depth. They identified different socioeconomic factors which influence parents digital mediation, such as income and education. Within their large international study they identified different approaches in terms of digital monitoring, based upon Baumrind’s (1991) styles of parenting. First of all, in line with previous research, they showed that less advantaged parents (low income and low educated) often feel less confident than their children in the use of digital media, and are therefore less able to actively mediate their engagement with digital devices. For this reason, parents imply a more restrictive approach with set rules fitted to their daily routines, often related to limited screen time or use it as a part of reward-punishment system. Secondly, the research showed that low income yet highly educated parents both have sufficient digital skills and high levels of self-efficiency in internet use, hence they are more confident in managing children’s digital use. Overall, they prefer active mediation of children’s digital media use at home. This group of parents is likewise more aware of the possible risks of the digital environment, such as online bullying and strangers contacting children, and are less persuaded. Therefore, they take on an authoritative or permissive approach and remain in overall control while still practising responsive parenting. Lastly, for high income and high educated parents strategies are varied. In one way parents feel that digital technologies are a useful asset to their children lives, however on the other they fear psychological consequences caused by digital media, such as the risk of online bullying. Consequently, they apply hybrid strategies in reaction to certain situation, such as regulating digital media only when problems occur. For instance, some parents apply more rules to monitor their children’s use of digital media but are ready to change these in order to get a more appropriate balance of freedom and protection. While other parents apply more clear limits on the use of digital media, since there are confident in their ability to instruct their children.

### *2.5.2 Parental strategies to mediate online behaviour of children*

Zaman et al. (2016) investigated which strategies Flemish parents apply to mediate their children’s digital media use. They did not focus primarily on the socioeconomic factors as Livingstone et al. (2015), but identified which dimensions may occur in terms of mediation and co-use. They argue parents use five types of restrictive mediation, concerning: time, device, content, location and purchase. Also, two type of co-use appeared, which are the parent as the helper and the parent as the buddy. While the helper guides their children when they use a digital platform or when they face problems, the buddy shares certain media

practices for recreational purposes. The authors claim the strategy of participatory learning and distant mediation are key. Meaning that on the one hand co-use and active mediation appears often amongst parents who want to invest in their children's knowledge and skills. On the other hand, distant mediation appears when parents take distance from their children's media usage while still keeping an eye on what is occurring.

According to Valkenburg and Piotrowski (2017) a potential explanation of this mediating behaviour are the results of a shifting balance in power within households. While in the 1950's families took on the traditional top-down communication style where parents were the decision makers, nowadays parents value it more if their children are included in family decisions. In order for their children to practise choice-making and unfold their personal identities. These changes go along with parents wanting to be their children's friends rather than a character of authority, by being more tolerant, feelings of guilt and just wanting what is best for their children. The researchers also draw on the notion of Privatization of media use, allowing family members to retreat to their personal spaces for entertainment and communication with people outside their family. Bovill and Livingstone (2001) claim this is often due to a media-rich bedroom culture, as the increase of personally owned media may ease children's use of individual space rather than the shared family space.

## **2.6 The sub-research questions**

Building on the aforementioned considerations, four individual sub-research questions were formulated in order to answer the main research question.

*Sub-question 1: How do parents speak about their children's viewing experiences?*

The first sub-research question is posed to outline the discourse Dutch parents have regarding toy unboxing videos in general and their child's viewing behaviour. As presented in the literature the largest toy unboxing channels on YouTube are often of American origin. In comparison, the Dutch channels have less followers yet are relatively large as well. This question helps to make clear how aware parents are of the videos, their child's toy unboxing video preferences and of their child's viewing behaviour. Parental knowledge of the videos may impact how they formulate their opinions and make sense of their child's viewing experiences. This sub-research question is less based on existing literature, since it can shed light on a new phenomenon which has not been researched yet. In-depth conversation can result in the current discourse of Dutch parents on their child's experiences of viewing toy unboxing channels on YouTube.

*Sub-question 2: What do parents think the current implications are for their children in terms of viewing toy unboxing videos?*

The current implications which this question aimed to answer were based on previously established literature. First of all, based on Loewenstein and Prelec (1993) research, Dutch parents may perceive that their child adapts to the standards of the toy unboxing experience. Since the videos present a large amount of new toys, a potential implication may be that parents feel their child adapts to the experience of ownership of particular products. In practice, children may express this desire by requesting similar toys. Secondly, adapting to the toy unboxing experience could also be in the form of copying the unboxing behaviour, meaning children open and assemble toy similarly and patiently as in the videos. Furthermore, as Laurinella et al. (2013) argues para-social relationships have shown to enhance children's learning from media characters, and the MRT suggests rich media have the ability to integrate lots of knowledge in the videos about the product (Daft & Lengel, 1983), it could be the parents notice their child learns from the videos. The last implication this questions addresses was based on Sukalla, Shoenberger, Bolls' (2016) and Lang's (2000) research. Parents may perceive their child's curiosity to new toy unboxing videos increases because they are exposed to sensational or surprising elements within the videos. Furthermore, likewise based on Sukalla et al. (2016) research, children may develop a 'what is it?' response, increasing their curiosity to how the toys unboxed in the videos appear and how they are assembled.

*Sub-question 3: Which strategies do parents apply to mediate their children's toy unboxing viewing behaviour?*

As stated in previous literature (Zaman et al., 2016; Livingstone et al. 2015) there are large differences in how parents monitor their children's media behaviour. While most studies focus on children's digital media 'use', one could negotiate whether children watching toy unboxing videos actively 'use' the platform YouTube or merely view. Still, it is valuable to detect how Dutch parents monitor this behaviour, as it may affect how they perceive their children's toy unboxing viewing experience. Baumrind's (1991) parenting strategies can be used as a helpful tool to identify and categorize the dynamic restrictions parents apply. Also, Valkenburg and Piotrowski (2017) research can be used to outline the current shifts in balance of power and communication within Dutch households, which may impact their monitoring strategies of toy unboxing videos on YouTube or even the use of electronic devices in general. Even though the purpose of this study is not to present the differences amongst parents in terms of socio-economic status and their monitoring strategies, it could potentially confirm or contradict Livingstone et al.'s (2015) statements.

*Sub-question 4: What do parents think the future results are for their children in terms of viewing toy unboxing videos?*

Similar to sub-question two, the future results were based on literature from Loewenstein and Prelec (1993) and Sukalla et al. (2016). While the second question focussed on what parents currently notice, this question focused on what parents consider will happen in the future regarding the same behaviour. The questions in the interview guide therefore tap into if parents expect their child to copy the toy unboxing behaviour in the future, if they would expect their child to develop in larger desire to own the products in the videos. And lastly, if parents would expect their child to watch unboxing videos less or more frequently.



### **3. Method**

In the following paragraphs the methodology is outlined. First of all, the choice of method, sampling approach and data collection procedure are explained. Thereafter, the operationalization process and data analysis strategy. Eventually, the authenticity and trustworthiness, and ethical considerations are presented.

#### **3.1 Choice of Method**

The qualitative approach to collect the data was by conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with Dutch parents whose children or child are/is in the 2-to-12 age category. The benefit of this method was that it allowed the researcher to understand the topic from the perspective of the interviewee, to eventually detect how parents portrayed the activity and experience of viewing toy unboxing videos of their children. The advantages of conducting interviews was that each respondent was able to give meaning to the behaviour of their child in their own words, without being influenced by other participants. Personal feelings were shared, and the interviewer had the option to ask more detailed questions or ask to clarify ambiguities. Furthermore, the methodological advantage of interviewing parents in comparison to children was that practical and ethical issues were avoided which may have occurred when interviewing minors. According to Christensen and James (2008) it is commonly believed that children lack the communicative and social skills that are the base of good respondents. Interviewing parents could be considered as less time consuming and allowed the researcher to avoid parental consent issues. The disadvantage is that parental observations about their children may be diverse from the child's own perceptions. Then again, it is hardly possible to conduct actual in-depth conversations with very young children, and there are little to no instruments to investigate this specific toy unboxing experience.

The decision was made to develop an interview guide including mainly open-ended questions to structure to interviews, yet which still allowed the respondents to fully express themselves by using their own words (please see appendix A). This guide also facilitated the researcher to recognize patterns by the routine of continuously comparing the interview data per topic. The approaches taken in the interview guide were primarily inspired by the studies of Lauricella et al. (2013), Loewenstein and Prelec (1993), Sukalla et al. (2016) Zaman et al. (2016) and Livingstone et al. (2016). The questions in the guide were based upon the four sub-research questions.

#### **3.2 Sampling**

The unit of analysis were Dutch parents (or guardians), who have children in the 2-to-12 age category and are allowed to watch toy unboxing videos on YouTube. The actual age of the

parents varied, as long as their child or children were within the previously mentioned age category. The motivation behind this unit of analysis was partly based on research of Livingstone et al. (2012; 2015) that parents are the monitors of the online habits of their children yet sometimes parents lack basic understanding of social communication platforms. Hence both children and parents have the ability to influence one another, especially for newer media forms and devices. Therefore, it was of value to detect the power young children have in influencing their parents on what to watch on YouTube, and how parents make sense of new online phenomena such as toy unboxing videos.

This research implied the non-probability sampling method maximum variation. In the theoretical framework was argued that parental monitoring strategies are influenced by the social background and education level of the parents. Therefore, this allowed the researcher to understand how unboxing videos are seen and understood amongst different variation of parents. There was no adequate list of the research sample, thus in order to gather the participants this research made use of the network of the researcher, which could also be referred to as the snowball sampling technique (Gilbert, 2001). This technique refers to the process of accumulation, as each respondent suggested other subjects with the same characteristics for the next interview (Babbie, 2008). The researcher must, however, be aware that her personal connection to the research participants may have affected the conversation and should prevent the social desirability bias.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The research participants were recruited between February to April 2018. The phenomenon was examined in one specific moment in time, hence the cross-sectional design was implied. The data was gathered between March to May 2018. The researcher decided to schedule the interviews beforehand, based on the availability of the parents. The researchers was also flexible in terms of interview location as it was key to provide a comfortable environment for the participants, in which they could fully express their opinions and have a natural conversation. The choice was made to conduct one test-interview, to clear out any ambiguous, irrelevant or unclear questions. All interviews were recorded by the interviewer with a smartphone, the advantage of this device was its relative unobtrusiveness and the fact that no potential important information would be missed. The interviewer asked the respondent's permission for recording the conversation through the consent form. The interviews were saved on an external hard drive and eventually transcribed to verbatim (please see appendix D).

The data analysis started early, as the interviewer kept track of field notes consisting of outstanding answers, or notable patterns which were occurring. Also, during the interview

transcription phase the interviewer came across several re-occurring patterns, which were then be marked down. The interviewer did not make use any scientific software, but analysed the data by using pen and paper and Microsoft Word to mark the text. After the transcription a schedule was created in which all interviews were summarized per sub-category, and the most important quotes were added (please see appendix E). In these summaries overlapping or contradicting answers could be easily detected by the researcher. Based on this overview preliminary results were written which formed the base of the final results section.

### *3.3.2 Profile of the participants*

In total, eleven interviews were conducted, lasting minimum 45 and maximum 65 minutes. The notion of theoretical saturation was implied, meaning that once repetitive answers came forth and each topic was extensively examined, enough data was collected (Bryman, 2012). Overlapping answers were noticed after approximately seven interviews already, but after eleven interviews the researcher decided enough data was collected.

