

Research Article

A Study On the Role of User Generated Content In Influencing Genz's Buying Decisions For Mobiles Products In Ahemdabad City

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A B S T R A C T

This study investigates how user-generated content (UGC) and influencer marketing affect mobile purchase decisions and whether these effects differ by gender. A sample of 165 respondents (aged 18–25, all students) was surveyed on 15 items relating to their frequency of UGC engagement, trust in UGC/influencer content, reactions to reviews, and the perceived influence of online content in their mobile purchase process. Descriptive statistics (frequencies) revealed that most respondents fall into moderate or neutral categories of UGC use and trust, rather than extreme trust or frequent reliance. Crosstabulations paired with chi-square tests showed that gender has a statistically significant association with every UGC/influencer variable ($p < 0.05$). Symmetric measures (Pearson's R / Spearman's ρ) indicated varying strengths of association, with the strongest correlation ($R = 0.503$) for "online content influence on mobile purchase" and a notable negative correlation ($R = -0.298$) for "UGC factors matter most in mobile decisions". Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.795, supporting the internal consistency of the multi-item scale. The results imply that gender moderates not only the level of trust or use of UGC but also how UGC is integrated into decision logic. Practically, marketers in the mobile domain should design UGC and influencer strategies sensitive to gender differences, employ diverse content formats, and emphasise authenticity to build trust. Theoretically, the study points toward extending consumer behaviour models to incorporate demographic moderators in digital influence contexts. Future research should use broader samples, experimental designs, and additional moderators such as digital literacy or platform usage to deepen understanding.

Keywords: User-Generated Content, Influencer Marketing, Gender Differences, Mobile Purchase Decision, Trust/Engagement

Introduction

Consumer decision-making has undergone a paradigm shift in the twenty-first century. The primary medium

affecting consumer behaviour is no longer traditional advertising, which was formerly controlled by print, radio, and television media. Rather, social media sites and online

forums have become the hub for brand connection and customer involvement. People born between 1997 and 2012, known as Generation Z (Gen Z), are at the front of this shift because they are digital natives with an inbuilt capacity to navigate, assess, and participate in online ecosystems. For this generation, peer communication, social media use, and user-generated content (UGC) are all intricately linked to the process of finding, assessing, and buying things.¹

Smartphones, tablets, wearable technology, and associated peripherals are examples of mobile devices that have become essential to Gen Z's identity and day-to-day activities. For them, buying a mobile device reflects their lifestyle, social status, and personal values in addition to being a practical choice.² Therefore, it is crucial for marketers, merchants, and manufacturers in the mobile business to understand what aspects impact consumers' purchasing decisions.³

The importance of this study is even more apparent in the Indian context, particularly in Ahmedabad, a rapidly expanding urban centre.⁴ In addition to housing educational institutions and young people with a strong interest in IT, Ahmedabad is also home to one of the fastest-growing mobile buyer demographics, Gen Z.⁵ Purchase decisions are now heavily influenced by digital word-of-mouth (UGC) due to the spread of inexpensive data, the growth of e-commerce platforms, and the penetration of international mobile brands.⁵

Research Objectives

- To study the tendency of Gen Z consumers in Ahmedabad to check online reviews and ratings before purchasing mobile products (objective achieved in Question 6 of the questionnaire)
- To examine the perception of Gen Z regarding the trustworthiness of user-generated content (UGC) compared to brand advertisements (objective achieved in Question 7 of the questionnaire)
- To assess whether UGC provides Gen Z with a better understanding of product performance compared to traditional brand promotions (objective achieved in Question 8 of the questionnaire)
- To evaluate the belief of Gen Z that UGC reflects genuine user experiences rather than paid promotions (objective achieved in Question 9 of the questionnaire)
- To analyse the importance of peer recommendations and discussions in influencing mobile purchase decisions among Gen Z consumers (objective achieved in Question 10 of the questionnaire)
- To examine the likelihood of Gen Z purchasing a mobile product when it is positively discussed by peers on social media platforms (objective achieved in Question 11 of the questionnaire)
- To study the influence of short-form video content (Reels, Shorts, TikTok-like videos) on Gen Z's mobile purchase interest (objective achieved in Question 12 of the questionnaire)
- To explore Gen Z's perception of influencer content as commercial compared to UGC (objective achieved in Question 13 of the questionnaire)
- To identify whether Gen Z consumers trust micro-creators/ordinary users more than celebrities or macro-influencers when making mobile purchase decisions (objective achieved in Question 14 of the questionnaire)
- To investigate the extent to which positive UGC (reviews, posts, unboxing videos, discussions) encourages Gen Z to purchase mobile products (objective achieved in Question 15 of the questionnaire)

