

## EXPLORING THE DIFFERENTIAL IMPACT OF VARIOUS USER-GENERATED CONTENT TYPES ON PURCHASE INTENTION THROUGH AWARENESS

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the role of brand awareness as a mediating variable between user generated content (UGC) and purchase intention among generation z consumers of local beauty brands. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 206 respondents through online questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The measurement model shows high reliability and validity across all constructs, confirming the robustness of the data. The findings reveal that UGC has significant positive effect on both brand awareness and purchase intention, while brand awareness also positively influences purchase intention. Furthermore, the analysis confirms that brand awareness partially mediates the relationship between UGC on consumer behavior is strengthened through enhanced brand recognition and familiarity. These result highlights the crucial role of UGC in shaping consumer perception and purchase decision within the digital beauty market. The study highlights that generations Z consumers who are highly engaged with social media, respond more positively to authentic peer generated content than to traditional advertising. Therefore, local beauty brands are encouraged to utilize UGC-based marketing strategies to build stronger brand awareness and foster higher purchase intention among their target audience.*

**Keywords:** Purchase Intention, User Generated Content, Brand Awareness, Generation Z

### Introduction

In today's digital landscape, the way people discover, evaluate and purchase products has change differently. For Generation Z buying decision are no longer shaped only by traditional advertising or brand campaigns. Instead, they are strongly influenced by the voices of their circles, communities, and online creators. This shift is largely fueled by the rise of user-generated content (UGC) such as customer reviews, unboxing videos, tutorial, and social media post (Israfilzade & Baghirova, 2022). Unlike professional advertisements, UGC carries a sense of authenticity and relatability that makes Gen Z who tend to be skeptical of overly polished brand messages and more trusting of peer opinions (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021).

However, the relationship between UGC and consumer purchase behavior is not always straightforward. While exposure to UGC often sparks interest and positive attitudes on products, purchase intention usually depends on additionally factors such as brand awareness (Ezzeldeen Mohamed, 2025). Awareness means being able to recognize or recall a brand, functions as a gateway in consumer decision making. Without awareness even the most persuasive content may fail to translate into actual consideration or buying behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Several studies highlight that social media content can enhance purchase intention indirectly through mechanism of building stronger awareness (I Gusti Bagus Krisna Saputra & I Made Wardana, 2023)

In the selfcare product especially beauty product industry, this dynamic relevant to digital marketing strategies these days. Lately, the local company such as Paragon Corp which have a lot of brands like Wardah, Make Over, Kahf, and many more have successfully entered the competitive market by leveraging cultural identity, halal values, and social media engagement (Chambers, 2025). Gen Z consumer often first encounter these brands not through billboards or TV commercials, but through Tik Tok by showing skincare routines, Instagram reviews and testimonials coming from influencer (Aquinia et al., 2025). Based on Tri Wulandari et al., (2025) research UGC in beauty and personal care significantly shapes consumer attitude, trust and purchase behavior. Yet, whether these effects happen directly or mediated by the level of brand awareness is still a question that deserve more closer studies.

Despite growing body of literature on social media marketing and e-word of mouth relatively few studies have explicitly tested brand awareness as a mediator between UGC and purchase intention, particularly in the context of local beauty brands targeting Gen Z. Filling this gap is important not only for academic purposes but also practical implications. Therefore, this study aims to examine the mediation role of brand awareness in the relationship between UGC content and purchase intention among Gen Z consumer by focusing on local beauty products. This research will provide insight into how peer-driven content contributes to both awareness and intention, offering valuable lessons for brand managers in an increasingly competitive digital marketplace.

## **Literature Review**

### **Purchase Intention**

Purchase intention refers to consumers likelihood or willingness to buy a particular product in the near future. It is often seen as the final step before an actual purchase decision take place. According to Kotler & Keller (2016) intention is influenced not only by product quality or price but also by perception, emotion and external communication things. In digital commerce, intention has become increasingly shaped by online interactions and exposure to brand narratives (Majeed et al., 2021). For Gen Z, intention is rarely formed through traditional advertisement alone, and it tends to emerge after observing real user experiences or social validation through digital platforms (Ngo et al., 2023).

### **User – Generated Content**

User-generated content refers to content created voluntarily by consumers such as reviews, tutorial, testimonial or even casual mention on social media (Panopoulos et al., 2023). Unlike polished brand campaigns, UGC tends to be raw, personal and experience-based which is why it carries strong credibility. Gen Z perceives UGC as more trustworthy than influencer advertisements, especially when it comes from everyday users rather than celebrities (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). UGC also acts as a form of social proof, signaling to consumers that a product is widely accepted or worth trying.

