

The Impact of Firm-Created Content and User-Generated Content on Purchase Intention through the Mediating Effect of Brand Passion among Gen Z

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – Modern digital marketers leverage social media as a tool for brand awareness and customer engagement. Technological advancements have significantly transformed the way consumers and companies communicate. The purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of investigating the impact of firm created content and user generated content on purchase intention through the mediating effect of brand passion. Focusing on TikTok, a popular platform among Gen Z users

Design/methodology/approach – The positivist philosophy and associated methods as the quantitative technique and deductive approach, were employed. The research sample consists of TikTok users who are considered part of Gen Z, aged between 16 and 28, with a sample size of 387 respondents.

Findings – The correlation analysis revealed that all variables demonstrated positive, strong, and statistically significant relationships. In the regression analysis, three out of the five proposed hypotheses were supported. Specifically, user-generated social media communication was found to have a positive effect on brand passion, brand passion positively influenced purchase intention, and firm-created content had a positive effect on purchase intention. However, the relationships between firm-created social media content and brand passion, as well as between user-generated content and purchase intention, were not statistically significant, as their p-values exceeded the 0.05 threshold.

KEYWORDS: Firm created content - User generated content - brand passion - purchase intention- Generation Z

1. INTRODUCTION

The internet and social media have transformed consumer behavior and the way companies operate. Social and digital marketing present valuable opportunities for businesses, including reduced costs, enhanced brand visibility, and higher sales (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Digital marketing is the practice of promoting products and services using online channels via computer, display advertising, and other digital media" or the "use of digital technologies, mainly on the Internet, but also including mobile phones, display advertising, and any other digital medium (Georgescu & Bâzu, 2023).

Digital channels have totally changed the way marketers interact and engage with consumers (Dašić et al., 2023). A considerable percentage of the world's consumers own and use computers and/or mobile devices, which contributes to the tremendous growth of digital ad spending. Marketers quickly recognized the benefits of social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Instagram for communications (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Social media is an essential pillar of digital marketing that is widely used as a communication channel. It gives marketers a highly useful platform for interacting and engaging with both current and potential customers (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Currently, the majority of businesses continuously promote their goods and services and interact with their target audience on social networking sites like Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube. Social media are the online communities and resources that individuals use to exchange thoughts and experiences, as well as images, videos, music, ideas, and perspectives (Zhao, 2023).

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In today's digital age, everything is becoming increasingly digitalized, and marketing is no exception. People are now deeply connected to social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, making social media an essential tool for reaching customers with products and services (Khanom, 2023).

Social media platforms provide businesses with a valuable opportunity to broaden their reach, enhance their visibility, and build a robust brand presence in the global market. These networking platforms have become essential tools for businesses and marketers to understand customer needs and deliver effective solutions to their marketing challenges (Singh, 2024).

As noted by Faruk, M. et al. (2021), many consumers now spend significant time on social and digital media, whether for information gathering or making purchases. The rise of these platforms has transformed business operations, with social media playing a crucial role in engaging customers, building brand awareness, and promoting products or services.

Social media has changed the marketing from one way of communication to two ways of communication. The interactive nature of social media platforms allows companies to engage and communicate with consumers, enabling them to respond immediately to content published by companies (Zhao, 2023).

According to Faruk, M. et al. (2021), traditional marketing primarily focuses on a local audience and relies on costly tools that are difficult to track in campaigns. In contrast, digital marketing is more effective in reaching a targeted audience, cost-efficient, and allows easy monitoring of campaign performance through social media analytics reports, such as Facebook Insights. Businesses have gained significant advantages from social media, including enhanced customer loyalty, improved market intelligence, access to new markets, reduced costs, increased sales, and greater efficiency (Khanom, 2023).

The digital environment has reshaped how users engage with content online and interact with brands. TikTok offers a platform where brands can create content that integrates with the TikTok community, making it ideal for reaching younger users, specifically Generation Z (Mussa, 2023). This generation consists of individuals born between 1997 and 2012, who are currently 25 years old or younger, this demographic accounts for 41% of TikTok users, and their numbers continue to grow (Slepian et al., 2024).

Moreover, Mussa (2023) added that, the average TikTok users open the app eight times a day and spend approximately 45 minutes on it. The primary reason Generation Z consumes content on TikTok is its entertainment value. They are clear about their preferences and appreciate authenticity, motivating marketers to partner with influencers on the platform to enhance the credibility of their brand communications.

TikTok's algorithm plays a key role in delivering videos based on user interactions, making each feed personalized. TikTok has emerged as a major player in social media by fulfilling users' demand for curated and concise video content (Liao & Shu, 2020). The short video format and playful nature help brands capture consumers' attention within the first few seconds. User-generated content has further aided brands in promoting their products and increasing engagement with consumers, making TikTok a powerful tool for brands (Purbaningrum, Andrini, & Barokah, 2023).

Wang (2022), emphasized about the reasons of why companies are shifting toward using TikTok for social media marketing. TikTok addiction is becoming more common, and this is closely linked to how its algorithm works. The app's collaborative filtering algorithm and easy interaction design are highly effective in keeping users engaged. However, this same algorithm can also trap people into spending excessive amounts of time on the app.

TikTok is transforming the relationship between brands and consumers by promoting user-generated content. The platform offers a range of user friendly features that allow users to create and share enjoyable experiences, making it highly appealing to creators around the world. As a result, TikTok stands out from other social media platforms. Users not only upload their own videos but also engage with content from others (Mussa, 2023).