The respondents consisted of a diverse group of individuals (please see appendix C for the list of research participants). In total, three respondents were male, and eight respondents female. The respondents all had at least one child watching the toy unboxing videos on YouTube, and the ages of those children varied between zero to eleven years old. The ages of the participants ranged from 29 to 48 years old. It occurred one time that two parents from the same household were questioned, yet both parents were questioned individually to prevent the one parent from influencing the other. Nine interviews were conducted at the personal residence of the participant and two were conducted at the work of the participant. Most participants were not related to the researcher whatsoever, while three respondents were related personally. The participants were able to choose to conduct the interview in English or Dutch, eventually all interviews were held in Dutch as the interviewees were best able to express themselves in this language.

## **3.4 Operationalization**

The interviews were divided into four categories based on the sub-research questions (please see appendix A for the interview guide). The following section identifies what concepts the researcher tapped into, and how the questions were structured.

*Sub-question 1: How do parents speak about their children's viewing experiences?* The first sub-question was posed to gain insights into how Dutch parents generally feel about their children's toy unboxing viewing behaviour. Thus: why, when, how long, and on which platforms does their child view the videos. The researcher asked the participant to recall any

toy unboxing video examples, which indicated if the parent was aware of the actual content of the videos. The knowledge of the videos could impact how the parent perceived the videos and the viewing experiences of their child. For instance, if the parent was highly aware of the videos and personally was in favour of the content portrayed in the videos, this could impact how they spoke about their child's viewing experiences, compared to when a parent personally disliked the content.

*Sub-question 2: What do parents think the current implications are for their children in terms of viewing toy unboxing videos?* During the interviews this section focused on a variety of potential implications. For instance, since the videos often incorporate new toys parents may feel the videos led to a desire for their children to own those specific toys as well. The researcher asked if the parent ever noticed their child requested similar toys as in the videos. Furthermore, since the child may adapt to the unboxing experiences, the parent was asked if they feel their child copies the toy unboxing behaviour and as a result extracts more pleasure from the act of toy unboxing itself. The last possible implication which was discussed with the parents was if they experienced that their child more frequently requested to watch toy unboxing videos in general, due to the surprising elements within the videos.

*Sub-question 3: Which strategies do parents apply to mediate their children's toy unboxing viewing behaviour?* This section focused on the differences in how Dutch parents monitor their children's media behaviour. For instance, once a parent claims to take on a restrictive approach in terms of when and how long their child may watch the videos, on which devices to watch, which exact content to view on YouTube, or on which platforms to view the content. This could lead to a difference in portraying how their child experiences toy unboxing videos on YouTube, compared to when a parent takes distance from their child's media use while still keeping an eye on what is occurring, and actively anticipates on co-use.

*Sub-question 4: What do parents think the future results are for their children in terms of viewing toy unboxing videos?* Firstly, Dutch parents were asked if they felt in the future their child will copy and derive more pleasure from the act of toy unboxing itself. Secondly, if parents felt that once their child would continue to watch toy unboxing videos on YouTube he or she may develop a larger desire to own the products exposed in the videos. Lastly, the researcher asked if parents could indicate that over time they feel their child will either watch more or less unboxing videos.

### **3.5 Data Analysis Strategy**

As a research tool this study made use of the so called constructivist grounded theory approach first identified by Glaser and Strauss (1967). While the actual grounded theory approach holds the premise that researchers hope to discover a theory that is grounded in

information from participants (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The constructivist approach aims to emerge a middle range theory of situated social behaviour in relation to observed practices and phenomena. Since the interview guide was based on previously established literature the researcher could not ignore all preconceived ideas on the phenomenon, therefore the constructivist approach was most appropriate since this emphasizes on the 'situatedness' of the research (Clarke, 2003). During the data analysis process social patterns and structures were conceptualized through the process of constant comparison of the answers given by the respondents per topic (please see appendix E for an example of the analysis of the data). The process involved multiple stages of data collection by means of interviews and the correction and relationship of categories of information (Creswell, 2014). This also forced the researcher to apply 'theoretical sensitivity', which meant she had to be open to reflect on empirical data with support of theoretical terms, a deductive research practise. The notion of constructivism of the grounded theory allowed the researcher to use her methods as flexible strategies, by always placing the priority of the specific phenomenon under study. Both the gained data as well as the analysis were shared experiences of the researcher and participants. Which meant that during the interviews questions were added or adjusted in the interview guide, if this led to a more insightful outcome. In like manner the results were also a construction, as the entire research process mirrored the researcher and the construction of the social world of the participants. The outcome was an interpretative representation of the world portrayed by the researcher and the parents, and therefore is not an objective exact picture of the world. This approach would build new forms of understanding on how parents portray their children's experiences, derived from cautious observation practices.

### **3.6 Trustworthiness & Authenticity**

One must also recognize the potential pitfalls of the methodology and issues regarding validity and reliability of the research. The notion of reliability and validity are common in quantitative research, however these concepts are redefined for qualitative research (Stenbacka, 2001). First of all, while reliability often relates to external criteria such as stability and consistency (Gilbert, 2001), to ensure reliability in qualitative research the notion of trustworthiness was central (Golafshani, 2003). In like manner, researchers have developed their own concept of validity by using terms such as quality, rigor and authentic, which this research therefore also made use of.

First of all to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher provided a thick description of the particular phenomenon, since this study entailed the investigation of a small group in society of individuals sharing certain characteristics (Geertz, 1973). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) this thick description allows others to make judgements about the transferability of

findings to another setting. An empirical issue of this method is that the phenomenon of unboxing videos on YouTube may not be transferable in a somewhat similar context in another time. Therefore, the idea of dependability was applied in this research and relates to the aspect of keeping record of all phases of the research process (Bryman, 2012). The researcher kept track of the initial research objective and problem definition, selection of potential research participants, field notes, transcribed interview data, and data analysis choices in an attainable way (please see the appendices).

Besides this, the researcher recognized that complete objectivity is impossible in social research, which relates to the concept of confirmability. However, it was important while collaborating with participants within the personal circle of the researcher she did not allow personal values or personal relationships overrule the conduct of the research and findings. Furthermore, to achieve authenticity, it was crucial the researcher fairly represented different viewpoints since the interview guide was based on various pre-established research perspectives, even when they contradicted assumptions of other scholars. Lastly, based on Yardley's (2000) criteria for qualitative research, the research process had to be transparent and coherent. The researcher took a reflective stance about the implications of the chosen methods, decisions and knowledge of the social world she created (Bryman, 2012). The researcher acknowledged that interviews are a social construction, and that the researcher's perception and chosen angle of investigation regarding unboxing videos had an influence on the conversation. Also, the researcher was reflexive of the chosen sampling technique, as participants from within a connected network were gathered. This could have led to a source of bias of the research topic, therefore it was essential once analysing the gathered data to assess and report the representativeness of the research sample and any probable sources of bias (Gilbert, 2001).

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

The research considered various ethical issues. First of all, because the research was conducted with people it was highly important the research participants were protected. The researcher developed report and promoted the integrity of the research. By means of disclosing the intentions, goals and purposes of the research, the researcher made sure no deception occurred. The participants were given a consent form in which clearly information regarding the research was stated, and the interview only took place once the participant agreed upon the given terms. The researcher did not pressure the participants into signing the consent forms. Moreover, as a researcher one must be sensitive to the needs of vulnerable populations (Creswell, 2014). Since the interview cover questions about the children of the participant, it could have made her/him feel uncomfortable. Therefore, the

researcher avoided collecting harmful information and anonymize the participant if requested.

Furthermore, during the data analysis it was important that the research was not influenced by the personal biases of the researcher. The researcher reported multiple perspectives and contrary findings, and did not disclose primarily positive results. Lastly, the researcher also bared in mind that the results of this study are not generalizable to a large population and identically replicable. However, the goal of this study was to focus on a selected contemporary phenomenon of toy unboxing videos where in-depth insights are a key component in the process, which provided knowledge to a specific community (Myers, 2000). Still, to assure credibility the researcher provided accurate descriptions of parents perceptions, in order for other parents who may share the experience to recognize it (Sandelowski, 1986).

## 4. Results

In the upcoming section the discovered findings based on the conducted interviews with Dutch parents are displayed. The results are structured in terms of the four sub-research questions, and categorized by sub-headings.

### 4.1 How parents speak about their children's toy unboxing viewing experiences

The purpose of this sub-research question was to identify the discourse Dutch parents have regarding toy unboxing videos on YouTube. First, by means of underlying how well the parents understand the content of the videos and how the videos emerged into the viewing preferences of their child. Secondly, their personal opinions towards the videos, thus how do they personally feel about the videos, such as the actors, the pace and the variety. Lastly, how they describe the viewing behaviour of the toy unboxing videos of their child, for instance the frequency, most preferred toy unboxing channels, and how captivated their child is by the videos.

#### 4.1.1 How toy unboxing videos became part of children's viewing preferences

Based on the conducted interviews, the explanations of Dutch parents to how toy unboxing videos emerged into the lives of their children were rather similarly. All parents clarified that their children were already frequently watching YouTube videos, and therefrom had the ability to click on other videos. Once their child clicked on the recommended section within the platform YouTube they entered the toy unboxing world, and the platform ensured the child was continuously exposed to other toy unboxing videos by the same or different toy unboxing channels. Because the children of the majority of interview participants were unable to or encountered difficulties in writing or reading, their only and quickest option was to open the application and immediately click on the previously watched videos. As a result, they ended up watching toy unboxing videos over and over again. Renee (38) mentioned: *"He always ends up watching it and that is what I find so clever of YouTube, that always by clicking on something you end up in a web of all sorts of nonsense in my eyes"*<sup>1</sup>. The actual ages from when their children started watching toy unboxing videos varied slightly. The youngest age which was mentioned was zero, because this child watched along with an older sibling, to approximately eight (with some exceptions). From that age onwards parents notice their child seems to obtain other interests, surpassing the simplicity of toy unboxing videos.

Six out of eleven parents expressed difficulties recalling the exact names of their child's most frequently watched toy unboxing channels. Instead they described the videos by

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<sup>1</sup> Renee (38): *"Hij komt er ook altijd weer op terecht en dat vind ik knap van YouTube in dit geval, dat je natuurlijk altijd door iets aan te klikken in een web komt van allemaal dit soort onzin in mijn ogen."*



the toy or toy brands opened in the videos. Overall, 'Surprise eggs', 'Playdoh', 'Playmobile', 'Lego' and 'Fireman Sam' toy unboxing videos were mentioned most frequently. Five parents mentioned the Surprise Egg videos were the starting point of the toy unboxing viewing of their children, and more videos were viewed after this. Furthermore, children's most favoured toy unboxing channels mentioned by parents were 'ToysCollector' (or the Dutch father with his two daughters), RyansToyReviews (or American boy opening large toys), and 'Speel met mij' (or the Dutch adult woman who unboxes and creates stories with Lego). Not all parents were aware of the variety of toy unboxing channels on YouTube, for instance Kimberly (29) had never heard of Dutch toy unboxing videos where adults unbox toys but was only familiar with American ones, while Marloes (36) was mainly familiar with the Dutch channels. However, seven parents mentioned their children watched both Dutch and foreign language toy unboxing channels. Apart from toy unboxing videos, parents also mentioned other YouTube videos their children are interested in, which showed a certain pattern since often the same videos were mentioned. It seems when children are in the search loop of toy unboxing often other user-generated videos emerge, such as videos of children playing in playgrounds (i.e. MonkeyTown), vlogging families (i.e. Koetlife, or De Bellinga's), or vlogging children (i.e. De Zoete Zusjes, or Jill).

