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The Implications of User-Generated Content (UGC) for Digital Marketing Strategies in Indonesia: A Systematic Literature Review of Research Trends and Key Insights Over the Past Decade (2015–2025)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to evaluate the development, contribution, and strategic direction of User-Generated Content (UGC) in digital marketing practices in Indonesia through a systematic literature review approach using the PRISMA method. A total of 27 scholarly articles published between January 2015 and May 2025 were thematically analyzed to identify publication trends, methodological approaches, and the impact of UGC on consumer behavior and brand strategies. The findings show that UGC has become a strategic element in building brand authenticity, increasing customer engagement, and influencing purchase intentions and consumer loyalty. Digital platforms such as TikTok and Instagram play a significant role in amplifying these effects, especially among younger generations and online communities. However, challenges remain, including content quality, impact measurement, and limitations in population segmentation. Theoretically, this study contributes by contextualizing UGC research in a developing country with high social media penetration, thereby complementing existing international literature that is largely dominated by Western and Chinese contexts. Practically, the study offers actionable recommendations for brand managers, including strengthening community-based strategies, adopting UGC analytics tools, and integrating participatory content into long-term digital marketing plans. These contributions are expected to enrich academic literature and provide practical guidance for managing participatory and sustainable digital content.

Keywords: *User-Generated Content (UGC); Digital Marketing Strategy; Social Media; Systematic Literature Review; Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the development of digital technology and the increasing penetration of the internet have fundamentally transformed how organizations market their products and build relationships with consumers. One striking global phenomenon is the growing role of User-Generated Content (UGC), which refers to content voluntarily created by users—such as reviews, comments, photos, videos, and testimonials shared across various digital platforms like social media, online forums, and e-commerce sites. UGC has now become an integral part of the digital marketing ecosystem due to its ability to create an authentic impression, build consumer trust, and significantly influence purchasing decisions (Li et al., 2020; Mathur et al., 2022). Research shows that the effectiveness of UGC is influenced by

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source credibility, user engagement, and the relevance of the information presented, which together enhance consumers' purchase intentions (Geng & Chen, 2021). Moreover, the presence of authentic and relatable UGC can increase transparency and set it apart from traditional advertising (Alamyar, 2025). Overall, UGC has proven to be a cost-effective and efficient marketing strategy for building trust and reinforcing consumer loyalty (Akhter & Mohamadali, 2023).

The growing role of User-Generated Content (UGC) is also strongly reflected in Indonesia, one of the countries with the highest social media penetration in the world. According to a recent report, over 170 million Indonesians actively use social media, creating a fertile ecosystem for the growth of user-created content and intense digital interaction (Widodo, 2024). Indonesian consumers, particularly the younger generation, show a strong tendency to rely on reviews and recommendations from fellow users before making purchases—especially in the e-commerce, fashion, culinary, and tourism sectors (Effendy & Bakhri, 2022; Prasanti & Rufaidah, 2024). In the tourism sector, the use of UGC through platforms like Instagram has proven more effective than traditional media in influencing travel decisions, due to higher trust in peer-generated reviews (Paramadita et al., 2019). Local companies are increasingly recognizing the strategic potential of UGC to expand marketing reach, strengthen consumer engagement, and build an authentic and trustworthy brand image, including driving purchase conversions through e-commerce platforms such as Shopee (Fransiska et al., 2024).

In the context of digital marketing, User-Generated Content (UGC) holds strong relevance as it is considered more authentic and credible compared to content created by companies or brands themselves. UGC facilitates a two-way relationship between brands and consumers and has the potential to create a viral effect that accelerates the spread of marketing messages (Kumar, 2024). UGC-based marketing strategies have proven effective in increasing engagement rates, customer loyalty, and consumer purchase intentions (Niu, 2025; Mathur et al., 2022). In Indonesia, this approach is also gaining traction, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, when UGC played a crucial role in enhancing customer digital engagement through e-commerce platforms and social media (Febrian & et al., 2021). Even in sectors like food delivery apps, UGC has shown a significant impact on user purchasing decisions by influencing perceptions of trust and content authenticity (E. Halim et al., 2023). Therefore, a deep understanding of how UGC is utilized in marketing strategies is becoming increasingly essential, especially in building emotional and authentic connections with consumers in the digital culture era.

Several previous studies have reviewed the contribution of User-Generated Content (UGC) to digital marketing activities. For instance, a study by Kumar (2024) revealed that UGC has a positive impact on brand perception because it is considered authentic, enhances trust, and strengthens emotional connections with consumers on social media. Additionally, research by Zhang (2025) showed that the credibility and usefulness of UGC significantly influence brand attitude and purchase intention, particularly in the context of international restaurants operating in China. In the food retail sector, Beurer-Zuellig & Klaas (2020) found that different types of consumers respond differently to UGC; however, in general, user-created content can enhance brand loyalty and trust. Furthermore, a study by Muda & Hamzah (2021) highlighted the importance of source credibility in UGC, which has been shown to affect information-sharing intentions and purchasing decisions through platforms like YouTube. Meanwhile, Thomas (2020) emphasized that UGC plays a crucial role in building brand engagement and positive brand attitudes through content-sharing activities on

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Instagram. Nevertheless, most of these studies remain fragmented and unconnected, and they have yet to provide a comprehensive overview of the development of UGC research, especially in the sociocultural digital context of Indonesia.

In recent years, research on the topic of User-Generated Content (UGC) in digital marketing has continued to grow. However, there remains a significant research gap, particularly in terms of systematic mapping of academic studies that explore the relationship between UGC and digital marketing strategies in Indonesia. Most existing research is still fragmented and tends to focus on specific case studies or platforms, thus failing to provide a comprehensive understanding of the direction and consistency of academic findings (Akhter & Mohamadali, 2023). A review by Romero-Rodriguez & Castillo-Abdul (2023) also emphasized that many UGC studies are limited to visual or text-based content, while other digital formats such as videos, podcasts, and carousels remain under-researched in academic discourse. In Indonesia, research approaches to UGC are often confined to specific contexts such as the #ShopeeHaul phenomenon or the use of UGC in e-commerce, without providing a framework that enables nationwide generalization of the findings (Nisrina, 2021). Additionally, research by Kahfi & Suyuthi (2024) indicated that although UGC is effective in increasing online consumer engagement, proper content management and awareness of demographic variations among users remain challenges that are rarely addressed in local literature. Most of these studies are isolated and tend to focus on individual cases or platforms, lacking an integrated understanding that synthesizes the research outcomes. This makes it difficult for academics and practitioners to grasp general patterns, theoretical and methodological developments, and the practical application potential of existing findings.