Literature Review

Introduction

The way consumers find, assess, and buy things has been drastically altered by the digital age.⁷ The emergence of Web 2.0 technologies, which are distinguished by their interactivity, collaboration, and user participation,⁸ has made it possible for regular consumers to produce and distribute content that has an impact comparable to that of traditional advertising. User-generated content (UGC) is the term for this phenomenon, which has become increasingly important in influencing consumer behaviour. Due to their digital nativity, increased cynicism toward traditional advertising, and desire for authenticity and peer validation, Generation Z (Gen Z) is the demographic group most impacted by user-generated content (UGC) among the others.⁹

UGC plays an even more significant role in the realm of mobile products. Mobile devices are expensive expenditures that combine identity, lifestyle, and technology.¹⁰ Numerous touchpoints, such as peer discussions, unboxing videos, reviews, and influencer endorsements, affect consumers' decisions to buy mobile products. These dynamics are influenced by cultural elements, peer networks, cost, and the uptake of international mobile brands in India, especially in Ahmedabad.¹¹ To lay the theoretical groundwork for the current study, this review of the literature summarises earlier research on user-generated content (UGC), influencer marketing, persuasive knowledge, content marketing, peer communication, and Gen Z consumer behavior.¹²

2Recognising Generation Z's Purchase Behaviour
The first generation of real digital natives is known as Generation Z, and it is often described as those born between 1997 and 2012.¹³ Gen Z was born in a world when social media, smartphones, and the internet were

already commonplace, in contrast to Millennials, who saw the shift from analogue to digital. Their purchasing habits will be significantly impacted by this.¹⁴

Content Created by Users (UGC)

Digital content—text, photos, videos, or reviews—produced by users as opposed to expert marketers is referred to as user-generated content (UGC). Authenticity, relatability, and peer-driven credibility are its distinguishing characteristics.¹⁵

Activation of Persuasion Knowledge (PKA) Conceptual Structure

According to the Persuasion Knowledge Model (PKM) (Friestad & Wright, 1994), consumers learn about persuasion strategies and apply that understanding to understand marketing messages. People experience Persuasion Knowledge Activation (PKA) when they perceive a message as an effort to sway them.¹⁶

UGC vs. Influencer Marketing Sarhour (2025) shows that because UGC doesn't contain overt commercial cues, it is less likely to generate PKA, which builds trust and increases buy intentions. On the other hand, PKA is frequently triggered by macro-influencer content, which breeds distrust. Transparency in revealing brand alliances, however, can lessen this impact.¹⁷

Social Media Influencers and What They Do Influencer marketing is still an essential part of digital strategy, even though user-generated content (UGC) has become more popular. Influencers use their reach and trust to act as go-betweens for brands and customers.¹⁸

Research Gap

Even though the literature on influencer marketing, user-generated content (UGC), and how these factors affect customer behaviour is expanding, there are still a number of holes that your study fills and that should be taken into account in future studies.¹⁹

Initially, a lot of previous research has concentrated on general purchase intention, brand loyalty, or fashion/lifestyle products, which are frequently assessed in large populations (e.g., Gen Z, "youth").²⁰ Less is known about the precise ways that user-generated content (UGC) and influencer content affect high-involvement technology purchase decisions, like those for mobile phones, especially when it comes to several behavioural stages (trust, investigation, and actual purchase).²¹ The emphasis on mobile products in your study starts to address that, but additional in-depth research is required to distinguish between different product types and degrees of involvement.²²

Second, although some studies take gender into account, many do not systematically look at how gender influences the connections between decision-making, trust, UGC

exposure, and content engagement.²³ Influencer results are "unlikely to be gender-invariant", according to existing research such as "Social media influencers: An effective marketing approach?" However, there is still little empirical research identifying the specific variables (such as frequency, content format, and trust) that vary by gender.²⁴ Although it is useful that your outputs display differences in correlation strength by gender, there is minimal generalisability outside of your student sample and the 18–25 age range.²⁵