#### *4.1.2 How parents personally make sense of toy unboxing videos*

The personal notions formed by Dutch parents about the toy unboxing videos their children watch was for five parents rather negatively. They expressed a tendency to dislike the videos, due to diverse matters. First of all, parents mentioned they detest the childish voices of the adult narrators within the Dutch toy unboxing channels, as Inge (38) mentioned: "*In particular I find that man very annoying, I am getting already a little irritated when I hear his voice*"<sup>2</sup>. She refers to the adult narrator in the Dutch 'ToysCollector' unboxing channel. Renee (38) also expressed great dislike towards this specific man, while Frank (42) highly dislikes the childish voice of the female Dutch adult narrator of potentially the channel 'Speel met Mij'. It is remarkable the adults are not averse to the voices of their opposite sex. Furthermore, Anika (38) mentioned she thinks the videos are long-winded, and the remaining parents mentioned they encounter the videos as nonsense or they just do not get why their son or daughter wants to watch the videos. While Marloes (36) pointed out she is unaware of the actual message and purposes of the unboxing videos, Beata (39) claims she acknowledges that the videos are partly commercial in the sense that they trigger children to purchase toys. However, parents are able to take distance from their personal viewpoints once they notice their child retrieves much joy from watching the videos. Also, by looking at

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<sup>2</sup> Inge (38): "*ik vind vooral die man vind ik heel erg vervelend, ik wordt al een beetje geïrriteerd als ik zijn stem hoor.*"

the videos from the perspective of the child parents are often more compatible to understand why the videos may be interesting. Jan-Willem (41) mentioned *“it is something new, toys, opening, it has a feeling of excitement or something so I get that”*<sup>3</sup>. Another highly important key factor to why parents allow their children to watch the videos is because they encounter the content of the videos as innocent. The videos cannot do any harm to their offspring, so if their children express great interest in the videos they are allowed to watch it. Kimberly (29) mentioned: *“I do not think it can do harm, no matter how old you are”*<sup>4</sup>. Also Marloes (36) stated: *“I do not really see any problems in it, therefore I am also not being difficult in watching it”*<sup>5</sup>. Parents therefore reject their personal notion of the videos, and place their children’s preferences first. Although, a large number of participants mentioned if the behaviour of their child would change negatively according to the videos, by for instance continuously requesting for toys presented in the videos, their disapproval towards the videos will transcend their child’s preferences. Not to mention, parents have experienced once their child moves away from the toy unboxing videos, they start to intervene in their child’s search process. Especially once toy unboxing videos are compared to other types of YouTube videos they seem harmless, as other videos are experienced as more provoking or aggressive by parents. Beata (39) mentioned: *“I am more afraid, not necessarily for the unboxing videos, but rather for actual violence or all sorts of things not good for his development”*<sup>6</sup>. Anika (38) for instance mentioned ‘De Zoete Zusjes’ feature in her eyes naughty children, and she feels her daughter can copy this behaviour which she discourages. Suzanne (37) mentioned family vlogging channels such as ‘Koetlife’ which she disfavours.

Besides this, Renee (38) explained there are different categories in the toys unboxing channels. The first consisting of Dutch toy unboxing channels where adults open toys, in these videos only the hands of the adult are visible and the video is narrated. The second are foreign language toy unboxing videos in which young children open toys, in these videos the child is entirely visible. Renee (38) thinks the reason to why Dutch videos are for the greater part created by adults instead of children is because adults have the ability to record themselves and upload it to YouTube, while children need assistance in this process. She thinks many parents will hesitate to film their child and create an account, she stated: *“I*

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<sup>3</sup> Jan-Willen (41): *“iets nieuws, speelgoed, openmaken, het heeft een gevoel van volgens mij opwinding of dus dat snap ik wel.”*

<sup>4</sup> Kimberly (29): *“ik denk niet dat er iets kwaads in kan, hoe oud je ook bent.”*

<sup>5</sup> Marloes (36): *“daar zie ik niet echt problemen in, daarom doe ik er ook niet zo moeilijk over om te kijken”.*

<sup>6</sup> Beata (39): *“Ik ben meer bang, niet zozeer voor die uitpak filmpjes, maar meer voor echt geweld bijvoorbeeld of allemaal andere dingen die gewoon niet goed zijn voor zijn ontwikkeling.”*

*cannot imagine that you are continuously filming your child who is unboxing something.”<sup>7</sup>*

Marloes (36) agrees with her line of thought. In contrary, Anika (38) and Kim (38) mentioned due to the simplicity of the unboxing videos they wished they came up with the idea themselves, however this does not indicate they would actually create such videos.

#### *4.1.3 How parents describe the toy unboxing viewing behaviour of their children*

In terms of children’s individual preferred toy unboxing videos, parents mentioned certain overlaps and differences. First of all, generally all parents mentioned their children often do not care about the language which is spoken in the videos, but claim it is all about the visuals. Beata (39) mentioned: *“It is more that he just watches, that he is really visually oriented.”<sup>8</sup>* Suzanne (37) claimed her children do not care about the language in the video nor who performs the unboxing act (man, woman or child), but it is all about the product being unboxed. Nonetheless, it seems parents are the driving factor in choosing the language of the videos. For instance, Anika (38) prefers if her daughter primarily watches Dutch toy unboxing videos, since her child is still in the process of learning to speak Dutch and she wants no other language to intervene. Frank (43) also prefers Dutch videos, but acknowledges there are not many Dutch videos available so therefore English is a good second option. Renee (38) and Rob (48) on the other hand think it is only good their children watch English videos, as they may increase their English vocabulary. Renee (38) is very reluctant to the Dutch ‘ToysCollector’ narrator voice, which only reinforces her preference of English videos. Overall, unboxing videos in which a certain Asian or Russian language is spoken are less preferred by parents and they always check the visuals of these videos since they cannot understand the language. Apart from Beata (39), she raises her son bilingual and consequently encourages him to watch not only Dutch but also Polish videos, in order for her son to practice the language.

Besides the language, parents did not observe their child has specific preferences in terms of children unboxing toys or adults unboxing toys in the videos. To support this argument, Beata (39) said: *“There is no difference, he does not react differently when an adult unboxes a toy compared to when a child does it”<sup>9</sup>*. As mentioned before, the most popular Dutch toy unboxing channels involve an adult narrator, while in some of the most popular American toy unboxing channels children perform the act of unboxing. One could therefore say children can develop a para-social relationship with any video personality once they share certain preferences, in this case their extreme interests in specific toys. The video

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<sup>7</sup> Renee (38): *“ik me niet voorstellen dat je de hele tijd je kind aan het filmen bent die dus iets aan het uitpakken is.”*

<sup>8</sup> Beata (39): *“het is meer dat hij gewoon kijkt, dat hij echt visueel ingesteld is.”*

<sup>9</sup> Beata (39): *“Het is niet het verschil dat hij als volwassenen het uitpakken dat hij anders reageert dan een kindje dat doet.”*

host not necessarily has to be a child him or herself, nor be personally visible in the videos. This outcome partly turns down Draft and Lengel's (1983) Media Richness Theory. As according to this approach communication in which lots of knowledge can be integrated and in which the viewer can observe multiple cues of the video character, such as body language, facial expression or tone of voice can be considered a rich form of media. However, in the case of many Dutch toy unboxing videos the video performer's body language or facial expressions are not visible, instead he or she only speaks in direct manner to the child through which knowledge is conveyed. Apparently, this media form can still be considered as rich because already enough learning is pumped in the videos by means of providing insights about the product, which is recognized as most important for the child.

Furthermore, almost all parents mentioned their child watches the same toy unboxing videos multiple times, because they are aware small children like repetition. Kim (38) said: *"This was already seen with the Teletubbies in the past, children seem to enjoy repetition."*<sup>10</sup> Another explanation provided for this behaviour was that parents argue small children are unable to type themselves, and for that reason remain in the same search loop by only clicking on the following video. Additionally, several differences were noticed between the preferred toy unboxing videos of girls and boys. Parents often claimed their son likes brands such Lego or Playmobile and dislikes girly videos. Some parents mentioned their daughter likes gender neutral videos such as Playdoh, but some also mentioned their daughter prefers to watch videos about horses or arts and craft channels. In all cases, the preferred toy unboxing videos by the child is directly related to the preferred toys the child likes to play with him or herself.

The frequency and devices on which children watch are dependent on parents' monitoring regulations (please see the third section for a more comprehensive explanation on this matter). The frequency of watching toy unboxing videos varied by 'once every three days' to 'at least once a day'. The devices on which their children watch the videos vary from 1) their smartphone or tablet, 2) their child's own smartphone or tablet or 3) the family television. Several parents mentioned children are often unaware the videos can also be watched on other devices, for reason that this is not offered or explained to the child. For instance, the child does not know they can watch the videos on a smart TV when they are only allowed to watch on the tablet. In continuance, some parents mentioned their child is captivated by what they watch and not easily distracted. Seven parents mentioned their children often quite easily swipe from one unboxing video to the next, Suzanne (37) for instance is annoyed by this behaviour as she thinks too many images and impulses are not good for children. Though, this behaviour may be translated to the findings of Hsee and

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<sup>10</sup> Kim (38): *"Dat zag je al met de Teletubbies vroeger, kinderen schijnen van herhaling te houden."*

Abelson (1991). They argued that the improvement of future life events does not rely only on the amount of improvement but also on the speed of improvement. Hence children may watch toy unboxing videos in a fast pace and observe several toys being opened quickly, as they will derive a more satisfying feeling from this. While these statements cannot be entirely confirmed by the interview data, there may be underlying factors to why children consume the videos in a fast pace.

The reasons to why their children enjoy watching toy unboxing videos on YouTube triggered a variety of answers by parents. Suzanne (37) and Kim (38) reflected their children's viewing behaviour to the viewing behaviour of adults. According to them, adults also watch soaps because of pure amusement and potentially interest in others' lives, and this also counts for children. Children enjoy watching other children interacting with toys as they like watching their peers in general. Kimberly (29) perceived the videos are just a form of amusement, she mentioned: *"Perhaps it is also a little easy watching, approachable"*<sup>11</sup>. According to Renee (38) her child cannot reproduce very well every single toy unboxing video he has seen, as he merely consumes. It is also therefore the opinion of parents in this research is very valuable. However, Frank (42) disagrees as his son often explains to his parents what he has seen, what each box contains, and what the purpose was of the specific toys. While parents have different opinions to why their child watches the videos, it appears based on their answers the main objective of children to watch the videos is to discover the purpose of the toys. In the following section this concept will be discussed more extensively.

## **4.2 Parents' thoughts on the current implications of viewing toy unboxing videos for their children**

The goal of the second sub-question was to understand how and if Dutch parents encounter implications for their children of viewing toy unboxing videos on YouTube. Several potential implications are discussed, such as, whether the parents observed resemblances between the behaviour in the videos and their child's behaviour. If the curiosity of the child is affected by the videos, the overlapping emotions between watching an unboxing videos and opening toys themselves, the implication of learning something from the videos, and also, the implication of addiction. Additionally, the significance of the toys unboxed within the videos for their children are discussed.

### *4.2.1 Current implications of watching toy unboxing videos*

In the interviews various implications of watching toy unboxing videos on YouTube were recognized. First of all, five parents mentioned they see resemblances between the toy unboxing videos their child watches and the way their child interacts with toys him or herself.

