Influence of Brand Generated Content's Credibility on Customer Behavior Response Through Positive User Generated Content

Wongpun Sukontip [1], Inmor Sureerut [1], Podaras Athanasios [2]

[1] Faculty of Business Administration, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi,
Pathum Thani 12110, Thailand
[2] Technical University of Liberec, Faculty of Economics, Department of Informatics, Liberec, Czech republic

Abstract – **This paper investigates the mixed influence of brand-generated and credible user-generated content on customer behaviour response. The research involved surveying 400 people buying online, aged 18 years and over, in the Pathum Thani province, Thailand. Primary demographic data were collected between October and December 2022 and analysed employing descriptive statistics and structural equation modelling. The result of study indicated that the credibility business generated content has no significant influences on consumer behaviour response. The research also revealed that the credibility of brand generated content has significant influences on customer behavior response through positive user generated content. Consequently, businesses must prioritize the quality of their content and consider integrating user generated content into their marketing strategy for —customer engagement effectively.**

Keywords – **Brand generated content, user generated content, customer behaviour response.**

1. Introduction

Digital transformation has significantly altered traditional commercial transactions and customer services.

Modern commercial procedures, customer-company interactions and marketing activities are implemented using multiple technological channels. The evolution of modern digital technologies has resulted in novel and innovative business models that significantly transformed the expectations and behaviors of consumers, creating substantial pressure on conventional firms [1]. Examples of channels adopted by companies to interact with customers are social media, blogs, websites, email accounts, mobile applications, and more.

Due to the exponential increase of customers using the aforementioned channels and tools, the relative electronic content and the data generated by both companies and users implementing web transactions, plays a dominant role to customer engagement. As a consequence, investigating the potential effect that both the BGC (brand-generated content) [2] and the UGC (user-generated content) [3] on the customer behavior response is of paramount importance for modern enterprises and has been thoroughly discussed by multiple scholars.

A study conducted by [2] refers to the potential positive effect of brand-generated social media content on the success of customer loyalty programs. Other researchers have analyzed the effect of social media BGC on consumer behavior [4] highlighting the significant relation between the social media BGC and the increased customer engagement. Apart from these studies, additional research outcomes refer to the potential influence of UGC on positive consumer response.

For instance, an important study conducted by [5] delineates the strong influence of UGC on young people who interact with branded web sites, not only in terms of purchasing or consuming, but also on obtaining important decisions regarding their wider life goals. The available literature reveals either a BGC positive consumer response or a UGC positive consumer response relation with most of the studies mainly exploring the latter case.

This paper aims to investigate the trust of consumers in both BGC and UGC, as well as the impact of both types of content on consumer behavior. In this respect, the current investigation differs from previously published similar research. This study is based on data collected from 400 respondents purchasing products online in Pathum Thani province, Thailand. Data was collected between October 2022 and December 2022. The respondents belong to the age group of 18 years and over. The research purposes are as follows:

1. To explore the brand generated content aspects that influence customer behavior response, and
2. To study the influence of credibility of positive user generated content on customer behavior response.

The article is structured as follows: the introductory part is succeeded by a comprehensive examination of the literature that encapsulates prior investigations, and elucidates the distinctions between the present investigation and the existing studies within the discipline.

Moreover, the literature review section bridges the related work with the conceptual framework and the formulation of the research hypotheses. The materials and methods section refers to the utilized data elements and the adopted statistical tools and methods, followed by the results and discussion section where the main findings are reported and analysed. Finally, the paper closes with the inferred conclusions and the implications for both academics and practitioners. The findings suggest a marketing strategy for online businesses to be more competitive.

2. Literature Review

This section examines (BGC), (UGC) and their roles in influencing customer behavior response (CBR). BGC aims to build brand loyalty, while UGC fosters trust through authentic consumer interactions. Understanding the impact of both on CBR helps businesses refine their marketing strategies. This review connects these elements to form a basis for the conceptual framework and hypotheses in the research.

2.1. Brand Generated Content (BGC)

BGC refers to any type of content, such as social media posts, blog articles, videos, and other digital or physical materials that are created and published by a brand or business with the aim of promoting their products or services. The primary goal of BGC is to establish brand royalty. Businesses can share valuable content to build a loyal customer base [6]. BGC such as advertisements and branded social media posts, can influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions [7].

