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The Influence of User Generated Content (UGC) on Skincare Product Purchase Decisions Among Generation Z on TikTok (A Case Study in Bandung City)

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Abstract: This study seeks to explore the influence of User Generated Content (UGC) on the purchase decisions of skincare products among Generation Z users on TikTok, using Bandung City as a case study. The research targets individuals from Generation Z who are active TikTok users and reside in Bandung. A purposive sampling technique was used, resulting in a total sample of 155 respondents. Data were collected through a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to Generation Z users who meet the criteria. The analysis technique used is descriptive analysis and simple linear regression analysis using SPSS software. The findings reveal that User Generated Content (UGC) has a positive and significant effect on the skincare purchase decisions of Generation Z on TikTok, accounting for 40.5% of the variation in purchasing decisions.

Keyword: User Generated Content, Purchase Decisions, Skincare Product, TikTok.

INTRODUCTION

Recent technological advancements have made internet access widely available across nearly all segments of society. In Indonesia, as of 2024, approximately 221.56 million people, representing 79.5 percent of the total population of 275.77 million, are connected to the internet. Among these users, Generation Z constitutes the majority, accounting for 87.2 percent (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2024). The internet serves various functions, one of which is the use of social media. With internet connectivity, users can easily interact and stay connected through different social media platforms. Among the many platforms available, TikTok stands out as the most widely used in Indonesia. In 2024, Indonesia ranked first globally in terms of TikTok users, reaching a total of 157.6 million users (GoodStats, 2024).

In addition, as of 2024, TikTok ranked as the most time-consuming platform in Indonesia, with an average usage time of 38 hours and 26 minutes per month (Meltwater, 2024). Bandung is also listed among the top three cities in Indonesia with the highest number of TikTok users (Rizaty, 2025). As of January 2025, skincare was the most popular product subcategory on TikTok in Indonesia, reaching 238 thousand in popularity. Of this figure, 44

percent or approximately 104 thousand was dominated by Generation Z (TikTok Creative Center, 2025). The popularity of skincare products can be driven by the large amount of related content, especially User Generated Content (UGC). Hayat et al. (2024) Content that is commonly shared on social media, such as product reviews, testimonials in the form of text, photos, or videos, is known as User Generated Content (UGC) and plays an important role in increasing consumer trust in a product.

User Generated Content (UGC) refers to product-related content created independently by users or consumers, without direct involvement from companies and without receiving any compensation (Arnhold, 2010). UGC produced by social media creators typically documents their personal experiences with a product. This type of content is generally perceived as neutral and trustworthy, which helps consumers in evaluating their purchase decisions (Anwar & Reham, 2013). User Generated Content can be measured through four key indicators. First, consumer trust tends to increase when they see reviews from individuals who have actually purchased the product. Second, consumers are more likely to trust evaluations provided by fellow buyers. Third, written reviews shared directly by consumers tend to leave a stronger impression. Lastly, audiences often gain new insights or knowledge about specific products through content created by other users (Dila & Novi, 2022).

User Generated Content (UGC) is one of the factors that can influence customer purchase decisions. The information shared through UGC often serves as a supporting element in guiding buyers' choices (Khofifah & Hasanah, 2023). TikTok offers a feature for sharing content, promoting a culture of content sharing among users, both of their own and others' content (Agustina, 2020). This feature facilitates the rapid spread of content, including UGC, allowing it to reach a larger audience quickly. The increasing use of UGC reflects a shift into an era where consumers hold greater power, allowing them to influence the purchasing decisions of other consumers (O'Hern & Kahle, 2013). Shared UGC content also carries informational value that can encourage others to buy, as the information presented is often clear and easy to understand (Mathur et al., 2021).

A purchase decision is the stage where consumers evaluate their previously considered preferences before ultimately deciding to buy a product or service (Putri et al., 2021). Consumer purchase decisions are also influenced by habitual buying behaviors, which include the timing of the purchase, when it is carried out, and where it takes place (Assauri, 2014). Purchase decisions can be measured using six indicators: product choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchasing timing, purchase amount, and payment method (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

This study aims to examine the level of User Generated Content (UGC) related to skincare products among Generation Z users on TikTok, assess their purchase decision levels, and analyze the influence of UGC on their purchasing decisions. Previous research on the impact of UGC on purchase decisions has shown mixed results. While some studies have found that UGC has a positive and significant influence on purchasing behavior (Hayat et al., 2024; Z.Nur et al., 2024), others have reported no such significant effect (Faizatul Wafiyah & Any Urwatul Wusko, 2023; Wiguna, 2022). This inconsistency highlights a research gap. Therefore, this study is conducted to re-examine the influence of UGC on purchase decisions among Generation Z users on TikTok.