It has been said that TikTok's algorithm is the most advanced in influencing social interactions and personal experiences (Scalvini, 2020).

Scalvini (2020), stated that traditional social media platforms typically recommend content from users we follow or whose views align with our own. Consequently, algorithmic recommendation systems tend to reinforce similar content while filtering out material that diverges from a user's established preferences or beliefs.

By prioritizing content that aligns with past behavior and preferences, they not only highlight familiar material but also obscure content that might challenge or differ from the user's perspective. This creates an environment where it is easy to overlook the existence of contrasting opinions in a highly curated digital space (Kitchin, 2017).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2 Social media marketing

Social Media Marketing is a business strategy that leverages various social media platforms to positively impact consumers' purchasing decisions (Alqurashi et al., 2023). Additionally, it facilitates the creation, sharing, and communication of information through digital channels to encourage positive engagement with a company and its brands, build long-lasting relationships with consumers, and foster engagement and interaction with them (Singh, 2024).

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Another definition of social media marketing is the use of social media tools to reach traditional and future users and to retain users in order to share information, content, and communicate with each other (Appel et al., 2020)

Additionally, Fill and Turnbull (2016) defined marketing communication as a process in which organizations and audiences interact with each other. Social media has become one of the most popular tools for fostering these relationships, allowing companies to connect with and engage their audiences through content-sharing activities (Butow et al., 2020). Social media marketing refers to online activities and programs aimed at engaging customers or potential customers, either directly or indirectly, to boost awareness, enhance brand image, or drive sales of products and services (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Social media marketing is a crucial tool for organizations of all sizes. Because of social media platforms and the capacity to reach a considerably larger audience than traditional advertising, social media has become one of the most powerful marketing strategies available today (Erlangga, 2021). Social media may be accessible through a variety of technologically enabled activities such as photo sharing, blogging, social gaming, social networks, video sharing, business networks, reviews, and more (Khanom, 2023).

TikTok has become so popular nowadays in the world due to the reliance on artificial intelligence algorithms to enhance and create a unique user experience by showing them the most recent and updated content in terms of videos, reels and recommendations (Pedrouzo & Krynski, 2022).

Additionally, TikTok monitor what their users prefer to show them the videos that fits and matches with their preferences and previous search inside the application. Moreover, TikTok videos and reels go viral and spread among large number of audience so business uses this platform to gain more exposure, awareness and reach (Macarthy et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2023). In other words, if any user is not aware of a certain brand simply TikTok enable user to know more information, watch videos and content related to the brand that the users seek to find (Sun, 2024). Previous studies on social media marketing have typically classified activities into two primary categories: firm-created content (FCC) and user-generated content (UGC) (Lin et al., 2023)

2.3 Social identity theory and social-interactive engagement

According to Mukherjee (2020), individuals shape their social identities based on their association with specific social groups. In a network community, members can also develop a shared social identity through their interactions, which may differ from their personal identity.

According to earlier research, consumers may form a strong identification with companies based on their social identity, and the social identity theory offers a foundation for building strong relationships with customers (Elbedweihy et al., 2016; Lam et al., 2012). Moreover, socialinteractive engagement refers to the wide range of experiences that users can have through joining and being a member of numerous online communities and groups (Mukherjee,2020).

People gain more from socializing, taking part, and receiving feedback from other community members when they engage in social-interactive engagement. While engaging in these social activities, individuals have fun and can even pick up helpful advice and knowledge for decisions (Vernuccio et al., 2015).

As individuals engage with others who share similar interests, values, or experiences related to the brand, they not only reinforce their own identity but also enhance their emotional ties to the brand (Brodie et al., 2013). This shared sense of identity fosters a supportive environment where consumers feel understood and valued, which in turn strengthens their loyalty and commitment to the brand (Vernuccio et al., 2015). Moreover, social identity serves as a foundational element in the way consumers connect with brands in the digital age, highlighting the importance of fostering community engagement to cultivate lasting brand loyalty (Mukherjee,2020).

2.4 Theory of reasoned action

The Theory of Reasoned Action is developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), suggests that individual behavior is primarily influenced by two key factors: personal attitudes and subjective norms. These elements help predict behavioral intentions, such as engaging in moral actions like knowledge sharing (Vallerand et al., 1992). However, TRA assumes that behavior is entirely under volitional control, a limitation in contexts such as social media, where actions often occur automatically or are influenced by external factors (Peslak, Ceccucci, & Sendall, 2012).

To address these limitations, recent research has integrated TRA with Perceived Value Theory and Social Influence Theory, offering a more holistic understanding of content sharing behaviors online (Karnowski, Leonhard, & Kümpel, 2018). This integrated framework accounts for both internal drivers such as attitude and perceived content value and external influences such as social norms and peer pressure, thus providing deeper insights into user behavior on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.

2.5 Firm created content

According to Mukherjee (2019), firm-created content is defined as any content that is posted by brands on their social media platforms, such as social media posts and banner ads that appear in the newsfeed.

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Firm-created content is defined as any content published to create touchpoints and engagement between consumers, or between the firm and consumers. Additionally, Ballester et al. (2021) stated that firm-created content increases followers' interactions and communication with social media pages.

Lin et al. (2023) also added to the previous definition that firm-created content is more effective at satisfying consumers' information needs, as it requires less time and effort for customers to find and access information.