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<sup>11</sup> Kimberly (29): *"Het is misschien gewoon een beetje makkelijk kijken, laagdrempelig."*

Frank (42) for instance, mentioned his son imitates the videos when he play with his own Lego toys. In like manner, Beata (39) claimed she feels her son is not an extremely creative person and lacks inspiration on how to play with toys, for that reason she thinks the videos learn him how he can play and create imaginary worlds with his toys. Their observations can relate to Helson's (1964) assumptions regarding the notion of adaptation. He argued that citizens adapt to ongoing stimuli over time, and therefore imagine themselves experiencing the event and adapt to the standards of the experience. In this sense, children may adapt to the way others play with the toys in the videos, or even adapt to the emotions children encounter while playing in a specific way with toys. On the contrary, Suzanne (37) and Marloes (36) do not see this implication in the behaviour of their daughters, as their children can easily create stories based on their own imagination and do not adapt their stories according to the videos. Marloes (36) stated: "*Now she creates her own fantasy world more often and she learns how to play on her own.*"<sup>12</sup> On the whole, it differs per child how their creative skills are developed.

Nonetheless, parents share unanimously the opinion to detect zero resemblances between the toy unboxing behaviour in the videos and the toy unboxing behaviour of their own son or daughter. All parents mentioned when their child receives a toy it has to be opened very quickly. Jan-Willem (41) stated: "*When you see an unboxing video then it goes quite calm and everything will be exposed and placed down quite gently but I do not see that my daughter exactly copies or imitates this*"<sup>13</sup>. All parents mentioned their child does not pay attention to how their toy is opened nor the pace, instead once they receive it they quickly unwrap and unbox it. Suzanne (37) experienced that because of the videos her children only like the act of opening and assembling the received toys, but she thinks the act of playing with the toys derives to the background. Whereas Frank (43) mentioned his sons biggest goal at that point is to assemble the toys and to play with his new asset. Kim (38) thinks her children do not make the connection between their own unboxing behaviour and the videos at all. She said: "*I do not think they see it as someone who receives gifts, and that they also want it*"<sup>14</sup>. This was a rather important insight, as children are able to make a distinction between merely opening and playing with toys and the act of receiving gifts. Getting a gift is often linked to a birthday, Christmas or another specific occasion, whereby children are getting rewarded and are the true owners of a desired product. However, in the videos the entire fulfilment of receiving a toy, removing its wrapping paper and expressing gratefulness

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<sup>12</sup> Marloes (36): "*Ze is wel meer van dat ze nu haar eigen fantasie wereldje heeft en meer gaat, ja, zelf leren spelen.*"

<sup>13</sup> Jan-Willem (41): "*als je de unboxing video's ziet dan gaat dat redelijk kalm en wordt dat rustig allemaal in beeld gebracht en rustig neergelegd maar ik zie niet dat mijn dochter dat exact kopieert of na doet*".

<sup>14</sup> Kim (38): "*Ik denk niet dat zij het zien als iemand die cadeautjes krijgt, en dat ze dat ook willen.*"

to the giver is not included. It may also be therefore that children do not copy or even make the connection between unboxing a product themselves and the unboxing videos.

Furthermore, contradictory opinions were given when it comes to parents' ideas on whether their child's curiosity towards the toy is affected by the toy unboxing videos. For instance, Anika (38) indicated her daughter may get less curious and the element of surprise diminished because she already exactly knows what the box contains. In contrast, Renee (38) claimed her son remains just as curious and excited about the toy even though he already knows what is inside the box. Renee (38) and Frank (42) both told a similar anecdote of their son desiring a specific toy for a particular occasion. Renee (38) explained that four weeks before her son's birthday he watched the same unboxing video of that specific toy multiple times every day. In like manner, Frank (42) explained his son watched the same video of the desired toy over and over again until the day of receiving the gift. Eventually, when their children received the toy they were still very excited and it was still a great surprise. These insights connect to Sukalla et al. 's (2016) research, as parents perceive their child experiences the performance of toy unboxing as an exciting, surprising or sensational exercise. Over and over again they create a 'what is it' response, as they remain curious to the actual toy and the functions of the toy in the videos. Particularly, it may be once the child is aware he or she has the option to actually own this toy someday, they consider the exercise as even more exciting. For that reason, it is remarkable some children adapt their viewing behaviour of toy unboxing videos the moment they personally desire a specific toy, although once this toy is obtained the videos also seem of less importance. Except for Frank's (42) son, who sometimes searches for specific toy unboxing videos of toys he already owns, to show it to his friends.

Rather overlapping perspectives were given when parents compared the emotions of their children when they unboxed a toy themselves, versus emotions of watching a toy unboxing video. It may be unsurprising, but all parents explained their children experience extreme happiness when they open a new toy themselves. In contrast, parents feel their child does not experience the exact same joyful emotions when they watch an unboxing video, but they rather experience a certain amount of joy, curiosity to what is inside the box and desire to own the toys. One explanatory factor of this could be that in the videos their child is not the final owner of the toy and does not have the option to play with it, which is eventually the purpose. Anika (38) stated: "*The end result you do not have in your hands in such a video*"<sup>15</sup>. This seems to confirm previous assumptions again, as children may derive a satisfying feeling from watching the videos, but once they have the actual option to play with it in the future the exercise seems more sensational.

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<sup>15</sup> Anika (38): "*Het eind resultaat het je niet in je handen op zo'n filmpje.*"

Alternatively, another implication which was discussed with the parents entailed the element of learning within the videos, in other words, if the videos could potentially learn their child something. At first hand, many parents were sceptical towards the notion of learning as they failed to see the entire purpose of the videos. However, when looking more closely at the complete viewing behaviour of their child some learning points were mentioned. First of all, the majority of parents mentioned their child learns how to assemble and construct their toys, thus they view the videos to gain information about the product. To support the implication of learning, it could be that due to the para-social relationship the child has developed with the toy unboxing performer, children's learning is enhanced. The social cognitive theory implicates children learn from video characters, by acquiring information by absorbing, memorizing and motivations to perform similar behaviour as the video character (Lauricella et al., 2013). For instance, Kimberly (29) told an anecdote of her son discovering an invisible feature in his fire truck toy. She thinks he had gained knowledge through the video character of an toy unboxing video, who explained that a fire hose was hidden inside the truck. These insights also relate to Lang's (2000) assumptions that viewers watch videos to receive information that is significant for the goals of the viewer. In this case, the goal is to gain more knowledge on the product to increase their ability to play and interact with the toys. Beata (39) mentioned her son often uses the videos as point of comparison, to analyse the overlaps and differences between his toys and the toys in the videos. Besides gaining knowledge on the product, Jan-Willem (41) thinks his two-year-old also increases her vocabulary by watching the videos, as she repeats words said in the videos. Renee assumes when her son watches English unboxing videos he may learn some words from it. On top of that, Inge (38) Beata (39) and Rob (48) observed their children watch the videos to stay up to date with their fellow classmates which allows them to talk along with other children at school or kindergarten. These perspectives slightly confirm Loewenstein and Prelec's (1993) theory of preference of improvement, as children view the videos to in-directly improve their vocabulary or social status over time. Owing to this, the assumption could be taken that watching the videos may improve later responsibilities they encounter on school. This could vary from improving their curiosity to subjects on school for instance the English language, to improving their social relationships by sharing an interest in the same video content.

Lastly, the most severe implication of the toy unboxing videos which was discussed with the parents encountered the element of addiction. Seven parents mentioned not necessarily only toy unboxing videos could lead to addictions, but rather the entire platform YouTube. Renee (38), Inge (38) and Suzanne (37) all mentioned their daughter can be called an addict. Suzanne (37) stated: "*When she is not captivated anymore then her little finger moves and she looks at what captivates me or what looks interesting, next, next, yes*



*absolutely very addictive*<sup>16</sup>. Several parents conceived the platform YouTube encourages addictions because continuously new videos are offered to the viewer, so if their interest in a certain video diminishes they immediately have the option to click on the following video. Kim (38) however, thinks the term addiction is a little too extreme especially for unboxing videos. Both her and Kimberly's (29) children could not get addicted because at a certain point they really want to play outside and get away from the screen. In fact, in all interviews playing outside or playing in general was encountered as an important matter. None of the parents liked it if their child only sits inside, watches videos and makes no social contact with others. Nonetheless, all parents agreed that in order to prevent addictions, one must monitor their child's viewing behaviour. The next section dives into the matter of monitoring more deeply.

#### 4.2.2 Toys, a subject of the parent-child discussion

The toys in the videos often seem the driving factor to why children watch unboxing videos, as six parents mentioned the toys in the videos are a subject of discussion within their family. Frank (42) explained that wish lists are not a problem for his son, because after watching toy unboxing videos he knows what he wants to have for his birthday. In like manner, Beata (39) explained her son remembers the products in the unboxing videos and refers to it when a specific occasion takes place. In spite of some other parents, Kim (38) feels her children are substantially more inspired by commercials on the programmed television. For the most part there are different opinions among parents regarding the toys unboxed in the videos.

Suzanne (37) and Frank (42) mentioned because their child desired a toy inspired by a toy unboxing video they bought it online as it was not available in the Dutch toy stores. Many of the videos are of American origin, and therefore present toys sold exclusively in American stores. The purchase behaviour of the parents is thus influenced to such a large extent they are willing to purchase products overseas. In contrast, Renee (38) mentioned she dislikes in particular the American toys due to the size, colours and large amounts of plastic. While Suzanne is also consciously aware the plastics harm the environment, she still buys it because of the videos, advertisements and her children. One clear exception is Marloes (36) as she claimed to be reluctant to purchasing toys in general, she supported her viewpoint by stating: *"I am completely not, well everyone is influenced by commercials and that sort of things, but I think I am quite determined not to follow it"*<sup>17</sup>. Additionally, various parents mentioned their child requests the toys unboxed in the videos. Anika (38) argued her child currently does not request the toys, but her daughter would make the connection once she would enter a physical toy store. Already several parents claimed their children recognize

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<sup>16</sup> Suzanne (38): *"ze niet meer geboeid dan gaat dat vingertje weer en dan kijk ik van nou wat boeit me dan wel of wat lijkt interessant, volgende, volgende, ja absoluut heel verslavend."*

<sup>17</sup> Marloes (36): *"Ik ben allemaal niet dat ik, ja iedereen wordt beïnvloed door reclame en dat soort dingen, maar ik denk dat ik wel vrij standvastig ben om daar niet zo snel in mee te gaan."*

toys in the toy store based on the unboxing videos. Both Suzanne (37), Frank (43) and Renee (38) experience difficulties when their child enters a toy store. Children start to ask, negotiate and whine for the toys in the store, because they recognize it from the videos. Suzanne (37) said: *“Sometimes I think oh we are just going to walk past the toy store because then we won’t have the entire discussion”*<sup>18</sup>. Renee (38) also thinks the manner children value toys in general has a large impact on the way they get influenced by the toy unboxing videos. She explained her daughter never had the magic in the toy store that her son had, in the past she had to evacuate him from the store because he just did not want to come along, and desired everything. However, parents also mentioned when children get home from the toy store they can easily forget about the toys.

Divergent opinions are given by parents regarding giving toys to their child based on the toy unboxing videos. Anika (38) thinks it is not fun if her child is entirely aware of the content of the toy box when she receives it for her birthday. Suzanne (37) thinks it is not a problem when her child already knows what he or she gets, as by means of toy unboxing videos she is ascertained her child would definitely like it. She explained that in the past she purchased games which eventually turned out not to be fun at all, so because of that the videos serve as a warrant for spending your money wisely. Kim (38) and Beata (39) actually mentioned they search for YouTube videos about specific toys themselves, in order to find out the details and purposes and to check if their children would be interested in it or not. In other words, not only children view the videos to reach a specific goal, but also some parents find it valuable to discover the preferences of their child through the videos. Generally all parents share similar ideas towards the notion of giving gifts to their children. While these insights move past the objectives of this research, it is good the mention parents have certain standpoints when their children desire toys. If children request toys, a significant amount of parents respond by saying either ‘put it on your birthday wish list’, or secondly, ‘save money’ to purchase it yourself. Anika (38), Renee (38) and Suzanne (37) dislike it when their children receive toys without any specific reasons, as the moment of giving toys will then lose its value. All three think their child will not get any happier when they randomly receive toys.