The researchers adopt the Howard & Seth consumer behavior model to explain the decision-making process of Generation Z when purchasing skincare products through TikTok. This model outlines a sequence beginning with stimuli (input), followed by internal processing (perception and learning), and ending in a purchase decision (output) (Handayani, 2012). In this study, User Generated Content (UGC) on TikTok, such as reviews and testimonials, serves as the primary stimulus. These stimuli influence consumer perception and learning, which are shaped by personal experiences, beliefs, and emotions (Timoshenko & Hauser, 2019). Ultimately, these internal processes affect the consumer's final decision to purchase.

Additionally, exogenous factors like personality, social environment, and financial condition also play a moderating role.

METHOD

This study utilized a quantitative method with an associative approach to investigate the relationship between User Generated Content (UGC) and purchase decisions. As stated by Ghozali (2016), associative research is conducted to identify the relationship or influence between two or more variables. The target population comprised Generation Z TikTok users in Bandung who had purchased skincare products influenced by UGC. The main source of data was obtained using an online questionnaire that was distributed through Google Forms.. A purposive sampling method was employed, with a total of 155 respondents selected based on Hair Jr et al.s (2010) recommendation, which suggests multiplying the number of indicators by 15 to determine the appropriate sample size.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In the field of digital marketing, the emergence of social media platforms like TikTok has transformed how consumers engage with brands, especially among Generation Z. This demographic is notably responsive to online content, with User Generated Content (UGC) playing a pivotal role in shaping their perceptions, preferences, and purchasing behavior. UGC, which includes text, reviews, images, or videos created by users rather than brands, is often regarded as more authentic and trustworthy (Hayat et al., 2024). This reflects a broader trend among digital consumers who increasingly rely on peer recommendations over traditional advertising.

The purchase decision process is significantly influenced by psychological and informational cues embedded within UGC. These cues support consumer evaluation of products, particularly in the skincare industry, where credibility and personal experience are key factors in decision-making. Kotler & Keller (2016) identify six stages in the purchasing decision: product choice, brand choice, dealer choice, purchase timing, purchase amount, and payment method, all of which may be affected by the perceived reliability and value of UGC.

Descriptive Analysis

Based on the research findings, the majority of respondents, Generation Z users who are active on TikTok in the Bandung city, are within the age group of 21 to 24 years, accounting for 53.5% of the total 155 respondents. Female participants represent the majority, comprising 70.3% of all respondents. Additionally, most respondents reported using TikTok for 4 to 6 hours per day, with this usage category representing 47.7% of the total sample.

A descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an overview of respondents' perceptions regarding the two main variables: User Generated Content (UGC) and Purchase Decision. As shown in Table 1, the average mean score for the UGC variable is 3.54, which falls within the "Good" category. This suggests that respondents generally agreed that content shared by users, such as reviews, testimonials, and product usage experiences, positively influences their evaluation of skincare products on TikTok. The Purchase Decision variable received a mean score of 3.40, also categorized as "Good," indicating that most respondents are inclined to base their purchasing decisions on the information gathered from UGC. These results demonstrate that Generation Z respondents perceive UGC as a credible and useful source of information, which plays an important role in influencing their buying behavior, particularly in the context of personal care products distributed through social media platforms.

Table 1. Result of the Average Mean score for Each Variabel

Variables	Mean	Category
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User Generated Content	3.54	Good
Purchase Decision	3.4	Good

Source: Primary Data, Processed 2025)

Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Tabel 2. Simple Linear Regression Result

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	19.796	2.417	8.191	.000
	TOTALX	.670	.066	.636	10.205

a. Dependent Variable: TOTALY

Source: SPSS 23, Processed by Researchers in 2025

Simple linear regression analysis was used to examine how much influence User Generated Content (UGC) has on the purchasing decisions of Generation Z users on TikTok. As shown in Table 2, the analysis produced the regression equation $Y = 19.796 + 0.670X$, indicating that for every one unit increase in the UGC score, the purchase decision score increases by 0.670 units. The regression coefficient of 0.670 is statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), demonstrating that UGC has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. The constant value of 19.796 implies that, even in the absence of UGC, there is a baseline purchase decision score, possibly influenced by other latent factors not included in the model. Additionally, the standardized beta coefficient of 0.636 reflects a moderately strong positive relationship between the two variables. This finding is further supported by a t-value of 10.205, which greatly exceeds the critical value in standard statistical thresholds, reinforcing the reliability of UGC as a predictor. These results provide empirical support for the hypothesis that peer-created content, manifested through increased trust, real experience, memorable, and new knowledge, plays a significant role in influencing the skincare purchasing behavior of digital-native consumers, particularly on short-video platforms like TikTok.

Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination (R Square) was used to assess how well the independent variable, User Generated Content (UGC), explains the variation in the dependent variable, Purchase Decision. As presented in Table 3, the R Square value is 0.405. This indicates that 40.5 percent of the variation in purchase decisions among Generation Z TikTok users in Bandung can be explained by the UGC variable. The remaining 59.5 percent may be attributed to other factors not examined in this study.

Tabel 3. Coefficient of Determination Test Result

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.636 ^a	.405	.401	7.27786

a. Predictors: (Constant), TOTALX

Source: SPSS 23, Processed by Researchers in 2025

Additionally, the adjusted R Square value is 0.401, which accounts for the number of predictors in the model and provides a more accurate estimation when generalized to the population. This adjusted value confirms that the model maintains a consistent level of explanatory power even after accounting for sample size. The standard error of the estimate is

7.27786, reflecting the average distance between the actual data points and the regression line. The R value of 0.636 further supports the existence of a moderate to strong positive correlation between UGC and purchase decision. These findings demonstrate that UGC is a significant predictor in influencing consumer behavior within the digital marketplace.

T test

A t-test was conducted to evaluate the significance of the effect of User Generated Content (UGC) on purchase decisions. Based on the results of the regression analysis, the UGC variable produced a t-value of 10.205 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.000. According to Pallant (2016), a predictor variable is considered statistically significant if the p-value is less than 0.05.

Tabel 4. T test Result

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	19.796	2.417		8.191
	UGC	.670	.066	.636	10.205

a. Dependent Variable: Keputusan Pembelian

Source: SPSS 23, Processed by Researchers in 2025

Since the result of this study meets the threshold, it can be concluded that UGC has a significant positive influence on the purchase decisions of Generation Z consumers on TikTok. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0), which states that UGC has no significant effect, is rejected. In contrast, the alternative hypothesis (H1), which states that UGC has a significant and positive effect on purchase decisions, is accepted. This finding is supported by Chaniago et al. (2023), who highlight that a high t-value and low significance level provide strong statistical evidence for the influence of an independent variable. The result confirms that peer-generated content, such as reviews and testimonials, is perceived as a credible factor shaping consumers' preferences and strengthening their intention to purchase skincare products in digital marketplaces.

Discussion

1. User Generated Content Level of Skincare Products Among Generation Z on TikTok

Based on the results of descriptive statistical analysis, it was found that the level of User Generated Content (UGC) for skincare products on TikTok falls within the high category. This is reflected in the average score for all indicators of the UGC variable, which is 3.57 on a Likert scale of 1–5, placing it within the range of 3.41–4.20. These findings indicate that Generation Z actively engages with various types of user-generated content on TikTok, such as reviews, tutorials, and skincare product testimonials. This high level of engagement reflects that UGC has strong appeal and trustworthiness as a reference source before making a purchase.

2. Generation Z's Decision-Making Process for Skincare Purchases on TikTok

The level of purchase decisions regarding skincare products by Generation Z also falls within the high category. The overall average score for the purchase decision variable is 3.4, which falls within the range of 3.41–4.20. This suggests that the majority of respondents tend to agree with statements related to making purchase decisions after being exposed to content on TikTok. These findings indicate that TikTok has a strong influence as a social media platform in shaping purchase decisions, particularly through visual and narrative content from other users that is perceived as more authentic and trustworthy.

3. The Influence between User Generated Content and Purchase Decisions

Based on the findings of this study, it was discovered that User Generated Content (UGC) has a positive and significant influence on skincare product purchase decisions. This finding is supported by the results of the simple linear regression analysis, which shows a regression coefficient of 0.670. This indicates that the higher the exposure to UGC, the greater the tendency of Generation Z to make purchase decisions. Therefore, it can be concluded that UGC is an important factor in the decision-making process, particularly in the context of skincare product purchases.

Furthermore, the R-square value of 40.5% indicates that UGC explains almost half of the variation in purchase decisions. This suggests that although UGC plays a significant role, other factors not explored in this study, such as product quality, price, and individual preferences, also influence purchase decisions. Nevertheless, these findings further emphasize the strategic role of UGC as an effective marketing tool, especially among Generation Z. This finding aligns with previous research, which also shows that UGC has a positive and significant impact on purchase decisions (Hayat et al., 2024; Z.Nur et al., 2024).

