



# Examining the Influence of User Generated Content on Purchase Intention: An Experimental Study of Digital Marketing Training Participants

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**Abstract.** The advent of the digital age has resulted in a notable transformation in the marketing environment, whereby User-Generated Content (UGC) has emerged as a potent influence in molding consumer opinions and intents to make purchases. The present study investigates the impact of user-generated content (UGC) on the purchase intentions of digital marketing trainees enrolled at Ibn Khaldun University Bogor. Employing a quantitative methodology with a sample size of 40 participants, the research examines the impact of several forms of user-generated content (UGC), such as product reviews and social media posts, on the attitudes and purchase intentions of trainees. An analysis of the data was conducted using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). In addition to influencing elements such as ratings, perceived risk, social media marketing, and word-of-mouth, the results indicate that user-generated content (UGC) has a substantial and direct effect on purchase intention. The study further emphasizes that the indirect impacts of user-generated content (UGC) on the intention to make a purchase, mediated by factors such as perceived risk, social media marketing, and word-of-mouth, lack statistical significance. These findings highlight the crucial significance of user-generated content (UGC) in determining customer behavior and underline its capacity for marketers to successfully impact purchase intentions in the era of digital technology. The study provides critical insights into the dynamics of user-generated content (UGC) and its consequences for digital marketing tactics, namely in the realm of training and education.

**Keywords:** Experimental study, UGC, digital marketer, training, online shopping.

## 1 Introduction

In the rapidly advancing digital age, the marketing landscape has undergone a significant transformation. One of the most prominent changes is the paradigm shift from

brand-centric one-way communication to a two-way dialog that actively engages consumers. In this context, User Generated Content (UGC) has emerged as an influential force shaping consumer perceptions, attitudes and behaviors. UGC encompasses various forms of digital expression, from product reviews, testimonials, social media posts, to creative videos shared by users. The authenticity and credibility of UGC make it a highly valued source of information by consumers, often more trusted than traditional marketing messages from the brand itself.

The study of the influence of UGC on consumer purchase intentions has attracted widespread attention from both academics and marketing practitioners. Previous research has demonstrated that User-Generated Content (UGC) has considerable capacity to impact customer buying choices. Appreciative feedback and endorsements from other users can increase consumers' confidence in a product or service, encouraging them to consider a purchase. Conversely, negative reviews or bad experiences shared by users can damage brand image and inhibit purchase intention. However, the relationship between UGC and purchase intention is not simple. The influence of User-Generated Content (UGC) can be moderated by a variety of factors, including user characteristics, the type of product or service, and the context of the purchase situation.

Digital marketing training has become an important tool to equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively participate in the digital landscape. These trainings not only provide an understanding of digital marketing strategies and tactics, but also empower participants to become active and critical content creators. In this context, digital marketing trainees can be considered as users who have a higher level of digital literacy and greater awareness of the role of UGC in marketing. Therefore, they can be an interesting research subject to explore the influence of UGC on purchase intention.

Ibn Khaldun University of Bogor has organized digital marketing training that aims to improve students' competency in this area. This study focuses on digital marketing trainees at Ibn Khaldun University of Bogor as research subjects. By analyzing their perceptions, attitudes and behaviors related to UGC, this study aims to gain deeper insights into the influence of UGC on purchase intention in the context of digital marketing training.

A number of studies have examined the relationship between UGC and consumer purchase intention. A meta-analysis by Awad and Ragowsky (2017) found that UGC has a significant positive effect on purchase intention, especially in the context of e-commerce. Online product reviews, both positive and negative, were shown to influence consumer purchase decisions. In addition, research conducted by Filieri and McLeay (2014) shown that user-generated user-generated content (UGC) has a more significant impact on purchase intention compared to content created by brands. This shows the importance of UGC authenticity and credibility in influencing consumer perception and behavior.

Although research on UGC and purchase intention has grown rapidly, studies specifically focusing on digital marketing trainees are limited. Some studies have investigated

the role of UGC in digital marketing education, but the focus has been more on the use of UGC as a learning tool rather than its influence on purchase intention. This study therefore seeks to fill this research gap by exploring specifically how digital marketing trainees perceive and respond to UGC, and how this affects their purchase intentions. This analysis also addresses the risks perceived by consumers when engaging with user-generated content, particularly in the realm of online purchasing. Perceived risks, such as financial risk, product risk, security risk, and psychological risk, can be a significant barrier to purchase intention (Andrian & Selamat, 2021).

The primary goal of this investigation is to investigate the impact of user-generated content (UGC) on the purchase intention of participants in digital marketing training at Ibn Khaldun University of Bogor. Specifically, this study will analyze how different types of UGC, such as product reviews, testimonials, and social media posts, influence trainees' perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions. In addition, it will also identify factors that may moderate the influence of UGC, such as participants' demographic characteristics, their level of engagement in the training, and the type of product or service being evaluated. As such, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of digital marketing theory and practice, particularly in the context of training and education. In addition, this research will also provide valuable insights for marketers on how to effectively utilize UGC to increase consumers' purchase intentions, especially in a context where consumers increasingly rely on information and recommendations from fellow users.

