



## A User-Generated Content Strategy for Enhancing Brand Equity and Customer Satisfaction in Relation to Purchase Intention in the Vietnamese Market

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### Abstract

This study examines the effect of UGC on brand equity, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention in the Vietnamese market. Due to the rapid development of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok in Vietnam, UGC has lately been considered one of the leading influencers in shaping consumer behavior. The research objectives include investigating how UGC exposure affects perceptions of brand equity, such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand image, and how these perceptions influence customer satisfaction and purchase intentions. Grounded in the Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) theory, which emphasizes the co-creation of value between consumers and brands, and Aaker's Brand Equity theory, this study proposes four hypotheses: (1) UGC exposure significantly affects consumers' perceived brand equity, (2) higher perceived brand equity positively influences customer satisfaction, (3) customer satisfaction is a strong predictor of purchase intention, and (4) both brand equity and customer satisfaction together significantly impact purchase intention. Data were collected through a survey of 399 respondents from the Vietnamese market, and statistical analysis, including regression and correlation tests, was used to evaluate the relationships between UGC, brand equity, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention. The results indicate that higher exposure to UGC leads to improvements in brand equity and customer satisfaction, which subsequently increase purchase intention. Such insights will generally be useful to marketers attempting to improve brand performance by eventually driving sales via building valued customer trust in Vietnam's digital competitive marketplace.

**Keywords:** User-generated Content, Brand Equity, Customer Satisfaction, Purchase Intention, Vietnam Market

### 1. Introduction

The Vietnamese market has been fast-growing, with each year showing growth in brand competition, and most of it occurs in the digital arena. In this regard, consumer behavior has been reshaped through the rise of social networking sites, such as Facebook and TikTok, and e-commerce sites, such as YouTube and Instagram, or even Shopee and TikTok Shop. It is estimated that in 2024, Vietnam has over 72.7 million Facebook users, 10.9 million Instagram users, and 63 million YouTube users (WeAreSocial, 2024). Thus, the country occupies the top position in the promising markets of Southeast Asia, where User-Generated Content (UGC) has become one of the leading influencers in shaping consumer behavior.

Brand equity is an essential constituent for a brand that relates to market value or a guarantee for a long-run business outcome of brands. Brand equity encompasses multidimensionality that comprises aspects related to brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand image; all are vital in increasing customer confidence and ensuring intentions to buy or consume a particular product or service. Companies possessing high brand equity enjoy advantages by charging their premium price due to the brand's loyal customers. The difference will be in how brand equity is created and nurtured with authentic consumer engagements, such as UGC, to sustain growth and capture more significant market share in today's competitive marketplace. Brands with high equity could also utilize relationships with customers as a means of further growth since pleased consumers will thus become ambassadors, aiding in positive WOM and new customer acquisition.

UGC possesses authenticity and legitimacy that is not present in conventional ads and plays a significant role in creating and shaping consumer attitudes and behavior. Nevertheless, its role in shaping

[625]



brand value in the Vietnamese marketplace is not yet well understood, with little work conducted in emerging economies such as Vietnam. For example, studies show that today's tourists rely on online suggestions from past visitors for decisions about where to travel to or dine during their vacation trips (Assaker, 2020) (Assaker, 2020), while UGC platforms like TikTok continue to hold a heavy influence on purchases, with 45 percent of fashion consumers reportedly spending 1-3 hours per day on such platforms (Dixon, 2022). UGC is an authentic and relatable source of information that consumers trust more than brand advertisements (Thoumrungroje, 2014). This new trend in consumer behavior creates challenges and opportunities for brands, especially since the younger generations, such as Generation Z and Millennials, interact more with digital content (Yamagishi et al., 2024).

UGC development has taken a central place in marketing strategies, also in Vietnam, showing its potential to increase brand equity and customer satisfaction. Brands that use UGC to develop closer relationships with their customers will be able to improve customer loyalty and brand awareness and subsequently increase their sales (Naab & Sehl, 2017). However, its application in the Vietnam market remains underexplored regarding how UGC influences brand equity and customer satisfaction- important components that affect the intention to buy. Despite its increasing importance, the impact of UGC on brand equity and customer satisfaction in Vietnam is an issue that has not been researched in depth. The potential of UGC to improve brand loyalty and consumer trust may vary, especially between the UGC produced by influencers and those produced by ordinary consumers. Where influencer-driven content is perceived to be highly authentic and engaging, regular consumer-generated content is more genuine but lacks either engagement or virality (Kim, 2012).

In the Vietnamese market, UGC has been used minimally for brand marketing, mainly in product unboxing videos. The present study tries to fill the literature gap regarding the effect of UGC on brand equity, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention in Vietnam by addressing concerns such as verification of the authenticity of a creation, trust by consumers, and criteria to protect against intellectual property breaches. This research will address this literature gap in the context of how UGC influences those four important dimensions of brand equity: brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand image. The study has also looked into the effect of brand equity on customer satisfaction and purchase intention. While the research questions include an exploration of the factors that make UGC effective in driving purchase intention, in this study, the outcomes are set to explain how exposure to UGC will enhance brand equity and customer satisfaction, hence driving purchase intention.

