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The Mediating Role of Perceived Authenticity in the Influence of User-Generated Content, User Reviews, and Influencer Endorsement on Purchase Intention for Global Brands in Emerging Markets

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Abstract

Social media and digital platforms have transformed the ways young consumers assess global brands. At the same time, the increasing amount of commercial content has made authenticity an important concern. Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) perspective, this study explores analyzes the relationships of User-Generated Content (UGC), User Reviews (UR), and Influencer Endorsement (IE) on Purchase Intention (PI), while examining Perceived Authenticity (PA) as a mediating psychological process. The model also considers the direct relationships between digital information sources and purchase intention. An explanatory quantitative approach was employed, involving 200 young social media users in Bengkalis Regency, Indonesia, using purposive sampling. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. The findings show that UGC and IE significantly affect PA, whereas UR does not. UR, IE, and PA have significant effects on PI, while the direct effect of UGC on PI is not significant. The mediation results further show that PA mediates the relationships of UGC and IE with PI, but not the relationship between UR and PI. These findings indicate that PA provides a psychological pathway through which UGC and IE are associated with purchase intention, whereas UR is related to purchase intention mainly through a direct path. The study demonstrates that different digital information sources play distinct roles in shaping young consumers' purchase intentions toward global brands in an emerging market.

Keywords:
User-Generated Content; User Reviews; Influencer Endorsement; Perceived Authenticity; Purchase Intention.

1. INTRODUCTION

Advances in digital technology and social media have reshaped the ways consumers obtain information, assess products, and communicate with brands. In Indonesia, an emerging market, the widespread use of digital platforms has created new opportunities for brands to engage with consumers through online communication. DataReportal (2026) estimates that the country has 230 million internet users, representing 80.5% of the population, alongside 180 million social media user identities, equivalent to 62.9% of the population. The report also indicates that 78.2% of Indonesian internet users accessed at least one social media platform. Such extensive digital access allows global brands, including Coca-Cola, Nike, Samsung, Apple, Uniqlo, Zara, and Adidas, to reach consumers through various forms of digital communication, including user-generated content, user reviews, and influencer endorsements. These forms of communication have become increasingly relevant to consumer behavior because they provide information that consumers may use when evaluating global brands and making purchase decisions.

Despite the opportunities offered by social media, the increasing amount of promotional material available online has made the credibility and genuineness of digital information an important concern. Consumers may question whether online content reflects genuine experiences and opinions or primarily serves promotional purposes. Consequently, perceived authenticity, which refers in this study to consumers' perceptions of the genuineness of digital content and brand-related communication, is an important factor in understanding consumer responses. Earlier research has approached digital communication and consumer behavior from several angles. (Zakaria et al., 2024) explored how digital content affects consumer responses, while (Nathanael & Utami, 2025) discussed the contribution of User-Generated Content to consumer perceptions and responses. In addition, (Siahaan et al., 2025) examined influencer-related communication and reported that young consumers may show skepticism toward endorsements that appear overly commercial. Taken together, these studies indicate that digital content and influencer messages can shape consumer responses and make consumers' authenticity perceptions an important issue to investigate.

Although earlier studies have addressed the connection between digital marketing communication and consumer responses, they have focused on different combinations of stimuli and explanatory mechanisms. As an example, (Mukti & Santosa, 2023) Analyzed the influence of social media influencers, celebrity endorsements, and customer reviews on consumers' purchase intentions, considering brand image as a mediating factor. Meanwhile, (Ren et al., 2023) in contrast, analyzed perceived authenticity as an intervening factor between influencer type and purchase intention. While these studies offer useful explanations of digital marketing stimuli and consumer perceptions, they do not test the same set of variables brought together in the present research. Specifically, further investigation is warranted into the mediating role of perceived authenticity when UGC, user reviews, and influencer endorsements are examined simultaneously within a single integrated model. This research gap is particularly relevant to global brands in Indonesia, where young consumers increasingly encounter different forms of digital communication through social media. This study adopts the S-O-R perspective by treating user-generated content, user reviews, and influencer endorsement as external stimuli that shape consumers' perceived authenticity, which subsequently relates to their purchase intention. PLS-SEM is applied to investigate the direct associations of these digital communication sources with purchase intention, as well as the indirect effects operating through perceived authenticity.

The study adds to existing research by providing empirical evidence on the distinct direct and indirect relationships between user-generated content, user reviews, and influencer endorsements and purchase intention through perceived authenticity. Applying the S-O-R framework to global brands also provides insight into digital consumer behavior among young people in Bengkalis Regency, Indonesia. From a practical perspective, these findings can provide insights for global brands in formulating digital communication strategies that consider consumers' judgments of authenticity and the varying contributions of user-generated content, user reviews, and influencer endorsements to purchase intention.