Another definition of firm-created content is that it is a marketing technique used by marketers to generate consumer interest in a product or service. This strategy involves creating advertisements to attract consumer attention (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014). FCC is composed up of marketers who produce material on the internet with the goal of interacting with customers (Brodie et al. 2013). Additionally, since social media profiles are entirely under the brand's control, marketers also want to project a positive image of their company and will only ever provide positive material. Reliable and visually appealing FCC increases customer brand recognition as well as the emotional and behavioral reactions that build relationships, trust, and positive brand engagements (Lin et al., 2023).

Social media FCC has transformed the communication process between firms and consumers due to the interactive capabilities of the associated technologies. Marketing teams within firms can now directly and responsively create or deliver marketing content and messages through social media, engaging with consumers on the same platform as other users (Al-Abdallah & Jumaa, 2022). This support the previous definition of (Ballester et al. 2021).

A key aspect of creating diverse and innovative content is understanding and knowing your customers. By actively listening to them on social media, brands can gain valuable insights into what matters most to their audience (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). This allows the brand to communicate with a more appropriate and thoughtful tone, while also fostering the development of fresh, unique content. Companies need to conduct comprehensive research on their target audience to create content that captures their interest (Dessart et al., 2015).

Persuasive messaging should prioritize effective communication with recipients and provide utility in social media marketing. The usefulness of the content shared positively influences followers' intentions to engage in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Besides useful content, factors such as contests, games, and other forms of entertainment are crucial in enhancing consumer interest and connection to brands on social media (Gümüş, 2017).

TikTok seems to be a platform for watching short, interesting, and mostly entertaining videos as well as expressing creativity. TikTok appeals to users that wish to use their creative abilities for the enjoyment of other users (Haenlein et al., 2020). When it comes to firm created content, TikTok offers brands a unique opportunity to connect with audiences through engaging and creative video formats. Companies can leverage the platform's features, such as trending sounds, challenges, and effects, to enhance their marketing strategies. By creating relatable and entertaining content, brands can foster a deeper connection with consumers, encouraging user interaction and participation (Gesmundo et al., 2022).

Regarding TikTok as a platform for consumer targeting, Gesmundo et al., (2022), found that the majority of its users are everyday people who use it to either manage content created by others or share content with their social network. Many people use social media to showcase themselves by acting as consumers in the contemporary society. By publishing content, they share their experiences with a product or service with others. As a result, marketers have started using digital marketing platforms more frequently.

Consumers are generally expected to develop a purchase intention before engaging in the actual buying process. Consequently, purchase intention serves as a strong predictor of consumers' actual purchasing behavior (Makudza, Mugarisanwa & Siziba, 2020). Poturak and Softic (2019) asserted that a clear and measurable relationship exists between firm-created content (FCC) and consumer purchase intention, as brand created messages influence consumer perceptions and trust.

2.6 User generated content

The concept of User-Generated Content, or UGC as it is generally abbreviated, gained attention with the increasing usage of personal computers and the introduction of user-friendly interfaces for search engines, social media, and video sharing in the early 2000s (Bolin, 2021).

UGC refers to any original content created and shared on the internet by non-media sources, meaning it occurs outside traditional media channels. It has a stronger influence on consumer behavior and is commonly shared on social media platforms (M N, 2019). Additionally, Lyu et al. (2023) added to the previous definition of M N (2019), User-Generated Content (UGC) is typically distinguished by several key features: it is informal rather than authoritative, open rather than confidential, and original rather than a repost. Based on these characteristics, UGC is explained according to Lyu et al. (2023), any content voluntarily written and shared by users participating in online interactions. The content format can be classified into: pictures, text, videos, or audio.

Bashir et al. (2017), stated that user-generated content is not influenced by organizations, and users have full control over what they post or comment, whether positive or negative. This makes the content more authentic and trusted by other.

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Supporting the previous argument by Bashir et al. (2017), users and customers trust user-generated content (UGC) because they perceive it as a transparent reflection of both positive and negative product experiences shared by other users (Mir & Rehman, 2013).

Naeem & Okafor (2019) emphasized that the user generated content needs to be developed outside of professional techniques and routines, it must be posted on any website or social networking platform, and demonstrate some original or creative work.

Additionally, to the previous definition UGC should meet three criteria. First, content should be published on social media platforms. Second, content should be original and not copied from others. Third, content created must be free, unpaid and no rewards given (Naeem & Okafor, 2019).

Poch & Martin (2014) proposed a new and opposing argument to previous authors and studies, suggesting that UGC could be paid for by providing monetary incentives, free products, discounts, or rewards for customers to spread positive word-of-mouth or make favorable reviews to support the brand. However, other authors argue that UGC should be free and not compensated. Additionally, when UGC is compensated, definitely it may lose its credibility and trust, as the content could be biased and may not accurately reflect the actual experience of consumers. (AdAge, 2007).

On social media, user-generated content (UGC) marketing is one of the most popular marketing strategies. On TikTok, UGC marketing occurs when companies encourage users to create content that promotes a particular product, service, or event. This content can include dancing and singing videos, initiated challenges, positive or negative product reviews, makeup tutorials, creative expressions, or simply vlogs about their daily activities (Wang, 2024).

Additionally, the primary reasons for the success of TikTok's user-generated content marketing are the platform's emphasis on user interaction and short video quality optimization. TikTok admits that user experience and user-generated content are shaped by its algorithm (Wang, 2024).