## 2 Methods

This study's quantitative approach is meticulously designed to rigorously examine the complex relationships between UGC and Purchase Intention, as well as the roles of intermediary constructs such as WoM, SMM, Consumer Rating, and Perceived Risk. By focusing on participants from the Digital Marketing Training program at UIKA Bogor, the study leverages a specific and relevant sample of 40 respondents, all of whom are engaged in academic pursuits within the field of economics and business. This targeted sample allows for a more controlled examination of the constructs within the context of digital marketing education, providing rich insights into how these factors interplay in a learning environment

**Table 1.** Operational table of research variables

Variables	Definition	Reference	Indicator
Word-of-Mouth (WOM)	Informal communication about the use or characteristics of certain goods and services, or about their sellers/producers, by consumers to other consumers.	(Wyrwoll, 2014; Manap & Adzharudin, 2013)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I often talk about this product or brand with friends and family.</li> <li>2. I feel happy to share information about this product or brand with others.</li> <li>3. Others value my opinion about this product or brand.</li> </ol>

Variables	Definition	Reference	Indicator
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. I believe that advice from friends and relatives is more reliable than commercial messages.</li> <li>5. I often seek information about this product or brand from friends and family before buying it.</li> <li>6. I feel that I have influence over the purchasing decisions of my friends and family.</li> <li>7. I feel happy if my friends and family follow my recommendations about products or brands.</li> <li>8. I feel that I am a trusted source of information about this product or brand.</li> <li>9. I feel good about giving positive reviews about this product or brand on social media.</li> <li>10. I feel that I am part of a community that supports this product or brand.</li> </ol>
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I feel UGC is more authentic and trustworthy than brand-generated content.</li> <li>2. I feel entertained by the UGC that I find on online platforms.</li> <li>3. I feel UGC provides useful information about the product or service.</li> <li>4. I feel motivated to create my own UGC after seeing similar content from other users.</li> <li>5. I feel UGC helps me in making purchase decisions.</li> <li>6. I feel UGC makes me more engaged with the brand or online community.</li> <li>7. I feel UGC increases my trust in the brand or product.</li> <li>8. I feel happy when my UGC gets attention or appreciation from other users.</li> <li>9. UGC feels a bit more personalized and relevant for me.</li> </ol>

Variables	Definition	Reference	Indicator
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	According to Dahnil et al (2014) SMM is a new element of corporate marketing strategy that supports the coordination of goods, services, information, or ideas available through one or friends more online social media. Kim and Ko (2010) examination distinct types of social media marketing activities such as entertainment, trends, personalization, and word-of-mouth promotion.	(Dahnil et al, 2014), Kim and Ko (2010), in Choah, MAyaddin, Arifin, Othman (2023).	<p>10. I see UGC as a powerful medium for brands to reach to customers</p> <hr/> <p>1. The content presented on social media attracts my attention.  2. I feel connected through interactions on social media.  3. The information provided on social media is useful to me.  4. I feel compelled to buy a product/service after seeing it on social media.  5. I feel that customer service is responsive to my comments and questions on social media.  6. I feel that social media is used effectively to promote products/services.  7. I trust a product more because of its active presence on social media.  8. I often share content on my social media.  9. I feel that a product understands my needs and wants through social media.  10. I feel that social media is an effective channel for communicating with consumers.</p>
Customer Rating	Opinions given by consumers who have purchased the product to the seller as a form of input in the rating scheme by giving 1 to 5 stars.	(Filieri, 2015)	<p>1. I feel that online customer ratings help me in making purchasing decisions.  2. I tend to buy products or services with high customer ratings.  3. I feel that customer ratings provide accurate information about the quality of the product or service.  4. I feel that customer ratings help me compare different products or services.  5. I feel that customer ratings from people I know are more influential than ratings from people I don't know.</p>

Variables	Definition	Reference	Indicator
Perceived Risk	The uncertainty that consumers feel about the risk of loss from online shopping.	(Bauer, 1960 in The Role of the Perceived Risk to Purchase Decision), (Featherman & Pavlou, 2002) in Azlin, Muda (2015).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. I feel that customer ratings given by many people are more trustworthy than ratings given by a few people.</li> <li>7. I feel that recent customer ratings are more relevant than older ratings.</li> <li>8. I feel that customer ratings accompanied by written reviews are more informative than ratings that are just numbers.</li> <li>9. I feel that customer ratings help me avoid bad products or services.</li> <li>10. I feel that customer ratings are an important factor that I consider before purchasing a product or service.</li> </ol> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I feel confident that this product will not cause me financial loss.</li> <li>2. I believe that this product is safe to use and will not pose a risk to my health or safety.</li> <li>3. I am confident that this product will work well and will not disappoint me.</li> <li>4. I feel that the information I have about this product is sufficient to make an informed purchase decision.</li> <li>5. I feel that I have enough control over the decision to purchase this product.</li> <li>6. I feel that I can easily return or exchange this product if I am not satisfied.</li> <li>7. I feel that I don't have to worry about other people's opinions on my decision to purchase this product.</li> <li>8. I feel that I have enough time to consider my purchase decision for this product.</li> <li>9. I feel that I can easily find additional information about this product if I need it.</li> </ol>