1.1. Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory

The S-O-R theoretical perspective, introduced by (Mehrabian & Russell, as cited in Hadrian & Ratnasari, 2025), describes the process through which environmental factors affect individual responses by means of internal psychological conditions. In this study, User-Generated Content, User Reviews, and Influencer Endorsement represent the stimuli received through social media, providing information, experiences, and recommendations about global brands. Perceived Authenticity represents the organism, reflecting consumers' perceptions of content as authentic, honest, and trustworthy. Meanwhile, purchase intention constitutes the response, reflecting consumers' willingness or plans to purchase products from global brands. Accordingly, the framework provides an explanation of how digital communication may affect purchase intention through perceived authenticity as an internal psychological process.

1.2. User-Generated Content

According to (Mellyani & Siregar, 2025) User-generated content is content that is created and published on social networks and can be accessed by the public, the content of which is a creative practice outside of professional activities, which can be created by individuals or groups by managing, modifying, sharing, and consuming it. UGC can take various forms, including reviews, comments, photos, videos, blogs, and testimonials, and is circulated through social media and other digital platforms (Noventi & Thaib, 2025). UGC represents consumer-created content that allows individuals to share their evaluations, preferences, and perspectives based on their experiences.

Consumers increasingly consult UGC when gathering information before making a purchase. According to (Hanindharputri & Putra, in Nasution, 2025), explain that reviews and testimonials posted on social media may affect consumers' interest in buying, while (Anisa Dila Khoirin & Novi Marlena, 2022) also note that evaluations shared by people who have used a product or service can become a point of consideration before a purchase. Furthermore, (Anwar & Reham, in Pratiningsih, 2023) state that UGC documents consumers' product experiences, making the content appear more objective and trustworthy and potentially influencing purchasing decisions.

1.3. User Reviews

User Reviews refer to marketplace-based communications through which prospective buyers obtain product information from people who have previously made a purchase. According to (Ningsih, in Chatrina & Militina, 2025), user reviews are reviews or assessments given by previous consumers based on product evaluations in various aspects, helping consumers determine product quality. Similarly, (Fauziah et al., 2023) similarly describe user reviews as opinions that consumers publish after buying a product or service and that communicate their level of satisfaction.

According to Sutanto et al. in, associate online reviews with Digital word of mouth communication, which functions as a marketing communication channel capable of influencing consumer decision making. Online reviews and ratings can encourage purchase intention because they provide information that consumers consider before purchasing. Furthermore, (Hariyanto & Trisunarno, in Siskawati & Fachrunnisa, 2025) urther explain that customer reviews can significantly affect consumer trust and contribute to the development of confidence in a product or brand.

1.4. Influencer Endorsement

According to (Puspita & Handayani, 2024), explain that endorsement is an advertising approach in which another party is engaged to promote or support a product or service. The use of influencer endorsements has gained considerable popularity in digital marketing in which influencers act as spokespersons and help build brand image through their credibility and ability to reach audiences. Similarly, (Azizah, in Al Fajri & Septrizola, 2025) states that influencer endorsement involves influencers openly supporting or recommending a product or brand to increase consumer trust. Djafarova and Bowes in (Siahaan et al., 2025) likewise present influencer endorsement as a planned partnership between brands and social media influencers that uses the influencers' credibility and reach to promote products or services.

According to (Khadia, 2023), Influencer marketing draws upon the concept of social proof, whereby consumers increasingly turn to influencers for product recommendations due to their perceived relatability and credibility. (Weismueller et al., 2020) explain that influencer endorsement involves individuals with large and active social media followings who influence audiences through product recommendations, reviews, unboxing, or shared experiences.

1.5. Perceived Authenticity

According to (Kothari et al., 2025) Perceived authenticity refers to the extent to which consumers perceive an individual or content as natural, genuine, and trustworth. Meanwhile, According to Han in (Eze, 2025) Perceived authenticity reflects consumers judgement regarding the genuineness, sincerity, and originalityof a particular piece of content. These perspectives indicate that authenticity is shaped not only by the content itself but also by consumers' judgments of its genuineness and credibility.

According to (Napoli et al., in Eze, 2025), The concept of perceived authenticity encompasses two main aspects: its objective and subjective dimensions. Objective authenticity concerns the extent to which the authenticity of content can be assessed based on factual evidence and verifiable information. More broadly, authenticity encompasses several related qualities, including truthfulness, credibility, accuracy, and originality. These qualities help explain how consumers evaluate whether digital content is genuine and reliable when making purchase-related decisions.

1.6. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention reflects consumers' willingness or likelihood to purchase a specific product or service through a decision-making process influenced by perceptions, attitudes, and external factors. According to Sari in (Mardhotillah et al., 2025), ssociates purchase intention with the process through which consumers consider a product and develop an interest in buying it. Similarly, (Moslehpour et al,. In Al Fajri & Septrizola, 2025) state that purchase intention reflects consumers' confidence in their decision to purchase and serves as an important predictor of actual buying habits.