For example, a fashion brand may create a series of blog articles or social media posts that showcase their latest fashion trends or provide tips on how to style their products. By sharing this type of content, the brand can attract potential customers who are interested in fashion and provide them with valuable information that helps them make informed purchasing decisions. Over time, these customers may become loyal to the brand and continue to make purchases in the future. Overall, BGC is an important component because it helps organizations connect with their prospective customers, increase brand awareness, and drive sales [6].

2.2. User Generated Content (UGC)

UGC could be in the form of social media posts, blog articles, videos, and other digital or physical materials that are created and shared by individual users on various social media platforms. This content can take various forms, including text, images, videos, and audio. UGC, such as online reviews and social media posts created by consumers, can affect consumer trust, attitudes, and purchase decisions. UGC become increasing important aspect of digital marketing, enables businesses to build trust with their customers [8]. According to a survey conducted by [9] UGC is considered to be the most genuine type of material. When compared to material produced by brands, consumers are three times more likely to say that UGC is authentic. Based on the literature review, the content created by users and businesses can be categorized into 5 types [10]:

(1) *Social Media Content* is the content on social media, which includes posting pictures, videos, or text related to products and services, can be created by the users themselves or shared from other customers.

(2) *Review and Testimonial* is reviews from customers or user groups who are satisfied with the products and services will confirm their effectiveness and actual usage. These reviews may be written on Facebook, the seller's website, as well as review websites such as Google, Pantip, and TripAdvisor.

(3) *Blog Post* is posted content related to products or services that may include users who have a reputation for writing recommendations about the product or store.

(4) *Video Content* is a presentation of content in video format, which can be displayed in various channels such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook Live, TikTok, and more.

(5) *Forum* is a creation of a specific product or service-focused Q&A group.

2.3. Customer Behavior Response (CBR)

CBR refers to the actions and decisions that customers make when faced with a particular product, service, or brand. It includes a wide range of behaviors, such as making a purchase, leaving a review, recommending a product to others, or engaging with a brand on social media. Personal preferences, social and cultural norms, marketing and advertising messages, and perceived product quality all influence CBR. Understanding and analyzing CBR can help businesses to identify areas for improvement, refine their marketing strategies, and ultimately increase customer satisfaction and loyalty [11].

2.3.1. Evaluating Customer Behavior Response Using Stimulus Organism Response Model (S-O-R Model)

The model was used to evaluate the influence of factors that affect online consumer buying behavior. The evaluation includes identifying which stimulating factors and mechanisms affect the consumer's response or decision-making process. The idea of this model is that the stimulus will affect the mechanism and the response of the consumer.

The format of purchasing decision or intention in the future, if it is purchasing products through a website, it is found that the user's response to the website that presents product information may lead to future product purchases. If it is a purchase of products through a website, it is found that user response to the website presenting product information may result in future product purchases [11].

In addition to user response to the website, various features that arise from online social networks such as user recommendations, images, songs, conversations, gaming activities, and recommendations from acquaintances also play a role in enabling users to participate more in presenting product information [12].

Therefore, in this research, the examination of consumer response behavior was based on four factors, namely, information pass along, brand engagement, future purchase intention, and impulse buying.

3. Related Work

This segment presents empirical studies pertaining to the influence of (BGC) and (UGC) on (CBR). It underscores the notion that both BGC and UGC possess the potential to exert a favorable impact on customer responses, with certain investigations indicating that UGC might exert a more pronounced effect owing to its perceived authenticity. Furthermore, this section delves into research that juxtaposes the efficacy of BGC and UGC in molding consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

3.1. Relationship between UGC, BGC and CBR

The influence of BGC and UGC on CBR has been a topic of interest in marketing research. According to a study by [13] both types of content can have a positive effect on customer response, but UGC may have a stronger influence. The study found that both of them were positively related to the level of customer involvement, but only BGC had a negative impact on purchase intention [13]. Another study [14] found that UGC can enhance the credibility and authenticity of a brand, leading to more favorable customer responses. Moreover, researchers in [15] showed that UGC outperforms BGC as a predictor of online brand support.

Furthermore, specific studies have investigated the relative impact of BGC and UGC on consumer behavior. For example, the investigation in [16] revealed that UGC was more influential than BGC in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. However, other studies have found that both types of content can be important in different ways and contexts [17].

Based on the literature sources, it has been concluded that UGC may have a stronger influence on customer response behaviors or decision-making process. Incorporating UGC into marketing strategies can enhance the credibility and authenticity of a brand, while also increasing customer engagement and purchase intention [13], [16].

