

The Impact of User-Generated Content Marketing on Purchase Decisions: A Study on Consumers of Alternative Medicine Products in Algeria

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the impact of user-generated content marketing on the purchase decisions of alternative medicine consumers in Algeria. The study adopted a quantitative approach, as data were collected through an electronic questionnaire distributed to a sample of 200 consumers who use digital platforms to browse alternative medicine content. The data were analyzed and the hypotheses were tested using SPSS through a set of appropriate statistical methods.

The results showed that user-generated content has a positive and statistically significant effect on the purchase of alternative medicine products in Algeria, and that digital trust partially mediates this relationship. It was also found that the type of content—especially visual content—strengthens this effect. Based on these findings, the study recommends that organizations operating in the field of alternative medicine adopt digital marketing strategies that rely on user-generated content to enhance brand credibility and encourage consumer purchasing.

Keywords: Digital marketing, User-generated content, Purchase decision, Digital trust, Alternative medicine.

Jel Classification Codes : M31, M37, D91, O33, I12.

Résumé:

Cette étude vise à analyser l'impact du marketing fondé sur le contenu généré par les utilisateurs sur les décisions d'achat des consommateurs de produits de médecine alternative en Algérie. L'étude adopte une approche quantitative ; les données ont été recueillies au moyen d'un questionnaire électronique administré à un échantillon de 200 consommateurs utilisant les plateformes numériques pour consulter des contenus liés à la médecine alternative. Les données ont ensuite été analysées et les hypothèses ont été testées à l'aide du logiciel SPSS, en recourant à un ensemble de méthodes statistiques appropriées.

Les résultats ont révélé que le contenu généré par les utilisateurs exerce un effet positif et statistiquement significatif sur l'achat de produits de médecine alternative en Algérie, et que la confiance numérique joue un rôle de médiation partielle dans cette relation. Il a également été constaté que le type de contenu – en particulier le contenu visuel – renforce cet effet. Sur la base de ces résultats, l'étude recommande aux organisations opérant dans le domaine de la médecine alternative d'adopter des stratégies de marketing numérique reposant sur le contenu généré par les utilisateurs, afin de renforcer la crédibilité de la marque et d'encourager les comportements d'achat des consommateurs.

Mots clés: Marketing numérique, Contenu généré par les utilisateurs, Décision d'achat, Confiance numérique, Médecine alternative

Jel Classification Codes : M31, M37, D91, O33, I12.

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I. Introduction

Marketing practices have undergone significant transformations in recent years due to the rapid development of digital media, particularly social media platforms, which have provided consumers with a broad space for interaction and participation in creating content related to brands. In this context, consumers are no longer merely recipients of advertising messages; they actively contribute to shaping the product image and influencing purchase decisions through what is known as user-generated content, which includes reviews, ratings, images, videos, and personal experiences shared by individuals on digital platforms.

User-generated content represents one of the most prominent tools in modern digital marketing, as it derives its influence from its realistic nature and the authenticity of the experience it conveys, which enhances its credibility and persuasive power compared to traditional advertisements. Numerous studies have shown that this type of content plays a significant role in building digital trust among consumers and influences their purchase intentions and behaviors.

Amid this digital transformation, the alternative medicine market in Algeria emerges as an important field for studying the impact of user-generated content. This sector has witnessed notable growth due to increasing consumer interest in natural products and herbal remedies, with many individuals relying on others' online experiences to assess product quality and effectiveness before making a purchase decision. The importance of studying this phenomenon is further amplified by the limited formal regulation of the market, varying levels of health awareness, and the lack of reliable evaluation channels, making user-generated content a primary reference for guiding consumer decisions.

Research Problem

Despite the growing scientific interest in the role of user-generated content in consumer behavior, Arab—particularly Algerian—studies remain limited in this field, especially those that address the relationship between the characteristics of digital content (its quality, credibility, and type) and the purchase decision in health-sensitive sectors such as alternative medicine products. This gap raises the main research question that guides the study toward a deeper understanding of this relationship, formulated as follows:

To what extent does user-generated content marketing, through its quality, credibility, and type, influence the purchase decisions of alternative medicine consumers in Algeria?

The main research question can be divided into several detailed sub-questions, designed to analyze the different dimensions of the relationship between the studied variables, as follows:

1. Is there a relationship between the quality of user-generated content and consumer trust in the product?

2. How does the credibility of user-generated content affect the consumer's purchase intention?
3. Is there a difference between visual user-generated content (images/videos) and textual content in influencing the purchase decision?
4. What role does trust play in explaining the relationship between user-generated content and the consumer's purchase decision?