### **Brand Awareness**

Brand awareness is the extent to which consumer can recognize or recall brand when prompted with a product category (Nguyen et al., 2024).It is often described as the foundation of the marketing funnel , no matter how attractive a product is, consumers are unlikely to choose it if they cannot remember it exist (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Awareness plays a particularly crucial role in competitive markets like beauty and self care, where consumers are constantly exposed to similar offerings. A well-know brand gains advantage simply by being top of mind during evaluation.

### **Methods**

This research is conducted using quantitaive approach with several systematic stages. The first stage involves collecting primary data through online questionnaires distribute to all respondents. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling with respondent selected based on the age range of 19 to 27 years old as this study specifically focuses on Generation Z consumers. The next stage is data analysis which will be conducted by using SEM PLS. The analysis will begin with outer model testing to examine reliability and validity of the measurements indicators followed by inner model testing to evaluate the structural relationships between variables. The sampling focused on Semarang Central Java and 206 respondents filled through online questionnaire.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Respondent Characteristic**

This study involved 206 respondents who participated in in examining the role of brand awareness as mediating between user generated content and Gen Z purchase intention. Based on the demographic data, the majority of respondents were female. This gender reflects the general consumer pattern in the beauty and personal care market, where women tend to be dominant users and decision makers. Such composition strengthens the relevance of this study, as female consumers are often more engaged with beauty-related digital content and are active participants in online discussions surrounding self-care and beauty brands.

In terms of age, most respondents were within the 19-20 years old (51%) and followed by 21-22 years old (25.2%) and 17-18 years old (16%). This age profile represents a typical segment of Generation Z, who are known for their strong digital presence and reliance on online information when making purchase decisions. The data indicate that this group is highly influenced by social media interactions and peer generated content. Furthermore, in relation to monthly spending on self-care products, a significant proportion of respondents (89.3%) reported expenses of less than Rp. 500.000 per month. This suggest that affordability remains a key consideration among Gen Z consumers, emphasizing the importance of value perception in shaping their purchase intention toward local beauty products.

The occupational and social media data provide additional insight into the respondents' profiles. A majority were college students, indicating that the sample largely consists of young individuals who are in a transitional stage between adolescence and adulthood, a group highly receptive to digital marketing efforts. In terms of social media usage, Tik Tok and Instagram emerged as the most frequently used platforms, underscoring the dominance of visually driven and interactive content among Gen Z users. These platforms serve as the primary channels for user generated content, including reviews, tutorials and influencer endorsement which play a crucial role in building awareness. Overall, the demographic characteristics of the 206 respondents highlight the significance of social media and peer created content in influencing Gen Z's awareness and purchasing behavior toward local beauty brands.

**Table 1.** Respondent Characteristic

Description	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	72	35%
Female	134	65%
Age:		
17-18 years old	33	16%
19-20 years old	105	51%
21-22 years old	52	25.2%
23-24 years old	7	3.4%
25-26 years old	3	1.5%
27-28 years old	6	2.9%
Monthly expenses per month for selfcare product:		
< Rp. 500.000	184	89.3%
Rp. 1.000.000 – Rp. 3.000.000	20	9.7%
> Rp. 3.000.000	2	1%
Occupation:		
Students	2	1%
College Students	154	74.8%
Private employees	12	5.8%
Employees	22	10.7%
Others	16	7.7%
Social media most frequently used:		
Facebook	5	2.4%
Twitter	2	1%
Instagram	67	32%
Tik Tok	126	61.2%
YouTube	6	3.4%

Source: Processed data (2025)

**Result of measurement model assessment**

Table 2 presents the results of the construct reliability dan validity test for the variables used in this study. The indicators of User Generated Content loadings between 0.705 and 0.853 which exceeds the acceptable threshold of 0.7 indicating that each item strongly reflects the underlying variable. The Cronbach Alpha value of 0.898 and composite reliability value of 0.922 demonstrate excellent internal consistency, as both value of 0.663 indicates good convergent validity as it surpasses the 0.5 benchmark confirming that the indicators adequately explain the variance of the construct. Similarly, the brand awareness construct shows strong reliability and validity. The loading values for this construct range from 0.805 to 0.901, which are considered excellent. The Cronbach alpha of 0.901 and composite reliability of 0.931 both indicate a high level of internal consistency among the indicators. Additionally, the AVE value of 0.770 exceeds the minimum acceptable level 0.50, signifying that the construct captures a substantial proportion of variance from its measurement items. The purchase intention factor loadings for its indicators range from 0.878 to 0.921, showing a good reliability. The construct's Cronbach alpha is 0.922 and CR 0.944 from both indicate good internal consistency while the AVE value of 0.810 indicates high degree of convergent validity. All these findings confirm that all the indicators used in this study meet the criteria of reliability and validity.