The correlation between BGC and UGC and its effect on consumer behavior can be complex, but both types of content can have a positive impact on customer response [14], [17]. Therefore, this research investigates whether enhancing BGC with UGC will increase customer engagement, especially in terms of the credibility of the content and its effect on customer purchase intention. Most of the studies in this area focus on the UGC aspect but this research will focus on the aspect of BGC that will mostly influence customers positively.

3.2. Research Framework and Hypothesis

Conceptually, the present study is based on the correlation between BGC and UGC and its effect on positive consumer behavior. Part of the research focuses on the direct BGC effect on customer positive response, while the remainder of the investigation seeks to observe the BGC indirect effect on consumer behavior when combined with UGC (Figure 1). In both circumstances, the factors that ensure BGC and UGC credibility have been considered crucial input for the research framework conceptualization as well as the hypothesis formulation.
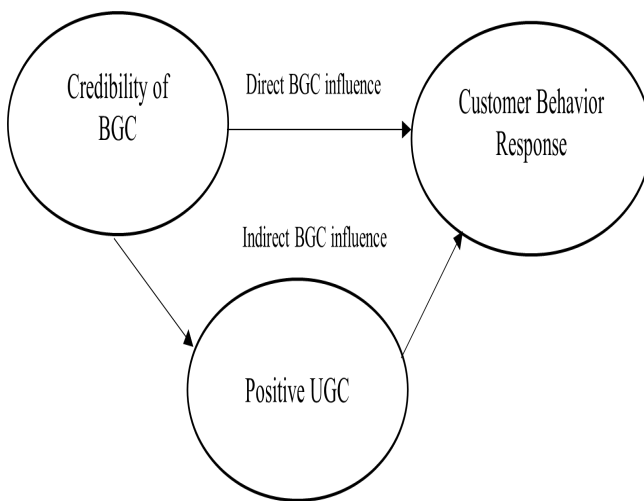

Figure 1. Conceptual research framework

3.2.1. Hypothesis 1: The influence of BGC on CBR

Researchers in [18] examined the purchase intention of customers towards BGC on social media. The results revealed that the level of customer technology savviness positively affects the online customer purchase intention, which is affected by the BGC present on social media platforms. Furthermore, the research conducted by [19] examined how the effectiveness of BGC influences the intention to make a purchase. These findings suggest that the perceived quality and brand attitude act as intermediaries between BGC effectiveness and purchase intention. The outcomes imply that companies should not solely focus on providing information but should also prioritize emotional aspects in their interactions with customers. Therefore, the credibility of brand-generated content will have a direct influence on consumer response behavior. In this regard, the first research hypothesis has been formulated.

H1: The credibility of BGC influences the customer behavior response.

3.2.2. Hypothesis 2: The influence of BGC on CBR through Positive UGC

The research team in [20] examined how Indonesian consumers perceive BGC and UGC advertising on Instagram, specifically focusing on their influence on consumer purchase intention. The findings affirmed that the way consumers perceive BGC and Consumer Generated Advertising (CGA) on Instagram has a favorable impact on their purchase intentions. Consumers found BGC important as it encompassed crucial elements that influenced their inclination to make a purchase.

Additionally, consumers also sought out CGA as it served to reinforce product information based on two specific factors, namely homophily and originality. Moreover, researchers in [21] studied the connections between different dimensions of BGC, including neutral valence, positive valence, and vividness, as well as UGC, with respect to customer purchase intention and satisfaction. Additionally, their findings indicate that brands with a higher corporate reputation exhibit more robust connections between dimensions of BGC and various stages of the marketing funnel. The results, when analyzed by consumption category, reveal that UGC and BGC dimensions have more significant positive associations with awareness in the case of durable and non-durable products, and with consideration, purchase intent, and satisfaction for services. Following the literature recommendations, the second research hypothesis was formulated.

H2: The credibility of BGC influences customer behavior response through positive user generated content.

4. Materials and Methods

The sample size for structural equation modelling analysis should not be less than 100 samples, and the proportion of the sample size to the number of parameters needed to be estimated should be 10-12 samples per parameter [21]. This study has 14 latent with 3 observed variables. Therefore, at least sample size required to collect 280 (14 X 20). In this study, 400 samples were collected which is more than the least sample size of 280.

The questionnaire consisting of four parts including, a) demographic factors including gender, age, occupation, education, income, and social media usages), b) the trustworthiness of the BGC, c) the trustworthiness of positive, and d) the customer behavior response including information pass-along, brand engagement, impulse buying, and future purchase intention. Section B, C and D used the Likert Scale (5 levels).