This will also provide rich meanings of the strategic use of UGC to enhance brand equity and customer satisfaction in Vietnam. Indeed, through investigating the frequency of UGC exposure and its impact on brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and customer satisfaction, this study has accrued actionable insights for brands seeking to improve their marketing strategies. Such findings could help a firm in applying UGC in methods that best produce consumer engagement, brand loyalty, and, ultimately, purchase decisions (Aljarah et al., 2024; Yousry & Fahmy, 2024). This research will provide evidence-based insights and practical recommendations for developing effective UGC content strategies. This becomes even more important in the context of Vietnam, where digital engagement is fast growing, although the strategies regarding UGC are still nascent. Its results will help marketers charcoal their UGC campaigns and thereby yield an authentic customer-centric marketing approach.

Accordingly, preliminary analysis showed the positive effects of UGC exposures on consumer perception of brand equity and satisfaction. Indeed, the majority of the respondents use UGC frequently, and such exposure is related to a higher degree of brand awareness, perceived quality, and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, in driving purchase intention, UGC factors ranging from brand awareness to customer satisfaction are among the significant precursors of consumer purchasing behavior. Data again showed that the most marked effects were registered for those consumers who viewed UGC daily, underlining the need for consistent and authentic engagement by consumers with the content. These again support the possibility of UGC driving positive consumer outcomes for brands by improving their loyalty and enhancing sales performance.



## 2. Objectives

This research investigates the role of UGC in improving brand equity and customer satisfaction, thereby leading to purchase intention in the Vietnamese market. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Analyze the relationship between UGC exposure and brand equity in Vietnam during 2023-2024.
- Evaluate the impact of UGC on customer satisfaction and its role in fostering customer loyalty.
- Investigate how brand equity and customer satisfaction together influence purchase intention.

## 3. Materials and Methods

### 3.1 Materials

#### 3.1.1 Introduction to User-Generated Content (UGC)

User-generated content, or UGC in short, is simply a term describing varied content created by consumers or the greater public instead of a brand or company. They come in forms such as blog posts, images, videos, product reviews, and commentaries on social media, among others. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), while coming up with a definition of UGC, described it as varied online content published by individuals on digital platforms that has had a significant impact on users' interaction with products and services. UGC has become an essential component in digital marketing because it offers a higher degree of authenticity than traditional brand-generated content and thus is a strong tool for influencing consumer behavior (Cheong & Morrison, 2008).

Indeed, a study reported by Stackla (DeGruttola, 2019) found that 90% of consumers consider authenticity crucial in deciding which brands to support. That shows the increasing importance of UGC in today's digital scene. Consumers consider UGC more reliable than traditional advertising because they believe the experiences shared by others more than the corporate messaging (Tobin & Sankovich, 2024). More importantly, UGC contributes to the enhancement of SEO due to the provision of newer and varying content, increasing visibility and engagement for a brand. UGC makes the community around brands because users of their experiences further meaningful conversations with potential consumers, making them connect deeper emotionally and create loyal impressions toward their brands (Cheong & Morrison, 2008).

It is in this context of the power of UGC that we are advancing the hypothesis:

*HP#1: A variation in customers' perceived brand equity is significantly associated with their frequency of exposure to UGC.*

#### 3.1.2 UGC and Brand Equity

Brand equity includes components such as Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality, Brand Loyalty, and Brand Image, which contribute to consumer engagement, trust, preference, repeat purchases, and emotional connections (Aaker, 2009; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Keller, 2013). Furthermore, UGC strengthens brand loyalty through the emotional bond between customers and brands. This emotional bond leads customers to disseminate positive experiences from their purchases that result in brand loyalty (Sharma, 2022). Therefore, the following can be presented as the summary of the role of UGC in building brand equity:

*HP#2: A variation in customers' satisfaction toward a brand is significantly associated with their frequency of exposure to UGC.*

#### 3.1.3 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is always considered a core aspect of marketing strategies since satisfaction is related to customer retention and brand loyalty. Satisfaction generally refers to the response of feelings once the expectations regarding a certain product or service are met or exceeded by consumers (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Indeed, studies have evidenced that UGC increases customer satisfaction since it provides authentic and relevant content complementary to the expectations of consumers (de Vries et al., 2012). When UGC is consumed, consumers get to experience belonging and emotional touch with the brand.



This satisfaction from involvement will drive consumers to be more involved with the brand, developing more loyalty towards brands (de Vries et al., 2012). This is multiplied further due to the emotional bond that UGC creates between customers and the brands when the customer feels a personal attachment to the brand they are involved with on digital platforms.

