

# Analyzing the Impact of User-Generated and Firm-Generated Content on Online Shopper Behavior in a Developing Market: A Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Approach

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## ABSTRACT

*It is important to note that online content is central to the development of consumer behavior in the digital age of the marketing transformation wherein consumers have become heavily dependent on the nature, quality, and validity of information they see online prior to making purchase-related decisions. The assumption as to whether user-generated or firm-generated content is more important issue is, however, under-researched and especially in such countries as Pakistan, where the adoption of digital is growing at a rapid pace, but academic and empirical interest in the given issue has been limited. The study is based on analyzing the impact of user-generated content and firm-generated content on evaluation perceptions and attitudes of online shoppers in Pakistan and employs the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as the theoretical framework to interpret the research results. The results show that there is no significant difference between the two types of content in regard to the perceived usefulness or intention to purchase, but the user-generated content has a significantly greater impact on the attitudes towards the advertisements and brand perception. This implies that consumers are more likely to consider as naturally, relatable and credible content that is produced and shared by other users than that which is specifically produced and distributed by companies. These discrepancies point to the role of consumer voices within digital ecosystems in which online trust and credibility is highly involved in decision-making, and found that in situations where both types of content deliver helpful information, user-generated content is more sensitive to content influence than the content produced by the company. Moreover, it provides useful lessons to the marketers who work in the developing markets with particular reference to Pakistan because of the necessity to incorporate user-driven stories, reviews, and experiences into the digital strategies to enhance consumer engagement, brand image, and effectiveness of the marketing campaigns.*

## KEYWORDS:

User-generated content, firm-generated content, e-commerce, attitude toward brand, purchase intention, Technology Acceptance Model

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## INTRODUCTION

The global digital economy and the e-commerce industry is expanding at an unprecedented rate transforming the way business is being carried out and how consumers interact with markets. Statista (2023) also states that in 2023, online advertising expenditures will reach the unbelievable number of more than \$680 billion dollars of money, which means the overwhelming relevance of the Internet in business nowadays. This tidal wave of digital expenditure does not exist only due to the emergence of technology but also embodies the high dependence of digital channel as the primary element of marketing, interaction and create sales. The increase in user-created content (UGC) which is comprised of varied content created by consumers in the form of video, photograph, animation, review, and testimonials is one of the primary drivers of this change. UGC is gradually being identified as a potent form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWoM)



as a form of influence; a powerful tool that determines consumer perceptions and behaviors in markets around the globe.

UGC has also significantly changed the dynamic nature of online consumer behavior, which is that instead of being a passive recipient of information, consumers now have to partake in the content generation and decision-making process. Nowadays, consumers are no longer only dependent on the adverts by the companies and their corporate communication; they are now eager to find peer-reviewed information that would give them authenticity and relatability. It has been proposed that experiences by peers in the form of reviews, testimonials, and videos can have a considerable impact on consumer decision-making since they enable potential customers to evaluate the quality and utility of a product, as well as trustworthiness through the prism of their former users (Abbasi, Tsiotsou, Hussain, Rather, and Ting, 2023; Assaker, 2020; Diwanji and Lee, 2022; Hollebeek, Abbasi, Schultz, Ting, and Sigurdsson, 2022); Romero-Rodriguez and Castillo-Abdul, 2023). By doing so, eWoM is a kind of informal but influential assessment tool, allowing consumers to successfully overcome the difficult aspects of online markets with more confidence and informed decision-making skills (Abbasi et al., 2023; Ali, Ahmed, Afzal, and Ilyas, 2022).

Although studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of text based reviews, especially in the eWoM arena, little empirical data on the relative effects of visual and video based UGC versus company generated content in online space has been examined. Visual and video content, due to their richness and immersion ability, can potentially have a different impact on consumer perceptions compared to the text, and it provides more of an immersive evaluating experience (Nilashi et al., 2022) However, the relativity of these content types is under researched, particularly in those settings where digital adoption is at the maturity phase.

This research gap is particularly pertinent in the context of the developing economies like Pakistan when the digital ecosystem is growing very fast yet the academic research is not abreast of the practical improvements. The e-commerce market has demonstrated impressive development in Pakistan, and the market value forecasts show that the market is projected to grow by 2023 with the market value being estimated at \$2.1 billion in 2023 as compared to its status in 2018, which was estimated at \$1.2 billion (Perera, Nguyen, and Nayak, 2023). This growth has also been enhanced by the emergence of local platforms like Daraz, iShopping, and Home-Shopping that provide convenient and varied online shopping experiences to a wide consumer base of consumers (Agrawal and Mittal, 2022; Xing, Wang, Qiu, Li, and He, 2022). Online marketplaces with a consumer trust that has yet to be nurtured In this type of environment, peer-created content, and especially video-based UGC, has become a decisive element when it comes to affecting purchase intentions. The role of social proof is becoming more prominent as more consumers switch to genuine, peer-generated reviews and demonstrations, controlling the online shopping habits and boosting the trust in online platforms (Jasin, 2022; Santos, 2022).