Based on (Zulfikar et al., 2025), describe purchase intention is a decision-making process influenced by consumers' actions, attitudes, and perceptions, reflecting their tendency to purchase certain products under specific conditions. Meanwhile, (Ferdinand, in Muhamad & Aransyah, 2022) defines it as a mental indication that a consumer intends to purchase a product from a particular brand. Thus, purchase intention represents consumers' willingness and tendency to buy a specified product or brand.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative explanatory approach to analyze the associations among the research constructs and assess the mediating role of perceived authenticity based on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) model. The target population consisted of young consumers living in Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, Indonesia, who actively used social media and had encountered digital content concerning global brands.

The sample size in this study was set at 200 respondents a purposive non-probability sampling strategy was employed to select eligible participants. Participants were recruited according to three established inclusion requirements: (1) individuals aged 18–35 years, (2) actively using digital social media platforms, and (3) users who have actively viewed or interacted with marketing content concerning global brands (such as UGC, user reviews, or influencer endorsements). Prospective participants outside these age brackets or lacking relevant exposure to global brand marketing content were excluded.

Primary information for this research was collected through a structured questionnaire that respondents completed independently via Google Forms. Measurement statements were adapted from relevant earlier studies and provided in Indonesian so that respondents could understand them Responses were recorded on a five-level Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). No pilot test was conducted before the main survey. Consequently, the measurement instruments' validity and reliability were examined using responses from the 200 participants in SmartPLS. The assessment covered the reliability of individual indicators, consistency among measurement items, as well as convergent and discriminant validity. SmartPLS was used to analyze the data through partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The analysis was conducted in two primary phases. Initially, the measurement model (outer model) was assessed by examining indicator reliability, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The latter was evaluated using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT). The second stage examined the structural model (inner model) and the hypothesized links among the constructs. It also assessed whether perceived authenticity mediated the relationships of UGC, UR, and IE with purchase intention. The hypotheses were tested using a bootstrapping procedure involving 5,000 resamples to obtain the t-statistics and p-values associated with both direct and indirect effects. Statistical significance was established when the t-statistic was above 1.96 and the p-value was below the 0.05 threshold.

The use of a single self-administered questionnaire, with all responses collected during one survey period, may have introduced common method bias. However, the study did not employ a specific statistical test to identify this potential bias. As a result, the possibility that common method bias influenced the research outcomes remains, and this limitation needs to be taken into consideration when interpreting the findings.

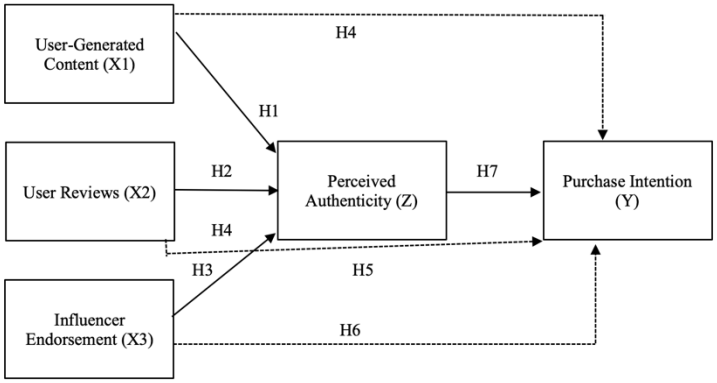


Figure 1. Research Model

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Measurement Indicators	Sources
User Generated Content (X_1)	1. Content authenticity 2. Content interestingness 3. Content usefulness 4. Content valence	(Luo & Lee, 2022)
User Reviews (X_2)	1. Perceived Usefulness 2. Source Credibility 3. Quality Argument 4. Valence	(Rinaja, in Maulana et al., 2025)
Influencer Endorsement (X_3)	1. Attractiveness 2. Trustworthiness 3. Expertise	(Weismueller et al., in Garut & Olanda, 2025)
Perceived Authenticity (Z)	1. Truthfulness 2. Originality 3. Factual authenticity 4. Consistency of Communication	(Napoli et al., in Eze, 2025)
Purchase Intention (Y)	1. To buy 2. Intend to buy 3. Planning to buy	(Fishbein & Ajzen, in Nora & Sriminarti, 2023)

	4. Trying to buy

Source: Processed research data (2026).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The final dataset comprised 200 qualified participants whose responses were analyzed using SmartPLS based on the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique. The analytical process involved evaluating the measurement model (outer model), examining the structural model (inner model), and testing the formulated hypotheses using bootstrapping procedures. This approach was adopted to determine how user-generated content, user reviews, and influencer endorsement influence purchase intention, including the indirect effects transmitted through perceived authenticity.