According to Omar and Dequan (2020), User-Generated Content (UGC) on TikTok is a crucial tool for brands, enabling more organic interactions with audiences. By encouraging users to create content, whether through product reviews, challenges, or tutorials, brands can tap into authentic and engaging stories. TikTok's algorithm further boosts the reach of this content by promoting engaging posts, which increases the likelihood of viral exposure. Additionally, UGC campaigns, such as hashtag challenges, motivate users to actively participate, enhancing brand visibility and fostering audience interaction (Yang & Zilberg, 2020).

Moreover, Gupta (2022), examined the impact of user-generated content on consumers' attitude formation and decision-making. He found that user-generated content (UGC) significantly influenced consumers' perceptions of a product or service, which influenced their purchasing decision. Additionally, user-generated content in online communities and social media influenced the purchasing decisions of customers. Finally, the result that consumers' brand preferences were significantly impacted by peer recommendations and participation in online forums (Gupta, 2022).

Consumers are influenced to buy goods and services based on their prior experiences, personal preferences, and the external environment. Online shopping cannot provide consumers with the experience of touching, seeing, and smelling products, which poses a challenge in decisionmaking (Geng & Chen, 2021). To mitigate this, consumers often rely on user-generated content ratings on social media platforms to reinforce their purchase intentions. Visually appealing UGC with engaging narratives can effectively capture viewers' attention and encourage purchasing behavior (Cillo et al., 2019).

UGC plays a crucial role in boosting online sales by reducing perceived risks associated with digital transactions. This content not only enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of online businesses but also creates a sense of authenticity that positively influences purchase intent. Consequently, UGC serves as a vital tool in shaping consumer behavior, driving online business growth, and enhancing consumer confidence in their purchase decisions (Juliyanti et al., 2023).

2.8 Purchase intention

Purchase intention refers to a consumer's deliberate decision to acquire a product or service. It is influenced by demographics, brand marketing, and digital engagement, particularly on social media platforms (Wu et al., 2011; Gesmundo et al., 2022). Factors such as brand incentives, interactivity, and advertisements play a significant role in shaping consumer intentions.

(Makudza, 2020) defines purchase intention as a crucial aspect of consumer behavior, reflecting both a customer's desire to buy and their likelihood of making future purchases. It emerges from cognitive and learning processes, driving consumers to act upon their purchasing needs (Khan et al., 2023). In online shopping, this intention is based on product perception and information gathering (Le-Hoang, 2020). Additionally, businesses can analyze purchase intentions to refine products and strategies (Sabila & Albari, 2023).

Purchase intention is considered a step before actual buying behavior and is influenced by consumer attitudes, brand evaluations, and satisfaction levels (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2014; Oliver, 2010; Juliyanti et al., 2023). Social networks further impact purchase intention through group dynamics, opinion leadership, and peer influence, as people tend to follow popular trends when shopping (Eqwubo, 2020; Makudza et al., 2020).

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Social media, originally designed for entertainment, has become a powerful marketing tool. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and TikTok facilitate product discovery and consumer engagement (Wijayanto et al., 2023). In particular, TikTok's Shopping feature enables businesses to promote and sell products directly within the app. The platform's algorithms use big data and ad retargeting to match advertisements with users' interests, enhancing the likelihood of purchases (Zhao & Wagner, 2023; Biagiola, 2022; Xiao et al., 2023). Unlike traditional advertising, this approach focuses on precise audience targeting to increase marketing efficiency (Dengler, 2021).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Framework and Hypothesis

H1: Firm-created social media has a positive effect on brand passion.

The effect of Firm-Created Communication on brand passion could be shown obviously in the marketing and promotion of product or service through their social media channels that creates a strong customer bond and engagement which leads to their passion and love. (Mukherjee, 2020). Arinni & Sharif's research (2022) also supports the positive impact of firm created content on brand passion.

H2: User-generated social media communication has a positive effect on brand passion

This hypothesis is developed as studies shows that brand passion and User-Generated Content (UGC) are strongly linked. Positive brand communication fosters an emotional connection with consumers, enhancing brand passion (Bruhn, Schoenmueller, & Schäfer, 2012). Passionate consumers are more likely to share their experiences through UGC, such as social media posts and reviews, which increases brand awareness and deepens emotional ties. As consumers continue generating UGC, their passion for the brand strengthens, creating a cycle that boosts engagement and brand loyalty. Ultimately, UGC plays a key role in cultivating brand passion, contributing to long-term brand success (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014).

H3: Brand passion has a positive effect on purchase intention

This hypothesis has emerged as studies shows that brands that successfully establish emotional connections with their customers are more likely to experience positive consumer outcomes (Gilal et al., 2018a; 2018b; 2019b). Additionally, supported by Swimberghe, Astakhova, & Wooldridge (2014) that consumers with strong brand passion are significantly more willing to pay a premium price for their preferred brand.

H4: Firm created content has a positive effect on purchase intention.

This hypothesis has developed as previous studies indicates that firm created content on social media plays a key role in shaping consumer purchase intentions by influencing brand perception and engagement (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Research by Pappas (2016) indicates that 70% of consumers are more likely to purchase a product after viewing an appealing advertisement. This confirms that firm created content has a positive impact on purchase intention.