Despite the fact that the video material created by the firms is an essential marketing tool as it is supposed to demonstrate products in refined and convincing ways, it is still seen as less authentic than UGC. Contrarily user-created videos often focus on lived experience, authenticity, and storytelling, which may be more effective with prospective consumers (Ma and Gu, 2022; You and Joshi, 2020). Regardless of these apparent contrasts, however, the direct empirical studies investigating the effectiveness of user-created and firm-created video contents are still few, especially in the context of developing economies and the emerging e-commerce systems where the trust of the users is weak and constantly changing. Further, the theoretical synthesis of such comparisons is still very limited with few studies applying accepted frameworks like

the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as the means of studying consumer reactions in such situations.

To fill these gaps, the current research study uses the TAM model to conduct a systematic study of the impact of user-generated and firm-generated video contents on the perception, attitude and purchase intentions of online shoppers in Pakistan. In particular, it studies whether either of these types of content has a more pronounced influence on the consumer decision-making process compared to the other, and how the mediating variables of perceived usefulness and consumer attitudes contribute to such associations in platform-specific situations. By focusing on Pakistan's evolving e-commerce sector, this research contributes to the broader understanding of digital consumer behavior in developing economies and provides insights into how different forms of video content impact trust, engagement, and purchasing outcomes.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 reviews the relevant literature and conceptual background in greater detail. Section 3 outlines the theoretical framework and presents the hypotheses. Section 4 discusses the research design and methodology employed. Section 5 reports the results of the empirical analysis. Section 6 provides an in-depth discussion of the findings and their theoretical and managerial implications. Finally, Section 7 concludes with a summary of the key contributions, outlines the study's limitations, and highlights directions for future research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

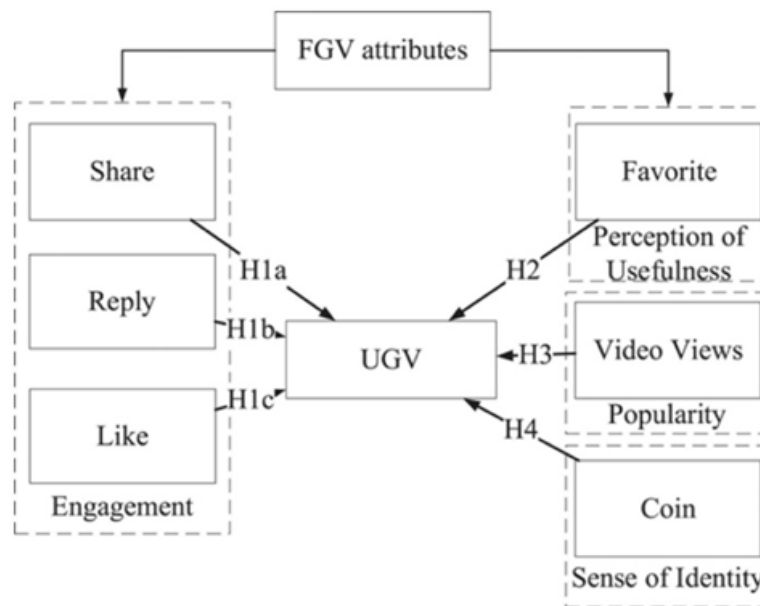
The contribution of user-generated content (UGC) to consumer perceptions, engagement, and purchase intentions has been examined in a significant amount of literature (Mayrhofer, Matthes, Einwiller, and Naderer, 2020; Nguyen and Tong, 2022; You and Joshi, 2020);(Muller Christandl, 2019). In the development of web technologies, user-created reviews especially those posted on e-commerce sites have become critical in shaping the shopping behavior (Aljarah, Sawaftah, Ibrahim, and Lahuerta-Otero, 2022; Banerjee, Dellarocas, and Zervas, 2021). Customers are increasingly using peer reviews and image-based materials when making buying decisions and particularly those that are high-involvement products(Demba, Chilya, Chuchu, and Ndro, 2019; Diwanji and Lee, 2022);

YouTube, Facebook, and Dailymotion are the platforms that spread the influence of video reviews of the products, and those reviews are often organized by real users or micro-influencers (Chen and Dermawan, 2020; M. Lee and Lee, 2022). These videos do not only demonstrate products, but also build trust by means of a perceived authenticity, interactivity, and emotional appeal (Banerjee et al., 2021; Gong, Wang, Yan, Liu, and Ali, 2020). In contrast to textual reviews, video-based UGC provides more visual information that increases the levels of consumer trust, clarity and perceived diagnosticity important factors in attitude and purchase intentions formation (Ma and Gu, 2022); (Nilashi et al., 2022).