#### **4.3 Strategies parents apply to mediate their children’s toy unboxing viewing behaviour**

The objective of the third sub-research question was to detect how Dutch parents monitor the toy unboxing viewing behaviour of their children, as it may influence the way they portray their children’s viewing experiences. This question helped to outline the individual notions of

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<sup>18</sup> Suzanne (37): *“dat ik soms denk oh we lopen die speelgoed winkel voorbij want dan hebben we die hele discussie niet.”*

the platform YouTube, the usage of electronic devices and the flow of communication within households.

#### *4.3.1 Monitoring the toy unboxing viewing behaviour*

Derived from the interviews was noticed when it comes to the types of toy unboxing videos parents do not have particular preferences. If their child expresses great joy in a specific toy unboxing video the parent lets him or her watch it. However, in order to assume the video is suitable for their child, parents apply various monitoring strategies. The most frequently mentioned approach is first checking what the video is about, and thereafter continuously listening to what their child watches on a specific device. Similarly to other parents, Beata (39) said: *“I always look at what my son is watching to first determine what it is about”*<sup>19</sup>. A significant amount of parents claimed once their child watches videos the sound is always on speaker, in order for them to hear what the child is watching. Based on the sound parents frequently check what the video involves, and after a while they recognize specific videos by the audio and are ascertained the video is appropriate. Coupled with this strategy, Frank (42) also checks afterwards the YouTube search history of his son to make sure he watched appropriate videos. This form of distant mediation confirms with Zaman et al.’s (2016) parental strategies to monitor the media use of children. Meaning that parents take distance from their child’s media use, while still keeping an eye on what is occurring. Overall, parents try to have a conversation with their children about the videos they watched on YouTube, or why they think certain videos are unsuitable in their eyes. Because of this constant channel of communication parents perceive their children are highly aware what they are allowed to watch. To such an extent that when their children doubt about the appropriateness of the video they consult their parents. This insight also confirms Zaman et al. (2016) strategy of co-use, as the parents take on the role as the helper by guiding their child when they use a digital platform or when they face problems.

Another restriction the majority of parents mentioned is they do not want their child to take the device upstairs or in a room without supervision. This mediation approach draws on the notion of privatization of media use. According to Bovill and Livingstone (2001) it is due to the increase of personally owned media that children retreat to their personal space instead of the shared family space. If the child isolates him or herself, the parent is unable to hear and see what the child watches. Due to this factor, the process of watching toy unboxing videos mainly takes place in the living area, or in an area in which the parent is also present. One exception is Rob (48), but his daughter is significantly older than the children of the other parents, hence she is allowed to retreat to her own space more easily. Yet, still he does not encourage this behaviour, he stated *“It is not that we watch along, but when something*

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<sup>19</sup> Beata (39): *“ik kijk altijd naar alles wat mijn zoon kijkt om eerst even te kijken wat het is.”*

*happens she can more quickly ask our help, and that is harder when she is upstairs.*"<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, the majority of parents also tries to structure on which moments their child can watch videos on YouTube. While the most frequently mentioned time periods were in the mornings and in the evenings, still five parents indicated when their child requests to watch videos during the day they sometimes also allow it. Especially when the weather is bad, the child is exhausted or it fits their daily routine more properly. In addition, some parents prefer if their child watches videos together with their sibling instead of individually, Renee (38) stated: *"because I don't think it is necessary if one watches TV and the other watches on a phone and you are occupied individually"*<sup>21</sup>. She motivates her restriction by stimulating them to watch together and let them negotiate despite her children's different preferences. In contrary, Inge's (38) children both have individual tablets and therefore often consume the unboxing videos or other videos separately. But unlike Renee (38), the younger sons of Inge (38) and Kim (38) like and copy the behaviour of their older sisters, whereas Renee's younger son dislikes everything his older sister watches.

As mentioned before, on what devices a child watches toy unboxing videos differs per household. While Rob's (48) oldest daughter owns a smartphone, Frank (43) and Inge's (38) children own personal tablets and Anika (38) gave her daughter her old smartphone to watch videos, the others let their children watch either on their smartphone, the family tablet or family television. Apart from this, Suzanne (37) just applied a new rule by not giving her smartphone to her children anymore at all. She made the decision in favour of her daughter's well-being, because it was always quite a battle to get her daughter handing back her phone. Also, now her daughter grows older she thinks it will be less controllable what she watches. Her daughter sometimes ended up watching videos she disapproved, so to prevent all of this she applied this new technique. She is not the only parent expressing great dislike towards certain videos which their children ended up watching, by the process of clicking through after toy unboxing videos. It seems that hidden between the toy unboxing videos, the playground videos and the vlogs often videos appear created by adults not for children's eyes. Both Kim (38), Suzanne (37), Renee (38) and Beata (39) told a story of a video their child watched of which they were not in favour, all containing of a specific character for children (e.g. Spiderman, Frozen) but then in an adult setting. Thus, from the outside it appears as a video for children while in reality the videos are provoking or aggressive. Kim (38) said: *"it keeps you attuned because this means you always have to pay attention to what*

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<sup>20</sup> Rob (48): *"Niet dat we meekijken maar als er iets gebeurd dat kan ze zelf ook sneller om hulp vragen, dat is moeilijker boven."*

<sup>21</sup> Renee (38): *"ik vind het namelijk niet nodig als de een TV zit te kijken en de ander zit op de telefoon te kijken en je heel individueel bezig bent."*

*they are watching*<sup>22</sup>. Partly because of such videos several parents indicated they would like a setting on YouTube which prevents certain videos to enter the search loop. Lastly, based on the interviews it seems clear that from approximately the age of eight children are more capable to write and read and for that reason start to type search terms on their own. Under that age children search primarily by swiping from one video to the other. Rob (48) for instance explained sometimes his eleven-year-old daughter plays at a friend's place and they search with broad search terms for videos, but eventually end up watching videos less suitable for children. He stated: *"We try to warn her a little for that, and yes sometimes she runs into it and she has to learn how to deal with that."*<sup>23</sup> Altogether, once children are able to search more specifically this opens a whole new world for them, which leads to new monitoring strategies of parents. In the last section these future results of watching toy unboxing videos on YouTube will be discussed.

#### 4.3.2 Online media regulations in general, or 'what is best for your child'

Even though this research did not aim to discuss the overarching online media regulations parents preserve, this appeared to be a topic which could not be circumvented. It turned out that the rules Dutch parents created regarding toy unboxing videos are based on a much larger foundation of principles regarding children's digital media usage. It is therefore only of great value to share the results and viewpoints mentioned by the parents.

Derived from the interviews is seen parents often have well-grounded standpoints regarding giving or not giving electronic devices to their child. This decision often affected the frequency and variety of devices on which children were allowed to watch toy unboxing videos. The most outspoken parent regarding this regulation was Renee (38), as she firmly believed it is currently unnecessary for her children to personally own a tablet or smartphone. She motivated her restriction by stating: *"Why should a five year old have the newest iPad, on which he in his bedroom can just click on everything"*<sup>24</sup>. Also, Kimberly (29) perceived that iPad's should not be considered as a toy, which a young child should own individually. Renee (38) thinks parents do not consciously think about the effects of giving a child their own device, but just want what makes their child happiest. Suzanne (37) shares similar ideas as Renee, but she also experienced other parents give a smartphone or smartwatch to their child because they want to stay in constant contact with their children. She believes children should be able to shape their own lives without the constant involvement of the parent. Marloes (36) personally attaches little importance to new electronic devices and neither does

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<sup>22</sup> Kim (38): *"dat houd het houd je wel scherp want je moet dus altijd blijven opletten met wat ze nou kijken."*

<sup>23</sup> Rob (48): *"Daar proberen we toch ook wel een beetje voor te waarschuwen, ja ze loopt er soms tegen aan en ze moet er ook maar mee leren omgaan."*

<sup>24</sup> Renee (38): *"Waarom moet een vijfjarige de nieuwste iPad hebben, waar die op z'n slaapkamertje gewoon zelf alles kan aanklikken."*

her husband, because of this she feel they unconsciously pass this through to their children. In contrary, Frank's (42) son owns an individual tablet, with the primary function to watch YouTube videos. Also, Inge's (38) two children already own individual tablets and she is the only one in her house without one. She mentioned: "*Currently, at the age of nine they own their own phone, and a tablet well every child has one at the age of four I think*"<sup>25</sup>.

Consequently, she stands by the notion it is widely accepted young children own personal electronic devices, even though other parents believed otherwise. Because her children own their personal device they are more easily able to watch videos on YouTube, in comparison to children who have to watch on the device of their parents. Rob (48) explained the notion of social pressure also plays an important role, because he initially wanted to give his daughter a smartphone in her last year of elementary school, but decided to bring this forward. Kimberly (29) also shed light on the aspect it may differ per village or neighbourhood how quickly parents are inspired to give their children electronic devices. Personally she lives in a Christian neighbourhood where households do not own a television due to religious standpoints, let alone other devices. At last, also a rather positive viewpoint was shared by six parents. They believe it is beneficial their child is able to control electronic devices because it is part of their twenty-first century skills. Beata (39) supported her argument by saying: "*I would not be happy if he is occupied with it the entire day, but I do think it should be part of his development*"<sup>26</sup>. Marloes (36) agreed and believes even though she would not be at the forefront of giving the newest iPhone, she does feel her child should not be hindered by her standpoints.

The overall perception of the platform YouTube also had an impact on how parents monitored their children's toy unboxing viewing behaviour. A significant amount of parents were familiar with the platform, but are not active users of it due to lack of interest. For instance, Anika (38), Renee (38), Kim (38) and Marloes (36) only occasionally make use of the platform by searching for informative videos on a particular matter. Nevertheless, all parents seemed to be highly aware of the potential risks of the platform, namely being exposed to unsuitable videos. Suzanne (37) told a small anecdote of a friend whose children ended up watching adult videos because they typed in search terms themselves, which she would not want her children to be exposed to. The factor of literacy has a big impact on the general discourse of parents towards the platform YouTube. When children are unable to type search terms individually, the platform is encountered more harmless than when they master proper writing and reading skills. Both Renee (38) and Frank (42) indicated they

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<sup>25</sup> Inge (38): "*Tegenwoordig, een jaar of negen dat ze wel al een telefoon hebben, en een tablet heeft nou elk kind tegenwoordig met een jaar op vier geloof ik.*"

<sup>26</sup> Beata (39): "*Ik zou niet blij zijn als hij de hele dag daarmee bezig is, maar vind wel dat het onderdeel van zijn ontwikkeling moet zijn.*"

would potentially make use of an option to protect or limit the search options on YouTube for their child, once their child starts to search more specifically.