Variables	Definition	Reference	Indicator
Purchase Intention	The tendency of consumers to take action regarding purchases as measured by the likelihood of making a purchase.	(Ventre & Kolbe, 2020)	<p>10. I feel that the risks associated with purchasing this product are acceptable.</p> <p>1. This is a product I intend to buy shortly.</p> <p>2. I have no doubt that this product will satisfy my requirements and desires.</p> <p>3. I feel that this product has value for money.</p> <p>4. I am interested in trying this product after seeing an advertisement or review.</p> <p>5. I feel that this product is superior to other similar products.</p> <p>6. I would recommend this product to my friends and family.</p> <p>7. I feel that this product suits my lifestyle and personality.</p> <p>8. I am confident that this product will provide long-term benefits to me.</p> <p>9. I feel that this product is easy to get and buy.</p> <p>10. I feel that this product has a good brand reputation.</p>

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) serves as an essential preliminary measure to establish the validity and reliability of constructs. Given the imbalance between the number of respondents and indicators, CFA helps refine the measurement model by reducing indicators to their most essential components. This reduction is essential for achieving a parsimonious model that can reliably test the hypothesized relationships with a relatively small sample size. The subsequent path analysis through Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with SmartPLS enables the detailed examination of both the outer model (which assesses the measurement properties) and the inner model (which tests the structural relationships). The revalidation of the measurement model through the outer model step ensures that any potential measurement errors are accounted for before testing the structural hypotheses.

Moreover, the study's robustness is further enhanced by examining the direct and indirect effects of UGC on Purchase Intention through mediating variables. This nuanced approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of how different facets of digital marketing influence consumer behavior, providing valuable insights that can be applied to improve digital marketing strategies. Through the integration of advanced analytical

methods, this work makes a substantial contribution to the theoretical and practical understanding of digital marketing, particularly in the context of training programs aimed at developing digital marketers

### 3 Result & Discussion

#### 3.1 Demographu Respondents

The demographic analysis of respondents participating in the digital marketing training at Ibn Khaldun University (UIKA) Bogor reveals a balanced gender distribution among the 40 respondents, with 19 males and 21 females. All respondents fall within the age group of 18-24 years and possess a high school education as their highest level of educational attainment. Their employment status indicates that all 40 respondents are students. This data highlights a demographic predominantly composed of young, undergraduate individuals who have not yet entered the workforce. Additionally, the survey results indicate that most respondents shop online 1-2 times per month, with Shopee being the most frequently used marketplace. Fashion products are the most commonly purchased items, with price and promotional offers being the primary factors influencing their purchasing decisions. Overall, respondents expressed satisfaction with their online shopping experiences, although issues such as products not matching descriptions and delayed deliveries were frequently encountered. This demographic profile highlights the importance of focusing on young, tech-savvy consumers in digital marketing techniques, especially within educational contexts.

#### 3.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

The data processing technique employed in this study aims to identify the most prominent and dominant variables, as well as to group the variables effectively. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was utilized for all six constructs, with decisions made based on several criteria: the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO MSA) greater than 0.5, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with a significance level (Sig.) less than 0.05, and Anti-Image Correlation values exceeding 0.5.; Additionally, other CFA indicators such as communalities and the component transformation matrix were required to be greater than 0.5 (Moore, 2014). The CFA was conducted using SPSS version 26.0, and the results for each construct are detailed in Table xx. This rigorous approach ensures the reliability and validity of the constructs by filtering out less significant variables, allowing for a more robust analysis of the dominant factors within the study.