The recent studies have also underlined the significance of content exposure, perceived usefulness and trust as a contributing factor in explaining online shopper behavior in emerging markets. As an illustration, (Ibrahim and Aljarah, 2023) presented a meta-analysis that revealed that UGC always performs better than company-created content in developing relationships between consumers and brands. In a similar manner, (Renteria-García, Fajardo-Toro, and Sabogal-Salamanca, 2021) discovered that the amount and the valence of consumer generated reviews significantly influence brand trust. Notably, according to Zhuang et al. (2023), creator interactivity that is frequently found in UGC greatly enhances content helpfulness.

As it is especially applicable to this paper, El-Baz et al. (2023) and Majumder et al.

(2022)(Mazumder and Kazi Navid Bin, 2025) emphasize the mediating role of perceived trust and review exposure between the content format and the purchase intention. Such aspects are quite relevant in such markets as Pakistan, where consumer behavior is characterized by digital literacy, social influence, and mobile-first consumption behaviour patterns (Agrawal and Mittal, 2022; Jasin, 2022).



**Figure 1:** Figure UGV Effect Model

But little research has directly compared user-made videos with firm-created videos with an established theoretical framework such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). (Diwanji and Lee, 2022; M. Lee and Lee, 2022) observe that even though user videos have the potential to produce more positive brand perceptions, their behavioral intentions outcomes are complicated and often moderate familiarity, relevancy, and trustworthiness. The cognitive antecedent of perceived usefulness and the formation of an attitude is trust, which is essential in TAM-based appraisals (Filieri, 2015);(Renteria-García et al., 2021; Romero-Rodríguez and Castillo-Abdul, 2024).

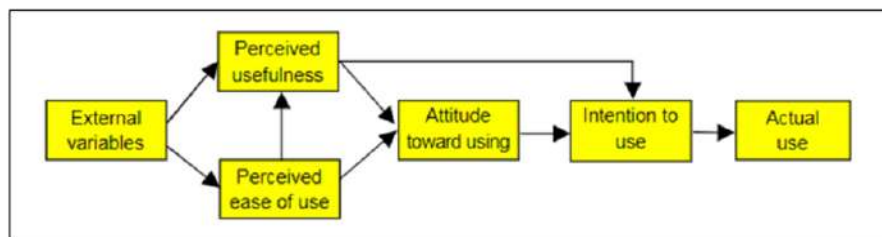
Therefore, the study adds to the recent requests to look into the context-specific effects of UGC in the emerging markets and how they impact digital-native consumers, in particular (Perera et al., 2023; Santo and Marques, 2022). This study will add to the finer details of perception, engagement, and intent, as it concentrates on visual content in Pakistani websites such as Daraz, it will help to better understand how the format and origin of the content employed influence or can influence it.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This paper is based on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) of Davis (1989), who proposes a model of user acceptance to new technology depending on two main cognitive variables, that is, on the perceived usefulness (PU) and on the perceived ease of use (PEU). PU is a level of how an individual is of the view that employing a certain system would improve his or her performance in the task at hand, whereas PEU is the view that the use of the system would

entail a small amount of effort. TAM has been elaborated over the years (e.g. TAM2, TAM3) to explain particular situations like content consumption online and social influence (Venkatesh and Bala, 2008).

In the research, TAM is used to analyze how online shoppers perceive and react to various forms of video content user-generated and firm-generated in evaluating products in an e-commerce platform. PU is employed to capture the consumers' cognitive evaluation of the usefulness of the video content in making purchase decisions, while attitudinal responses are measured via attitude toward the advertisement (ATA) and attitude toward the brand (ATB). These variables serve as mediators in assessing their influence on purchase intention (PI).



**Figure 2:** Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) Davis 1989

While PEU is traditionally a core element of TAM, its exclusion in this study is grounded in the specific context of the stimuli: both user-generated and firm-generated videos were embedded directly within familiar e-commerce interfaces such as Daraz. As such, consumers were not required to learn new technologies or interfaces to access the content. Previous research supports that in media-rich, low-effort digital environments, PEU may exhibit limited variance or predictive power and can be excluded without compromising model integrity (Sama, 2019) Shin, 2009; Marangunić & Granić, 2015. Further, extensions of TAM in e-commerce contexts usually vary or do not include such a construct as PEU, instead, referring to the relevance to situational in-place factors, such as trust, content authenticity, or source credibility

In this manner, an adapted TAM model will be used in this study, which considers PU and its lower-level effects on attitude and behavioral intentions. The adaptation aligns with the current research focusing on perceived informativeness and trust as the most significant factors in evaluating online content (Aljarah et al., 2022; Mazumder and Kazi Navid Bin, 2025).

## HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a model that assumes that beliefs of the users with regards to the usefulness of a system create an attitude towards the system, which in turn generates behavioral intentions (Davis, 1989). Videos reviews, as a form of content, can serve as an information system in the digital commerce scenario, and in such a scenario, consumer judgments are affected by the perceived usefulness (PU), taking a central role (Filieri, 2015; Mazumder and Kazi Navid Bin, 2025) .

In this work, PU is determined as the consideration of informational value and decision-making support given by brand-related videos by the consumer. It has been revealed that UGC can include better context, peer-created languages, and visual authenticity, which consumers find more useful to make a decision than the content produced by the firm can have (Banerjee et al., 2021; Ibrahim, Aljarah, Hayat, and Lahuerta-Otero, 2022). Hence, the study hypothesizes:

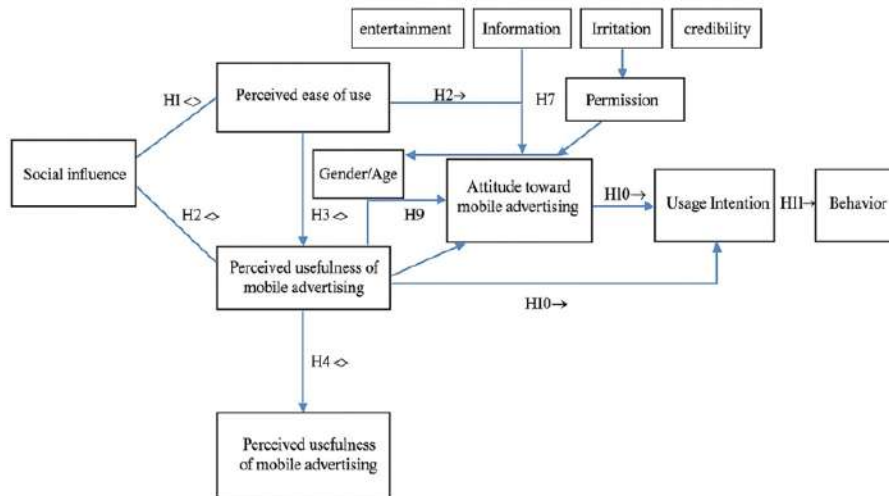


Figure 3: Social Influence Model

**H1: Online shoppers perceive user-generated videos as more useful than brand-generated videos:**

According to TAM, perceived usefulness contributes to positive attitudes toward the technology in this case, video content. Attitude toward the Advertisement (ATA) is shaped by how credible, informative, or engaging the consumer finds the content (Chukwu, Kanu, and Ezeabogu, 2019);Lutz, 1985. Studies have consistently found that user-generated videos enhance advertising value by presenting unfiltered experiences and engaging narratives (Abbasi et al., 2023; Assaker, 2020). Therefore:

**H2: Exposure to user-generated videos leads to a more positive attitude towards advertisements than brand-generated videos.**

Attitude toward the Brand (ATB) is conceptualized as consumers' evaluative judgment of the brand after watching the video. Previous research demonstrates a causal link between ATA and ATB MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989; Spears & Singh, 2004; (Cheung, Pires, and Rosenberger, 2020). When users find advertisements authentic and relatable as with UGC they are more likely to form favorable brand attitudes (Ibrahim and Aljarah, 2023);(Romero-Rodríguez and Castillo-Abdul, 2024). This relationship is in line with affect transfer theory, where affective responses to ads spill over to the brand (Gong et al., 2020). Therefore:

**H3: Exposure to user-generated videos leads to a more positive brand attitude than brand-generated content:**

Purchase Intention (PI) is the final behavioral outcome in TAM extensions. While many studies affirm the direct impact of ATB on PI, the influence of UGC on PI has shown mixed results depending on content credibility, brand familiarity, and perceived value (Ismagilova, Slade, Rana, and Dwivedi, 2020); (Khan, 2022). In the current model, ATB mediates the relationship between content type and PI, consistent with empirical research linking consumer attitudes to purchase decisions (Ajzen, 1991); (Santo and Marques, 2022). Thus:

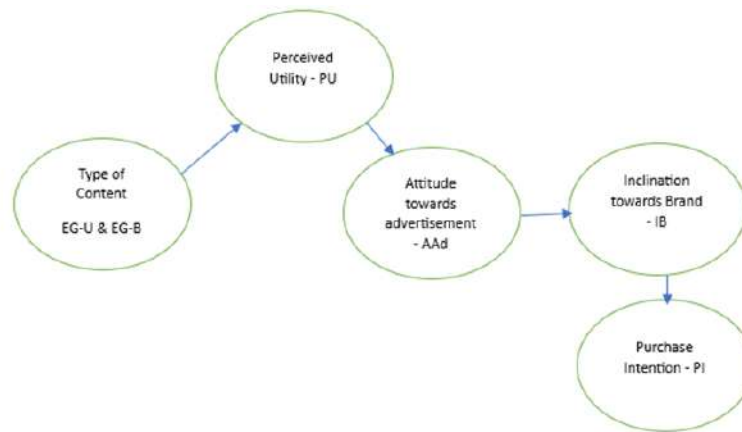
**H4: Exposure to user-generated videos leads to higher purchase intentions than brand-generated videos.**