H5: User generated content has a positive effect on purchase intention

This hypothesis has emerged as previous studies indicates user generated content significantly impact purchase intentions through social media interactions. Aji et al. (2020) emphasize that social media enables two-way communication, allowing consumers to share opinions and information transparently. This aligns with the impact of UGC, as authentic consumer-created content, such as reviews and testimonials, enhances trust and credibility, ultimately affecting purchasing intention. Furthermore, Consumers perceive UGC as authentic and unbiased, relying on the experiences of fellow customers to make purchasing decisions (Li et al., 2017).

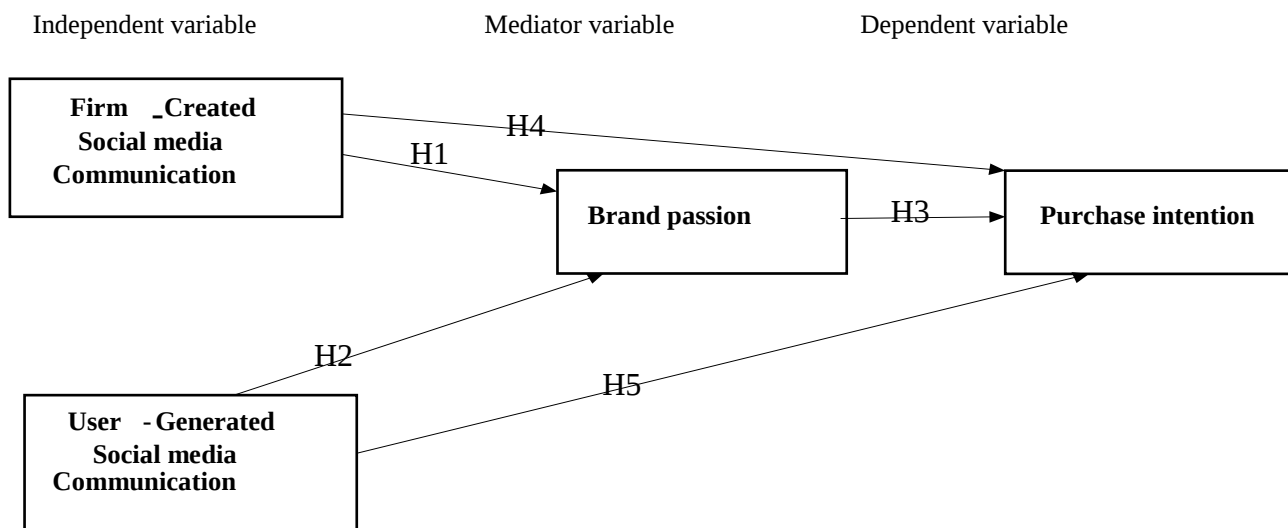


Figure (1): proposed research model

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3.2. Research Design

This research adopts a positivist philosophy, which assumes a single, objective reality and emphasizes using quantitative methods such as experiments and observations to explain phenomena scientifically (Park et al., 2020). It follows a descriptive research design, aiming to gather detailed, quantifiable data to identify and describe relationships between variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The quantitative method is central, focusing on statistical and mathematical techniques. The primary data collection strategy is a survey, specifically using questionnaires, as they allow for efficient collection of standardized data from a large sample and enable correlation analysis (Saunders et al., 2018). The time horizon is cross-sectional, meaning data will be collected once during a specific period to provide a snapshot of respondents' characteristics or opinions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Lastly, the research uses a correlational design, which explores the strength and direction of relationships between variables without implying causation (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

This research applies deductive reasoning by starting with an established theoretical framework that suggests marketing content both Firm Created Content and User Generated Content Influences Purchase Intention through the mediating role of Brand Passion. Based on this general assumption, the study examines specific data to determine whether these variables align with the proposed relationships. If the initial theoretical assumptions are true, the conclusions drawn from the data will be logically valid (Hall et al., 2023).

3.3 Measures

The questionnaire containing variable indicators Likert scales to measure the variables found in this study, ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 5 = "Strongly Agree". The Firm created content and User generated content variables were adapted from (Mägi, 2003; Tsiros et al., 2004; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015), while the brand passion variable adapted from (Keh et al., 2007) and purchase intention adapted from (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

The questionnaire also contained items designed to collect data on participants' demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, marital status, number of children, employment status, and average income.

Table 1: Research Variables Measurement

Variables	Statements	Reference
Firm created content	1. The content that is posted by oudies on their tiktok page satisfies me. 2. The content that is posted by oudies on their tiktok page is interactive 3. The content that is posted by oudies on their tiktok page attracts me. 4. The content on oudies page is better than the content posted in other clothes pages.	(Mägi, 2003; Tsiros et al., 2004; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015)
User generated content	1. I am satisfied with the content generated on 2. The content generated on tiktok by other users about oudies is trustworthy and credible. 3. The content generated on tiktok by other users about oudies is very attractive The content generated on tiktok by other users about oudies performs well, when compared with other brands.	(Mägi, 2003; Tsiros et al., 2004; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2015)
Brand passion	1. I would rather own oudies than any other brand 2. I cannot imagine another brand of the same product making me as happy as oudies 3. I find myself thinking about oudies frequently during the day 4. I have the impulse to buy oudies at the sight of the brand	(Keh et al., 2007)

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Purchase intention	1. I prefer to buy oudies products more than any other available brand. 2. I am willing to recommend oudies to others 3. I have a high intention to purchase oudies products in the future. 4. I intend to buy from oudies based on users tiktok review	(Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016)
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3.4 Data Collection and Analysis Process