3.1.1. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents an overview of the demographic profiles of the 200 participants who satisfied the predetermined inclusion criteria, women accounted for the larger share of the sample, with 168 respondents (84%), while male respondents accounted for 32 (16%). Regarding age, 178 respondents (89%) were aged 18–22 years, while the remaining 22 respondents (11%) were aged 23–27 years. No respondents were represented in the 28–35 age group. The sample therefore consisted mainly of young consumers. Regarding social media platform preferences for consuming global brand content, TikTok was the most frequently used platform, reported by 114 respondents (57%), followed by Instagram, with 73 respondents (37%). Meanwhile, X and other platforms were each reported by 6 respondents (3%), while Facebook was not reported by any respondents. Overall, most participants were women aged 18–22 who used TikTok or Instagram most often. The respondents' demographic characteristics offer a useful background for analyzing how user-generated content (UGC), user reviews, and influencer endorsements, together with perceived authenticity, relate to purchase intention in the study setting.

Table 2. Respondents' Demographic Characteristic

Characteristic	Classification	Number of respondents'	Percentage
Gender	Male	32	16%
	Female	168	84%
Age	18-22 Years old	178	89%
	23-27 Years old	22	11%
	28-31 Years old	-	-
	32-35 Years old	-	-
Media Social	Instagram	73	37%
	TikTok	114	57%
	Facebook	-	-
	X (Twitter)	6	3%
	Others	6	3%

Source: Processed research data (2026).

3.1.2. Outer Model (Validity and Reliability)

Table 3. Outer Model (Validity and Reliability)

Measurement Item	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Min Score	≥ 0.70	≥ 0.70	≥ 0.70	≥ 0.70	≥ 0.50
User Generated Content (X1)		0.767	0.770	0.843	0.519
UGC1	0.654				
UGC2	0.763				
UGC3	0.706				
UGC4	0.734				
UGC5	0.741				
User Reviews (X2)		0.792	0.797	0.858	0.549
UR1	0.699				
UR2	0.677				
UR3	0.825				

UR4	0.795				
UR5	0.697				
Influencer Endorsement (X3)		0.804	0.807	0.865	0.562
IE1	0.778				
IE2	0.718				
IE3	0.785				
IE4	0.770				
IE5	0.692				
Perceived Authenticity (Z)		0.827	0.829	0.879	0.594
PA1	0.686				
PA2	0.835				
PA3	0.810				
PA4	0.730				
PA5	0.783				
Purchase Intention (Y)		0.784	0.787	0.853	0.537
PI1	0.775				
PI2	0.673				
PI3	0.734				
PI4	0.775				
PI5	0.702				

Source: Processed research data (2026).

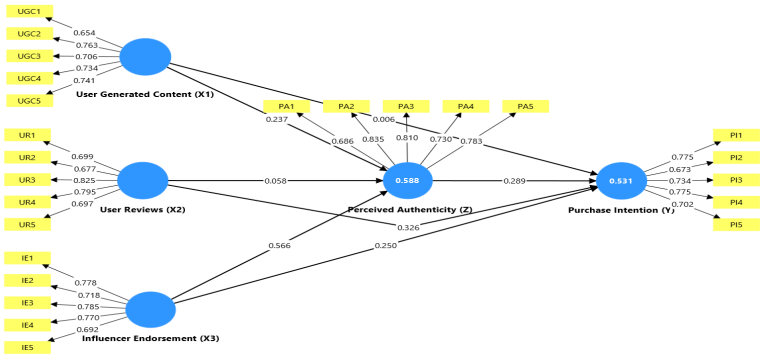


Figure 2. Outer Model

As demonstrated in Table 3, the measurement model fulfills most of the recommended requirements for assessing reliability and convergent validity. The majority of indicators exhibit outer loading values above 0.70, while a small number fall within the 0.60–0.70 range. These indicators were maintained because their respective constructs continued to meet the required reliability and convergent validity standards, as evidenced this is supported by the Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results, all of which exceeded the recommended threshold values.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) results indicate values of 0.519 for User-Generated Content, 0.549 for User Reviews, 0.562 for Influencer Endorsement, 0.594 for Perceived Authenticity, and 0.537 for Purchase Intention. Each of the five constructs records an AVE value above the required threshold of 0.50, indicating that more than half of the variance in their respective indicators is explained by the associated constructs. In terms of internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.767 to 0.827, while Composite Reliability (rho_c) values are between 0.843 and 0.879. Both reliability measures exceed the generally accepted benchmark of 0.70, demonstrating that all constructs possess sufficient internal consistency. Overall, the findings indicate that the measurement model meets the required standards for convergent validity and reliability, despite the presence of several indicators with outer loading values below 0.70.