Therefore, a systematic literature review is needed to comprehensively examine research trends, methodological approaches, and strategic insights from studies related to UGC in the context of digital marketing in Indonesia over the past ten years. This review aims to map the development of UGC research within the field of digital marketing, identify dominant patterns, themes, and methodologies, and formulate strategic insights that can serve as a foundation for decision-making by academics, business practitioners, and other stakeholders in an ever-evolving digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR)

A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is a literature review method conducted in a structured, transparent, and replicable manner to identify, evaluate, and synthesize all relevant research related to a specific research question (Page et al., 2021). Compared to narrative reviews, which are subjective and non-standardized, SLR is designed to minimize bias by using explicit protocols for literature search and selection (Ardern et al., 2022).

The SLR method typically follows the PRISMA framework (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses), which emphasizes systematic documentation of the process through an article selection flow diagram and clear explanations of inclusion and exclusion criteria. In the field of digital marketing, SLR is especially useful for mapping research trends, identifying theoretical gaps, and providing a strong empirical foundation for further studies (Faisal et al., 2024).

b. *User-Generated Content (UGC)*

User-Generated Content (UGC) is the content voluntarily created and distributed by users or consumers through digital platforms, including reviews, photos, videos, comments, or testimonials (Mathur et al., 2022). UGC differs from firm-generated content in that it is

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organic, based on real experiences, and is perceived as more authentic and trustworthy (Akhter & Mohamadali, 2023).

The effectiveness of UGC in influencing consumer behavior is significantly shaped by perceptions of credibility, informational value, and the emotional closeness between the content creator and the audience (Geng & Chen, 2021). In the digital era, UGC has evolved from a mere social communication tool into a strategic instrument for shaping brand perception and purchase decisions (Alamyar, 2025). Moreover, UGC plays a role in the formation of digital communities and participatory culture, where consumers help build brand narratives through interaction and co-creation (Romero-Rodriguez & Castillo-Abdul, 2023).

c. Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is the promotion of products or services using digital technologies, primarily through the internet and digital platforms such as social media, search engines, email, and mobile applications (Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Over the past decade, digital marketing has undergone significant transformation, marked by the growing use of consumer data, automation, and interactive content.

One of the most notable shifts in the digital marketing landscape is the move from one-way communication to two-way interaction, positioning consumers as active participants in spreading brand messages (Niu, 2025). Social media has played a major role in this change, enabling viral content dissemination, community-based promotions, and direct consumer involvement in shaping brand identity (Burhan et al., 2024). Recent studies also emphasize the importance of personalization, user experience, and value-driven content in fostering long-term customer loyalty (Kumar, 2024).

METHODS

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach guided by the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework to ensure transparency and replicability in the literature review process (Page et al., 2021; Ardern et al., 2022; Faisal et al., 2024). The search strategy was structured using key terms related to User-Generated Content (UGC) and digital marketing strategy, with a specific focus on the Indonesian context. Data sources were drawn from two reputable academic databases, Crossref and Scopus, to ensure the quality and relevance of the publications analyzed.

The literature search covered publications released between January 2015 and May 2025, with inclusion criteria as follows: (1) journal articles, (2) open access availability in PDF format, and (3) explicit discussion of the relationship between UGC and digital marketing strategies. The initial search yielded 306 articles—263 from Crossref and 43 from Scopus. After removing duplicates, 278 articles were screened based on title and abstract. Ultimately, 27 articles met the eligibility criteria and were thoroughly evaluated for analysis in this study.

The entire process of article identification, screening, and selection was systematically documented using a PRISMA flow diagram, as shown in Figure 1. No articles were eliminated

at the eligibility assessment stage, as all documents met the methodological criteria and were not bibliometric, systematic, or meta-analysis studies irrelevant to the research objectives.

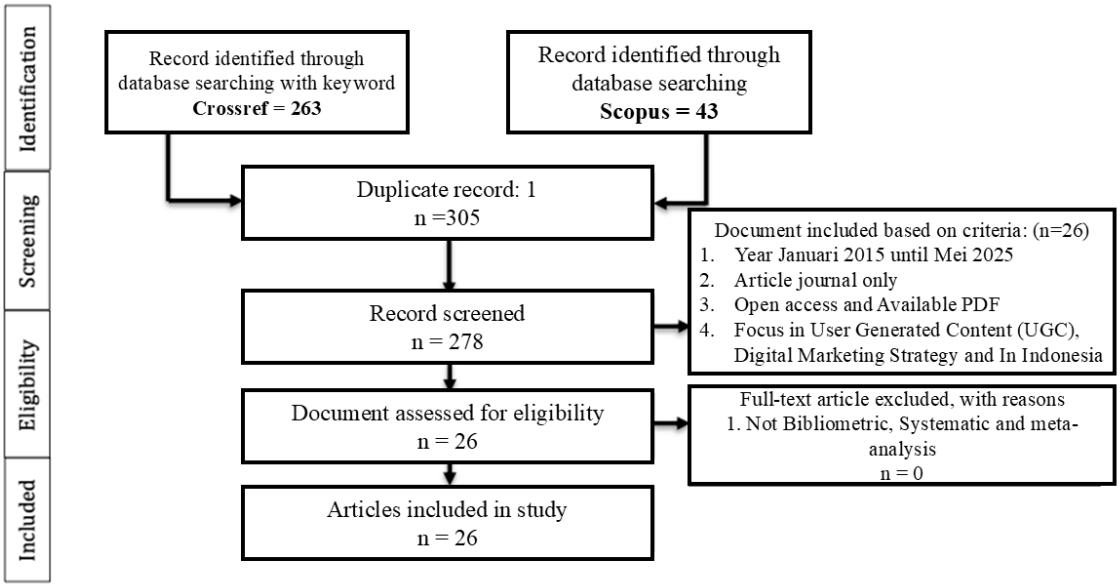


Figure 1 PRISMA Method

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Selection and Analysis of Articles Used in the Study

As part of the systematic review process based on the PRISMA method, a total of 27 articles underwent identification, screening, and eligibility stages for further analysis. Of these, 27 articles were purposively selected for in-depth analysis in the results section, based on their fulfillment of inclusion criteria, thematic relevance to the topic of User-Generated Content (UGC) in digital marketing strategies, and the geographic context of Indonesia.