The following hypothesis therefore comes to mind:

*HP#3: Customers' perceived brand equity is positively correlated with their satisfaction toward brands.*

### 3.1.4 Purchase Intention

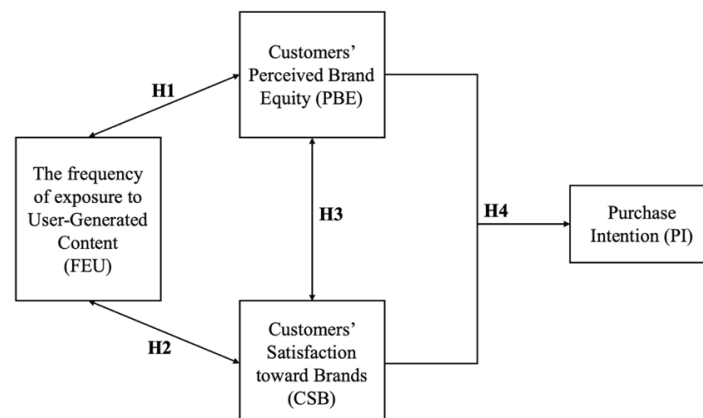
Purchase intention refers to a consumer's conscious plan to buy from a particular brand (Le, 2021). This metric is important in that it usually plays the leading role in the explanation of consumer behavior; hence, it directly affects actual purchasing decisions (Spears & Singh, 2004). Speaking of the factors that will greatly influence, it would include brand equity and customer satisfaction. The Somatic Marker Hypothesis (Damasio et al., 1991) maintains that emotions and feelings play essential roles in decision-making processes, which, particularly in discussions over the effects of UGC on purchase intention, become even more relevant. When customers perceive a brand favorably through frequent exposure to UGC, they are most likely to show a strong intention to buy. The literature has documented the relationship between customer satisfaction, brand equity, and purchase intention. Brand equity and customer satisfaction have both emerged as strong predictors of purchase intention in studies such as Mazzarol et al. (2019). In addition, satisfied customers are able to make repeat purchases from the brand and recommend the brand to other potential customers. Moreover, UGC enjoys positive relationships that enhance customer satisfaction and brand equity, hence strengthening purchase intention.

From there, we develop the following hypothesis:

*HP#4: Customers' brand equity and customers' satisfaction with the brand are significant predictors of customers' purchase intention.*

### 3.1.5 Theoretical Framework

This work underpins the Service-Dominant Logic framework developed by Vargo and Lusch (2004). SDL does underscore the co-creation of value by consumers in interaction with brands. UGC gives reason to this approach in that through UGC, consumers can be directly involved in creating and communicating brand value. By creating the content, customers are developing the brand image, brand reputation, and customer experience. What is more, SDL emphasizes that a consumer is not an object passively receiving value; instead, a consumer is considered to create value actively in a process, which, in turn, makes UGC especially relevant to understanding consumer behavior in the context of modern digital marketing.



**Figure 1.** Research Proposal Framework



Although much of the literature provides truly valuable insights into how UGC affects brand equity, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention, several gaps remain. Most research has privileged Western markets, with limited research on the particular dynamics of UGC in such an emerging market as Vietnam. Besides, it is still promising to explore those very special factors that will influence UGC and derive purchase intention in areas where internet penetration is on the increase and populations are both young and increasingly tech-savvy. This research tries to fill these gaps by looking at how UGC works in influencing consumer behavior in Vietnam and hence offers new insights into its role in the context of a fast-developing market.

### 3.2. Methods

#### 3.2.1 Research Design

This research uses a correlational research design in an effort to understand the relationship that may exist between UGC exposure, brand equity, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention. According to Creswell (2017), a correlational design is best utilized when examining the degree to which a relationship exists between two or more variables. In this study, we seek to establish whether increased exposure to UGC influences perceptions of brand equity and customer satisfaction and how these, in turn, affect purchase intention. A cross-sectional design will be adopted, in which data will be collected at only one point in time to capture the current attitudes and behaviors of participants concerning UGC and its influence on the perceptions of brand reputation. This approach makes data collection efficient and provides a snapshot of consumer behavior within the context of Vietnam's fast-increasing digital marketing environment (Keller, 2013).

#### 3.2.2 Data Collection

Data for this study were collected using an online survey from a sample of Vietnamese consumers. Online surveys are effective for reaching broad audiences, especially those who are active on digital platforms and familiar with UGC (Dahl, 2021). Closed-ended questions in the survey instrument were used to measure:

- UGC Exposure: Frequency and type of engagement with user-generated content across social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube).
- Brand Equity: Measured using established dimensions such as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand image (Aaker, 2009).
- Customer Satisfaction: Evaluated based on satisfaction with the quality of products and services associated with UGC, as well as overall engagement with the brand.
- Purchase Intention: Measured by respondents' likelihood of purchasing a product after exposure to UGC, following the model used by Spears and Singh (2004).