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for our research can be organized as follows:

**Table 1:** List of Model Variables

Independent Variables	Mediating Variable	Dependent Variables
Exposure to User-Generated Videos (EG-U)	Perceived Utility (PU)	Inclination towards the Brand (IB)
Exposure to Brand-Generated Videos (EG-B)	Attitude towards Advertisement (AAd)	Purchase Intention (PI)



**Figure 4:** Social Influence Model

## RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

This study employed a between-subjects randomized experimental design to compare the effects of user-generated versus firm-generated video content on online shopper perceptions and behavior. The independent one was the type of video used (user-created or brand-created) whereas the dependent variables were the perceived usefulness (PU), attitude towards the advertisement (ATA), attitude towards the brand (ATB) and purchase intention (PI).

The participants would be randomly chosen to be in either of the two video conditions that were presented on a simulated e-commerce product page. This design enabled the study to have control internally and at the same time replicate an authentic digital shopping setting. Product pages were designed to resemble closely those of Daraz.com, one of the most popular Pakistani e-commerce sites to improve the ecological validity. As much as using a fictitious brand lessened the problem of bias due to the prior familiarity with the brand (Huang, Lin, and Yang, 2022)), it could have diminished the emotional salience of purchase choices and this is a limitation that has been mentioned and debated.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The type of research design applied in this study was a quantitative, cross-sectional experimental research design and between subjects design and was used to study the impact of video source on online consumer behavior. The research design was structured in a way that it was possible to establish causal relationships between the independent variable (source of content: user-generated vs. brand-generated video) and the dependent variables (PU, ATA, ATB, PI). The method is in line with the previous studies that focus on controlled experimentation in digital content analysis (M. Lee and Lee, 2022).

## DATA COLLECTION APPROACH

An online experimental survey was conducted on Qualtrics as a way of collecting data. The survey was applied individually rather than requiring a large number of people to engage in it, and it was carried out on personal devices, which allowed covering a vast geographical area and controlling the order of exposure and the quality of information. There was a logic internalization to make sure that every participant viewed the specified video stimulus and answered every item to move on.

## SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND RATIONALE

The non-probability convenience sampling method was used, including the university students and professionals of the early career who were conversant with e-commerce sites like Daraz.com. This target group is a representative of the young-digital-native consumer population in Pakistan and is highly exposed to video-based content and reviews.

The initial sample comprised 248 respondents. After applying attention checks and removing incomplete responses, the final dataset included 230 valid cases. This sample size was considered adequate based on power analysis recommendations for ANCOVA, ensuring a power level of 0.80 to detect medium effect sizes Cohen, 1988.

## RANDOMIZATION AND CONTROL PROCEDURES

Qualtrics through its block randomiser assigned the participants randomly to the user-generated or brand-generated video condition. The rest of the details of the product page (text description, layout, interface) did not vary across the conditions to reduce confounding factors.

To make it interesting, the survey did not allow the use of the next button until the video was complete. There were also embedded cues in product descriptions (e.g., reference to redesigns of the UI) to determine the attentiveness.

## PRETEST PROCESS

**Table 2:** Model Pretest

Pretest	Objective	Participants	Instrument/Scale Used	Key Outcome
Pretest 1	Identify the most suitable product category	90	Mittal's Purchase Choice Relevance Scale ( $\alpha = .79$ )	Video game console selected due to higher consumer engagement compared to utilitarian products
Pretest 2	Determine relevant product attributes	124	7-point Likert scale adapted from Steenkamp et al. (2003)	Performance, controller design, and on-line connectivity identified as most important attributes

## ECOLOGICAL VALIDITY CONSIDERATIONS

The study approximated real-world shopping behavior by having a mock e-commerce interface that was made to look like the Daraz.com. All videos were integrated within a simulated product page that was recreating normal layout, design and navigation design. This increased the ecological validity because the participants were placed in a familiar choice situation, and this enhanced external generalizability of the finding (Vollero, Sardanelli, and Siano, 2021)(Viglia et al., 2021).

Fictitious branding was used to provide the most unbiased evaluation as it removed the confounding factors of prior knowledge of brand. Nevertheless, this design strategy can have resulted into a restricted emotional level of purchase intention as an admitted limitation.

## STIMULI AND EXPERIMENTAL MATERIAL

The experimental stimuli were two types of video format one user generated and the other brand-generated so as to represent the same fictional video game console. The videos had a uniform product content, duration of the video, and the presentation style of audio.