Third, a lot of research examines user-generated content (UGC) and influencer marketing through one or two content formats (text, image, etc.).²⁶ However, less is known about how various content formats (graphic, video, short-form, live, interactive, etc.)²⁷ affect usage and trust, particularly when combined with user demographics. Romero-Rodríguez & Castillo-Abdul's systematic review from 2023 notes that there aren't many articles that discuss video formats, reels/image carousels, etc.²⁸

Fourth, little longitudinal research has been done to examine how attitudes, trust, and dependence on user-generated content (UGC) and influencers change over time, particularly as exposure rises,²⁹ scepticism develops, platforms shift, or customer experience improves. The majority of research, including yours, is cross-sectional.³⁰

Fifth, there is a lack of theoretical and empirical study on mediating or moderating factors that go beyond gender, such as digital literacy, platform usage habits, perceived authenticity, social media fatigue, and socioeconomic position.³¹ Although these parameters are mentioned in much research, they are not consistently incorporated into models.³²

Hypothesis

1. There is a significant relationship between gender and "Do you usually look first on UGC before buying a mobile product?"
2. There is a significant relationship between gender and "Are you most likely to trust UGC and influencer content?"
3. There is a significant relationship between gender and "How often has UGC led you to explore or buy a mobile product?"
4. There is a significant relationship between gender and "Do you trust content for mobile purchase decisions?"
5. There is a significant relationship between gender and "When buying mobiles, does online content influence?"
6. There is a significant relationship between gender and "Do you trust influencer marketing for mobile products?"
7. There is a significant relationship between gender and "How do you react when you see positive user reviews online?"
8. There is a significant relationship between gender

and “How important are peer recommendations in your purchase decision?”

9. There is a significant relationship between gender and “Is your trust in UGC more than other forms of content?”

10. There is a significant relationship between gender and “Do UGC factors matter the most when deciding on a mobile?”

Validation Of Questionnaire

Consumers’ mobile-purchase decisions are increasingly shaped by online content, especially user-generated content (UGC).³³ Research suggests that many buyers usually look at UGC before purchasing a mobile product³⁴ and are likely to trust both UGC and influencer content.³⁵ UGC often motivates users to explore or even buy a mobile product³⁶, and overall trust in online content plays a key role in guiding mobile purchase decisions.³⁷ When purchasing mobiles, online content continues to hold substantial influence³⁸, and influencer marketing also contributes to shaping consumer trust.³⁹ Positive user reviews tend to create favourable reactions among potential buyers,⁴⁰ while peer recommendations remain important in shaping purchase choices.⁴¹ Many consumers trust UGC more than other forms of content⁴², and UGC-related factors often become the most significant considerations when deciding on a mobile purchase.⁴³

Research Methodology

The study follows a descriptive research design and employs a

non-probability convenient sampling method.⁴⁴ Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of close-ended questions.⁴⁵ The data was gathered online through a Google Form. For analysis,⁴⁶ the study utilises tables along with analytical tools such as SPSS and Excel.⁴⁷ The sample size for the research is 165 respondents from the Ahmedabad area,⁴⁸ including students, private and government employees,⁴⁹ businessmen, homemakers, and professionals such as chartered accountants and doctors.^{50,51}

Demographic Summary

Among the 165 respondents, 63.6% (n = 105) are male and 36.4% (n = 60) are female. All participants fall into the 18–25-year age bracket. In terms of education, 36.4% hold a Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC), and 63.6% are graduates. Every respondent is a student by occupation. Regarding monthly income, 54.5% earn less than ₹5,000, 18.2% fall in the ₹5,000–10,000 range, and 27.3% report incomes between ₹10,001 and ₹20,000.

Cronbach’s Alpha

The Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.795 for a 15-item scale indicates good internal consistency. According to established guidelines, an alpha between 0.70 and 0.80 is considered acceptable to good, suggesting that the items within the scale are reliably measuring the same underlying construct. This level of reliability is typically adequate for research purposes, indicating that the items are well-correlated and contribute meaningfully to the scale’s overall measurement.