The questionnaires were used to collect primary data from October 2022 to December 2022. The statistical methods adopted in this research were descriptive statistics and structural equation modelling (SEM).

5. Research Result

This section displays the validity results to confirm the reliability of the data. The analysis of the respondents' descriptive data is also included. Ultimately, the research model's hypothesis testing has proven its validity.

The recommended internal quality metrics were based on Cronbach's alpha, whose reliability is often predicted to range 0.6 - 0.9, with 0.7 being considered good. Table 1 shows that Cronbach's alpha was found to be greater than 0.8, which is acceptable in this investigation.

In order to establish convergent validity, three criteria must be met: indicator factor loadings must exceed 0.5, composite reliability must exceed 0.7, and the average variance extracted (AVE) must exceed 0.5 to be statistically significant. Table 1 shows all criteria are complied with above mentioned.

5.1. Measurement and Validity

Table 1. Factor loadings, validity, and reliability

	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
BGC	Social Media Content	.780	.876	.872	.578
	Reviews/ Testimonials	.790			
	Blog Posts	.767			
	Video Content	.757			
	Forums	.705			
UGC	Social Media Content	.771	.886	.886	0.609
	Reviews/ Testimonials	.815			
	Blog Posts	.800			
	Video Content	.775			
	Forums	.740			
CBR	Information Pass Along	.868	.928	.935	0.673
	Brand Engagement	.923			
	Impulse Buying	.775			
	Future Purchase Intention	.744			

5.2. Descriptive data analysis

The demographics showed that respondents were mostly females (51.2%), aged between 18-25 years (57.8%), students (54.8%), bachelor's degree (66.5%), incomes below 15,000 baht (48%), and Facebook as social media program in connection with online purchases or services (41.3%).

The ranking of opinions regarding credibility of brand generated contents, ranges from the highest to the lowest level as follows based on an 1-5 scale: reviews and testimonials (4.12), video content (4.07), blog posts (3.99), social media content (3.97), and forums (3.82).

The ranking of opinions regarding credibility of user generated contents, ranges from highest to lowest as follows: social media content (3.95), video content (3.92), blog posts (3.91), reviews and testimonials (3.88), and forums (3.77), as shown in Figure 2.
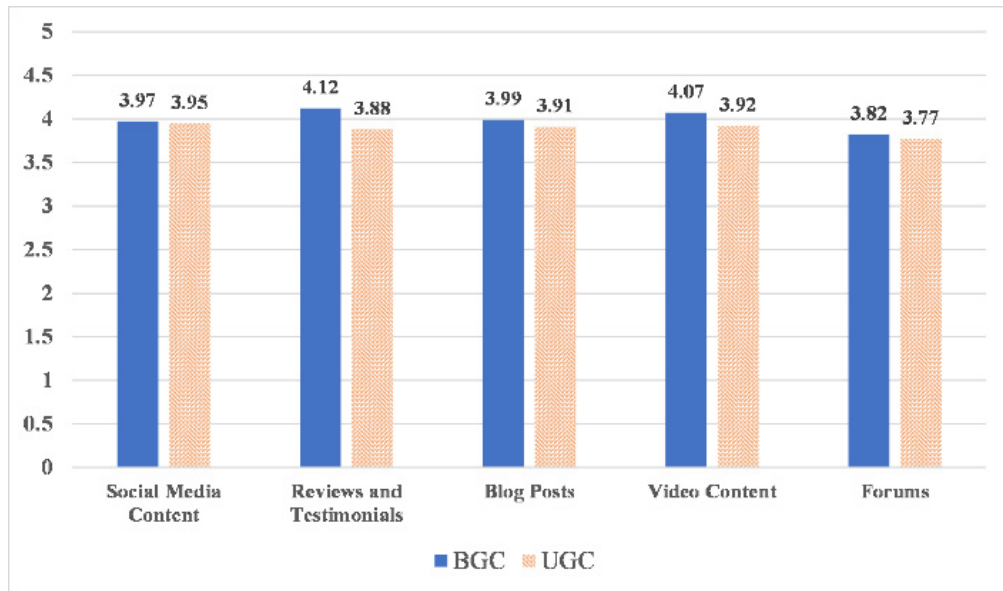
Figure 2. Comparative ranking of opinions regarding BGC and UGC credibility (1-5 scale)

As shown in the above graph customers give more trust to BGC than UGC in all aspects. The BGC content from reviews and testimonials demonstrates outstanding opinion-based credibility (4.12), followed by video content and blog post, with 4.12 and 4.07 respective credibility scores. Customers may interpret user-generated material like reviews and testimonials to be prejudiced or impacted by personal experiences, emotions, or hidden intentions. Brand-generated content, on the other hand, is perceived as more objective and dependable since it comes straight from the brand [22].