- **User-generated video:** Featured an unboxing/review format recorded from a consumer's point of view, including commentary and product handling.
- **Brand-generated video:** Featured professional narration and visual graphics consistent with corporate promotional standards.

They were integrated into bespoke mock product web pages that were modelled after Daraz.com to create a naturalistic shopping experience. The category of products and attributes was founded on the constructs of hedonic value and product engagement, accepted earlier on (Hollebeek et al., 2022).

## MEASUREMENT INSTRUMENTS

The table below presents the measurement scales, sample items, and reliability coefficients:

**Table 3:** List of Measurement Scales Used for the Study

Construct	Measurement Items (7-point scale)	Scale Source / $\alpha$
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	- "This video helps me decide more quickly." - "This video helps me save money." - "This video makes my purchase process easier."	Davis (1989), $\alpha = .79$
Attitude Toward Advertisement (ATA)	- Believable / Unbelievable - Appealing / Unappealing - Valuable / Not Valuable - Useful / Useless - Favourable / Unfavourable	Bhutada et al. (2016), $\alpha = .83$
Attitude Toward Brand (ATB)	- Excellent / Terrible - Pleasant / Unpleasant - Favourable / Unfavourable	Kraft et al. (2005), $\alpha = .87$
Purchase Intention (PI)	- "I am willing to purchase this product." - "I have a favourable view of buying this product." - "I desire to buy this product." - "I am likely to consider buying."	Lee et al. (2016), $\alpha = .80$

All items were rated on 7-point Likert or semantic differential scales. Cronbach's alpha values confirmed acceptable internal consistency for each scale.

## PROCEDURE

The survey was conducted using a secure web connection with the respondents being randomly assigned to either the user-generated or brand-generated video environment by the randomization feature of Qualtrics. Having examined the mock product page and watched the assigned video, the participants answered the items on the survey.

To ensure data quality, the survey incorporated the following features:

- Full video watch enforcement (auto-proceed disabled until completion).
- Embedded cues in the product description (e.g., references to changes in video placement) to ensure attention.
- Inclusion criteria checks (shopping frequency, familiarity with e-commerce).
- Demographics collected at the end, along with data on typical online shopping behavior.

The entire session took about 30–35 minutes. Debriefing was offered to the participants at the end of the study. The ethical aspects (e.g., informed consent, data privacy) were followed according to the policy of university research.

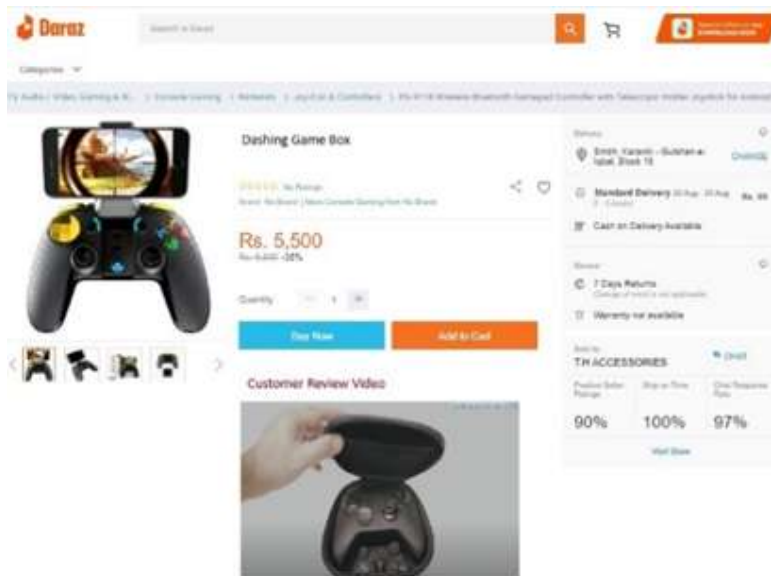


Figure 5: User Generated Content Stimuli

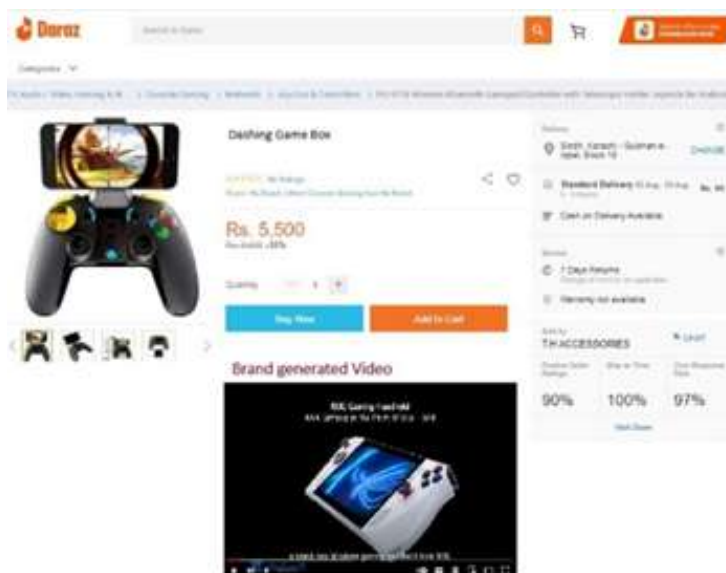


Figure 6: Brand Generated Content Stimuli

## RESULTS

The research paper has tested four hypotheses in order to determine the different impacts of the user-generated content (UGC) compared to the firm-generated content (FGC) on online shoppers perceptions and behavioral responses. The findings are discussed in terms of each

hypothesis and backed by statistical data and combined with some theoretical and empirical data.