3.1.3. Evaluation of Construct Distinctiveness

3.1.3.1. Assessment of Construct Distinction Using the Fornell–Larcker Approach

According to the Fornell–Larcker criterion, the square root of the AVE obtained for each construct is greater than its correlations with the remaining constructs, thereby confirming that the measurement model meets the requirements for discriminant validity. This finding applies to user-generated content, user reviews, and influencer endorsement on purchase intention through perceived authenticity. These findings indicate that the research constructs represent separate concepts and are measured without substantial overlap. The measurement indicators are capable of distinguishing one construct from another, thereby supporting the

examination of relationships among variables. Taken together, these findings indicate that the measurement model meets the necessary requirements for proceeding with the structural model assessment.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion Value

Variable	IE	PA	PI	UGC	UR
IE	0.749				
PA	0.735	0.771			
PI	0.620	0.630	0.733		
UGC	0.595	0.610	0.530	0.720	
UR	0.471	0.468	0.583	0.607	0.741

Source: Processed research data (2026).

As presented in Table 4, the AVE square root values for all constructs exceed the corresponding correlation values between each construct and the others. Specifically, the diagonal figures are 0.749 for Influencer Endorsement, 0.771 for Perceived Authenticity, 0.733 for Purchase Intention, 0.720 for User-Generated Content, and 0.741 for User Reviews. All reported values are higher than the respective correlations between the constructs. This pattern confirms that the constructs satisfy the discriminant validity requirement and represent distinct concepts within the research model.

3.1.3.2. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Beyond the Fornell–Larcker criterion, the HTMT approach was incorporated to provide another assessment of discriminant validity. This procedure examines the extent to which the constructs in the proposed model are sufficiently distinct from one another. Following (Saeed, 2026), identifies two commonly applied reference values: 0.85 for a more stringent assessment and 0.90 for a less restrictive evaluation. For the purpose of this analysis, the latter value was selected as the benchmark for determining whether discriminant validity had been established.

Table 5. heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Constructs	IE	PA	PI	UGC	UR
Influencer Endorsement					
Perceived Authenticity	0.897				
Purchase Intention	0.784	0.784			
User-Generated Content	0.755	0.766	0678		
User Reviews	0.590	0.576	0.736	0.776	

Source: Processed research data (2026)

Every construct pair in the HTMT assessment has a value below the selected threshold of 0.90, with results extending from 0.576 to 0.897. The highest value is observed between Influencer Endorsement and Perceived Authenticity 0.897, while the lowest value is found between Perceived Authenticity and User Reviews 0.576. Although the HTMT value between Influencer Endorsement and Perceived Authenticity is close to the threshold, it remains below 0.90. The HTMT results for the other construct combinations likewise fall within the acceptable range, suggesting that each construct captures a distinct concept within the research model. These findings suggest that User-Generated Content, User Reviews, Influencer Endorsement, Perceived Authenticity, and Purchase Intention measure conceptually different constructs within the research model. Therefore, based on the adopted threshold, discriminant validity is established among all constructs. The HTMT findings reinforce the results obtained from the Fornell–Larcker criterion, providing further support for the measurement model's validity prior to the evaluation of structural relationships.

3.1.4. Structural Model (Inner Model)

3.1.4.1. R-Squared value (R2)

Table 6. R-Squared (R2) Value of Structural Model

Variable	R Square	R square adjusted
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	0.588	0.581
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.531	0.521

Source: Processed research data (2026).

In the SEM-PLS analysis framework, the R-squared (R^2) value is calculated as follows: Hair et al in Changalima & Chuwa (2025) Based on the specified interpretation criteria, The coefficient of determination (R^2) is interpreted as substantial at a value of 0.75, moderate at 0.50, and weak at 0.25. The R^2 result for Perceived Authenticity (PA) is 0.588, placing it in the moderate category. These results suggest that the proposed model accounts for 58.8% of the variance in perceived authenticity. A similar result is observed for Purchase Intention (PI), which obtains an R^2 value of 0.531. This figure also represents moderate explanatory

power, with the model accounting for 53.1% of the variation in PI. Thus, both endogenous constructs show moderate explanatory levels, while the remaining variance may be associated with factors outside the current model.

3.1.4.2. Predictive relevance (Q2)

Table 7. Predictive Relevance (Q2) Values of the Structural Model

Variable	Q^2predict	RMSE	MAE
Perceived Authenticity (Z)	0.567	0.665	0.522
Purchase Intention (Y)	0.472	0.734	0.566

Source: Processed research data (2026).

The findings indicate that of the predictive relevance results (Q2), the Perceived Authenticity (PA) score of 0.567 indicating a relatively strong predictive capacity for this construct. This indicates that the combination of independent constructs such as user-generated content (UGC), user reviews (UR), and influencer endorsement (IE) has a strong ability to predict consumers' perceptions of the influence of purchasing products from social media platform shared through user generated content, along with the effects of influencer endorsement and user reviews. On the other hand, Purchase Intention (PI) as the dependent variable produced a Q^2 value of 0.472. The result shows that user-generated content (UGC), User Reviews (UR), and Influencer Endorsement (IE) indicating that the model demonstrates satisfactory predictive capability in explaining purchase intention. Based on the Q^2 measurement is above 0.25 and close to 0.5, the result indicates the model's relatively strong ability to predict variance in purchase intention. Perceived Authenticity and Purchase Intention show predictive relevance, with Perceived Authenticity having stronger predictive relevance than Purchase Intention, as indicated by a higher Q^2 value. This suggests that the structural model provides better predictions for perceived authenticity than for purchase intention.