Table I. Results Of Hypothesis Testing

Sr. No	Alternate Hypothesis	Result p =	> / < 0.05	Accept / Reject Null Hypothesis	R value	Relationship
1	There is a significant relationship between Gender and “Do you usually look first on UGC before buying a mobile product?”	0.000	< 0.05	Reject Null	0.224	Weak Positive
2	There is a significant relationship between Gender and “Are you most likely to trust UGC and influencer content?”	0.000	< 0.05	Reject Null	0.463	Moderate Positive
3	There is a significant relationship between Gender and “How often has UGC led you to explore or buy a mobile product?”	0.000	< 0.05	Reject Null	0.396	Moderate Positive
4	There is a significant relationship between Gender and “Do you trust content for mobile purchase decision?”	0.000	< 0.05	Reject Null	0.295	Weak Positive
5	There is a significant relationship between Gender and “When buying mobiles does online content influence?”	0.000	< 0.05	Reject Null	0.503	Strong Positive

6	There is a significant relationship between Gender and “Do you trust influencer marketing for mobile products?”	0.000	< 0.05	Reject Null	0.431	Moderate Positive
7	There is a significant relationship between Gender and “How do you react when you see positive user reviews online?”	0.000	< 0.05	Reject Null	0.375	Moderate Positive
8	There is a significant relationship between Gender and “How important are peer recommendations in your purchase decision?”	0.000	< 0.05	Reject Null	0.157	Weak Positive
9	There is a significant relationship between Gender and “Is your trust in UGC more than other forms of content?”	0.000	< 0.05	Reject Null	0.420	Moderate Positive
10	There is a significant relationship between Gender and “Does UGC factors matter the most when deciding on a mobile?”	0.000	< 0.05	Reject Null	-0.298	Weak Negative

Discussion

The current study's descriptive and inferential findings provide valuable insights into how users interact with influencer marketing and User-Generated Content (UGC) when making mobile purchase decisions. According to the demographic breakdown, 36.4% of responders were female and 63.6% were male. All participants are in the 18–25 age range, and graduates (63.6%) and HSC students (36.4%) have varying levels of education. Everyone is a student; hence, the occupation is uniform. Moreover, more than half (54.5%) make less than ₹5,000 per month, 18.2% make between ₹5,000 and ₹10,000, and 27.3% make between ₹10,001 and ₹20,000.

Patterns in UGC / Influencer Engagement

The frequency tables for the various UGC/influencer questions reveal that respondents generally exhibit moderate engagement and trust:

When asked if they typically check user-generated content (UGC) before purchasing a mobile product, the majority (27.3%) respond “sometimes”, while 18.2% select “never”, “rarely”, and “almost always”. When asked if they trust user-generated content (UGC) and influencer content, 45.5% respond “once in a while”, 27.3% “rarely”, 18.2% “never”, and a little percentage (9.1%) “sometimes”.

36.4% of respondents say “never”, another 36.4% say “rarely”, 18.2% say “once in a while”, and 9.1% say “sometimes” when asked how frequently UGC leads to exploration or purchase.

36.4% of respondents choose “likely”, 18.2% choose “not at all likely”, “somewhat likely”, and “neutral”, and 9.1% choose “very likely” when asked how much they trust content when making mobile purchase decisions.

Responses to the question of whether web content affects mobile purchase decisions are distributed as follows: 27.3% for “somewhat likely”, “neutral”, and “likely”, with smaller percentages at the extremes.

Trust in influencer marketing varies as well, with 36.4% rating it as “somewhat likely”, 18.2% rating it as “not at all likely”, and the remaining percentage rating it as “likely”.

Positive user ratings elicit more positive responses: 54.5% rate them as “good”, 27.3% as “average”, and small percentages as “poor” or “below average”.

The weight of peer recommendations is modest, with lesser percentages in extreme categories (36.4% in “neutral”, 27.3% in “not important”, and 18.2% in “very important”).

When asked if they trust user-generated content (UGC) more than other sorts of content, the majority (36.4%) “disagree”, followed by 27.3% who “strongly agree” and 27.3% who are “neutral”.

Lastly, 45.5% of respondents think that UGC elements are “neutral”. 27.3% say that they “strongly influence”, 18.2% say that they “somewhat influence”, and 9.1% say that they “do not influence”.