**H1: Online shoppers perceive user-generated videos as more useful than brand-generated videos:**

To test this hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was used to provide a comparison of the groups of participants who were exposed to user-generated videos and those who watched brand-generated videos in terms of perceived usefulness (PU). This analysis indicated that there was no statistically significant difference,  $t(228) = -.87$ ,  $p = .39$  and H1 was not accepted. This result is in contrast to the previous research where authors focused on the informational superiority of UGC and the perception of its authenticity, which in many cases increases its usefulness (Banerjee et al., 2021; Ma and Gu, 2022). Users perceive peer-generated content in most of the settings as more relatable, trust, and diagnostic (Demba et al., 2019; Filieri, 2015). Nonetheless, in this research, the two types of video used were the same in terms of product characteristics, duration and format hence eliminating variations in perceived informativeness.

The other possible answer is in the notion of standardization of content. On the one hand, the cognitive distinction due to the source might be reduced by placing both UGC and FGC in a strictly regulated, carefully curated online space (Nilashi et al., 2022). Additionally, the use of a fictional brand might have created a level playing field, where neither content type had strong brand equity or trust associations to leverage (Khan, 2022; Park, Sutherland, and Lee, 2021). In the absence of social cues such as view counts, likes, or comment threads factors typically present in organic UGC participants may have relied more on the message quality than the source (Cheung et al., 2020). Hence, although the literature generally positions UGC as more effective in driving cognitive engagement, this study demonstrates that source effects may be muted when video content is normalized across design variables and presented outside real-time social contexts.

**H2: Exposure to user-generated videos leads to a more positive attitude toward advertisements than brand-generated videos:**

H2 was tested using ANCOVA with PU as a covariate to control for potential confounding effects. The results showed a statistically significant effect of video source on attitude toward the advertisement (ATA),  $F(1, 229) = 13.81$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .059$ , with UGC yielding higher mean scores ( $M = 4.99$ ) than FGC ( $M = 4.12$ ). This validates H2 and is consistent with the studies that UGC can increase emotional appeal and credibility, which contribute to more positive ad recommendations (Assaker, 2020; ?). Viewers often perceive user-generated content as more sincere, spontaneous, and experiential, which amplifies their receptiveness to the message (Romero-Rodríguez and Castillo-Abdul, 2024).

Theoretically, the result supports the expansion of TAM to advertising psychology where PU should be used as a cognitive antecedent to influence an affective reaction such as ATA Diwanji and Lee (2022) Davis, 1989; Tran & Tran, 2022. The predictors of ATA in this study were PU itself, which was a powerful predictor of ATA ( $F(1, 229) = 118.6$ ,  $p < .001$ ), again in line with the assumptions of the model. Also, the emotional contagion theory can contribute even more: by observing real users express interest or happiness, viewers can get corresponding emotions, which makes them have an even greater affective assessment of the material (M. Lee and Lee, 2022). Although branded content can be aesthetically refined, it can appear as a written presentation or advertisement, minimizing its emotional and social impact Timoshenko & Hauser, 2019. The

findings indicate that peer relatability, despite the deprivation of overt social proof (e.g., likes, shares) continues to have a persuasive effect on perception of ads.

### **H3: Exposure to user-generated videos leads to a more positive brand attitude than brand-generated content:**

The third hypothesis was the trick of whether the video content origin had any effect on attitude towards the brand (ATB) where ATA was introduced as a covariate. The results of ANCOVA indicated that the main effect of the source of content on ATB was statistically significant,  $F(1, 229) = 3.21, p = .02, \eta^2 = .014$ . The respondents who were exposed to UGC expressed more positive brand attitudes ( $M = 4.79$ ) compared to those who were exposed to FGC ( $M = 4.53$ ). These results confirm H3 and provide a support of the affect transfer hypothesis (Mayrhofer et al., 2020), which suggests that the presence of affective reactions to advertisements is related to brand judgments.