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

No	Construct	No. CFA run	No. Indicator/Factor	Indicator/Factor
1	Word of Mouth (WoM)	3-run	1 Factor	F: X11, X12, X13



No	Construct	No. CFA run	No. Indicator/Factor	Indicator/Factor
2	Social Media Marketing (SSM)	2-run	1 Factor	F: X22, X23, X210
3	Consumer's Rating (Rating)	3-run	1 Factor	F: X32, X310
4	Consumers' Risk (Risk)	3-run	2 Factors	F41: X44, X45, X46, X410 F42: X41, X42, X43
5.	User Generated Content (UGC)	3-run	2 Factors	FY1: Y2, Y4, Y5, Y6 FY2: Y7, Y8
6.	Purchase Intention (PI)	3-run	2 Factors	FZ1: Z2, Z4, Z6, Z9 FZ2: Z3, Z5, Z7, Z10

### 3.3 Outer Model

In this study, we conducted an analysis of the impact of User Generated Content (UGC) on Word of Mouth (WoM), Social Media Marketing (SSM), Customer Rating, Perceived Risk, and Purchase Intention using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS. The outer model results were evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, rho\_A, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to assess the reliability and validity of the constructs. In accordance with Hair et al. (2017), reliable internal consistency measures how well the indicators represent the latent construct, assessed using composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. A composite reliability score between 0.6 and 0.7 is considered good, while Cronbach's Alpha should ideally be above 0.7 (Sarstedt et al., 2017).

Purchase Intention demonstrated strong internal reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.778 and rho\_A of 0.783. The composite reliability of 0.900 indicates high reliability, aligning with (Sarstedt et al., 2017) benchmark. Additionally, the AVE of 0.818 suggests excellent convergent validity, indicating that the latent construct can account for more than 81% of the variance of the indicators. Similarly, Customer Rating and Perceived Risk showed adequate composite reliability values of 0.829 and 0.835, respectively, despite their Cronbach's Alpha values being slightly below the expected threshold, suggesting areas for potential improvement.

Conversely, UGC and WoM constructs revealed lower internal reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.567 and 0.725, respectively. The rho\_A value for WoM was particularly high at 1.634, indicating potential issues with indicator consistency or redundancy. Despite these concerns, both constructs achieved composite reliability scores above 0.8, suggesting overall reliability per (Sarstedt et al., 2017). The AVE values for these constructs were also adequate, demonstrating satisfactory convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was assessed applying the Fornell-Larcker Standard, which examines the relationship between the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct and the correlations between that construct and other constructs in the model (Henseler et al., 2015). Fornell and Larcker (as cited in Kwong-Kay, 2013) suggest that a construct exhibits good discriminant validity when the square root of its AVE exceeds the correlations with other constructs. The results showed that the square root of the AVE for each construct—Purchase Intention (0.904), Rating (0.841), Risk (0.847), Social Media Marketing (SSM) (0.766), User Generated Content (UGC) (0.835), and Word of Mouth (WoM) (0.762)—was indeed greater than the correlations with other constructs. For instance, the square root of AVE for Purchase Intention (0.904) was higher than its correlations with Rating (0.584), Risk (0.421), SSM (0.390), UGC (0.711), and WoM (0.227), confirming the discriminant validity of this construct.

Similarly, the constructs Rating, Risk, SSM, UGC, and WoM demonstrated discriminant validity by exhibiting square root Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values that exceed the correlations with other components in the equation. Specifically, the square root of AVE for Rating (0.841) surpassed its correlations with Risk (0.497), SSM (0.212), UGC (0.595), and WoM (0.438). The same pattern was observed for Risk (AVE = 0.847), SSM (AVE = 0.766), UGC (AVE = 0.835), and WoM (AVE = 0.762), as each construct's AVE was greater than its highest correlation with any other construct. These results confirm that the model possesses good discriminant validity, ensuring that each construct is distinct and well-differentiated from others, thus enhancing the credibility and reliability of the study's findings.

The assessment of the outer model's Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values is crucial for diagnosing multicollinearity issues among the indicators. Multicollinearity occurs when indicators within a construct are quite closely linked, which can increase the variance of regression coefficients and lead to unstable estimates. In general, a VIF value of less than 5 is regarded as acceptable, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern (Hair et al., 2011). In this study, all VIF values are well below the threshold of 5, indicating that multicollinearity is not an issue among the indicators. Specifically, the VIF values for F41 and F42 are both 1.237, FY1 and FY2 are 1.186, FZ1 and FZ2 are 1.680, X11 is 1.579, X12 is 1.415, X13 is 1.368, X210 is 1.407, X22 is 1.156, X23 is 1.398, and X310 and X32 are both 1.208. These values suggest that each indicator contributes unique information to its respective construct without excessive overlap with other indicators.

The absence of significant multicollinearity among the indicators supports the robustness of the model's estimates and enhances the reliability of the constructs. This ensures that the relationships observed in the model are attributable to genuine associations rather than artifacts of collinearity. Consequently, the model can be interpreted with greater confidence, as the indicators are confirmed to measure their intended constructs