In addition, six parents explained when friends of their child come over to play they encourage them not to watch videos online nor watch the television. Playing and social contact is endorsed by parents, and they do not consider watching videos as a suitable exercise. Suzanne (37) and Marloes (36) mentioned when their child would play at someone else's house and they would notice he or she mainly watched a screen during that time they would start a conversation with the other parents. Kimberly (29) agrees to their standpoint and mentioned: *"I would personally never stimulate children, once a friend comes over to play, to sit the entire day behind an iPad for three hours"*<sup>27</sup>. Suzanne also claimed: *"Generally as a parent you also search for like-minded people"*<sup>28</sup>, by referring to parents who oblige similar rules and obtain similar viewpoints as her. However, Inge (38) mentioned even though her daughter also plays outside, when her friend comes over they often grab her tablet to watch videos. Frank (42) also mentioned his son and his son's friend sometimes watch YouTube videos 'like zombies' when his friend comes over during dinner time, because then they sit still for a while. He was not the only parent who sometimes wants his child to watch videos because of convenient purposes. The majority of eight parents mentioned when their child watches videos, they finally have moment to fulfil their own to-do lists, such as make dinner, clean, or even unload the dishwasher. During those moments they do not continuously have to actively supervise their children, as they just sit still and are more controllable. Marloes (36) encounters this as well, but she also feels watching a video before e.g. bedtime relaxes her daughter and prepares her to go to sleep.

Additionally, while some parents such as Kim (38) claimed to have found the right balance in the regulations of the online media usage of her children. Various other parents claimed to struggle with the monitoring of their children's online media use in general. Inge (38) for instance sometimes finds it hard to start the discussion with her daughter over the use of her tablet. Besides this, she said: *"Sometimes it is a good trap for your personal rest"*<sup>29</sup>, but she thinks in the future she has to oblige to her own created rules more often. Suzanne (37) mentioned she also has to find the right balance in her rules and wonders to how far her boundaries can stretch and how she would adjust once her children grow older. This outcome could relate to Valkenburg and Piotrowski's (2017) statements regarding the shifting balance in power within households. Nowadays, children are included in family decisions and parents rather want to be their children's friend than purely a character of

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<sup>27</sup> Kimberly (29): *"ik zou zelf nooit stimuleren dat kinderen hele dagen dan achter, als er een vriendje komt spelen, dan drie uur lang achter een iPad zitten."*

<sup>28</sup> Suzanne (37): *"Over het algemeen ja zoek je toch als ouder een beetje gelijkgestemde op."*

<sup>29</sup> Inge (38): *"het is een mooie valkuil voor je eigen rust af en toe."*

authority. One could therefore determine children take on an important role when parent's formulate their mediating approaches. Several participants also mentioned their regulations have liberalized since they had children, so they adjust their rules according to their children's behaviour. Anika (38) for instance mentioned she never thought her two-year-old daughter would ever own a smartphone on that age. Although, recently she gave her old smartphone to her daughter with the purpose of watching videos. Suzanne (37) mentioned in the past she never understood why children were allowed to watch television in the morning, but now this also happens at her home. Furthermore, within certain families contradictory ideas are perceived about media regulations of their children. Six parents claim to have corresponding rules with their partner, and formulate these rules in cooperation with each other. Unless Suzanne (37), who mentioned her partner sometimes obtains other rules than her which leads to a discussion. Inge (38) mentioned her partner leaves it entirely up to her how to monitor their children's online behaviour.

In result, previous literature of Livingstone et al. (2015) suggested parental strategies differ per socio-economic level of the parents, and they identified three types of parents based on Baumrind's (1991) styles of parenting. In contrast, as far as this was known by the researcher, differences in income or education do not have a distinguishable influence on the monitoring strategies of the parents. In fact, most parents made use of bits and pieces of each style of parenting instead of fitting into a precise category. First of all, none of the parents' monitoring strategies seemed to be entirely in line with the less advanced category. While none of the parents expressed to have little digital skills, still some claimed not to be extremely familiar with the platform YouTube as they do not use it themselves. They did not apply a radical restrictive approach by means of a reward-punishment system, though all parents developed rules fitting to their daily routine. It appears that actually the majority of parents applied a strategy consisting of combination of medium and advanced parents. As they considered digital technologies could be a useful asset to their children's lives, but at the same time were highly aware of the risks of the platform. Because of this, many parents applied a strategy in reaction to their child's behaviour. Parents seek to find the appropriate balance between freedom and protection, but sometimes lack confidence in this process.

#### **4.4 Parents' thoughts on the future implications of viewing toy unboxing videos for their children**

The purpose of the final sub-research question was to inspire Dutch parents to take a look into the potential future. This question allowed parents to project their child's current behaviour to the future, and make conclusions based on these projections.



#### 4.4.1 The future behaviour of watching toy unboxing videos

Derived from the interviews can be concluded the majority of participants think their child will watch the videos for a few more years, but eventually stop watching toy unboxing videos at a certain age. Kimberly (29) supported her argument by stating: *“I think he finds it interesting now because he recognized things [...] but I think after a certain point he will move away from it”*<sup>30</sup>. Due to the simplicity of the videos, parents encounter their children’s interests will change and they will look for more diverse and entertaining content based on their preferences. Renee (38) had a strong opinion and said: *“I cannot imagine that in three years he still watches those enormous presents which I think only a five-year-old can get excited about”*<sup>31</sup>. Although, she would not mind if her son continued to watch more meaningful toy unboxing videos which will serve more as an instruction video. Beata (39) on the contrary said: *“Almost at all themes an unboxing video appears, so I think he will just remain watching it”*<sup>32</sup>. Frank (42) believes his eight year old son may want to watch the videos for a few more years, however he also stated: *“He grows older and will get other interests which means he wants to see other things”*<sup>33</sup>. A significant number of parents is uncertain what type of YouTube videos their child will watch in the future. In spite of their uncertainties, they all seem to realize the videos will not be as innocent as the toy unboxing videos. Renee (38) notices her daughter watches Dutch arts and craft videos of the child vlogger Jill, since she is very interested in doing handicrafts. Personally she does not endorse the vlogs, because she thinks they are unnecessary and deviate lots from her and her husband’s interests. Inge’s (38) seven-year-old daughter is already making the transition to vlogs, as she often watches the Dutch Vlog channels MeisjeDjamila and Enzo Knol. Also, Rob’s (48) eleven-year-old daughter is currently more interested in watching user-generated videos in which children review and comment on online games such as the game Star Stable. Five parents do not expect this type of viewing behaviour from their child because they do not notice their child is interested in it yet. Suzanne (37) rather notices her seven-year-old is getting more interested in cooking videos, consequently she may view such videos on YouTube. While most of the parents only can make guesses, Kim (38) has no clue yet, she stated: *“I am not familiar with the girls of an older age and boys of an older age”*<sup>34</sup>. Nonetheless, several parents indicated once their child would watch a new form of videos, they would carefully investigate what the

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<sup>30</sup> Kimberly (29): *“ik denk dat hij het nu interessant vindt omdat hij spullen herkent [...] maar ik denk op een gegeven moment dat hij daar een beetje van af dwaalt.”*

<sup>31</sup> Renee (38): *“Ik kan me niet voorstellen dat hij over drie jaar nog steeds naar die enorme cadeaus waar volgens mij alleen een vijfjarige warm voor loopt kijkt.”*

<sup>32</sup> Beata (39): *“bij bijna alle thema’s verschijnt zo’n uitpak video, dus ik denk dat hij dat gewoon blijft kijken.”*

<sup>33</sup> Frank (42): *“hij wordt ook ouder en dan krijgt hij andere interesses en dan wil hij andere dingen zien.”*

<sup>34</sup> Kim (38): *“ik ben nog niet thuis in dat in meisjes van oudere leeftijd en jongetjes van oudere leeftijd.”*

videos contain and how their child responds to it. Besides this, some parents are even doubting how social media will develop in a few years from now, and wonder if YouTube in the future will remain existing.

The majority of parents believed that in the future the toy unboxing behaviour of their child will not adjust according to the toy unboxing in the videos. The participants mentioned their children probably would always quickly want to open toys themselves, and not be influenced by the videos. On the contrary, Suzanne (37) argued her children may see at a later stage in their lives that it is more wise to carefully unbox a toy in order to play with the toy quicker. She believes the fact they are getting older plays a big role in this realization process, but the toy unboxing videos may also influence their children. In like manner, Anika (38) thinks her daughter might copy the toy unboxing behaviour in the future. Furthermore, five parents think the products their child will receive in the future may be inspired by toy unboxing videos. Jan-Willem (41) stated: *“Or we will tell others, hey she likes this because she often watches it via unboxing videos, so it will be purchased according to that”<sup>35</sup>*. Some parents whose children’s toys are already inspired by the toy unboxing videos believe in the future this will also still be the case. Inge (38) believes otherwise, she thinks her children will be rather influenced by the products presented in vlogs. To support her argument she stated: *“For instance Enzo Knol will play a bigger part because he will serve as an example, yes and then the things he owns you of course also want to own.”<sup>36</sup>* Marloes (36) also notices her daughter is currently more influenced by videos where families visit specific events or activity parks, and feels such videos will play a more important role. These viewpoints connects to Lauricella et al. (2013), as children may developed a more stronger para-social relationship with the video characters in vlogs, then they did with the unboxing videos. Another future influence of the videos may be children’s growing interest of creating vlogs themselves and uploading it to YouTube. Rob (48) notices his eleven-year-old daughter and her friends like to create vlogs and film each other with their own smartphone, however he would only approve this once they create something of added value to the platform YouTube, and not just be present on YouTube without any specific contribution.

#### 4.4.2 Future parental monitoring habits

Due to the uncertainty of parents on how their children’s viewing behaviour would look like in the future, in like manner they are uncertain about potential future monitoring approaches. Five parents indicated they may get stricter once their child wants to explore more things online. Renee (38) and Frank (42) indicated that if necessary in the future their will put

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<sup>35</sup> Jan-Willem (41): *“Of aan anderen zeggen hey dit vindt ze leuk want dit kijkt ze vaak via de unboxing video’s dus dan wordt dat wel daardoor aangeschaft.”*

<sup>36</sup> Inge (38): *“bijvoorbeeld Enzo Knol die gaat dan een wat grotere rol spelen want ja dat wordt dan een voorbeeld, ja dan zijn de dingen die hij heeft wil je dan natuurlijk ook.”*

boundaries on the search possibilities on the web, such as a parent-control. However, the remaining parents claimed they will wait to respond to their child's behaviour. If, for instance, they notice their child watches videos that may be harmful for them action will be taken. Beata (39) argued once her child learns how to write and read it is very important to monitor what he is watching, because now they determine what he watches but in the future they will have less control. Generally speaking, since the children of several parents are of such a young age, they encounter it as difficult to project their child's current behaviour to the future. Marloes (36) stated: *"The child is three, you do not know what sort of person she turns out to be"*<sup>37</sup>. Four parents mentioned they rather feel external people or factors will influence their child's viewing behaviour. Anika (38) for instance mentioned: *"Of course you have to comprise to what other children are allowed to see and what they will then show her"*<sup>38</sup>. Other children, the neighbourhood and the school have influences on the development and behaviour of their child. Also, when looking to the future parents are able to see the practical benefits of giving a smartphone to their child, especially once they attend middle school. In addition, five parents indicated their minds are not occupied with thinking about potential future online monitoring strategies. Partly because they may take on specific standpoints at first, but later on always adapt to the behaviour of their child. Jan-Willem (41) claimed: *"I am not going to think in advance that in a year from now I have to tighten my rules, no, I will see that along the way"*<sup>39</sup>. On the contrary, Inge (38) and Suzanne (37) mentioned that sometimes they are worried about what the future will bring, because it will probably be less controllable what their children watch on YouTube. Altogether, the overarching approach parents apply is to keep a constant flow of communication between them and their child, by explaining why certain rules are set or why certain viewing behaviour is less accepted. Instead of bluntly forbidding certain behaviour, provide reasoning to why one as a parent is not comfortable when their child watches certain videos on YouTube. In order for the child to understand why he or she may be too young, or certain content is unsuitable.