3.1.4.3. Effect size (f2)

The effect size interpretation follows the criteria reported by (Cohen, in Changalima & Chuwa, 2025) The magnitude of f^2 is evaluated according to the following thresholds: An effect size is classified as large when its value reaches or exceeds 0.35, moderate when it is at least 0.15, and small when it is 0.02 or higher.

Table 8. Effect Size (F2) of the Structural Model

Structural Path	F^2 Value	Effect Size
UGC→ PA	0.070	Small
UR → PA	0.005	No meaningful effect
IE → PA	0.487	Large
UGC → PI	0.000	No meaningful effect
UR → PI	0.139	Small
IE → PI	0.056	Small
PA → PI	0.074	Small

Source: Processed research data (2026).

In line with above, the results related to effect size can be summarized as follows:

a. The effect of user-generated content (UGC) on perceived authenticity (PA) yielded an f^2 coefficient of 0.070, indicating a small effect size. This finding demonstrates that UGC makes a relatively modest contribution to the development of consumers' perceived authenticity.
b. User Reviews (UR) on Perceived Authenticity (PA) obtained an f2 value of 0.005. This shows that user reviews do not have any meaningful impact on perceived authenticity.
c. Influencer Endorsement (IE) on Perceived Authenticity (PA) resulted in an f2 value of 0.487, which indicated a large effect. The findings suggest that influencer endorsement makes a meaningful contribution to strengthening consumers' perceived authenticity (PA) of the content.
d. The effect size assessment for the relationship between UGC and PI resulted in an f^2 value of 0.000, suggesting that user-generated content contributes virtually no explanatory effect to consumers' purchase intention.
e. User Reviews (UR) exhibited an effect size of 0.139 in relation to Purchase Intention (PI), placing this relationship in the small-effect category. This suggests that user reviews contribute to purchase intention, although their effect size is relatively modest.
f. Influencer Endorsement (IE) demonstrated an effect size of 0.056 in predicting Purchase Intention (PI), which is classified as a small effect. This indicates that the contribution of influencer endorsement to consumers' purchase intention is relatively modest.

g. Perceived Authenticity (PA) demonstrates an effect size of 0.074 with respect to Purchase Intention (PI), which also represents a small effect. This indicates a modest contribution of perceived authenticity to the explanation of purchase intention.

Among all variables, Influencer Endorsement (IE) has the largest effect on Perceived Authenticity (PA), whereas User Reviews (UR) has the largest direct effect on Purchase Intention (PI).

3.1.5. Hypothesis Testing

Bootstrapping within the PLS-SEM procedure was employed to determine whether the hypothesized relationships among the research constructs were statistically significant. The procedure assessed both direct and indirect pathways linking user-generated content, user reviews, and influencer endorsement to purchase intention. It also examined whether perceived authenticity functions as an intermediary in these relationships. Statistical significance was determined using two criteria: a t-statistic greater than 1.96 and a p-value lower than 0.05. Relationships satisfying both requirements were classified as statistically significant. The findings from this procedure provided the empirical basis for determining whether the hypothesized associations within the research model were supported.

Table 9. Result of Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effect)

	Original sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Result
UGC → PA	0.237	0.243	0.080	2.951	0.002	Accepted
UR → PA	0.058	0.056	0.059	0.987	0.162	Rejected
IE → PA	0.566	0.564	0.070	8.065	0.000	Accepted
UGC → PI	0.006	0.011	0.070	0.092	0.463	Rejected
UR → PI	0.326	0.327	0.063	5.202	0.000	Accepted
IE → PI	0.250	0.241	0.102	2.436	0.007	Accepted
PA → PI	0.289	0.294	0.104	2.786	0.003	Accepted

Source: processed research data (2026)

The direct-effect results reported in Table 9 demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between User-Generated Content (UGC) and Perceived Authenticity (PA), thereby confirming H1. In contrast, the relationship between User Reviews (UR) and PA is not statistically significant, leading to the rejection of H2. Influencer Endorsement (IE), on the other hand, demonstrates a significant effect on PA, supporting H3. Regarding Purchase Intention (PI), UGC shows no statistically significant direct effect, resulting in the rejection of H4. Meanwhile, significant direct relationships are identified between UR and PI, IE and PI, as well as PA and PI. The results therefore confirm Hypotheses H5, H6, and H7, respectively.