independently. This strengthens the validity of the conclusions drawn from the SEM analysis, affirming that the constructs are appropriately operationalized and measured. The outer model results largely indicate that the indicators for most constructs exhibit strong loadings, signifying robust convergent validity. According to the guideline that an indicator is regarded as having high reliability if its outer loading exceeds 0.70 (and in emerging fields, 0.5-0.6 can be acceptable) (Hair et al., 2017), the constructs Purchase Intention, Rating, Risk, Social Media Marketing (SSM), and Word of Mouth (WoM) demonstrate strong reliability. Specifically, the Purchase Intention construct has high indicator loadings of 0.894 and 0.914 for FZ1 and FZ2, respectively, and the Rating construct shows loadings of 0.848 and 0.834 for X310 and X32. The Risk construct exhibits loadings of 0.838 and 0.832 for FY1 and FY2, while SSM displays adequate convergent validity with indicator loadings of 0.811, 0.731, and 0.755 for X210, X22, and X23. Finally, WoM maintains good convergent validity with loadings of 0.811 and 0.881 for F41 and F42. However, the User Generated Content (UGC) construct presents some concerns, as the indicator loadings vary significantly. While X12 has a high loading of 0.962, X11 and X13 have lower loadings of 0.675 and 0.601, respectively. Although these lower loadings fall slightly below the ideal threshold of 0.70, they still meet the acceptable range of 0.5-0.6 for emerging research fields.

### 3.4 Inner Model

**Table 3.** Inner Model

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Rating -> Purchase Int	0.309	1.849	0.065
Risk -> Purchase Int	-0.053	0.338	0.736
SSM -> Purchase Int	0.143	1.209	0.227
UGC -> Purchase Int	0.572	2.941	0.003
UGC -> Rating	0.595	6.838	0.000
UGC -> Risk	0.597	7.870	0.000
UGC -> SSM	0.370	2.560	0.011
UGC -> WoM	0.421	2.042	0.042
WoM -> Purchase Int	-0.156	0.890	0.374

The path coefficient results from this study's results are in line with those of (Colicev et al., 2019; Dwi Pratiwi, 2021). Colicev et al.'s research highlights the substantial impact of User Generated Content (UGC) on stages such as awareness and satisfaction, which is in accordance with the current study's findings that UGC significantly affects Purchase Intention ( $\beta = 0.572$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), Rating ( $\beta = 0.595$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), Risk ( $\beta = 0.597$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), Social Media Marketing (SSM) ( $\beta = 0.370$ ,  $p = 0.011$ ), and Word of Mouth (WoM) ( $\beta = 0.421$ ,  $p = 0.042$ ). This demonstrates UGC's pivotal role in shaping

consumer perceptions and behaviors, aligning with Colicev et al.'s (2019) observation of UGC's strong influence on the marketing funnel stages.

Additionally, the findings are also supported by Dwi Pratiwi (2021), who discusses the role of social media and UGC in enhancing place identity and local distinctiveness at cultural tourism destinations. The current study reflects how UGC contributes to enhancing Purchase Intention and overall consumer engagement, like how UGC reviews and ratings can bolster place identity and attract more visitors to cultural sites like Setu Babakan. The significant impact of UGC in shaping perceptions and behaviours underscores its role in creating local distinctiveness and fostering consumer engagement, as highlighted in Dwi Pratiwi's study. The findings of studies conducted by Colicev and O'Connor (2020) indicate that user-generated content (UGC) has a more pronounced impact on customer satisfaction than content created by marketers. This underscores the significance of UGC in enhancing brand value. UGC, or user-generated material, can be used as a valuable source of consumer insights, contributing to a deeper understanding of customer satisfaction and brand positioning (Tirunillai & Tellis, 2014). In their 2022 study, Israfilzade and Baghirova (2022) compared the effectiveness of brand and user-generated videos and found that UGC is often more impactful in driving consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. Similarly, Ibrahim et al. (2022) found that the comparative impact of UGC versus firm-generated content on consumer engagement behaviors like liking, sharing, and commenting, revealing that UGC is more effective in driving these interactions.

In contrast, while Colicev et al. (2019) point out that Firm Generated Content (FGC) dimensions, particularly vividness, are more effective for consideration and purchase intent, the current study's results suggest that UGC is more influential in driving these outcomes. This differentiation indicates that while UGC is critical for shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors, a balanced strategy incorporating both UGC and FGC can optimize various stages of the marketing funnel and enhance overall brand engagement. The integration of these insights highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to leveraging both types of content to effectively manage consumer interactions and marketing strategies.

The analysis of the indirect effects in this study provides insights into how User Generated Content (UGC) influences Purchase Intention through various mediators. Firstly, the indirect effect of UGC on Purchase Intention through Rating shows a positive relationship ( $\beta = 0.184$ ,  $p = 0.072$ ), although it is not statistically significant at the conventional 0.05 level. This suggests that while UGC positively impacts Purchase Intention indirectly via Rating, the effect is weak and might be influenced by other factors. The t-statistic value of 1.805 indicates that there is some evidence of mediation, but the result should be interpreted with caution due to its marginal significance. This effect aligns with findings from the literature, which often show that while UGC is influential, the strength of its indirect impact via mediators like rating can vary based on contextual factors like content quality, perceived credibility, and user engagement. The effectiveness of UGC in this scenario is closely tied to the perceived quality of the content

(Mayrhofer et al., 2019). Mayrhofer found that high-quality UGC is often characterized by relevance, authenticity, and the ability to resonate with the target audience. When content is well-crafted, engaging, and appears genuine, it is more likely to be perceived as credible, leading to higher purchase intentions. Nosita & Lestari (2019) highlights that perceived credibility of UGC, especially in beauty product reviews, has a strong effect on purchase intentions, illustrating how UGC influences decision-making through perceived trust and ratings. Then Geng & Chen (2021) shows that the interaction quality of UGC enhances perceived trust and usefulness, which in turn influence purchase intentions, particularly in the context of high involvement products.