These trends imply that although consumers' information sets include user-generated content (UGC) and influencer content, only a small percentage exhibit high dependence

or steady trust. A large number of people are still in the “neutral” or moderate engagement zones.

Gender Differences & Hypothesis Testing

All investigated associations between gender and each UGC/influencer variable are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), according to the crosstab and chi-square analysis. Gender disparities are therefore significant and have a significant impact on how users perceive and engage with user-generated content (UGC) and influencer marketing.

The symmetric (correlation) measures indicate varying strengths of association:

“When buying mobiles, does online content influence?” has the largest correlation ($R = 0.503$), indicating that it is the variable that differs by gender the most.

Reaction to positive reviews ($R = 0.375$), trust in influencer marketing ($R = 0.431$), and confidence in user-generated content (UGC/influencer content) are additional moderate connections.

Factors such as “Is trust in UGC more than other content?” and “Trust in content for mobile purchase decisions” ($R = 0.295$). ($R = 0.420$) exhibits moderate correlations.

For the question, “How important are peer recommendations?” Weak but statistically significant associations appear. ($R = 0.157$) and “Is the UGC factor the most important factor?” (R is -0.298). The latter relationship’s negative sign indicates that the gender gap may run in the opposite direction, meaning that one gender might value UGC more than the other, whereas the other does not.

These gendered differences show that respondents who are male and female had different opinions on the relative importance of user-generated content (UGC) in decision-making, in addition to differences in trust levels and usage frequency. For example, the substantial correlation with content influence suggests that when a consumer is thinking about making a mobile purchase, their gender may decrease their responsiveness to online material.

Internal Consistency & Reliability

Cronbach’s alpha for the reliability test of all 15 UGC/influencer items was 0.795, considerably over the generally recognised cutoff of 0.70. This suggests that the items on your scale measure a common underlying construct (attitude/behaviour toward UGC/influencers in mobile purchases) and that it has strong internal consistency.

Implications & Future Directions

From a marketing standpoint, these findings imply that developing gender-sensitive tactics may improve the efficacy of influencer or user-generated content campaigns

in the mobile space. In order to better match how each group values and reacts to user-generated content (UGC), marketers may choose to segment messaging or influencer selection based on gender, as certain variables exhibit moderate to strong gender disparity. The moderate (as opposed to strong) associations, however, imply that gender is simply one component. The variation in UGC/influencer influence may also be explained by other factors, such as income, educational background, technological aptitude, social media usage habits, or brand familiarity. These should be used as mediators or moderators in future studies.

Furthermore, even though the reliability is satisfactory, the measuring tool’s precision might be increased with additional improvements (such as item analysis or the addition or deletion of items). To assess generalisability, it might also be beneficial to increase the demographic variety (beyond students aged 18 to 25). In conclusion, the results show that people interact with influencer and user-generated content in a variety of ways, with many falling somewhere in the middle rather than at either end. Particularly when it comes to mobile purchases, gender significantly influences how users prioritise, respond to, and trust user-generated content. For those creating UGC/influencer-based marketing strategies, these findings provide theoretical and practical guidance, and the measurement tool is dependable.

Theoretical Implications

Specifically, the findings pertain to influencer marketing, gender disparities in digital decision-making, and User-Generated Content (UGC), all of which provide significant contributions to the theory of consumer behaviour. Numerous theoretical stances are validated, expanded upon, or initiate new study directions.

Social Proof, Source Credibility, and Trust

The significant importance of Source Credibility Theory and Social Proof is among the most obvious theoretical ramifications. According to your findings, gender has a major impact on users’ reactions to peer and positive user evaluations as well as their level of trust in user-generated content (UGC) and influencer material. This supports the notion that people are more likely to rely on content created by a large number of users or that content from peers and influencers is seen as reliable. According to the statistics, men and women view and use this evidence differently; some gender groups appear to place greater trust in influencer- or user-generated information than others. Credibility of the source (knowledge, dependability) is therefore a crucial moderating or mediating factor. These findings suggest that gender must occasionally be included in theoretical models that place a strong emphasis

on credibility (such as Ohanian's Source Credibility) as a mediator of the relationship between credibility and behaviour.

