

A STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USER GENERATED CONTENT BASED MARKETING AND CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT FOR DEVELOPING BRAND RECOGNITION

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ABSTRACT

The term "user-generated content" (UGC) refers to the material that is created and shared by consumers and other users. UGC has become an increasingly essential tool in marketing for building brand awareness and engaging customers. The purpose of this research was to evaluate the connection between user-generated content (UGC) marketing and consumer engagement as it relates to the process of creating brand awareness. The approach consisted of doing a comprehensive evaluation of the relevant literature, with a particular emphasis on research that looked at how user-generated content (UGC) marketing influences consumer engagement and brand identification. According to the findings, marketing strategies based on user-generated content have a beneficial effect on consumer engagement and brand awareness. In addition, the research uncovered the many forms of user-generated content (UGC) that are the most successful in engaging consumers and developing brand awareness. These forms of UGC include customer reviews, posts on social media, and user-generated films. According to the findings of the research, organisations that want to boost consumer engagement and increase brand awareness might benefit from using marketing strategies that are based on user-generated content (UGC).

Keywords: user-generated content, UGC, marketing, customer engagement, brand recognition.

INTRODUCTION

Consumers now have more power than they ever had before because to the rise of digital technology. They now have a bigger voice in how businesses are regarded, and their views may have a substantial influence on a company's image as well as its bottom line as a result of the advent of social media and other online platforms. Because of this, more and more companies are relying on user-generated content (UGC) as a means of interacting with their target audience and constructing their brand.

The term "user-generated content" (UGC) refers to any material that is produced by consumers or users of a company and may be shared on social media platforms or other online channels. Examples of UGC include reviews, images, and videos. Marketing based on user-generated content entails motivating consumers to produce and distribute material that is associated with a particular brand or

item. This may consist of anything from photographs and written evaluations of products to videos and blog articles. By using the power of user-generated content (UGC), companies have the opportunity to capitalise on the inventiveness and fervour of their clientele and to utilise their material to better their marketing efforts.

The capacity to increase client interaction is one of the primary advantages of marketing strategies that are based on user-generated content (UGC). Customers are more likely to feel connected to a brand and become committed advocates for that company when they believe that their opinions are being taken into consideration and their contributions are being recognised. In addition, user-generated content has the potential to present a more genuine and approachable perspective of a business since it is produced by real people based on their actual experiences. This may assist to generate trust and credibility with the target audience, which is crucial for the development of a powerful brand identity.

User-generated content (UGC), also known as user-generated content, has been an increasingly popular method for companies to sell their goods and services in recent years. It has been shown that material of this kind is especially useful for increasing the level of consumer interaction as well as generating brand awareness. This study investigates the connection between user-generated content (UGC) marketing and customer engagement, with a particular emphasis on the ways in which companies may make use of UGC to build a powerful brand identity and encourage customer loyalty. The paper will also include advice for organisations who are wanting to execute a UGC strategy and will look at some of the obstacles and dangers that are connected with marketing based on user-generated content (UGC).

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

There is a paucity of thorough research on the link between UGC-based marketing and consumer engagement for the purpose of establishing brand awareness, despite the fact that the usage of user-generated content (UGC) in marketing is becoming more common. Previous research has researched the influence of user-generated content (UGC) on brand recognition and customer behaviour; however, very few studies have investigated the precise aspects that lead to customer engagement via UGC-based marketing tactics. [C]onsumer engagement is a key objective for many businesses today.

In addition, there hasn't been a lot of study done on how user-generated content (UGC) based marketing techniques may be improved to increase consumer engagement and brand awareness. Understanding the link between user-generated content (UGC) marketing and customer engagement is essential to the development of efficient marketing strategies that may boost brand awareness. This is particularly important in light of the proliferation of social media platforms and the growing significance of customer involvement in the establishment of brand loyalty. As a result, the purpose of this research is to analyse the link between user-generated content (UGC) marketing and consumer engagement, as well as to determine the primary aspects that lead to the growth of brand awareness.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the effectiveness of user-generated content (UGC) based marketing in increasing customer engagement for brand recognition.
- To identify the different types of UGC that can be utilized for marketing purposes and their impact on customer engagement and brand recognition.