In contrast, the indirect effects of UGC on Purchase Intention through Risk ( $\beta = -0.032$ ,  $p = 0.750$ ), Social Media Marketing (SSM) ( $\beta = 0.053$ ,  $p = 0.337$ ), and Word of Mouth (WoM) ( $\beta = -0.066$ ,  $p = 0.449$ ) are not statistically significant. The low t-statistics for these paths (below 1.96) suggest that UGC's impact on Purchase Intention through these mediators is negligible. The relationship through Risk ( $\beta = -0.032$ ,  $p = 0.750$ ) suggests that UGC does not meaningfully influence perceived risk in a way that impacts purchase intentions. This aligns with studies that show while UGC can influence trust, its impact on perceived risk is often mitigated by other factors, such as the credibility of the content or the brand itself (Khwaja et al., 2020). Similarly, the indirect effect through SSM ( $\beta = 0.053$ ,  $p = 0.337$ ) indicates that while SSM can boost consumer engagement, its mediating role between UGC and purchase intention is weak. Previous research suggests that SSM is more effective when combined with targeted content strategies rather than relying solely on user-generated posts (Almohaimmed, 2019).

The insignificant indirect effect through WoM ( $\beta = -0.066$ ,  $p = 0.449$ ) further supports the idea that while WoM is traditionally a strong marketing channel, its effectiveness as a mediator in the context of UGC is limited. This is consistent with findings that suggest WoM's impact is highly dependent regarding the perceived credibility and the content's relevance, which may not always be aligned with purchase behavior (Rahaman et al., 2022). Moreover, the non-significant results indicate that these channels (Risk, SSM, and WoM) do not sufficiently mediate the relationship between UGC and Purchase Intention. This highlights the importance of focusing on more direct pathways, such as content quality and brand engagement, which tend to have a more robust influence on consumer decisions (Mayrhofer et al., 2019). In summary, while UGC is a critical factor in shaping consumer behavior, its indirect influence through Risk, SSM, and WoM is minimal, indicating that brands should prioritize more direct mechanisms like enhancing content relevance and credibility to drive purchase intentions. Overall, while UGC has a direct and significant effect on Purchase Intention, its indirect effects through Rating show a marginally positive impact. The non-significant indirect effects through Risk, SSM, and WoM suggest that these mediators do not substantially contribute to the relationship between UGC and Purchase Intention. This indicates that while UGC directly influences Purchase Intention, its influence through these specific mediators is minimal, warranting further investigation into other potential mediators or mechanisms.

The total effects analysis highlights the critical role of User Generated Content (UGC) in influencing Purchase Intention. UGC shows a strong and statistically significant direct effect on Purchase Intention ( $\beta = 0.711$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), underscoring its importance in driving consumer purchasing decisions. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Colicev et al. (2019), who demonstrated that UGC significantly impacts various stages of the marketing funnel, particularly awareness and satisfaction, more effectively than firm-generated content. The substantial influence of user-generated content (UGC) on purchase intention is consistent with other findings highlighting the importance of content quality and perceived credibility. Mathur et al. (2021) found that the effectiveness of UGC is closely tied to perceived credibility, which in turn positively influences attitudes toward UGC and ultimately drives purchase intention. Additionally, Geng and Chen (2021) demonstrated that the interaction quality of UGC plays a critical function in its effectiveness, particularly in terms of enhancing perceived usefulness and trust, both of which are essential in influencing purchase decisions. Furthermore, UGC also significantly influences intermediary constructs such as Rating ( $\beta = 0.595$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), Risk ( $\beta = 0.597$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), Social Media Marketing (SSM) ( $\beta = 0.370$ ,  $p = 0.011$ ), and Word of Mouth (WoM) ( $\beta = 0.421$ ,  $p = 0.042$ ). This multi-faceted impact of UGC suggests that it plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors across various dimensions.