The researcher followed ethical procedures by providing participants with a clear explanation of the study's purpose before they completed the online questionnaire. This introductory paragraph also outlined how to participate accurately in the study. To ensure consistency and reliability, all participants received the same set of standardized and clearly worded questions. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation, and respondents' identities were kept anonymous to uphold ethical standards in data collection. This study applied a nonprobability convenience sampling method, where participants are selected based on their accessibility to the researcher, often due to factors such as geographical proximity, availability, or willingness to participate (Makwana et al., 2023; Turner, 2020). The sample consists of Egyptians familiar with the Oudies brand, with an age range of 16 to 28, representing Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012), as the study focuses on social media marketing communications, particularly on TikTok (Slepian & Furman, 2024). For data analysis, the researcher employed both SPSS and AMOS software. In SPSS, analyses included reliability testing, descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and correlation analyses. AMOS was utilized to perform regression analysis.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Scale Reliability and Validity

Table 2: Reliability and validity analysis

Variable	F.L		AVE	Cronbach alpha
Firm created content	Firm created content 1	0.842	61.36%	0.785
	Firm created content 2	0.729		
	Firm created content 3	0.826		
	Firm created content 4	0.728		
User generated content	User generated content 1	0.767	58.07%	0.757
	User generated content 2	0.732		
	User generated content 3	0.802		
	User generated content 4	0.744		
Brand Passion	Brand passion 1	0.792	65.77%	0.825
	Brand passion 2	0.837		
	Brand passion 3	0.841		
	Brand passion 4	0.772		
Purchase intention	Purchase intention 1	0.784	65.62%	0.821
	Purchase intention 2	0.838		
	Purchase intention 3	0.852		
	Purchase intention 4	0.763		

Reliability is crucial in assessing a measure over time, as it evaluates the stability and consistency of the results generated by a test. On the other side, validity refers to the extent to which a tool accurately measures what it is designed to assess. It is essential for

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ensuring that research findings are precise and meaningful. By conducting the reliability analysis, the researcher found that all variables were reliable because, Cronbach alpha was above 0.7 as shown in table (2).

According to the table (2) which represents the values of factor loading and average variance extracted (AVE) has shown the following results: first, firm created content the independent variable in the current study its factor loading for the 4 scales of measurements are above 0.7 at a value between 0.728 and 0.842 this indicates that the factor sufficiently captures the variance of the observed variable. Additionally, AVE for the firm created content variable is 61.36% which is above the 0.5 which has is considered as an acceptable level of convergent validity.

Moreover, user generated content the other independent variable in the current study its factor loading for the 4 scales of measurements are above 0.7 at a value between 0.732 and 0.802 this indicates that the factor sufficiently captures the variance of the observed variable. Additionally, AVE for the user generated content variable is 58.07% which is above 0.5 which has is considered as an acceptable level of convergent validity.

Furthermore, brand passion the mediator variable in the current study its factor loading for the 4 scales of measurements are above 0.7 at a value between 0.772 and 0.841 this indicates that the factor sufficiently captures the variance of the observed variable. Additionally, AVE for the brand passion variable is 65.77% which is above 0.5 which has is considered as an acceptable level of convergent validity.

Finally, purchase intention the dependent variable in the current study its factor loading for the 4 scales of measurements are above 0.7 at a value between 0.763 and 0.852 this indicates that the factor sufficiently captures the variance of the observed variable. Additionally, AVE for the brand passion variable is 65.62% which is above 0.5 which is considered as an acceptable level of convergent validity.

To sum up, all variable scales are valid because all factor loadings are above 0.7 and the AVE is above 0.5. This means that each observed variable has a strong relationship with its respective latent construct, explaining a significant portion of its variance

4.2. Frequency Analysis

A frequency analysis is used to describe how frequently the respondents answered questions like gender, age, education, marital status, number of children, employment, and average income. Consequently, the analysis provides valuable information regarding the composition and diversity of the sample group, helping the researcher to draw relevant conclusions about the sample under study.

The demographic analysis of respondents reveals that the majority (64.1%) were between the ages of 20 and 27, while 35.7% were aged 16 to 20, and only 0.3% were younger than 16. In terms of education, most respondents (73.1%) held a college degree, followed by 25.8% with a high school education and only 1% with an elementary school education. Regarding marital status, 92.8% of respondents were single, while 4.9% were married, and 2.3% were divorced. The majority of respondents (93.8%) resided in Alexandria, with only 6.2% living in Cairo. In terms of employment status, 62.8% were students, 28.4% were employed, and 8.8% were unemployed. Household income distribution showed that 35.7% of respondents earned between 5,000 and 10,000, while 25.1% had an income between 10,000 and 30,000, 15.5% earned between 30,000 and 50,000, and 23.8% reported an income above 50,000. Finally, the gender distribution indicated that 54.3% of respondents were female and 45.7% were male, with females representing the majority. Overall, the data suggests that most respondents were young adults, highly educated, single, living in Alexandria, and primarily students, with a predominant household income range of 5,000 to 10,000.

4.3 Correlational analysis

The correlation coefficient (r or R) measures the strength, direction and significance of the relationship between two variables. The degree of linear correlation between two variables can be statistically measured using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The results of the correlation analysis are shown in table 3:

H1: Firm-created social media has a positive effect on brand passion.

The relationship between firm-created content and brand passion is 0.36** with a significance value of 0.000. This indicates a positive, moderate, and highly significant relationship, supporting the proposed hypothesis.