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<sup>37</sup> Marloes (36): *"Het kind is drie, ja dan weet je niet wat voor persoon het gaat worden."*

<sup>38</sup> Anika (38): *"Je moet natuurlijk gaat schipperen in wat die kinderen weer mogen en zien en wat ze haar dan weer laten zien."*

<sup>39</sup> Jan Willem (41): *"ik ga niet van te voren bedenken over een jaar moet ik mijn regels aanscherpen nee dat zie ik along the way wel."*

## **5. Conclusion and Discussion**

In the following section the objective of the study and the overarching results are bundled below and analysed to previous research. Also, the most remarkable outcomes are presented in the additional insights section, thereafter a critical stance is taken by reflecting on the entire research process and outcomes, and lastly new areas for future research are discussed.

### **5.1 Main Findings and Discussion**

The goal of this research was to understand how Dutch parents portray their children's viewing experience of toy unboxing videos on YouTube. In-depth conversations were conducted with a diverse group of Dutch parents to discover how they give meaning to their children's toy unboxing viewing behaviour. The phenomenon was approached by touching upon four different sub-concepts, namely how parents make sense of their child's viewing behaviour and their personal discourse of the videos, what the implications are of watching those videos, how they shape their monitoring strategies of watching the videos, and lastly how they portray the future results of watching the videos.

First of all, based on the research results can be concluded that toy unboxing videos emerged into the YouTube viewing preferences of children by continuously clicking on the recommended section within the microblogging platform. The overarching discourse parents formed regarding these videos is innocence, and that it cannot cause harm for their children. Especially, once parents approach the videos from the viewpoint of their children, they are able to reject negative personal notions and place their children's preferences first. Unless they experience their child's behaviour would change negatively due to the videos, then their disapproval will transcend their child's preferences. Generally speaking, while children do not seem to be interested in the language spoken in the videos but rather focus on the visuals, parents are the driving factor in choosing the language and for that reason parents have an influence on the viewing habits of their child. Also, based on the perspective of the parents, children are able to develop a para-social relationship with any videos personality (child or adult) once they share certain overlapping preferences, or in other words their interest in toys (Lauricella et al. 2013). Furthermore, parents encounter their children view videos repetitively and quickly swipe from one video to the next. Hence not only the amount, but also the speed of improvement seems to be of value, as once toys are opened quickly children may derive a more satisfying feeling from the activity (Hsee & Abelson, 1991). Overall, the toy unboxing videos are portrayed as a simple yet rich media form in the eyes of parents (Draft & Lengel, 1983).

Secondly, parents portrayed several implications of viewing toy unboxing videos on YouTube for their children. For instance, resemblances were noticed between the toy unboxing videos and the way their child interacts with toys him or herself. In essence, children may adapt to the manners and even emotions the video host obtains while playing with toys. However, in the videos the entire fulfilment of receiving a toy, removing its wrapping paper and expressing gratefulness to the giver is not included. It may be therefore parents did not portray resemblances between the toy unboxing videos and their child's own product unboxing behaviour. Not to mention, parents had opposing ideas to whether their child's curiosity is (negatively) affected by the toy unboxing videos. On the one hand, the videos could harm the element of surprise, but on the other hand it could serve as a warrant for parents to spend money wisely on toys their child adores. Nonetheless, parents indicated children experience great happiness when they receive and open a new toy themselves, yet do not encounter the same emotions when watching the unboxing videos for reason that the child does not own the final end product. Except once a child is ascertained to one day own the toy in the video, the act of watching becomes a highly sensational exercise (Sukulla et al. 2016). In continuance, while parents were sceptical towards the implication of learning, still they recognized that children learn in terms of assembling toys and retrieving information on the product significant to the goals of the viewer (Lang, 2000). Alternative implications confirmed Loewenstein and Prelec's (1993) theory of preference of improvement, as children view videos which may in-directly improve their vocabulary or social status over time. All in all, parents indicated that not necessarily only toy unboxing videos could lead to addictions, but rather the entire platform YouTube if not monitored properly. Lastly, while the toys presented in the videos seem the driving factor to consume it, still the way children value toys in general has an impact on the extent they are influenced by the videos.

Furthermore, parents apply various monitoring strategies to mediate their children's toy unboxing viewing behaviour, which affected the way they portrayed their children's viewing experiences. To begin with, they perform forms of distant mediation, thus take distance from their child's media use while still keeping an eye and ear on what is occurring (Zaman et al., 2016). They stay on the background but continuously listen to what their child watches on a particular device, or control the search history of the child. Besides this, they apply a strategy of co-use, by taking the role of the helper once their child faces problems on questions the appropriateness of the video on YouTube. In addition, parents seem to develop restrictions based on their aversion to the notion of privatization, as children are only allowed to watch YouTube videos at the presence of at least one parent instead of retreating to their personal space (Bovill & Livingstone, 2001). These approaches are taken to prevent addictions and prevent their children from watching harmful content, affecting their behaviour negatively. Next to this, based on the results can be concluded that the rules parents created

regarding toy unboxing videos are based on a much larger foundation of principles regarding children's digital media usage. Firstly, well-grounded assumptions to why their child should or should not personally own an electronic device affected the frequency of watching videos and the variety of devices children were allowed to watch on. Secondly, the overall perception of the platform YouTube impacted the monitoring of their child's toy unboxing viewing, as parents were aware of the potential risks of the platform mainly related to the exposure of unsuitable videos. Lastly, other standpoints influenced the monitoring habits, such as parents endorsed social contact over individual screen time which led to more strict rules, and sometimes they loosened their restrictions because of convenient purposes. Conclusively, some parents found the right balance in their regulations while others struggle with the monitoring of their child's online media usage. In all cases, children take on an important role when parents formulate their mediating approaches (Valkenburg & Piotrowski, 2017). Regulations have liberalized since they had children, and they adjust their rules according to their child's behaviour. Based on the results, socio-economic variations do not have a notable influence on the monitoring strategies of parents. Parents apply a strategy consisting of elements of all three of Baumrind's (1991) styles of parenting, and seek to find the appropriate balance between freedom and protection.

At last, parents portrayed several future results of watching toy unboxing videos. They share the perspective that due to the simplicity of the videos children will move away from toy unboxing to more diverse and entertaining content based on their changing interests. In the future, parents believe their child will not adapt their own unboxing behaviour to the toy unboxing videos. For some, the products their child will receive in the future may be inspired by the toy unboxing videos, or potentially by other user-generated videos. Possibly their children may develop a stronger para-social relationship with other video characters, than they did with the toy unboxing videos. Generally speaking, parents are uncertain about their potential future monitoring approaches. A plausible response could be tightening their rules, since their children want to explore more things online. However, currently their children are at such a young age that parents encounter it difficult to project their current behaviour to the future. The overarching approach parents aim to apply is to keep a constant flow of communication between them and their children, regarding the set rules on their child's viewing behaviour.

## **5.2 Additional Insights on the Findings**

To start with, it is remarkable that at the early stage of gathering interview participants various parents did not want to cooperate because they had firm viewpoints regarding YouTube videos in general. Their children were not allowed to watch YouTube, and they supported their restriction by the aspect they were too young or the videos were unsuitable.

The parents who were willing to participate were more open to the platform YouTube and the videos their children were interested in. Furthermore, initially the researcher assumed that children were watching those videos from the age of four to approximately twelve, however the first conversations with parents already contradicted this presumption and therefore the sampling group had to be adjusted. Children from the age of two are already highly interested in the videos due to its simplicity, until approximately eight, after this age their interests are overtaken by other matters. Not to mention, it is remarkable that two-year-olds are able to operate the platform YouTube entirely individually. Even though the minimum age to sign up for a social media profile is thirteen, parents evaluate the platform as appropriate for their child but are also aware of the potential risks. Because of the easy infrastructure of the platform even children who cannot write or read yet are able to search by clicking on the recommended section within YouTube.

One of the most renewing insights gained from the perspective of the parent was that children are able to make a distinction between toy unboxing and the act of receiving toys. The fact that within the videos no emotions are expressed regarding receiving the toy but rather towards the functions of the toy, indicates that children unconsciously determine the toys in the videos are merely products but not gifts. Perhaps because of this children sometimes request the toys, but understand that one has to wait for a special occasion to receive a gift and unbox it. Furthermore, a big point of discussion which surpassed the boundaries of this research was the discussion of media regulation of parents in general. All participants were very keen to talk about their regulations at home, and had strict reasoning to why their child should or should not own electronic devices at a young age. Several parents also expressed a lack of understanding in how other parents in their surroundings dealt with this matter less strict, for instance they expressed disliking towards others whom without any specific occasion give their child a tablet. However, parents were more capable to sympathize with the decisions of other parents whom obtained stricter monitoring habits, or even admired how other parents emulate their rules.

At the end of the interviews many parents expressed interest in the end results of the research and were curious to find out how other parents answered, in order for them to see how much their ideas deviated or overlapped with the views of others. Based on these shared interests one could conclude parents value the opinions of others, and their reasoning behind certain restrictions. Because they value a point of comparison, perhaps in the future a shared online space could be created on which parents can convey about matters such as new YouTube viewing trends, and how they could respond to these new online phenomena. The upcoming section will focus on the strengths and limitations of the research and elaborate more on future research recommendations.

### 5.3 Strengths and Limitations

The first strength of this research is the novelty of the research topic, as only scarce qualitative research was devoted to exploring how parents make sense of their children's viewing experience of toy unboxing videos. Especially amongst Dutch parents no research was conducted yet on this subject, and therefore this research could serve as the starting point of exploring the phenomenon in even broader contexts. The second advantage is the qualitative approach, which allowed in-depth data collection and triggered Dutch parents to provide in-depth explanations on their child's behaviour and their personal visions, which would have not been discovered through quantitative data collection methods. By means of the semi-structured interviews the parents gave valuable descriptions of the behaviour, their feelings and their reasoning. Another strength was the place of conducting the interviews chosen by the participants which positively influenced them to provide answers in a location they felt comfortable and at ease, leading to more natural and authentic conversations. Since in most cases the interviews took place at the personal residence of the participant, the child of the participant was also at home. After few attempts, it was observed that children could not give explanatory meaning to their behaviour, but rather just indicated to enjoy the videos. Children did not observe the toy unboxing videos as a renewing phenomenon, while parents clearly saw these videos emerge into their child's viewing habits. This again established why the perspective of the parent was highly valuable. The fourth strength is that the specific and diverse profile of the participants lead to a wide variety of insights, and therefore it was proper the researcher fairly represented the different viewpoints even when it contradicted the assumptions of other scholars. Due to the well-structured interview guide, patterns were quickly noticeable and conceptualized through the process of constant comparison of the answers given by the participants. This also allowed the researcher to reflect on the interview data with the support of theoretical terms. Lastly, the motivation of parents to provide detailed information is proven by the length of the discussion. All interviews lasted at least 45 minutes, which indicated that parents were quite interested in the topic and were open to adequately share their viewpoints. It seemed that talking about their own children triggered emotions and opened up a large range of perspectives.

Additionally, also several limitations were noted. First of all, not an equal amount of men and women were interviewed, which may have led to biased results. Women may encounter different perspectives than men, however this research could not draw on the differences because of the unequal balance. This was caused by the snowball sampling technique, as once a parent recommended another parent he or she often recommended someone of similar sex. Another reason could be that mothers are more actively present when a child watches YouTube videos, as in several cases the fathers worked full-time and



the mothers did not. The second limitation was that some interview participants were retained and needed motivation to talk about their child's behaviour, which sometimes lead to less comprehensive answers. To solve this issue, in the future focus groups could be organized to trigger less outspoken participants to share their viewpoints more extensively. The last limitations is the aspect that all participants came from a connection network. Because of this, no distinguishable differences could be detected between socio-economic variations of parents and their monitoring techniques. For instance, they all had access to technology and sufficient digital knowledge. Even though the researcher was reflexive of the chosen sampling technique, this could have led to a source of bias in the research outcome.