The summary of customer behaviour response, which was at a high level with an overall score of 3.86, revealed that most participants had intentions of making future purchases because of product or service postings, with a high score of 3.92 for future purchase intention. This was followed by a high score of 3.90 for impulse buying, where participants were motivated to buy products because of posts about them, and a high score of 3.82 for brand engagement, where participants showed interest in interacting with their favourite company's products or services.

5.3. Hypothesis Testing

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used for hypothesis testing. The researcher created the full causal relationship path analysis model based on the data analysis, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The model results and the path analysis of the variables under investigation

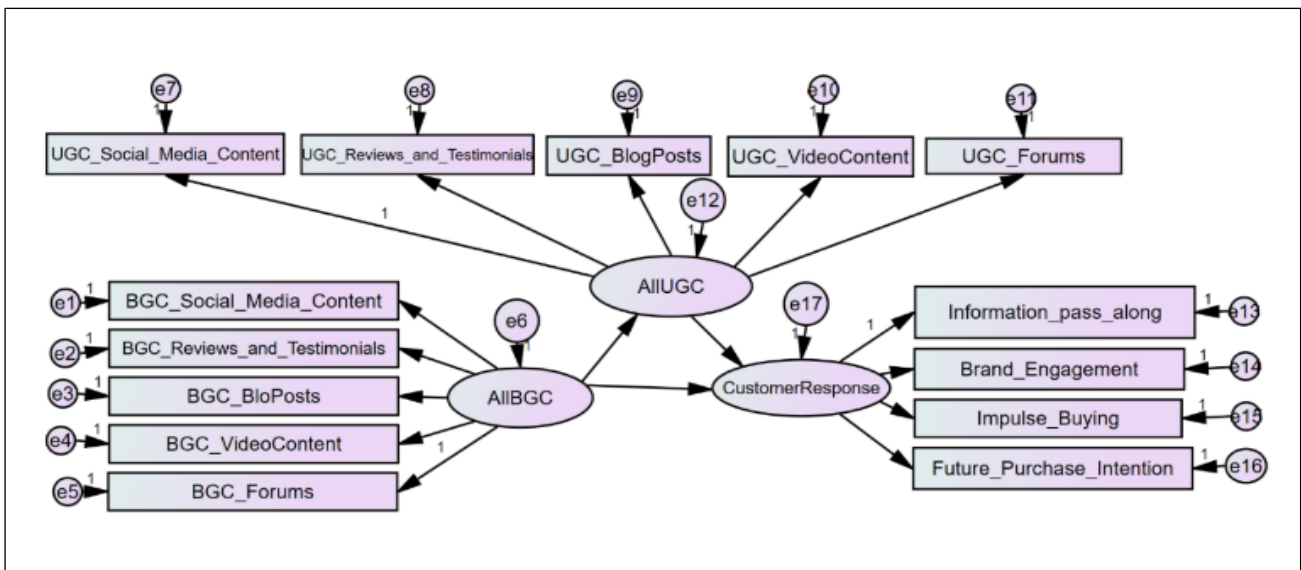In the above depicted schema, *e* symbol refers to the error margin while the abbreviations *AllBGC* and *AllUGC* refer to the overview of the content the business generates and posts on its social media and the overview of the content the users generates and posts on its social media respectively. The standard regression coefficients of the variables and their corresponding indicating statistical significance levels are shown in Figure 4.

The model illustrates the statistical relationship between the variables using standard regression coefficients (standardized regression weights), t-value (critical ratio: C.R.), p-value, and standard error (S.E.), as indicated in Table 2.

Figure 4. Model adjustment

The measurement model's results indicated that the data was valid and reliable, exhibited a high level of model-fit, and suitable for route analysis. The model is reasonable fit, as evidenced by following values as: CMIN/df = 2.560, RMSEA = 0.063, GFI = 0.934, AGFI = 0.901, NFI = 0.957, CFI =0.973, and TLI = 0.966.

The results from Table 2, revealed that almost variable had a significance relationship (<0.001), except for relationship between AllBCG and customers response.