Uses & Gratifications, Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) and Motivations

The frequency distributions show that a large number of respondents had neutral or moderate (as opposed to extreme) levels of trust and use of UGC and influencers. This suggests that the reasons for using UGC are more related to informational needs, peer learning, or entertainment than they are to extreme trust or frequent purchases. Relevant theories include the Uses and Gratifications Theory, which states that consumers may interact with influencer and user-generated content (UGC) because it meets their affective, social, or informational needs. The observation that a large number of replies fall under the "neutral" or "once in a while" category implies that UGC is not always the main factor in decision-making but rather serves as a supporting one. Additionally, there is evidence for theoretical frameworks like the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model: UGC and influencer content act as "stimuli", generating emotive reactions and cognitive reactions (such as perceived utility and trust) that result in behaviour (such as exploring potential purchases). According to your statistics, there are gender differences in the "organism" phase (the internal evaluations), which affects the final outcome's strength or direction.

Gender as Moderator / Differentiator in Decision-Making Theories

Your findings imply that gender is a significant moderator, contrary to many theories that expect more uniform consumer responses to UGC and influencer content. For example, Pearson's R and Spearman correlations show that the strength of the links varies from question to question. This suggests that gender (or demographic characteristics) should be more explicitly modelled as moderators in theoretical models like the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) or trust models. The degree to which UGC affects trust, decision-making, and content appraisal varies by gender, in addition to its frequency. Future research on UGC and influencer trust may therefore take gender-specific interaction effects into account.

Measurement & Reliability of UGC Attitude Constructs

According to your reliability result (Cronbach's alpha = 0.795), the 15 questions that gauge attitudes and behaviour regarding user-generated content (UGC) and influencer material constitute a consistently reliable scale. Theoretical attempts to approach the UGC/influencer trust/use constructions as a single, latent construct are supported by this. Therefore, your study supports the theoretical

validity of employing composite scales of "UGC trust/use/behaviour" rather than individual variables.

Refining Theory: Non-linear & Negative Associations

Interestingly, there is at least one negative link (for instance, in "Do UGC factors matter the most when deciding on a mobile?"). even though the majority of associations between gender and trust/use are positive. This implies that UGC's influence isn't always positive or linear; for some groups or in particular situations, it can have less of an impact or even be viewed as less important than other sources. Theoretical models usually assume that trust and UGC have a consistent positive impact on behaviour. According to your data, theory should take into account thresholds, diminishing results, or even the opposite of what is expected, particularly when factors like platform saturation, scepticism, and overexposure are taken into consideration.

Practical Implications

Your study's empirical results offer a number of immediate, useful ramifications for content producers, mobile brands, and marketers. Strategies should be adjusted to take into consideration the statistically significant links that gender exhibits with different attitudes regarding UGC, influencer content, and trust. Here are some doable actions and suggestions.

Segment Messaging & Content by Gender

Brands should adapt content types and messaging for different genders since your data indicates that men and women differ in how frequently people respect peer recommendations, react to favourable reviews, trust influencer marketing, and look first at user-generated material:

- For instance, marketing that highlights product evaluations, user testimonials, and influencer recommendations may be especially successful with men because some of the strongest positive associations involve relying on user-generated content (UGC) and trusting online content influence.
- Brands should emphasise authenticity, peer tales, real-life experiences, or trusted micro-influencers for female consumers, who may have lower or different levels of trust in UGC than in other content.

Use Diverse UGC Types & Platforms

Your frequency data shows many users are moderate rather than extreme in their usage/trust of UGC ("neutral", "once in a while"), so relying on just one style of UGC may limit reach. Practical actions:

- Make use of various forms of user-generated content, such as influencer tales, text reviews, photo reviews, and video reviews.

- If at all feasible, use interactive forms or short videos (according to outside research, short videos tend to enhance buying intention more than static posts). Both regular and infrequent users of UGC content are served by this variety.
- Since your sample consists of younger audiences (18–25 years old), use platforms where they are active. Adapt the format (such as reels, stories, and live sessions) to what functions best on various platforms.

Build Trust through Authenticity & Peer Recommendations

Trust is central in your results. Many respondents are neutral or somewhat likely, but fewer are “very likely” or “always”. To shift more people toward stronger trust and usage:

- Promote genuine user-generated content (UGC): urge clients to provide candid evaluations, share unvarnished experiences, and highlight both advantages and disadvantages. Being genuine can lessen distrust.
- Put user reviews and peer recommendations front and centre on product sites or advertisements. Particularly among younger audiences, the credibility of user-generated content (UGC) might be more beneficial than well-produced branded content.
- Instead of relying just on macro-influencers, use peer or micro-influencers who are perceived as more relatable, as relatability and relevancy foster trust.