H2: User-generated social media communication has a positive effect on brand passion. The relationship between user-generated content and brand passion is 0.488** with a significance value of 0.000. This shows a positive, moderate, and highly significant relationship, confirming the support for the proposed hypothesis.

H3: Brand passion has a positive effect on purchase intention.

The relationship between brand passion and purchase intention is 0.703** with a significance value of 0.000. This suggests a positive, strong, and highly significant relationship, thus supporting the proposed hypothesis.

H4: Firm-created content has a positive effect on purchase intention.

The relationship between firm-created content and purchase intention is 0.557** with a significance value of 0.000. This reflects a positive, strong, and highly significant relationship, thereby supporting the proposed hypothesis.

H5: User-generated content has a positive effect on purchase intention.

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The relationship between user-generated content and purchase intention is 0.579** with a significance value of 0.000. This indicates a positive, strong, and highly significant relationship, confirming the support for the proposed hypothesis.

Table 3: Correlation analysis matrix

		Firm created content	User generated content	Brand passion	Purchase intention
Firm created content	Pearson Correlation	1	0.639**	0.366**	0.557**
	Sig. (2tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387
User generated content	Pearson Correlation	0.639**	1	0.488**	0.579**
	Sig. (2tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	387	387	387	387
Brand passion	Pearson Correlation	0.366**	0.488**	1	0.703**
	Sig. (2tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	387	387	387	387
Purchase intention	Pearson Correlation	0.557**	0.579**	0.703**	1
	Sig. (2tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	387	387	387	387

4.4 Regression analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical technique used to examine a relationship between two or more variables in a way that allows the knowledge on the other variables to predict or explain one of the variables.

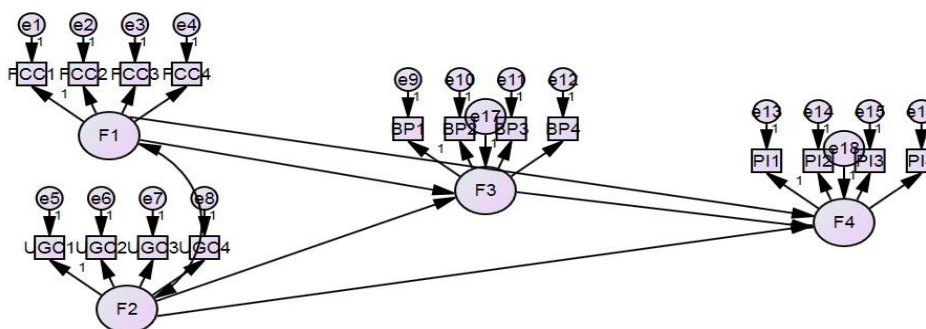


Figure (1): Structural equation modeling (SEM) for the research model

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The current study relied on the structure equation modeling through Amos to test the study hypotheses, as shown in figure 1 the measured model with $p = 0.000$, $CMIN/df = 2.982$, $RMSEA = 0.072$, $GFI = 0.916$, $CFI = 0.929$, $TLI = 0.913$, $PGFI = 0.660$, and $PNFI = 0.733$, the model fits the data rather well. While Table 3 shows the results of the hypothesis tests.

Table 4: Structure Equation Modeling Results

Hypothesis	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypothesis Supported or rejected
H1: Firm-created social media has a positive effect on brand passion.	-0.188	0.144	-1.306	0.192	Rejected
H2: User-generated social media communication has a positive effect on brand passion	0.961	0.190	5.050	***	Supported
H3: Brand passion has a positive effect on purchase intention	0.739	0.081	9.132	***	Supported
H4: Firm created content has a positive effect on purchase intention	0.449	0.111	4.039	***	Supported
H5: User generated content has a positive effect on purchase intention	-0.087	0.159	-0.550	0.582	Rejected

H1: Firm-created social media has a positive effect on brand passion.

The results indicate that this hypothesis is rejected, as the p-value is greater than 0.05 ($p = 0.192$). This suggests that firm-created content does not have a significant effect on brand passion, indicating that the company's communication on social media has no measurable impact on brand passion. Furthermore, the relationship is statistically insignificant, as the critical ratio (CR) is below 1.96 ($CR = -1.306$).

H2: User-generated social media communication has a positive effect on brand passion. The results support this hypothesis, as the p-value is less than 0.05 ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that user-generated content on social media has a significant positive effect on brand passion. The relationship is also statistically significant, as the CR value exceeds 1.96 ($CR = 5.050$), confirming the impact of user-generated content on brand passion.

H3: Brand passion has a positive effect on purchase intention.

This hypothesis is supported, with a p-value less than 0.05 ($p < 0.001$). The results show that brand passion positively influences purchase intention, suggesting that greater brand passion leads to higher purchase intention on social media. The relationship is statistically significant, as the CR value exceeds 1.96 ($CR = 9.132$), further validating the hypothesis.

H4: Firm-created content has a positive effect on purchase intention.

The results support this hypothesis, with a p-value less than 0.05 ($p < 0.001$). This shows that firm-created content positively affects purchase intention, indicating that content generated by the firm directly influences purchase intention on social media. Additionally, the relationship is statistically significant, with a CR value above 1.96 ($CR = 4.039$).

H5: User-generated content has a positive effect on purchase intention.

This hypothesis is rejected, as the p-value is above 0.05 ($p = 0.582$), indicating that user-generated content does not have a significant effect on purchase intention. Thus, user-generated content on social media does not directly impact purchase intention. The relationship is also statistically insignificant, as the CR value is below 1.96 ($CR = -0.550$).