The analyzed articles include both national and international publications from the period between 2015 and May 2025, and were published in indexed journals or those with national accreditation. The studies cover a wide range of topics, from the impact of UGC on purchase intentions and consumer decision-making, to managerial strategies for managing user-generated content participation. Various research methods were employed, including quantitative approaches using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), case studies, and integrative models combining consumer behavior theory and digital marketing concepts.
The following is the list of the 27 core articles analyzed, presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1 List of Articles

No	Author & Year	Article Title	Keywords	Main Research Focus
1	Nuralam & Astuti, 2025	*A Proposed User-Generated Content (UGC) Strategy in Influencing Purchase Intention of Family Segment With Mediation of Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Trust*	Family Segment; Perceived Trust; Perceived Usefulness; Purchase Intention; UserGenerated Content	Purchase Intention, trust, perceived usefulness

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No	Author & Year	Article Title	Keywords	Main Research Focus
2	Imanulrachman, 2024	*Developing Marketing Strategy for User-Generated Content: Study Case for Company X*	Online Media; User-Generated Content; Travel; Tourism; Motivation; Incentive	UGC Strategic, User Participation
3	Amaliyatul et al., 2024	Pengaruh Social Media Marketing Dan User Generated Content (UGC) Terhadap Purchase Decision Produk Luxcrime Pada Generasi Z Di Tiktok	Social Media Marketing, User Generated Content (UGC), Buying Decission	Puchase intention, social media.
4	Anisa & Marlena, 2022	Pengaruh User Generated Content Dan E-Wom Pada Aplikasi Tik-Tok Terhadap Purchase Intention Produk Fashion	User Generated Content, E-Wom, Purchase intention, TikTok, Fashion	TikTok, e-WOM, purchase intention
5	Khayani et al., 2025	Pengaruh User Generated Content (UGC) terhadap Tingkat Kepercayaan Konsumen Pinkflash	UGC, consumer trust level, social media marketing, digital marketing, marketing content	Trust, Cosmetic, Instagram
6	Burhan et al., 2024	*The Impact of Firm-Generated and User-Generated Content on Brand Loyalty on TikTok: The Role of Trust and Engagement*	Firm-Generated Content (FGC), UserGenerated Content (UGC), Social Media Brand Engagement (SMBE), Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty	Brand loyalty, engagement, trust
7	Puspitasari et al., 2023	*The Effects Of User-Generated Reviews Versus Influencer-Generated Reviews On Consumer Purchase Intention*	Influencer-Generated Review, Online Review, Perceived Review Credibility, Perceived Review Making Effort, Reviewer's Motivation, UserGenerated Review	UGC vs influencer, review credibility
8	Effendy & Bakhri, 2022	*Analysis Of The Effect Of User-Generated Content (UGC) Information From Social Media And Positive Electronic Word Of Mouth (E-Wom Positive) On Tourist Visiting Intentions In Indonesia*	Electronic Word of Mouth (e-Wom); Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM); Social Media; Visit Intention; UserGenerated Content (UCG)	Tourism information, visit intention
9	Kemala & Azhar, 2025	*The Impact Of User-Generated Content (UGC) On Customer Engagement And Brand Loyalty*	Firm-generated content, user-generated content, customer engagement, consumer-based brand	Engagement, brand loyalty, brand equity

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No	Author & Year	Article Title	Keywords	Main Research Focus
			equity, purchase intention	
10	Fransiska et al., 2024	*E-commerce Revitalization Ease Study: The Role of User-Generated Content and Swift Guanxi in Reducing Shopping Cart Abandonment to Checkout Conversion on Shopee E-Commerce*	Shopping Cart Abandonment, User Generated Content, Swift Guanxi, Purchase Completion Intention, ECommerce	E-commerce, perceived risk, trust
11	Hayat et al., 2022	*The Influence of Social Media Marketing and User-Generated Content (UGC) on Luxcrime Product Purchase Decisions on Generation Z on Tiktok*	Social Media Marketing, User Generated Content (UGC), Purchase Decision	Gen Z, TikTok, Buying Decission
12	Hermaren & Achyar, 2018	*The Effect Of Firm Created Content And User Generated Content Evaluation On Customer-Based Brand Equity*	Marketing, Firm created content, User generated content, Customer based brand equity, SEM	Awareness, loyalty, perceived quality
13	Wulandari & Wulandari, 2023	Peran User Generated Content Produk Mitochiba	marketing PR, user generated content, Mitochiba.	Brand image, brand trust, Buying
14	Lawrence et al., 2024	Pengaruh User Generated Content, Brand Image, dan Hedonic Value terhadap Minat Pembelian pada Produk Salted Egg Milea	User Generated Content, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Salted Egg Milea	Hedonic motivation, brand image
15	Prasanti & Rufaidah, 2024	*TikTok Customer Engagement Behavior Based on User-Generated Content of Fashion Products in Indonesia*	User-Generated Content, Customer Engagement Behavior, Social Media.	TikTok, fashion, young consumen
16	Paramadita et al., 2019	*Using PESTEL Framework to Analyze User-Generated Content Usage on Social Media: The Case of Indonesian Tourism and Travelling Business on Instagram*	PESTEL, Instagram, Social Media	Macro Analysis (PESTEL), tourism industry
17	Putra et al., 2021	*Configure the Symmetrical and Asymmetrical Paths of Brand Equity and Relationship of Firm Created*	User-Generated Content, Firm Creted Content, Brand Equity, Purchase Decision	Brand equity path analysis