3.1.6. Analysis of Indirect Effects

Findings from the mediation analysis indicate that analysis reveal that Perceived Authenticity is involved in the relationships between User-Generated Content, User Reviews, Influencer Endorsement, and Purchase Intention. These findings suggest that social media content and influencer endorsements may shape consumers' purchase intentions through two pathways: their direct influence and their ability to strengthen consumers' perceptions of authenticity. Content perceived as genuine, credible, and consistent can strengthen consumers' perceptions of authenticity, which may subsequently encourage their intention to purchase global brand products. Therefore, Perceived Authenticity serves as an important mechanism in explaining how digital stimuli are translated into consumers purchase intentions.

Table 10. Results of Mediation

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Result
UGC→ PA → PI	0.069	0.070	0.032	2.115	0.017	Accepted
UR → PA → PI	0.017	0.018	0.020	0.834	0.202	Rejected
IE → PA → PI	0.164	0.168	0.067	2.458	0.007	Accepted

Source: processed research data (2026).

The indirect effect analysis confirms that UGC influences PI through PA, in line with the proposed H8 hypothesis. However, the indirect pathway from User Reviews (UR) to PI through PA does not reach statistical significance; consequently, H9 is not supported. A significant mediating effect of PA is also observed in the relationship between Influencer Endorsement (IE) and PI, confirming H10. Overall, the findings demonstrate

that perceived authenticity provides an explanatory pathway through which UGC and influencer endorsement influence purchase intention. However, the analysis does not provide sufficient empirical evidence to confirm the mediating effect of Perceived Authenticity (PA) on the relationship between User Reviews (UR) and Purchase Intention (PI).

3.2. Discussion

The results demonstrate that User-Generated Content (UGC) has a significant positive effect on Perceived Authenticity (PA). This indicates that content created by users can strengthen consumers' perceptions that communication related to global brands is genuine and credible. Since UGC reflects consumers' personal experiences and opinions, it may be perceived as less commercially controlled than brand-generated communication. Accordingly, user-generated content provides consumers with a useful reference for assessing whether global brands are perceived as authentic. The result aligns with (Saroor & Khan, 2025), who reported a positive association between user-generated content and perceived authenticity. Within the S-O-R framework, UGC acts as an external stimulus that shapes consumers' internal perceptions of authenticity.

User Reviews do not significantly influence Perceived Authenticity. This indicates that reviews may provide consumers with product-related information without necessarily changing their perceptions of whether communication related to global brands is genuine and credible. Consumers may evaluate reviews primarily based on their usefulness, credibility, and relevance to product characteristics rather than using them as a basis for judging brand authenticity. This result differs from previous studies suggesting that consumer-generated evaluations can strengthen trust and authenticity perceptions. The difference may be attributed to the role of user reviews in the present research context, where consumers may rely on reviews mainly to reduce product uncertainty and support their purchase decisions rather than to assess the authenticity of global brand communication.

Influencer Endorsement positively and significantly influences Perceived Authenticity, indicating that endorsements from influencers can strengthen consumers' perceptions of the genuineness and credibility of global brand communication, this finding indicates that influencers can contribute to the formation of consumers' perceptions of authenticity. Influencer endorsements are more likely to be regarded as authentic and credible when they are presented naturally and demonstrate honesty, sincerity, and alignment with the influencer's own experiences. The result in line with (Suharyadi et al., 2024), who identified influencer authenticity as an important element in consumer evaluations. Authentic endorsements may consequently strengthen consumers' perceptions of global brand authenticity.

The results indicate that UGC does not exert a statistically significant direct effect on Purchase Intention (PI). This result implies that consumers' exposure to user-generated content, by itself, may not be adequate to stimulate their intention to purchase products from global brands. Consumers may first evaluate whether the content is genuine, credible, and relevant before translating the information into purchase-related intentions. This finding differs from (Noventi & Thaib, 2025), who reported a statistically significant positive association between user-generated content and purchase intention. Differences in consumer characteristics, the credibility and relevance of content, and the research setting may help explain the different findings. In this study, UGC may need to operate through another factor particularly Perceived Authenticity rather than influence purchase intention directly. The result therefore points to the possible importance of an intervening psychological process.

User Reviews (UR) are found to positively and significantly affect consumers' Purchase Intention (PI), suggesting that reviews can directly encourage consumers' purchase intentions by providing information about product quality, previous experiences, and potential product performance. Interestingly, User Reviews do not significantly affect Perceived Authenticity, but they significantly affect Purchase Intention directly. This suggests that consumers may use user reviews primarily as an informational basis for purchase evaluation rather than as a basis for judging the authenticity of global brand communication. The result is consistent with earlier research indicating that online customer reviews can increase purchase intention. (Al-Ja'afreh et al., in Ishomi & Abidin, 2024), who found that customer reviews positively affect consumers' intentions to make purchases. Consequently, reviews perceived as honest and trustworthy may strengthen consumers' confidence in a product and help guide their purchasing decisions.