- To evaluate the role of social media platforms in facilitating UGC-based marketing and its impact on customer engagement and brand recognition.
- To assess the influence of customer engagement on brand recognition and its implications for UGC-based marketing strategies.
- To recommend UGC-based marketing strategies that can be used to enhance customer engagement and improve brand recognition.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The investigation of the influence of user-generated content (UGC) on both brand recognition and customer engagement is included within the scope of this research, which focuses on the connection between user-generated content (UGC) based marketing and consumer engagement as a means of establishing brand awareness. The research will concentrate on several different kinds of user-generated content (UGC), including postings on social networking platforms, online reviews, and user-created videos. In addition to this, the research will investigate the significance of consumer participation in the process of establishing a name for a brand via the use of UGC-based marketing. The scope of the research will be confined to an examination of user-generated content (UGC) marketing strategies used by certain businesses operating within particular sectors. The area of investigation will be restricted to a certain nation or region for the duration of the research. The elements that determine the success of user-generated content-based marketing in terms of brand awareness and consumer engagement will also be evaluated as part of the research.

RESEARCH METHDOLOGY

Research Design: The research design for this study is cross-sectional. It involves collecting data at a single point in time to determine relationships among variables.

Data Collection: The data for this study has been collected using both primary and secondary sources. Primary data has been collected through the use of a structured questionnaire, while secondary data is been gathered from various published sources like articles, books, and online databases.

Sample Design: The sample design for this study has been a stratified random sampling technique. The sample size is 150.

Reliability: Several steps will be done in order to increase the trustworthiness of the findings of this research, which focuses on the connection between user-generated content (UGC) based marketing and consumer engagement for the purpose of creating brand awareness. In order to provide a solid theoretical groundwork for the research, the study will begin by doing a thorough literature assessment of prior studies that have been conducted in this field. The data gathering for the research is carried out using a mixed-methods approach, which incorporates both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Because of this, we will be able to get a deeper comprehension of the connection that exists between user-generated content-based marketing, consumer engagement, and brand awareness. For the purpose of ensuring that the results of the study are generalizable and relevant to a variety of settings, the research will be conducted using a sample that is intended to be representative of both consumers and enterprises. In conclusion, the research will comply with ethical standards throughout the process of data collecting and analysis in order to guarantee the exactness and dependability of the results. These precautions will guarantee that the research generates data that are accurate and genuine, which can then be used to influence user-generated content (UGC)-based marketing tactics for the purpose of increasing

brand awareness.

Research design

A stratified random sampling technique has been used to select the sample, and both primary and secondary data is been collected.

Tools Used:Percentage analysis, chi-square analysis and oneway ANOVA

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- It is possible that the research will be carried out using a small sample size, which may impact the degree to which the findings may be generalised to the whole target population.
- There is a possibility of bias in the data that was obtained, especially if the data collection relied on self-reported measures or questionnaires, which may not correctly represent the behaviours or opinions of the participants.
- Other circumstances outside the control of the researchers, such as shifts in the market or increased levels of competition, may have an effect on the findings of the research and may restrict its potential to be generalised.
- User-generated content (UGC) may be very varied and difficult to measure, which can have an impact on the accuracy and dependability of the study's findings.
- Because user-generated content (UGC) marketing is still a relatively new field of study, there may be a paucity of previous studies on the subject, making it challenging to arrive at definitive results or recognise patterns.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic variables of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Age	18-24 Years	22	14.7
	25-34 Years	74	49.3
	35-44 Years	50	33.3
	45-54 Years	4	2.7
	Total	150	100
Gender	Male	82	54.7
	Female	68	45.3
	Total	150	100
Highest level of education	High school or less	22	14.7
	Some college or associate degree	67	44.7
	Bachelor's degree	44	29.3
	Master's degree	16	10.7
	Doctorate degree	1	0.7
	Total	150	100
Employment status	Employed full-time	29	19.3
	Employed part-time	34	22.7
	Unemployed	42	28
	Self-employed	31	20.7
	Student	14	9.3

	Total	150	100
Monthly Income	Less than Rs.15,000	68	45.3
	Rs.15,000 – Rs.25,000	65	43.3
	Rs.25,000 – Rs.35,000	12	8
	Rs.35,000 or more	5	3.3
	Total	150	100

The given table provides information on the demographic variables of 150 respondents, including age, gender, highest level of education, employment status, and monthly income.

Age: The majority of the respondents (49.3%) were between 25-34 years old, followed by 33.3% between 35-44 years old. Only 2.7% were aged between 45-54 years old.

Gender: The sample was almost evenly split between male (54.7%) and female (45.3%) respondents.

Highest level of education: 44.7% of the respondents had completed some college or associate degree, followed by 29.3% with a bachelor's degree. Only 10.7% had a master's degree and 0.7% had a doctorate degree. 14.7% had high school education or less.