In contrast, the effects of Rating ( $\beta = 0.309$ ,  $p = 0.065$ ), Risk ( $\beta = -0.053$ ,  $p = 0.736$ ), SSM ( $\beta = 0.143$ ,  $p = 0.227$ ), and WoM ( $\beta = -0.156$ ,  $p = 0.374$ ) on Purchase Intention are not statistically significant, indicating that these factors do not strongly influence purchasing decisions in this context. The weak and non-significant impact of Risk highlights that perceived risk is not a significant deterrent for consumers. The weak and non-significant impact of Risk, for example, shows that perceived risk is not a significant barrier for consumers when it comes to making purchase decisions, which aligns with other research indicating that in some cases, trust mechanisms built by UGC can diminish the perceived risk factor in decision-making (Winarno & Indrawati, 2022). Similarly, while SSM and WoM have positive relationships with Purchase Intention, their effects are not substantial enough to be conclusive. This aligns with the findings by (Dwi Pratiwi, 2021), who emphasized the importance of UGC and e-WOM in enhancing local distinctiveness and place identity, particularly in cultural tourism destinations like Setu Babakan. This too reflects finding from Kartika and Pandjaitan (2023), which emphasize that while social media marketing and e-WOM can enhance brand image and purchase intention, they are often overshadowed by more influential factors like UGC quality and brand trust (Kartika & Pandjaitan, 2023). The significant role of UGC in driving consumer behavior and perceptions underscores its potential in marketing strategies to effectively influence consumer purchase intentions. Therefore, marketers should focus more on leveraging high-quality UGC and fostering trust through authentic content to drive stronger purchase intentions.

The results from the SmartPLS analysis provide valuable insights into the relationships between various constructs influencing Purchase Intention and other dependent variables within the model. When comparing these results with the studies by (Dwi Pratiwi,

2021; Royle, J. and Laing, 2014; Sul-toni et al., 2022; Zahara et al., 2023), several key points of convergence and divergence emerge.

The R Square values in this study give interpretative evidence of how much variance may be explained by the independent RJs. For example, an R Square for Purchase Intention of 0.585 would mean that this independent variable explains 58.5% of the variance in Purchase Intention. This substantial explanatory power reflects the significant role of digital marketing efforts, particularly User Generated Content (UGC), in shaping consumer behavior and driving purchase intentions. Similarly, (Zahara et al., 2023) found that entrepreneurial marketing through digital marketing capabilities positively impacts marketing performance in SMEs, highlighting the importance of digital strategies in enhancing business outcomes. (Sul-toni et al., 2022) also showed that digital marketing, digital orientation, marketing capabilities, and IT capabilities positively and significantly impact marketing performance. These findings align with the current study, emphasizing the necessity for SMEs to harness digital marketing tools effectively to optimize their marketing performance. (Royle, J. and Laing, 2014) further highlight the digital marketing skills gap, stressing the need for developing a digital marketer model that encompasses essential digital skills to bridge this gap and enhance marketing efficacy. (Dwi Pratiwi, 2021) discusses the role of creative planning in place identity and local distinctiveness, where social media and UGC play crucial roles in promoting cultural tourism destinations like Setu Babakan. This underscores the broader applicability of UGC in enhancing both consumer purchase intentions and cultural site visibility.

Moreover, the R Square values for intermediary constructs such as Rating (0.354), Risk (0.357), SSM (0.137), and WoM (0.177) indicate moderate to low explanatory power. This suggests that while the model captures some variance in these constructs, other factors not included in the model are also influential. (Zahara et al., 2023) noted that digital marketing capabilities significantly affect marketing performance, suggesting that SMEs need to continue improving these capabilities and implementing entrepreneurial marketing strategies. (Sul-toni et al., 2022) similarly emphasized integrating marketing and IT capabilities to optimize digital marketing performance. Royle, J. and Laing (2014) pointed out the necessity for a comprehensive skill set in digital marketing to address the skills gap effectively. The moderate explanatory power for these constructs in the current study highlights the multifaceted nature of consumer behavior and the necessity for a holistic approach to digital marketing strategies, encompassing various elements of digital orientation, marketing, and IT capabilities, as well as addressing the skills gap identified by (Royle, J. and Laing, 2014). (Dwi Pratiwi, 2021) further supports the importance of local identity and distinctiveness in driving engagement and retention, particularly in cultural tourism, indicating that UGC and social media endorsements are critical in this context.

The relationships between these constructs with path coefficients derived from the SmartPLS analysis also is image form (Figure xx). For example, Purchase Intention is

also positively and significantly affected by User Generated Content (UGC) (path coefficient = 0.711, T-statistics = 8.404), suggesting its impact on consumer purchase behavior as well. The result of this study is in line with research conducted by (Zahara et al., 2023) and (Sultoni et al., 2022), which concluded that digital marketing had a significant effect on markeCivilisation performance. Royle and Laing (2014) also highlighted the importance of developing digital marketing skills to enhance marketing effectiveness. The high T-statistics and low P-values for UGC's effect on other constructs like Rating, Risk, and SSM also suggest robust relationships, further reinforcing the pivotal role of UGC in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors. Dwi Pratiwi (2021) demonstrated that creative planning and the effective use of UGC can enhance the visibility and attractiveness of cultural destinations, suggesting a broader applicability of UGC beyond consumer goods into cultural and experiential marketing. This comprehensive understanding from all referenced studies provides a strategic framework for SMEs to enhance their marketing performance through targeted digital marketing efforts, leveraging UGC, and addressing the digital marketing skills gap, while also considering the importance of local identity and distinctiveness in their strategies.