**Table 2.** Reliability, Validity, and Discriminant Validity

Indicator Items	Loadings	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
User Generated Content				
X1.1	0.851	0.898	0.922	0.663
X1.2	0.853			
X1.3	0.842			
X1.4	0.815			
X1.5	0.705			
X1.6	0.809			
Brand Awareness				
Y1.1	0.850	0.901	0.931	0.770
Y1.2	0.901			
Y1.3	0.883			
Y1.4	0.877			

Purchase Intention				
Y2.1	0.878	0.922	0.944	0.810
Y2.2	0.893			
Y2.3	0.907			
Y2.4	0.921			

Source: Processed data (2025)

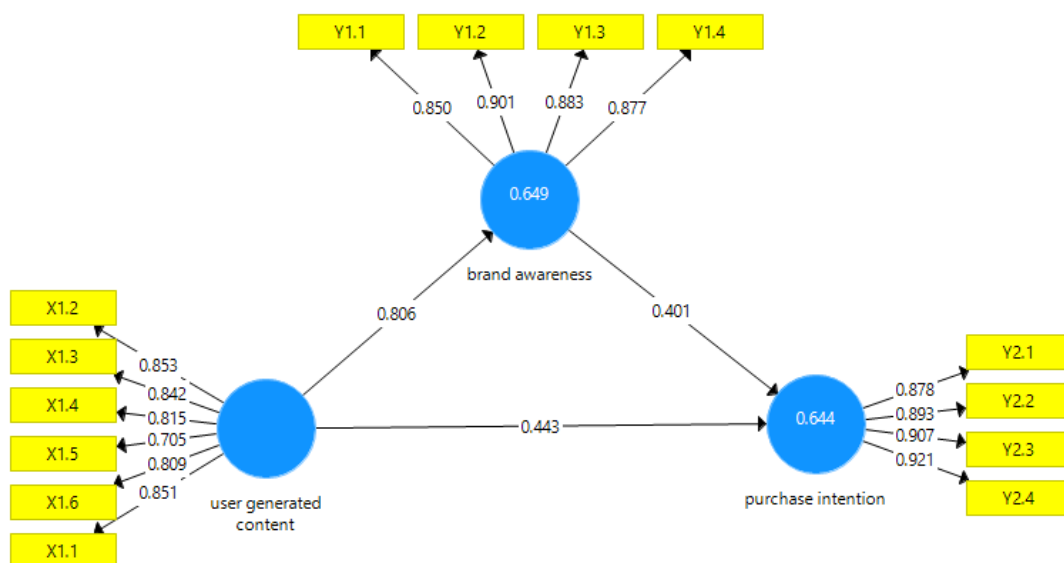
**Hypotheses test result**

On the table 3 shows the result of the hypotheses testing conducted to examine the relationships among the constructs in this study. The first hypothesis which examine the effect of user generated content (UGC) on brand awareness shows a path coefficient of 0.806 with T Statistic of 21.961 and P-Value of 0.000. These results indicate a strong and significant relationship, implying that user generated content has a substantial positive effect on the level of brand awareness among consumers. This finding supports the notion that UGC such a reviews, testimonials and social media content, serves as an effective medium for shaping consumer perceptions and increasing brand recognition, particularly among generation Z consumers who rely heavily on peer generated content when evaluating products. The second hypothesis assess the direct effect of user generated content, which yields a path coefficient of 0.443, a T-statistic of 4.031 and P-Value of 0.000. This result shows that UGC not only enhances awareness but also directly stimulates purchase intention. Also, brand awareness shows a significant positive effect on purchase intention with path coefficient of 0.401 and T-Statistic of 3.583, indicating that higher levels of awareness contribute to stronger purchase intention toward local beauty brands. Furthermore, the mediation analysis revealed that brand awareness significantly mediates the relationship between UGC and purchase intention with path coefficient of 0.323 and T-Statistic of 3.663. This finding confirm the mediating role of brand awareness, suggesting that UGC effect on purchase behavior not only directly but also indirectly through the ability to enhance brand awareness.

