

The Influence of UGC and Influencer Marketing on Consumer Buying Interest: A Case Study of Warunk Juragan

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Abstract— This study explores the influence of UGC and Influencer Marketing on consumer buying interest, with a focus on Warunk Juragan in Pangkalan Masyhur Village, Medan Johor. A quantitative approach was employed, involving 99 respondents aged 15 to 44, determined using the Slovin formula from a population of 10,439 residents in 2024. Data were collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The study demonstrates that both UGC and Influencer Marketing exert a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention. This indicates that content created by users and promotional efforts by influencers can effectively shape consumer decisions, emphasizing the importance of digital engagement strategies. However, despite their statistical significance, the practical impact of these approaches may be limited if not properly aligned with consumer preferences. For businesses such as Warunk Juragan, this highlights the necessity of customizing digital marketing efforts to resonate with their target audience. Practically, this involves enhancing content authenticity and choosing influencers whose personal brand aligns with the company's values. Theoretically, the findings affirm the importance of trust, social validation, and credibility in influencing online consumer behavior, offering valuable insights for SMEs aiming to strengthen engagement and boost buying interest through social media.

Keywords: Consumer Buying Interest, Influencer Marketing, UGC.

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing penetration of digital technology has transformed consumer behavior, particularly in the way individuals search for and evaluate product information. Rather than relying solely on traditional advertisements, contemporary consumers are more inclined to consult peer-generated content and social media to guide their purchasing decisions [1]. These platforms allow users to exchange experiences, provide feedback, and influence public perceptions almost instantaneously, thereby elevating the importance of User-Generated Content (UGC) and influencer marketing as key drivers of consumer engagement [2], [3]. In Indonesia, this shift is evident in the growing number of internet and social media users, which has opened new avenues for businesses especially micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to enhance visibility and build brand loyalty through cost-effective digital marketing strategies [4].

One such strategy, UGC, refers to consumer-created content such as online reviews, testimonials, and social media posts that reflect personal experiences with a product or

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service. UGC can function as a form of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), significantly shaping potential consumers' attitudes and intentions [5], [6]. Empirical studies suggest that positive UGC fosters trust, increases purchase intent, and enhances brand image [7], [8]. Conversely, negative reviews and content can damage a brand's reputation, reducing consumer confidence and purchase likelihood [9].

Simultaneously, influencer marketing has gained traction as a complementary strategy wherein individuals with sizable followings and perceived expertise promote products through engaging and relatable content [10], [11]. Influencers often possess strong parasocial relationships with their followers, resulting in a high degree of trust and persuasive power [12]. Several studies have found that influencer credibility, content quality, and emotional engagement positively correlate with consumer buying interest [13], [14].

Although numerous studies have examined the individual effects of UGC and influencer marketing in various sectors—including fashion, cosmetics, and tourism—there remains a notable gap in understanding how these elements influence consumer behavior within small-scale, local culinary businesses in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia [15]–[18]. Research is also limited regarding the combined or comparative effects of UGC and influencer marketing on consumer buying interest in the food and beverage (F&B) sector. While existing literature establishes the theoretical and empirical foundations of digital marketing effectiveness, further investigation is required to contextualize these findings in informal dining businesses that rely heavily on local engagement and community-based outreach [19], [20].

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring how UGC and influencer marketing affect consumer buying interest in the context of Warunk Juragan, a local culinary enterprise based in Medan, Indonesia. Specifically, it aims to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the impact of UGC on consumer buying interest? (2) How does influencer marketing influence consumer buying interest? (3) Do UGC and influencer marketing jointly influence consumer buying interest?

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 Consumer Buying Interest

The concept of buying interest encapsulates the propensity or inclination of consumers to acquire a product in the foreseeable future. While it does not necessarily culminate in actual transactions, this buying interest is frequently employed as a viable prognostic indicator to ascertain consumer buying behavior [21]. Several determinants that impact consumer buying interest encompass: product quality, pricing strategy, brand reputation, packaging aesthetics, availability of merchandise, promotional efforts, consumer needs, purchasing decisions, behavioral tendencies, as well as cultural, social, personal, and psychological influences [22].