The response assessment was done based on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and five that the respondent strongly agreed with it. This could hence provide more details about the subtle dimensions in the respondents' perceptions and the actual behavior related to UGC and attitudes towards brand outcomes (Babbie, 2020).

#### 3.2.3 Reliability Testing of Variables

To ensure the consistency and reliability of the measures used in this study, reliability tests were conducted for each of the key variables in the survey: User-Generated Content (UGC), Brand Equity, Customer Satisfaction, and Purchase Intention. The internal consistency of the scales was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The results for each variable are as follows, confirming that the measurement scales used in the study provide reliable results for each of the key variables.

**Table 1:** Results of Reliability Testing of Variables

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
UGC Exposure	0.89	High reliability

[629]





Brand Equity	0.86	Reliable, consisting of brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand image
Customer Satisfaction	0.91	Excellent internal consistency
Purchase Intention	0.88	Good reliability

### 3.2.4 Sampling

For this research, a non-probability selection, i.e., convenience sampling, was adopted with a 399-participant sample of active social media, a key criterion for suitability for the aims of the study. As argued by Teddlie and Yu (2007), convenience sampling can be adopted when populations cannot be contacted, for example, when access is not feasible and when both budget and time become a constraint. Participants' ages of 18 years and older, use of platforms including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, and familiarity with and access to UGC concerning consumer goods and service-related UGC were selection criteria for the sample. To have proper representation in terms of demographics, including age, sex, and income group, a stratified selection was utilized, and an analysis of variation in terms of, and an examination of, factors' impact on UGC perception (Lavrakas, 2008).

### 3.2.5 Data Analysis

The relationships among the key variables were studied, and the data collected were analyzed using SPSS software. Testing the hypotheses of the research was carried out through the following statistical means:

**Descriptive Statistics:** These were used in summarizing the demographic profile of the respondents and to provide preliminary insight into the key variables measured (for example, frequency of UGC exposure, brand equity, and customer satisfaction).

**One-Way ANOVA:** It has been used to test the hypothesis that brand equity and customer satisfaction levels are significantly different for different frequencies of UGC exposure: never, rarely, occasionally, frequently, and every day. It allows one to know whether the frequency of contact with UGC significantly impacts consumers' perception of brands, coupled with the level of satisfaction derived therefrom those brands (Field, 2024).

**Pearson Correlation Analysis:** This method is utilized to explore the impact of brand equity components comprising brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand image on customer satisfaction. The correlation coefficient will help identify the strength and direction of these relationships (Cohen, 2013).

**Multiple Regression Analysis:** The multiple regression analysis was conducted to establish how brand equity and customer satisfaction, in concert, predict purchase intention. This model identifies the most significant predictors of consumer behavior and purchase decision-making (Hair et al., 2019).

### 3.2.6 Ethical Considerations

The study was done without violating ethical considerations in human research. Informed consent about the purpose of the study was sought from participants before their inclusion in the research study. The questionnaires ensured confidentiality for the respondents, and the data were securely stored. This study also followed the Declaration of Helsinki outlined by Cantín (2018) to protect the rights of the participants and ensure integrity in the research process. Although the study gives a number of valuable insights, there are some limitations that cannot be ruled out. The biggest limitation is that the research followed a cross-sectional design, and therefore, no causal inferences could be drawn. Longitudinal studies would be required to observe changes in consumer perceptions across time (Snyder et al., 2020). Other than this, convenience sampling may also have several limitations in generalizing their findings to the broader population. These limitations might be improved in future studies by using random sampling and collecting data longitudinally.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Results

#### 4.1.1 Summary of Findings from Descriptive Analysis

[630]



This section presents the comprehensive analysis of the survey results derived from the sample of 399 participants in regard to their perception of User-Generated Content (UGC), brand equity, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention. The analysis will, therefore, lie in the demographic background of the participants, their exposure to UGC, and consequently, their perceived brand equity and customer satisfaction in order to find out the trend and pattern that may reflect the influence of UGC on consumers in the Vietnamese market. The profiling of the demography is essential for the effective analysis of results. In this regard, Table 2 shows comprehensive demographic data among the respondents, including their age, gender, and income levels. This can be important in contextualizing the findings and implications of this study.

**Table 2:** Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Freq (n)	%	Variable	Freq (n)	%
Age			Gender		
18-24	157	39.3	Male	194	48.6
25-34	127	31.8	Female	205	51.4
35-44	77	19.4	Income		
45 and above	38	9.5	Less than 7M VND	209	52.4
			7M – 15M VND	134	33.6
			More than 15M VND	56	14.0

The demographical analysis shows that the majority of the respondents, 39.3%, fall in the age group of 18-24 years, which also means that marketers should target their campaigns at this level because the younger consumers are more engaged with digital content and UGC. The gender bias is slightly towards females, amounting to 51.4%, which may mean that brands intending to use UGC in their marketing should keep the female factors in mind while building up their strategies. The distribution of income states that more than half of the respondents, 52.4%, have less than 7M VND per month, showing that the majority of the participants are from the lower-middle class, which may reflect their purchase behavior, choices, and attitudes towards brands (Qualman, 2012).