Employment status: The sample had a diverse mix of employment statuses. 28% of the respondents were unemployed, while 19.3% were employed full-time and 22.7% were employed part-time. Self-employed respondents made up 20.7% of the sample, and 9.3% were students.

Monthly income: The majority of respondents (45.3%) had a monthly income of less than Rs.15,000, while 43.3% had a monthly income between Rs.15,000 – Rs.25,000. Only 3.3% of respondents had a monthly income of Rs.35,000 or more.

Overall, this information provides a snapshot of the demographics of the sample, which could be useful for understanding their perspectives and behaviors on specific topics or issues.

Socio graphic variables of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Frequency of engaging with UGC (e.g. product reviews, social media posts, etc.) related to brands you are interested in	Very frequently	35	23.3
	Frequently	49	32.7
	Sometimes	41	27.3
	Rarely	16	10.7
	Very rarely	9	6
	Total	150	100
Influencing of UGC having on purchasing decisions	High influence	39	26
	Some influence	27	18
	Neutral	48	32
	Little influence	15	10
	No influence	21	14
	Total	150	100
Willing to share UGC related to brands are interested in with their social network	Very likely	38	25.3
	Likely	27	18

	Neutral	25	16.7
	Unlikely	24	16
	Very unlikely	36	24
	Total	150	100
Valuable of UGC for brands in terms of building trust and credibility	Very valuable	41	27.3
	Valuable	41	27.3
	Neutral	35	23.3
	Not very valuable	23	15.3
	Not valuable at all	10	6.7
	Total	150	100
Perceiving the authenticity of UGC compared to brand-created content	More authentic	32	21.3
	Equally authentic	48	32
	Neutral	49	32.7
	Less authentic	18	12
	Not authentic at all	3	2
	Total	150	100
Willing to engage with a brand that actively promotes UGC from their customers	Very likely	20	13.3
	Likely	45	30
	Neutral	38	25.3
	Unlikely	24	16
	Very unlikely	23	15.3
	Total	150	100

The given table provides information on the attitudes and behaviors of 150 respondents towards user-generated content (UGC) related to brands they are interested in.

Frequency of engaging with UGC: A majority of respondents (56%) engage frequently or very frequently with UGC related to brands they are interested in.

Influencing of UGC on purchasing decisions: Nearly half of the respondents (44%) were either highly influenced or somewhat influenced by UGC in their purchasing decisions, while 32% had a neutral view.

Willingness to share UGC: A majority of respondents (43%) were either very likely or likely to share UGC related to brands they are interested in with their social network.

Value of UGC for brands: Over half of the respondents (54%) found UGC to be valuable or very valuable for brands in terms of building trust and credibility.

Perceived authenticity of UGC: A majority of respondents (64%) perceived UGC to be equally or more authentic compared to brand-created content.

Willingness to engage with a brand that promotes UGC: A majority of respondents (43%) had a neutral view towards engaging with a brand that actively promotes UGC from their customers.

Overall, the results suggest that UGC can play an important role in influencing consumers' purchasing

decisions and building trust and credibility for brands. However, there is still some level of ambivalence towards UGC, as seen in the neutral views towards engaging with brands that promote UGC and the perceived authenticity of UGC compared to brand-created content.

**Comparison between gender and Frequency of engaging with UGC&Influencing of UGC
having on purchasing decisions**

Ho1: There is no relationship between gender and frequency of engaging with UGC & Influencing of UGC having on purchasing decisions

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	T	F	Sig
Frequency of engaging with UGC (e.g. product reviews, social media posts, etc.) related to brands you are interested in	Male	82	2.48	1.189	.499	.456	.500
	Female	68	2.38	1.079	.503		
Influencing of UGC having on purchasing decisions	Male	82	2.40	1.246	-2.857	.017	.896
	Female	68	3.01	1.377	-2.830		

The given table provides results of a t-test conducted to compare the means of responses from male and female respondents on two variables related to user-generated content (UGC) and brand engagement. Frequency of engaging with UGC: The mean score for male respondents (2.48) was slightly higher than that of female respondents (2.38), but the difference was not statistically significant ($t = 0.499$, $p = .456$), suggesting that gender does not have a significant effect on the frequency of engaging with UGC related to brands.

Influencing of UGC on purchasing decisions: The mean score for female respondents (3.01) was significantly higher than that of male respondents (2.40) ($t = -2.857$, $p = .017$), indicating that gender does have a significant effect on the extent to which UGC influences purchasing decisions. Female respondents were more likely to be influenced by UGC than male respondents.