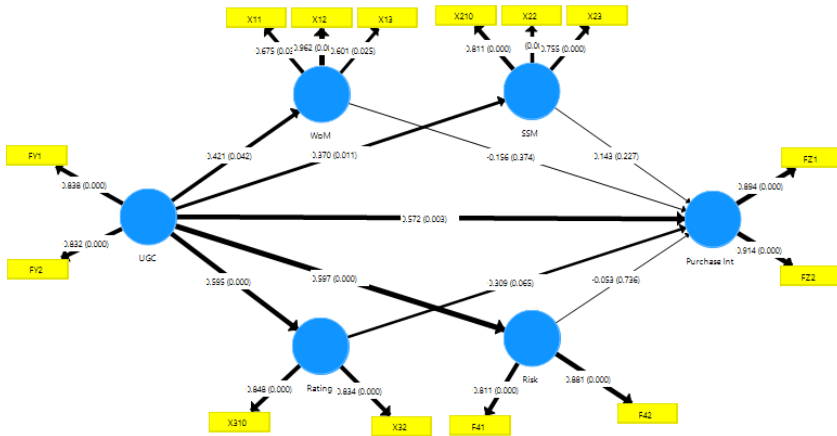


Fig.1. Path Analysis of UGC towards Purchase Intention

## 4 Conclusion

This research is aimed to test the influence of user-generated content (UGC) on purchase intention among digital marketing training participants at Ibn Khaldun University in Bogor. A total of 40 respondents from survey and using the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied to analyzing the data in sequence. Primary Findings of the Study:

1. The research findings confirm that user-generated content (UGC) has a strong and direct influence on consumer purchase intentions. This finding corroborates those of prior research which have identified the pivotal role of UGC in influencing the various stages of the marketing funnel, particularly those pertaining to awareness and satisfaction.



2. The study also revealed that UGC exerts a significant influence on other factors that can indirectly affect purchase intentions, including ratings, perceived risk, social media marketing, and word-of-mouth. This indicates that UGC exerts an influence that extends beyond direct purchase decisions, affecting broader consumer perceptions and behaviors.
3. The indirect effects of UGC were found to be limited. While UGC has a direct and significant effect on purchase intention, its indirect effects through mediators like perceived risk, social media marketing, and word-of-mouth were found to be statistically insignificant. This suggests that while UGC exerts a direct influence on purchase intentions, its indirect impact through these specific mediators is limited.
4. The Significance of User-Generated Content (UGC) in Digital Marketing: The findings of the study highlight the pivotal function of UGC in influencing consumer behavior and underscore its potential for marketers to effectively influence purchase intentions in the digital era. User-generated content (UGC) has become an effective instrument for fostering trust, strengthening brand engagement, and increasing conversions.
5. The implications for digital marketing strategies are significant. The findings of the study provide valuable insights for marketers and businesses alike. The study underscores the necessity for digital marketers to proactively promote and capitalize on user-generated content (UGC) in their strategies. The incorporation of UGC into business campaigns enables the utilisation of authentic customer voices, the establishment of credibility, and the cultivation of more robust relationships with target audiences.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of research on the impact of user-generated content (UGC) in the digital marketing landscape. The study highlights the pivotal role of UGC in influencing consumer perceptions, purchase intentions, and overall marketing performance. By grasping the intricacies of UGC and its ramifications, businesses can devise more efficacious digital marketing strategies that resonate with their target audience and fulfill their marketing objectives. Additionally, the study proposes avenues for future research, including exploring alternative potential mediators or mechanisms through which UGC indirectly influences purchase intentions and investigating the impact of UGC in diverse industries or contexts.

**Limitations**This review has several potential limitations that we should be aware of. The sample comprised only 40 participants, all of whom came from a single academic program at Ibn Khaldun University Bogor and therefore we cannot generalize the findings. The findings do not fully represent the population at large on user-generated content (UGC) and its impact on purchase intention. Additionally, the study focuses solely on digital marketing trainees, who may have higher levels of digital literacy compared to the general public, which could skew perceptions of UGC. Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which can be subject to biases such as social desirability or inaccurate recall. Furthermore, the study only considers direct and indirect effects of UGC on purchase intention within the context of digital marketing training, potentially overlooking other influential factors or contexts, such as product categories or cultural influences, that may impact consumer behavior. Future research should explore these

variables across more diverse and larger sample groups to enhance the robustness and applicability of the findings

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