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No	Author & Year	Article Title	Keywords	Main Research Focus
		Content and User Generated Content as Antecedent		
18	Putri & Alexandrina, 2022	*Building Customer Engagement Through User-Generated Content: A Case Study on @Bt21Stuff.Id*	Online Shopping Entrusted Goods Service; K-Pop; Customer Engagement; User Generated Content; Instagram	Engagement, Instagram, online store
19	Putri, 2020	Pengaruh User-Generated Content (UGC) Dan Kualitas Produk Terhadap Minat Beli Konsumen Dapur Mbok Sarminah	User-Generated Content (UGC), Product Quality, Purchase Intention.	Local products, quality, purchase intention
20	Wisianto & Keni, 2023	*The Influence Of User-Produced Content (UGC) And Company-Produced Content (FGC) On Smartphone Brand Loyalty In Indonesia With Brand Trust As A Mediation Variable*	User generated content, firm generated content, brand trust, brand loyalty	Brand loyalty, social content
21	Saskia et al., 2024	*The Influence Of User Generated Content Jiniso.Id On Tiktok Social Media On Consumer Buying Interest*	User Generated Content; Jiniso.id; TikTok; Consumer Purchase Interest	Visual UGC, fashion, young generation
22	Triono et al., 2021	*The Influence Of User-Generated Content To Consumer-Based Brand Equity Through Involvement In Indonesia's Top Brand Lipstic Consumer*	brand equity; consumer-based brand equity; content marketing; involvement; user-generated content	Involvement, brand equity
23	Tunjungsari et al., 2025	*How User-Generated Content Affects Tourist Loyalty Behaviour at Cultural Heritage Sites in Indonesia*	user-generated content (UGC), destination image, tourist loyalty behaviour, cultural heritage sites, sustainable tourism	Cultural tourism, loyalty
24	Wijaya & Ridanasti, 2024	Pengaruh User Generated Content terhadap Niat Pembelian oleh Konsumen Melalui Channel GadgetIn	Perceived Credibility, Information Quality, Brand Engagement, Trust, Attitude towards UGC, Purchase Intention	YouTube, purchase intention, technology
25	Zakaria et al., 2024	*Role of User Generated Content on Purchase Intention with Mediation of Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Trust*	User Generated Content, Media Social, Purchase Intention	Mediasi trust, perceived usefulness

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No	Author & Year	Article Title	Keywords	Main Research Focus
26	Rubyanti & Irwansyah, 2020	Peran User Generated Content (UGC) Instagram Pada Industri Makanan	UGC, Social Media, Instagram, Food Industry, E-Wom	Instagram, local culinary
27	Jesselyn & Sari, 2024	Analisis Regresi User Generated Content terhadap Brand Image Produk Skintific di Aplikasi TikTok Untuk Generasi Z	Brand Image, TikTok, User-Generated Content, Brand Perception	Brand image, generation Z

4.2 Publication Trends and Temporal Distribution of UGC Research in Indonesia (2015–2024)

An analysis of 27 selected articles discussing User-Generated Content (UGC) within the context of digital marketing strategies in Indonesia reveals a highly dynamic growth in academic interest over the past decade, with a notable surge after 2020. This development aligns with rapid digital transformation, increased public reliance on social media, and a shift in marketing paradigms from firm-centered approaches to consumer-based participatory models.

Period 2015–2018: Initial Conceptual Exploration

In the early part of the decade, the number of publications addressing UGC was still very limited. The data collected shows only one relevant article during this period—namely, the study by Hermaren & Achyar (2018). This research examined the comparative influence of firm-generated content versus user-generated content on brand equity. The focus at this stage was theoretical, and UGC had not yet been positioned as an integral component of systematic digital marketing strategies. The scarcity of publications during this period may be attributed to several factors: low adoption of UGC in local business practices, limited UGC literature specific to the Indonesian context, and the prevailing dominance of conventional approaches in marketing communication.

Period 2019–2020: Early Adoption and Local Context

By 2019–2020, academic interest in UGC studies began to rise, with a total of 3 articles identified over these two years. Articles such as Paramadita et al. (2019) started linking UGC with the PESTEL analysis framework, indicating openness to macro-level perspectives in understanding UGC's role in the tourism sector. Meanwhile, Putri (2020) examined the impact of UGC and product quality on consumer purchase intention in the context of a local culinary business (Dapur Mbok Saroh). This marked an initial shift in research focus from theoretical exploration to practical applications of UGC, especially in the MSME sector, which began leveraging Instagram and WhatsApp as community-based promotional channels.

Period 2021–2022: Post-Pandemic Surge and Massive Digital Adoption

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a critical turning point that accelerated digital media adoption and triggered a sharp increase in scholarly publications on UGC. During this period, 11 articles were identified (4 in 2021 and 7 in 2022), actively examining UGC as a primary variable in marketing studies. Articles such as Anisa & Marlena (2022b) and HAYAT et al. (2022) highlighted TikTok as a dominant platform for the dissemination of UGC, influencing purchase intention and brand trust. Effendy & Bakhri (2022) explored UGC's role in the post-pandemic tourism sector, where peer-generated information was perceived as more credible than conventional promotions.

This phase of studies marks the transition of UGC from merely a supplement to digital communication into a strategic tool for building emotional connections and consumer loyalty. These studies also began to adopt more complex methodological approaches, such as SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) and path analysis, reflecting advances in analytical rigor and model validity.

Period 2023–2024: Consolidation, Diversification, and Thematic Deepening

With a total of 13 articles published during these two years (5 in 2023 and 8 in 2024), this period represents the peak of academic productivity in UGC research in Indonesia. Research focus has expanded beyond merely examining the relationship between UGC and marketing outcomes (such as purchase intention or loyalty) to investigating the psychological and social mechanisms mediating UGC's influence, such as trust, perceived usefulness, perceived risk, and emotional value.

Articles such as Zakaria et al. (2024) and Wijaya & Ridanasti (2024) explore the mediating role of perceived usefulness and brand trust between UGC and purchase intention. Meanwhile, Saskia et al. (2024) and Mega Prasanti & Rufaidah (2024) highlight the role of UGC in shaping customer engagement through short-form videos on TikTok. These studies showcase increasingly diverse contexts: from the fashion and cosmetics industries, to digital services, and niche communities like K-pop fans and viewers of the GadgetIn YouTube channel.

Furthermore, there is also a visible diversification of approaches—some studies employ both symmetric and asymmetric methods (Putra et al., 2021), digital ethnographic case studies, and social media mining analyses. This indicates a growing epistemological and methodological maturity in UGC literature.

Year 2025 (as of May): Trends Remain Stable and Promising

As of mid-2025, five articles have been identified, including studies by Tunjungsari et al. (2025), which examined the role of UGC in cultural tourism loyalty, and Khayani et al. (2025), which explored consumer trust in local cosmetic brands. This number indicates that academic interest in UGC remains strong, with potential for deeper and more specific topic exploration, including cultural tourism, micro-influencers, and regional digital communities.