The phenomenon of buying interest can be quantified through four distinct metrics, specifically: 1) Transactional interest, which pertains to the consumer's proclivity to engage in an immediate acquisition of a product or service. 2) Reference interest, which involves the consumer's inclination to solicit information and recommendations from external sources prior to executing a purchase. 3) Preferential interest, denoting the consumer's affinity towards a specific brand, product, or service. 4) Exploratory interest, which signifies the consumer's aspiration to experiment with a new product or service [21].

2.2 User Generated Content (UGC)

UGC refers to content in the form of reviews, comments, or posts created by customers based on their personal experiences with a brand [23]. It commonly appears when existing customers share their opinions and experiences online, thereby influencing potential buyers who seek credible information before making purchasing decisions [24]. UGC serves two main functions: first, as an organic promotional tool that can build brand

awareness and trust; second, as a participatory platform where consumers contribute to brand perception and even product development [25]. Rather than relying on promotional content provided by brands, consumers tend to trust UGC because it reflects real experiences. This trust and perceived authenticity make UGC a powerful factor in shaping consumer behavior.

To better understand the influence of UGC on buying interest, four key indicators are commonly used [23].

1. Trust – Consumers exhibit greater trust in reviews written by other customers.
2. Credibility – UGC is perceived as more credible because it originates from actual product users.
3. Originality – Reviews based on firsthand experience are considered more impactful.
4. Informative Value – UGC contributes to deeper consumer understanding of the product.

These indicators can serve as the basis for evaluating the effectiveness of UGC in influencing consumer buying interest, and may be illustrated in a conceptual framework that links UGC to behavioral responses such as trust, interest, and purchase intention.

2.3 Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing encompasses a strategic framework in marketing that seeks to bolster sales through the endorsement of products or services by individuals who wield influence over their target demographic [16]. Identify three prevalent objectives associated with the utilization of influencer marketing: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain [26]. The implementation of influencer marketing yields numerous substantial contributions to the efficacy of a brand's marketing strategy, which includes enhanced brand awareness, fortified consumer trust, more precise market segmentation, and an augmentation in sales volume [27].

Regarding the four key indicators that exert influence over influencer marketing: 1) Visibility, which elucidates the breadth of an influencer's outreach and the frequency with which they are observed by their audience. 2) Credibility, which pertains to the degree of trust that the audience confers upon the influencer. 3) Attractiveness, encompassing various dimensions, including physical appearance, engaging personality, and an inspiring lifestyle. 4) Power, which denotes the influencer's capacity to sway the behaviors and decisions of others [16].

Based on the explanation above, the conceptual framework can be illustrated as follows:

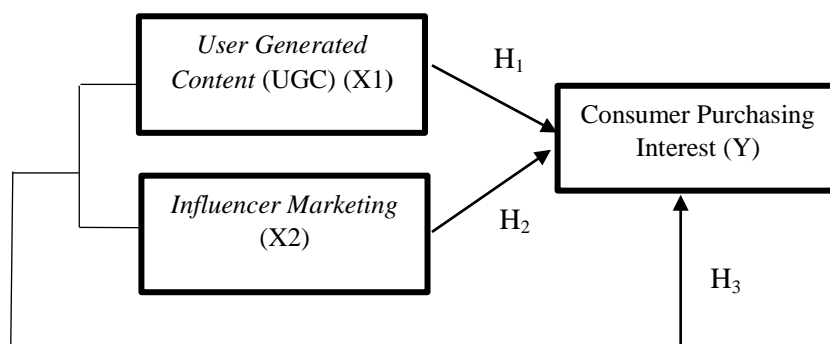


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

H_1 : User-Generated Content (UGC) has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention toward Warunk Juragan in Pangkalan Masyhur, Medan Johor.