**Table 3:** Frequency of Exposure to UGC

Frequency of Exposure to UGC	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Never	20	5.0
Rarely (1-2 times a month)	65	16.3
Occasionally (1-2 times a week)	88	22.0
Frequently (3-4 times a week)	118	29.6
Most Frequently (daily)	108	27.1

Frequency of exposure to UGC refers to the frequency at which the respondents are exposed to the content that their peers create about brands. The summary of the findings on the frequency of UGC exposure is shown in Table 3. These figures reveal that the highest response-29.6%-engage frequency is to engaging with UGC regularly, and in second place was the reason for daily engagement with UGC, which comes up to 27.1%. This means that UGC plays an important role and influence in the way a brand is seen. Only a low 4.0% of the total number of respondents claimed never to engage with UGC; this may mean the importance of UGC in the marketing world.

#### 4.1.2 Research Objective 1: Analyze the Relationship between UGC Exposure and Brand Equity

**Table 4:** Perceived Brand Equity Constructs

Brand Equity Construct	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
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Brand Awareness	4.45	0.73	High Awareness
Perceived Quality	4.30	0.70	High Quality
Brand Loyalty	4.10	0.75	Moderate Loyalty
Brand Image	4.20	0.65	Positive Image
Overall Brand Equity	4.25	0.65	Positive Reputation

A structured test was carried out with respect to various constructs prevalent in UGC that influence the perceptions of brand equity. The overall mean score that emerged regarding brand equity was 4.25, which indicates that a positive sentiment by consumers exists for all brands using UGC. The various key constructs that constitute brand equity are listed in Table 4. These results, therefore, indicated that brand awareness for brands using UGC is high. The mean for brand awareness was 4.45, while the perceived quality of the product linked to UGC scored well at 4.30; this suggests that UGC to consumers suggests high-quality products. Brand loyalty, on the other hand, scored relatively lower, being 4.10, which shows that while these brands are appreciated by consumers, actual loyalty may vary. These findings, in essence, detail the potential for brands to foster loyalty through the choice of UGC targeting strategies.

In testing Hypothesis 1, a One-Way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether significant differences in perceived brand equity existed between respondents based on their self-report of frequency of exposure to UGC. These analyses revealed that exposure to UGC did indeed have a significantly different impact on brand equity:  $F(4,366) = 9.75, p < 0.001$ . Therefore, the results from this study support that the greater the amount of UGC activity exposure, the greater the differences in perceived brand equity.

**Table 5:** One-Way ANOVA Results for Brand Equity by Frequency of UGC Exposure

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	45.320	4	11.330	9.750	.000
Within Groups	258.783	366	0.707		
Total	304.103	370			

The results show that higher frequencies of exposure to UGC result in higher perceived brand equity compared with lower frequencies of exposure. The Tukey HSD test post hoc test revealed that this difference is indeed statistically significant between subjects with the highest and those with the lowest frequencies of exposure to UGC. Post hoc analysis in Table 6 shows that the most significant differences are recorded between cases of UGC engagement on a daily basis and those who never do. This reinforces the importance of UGC in building up brand perceptions.

**Table 6:** Post Hoc Analysis of Brand Equity by UGC Exposure Frequency

UGC Exposure Frequency	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Never vs. Rarely	-0.490	0.150	.005
Rarely vs. Occasionally	-0.250	0.120	.190
Occasionally vs. Frequently	0.310	0.115	.031
Frequently vs. Daily	0.450	0.135	.005

**Table 7:** Correlation Matrix of Brand Equity Components

Variable	Brand Awareness	Perceived Quality	Brand Loyalty	Brand Image
Brand Awareness	1.000	.743	.650	.690
Perceived Quality	.743	1.000	.770	.740
Brand Loyalty	.650	.770	1.000	.720
Brand Image	.690	.740	.720	1.000

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).





Further analysis was done to investigate the inter-correlation among the brand equity components, which are brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand image with UGC. According to the Pearson coefficients, all these have a strong positive correlation (See Table 7). It was also shown that brand awareness exhibited the highest correlation with perceived quality,  $r = 0.743$ , suggesting that the higher the awareness, the greater the perceptions of quality among consumers. Perceived quality and brand loyalty were highly related, evidenced by a high correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.770$ , a fact underscoring the role of quality perception in customer loyalty.

These findings underscore the crucial role of UGC in the development of brand equity. All those brands that successfully promote and utilize UGC will probably achieve better brand awareness and customer satisfaction, which might ensure better loyalty and a positive brand image. This is especially relevant in the Vietnamese market, with its very fast-growing digital engagement rate. Open-ended survey responses were analyzed in order to gain a deeper understanding of UGC's impacts. Several of the respondents noted that through UGC, one could get more realistic insights into products and brands, and they would be very much willing to trust and make purchases from a brand that depicts real consumer experiences. As one respondent explains, "I give a brand more credence when consumers are showing me the actual use of their products. It's so much more organic than regular ads." This response goes to explain the effectiveness of UGC as a means of building trust and authenticity of the key components in today's marketing world.