Visualization of Publication Trends

Based on annual distribution, the trend in the number of publications can be illustrated as follows:

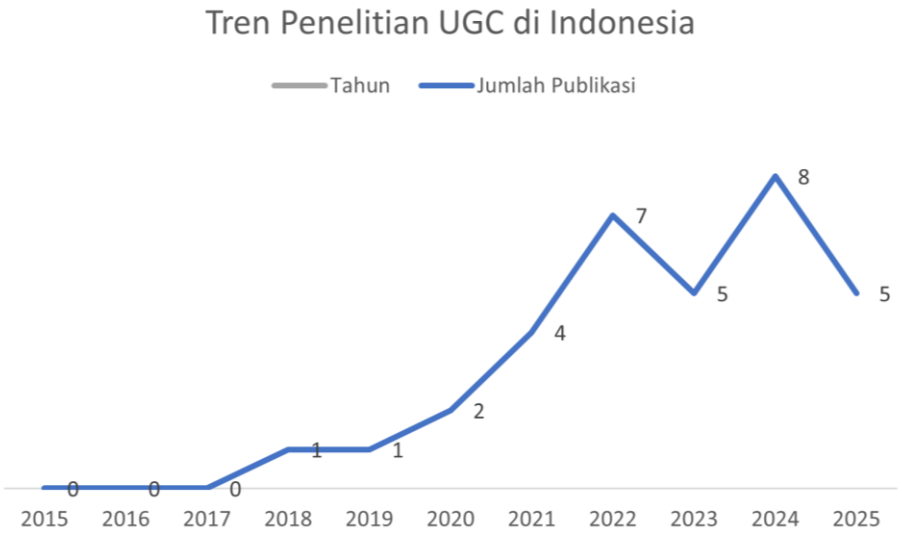


Figure 2: UGC Research Trends in Indonesia

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Overall, the trend graph shows a sharp surge beginning in 2020, peaking in 2024, which illustrates that UGC has become a central focus in digital marketing research and is expected to continue growing alongside advancements in social media technology and shifts in digital consumer behavior.

This publication trend reflects the evolution of UGC's role—from a simple participatory phenomenon to a strategic instrument in marketing communication, brand reinforcement, and the formation of emotional connections between consumers and brands. The post-pandemic academic surge also indicates that UGC is not merely a passing trend, but a foundational element of the future digital marketing ecosystem.

4.3 Methodological Approaches in User-Generated Content Studies

The methodological approaches in the 27 reviewed articles show that research on User-Generated Content (UGC) in digital marketing in Indonesia is predominantly quantitative. Most studies employed survey methods using online questionnaires to collect data from respondents who are active social media users. This dominance of the quantitative approach reflects a research orientation focused on testing relationships between variables such as UGC, purchase intention, brand loyalty, brand trust, and customer engagement. Only a few articles applied qualitative or mixed methods approaches, such as Putri & Alexandrina (2022), who conducted a case study on online communities in the context of K-pop product proxy-buying services on Instagram.

In terms of data analysis techniques, the majority of articles utilized advanced inferential statistical analyses. Many employed Partial Least Squares - Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), particularly in studies published after 2020. For instance, Zakaria et al. (2024) used SEM-PLS to examine the influence of UGC on purchase intention with perceived usefulness and trust as mediating variables. This technique was also used by Putra et al. (2021), who tested both symmetric and asymmetric pathways between firm-created content (FCC), UGC, and brand equity. In addition to SEM-PLS, some articles also utilized multiple regression, mediation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS, and path analysis to assess indirect effects.

The population characteristics in these studies predominantly focus on young consumers who are active users of social media, particularly those from Gen Z and millennial groups. This age group is viewed as the primary actors in both producing and consuming digital content. For instance, the study by Saskia et al. (2024) targeted TikTok users engaging with the fashion brand Jiniso.id, while Wijaya & Ridanasti (2024) examined the influence of UGC from the GadgetIn YouTube channel on purchase intentions for tech products. Other research subjects included university students, Instagram users following cosmetic brand accounts, and e-commerce consumers exposed to UGC in the form of product reviews. However, only a few studies have reached broader populations, such as users outside productive age groups, business actors, or non-digital native market segments.

In terms of digital platforms analyzed, TikTok and Instagram emerged as the most frequently studied channels. These platforms are considered the most relevant for UGC dissemination due to their visual nature, interactivity, and high viral potential. Articles by Anisa & Marlena (2022b) and Mega Prasanti & Rufaidah (2024), for example, examined the effectiveness of UGC on TikTok in building engagement and increasing purchase intention. On the other hand, several articles also explored YouTube as a UGC medium, such as the study by Wijaya & Ridanasti (2024), linking it to the influence of follower communities on purchasing decisions. Additionally, e-commerce platforms like Shopee and Tokopedia were analyzed in

the context of user reviews as a form of UGC that impacts product quality perception and credibility.

The research objects in these studies are quite diverse, ranging from fashion, cosmetics, food and beverages, to the tourism and technology sectors. For instance, Putri (2020) investigated the influence of UGC in the context of a local culinary business, while Tunjungsari et al. (2025) expanded the scope by examining tourist loyalty to cultural destinations based on user-generated content. On the other hand, studies focusing on local brands such as Pinkflash (Khayani et al., 2025) and Luxcrime (HAYAT et al., 2022) indicate that UGC is not only a strategy used by large corporations but is also being adopted by emerging domestic brands on social media.

Overall, the methodological approaches in UGC research in Indonesia have seen progressive development—from basic descriptive techniques to complex structural modeling. The dominance of quantitative methods reflects the need for strong empirical validation in the digital marketing domain. However, to enhance analytical depth, more exploration through qualitative approaches is needed, as well as broader research population diversification beyond younger generations.

The research focus on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram reflects the current digital reality, but also highlights opportunities to explore other forms of UGC through channels like online discussion communities, review-based e-commerce, and customer journey-based brand strategies. Thus, this methodological review not only provides an overview of how UGC research is conducted but also points toward a more inclusive and contextual future direction in the field.