H₂: Influencer marketing has a positive and significant impact on consumer purchase intention toward Warunk Juragan in Pangkalan Masyhur, Medan Johor.

H₃: User-Generated Content (UGC) and influencer marketing collectively exert a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention toward Warunk Juragan in Pangkalan Masyhur, Medan Johor.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study aimed to investigate the impact of User-Generated Content (UGC) and Influencer Marketing on consumer buying interest through a quantitative research design. The target population included residents aged 15 to 44 years in Pangkalan Masyhur Village, Medan Johor, with an estimated total population of 10,439 individuals in 2024. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who met the following criteria: (1) aged between 15 and 44 years, (2) male or female, (3) actively employed, (4) had previously made a purchase at Warunk Juragan, and (5) were domiciled in Pangkalan Masyhur Village, Medan Johor District. Using Slovin's formula, the sample size was calculated to be 99 respondents. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire designed on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Prior to full deployment, the instrument was tested for both validity and reliability to ensure accurate and consistent measurement. Furthermore, the reliability of all research variables was confirmed, with each demonstrating a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.6. This indicates a satisfactory level of internal consistency, affirming that the research instrument is dependable for capturing the intended constructs and that the data obtained are credible for subsequent analysis. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression with the assistance of SPSS version 27. Ethical protocols were upheld by securing informed consent from all participants prior to their involvement in the study.

4. RESULTS DAN DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULTS

The multiple linear regression analysis reveals that both UGC and Influencer Marketing significantly influence consumer buying interest.

$$Y = 2.024 + 0.512X_1 + 0.417X_2 + e$$

Where:

Y = Consumer Buying Interest

X₁ = User Generated Content (UGC)

X₂ = Influencer Marketing

The coefficient for UGC (0.512) implies that a one-unit increase in UGC leads to a 0.512 unit increase in consumer buying interest. Similarly, Influencer Marketing contributes 0.417 units for every one-unit increase. Both predictors are statistically significant at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). An R² of 0.782 indicates that 78.2% of the variation in consumer buying interest is explained by the combined effects of UGC and Influencer Marketing. The remaining 21.8% may be influenced by other variables such as price sensitivity, brand perception, product quality, or peer influence. The majority of respondents are within the 17–25 age group, indicating that the primary audience of Warunk Juragan comprises younger consumers, who are generally active users of social media and exposed to digital content.

The mean scores below 3.25 suggest a general skepticism or neutrality among respondents regarding UGC and influencer marketing, despite statistical evidence of their influence. These findings underline the need for more credible and engaging digital marketing content. Although regression results confirm the significance of both UGC and influencer marketing, actual consumer perception based on descriptive statistics indicates

underutilized potential, especially in fostering trust and emotional connection through content.

4.2 DISCUSSION

4.2.1 The Effect of User Generated Content (UGC) on Consumer Buying Interest

Based on the t-test, User-Generated Content (UGC) significantly influences consumer buying interest. The p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, and the t-statistic (5.945) exceeds the critical value (1.984), indicating that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected in favor of the alternative (H_1). The regression coefficient of 0.512 implies that a one-unit increase in UGC corresponds to a 0.512 increase in buying interest, assuming all other factors are constant. Despite the statistical significance, the mean values of the UGC-related indicators remain below 3.25, with the lowest average score (2.96) associated with trust in positive reviews. This reflects consumer skepticism toward the authenticity of user reviews, possibly due to a lack of detailed experiences and visual content. This insight suggests that while UGC influences consumer behavior, its effectiveness depends on credibility and presentation. To address these limitations, businesses like Warunk Juragan could: 1) Introduce a purchase-verification system for reviews, 2) Offer incentives for detailed feedback accompanied by images, 3) Highlight verified and trustworthy reviewers with visual badges. These findings align with Putri (2020), who emphasized that user-created content, including testimonials and visual media, plays a key role in building consumer trust and fostering purchase intentions [23]. Consumers are more confident when they observe real user experiences, making them more inclined to buy.