Such a strong relationship is further affirmed by the fact that the significance of ATA as a covariate is very high ( $F(1, 229) = 482.69, p < .001$ ), which indicates that ad liking is a very important mediator of brand perception (Cheung et al., 2020); . Research in the field of digital branding has highlighted that UGC can build trust, parasocial relationships, and brand advocacy, especially when the viewers appear to believe that the content is genuine or recommend a peer-related recommendation to the audience to follow it followed by a peer-advocacy effect on the brand (Gong et al., 2020; Ibrahim and Aljarah, 2023). The personal experience of UGC, first-person and colloquial language, probably increased the brand identification of the viewers. Conversely, professional content created by the brand can still fail to produce the emotional appeal needed to change brand image, particularly when dealing with brands the consumer has never heard of Renteria-García et al. (2021); Sama (2019).

### **H4: Exposure to user-generated videos leads to higher purchase intentions than brand-generated videos:**

ANCOVA was used to test the last hypothesis and ATB was used as a covariate. These outcomes showed that the purchase intention (PI) was not significantly different between the two video conditions,  $F(1, 229) = 0.423, p = .26, \eta^2 = .002$ . Thus, H4 was not supported. As much as there was a positive effect of ATB on PI ( $F(1, 229) = 153.78, p < .001$ ), purchase intent was not dependent on the source of the content.

The finding is consistent with other sources that highlight that behavioural intention is frequently conditioned by other situational factors, including product involvement, price transparency, perception of risk, and brand familiarity (Santo and Marques, 2022); Ajzen, 1991; Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2021. The fact that a fictional brand was used in this study was probably a dilution of the motivational impact of the videos since the participants did not have any existing emotional or cognitive schema associated with the brand. Furthermore, absence of price, shipping, and user reviews—all important decision drivers in real-world shopping may have reduced the ecological strength of the stimuli (Ismagilova et al., 2020); (Ma and Gu, 2022) .

The intention-behavior gap is another potential reason, as it is a frequent problem in consumer behaviour research where positive attitudes do not necessarily turn into a behavioural intention or action (Nilashi et al., 2022). Though UGC positively impacted attitudes, the virtuality of the situation and a lack of investment might have hampered the participants to show aggressive intentions to purchase. Lastly, available research indicates that purchase intention may need repetition, social validation, or incentives, which were nonexistent in the experimental context (Ali et al., 2022; Jasin, 2022; M. Lee and Lee, 2022; Mathur, Tewari, and Singh, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

The research paper provides a sophisticated insight into the role of the videos made by consumers and companies on the thoughts, emotions, and shopping intentions of online buyers in a developing-market context. The study was based on the Technology Acceptance Model and it studied how individuals in a simulated and controlled shopping condition assess usefulness, have an emotional response and acquire behavioral intentions when subjected to varying video sources.

The findings indicated that user-created videos and company-created videos did not have any difference in perceived usefulness. This result is probably connected not only to how both types of videos were maintained consistent in the experiment but also to the lack of social feedbacks, such as likes or comments, which in most cases make the persuasion of user-created content more effective. The informational value of the videos might have been decreased as well because of using the brand that was not real.

Conversely, the overall attitudes towards the advertisement and the brand were significantly higher in case the user-generated content was viewed by the participants. This demonstrates the effectiveness of emotional connection- implying that likeable, peer-produced stories can raise brand warmth and likeability even when they do not raise the perception of usefulness. The emotional bond that is formed by the user-generated content seems to boost brand attitudes by a positive transfer of mood.

The research was however unable to establish a difference in the purchase intention between the two types of videos. This could be since real purchase decisions tend to need greater personal relevance, knowledge of the brand or greater situational stimuli none of which was available owing to the make-up brand and the absence of pricing or urgency indicators. Emotional appeal might not suffice to take action in a market where trust is a consideration, the delivery matters, and the contextual considerations play a role in determining the buying behavior, such as the case with Pakistan.

The cultural background was also a factor. Although the confidence on peer opinion is on the rise, its structural constraints in the local online commerce setting do, nonetheless, influence the conduct of individuals. Consequently, the number of positive emotions evoked by user-created videos might not be converted into actual buying intentions instantly unless longed by the factors of trust or local offers.

The other significant aspect is the omission of the ease of use. Though it was excluded due to presumptions on platform familiarity, the digital confidence of all users in developing regions is not the same. The future study can be expanded by adding measures to reflect accessibility or content trust that can be more indicative of local conditions.

In practice, this research can provide practical guidance to marketers and platform designers. Putting authentic user video in the product pages can reinforce the ad attraction and brand associations. The platform can support customers to produce such content and design spaces that are mobile friendly to make video reviews. Nevertheless, more tactics can be required to transform positive attitudes into purchase intentions: price signals, recommendations, or certified purchases.

The research, on the whole, contributes to the realization of the profound impact of video format and sources of content on online consumer psychology. Although user-generated content is effective in increasing the level of emotion, its capacity to stimulate the purchase intention is still limited, unless it is complemented by the general situation in which the consumer makes a

purchase decision.

## CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST:

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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