Table 2: Methodological Approaches and Research Characteristics in UGC Studies (2015–2024)

No	Aspects Analyzed	General Characteristics of the Reviewed Articles
1	Research Approach	Predominantly quantitative (± 85%), with the remainder using qualitative and limited case studies
2	Data Collection Method	Online surveys (Google Forms, distributed via social media)
3	Research Design	Quantitative descriptive, explanatory, correlational, partially experimental
4	Primary Analytical Techniques	SEM-PLS, multiple regression, mediation testing (PROCESS), path analysis
5	Statistical Software Used	SmartPLS, SPSS, AMOS, and some use LISREL
6	General Population	Generation Z, millennials, active users of TikTok, Instagram, YouTube
7	Average Sample Size	100–400 respondents; most use non-probability sampling
8	Respondent Segmentation	Collage students, fashion & cosmetics consumers, e-commerce users, brand followers
9	Social Media Platforms Studied	TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, Shopee, Tokopedia
10	Popular Research Objects	Local brands (Luxcrime, Pinkflash), community accounts (Jiniso.id, GadgetIn), MSMEs
11	Industry Focus	Fashion, cosmetics, culinary, tourism, technology

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No	Aspects Analyzed	General Characteristics of the Reviewed Articles
12	Types of UGC Studied	Video reviews, testimonials, comments, product photos, community content
13	Research Timeframe	Mostly cross-sectional (data collected at one point in time)
14	Validity and Reliability	Commonly tested using AVE, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability

4. 4 Strategic Dimensions and the Impact of UGC on Digital Marketing

Based on the analysis of the 27 reviewed articles, it was found that User-Generated Content (UGC) plays a crucial role across various strategic aspects of digital marketing in Indonesia. Content created by users has evolved from being a supplementary element in brand communication to becoming a central factor influencing strategy, consumer perception, and purchasing behavior. The findings from these studies can be grouped into six key dimensions, as summarized in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Strategic Dimensions and Key Findings from the Articles

No	Strategic Dimension	Author (Year)	Platform / Object	Key Findings
1	UGC as a Digital Marketing Strategy	Akbar Imanulrachman (2024); Nuralam & Astuti (2025)	X Company, Family, Instagram	UGC is used in content planning, enhancing brand value, and building authenticity
2	The Influence of UGC on Purchase Intention	Saskia et al. (2024); Zakaria et al. (2024); Hayat et al. (2022)	TikTok, Cosmetic, E-commerce	UGC increases purchase intention directly and through the mediation of trust and usefulness
3	UGC and Brand Loyalty and Equity	Burhan et al. (2024); Fadilah & Azhar (2025); Khayani et al. (2025)	TikTok, Cosmetic	Engagement with UGC strengthens loyalty and brand quality perception
4	UGC and Customer Engagement	Mega Prasanti & Rufaidah (2024); Putri & Alexandrina (2022)	TikTok, K-pop Community	UGC interaction encourages active participation and emotional attachment among customers
5	UGC vs FGC	Wisianto & Keni (2023); Richard & Keni (2023)	Smartphone, Instagram	Comparative effectiveness shows UGC is more trusted and has a stronger impact on loyalty
6	Contextual Role and Digital Communities	Tunjungsari et al. (2025); Putri (2020)	Cultural Tourism, MSMEs	UGC is influenced by local context and users' digital social communities

The first dimension highlights UGC as part of a digital marketing strategy. Studies by Akbar Imanulrachman (2024) and Nuralam & Astuti (2025) show that companies are beginning to design content strategies that involve customer participation, placing UGC as a core element in building authenticity and emotional closeness between brands and their audiences. In this context, UGC is not merely a byproduct of passive interaction, but a deliberately integrated component in brand campaign planning.

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The second and most widely explored dimension is the influence of UGC on consumer purchase intention. Studies such as Saskia et al. (2024), Zakaria et al. (2024), and HAYAT et al. (2022) affirm that exposure to authentic content from other users on platforms like TikTok and Instagram significantly boosts purchase intention. This effect is further amplified by perceptions of trust, informational usefulness, and content quality. Many studies also note that a sense of social closeness with the content creator enhances the likelihood of purchasing.

The third dimension reveals that UGC contributes to brand loyalty and brand equity. Research by Burhan et al. (2024), Kemala & Azhar (2025), and Khayani et al. (2025) shows that active consumer participation in creating or sharing content is closely associated with increased emotional attachment and trust toward the brand. This engagement directly strengthens loyalty and can enhance perceptions of brand quality and credibility.

The fourth dimension concerns UGC as a driver of customer engagement. Studies by Prasanti & Rufaidah (2024) and Putri & Alexandrina (2022) found that user-generated content fosters higher levels of social and emotional interaction among consumers. Platforms like TikTok provide space for users to actively participate through duets, comments, and content sharing, thereby creating dynamic and co-creative digital communities.

The fifth dimension explores comparisons between user-generated content (UGC) and firm-generated content (FGC). Wisianto & Keni (2023) found that content from users is more trusted, more engaging, and has a greater impact on brand loyalty compared to content produced by the brand itself. This is due to perceived objectivity, real-life experience, and the authenticity of messages shared by fellow users.

Finally, the sixth dimension highlights the role of social context and digital communities in the effectiveness of UGC. In studies by Tunjungsari et al. (2025) and Putri (2020), the contexts of cultural tourism and local MSME communities were found to enrich the meaning and virality of content. This local context transforms UGC from a mere promotional tool into a representation of users' collective identity within online communities.

By categorizing these various findings into six dimensions as summarized in Table 3, it can be concluded that UGC holds strong and multifaceted strategic power in digital marketing. Its effectiveness depends on social context, platform characteristics, and the emotional involvement of consumers in collectively creating and distributing brand narratives

4.5 Challenges, Opportunities, and Strategic Directions for UGC Use in Indonesia

The use of User-Generated Content (UGC) in the context of digital marketing in Indonesia has shown rapid growth, yet it still faces several fundamental challenges that can affect its effectiveness as a strategic tool. On the other hand, trends in technological advancement, shifts in consumer behavior, and the dominance of visual content-based platforms also present substantial opportunities for optimizing UGC in the digital marketing landscape. This subsection identifies key challenges, potential opportunities, and strategic directions that can be pursued by industry practitioners and academics to further develop UGC practices moving forward.

The main challenges identified from the article analysis relate to authenticity, narrative control, and content quality. Several studies, such as Hayat et al. (2022) and Wisianto & Keni (2023), indicate that while UGC is generally perceived as more authentic than firm-generated content, not all UGC meets brand communication standards. When content is negative, misleading, or misaligned with brand image, its effects can be counterproductive. This challenge is closely linked to a brand's limited control over public narratives, since UGC

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originates from users' individual initiatives. Meanwhile, studies by Burhan et al. (2024) and Zakaria et al. (2024) show that UGC's influence heavily depends on perceived trust, making content authenticity crucial. Content perceived as sponsored or manipulative risks losing credibility with audiences.