#### **5.4 Future Research Directions**

Although this research focussed specifically on toy unboxing videos, it opened up doors for different research areas. To begin with, this research contributed to the fuller understanding of contemporary digitisation of early childhood, and provided insights into how parents observe the behaviour of their children. Nonetheless, the minds of young children are not always transparent of their behaviour, thus cognitive scientists could use these insights to find out how children actually cognitively process toy unboxing videos. In continuance, even though in this study several parents considered it difficult to project their children's current behaviour to the future habits, one could build on this research to investigate how adolescents experience other user-generated videos (influencer vlogs, DIY 'do-it-yourself' videos, or Minecraft vlogs) created by their peers. This study could be transformed into a longitudinal study, as a decade from now in-depth qualitative interviews with the same parents could be conducted to detect if the expected results resemble the actual habits. To mark developments in how parents portray their child's media usage and monitor this behaviour. In addition, academics could investigate why several parents indicated that in the future they would more strictly monitor their children's online media use (through e.g. parent-control) and how would this affect their children's content preferences on YouTube. Also, what are the exact motivations, fears and purposes for parents to make use of such systems, and how would children experience these online limitations. This study also shed light on the fact that many parents detest the user-generated videos on the platform YouTube and therefore did not want to cooperate in this research. It would be relevant to understand parents' motivations to e.g. prohibit their child entirely from using YouTube, or create strong limits on screen time in general. What are the driving factors for them to develop such rules, and how does this affect children who are accustomed to the digital platforms. For instance, researchers in the field of family communication research could investigate through in-depth qualitative research how the differences in generation and the gap in media literacy affect parent-child communication in terms of digital media use. In addition, since this research was

unable to define clear distinctions between socio-economic variations of parents affecting their media regulations, future research could for instance provide insights to how socio-economic or demographic differences may affect the monitoring habits and access to technology, and how this influences children's YouTube viewing behaviour. Lastly, a comparative line of research across countries could be conducted as the current sample used in this research were exclusively Dutch parents. It would be interesting to see the perspective of another group of parents from another nation in order to detect overlaps and differences between the two groups in the way they portray the viewing experiences of their children.

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## 7. Appendices

### Appendix A: Interview guide

# INTERVIEW GUIDE

## 1. KEY OPENING COMPONENTS

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Establish Rapport</b></p> <p>My name is Tibby van Dijk and I am a student at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Master program Media &amp; Business. I am currently writing my master thesis, and therefore it would very valuable if I could interview you.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>The Purpose</b></p> <p>I would like to ask you some questions about toy unboxing videos on YouTube, on how you feel about this and your child experiences watching these.</p> <p>To get a better understanding of parents' and children's experiences and what they think of these experiences when it comes to unboxing videos on YouTube. To eventually contribute to the larger understanding of children's social media usage.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Consent</b></p> <p>Please be aware participation is strictly voluntary. Moreover, confidentiality will be maintained. Please remember, you do not have to talk about anything you do not want to and you may end the interview at any time. Are there any questions about what I have just explained? Are you willing to participate in this interview? Would you mind if I record this interview? Please sign the consent form.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Time Line</b></p> <p>The interview should take approximately 45 minutes.</p> <p>I am going to ask questions along the way and you should feel free to ask for clarifications. I will follow up your answers with additional, clarifying questions too.</p>

## 2. BODY, IN-DEPTH SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Topic 1: How do parents speak about their children's toy unboxing viewing experiences?</b>	<i>Notes</i>
<b>1</b>	Are you aware of the existence of toy unboxing videos that can be watched on YouTube?	
<b>2</b>	Have you ever watched an unboxing video on YouTube? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why/ Why not?</li> </ul>	
<b>3</b>	Does your child watch unboxing videos on YouTube? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did your child start watching the videos?</li> <li>• Did you and your child watch these videos together?</li> </ul>	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you always watch it together? / Why don't you watch the videos together?</li> <li>Why do you think he/she mainly watches it alone/with friends?</li> </ul>	
4	<p>What do you think of the content of these videos?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would you say you like/dislike the videos?</li> <li>Why?</li> </ul>	
5	<p>Can you describe a video that you remember watching?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was the video about?</li> <li>Who was the main star of this video?</li> <li>What was the product they unboxed?</li> </ul>	
6	<p>What is your child's favourite unboxing channels?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why those particular channels?</li> </ul>	
7	<p>How often does your child watch these videos?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why not less / more often?</li> </ul>	
8	<p>How would you describe your child's watching behaviour?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How much time do your children spend watching one particular video?</li> <li>Are they captivated by what they are watching? Are they easily distracted?</li> </ul>	
9	<p>On which devices does your child watch the videos?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why on these devices?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Optional question.</i></p> <p><i>Not linked to particular literature, but interesting to get a broader understanding of online behavior of child</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Topic 2: What do parents think the current implications are of viewing toy unboxing videos?</b>	<i>Notes</i>
1	<p>Are toy unboxing videos a subject of discussion between you and your children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When do these discussions come up?</li> <li>What does your child say about it?</li> </ul>	
	<i>(1. Desires to own toys from unboxing videos)</i>	
2	<p>To what extent are the toys you give to your children inspired by the videos?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why do you think that?</li> <li>Which toys do you think?</li> </ul>	
3	<p>Does your child ever request you to buy a toy he/she saw in an unboxing video on YouTube?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Why do you think he/ she did that?</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which toy was this?</li> <li>• Why did / didn't you buy it?</li> </ul>	
	<i>(2. Copies unboxing behaviour)</i>	
4	<p>Do you see any similarities between the videos that are watched and the way your child interacts with the toys?</p> <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you see any similarities between your child's unboxing behaviour and the unboxing in the videos?</li> <li>• Does she/he takes extra time to open the toys?</li> </ul>	
5	<p>What emotions does your child experience when he/she is unboxing a toy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tap into emotions such as: pleasure/ curiosity</li> <li>• Why?</li> </ul>	
6	<p>What do you think your child learns from watching these videos?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you think this?</li> </ul>	
	<i>(3. More frequently wants to watch the videos)</i>	
7	<p>Since your child first started watching the unboxing videos did her/his watching time span increase/ decrease over time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why? / Why not?</li> </ul>	
8	<p>How do your children feel about the content of the video?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you think this?</li> </ul>	
9	<p>To what extent do you believe these videos can develop addictions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What makes it addictive/ not addictive?</li> </ul>	
	<b>Topic 3: Which strategies do parents apply to mediate their children's toy unboxing viewing behaviour?</b>	<i>Notes</i>
1	<p>Do you apply any regulations when it comes to your child's social media usage?</p> <p>How would you describe your regulations in terms of your child's social media usage?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why do you have these rules?</li> </ul>	
2	<p>Does your child express emotions regarding your regulations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does he/she say about it?</li> <li>• Does he/she agree/disagree with them? Why?</li> </ul>	
3	<p>How would you describe your regulations regarding your child's viewing of unboxing videos on YouTube?</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you say you have rules in terms of frequency/ platforms/ watching time span?</li> <li>• Why or why not?</li> </ul>	
4	<p>Could you explain how does your child searches for (unboxing) videos on YouTube?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do you interfere in/ guide this process?</li> <li>• Why?</li> </ul>	
5	<p>Could you explain what your particular preferences are regarding YouTube videos?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you see any connection between your preferences and your child's preferences?</li> <li>• How do think your preferences influence your child's preferences? / Do you feel your child influences you in any way when it comes to watching (unboxing) YouTube videos?</li> </ul> <p>Optional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have you ever made suggestions on what he/she could watch on YouTube? Why/ why not?</li> <li>• How do you feel if your child does/ does not act in accordance with these suggestions?</li> </ul>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Topic 4: What do parents think the future results are for their children in terms of watching unboxing videos?</b>	<i>Notes</i>
1	<p>How do you believe your child's viewing behaviour of unboxing videos on YouTube would look in the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you think there would be any differences between their viewing behaviour in the future compared to now?</li> <li>• Optional: Do you expect the watching time span to increase/ decrease in the future?</li> <li>• Why (not)?</li> </ul>	
2	<p>How do you see your future regulations in terms of your child's viewing behaviour of YouTube videos?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would there be any differences compared to your regulations now?</li> <li>• Why?</li> </ul>	
3	<p>How would you feel if, for instance, in the future your child wants to watch the videos more frequently?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why?</li> </ul>	
4	<p>Do think your preferences in terms of YouTube videos will influence your child's preferences in the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why? / Why not?</li> </ul>	
5	<p>To what extent do you think the toys you are going to buy for your child are inspired by the unboxing videos?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why?</li> </ul>	

<b>6</b>	<p>Do you expect to see more similarities between your child's unboxing behaviour and the unboxing in the videos in the future?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why?</li> </ul>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Transition: It has been a pleasure finding out more about you. Let me briefly summarize the information that I have recorded during our interview.</p>	

### 3. KEY CLOSING COMPONENTS

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Summarize conversation</b>          Altogether I can conclude that ... (summarize main points of conversation)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Maintain Rapport</b>          I appreciate the time you took for this interview. Is there anything else you would like to add to this research? Are there any issues relevant to discuss?</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Mention actions to be taken</b>          I should have all the information I need. Thank you for participating, and if you have any questions after all you can always contact me via <a href="mailto:trj.vandijk@hotmail.com">trj.vandijk@hotmail.com</a> or +31630848802. If you like to, I will send you my final research report.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Appendix B: Overview of interview participants

### LIST WITH RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

	FIRST NAME	AGE	GENDER	INTERVIEW DATE/TIME	LOCATION
<b>1</b>	<b>Jan-Willem</b>	41	Male	April 5 <sup>th</sup> 17:00	Leidschendam
<b>2</b>	<b>Anika</b>	38	Female	April 5 <sup>th</sup> 20:00	Leidschendam
<b>3</b>	<b>Renee</b>	38	Female	April 6 <sup>th</sup> 10:00	Rotterdam
<b>4</b>	<b>Frank</b>	43	Male	April 10 <sup>th</sup> 20:30	Den Haag
<b>5</b>	<b>Suzanne</b>	37	Female	April 13 <sup>th</sup> 11:00	Wateringen
<b>6</b>	<b>Kim</b>	38	Female	April 17 <sup>th</sup> 12:30	Bergschenhoek
<b>7</b>	<b>Inge</b>	38	Female	April 19 <sup>th</sup> 11:00	Zoetermeer
<b>8</b>	<b>Rob</b>	48	Male	May 24 <sup>th</sup>	Delft

	FIRST NAME	AGE	GENDER	INTERVIEW DATE/TIME	LOCATION
				20:30	
<b>9</b>	<b>Beata</b>	39	Female	April 29 <sup>th</sup> 12:30	Stolwijk
<b>10</b>	<b>Kimberly</b>	29	Female	May 1 <sup>st</sup> 19:30	Ouddorp
<b>11</b>	<b>Marloes</b>	36	Female	May 9 <sup>th</sup> 11:00	Haasdrecht

### **Appendix C: Transcribed interviews**

Please see the separate word document with the transcribed interviews, consisting of 124 pages.

### **Appendix D: Data Analysis example**

Please see the separate word document with an example of the data analysis process (nine pages).