4.2.2 The Effect of Influencer Marketing on Consumer Buying Interest

The results of the t-test indicate that Influencer Marketing also has a significant effect on consumer buying interest, with a p-value of 0.000 and a t-statistic of 4.895 (greater than the critical value of 1.984). The regression coefficient (0.417) suggests that a one-unit increase in influencer marketing leads to a 0.417 increase in purchase interest. However, the average score on TikTok influencer promotions remains low (mean = 2.97), suggesting that current marketing content may not resonate well with consumers. Concerns include doubts about follower authenticity, engagement quality, and whether influencer endorsements are genuinely persuasive or merely strategic marketing tactics. To improve effectiveness, businesses should consider: 1) Selecting influencers who align with the brand's values, 2) Prioritizing micro-influencers with strong organic engagement, 3) Setting standards for transparent and authentic promotional content, 4) Combining influencer messaging with real customer reviews. This conclusion is supported by Sekar (2023), who found that influencer marketing significantly affects consumer interest, particularly when influencers are seen as credible and emotionally connected with their audience [28]. A strong match between the influencer's image and the product enhances consumer trust and purchase motivation.

4.2.3 Combined Influence of UGC and Influencer Marketing

The F-test result shows an F-value of 176.434 with a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 threshold. This exceeds the critical F-value (3.091), indicating that the combined effect of UGC and influencer marketing on buying interest is statistically significant. Despite this, response patterns reveal that many customers remain neutral or disagree with statements about the impact of UGC and influencer marketing. For instance, the average score (2.92) for seeking reviews before visiting Warunk Juragan highlights that such digital marketing strategies have yet to fully influence customer decisions. A significant percentage (25.25%) of respondents strongly disagreed with using reviews as part of their buying process. However, the data also show potential, with 28.28% strongly agreeing that promotions influence their interest in purchasing, suggesting room for growth if strategies are optimized. These findings suggest that while digital marketing

strategies show promise, their current implementation needs refinement. Past research such as [Bahtar and Muda (2016)] supports this, highlighting that UGC and influencer campaigns are more effective when consumers perceive them as genuine and relatable [25]. The study confirms that both factors are important, but their successful application requires credibility, consistency, and alignment with consumer expectations.

5. CONCLUSION

This study underscores the significant influence of UGC and Influencer Marketing on consumer buying interest in the context of Warunk Juragan, a local culinary business in Pangkalan Masyhur Village, Medan Johor. The empirical results demonstrate that well-crafted digital content created by users and collaborations with strategically selected influencers can effectively enhance consumer interest in purchasing. These findings reinforce the theoretical framework that highlights the roles of authenticity, trust, and social validation in consumer decision-making processes, especially within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

However, the scope of this research is limited to a single business and geographic location, which may constrain the broader applicability of the findings. Moreover, the analysis is centered on only two marketing variables UGC and influencer marketing while other influential factors such as pricing strategies, product quality, and cultural norms were not explored. Future investigations are encouraged to adopt a more expansive approach, incorporating various business sectors and locations, and examining how different generational groups respond to digital marketing stimuli. Longitudinal research could also provide valuable insights into the enduring effects of these strategies over time.

For practitioners, particularly local entrepreneurs and SMEs, the findings suggest several actionable strategies. Businesses should prioritize enhancing the quality and credibility of user-generated content by encouraging satisfied customers to share authentic reviews and visual experiences online. Additionally, aligning with influencers who reflect the brand's values and appeal to the intended demographic can significantly strengthen market positioning. Strategic selection of digital collaborators and investment in content that fosters community trust and engagement are key to sustaining consumer interest. These efforts can help local brands like Warunk Juragan remain competitive and relevant in an increasingly digital marketplace.

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