Another challenge is the limited integration of UGC into long-term business strategies. Research by Imanulrachman (2024) shows that many companies lack a systematic approach to managing and evaluating UGC performance. The absence of specific performance indicators and effective tools to measure UGC's impact on conversion and loyalty makes it difficult to strategically integrate into marketing management systems. Additionally, Tunjungsari et al. (2025) highlight that traditional sectors like cultural tourism still lag in optimal UGC adoption due to limited digital resources and media literacy.

Nevertheless, behind these challenges, there are various opportunities that can be strategically leveraged. One of these is the increasing adoption of visual content-based platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, which provide ample space for consumers' creative expression. Research by Prasanti & Rufaidah (2024) and Saskia et al. (2024) shows that consumer participation on these platforms generates a high viral effect, strengthens brand awareness, and creates dynamic digital communities. Another opportunity is the trend toward preferences for local and personal content. Studies by Putri (2020) and Khayani et al. (2025) indicate that consumers are more likely to connect with content that showcases real experiences from individuals in similar cultural contexts.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of the growth of brand-based online communities paves the way for value co-creation between brands and customers. In this context, UGC is not just passive content but a part of a collaborative system where customers act as both advocates and co-creators. This strategy has been implemented by several companies that are case studies in the article by Nuralam & Astuti (2025), where brands encourage content from family users through community-based approaches, digital contests, or community-based micro-influencer collaborations.Based on these findings, the strategic direction for future UGC utilization can be focused on three key areas.First, building a sustainable UGC ecosystem by involving users in campaign design, offering non-material incentives, and fostering long-term relationships.

Second, implementing content moderation policies and quality filters to ensure that only relevant content aligned with brand values is widely promoted.

Third, strengthening analytical capabilities and evaluation metrics for UGC performance, including its impact on engagement, conversions, and customer lifetime value.

In Indonesia's context—marked by cultural diversity and a rapidly evolving digital ecosystem—the potential of UGC as a strategic digital marketing tool is immense. However, optimizing its role requires organizational readiness to address the inherent technical, social, and strategic challenges. With an adaptive, participatory, and community-based approach, UGC can become a powerful force in building competitive and relevant brands in the digital era.

DISCUSSION

5.1 Strategic Integration of UGC in Digital Marketing

Findings from the 27 articles indicate that User-Generated Content (UGC) is increasingly integrated into digital marketing strategies in Indonesia. Companies are now actively utilizing UGC to build more authentic brand narratives, strengthen consumer trust, and expand the reach of their messages through social media. A study by Prasanti & Rufaidah (2024) shows that UGC-based fashion content on TikTok significantly boosts consumer

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engagement. Meanwhile, Jesselyn & Sari (2024) note that UGC has a direct impact on brand image formation among Gen Z. Companies are also involving consumers in content creation through digital competitions, community campaigns, or collaborations with micro-influencers—a participatory approach that encourages brand co-creation. However, the strategic use of UGC is not yet widespread. Large brands and digital communities are more adaptable compared to MSMEs or the traditional tourism sector. This is reinforced by the findings of Halim et al. (2023), who discovered that MSME actors often lack the necessary skills to create and manage digital marketing content (E. Halim et al., 2023).

Other studies show that limitations in digital literacy, support systems, and resource availability remain key barriers to the comprehensive integration of User-Generated Content (UGC) among Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Research by Abdelina et al. (2024) emphasizes that low digital literacy among MSMEs in the electronics sector hinders the adoption of digital content-based marketing strategies, causing business owners to struggle with managing their online presence effectively. This is consistent with the findings of Lilya & Djunita Pasaribu (2024), which show that the lack of digital training and mentoring directly affects the slow adoption of e-commerce by MSMEs in Jakarta. Additionally, Efendi et al. (2024) found that insufficient understanding of digital platforms, as well as misconceptions about technology, pose structural barriers to the development of participatory content in the culinary sector. To address these challenges, Trisninawati & Sartika (2024) recommend a community-based approach to digital literacy education, particularly for women MSME owners, to improve digital marketing skills in a contextual and sustainable manner. Overall, these findings underscore the need for structured interventions in the form of training, mentoring, and digital capacity building as prerequisites for optimizing UGC strategies within the MSME sector.

Nevertheless, UGC has proven effective in supporting strategic aspects such as earned media, brand trust, and organic visibility. Consumer-generated content is perceived as more credible because it is viewed as honest recommendations based on real-life experiences. In fact, the use of UGC is considered to reduce dependency on paid advertising. This is affirmed by research from Jesselyn & Sari (2024) and Prasanti & Rufaidah (2024), which states that organic content from users fosters increased trust and social influence of the brand without the need for sponsored promotions.

5.2 The Impact of UGC on Consumer Behavior

One of the most consistent findings from the review of 27 articles is that User-Generated Content (UGC) has a significant impact on various aspects of consumer behavior, particularly purchase intention, brand loyalty, and perceptions of product quality. UGC is often seen as more credible than company-generated content because it stems from real consumer experiences. Studies by Halim et al. (2023) and Islamiyah & Hapsari (2023) show that trust in influencers and their content attributes significantly increase purchase intention, especially if the content is considered informative and trustworthy. Furthermore, Jesselyn & Sari (2024) note that UGC on TikTok has a strong impact on brand image and positive perceptions of products among Gen Z.

In addition to driving purchase intention, customer trust and engagement, which can be strengthened through emotional UGC, enhance long-term loyalty (Lailiyah, 2020). A study by Lathifah et al. (2023) shows that interactivity and the appeal of visual content on social media positively influence brand engagement and customer loyalty. Furthermore, research by Lie &

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Nawawi (2023) found that brand trust, built from positive perceptions (including UGC), has a significant impact on brand loyalty.

UGC not only serves as a promotional tool but also plays a crucial role as an important mediator in the consumer decision-making process. The AISAS model, which includes Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share, represents the mechanism by which user interaction with UGC can trigger emotional engagement that leads to purchase decisions (Istikhomah & Wahyuni, 2024). Moreover, the credibility of content shared by influencers can build trust and a positive brand image, two key factors that enhance the influence of UGC in driving purchases (Apriliani & Ali, 2024). In the digital social context, a study by Graciafernandy & Almayani (2023) shows that online customer reviews influence purchase decisions through social influence and digital interactions between users.