**Table 3. Hypotheses Test Result**

Path	Path Coefficient	T Statistic	P Value	Remark
user generated content -> brand awareness	0.806	21.961	0.000	Supported
user generated content -> purchase intention	0.443	4.031	0.000	Supported
brand awareness -> purchase intention	0.401	3.583	0.000	Supported
user generated content -> brand awareness -> purchase intention	0.323	3.663	0.000	Supported

Source: Processed data (2025)



**Figure 1. Structure Model**

**Discussion**

**The Effect of User Generated Content on Brand Awareness**

The findings revealed that user generated content has a positive effect on brand awareness with the strong path coefficient. The more frequently consumers are exposed to content created by other users such as reviews, tutorials, testimonial, and product experiences they will have greater awareness and familiarity with

a brand. User generated content functions as an authentic and credible source of information that resonates particularly well with Generation Z who tend to value peer opinions and real-life experiences over traditional advertising. These findings are consistent with previous studies which highlight that user generated content enhances brand visibility and recognition by creating organic exposure and trust among consumers (Ezzeldeen Mohamed, 2025; Hermaren & Achyar, 2018; Wulandari & Wulandari, 2023). Thus, in the context of local beauty brands, encourage customers to express and share their experiences on social media platforms serves as an effective strategy for building stronger brand awareness.

### **The Effect of User Generated Content on Purchase Intention**

The results also reveal that user generated content exerts a significant positive effect on purchase intention. This indicates that user generated content directly influences consumer's willingness to purchase, as peer created content often provides product credibility and emotional connection. Generation Z consumer rely heavily on online content and peer recommendations when making purchasing decisions. The interactive and community-driven nature platforms like Tik Tok and Instagram allows users to engage with real experiences, making them more confident in their purchasing choices. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that user generated content increase purchase intention (Israfilzade & Baghirova, 2022; Shakuntala & Ramantoko, 2023). Therefore, local beauty brands can leverage user generated content as a persuasive marketing tool to convert awareness into actual consumer interest and intention to buy.

### **The Effect of Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention**

The empirical analysis reveals that brand awareness has significant and positive effect on purchase intention. This finding emphasizes that consumers who are more familiar with a brand are more likely to consider purchase its products. High brand awareness enhances consumer confidence and reinforce brand's credibility especially in competitive markets such as beauty and personal care. This result aligns with previous research Abd El-Jalil et al., (2023), Purwanto et al., (2021), Saputra & Widiartanto (2019), that brand awareness serves as foundation for play a role in influencing consumer decisions. In the context of local beauty brands, strong brand awareness can increase consumer's likelihood of purchase by fostering trust and recognition especially when supported by consistent messaging across digital platforms.

### **The Mediating Role of Brand Awareness Between User Generated Content and Purchase Intention**

The results on table 3 further confirm that brand awareness mediates the relationship between user generated content and purchase intention. This mediation suggests that user generated content effect on purchase intention both directly and indirectly through enhancement of brand awareness. In other words, user generated content increases consumer exposure and familiarity with a brand which subsequently strengthens their intention to purchase. Based on Kotler & Keller (2016) posits that awareness is a prerequisite for favorable brand attitudes and purchase behavior. The mediation effect observed in this study highlights the strategic importance of UGC not only as direct marketing tool but also as a mechanism for long term brand development.

### **Conclusion**

The findings of this study reveal that user generated content (UGC) has a significant and positive influence on both brand awareness and purchase intention among generation Z consumers in the context of local beauty brands. The results demonstrate that UGC functions not only as direct driver of purchase intention but also as an indirect effect through the mediation of brand awareness. This suggest that peer created content such as product reviews, tutorials, and testimonials shared on social media platforms effectively enhances consumer familiarity and brand recall. The study further establishes that brand awareness plays a crucial mediating role, reinforcing that UGC's impact on purchase intention is strengthened when it simultaneously increases awareness and recognition of the brand. In summary, this research highlights the importance of UGC and brand awareness as strategic elements in shaping Generation Z's purchasing behavior. Generation Z consumers who are highly engaged with digital platforms are more likely to respond positively to authentic and relatable content rather than conventional marketing approaches. Therefore, fostering user participation and strengthening brand awareness are essential for increasing purchase intention and maintaining competitiveness in the local beauty industry.

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