Table 2. The relationship between variables and model estimation results

Standardized Regression Weights			Est.	S.E.	CR	p	Sig.
AllCGG	←	AllBCG	.880	.061	14.353	***	yes
Customer Response	←	AllCGG	1.072	.249	4.306	***	yes
Customer Response	←	AllBCG	.109	.227	.482	.630	no
BGC_Video Content	←	AllBCG	.920	.064	14.402	***	yes
BGC_BloPosts	←	AllBCG	.973	.067	14.573	***	yes
BGC_Reviews_ and_Testimonials	←	AllBCG	1.052	.070	15.004	***	yes
BGC_Social_Media_Content	←	AllBCG	.845	.057	14.818	***	yes
UGC_Reviews_and_Testimonials	←	AllCGG	1.157	.063	18.473	***	yes
UGC_BlogPosts	←	AllCGG	1.106	.061	18.004	***	yes
UGC_Video Content	←	AllCGG	1.039	.062	16.881	***	yes
UGC_Forums	←	AllCGG	1.140	.078	14.657	***	yes
Brand_ Engagement	←	CustomerResponse	.865	.032	27.198	***	yes
Impulse_Buying	←	CustomerResponse	.747	.043	17.529	***	yes
Future_Purchase_Intention	←	CustomerResponse	.762	.045	17.016	***	yes

Remark: *** is p-Value < 0.001

Table 3 analysed the direct and indirect effects of variables in our research.

Table 3. Hypotheses relationship

Model Relationship	β	P	Results
Main Effect			
H1 BGC → Customer Response Behavior	.11	.630	Support
Mediating Effect			
H2 BGC → UGC→ Customer Response Behavior	.94	.000**	Suppor (full mediator effect)

Remark: *** is p-Value < 0.001

The hypothesis testing results can be summarized as follows:

Hypothesis Testing 1: The credibility of BGC influences the customer behavior response.
The result from Table 3 concludes that the credibility of BGC has no significant direct influence on consumer behaviour response (β = 0.11) at the 0.630 which greater than significance level at 0.001. As a result, BGC has no direct influence on customer behaviour response.

Hypothesis Testing 2: The credibility of BGC influences customer behavior response through positive user generated content.
The result from Table 3 reveals that the credibility of BGC has significant indirect influence on customer behaviour response through the trust of positive UGC (β = 0.94) at the 0.000 which less than 0.001 level of significance. As a result, the credibility of BGC influences customer behavior response through positive user generated content.

6. Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the current understanding of BGC and UGC toward customer behaviour response in several important ways. The results indicate that while credible BGC alone may not directly influence customer behavior, it plays a crucial role when combined with positive UGC. This aligns with recent research by [23], who found that the credibility of influencer-generated content indirectly affects purchase intentions through consumer trust.
Implications for marketing strategies suggest from the results that businesses should adopt two method approach by creating credible brand content while also encouraging and showcasing positive UGC.

This strategy aligns with the concept of social media marketing engagement, as discussed by [24] in their comprehensive review of social media marketing literature.

7. Conclusion

The credibility of BGC has no direct influence on customer behaviour response but when brand add positive UGC to the contents, this will increase customer response with the brands significantly. Based on the research results, it is recommended that businesses should focus on generating high-quality and trustworthy content for their consumers and integrate with positive customer generated content which more credibility. Customer tends to believe in content generated by real customer, and it will increase trustworthiness toward business own contents. Additionally, this finding suggests that businesses should consider incorporating user-generated content into their marketing strategies, as it has been shown to be an effective way to build trust with consumers.
This could involve creating authentic user reviews and testimonials, regularly posting engaging and informative blog articles, producing professional-quality videos, and engaging with customers on social media platforms. By building a positive reputation and generating content that customer can trust, businesses can potentially increase loyalty and attract new customers. Additionally, businesses may benefit from investing in measures to evaluate the credibility of their content to ensure that it aligns with the needs and expectations of their target audience.
The currently presented findings include implications for both researchers and practitioners in the field of e-commerce. From the researcher's perspective, a new web-based customer engagement model has been suggested to inspire and motivate academics to conduct similar research in future. For example, similar investigation can be conducted towards the effect of enriched BGC via UGC on the business partner positive response.
From the practitioner's perspective, companies should prioritize the quality of their content and ensure that it is transparent, accurate, credible, and reliable to win over clients' confidence and loyalty. Failure to do so may have negative consequences, such as business losses, reputational damage, and lower sales. Conversely, companies that are committed to producing reliable information and mix it with excellent user-generated content see an increase in revenue, consumer happiness, and engagement.

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