However, the effectiveness of user-generated content (UGC) is not always stable. Several studies indicate that UGC can lose its influence if the content presented is less informative, biased, or irrelevant to the audience's needs. For example, Adinugroho & Martha (2020) found that YouTube videos that do not convey information clearly and contextually tend to fail to generate interest in behavior changes, such as in the context of using public transportation. Furthermore, Olivia & Rusdi (2022) highlighted that excessive exposure to poorly curated information on social media can lead to digital fatigue and a decline in trust in public information. Additionally, Pratama & Wibawa (2022) warn that inauthentic digital content, or content created merely to chase popularity, can create unrealistic expectations, which ultimately leads to disappointment and risks decreasing user loyalty toward the brand or platform.

5.3 Contextual Role: Social Platforms, Segmentation, and Digital Communities

The effectiveness of User-Generated Content (UGC) in influencing consumer behavior and strengthening digital marketing strategies heavily depends on the context in which the content is shared and received. Findings from the 27 articles indicate that differences in digital social platforms have distinct impacts on facilitating user participation and reaching target audiences. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube have unique technical, demographic, and cultural characteristics, meaning that UGC strategies need to be tailored to the specifics of each media. Studies by Flecha-Ortiz et al. (2023) and Jesselyn & Sari (2024) show that TikTok is highly effective for building rapid engagement through interactive and viral short video formats, especially among Gen Z, who prioritize hedonic gratification and parasocial relationships with influencers. Flecha-Ortiz et al. (2023); Jesselyn & Sari (2024). Additionally, a study by Abdul Meleh et al. (2025) found that marketing on TikTok, including influencer content, significantly increases purchase intention through more intense interactions and user reviews. On the other hand, Timmi et al. (2024) emphasize that YouTube excels in building in-depth and educational understanding, making it more suitable for long-term, information-based UGC campaigns.

Audience segmentation is an important contextual factor in determining the effectiveness of user-generated content (UGC). Various studies stress that younger generations, especially Gen Z, dominate the role of both producers and primary consumers of UGC. F. Halim et al. (2022) found that Gen Z's intention to use TikTok is strongly influenced by perceptions of fun, ease of use, and digital facilities that support their lifestyle. This finding is supported by Ente et al. (2023), which shows that Gen Z students use TikTok as a means of creative expression and content personalization. Furthermore, Pratiwi et al. (2024) describe

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how Gen Z actively uses digital platforms like YouTube and TikTok not only for entertainment but also for cultural promotion, in line with their social and informational motivations.

Furthermore, digital communities play a crucial role in shaping perceptions of content and brands. A study by Yu (2024) highlights that TikTok's algorithm can accelerate the spread of high-quality UGC content, but it also risks creating an echo chamber that reinforces uniform narratives and reduces information diversity. Therefore, community-based marketing that encourages horizontal interaction among users, rather than one-way communication from the brand, is considered more effective in fostering participation, emotional engagement, and long-term loyalty in a fragmented digital environment.

5.4 Strategic Implications, Limitations, and Future Research Agenda

The findings of this study provide important contributions to the development of practices and theories in digital marketing, particularly in the context of utilizing User-Generated Content (UGC) as a marketing strategy based on participation and authenticity. From a practical perspective, the results show that UGC can be integrated into various stages of the customer journey—from information search, alternative evaluation, to post-purchase loyalty. Therefore, brands are advised to actively build a collaborative content ecosystem, where consumers are not just recipients of messages but also creators and distributors of brand values. This strategy has proven to strengthen emotional attachment, expand organic reach, and improve marketing cost efficiency.

On the other hand, this analysis also reveals several common limitations that arise from the studies reviewed. Methodologically, most of the research is still cross-sectional and focuses on quantitative approaches, which means they have not been able to capture the dynamics of UGC in a longitudinal or contextual manner. Additionally, the study populations are still dominated by younger generations (Gen Z and Millennials), active social media users, and brands in the fashion and cosmetics sectors. This creates a segmentation bias that limits the generalization of the findings to a broader population, such as users outside major cities, traditional MSME actors, or non-consumer industry sectors. The platform context is also still focused on major social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, while the potential of UGC on other platforms such as marketplaces, community forums, or location-based apps has yet to be fully explored.

Based on these limitations, several research agendas are worth developing in the future. First, longitudinal studies that observe the influence of UGC on loyalty and consumer behavior over a longer period would be highly valuable. Second, research with in-depth qualitative approaches or mixed methods could enrich the understanding of consumer motivations in creating and spreading UGC. Third, the development of evaluation models for UGC effectiveness that combine quantitative metrics (such as engagement rate, conversion rate) and qualitative indicators (such as perceived value and emotional attachment) needs to be enhanced. Lastly, further exploration of the role of new technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) in the curation and distribution of UGC could open new horizons in the management of community-based digital content.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review reveals that User-Generated Content (UGC) has evolved into an increasingly important strategic element in digital marketing practices in Indonesia during the period from 2015 to 2025. From the analysis of 27 scholarly articles, it was found that UGC not only serves as supplementary content but has been actively integrated into the marketing

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strategies of various companies. UGC has proven to strengthen consumer trust, build emotional engagement, and influence purchase behavior through more authentic and participatory narratives compared to firm-generated content.

From the consumer behavior perspective, UGC plays a crucial role in driving purchase intention, enhancing brand loyalty, and improving perceptions of brand quality and credibility. The success of UGC strategies largely depends on social context, audience segmentation, and the characteristics of digital platforms like TikTok and Instagram, which support collaborative and interactive content formats. Additionally, the strength of digital communities—both at the micro-scale, such as fan communities, and at the local scale, such as MSME communities—becomes a key factor in amplifying UGC's impact on marketing.

However, UGC adoption still faces challenges, such as content quality and consistency, limited control over narratives by brands, and the lack of integration with strategic performance measurement systems. Most studies also highlight limitations in methodological approaches and population segmentation. Therefore, strengthening the digital ecosystem that supports content co-creation, developing measurable UGC evaluation metrics, and exploring the broader potential of UGC across sectors, platforms, and social layers are necessary.

Theoretically, this study contributes by contextualizing UGC research within a developing country that has one of the highest social media penetration rates globally, thereby complementing existing international literature that is still dominated by Western and Chinese contexts. Practically, the findings provide actionable recommendations for brand managers, including the adoption of community-based strategies, the use of UGC analytics tools, and the integration of participatory content into long-term digital marketing plans.

Overall, UGC holds significant potential as a strategic asset in community-based, collaborative, and trust-driven digital marketing. To maximize its role, brands need to adopt a more participatory, contextual, and data-driven approach in managing consumer engagement, so that the values created through user content can accumulate into a sustainable competitive advantage.

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