In summary, the findings suggest that user-generated content has a significant effect on brand passion, which in turn positively influences purchase intention. However, firm-created content did not show a significant impact on brand passion, and user-generated content did not significantly affect purchase intention directly.

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5. RESEARCH CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence purchase intention through brand passion as a mediator. Based on the analysis, the researcher found that in the correlation analysis, all variables showed a positive, strong, and significant relationship. In the regression analysis, three out of the five proposed hypotheses were supported. Specifically, **H2:** (User-generated social media communication has a positive effect on brand passion), **H3:** (Brand passion has a positive effect on purchase intention), and **H4:** (Firm-created content has a positive effect on purchase intention) were supported. However, **H1:** (Firm-created social media has a positive effect on brand passion) and **H5:** (User generated content has a positive effect on purchase intention) were rejected, as their p-values were greater than 0.05. This indicates that these relationships were not statistically significant.

5.1. Theoretical implications

The findings from this study on the effectiveness of TikTok in influencing Generation Z's purchase intention (PI) for clothing products of Oudies, an Egyptian brand offer significant theoretical implications for marketing, communication, and consumer behavior research especially concerning user generated content (UGC) and firm-created content (FCC). The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on how both UGC and FCC impact brand passion and purchase intention, particularly in the context of emerging digital platforms. It highlights the role of social media platforms, like TikTok, in shaping consumer behavior, where brand passion is fueled by interactions with both firm-driven and user-generated content. The study further extends the source credibility theory (Serman & Sims, 2023) by demonstrating how UGC, when perceived as authentic and trustworthy, can enhance brand passion and significantly influence purchase intention. This research provides valuable insights into how brands can strategically leverage UGC and FCC on short-form video platforms to drive engagement, strengthen emotional connections with consumers, and ultimately increase the likelihood of purchase.

The research tested the impact of firm-created content (FCC) and user-generated content (UGC) on purchase intention, both with and without the mediating impact of brand passion. This approach provided a strong foundational base for the study, offering a deeper understanding of how these types of content influence purchase intention. By examining both direct and mediated effects, the study makes a significant contribution to the existing literature, revealing the complex role of brand passion in shaping consumer behavior.

Moreover, the research presents a different viewpoint on user-generated content by suggesting that brands can encourage users to post positive reviews, comments, and opinions through extrinsic motivation. This could include offering monetary rewards or providing product samples as incentives. While these rewards may lead to higher engagement and more content creation, there is a downside. The credibility and trustworthiness of the content might decrease because users may post favorable reviews in exchange for rewards rather than based on genuine experiences. Despite this potential issue, this perspective is valuable as it brings attention to the balance brands need to find between motivating users and maintaining the authenticity of the content. It adds an important dimension to the discussion by showing the possible trade-off between incentivized participation and the reliability of user-generated content.

5.2 Practical Implications

The managerial implications for companies or businesses highlight the importance of shaping consumer attitudes toward content on TikTok, a platform that has gained significant popularity and engagement, particularly among younger generations (Gen Z). By leveraging TikTok's unique features, such as short form video content, viral trends, and its interactive environment, businesses can reach a broader and more diverse audience, enhancing consumer engagement and interest. Companies can use TikTok to encourage product reviews, where consumers share their experiences through creative videos, which can further boost interest and authenticity. In addition, businesses can foster stronger interactions with consumers on TikTok by maintaining consistent and engaging communication. TikTok's algorithm, which promotes personalized content based on user preferences and behavior, allows brands to target the right audience effectively. Through TikTok, businesses can not only engage with current customers but also attract new ones by creating interactive and entertaining content that resonates with the audience. Encouraging user-generated content (UGC) on the platform can increase consumer trust and emotional connection to the brand, which in turn strengthens brand passion and increases loyalty.

Furthermore, TikTok's viral nature enables brands to build a community of loyal followers who share and support their content, further promoting the brand's visibility and appeal. This sense of community can also enhance the bond between businesses and consumers, encouraging feedback and suggestions. By actively listening to consumer input and adapting to market needs, businesses can develop new products or services that align more closely with consumer desires and preferences. Ultimately, leveraging TikTok for brand engagement and consumer interaction can drive stronger purchase intentions, fostering long-term relationships and enhancing overall brand success.

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5.3 Research Limitations

Firstly, it focuses mainly on the customers' perspective and doesn't fully consider the seller's viewpoint. Secondly, the research uses convenience sampling, which may introduce bias and limit the ability to apply the results more broadly (Sandunima & Jayasuriya, 2024).

In addition, the participants were predominantly from a specific age group between 16 and 27 to represent (Gen Z) and most were located in Alexandria and Cairo, which excluded the opinions and insights of individuals living in other cities across Egypt.

Additionally, due to time and resource constraints, the study tested the research hypotheses using a questionnaire that provided cross-sectional data. As a result, the findings did not offer insights into how the research variables might change over time.

Moreover, the study concentrates exclusively on TikTok as a social media platform excluding other platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. This limits the generalizability of the findings, as user behaviors and interactions can differ across platforms. Furthermore, the study does not consider the effects of cross-platform engagement, where users might interact with a brand on multiple social media sites.

Finally, the data collection questionnaire was applied to Egyptian brand studies in the clothing industry, while international brands and other industries were excluded. This limitation means that the findings are specific to the context of Egyptian clothing brands and may not be applicable to other industries or international brands.

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