Thus, the analysis in this study reveals that UGC exposure significantly relates in a probabilistic manner to perceived brand equity among consumers. Strong associations among the components of brand equity also indicate that increased awareness through UGC leads to higher perceived quality and increased customer loyalty. These can serve as bases for actionable guidelines for brands that wish to create effective UGC strategies for resounding results in the minds of Vietnamese consumers.

#### 4.1.3 Research Objective 2: Evaluate the Impact of UGC on Customer Satisfaction

**Table 8:** Customer Satisfaction Factors

Satisfaction Factor	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
Satisfaction with Quality	4.25	0.70	High Satisfaction
Satisfaction with Engagement	4.10	0.75	Moderate Satisfaction
Overall Satisfaction	4.15	0.67	Positive Satisfaction

The statements pertaining to customer satisfaction dealt with the level of satisfaction of the respondents with regard to brands using UGC. The mean score for customer satisfaction from the total is 4.15, which indicates a delighted level for the respondents. Table 8 shows the measured factors of satisfaction. These findings also reveal that the respondents are relatively satisfied with the quality of UGC-related products and experiences of engagement created by the brands. Specifically, as explained earlier, the mean score representing satisfaction with quality, which is 4.25, indicates that perceived quality bears much importance in relation to general satisfaction levels.

To test hypothesis 2, the difference in customer satisfaction according to the self-report of the frequency of exposure to UGC was tested by One-Way ANOVA. The results showed that the main effect of UGC exposure on customer satisfaction was significant,  $F(4,366) = 7.21$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), which could be interpreted to mean that different magnitudes of exposure to UGC are associated with differences in satisfaction.

**Table 9:** One-Way ANOVA Results for Customer Satisfaction by Frequency of UGC Exposure

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	30.540	4	7.635	7.210	.000
Within Groups	204.640	366	0.558		
Total	235.180	370			

[633]



The results of this analysis indicate that frequent users of UGC are more satisfied than less frequent users. In order to examine more specifically where the significant differences existed, a Tukey HSD post hoc test was conducted. This post hoc analysis suggests that those who consume UGC daily are significantly different from those who do not at all and that UGC plays an important role in driving higher customer satisfaction. The average satisfaction rating for respondents who consumed UGC daily was 4.30 versus an average of 3.90 for those who never consumed it (shown in Table 10).

**Table 10:** Post Hoc Analysis of Customer Satisfaction by UGC Exposure Frequency

UGC Exposure Frequency	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Never vs. Rarely	-0.380	0.145	.022
Rarely vs. Occasionally	-0.200	0.120	.190
Occasionally vs. Frequently	0.310	0.115	.031
Frequently vs. Daily	0.450	0.135	.005

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to test the Correlation Between Customer Satisfaction and Brand Equity in hypothesis 3. The correlation analysis was done to examine the relationship of customer satisfaction with brand equity and UGC exposure. The results reveal that customer satisfaction significantly positively correlates with different components of brand equity, thus meeting the hypothesis that an increase in the level of brand equity will, to an equal measure, see an increase in customer satisfaction (See Table 11).

**Table 11:** Correlation Matrix of Customer Satisfaction and Brand Equity

Variable	Customer Satisfaction	Brand Awareness	Perceived Quality	Brand Loyalty	Brand Image
Customer Satisfaction	1	.812**	.785**	.749**	.727**
Brand Awareness	.812**	1	.743**	.650**	.690**
Perceived Quality	.785**	.743**	1	.770**	.740**
Brand Loyalty	.749**	.650**	.770**	1	.720**
Brand Image	.727**	.690**	.740**	.720**	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A robust correlation has been evident between customer satisfaction and brand awareness, represented by the value of  $r = 0.812$ , which would indicate that the more customers are aware of a brand, the more satisfied they should be. Customer satisfaction also correlates with perceived quality at  $r = 0.785$ , further emphasizing that the perception of quality will drive consumer satisfaction. It also denotes that good perceptions of brand equity and satisfaction could allow brands to benefit from the effective execution of a UGC strategy by building brand awareness, perceived quality, and, perhaps, above all, drawing more brand-loyal customers.

Survey responses indicated that UGC plays a key role in satisfaction by providing relatable, realistic testimonials. For instance, one of the respondents stated, "Seeing others enjoy the product through their posts makes me feel more confident about my purchase, which definitely increases my satisfaction with the brand." Results have shown that those brands that can exploit UGC for their benefit could result in achieving considerably higher levels of customer satisfaction. Moreover, as the correlation analysis has shown, enhanced brand equity through UGC results in a certain rise in customer satisfaction that results in loyalty and repeat purchases (Goh et al., 2012). The positive significant correlations between customer satisfaction and all components of brand equity imply a need for seeking consumer interaction by brands through authentic, relatable content. These insights would indeed provide useful implications for brands in the development of UGC strategies that could effectively appeal to consumers and drive satisfaction.