The findings establish a statistically significant positive effect of Influencer Endorsement (IE) on Purchase Intention (PI), thereby providing support for H6. This suggests that influencers may stimulate consumers' willingness to purchase through social media by sharing product recommendations, offering relevant information, and generating interest in the products they promote. The attractiveness, credibility, and connection between influencers and their followers can strengthen consumers' interest in the promoted products. A similar result was reported by (Shabrina et al., 2025), who reported a significant positive relationship between Influencer Endorsement and Purchase Intention among TikTok Shop consumers in Samarinda. This evidence highlights the potential of influencers to strengthen consumers' willingness to purchase products offered by global brands.

The findings confirm that Perceived Authenticity (PA) has a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention (PI), thereby supporting H7. Consumers are more likely to develop an intention to purchase global brands when the related content is considered genuine, honest, and consistent. Perceived authenticity can create

a sense of trust and psychological closeness, which strengthens consumers' willingness to consider purchasing the promoted products. The result is consistent with (Sanny et al., 2025), who identified perceived authenticity as an important psychological factor associated with purchase intention. Therefore, stronger perceptions of authenticity can encourage consumers to develop greater purchase intentions toward global brands.

The mediation analysis demonstrates that Perceived Authenticity (PA) serves as a significant intermediary in the association between User-Generated Content (UGC) and Purchase Intention (PI). Considering that UGC does not have a statistically significant direct effect on PI, these results suggest that its influence on purchase intention is transmitted through Perceived Authenticity (PA). In other words, UGC may not directly encourage consumers to purchase global brand products; instead, its influence emerges when consumers perceive the content as genuine and credible. This result further highlights the importance of perceived authenticity as an underlying psychological process in the S-O-R framework. Similar evidence can be found in the findings reported by (Sahai et al., in Kunjiapu et al., 2025), who demonstrated that UGC can strengthen consumer trust and subsequently influence online purchasing decisions. Thus, Perceived Authenticity (PA) represents a key mediating mechanism through which UGC influences consumers' intentions to purchase global brands.

The results indicate that Perceived Authenticity (PA) does not significantly mediate the relationship between User Reviews (UR) and Purchase Intention (PI), indicating that user reviews influence consumers' purchase decisions through factors other than perceived authenticity. This result is consistent with the non-significant relationship between User Reviews and Perceived Authenticity. Although user reviews significantly influence purchase intention directly, they do not appear to operate through perceived authenticity. This suggests that consumers may rely on reviews primarily as direct informational input when evaluating a potential purchase rather than using them to form perceptions of authenticity. The result contrast with (Indra et al,.in Nurhaliza et al., 2024), who demonstrated that consumer reviews can shape purchasing decisions by building trust among potential buyers.

The results also confirm that Perceived Authenticity (PA) significantly mediates the relationship between Influencer Endorsement (IE) and Purchase Intention (PI). This suggests that influencer endorsements may enhance consumers' intentions to purchase global brands by reinforcing their perceptions of brand authenticity. The finding indicates that influencer endorsement can increase purchase intention not only through direct recommendations but also by shaping consumers' perceptions of authenticity. When influencer communication is perceived as genuine, credible, and consistent with the influencer's identity, consumers may develop stronger purchase intentions toward the promoted global brand. This finding further highlights the role of Perceived Authenticity (PA) as an essential psychological mechanism through which influencer communication influences consumer responses. It is consistent with (Majid & Rosanti, 2025), who found that influencer credibility and authenticity significantly influence Purchase Intention. Thus, perceived authenticity represents one route through which influencer endorsement may encourage consumers' purchase intentions.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S-O-R) framework, the findings identify Perceived Authenticity (PA) as a key psychological mechanism linking digital marketing stimuli to young consumers' purchase intentions toward global brands. The empirical evidence indicates that User-Generated Content (UGC) and Influencer Endorsement (IE) positively and significantly shape consumers' perceptions of authenticity, which subsequently contribute to their purchase intentions. Interestingly, UGC does not exert a direct effect on purchase intention, indicating that its influence relies entirely on the establishment of genuine and credible perception. Conversely, User Reviews directly trigger purchase intention without being mediated by perceived authenticity, highlighting that consumers primarily utilize reviews as direct informational cues for decision-making rather than as a proxy for brand authenticity. From a managerial standpoint, global brand managers operating in emerging markets should tailor their digital marketing strategies based on these distinct communication roles. Brands should prioritize authentic, transparent collaborations with influencers and encourage unpolished consumer content creation to build brand authenticity, while optimizing e-commerce review systems to provide practical product details that facilitate purchase decisions. Future research could expand the sample to include a more balanced representation of age groups within the 18–35 age range. Although the current study included respondents aged 18–35, Although this study covered that age range, most participants were aged 18–22. Including more participants from older age groups would help determine whether the relationships among user-generated content, user reviews, influencer endorsement, perceived authenticity, and purchase intention differ across age groups.

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