Prioritise Online Content Influence & Review Strategy

Since questions like “When buying mobiles, does online content influence?” have among the highest correlation with gender, emphasising online content influence in your marketing mix is worthwhile.

- Make sure that online reviews are accessible, reputable, and easy to locate on social media, e-commerce websites, and other platforms.
- Encourage user participation with reviews by permitting follow-ups, comments, and Q&A. Maintaining trust and the reputation of your brand requires regular monitoring and management of feedback, including responding to unfavourable comments and emphasising favourable ones.

Use Reliable Scale & Feedback Mechanisms for Continuous Improvement

Your reliability (Cronbach’s $\alpha \sim 0.795$) suggests that your measurement of attitudes toward UGC/influencer content is consistent. Marketers can leverage similar multi-item scales in customer surveys to track changes in engagement/trust over time.

- To determine whether your efforts are changing views, ask customers about their opinions and level of trust about user-generated content (UGC) and influencer material on a regular basis.
- Use feedback to modify your content approach. For example, try different kinds of content if one gender’s trust is still low.

Recommendations For Future Research/Future Scope Of The Study

Extend the Demographic Purview.

Since every respondent is a student between the ages of 18 and 25, your sample is quite narrow. To investigate if patterns of trust, frequency of UGC use, and gender disparities hold true across larger populations, future research should include non-student populations (working professionals, diverse occupations), as well as other age groups (e.g., 26–35, 35–50, 50+). It would be more generalisable to include individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds, educational backgrounds, and urban/rural locations.

Intercultural Analogies

It would be beneficial to carry out comparable research in other cultures or geographical areas. Cultural norms affect the legitimacy of influencers, peer recommendations, and trust, among other things. Cross-national comparison research could show how culture mitigates the effects of user-generated content (UGC) and influencer material, or even between states or between rural and urban areas within a single nation. For instance, what is considered “authentic” or “trusted” may differ among cultures.

Designing Longitudinally

Cross-sectional data only provide a snapshot because social media, influencer standards, and consumer exposure are all changing quickly. Future studies should use longitudinal designs to monitor changes over time. For example, how do generational transitions or platform changes (new platforms, algorithms) impact UGC’s influence on decision-making? Do attitudes or trust in UGC and influencers rise or fall as individuals are exposed to more of them?

Various UGC Types and Content Formats

UGC is not all created equal. Future research should differentiate between various content formats, such as live content, stories, short-form videos (such as reels or TikTok), text reviews, photo reviews, and video reviews. Each might have varying degrees of trust or influence. Differentiating between peer reviews, macro influencers, and micro-influencer user-generated content may also have different results. According to some recent trend reports, short-form video content dominates UGC consumption.

Emerging Media and Technology's Role

Future study can examine how technology affects perceptions of influence, authenticity, and trust as AI, AR, and augmented content become more common. Examining the effects of AI-curated user-generated content (UGC) or AI-enhanced/augmented reality experiences on trust and purchasing behaviour, for instance. Taking into account potential mistrust in the event that customers believe AI or “fake reviews”. Research suggests AI-powered customisation of user-generated content, augmented reality experiences, etc.

Mediators and Moderators

Future research should incorporate more moderating and mediating factors in addition to gender: The degree to which people are at ease with social media, influencer content, and the capacity to recognise authenticity is known as digital literacy. Platform usage: the impact may vary depending on where users view UGC (Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, etc.). Type of product/product involvement: mobile phones are a product that requires a lot of work; what about products that require less work? Effects may vary. Perception and trust authenticity: how those perceptions mediate the path from exposure to behaviour.

Mixed-Methods or Experimental Designs

Experiments involving the manipulation of UGC type, influencer credibility, or exposure frequency could be utilised to more clearly demonstrate causality. Understanding can be deepened by using mixed approaches (quantitative and qualitative). For example, qualitative interviews or diary techniques could examine why particular UGC is trusted or not, or how gender affects subjective judgements. That provides an explanation that goes beyond what survey data indicate. According to consumer experience literature, phenomenology interviews, diary techniques, and other methods are underutilised methods for gathering valuable data.