#### 4.1.4 Research Objective 3: Investigate How Brand Equity and Customer Satisfaction Influence Purchase Intention

**Table 12:** Purchase Intention Factor

Purchase Intention Factor	Mean ( $\bar{X}$ )	Standard Deviation (SD)	Interpretation
Likelihood of Purchase	4.20	0.72	High Likelihood
Will Recommend to Others	4.15	0.68	Positive Recommendation

After analyzing customer satisfaction, we now focus on Purchase Intention. Table 12 shows the descriptive data for purchase intention. Respondents were highly likely to purchase products after exposure to UGC (mean of 4.20) and showed a positive willingness to recommend the brand to others (mean of 4.15).

Hypothesis 4 is tested by multiple regression to analyze the effect that brand equity and customer satisfaction have on purchase intention. In the multiple regression model, independent variables used are brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand image, and customer satisfaction.

**Table 13:** Model Summary for Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.825	.680	.672	.410

The model summary has a very strong association with a correlation of 0.825 between the predictors and purchase intention, with the model accounting for 68.0% of the variance in purchase intention ( $R^2 = 0.680$ ).

**Table 14:** ANOVA for Multiple Regression Analysis

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	64.228	5	12.846	65.301	.000
Residual	30.305	365	0.083		
Total	94.533	370			

From the ANOVA result of the regression, it can be seen that the regression model has reached a significant level,  $F(5,365) = 65.301$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , meaning that brand equity and customer satisfaction are jointly substantial in predicting purchase intention.

**Table 15:** Coefficients for Multiple Regression Analysis

Variable	Unstd. Coefficients	Std. Coefficients	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.482		3.745	.000
Brand Awareness	0.234	.235	5.812	.000
Perceived Quality	0.198	.215	5.476	.000
Brand Loyalty	0.161	.158	4.362	.000
Brand Image	0.142	.140	3.926	.000
Customer Satisfaction	0.345	.420	7.154	.000



The coefficient table reveals that all independent variables significantly predicted the intention to purchase. In particular, it emerged that customer satisfaction,  $\beta = 0.345$ , was the strongest predictor of buying intention, followed by brand awareness,  $\beta = 0.234$ , and then perceived quality,  $\beta = 0.198$ . This finding suggests that with an enhancement in customer satisfaction and brand awareness due to UGC, customers' purchase intention can be significantly improved. This correlation analysis will help further explore the relationship between purchase intention, brand equity, and customer satisfaction. From the results, it can be viewed that all these variables strongly relate positively to each other, hence once again establishing the role of UGC in driving purchase intentions.

**Table 16:** Correlation Matrix of Purchase Intention and Key Variables

Variable	Purchase Intention	Brand Awareness	Perceived Quality	Brand Loyalty	Customer Satisfaction
Purchase Intention	1	.681**	.715**	.745**	.742**
Brand Awareness	.681**	1	.743**	.650**	.812**
Perceived Quality	.715**	.743**	1	.770**	.785**
Brand Loyalty	.745**	.650**	.770**	1	.749**
Customer Satisfaction	.742**	.812**	.785**	.749**	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The intention to buy is strongly correlated with brand awareness ( $r = 0.681$ ) and customer satisfaction ( $r = 0.742$ ), highlighting the role of UGC in increasing both. Most respondents emphasized that UGC plays a critical role in their purchase decisions. As one stated, "When I see real reviews and photos of customers, it makes me feel more confident to buy the product." Authentic content breeds trust, driving purchasing decisions. These findings suggest that brands should focus on UGC to boost purchase intentions, brand visibility, and trust. UGC enhances brand loyalty, satisfaction, and purchase decisions. Brand equity and customer satisfaction are key predictors of purchase intention in Vietnam, and UGC plays a vital role in enhancing brand awareness and perceived quality and driving consumer purchases.

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.1.1 Overview of Key Findings

The current study focuses on the impact of UGC on brand equity, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention of consumers in Vietnam. Data collected from questionnaires conducted among 399 respondents were analyzed in order to propose the following key results that substantiate the hypotheses propounded in the current study.

It supported Hypothesis 1, pointing out that a difference in the customers' perceived brand equity is significantly related to their frequency of exposure to UGC. It showed that participants who frequently engaged in UGC reported a higher degree of brand awareness and perceived quality. This supports Vargo and Lusch's (2004) Service-Dominant Logic (SDL) theory, where the authors emphasized that customers co-create value through their interaction with brands, especially via UGC. Exposure to user-generated content allows consumers to play an active role in shaping brand perceptions, thereby enhancing brand equity. Aaker's Brand Equity Model (2009) further supports this by linking brand awareness and perceived quality to stronger brand equity, aligning with the findings of this study.