4. Novelty of the Study

The contribution of this study lies in its focused examination of a single independent variable, UGC, within a clearly defined context: TikTok skincare content consumed by Generation Z in Bandung. This narrow scope allows for a concentrated behavioral analysis, in contrast to broader studies that often combine UGC with other factors like brand trust or electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) (Dila Khoirin anisa & Novi Marlana, 2022; Nisrina, 2021). By isolating UGC, this research minimizes variable dilution and enhances its explanatory power.

Additionally, while many studies treat TikTok primarily as an entertainment platform, this study positions it as a digital marketplace where content, community, and commerce intersect. This aligns with the evolving role of social media as highlighted by Agustina (2020), who emphasized the shift from passive media consumption to active, participatory engagement.

5. Practical and Ethical Implications of this Study

For marketers and brand managers, these findings present a compelling argument to prioritize UGC strategies. Rather than focusing solely on high-profile influencers, brands can benefit more from fostering authentic community engagement and showcasing everyday user experiences. As O'Hern & Kahle (2013) suggested, empowering consumers to co-create content helps build a deeper emotional connection and extends the brand's reach organically. Campaigns that invite reviews, share customer testimonials, or spotlight skincare transformation stories are likely to have a stronger psychological impact.

However, ethical concerns must be addressed. As UGC becomes increasingly commercialized, the line between genuine user experiences and sponsored content begins to blur. Arnhold (2010) warned that incorporating UGC into brand strategies requires transparency and respect for user voices. Relying too heavily on undisclosed endorsements or hidden sponsorships can erode trust and harm brand equity. Therefore, businesses must strike a balance between commercial objectives and ethical integrity, ensuring that UGC remains a trustworthy, peer-driven resource rather than a covert form of traditional advertising.

6. Consumer Cognition and Platform Dynamics

UGC on TikTok serves not only as social proof but also as a catalyst for visual imagination and lifestyle projection. Skincare routines, before-and-after results, and product demonstrations create a sense of personal relevance, enabling viewers to visualize potential

outcomes. As Gautama (2022) highlighted, young consumers engage with TikTok not just for entertainment but also to seek practical guidance and validation of products from relatable sources.

In contrast to traditional advertising, UGC integrates seamlessly into user feeds and is often delivered by "someone like me," which enhances its relatability and credibility. This aligns with the findings of Dila & Novi (2022), who observed that UGC on TikTok boosted purchase intentions by fostering trust and a sense of proximity. However, as content volume increases, viewers grow more discerning. GoodStats (2024) noted that Indonesia ranks among the top countries for TikTok usage, suggesting that content saturation could make users more selective. This dynamic explains why high exposure to UGC does not always result in impulsive purchases. While UGC exerts a tangible influence, its impact is moderated by users' growing ability to identify inauthentic or biased content (Rubyanti & Irwansyah, 2020).

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that User Generated Content (UGC) significantly and positively influences the purchasing decisions of Generation Z users on the TikTok platform in Bandung. The multiple linear regression analysis reveals that UGC contributes meaningfully to consumer behavior, with key dimensions such as informativeness, authenticity, and credibility playing crucial roles.

The findings suggest that when Generation Z consumers perceive TikTok content as authentic, informative, and trustworthy, their likelihood of making purchasing decisions, particularly for skincare products, increases significantly. This supports the idea that peer-generated content, such as product reviews, tutorials, and personal experiences, effectively shapes consumer attitudes and decisions.

The coefficient of determination (R Square) in this study also demonstrates that a significant portion of purchasing behavior can be explained by UGC-related factors. This reinforces the view that UGC not only provides information but also serves as social proof, reducing perceived risk and enhancing brand trust, particularly among digital-native consumers like Generation Z.

These results align with the theoretical framework of the Howard & Seth Model of consumer behavior, which emphasizes the role of external stimuli (like marketing and peer influence) in shaping decision-making. In this context, UGC acts as a persuasive stimulus, influencing consumers both emotionally and rationally.

Compared to previous studies, this research provides a more focused examination of UGC within a single social media platform (TikTok) and a specific product category (skincare). By narrowing the scope, the study offers more precise academic insights into Gen Z's digital behavior and contributes to the expanding body of literature on social media marketing and consumer psychology.

The insights from this study can help marketers, skincare brands, and digital strategists craft effective content strategies that foster consumer engagement and drive purchasing behavior, particularly by encouraging the creation and amplification of high-quality UGC.

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