Overall, the results suggest that while gender does not have a significant effect on the frequency of engaging with UGC related to brands, it does have a significant effect on the extent to which UGC influences purchasing decisions. These findings could be useful for marketers and advertisers to develop more targeted strategies to engage with male and female audiences.

**Comparison between age and Frequency of engaging with UGC&Influencing of UGC having on
purchasing decisions**

Ho2: There is no relationship between age and frequency of engaging with UGC & Influencing of UGC having on purchasing decisions

	Age	N	Mean	SD	F	Sig
Frequency of engaging with UGC (e.g. product reviews, social media posts, etc.) related to brands you are interested in	18-24 Years	22	2.59	1.297	1.728	.164
	25-34 Years	74	2.45	1.148		
	35-44 Years	50	2.26	1.046		
	45-54 Years	4	3.50	.577		
	Total	150	2.43	1.138		
Influencing of UGC having on purchasing decisions	18-24 Years	22	2.32	1.086	1.234	.300
	25-34 Years	74	2.84	1.453		
	35-44 Years	50	2.66	1.287		
	45-54 Years	4	2.00	.000		
	Total	150	2.68	1.338		

The table shows the results of two one-way ANOVA tests that examine the relationship between age and two variables: frequency of engaging with user-generated content (UGC) related to brands of interest, and the influencing of UGC on purchasing decisions.

For the frequency of engaging with UGC, there is a significant difference in means between the age groups ($F(3,146) = 1.728$, $p = 0.164$), but the effect size is small. The post-hoc analysis would help to identify which age groups differ significantly.

For the influencing of UGC on purchasing decisions, there is no significant difference in means between the age groups ($F(3,146) = 1.234$, $p = 0.300$).

It's important to note that the sample size for the age group of 45-54 years is very small ($n = 4$), which can limit the generalizability of the findings for this age group.

FINDINGS

- User-generated content (UGC) is a valuable tool for brands to build trust and credibility with consumers.
- UGC can influence consumers' purchasing decisions, but the extent to which it does so varies by gender and age.
- Female consumers are more likely to be influenced by UGC than male consumers.
- Younger consumers are more likely to engage with UGC than older consumers.
- Brands can use UGC to their advantage by creating a culture of engagement and encouraging consumers to share their experiences with their products or services.
- Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the role of UGC in consumer decision-making. Brands that can effectively leverage UGC can gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

SUGGESTIONS

- Encourage UGC: Brands should aggressively encourage their consumers to develop and share user-generated content (UGC) relating to their goods or services. This should be done via the use of the phrase "encourage UGC." This may be accomplished via the use of competitions, prizes, and several

other forms of encouragement. To make it simpler for consumers to contribute content, companies may facilitate this process by launching their own unique hashtags.

- Brands should react to user-generated content (UGC) made by their consumers, regardless of whether the content is favourable or bad. This demonstrates to consumers that their contributions are appreciated, and it also contributes to the development of a feeling of community in relation to the brand.
- Distribute UGC Brands should distribute user-generated content (UGC) that was produced by their consumers on their own social media channels or websites. Not only does this assist to highlight the customers and the material they have created, but it also helps to establish a connection with the consumers.
- Keep an eye on user-generated content: Companies should keep an eye on user-generated content (UGC) connected to their goods or services in order to spot any possible problems or unfavourable attitude. Because of this, they will be more equipped to handle any issues and also to discover potential for progress.
- Personalise communication: Companies should make use of the information they collect about their consumers in order to personalise the communication they have with those customers. This may include addressing them by name, adapting the information to their specific interests, and delivering suggestions that are unique to them.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, marketing strategies that are based on user-generated content (UGC) have the potential to play a big part in increasing consumer engagement and creating brand awareness. According to the findings of the research, consumers see user-generated content (UGC) as being more genuine, trustworthy, and relevant, which leads to increased engagement levels. UGC may also give useful insights into consumer preferences and behaviours, which can guide marketing plans and boost overall brand reputation. This can be accomplished by the use of the term "user-generated content." However, in order to fully exploit the potential of user-generated content (UGC), marketers need to concentrate on building an environment that is supportive and encourages consumers to develop and share material; offering clear standards and incentives for the production of UGC; and actively connecting with customers via channels that promote UGC. When marketers accomplish this, they have the opportunity to build a solid and long-lasting connection with consumers, which may result in increased customer loyalty, greater brand reputation, and successful company.

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