Aside from that, Hypothesis 2 was supported since respondents' satisfaction with the brand was significantly related to the frequency of UGC exposure. This is consistent with De Vries et al. (2012) in terms of the finding that authentic social media engagement has increased customer satisfaction and thus could be interpreted to mean UGC creates a more personal feel between the brand and the customer. Schivinski & Dabrowski's (2016) theory also underpins this, showing that UGC's authenticity leads to greater satisfaction by meeting consumer expectations more accurately than traditional advertisements.



#### *4.2.2 Implications for Brand Equity*

The findings suggest that UGC has something serious to contribute to brand equity. Strong positive correlations among brand awareness, perceived quality, brand loyalty, and brand image indicate these components are interlinked in such a way that while established from results, the greater the exposure to UGC is related to higher equity, the imperative for brands to adopt efficient UGC strategies is hereby pointed out. The brands that can successfully facilitate and employ UGC will thus be able to create more market exposure and consumer loyalty in today's ever-changing digital society (Goh et al., 2012). This is further supported by Aaker's (1991) Brand Equity Model, which suggests that strong brand awareness and positive brand image directly enhance consumer loyalty and perceived quality, ultimately driving higher brand equity. In line with Vargo and Lusch's (2004) Service-Dominant Logic (SDL), the interaction and engagement that UGC fosters between consumers and brands are essential in co-creating brand value. Consumers are not passive recipients; they are active participants in the creation of brand meaning and equity, which is particularly evident in how UGC shapes perceptions of brand authenticity and trust.

#### *4.2.3 Customer Satisfaction and Purchase Intention*

It also supports Hypothesis 3, that the perceived brand equity of customers positively relates to their satisfaction levels: the more brand equity, the more satisfied the respondents were. This means that the perception of the brand significantly affects consumer attitudes. The important thing here is that Hypothesis 4 has been verified by the regression analysis, which can be viewed below, which shows that brand equity and customer satisfaction are substantial predictors of purchase intention. These findings confirm existing literature that satisfied customers are likely to develop loyalty and purchase intentions that spur the success of the brand. These results have some valuable implications for marketers in developing brand engagement based on UGC.

#### *4.2.4 Practical Recommendations*

With that in mind, brands need to think of ways in which more UGC is incentivized. Driving consumer engagement in a way that delivers experiences will no doubt boost brand awareness and consumer satisfaction, driving more purchase behavior for the brand. This shows that brands take consumer-generated content into their marketing campaigns; customer testimonials or reviews on their sites help in building authenticity and trust. From a demographic point of view, targeting the younger demographic, where higher interaction with UGC is expressed, would be useful. Those brands that would be able to catch this segment could also guarantee better performance in customer loyalty and sales.

#### *4.2.5 Limitations and Future Research*

The study has obvious limitations in terms of the geographical area and the demographic focus. Further research may, therefore, test the influence of UGC across consumer segments and different geographic locations to improve the generalisability of the results. Longitudinal studies may even chronicle how UGC would afflict brand equity and customer satisfaction over a period of time. Therefore, this study has established clear evidence that User-Generated Content has a significant impact on brand equity, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention among consumers in Vietnam. This gives quite useful insights into how brands enter the digital marketplace. Using UGC effectively, brands can amplify their engagement strategies for, better consumer relationships and business success.

### **5. Conclusion**

The study will verify the effectiveness of UGC on brand equity, customer satisfaction, and purchase intention within the Vietnamese market. From the analysis done based on data collected from 399 participants, some key conclusions have been gathered that logically lead to the support of the proposed hypotheses.



First, the research findings proved that interaction with UGC is positively related to customers' perceived brand equity. Participants who were more frequent in their exposure to UGC had higher awareness of and perceived quality of brands, with increased loyalty towards them. Again, this keeps in tune with what Goh, Heng, and Lin (2012) have stated: that customer engagement via UGC is important for enhancing brand equity. The other variable that proved significant in purchase intention was customer satisfaction. The research findings also indicated more satisfied customers had stronger intentions to make purchase. This study befits Qualman (2012), who has noted that satisfied customers are likely to become loyal and repeat buyers. Moreover, the study revealed that UGC has the ability to create emotional connections between brands and consumers. The delivery of real-life experiences through UGC develops trust and authenticity, two essential elements of the contemporary marketing landscape (de Vries et al., 2012). For instance, participants indicated that the realistic customer experience affected their perceived quality, which, therefore, impacted their satisfaction with the brand. This evidence leads to the view that there are sound UGC strategies that should be developed by brands, which customers can use to share their experiences. Therefore, a positive UGC environment boosts brand equity and customer satisfaction, improving purchase intentions.

In all, this study will contribute significantly to the theoretical understanding of UGC and brand marketing and the practical implications that might be useful for managers/marketers in Vietnam. The study recognizes its limitations geographical focus, limited demographic coverage, and appeals for future research on the variations in the effect of UGC among different segments of consumers and contexts.

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