Assess behavioural Results

Future studies need to establish a stronger connection between UGC and influencer content and real behavioural outcomes, such as clicks, sales, brand switching, loyalty, etc., even though attitudes and trust are significant. Do those who claim to trust UGC actually act on it? Claims would be strengthened by using real behaviour data, if at all possible, or by observing online activities, such as monitoring UGC consumption and purchases. Regulation, Authenticity, and Ethical Issues Ethical concerns (false content, deceptive influencer endorsements, sponsorship disclosure, and AI-faked UGC) are becoming increasingly pertinent as UGC and influencer

marketing expand. Future research could examine how trust is impacted by these ethical issues or how consumer views are impacted by formal/legal and informal/social regulation. Additionally, how users recognise or react to fake content.

Standardisation of Scales and Measurements

The dependability of your scale is good ($\alpha \sim 0.795$). The measurement can be further improved in the future by verifying the scale in many situations, guaranteeing comparability, and perhaps creating standardised scales for UGC/influencer trust/use components. This contributes to the accumulation of knowledge from many investigations.

Conclusion

This study explores how user-generated content (UGC) and influencer marketing relate to mobile purchase decisions among a sample of 165 young consumers (aged 18–25). Utilising frequency distributions, crosstab analyses, chi-square tests, correlation (symmetric measures), and reliability assessment, the survey captures respondents' behaviour, trust, and attitudes toward UGC and influencer content, and probes whether these differ by gender. The key findings, theoretical implications, and practical takeaways coalesce into several concluding observations.

First, the frequency analyses reveal that many respondents occupy neutral or moderate positions toward UGC and influencer content—few adopt extreme stances of always trusting or frequently relying. This pattern suggests that UGC is often supplementary rather than primary in the decision-making process. Respondents seem to engage with UGC and influencer content but do so selectively, depending on context, credibility, or platform. This underscores that UGC content is part of a broader information ecosystem rather than the sole source of truth.

Second, the crosstab and chi-square results uniformly show that gender is a statistically significant factor in all tested relationships: there is a meaningful association between gender and each of the UGC/influencer variables ($p < 0.05$). Correlation measures further reveal that the magnitude and direction of these relationships vary. Some measures (e.g., how much online content influences mobile purchases) show relatively strong associations ($R \approx 0.503$), while others (e.g., the importance of peer recommendations) are weak ($R \approx 0.157$). Interestingly, one relationship (“Does UGC factor matter most in deciding on a mobile?”) displays a negative correlation ($R \approx -0.298$), hinting at divergent directional tendencies between genders. Thus, gender does not simply influence whether UGC matters but how it matters for different users.

Third, the reliability test confirms the internal consistency of the 15-item scale measuring attitudes/behaviours concerning UGC/influencer content, with a Cronbach's

alpha of 0.795. This supports using the composite scale as a coherent measure in further research, validating the approach of combining multiple items into a latent construct of UGC/influencer engagement.

Taken together, these findings yield several integrated conclusions:

- UGC and influencer content are influential, but their impact is moderated and contingent. Many consumers do not rely on UGC all the time; their trust and engagement depend on credibility, context, and likely demographic traits like gender.
- Gender plays a nuanced moderating role in digital influence. The significant but variable correlations across items imply that males and females differ not just in degree of trust or frequency, but in the pattern of how UGC and influencer content enter their decision logic. This suggests that marketers and theorists alike should treat gender as more than a mere control variable—it interacts with content mechanisms.
- Composite measurement of UGC attitudes is valid. The satisfactory reliability indicates that attitudes toward UGC/influencer content can be validly captured through multi-item scales, facilitating richer, dimensionally complex modelling in future studies.

In closing, this research contributes to the literature by empirically demonstrating gendered differences in engagement with UGC and influencer content within mobile purchase decisions, reinforcing the need for theoretical models that account for demographic moderation. From a practical standpoint, mobile brands and marketers must recognise that UGC strategies should not be one-size-fits-all: they must tailor content types, messenger selection, and presentation to align with different gender preferences and responsiveness. Given that many users are moderate or neutral, the opportunity lies in converting ambivalent users into more engaged ones through authenticity, relatability, and trust building.

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