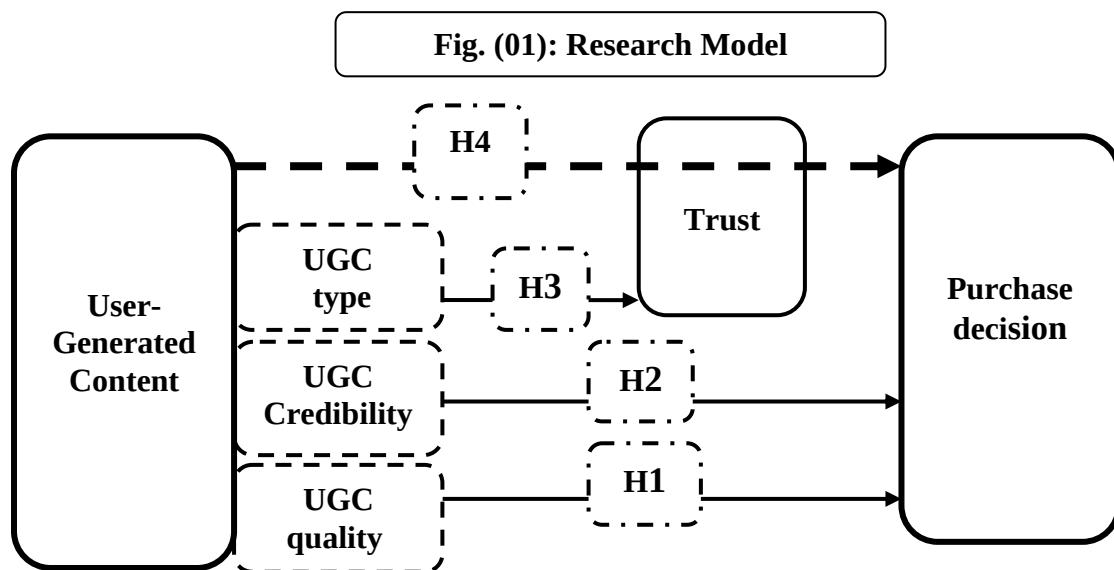
Research hypotheses

Building on the stated problem, this study is guided by the following hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis 1 (H1):** There is a statistically significant relationship between the quality of user-generated content and consumer trust in the product.
- **Hypothesis 2 (H2):** The credibility of user-generated content has a positive effect on the consumer's purchase intention.
- **Hypothesis 3 (H3):** The effect of user-generated content on the purchase decision varies depending on the type of content (textual, visual, or audio).
- **Hypothesis 4 (H4):** Trust plays a mediating role in the relationship between user-generated content and the purchase decision of alternative medicine consumers.

Research Model

We can propose an integrated theoretical model that links the elements of user-generated content (UGC), trust, and purchase decision, as follows:



Source: Prepared by the researcher

Research Significance

The importance of this research stems from its engagement with one of the most prominent contemporary trends in digital marketing- User-Generated Content Marketing (UGC Marketing)- which has become an effective tool for influencing consumer behavior and building trust toward brands and commercial products. This importance becomes even greater when examining this concept in

the context of alternative medicine products in Algeria, given the specificity of this market, which relies heavily on individual experiences and shared impressions among consumers rather than on traditional marketing campaigns. Furthermore, the research gains significance from its focus on highlighting the consumer's role as an active participant in the marketing process rather than a mere recipient of advertising messages. This contributes to a deeper scientific understanding of how purchase decisions are formed within the Algerian digital environment.

Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve a set of interrelated main objectives which are as follows:

1. To analyze the relationship between the quality of user-generated content and consumer trust in the product, and its impact on the purchase decision.
2. To determine the effect of the credibility of user-generated content on the consumer's purchase decision.
3. To highlight the differences in the impact of various types of user-generated content on the purchase decision, by comparing the influence of textual, visual (images/videos), and audio content on consumer attitudes and purchasing behavior.
4. To test the mediating role of trust in the relationship between user-generated content and the consumer's purchase decision

Literature Review Overview

Over the past decade, academic interest in User-Generated Content (UGC) has grown significantly, recognizing it as a powerful tool in digital marketing and in building consumer trust toward brands. A review of the literature indicates that the quality, credibility, and perceived value of user-created content are not only essential for capturing consumer attention but also play a crucial role in establishing digital trust and shaping purchase intentions. For instance, (Babić Rosario, et al, 2016, pp. 297- 311) found a strong relationship between perceived credibility of UGC and consumers' purchase intentions, emphasizing that authentic and reliable content enhances trust and encourages engagement. Similarly, (Zhang, et al, 2019, pp. 732- 744) demonstrated that detailed reviews and visual content on e-commerce platforms increase perceived value and positively influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

Recent research has further examined the psychological mechanisms underlying these effects. (Kim, et al, 2021, pp. 1805- 1824) found that emotions act as a mediating factor between exposure to UGC and purchase intention, suggesting that honest and positive content evokes feelings of trust and reassurance that ultimately strengthen consumers' intention to buy. Moreover, (Qin L, et al, 2022, pp. 36- 52) highlighted the importance of content format, showing that short video-based UGC generates a higher perceived value and engagement level than traditional text-based formats. More recently, (Hajli &

Colin, 2023, p. 142) revealed that digital trust partially mediates the relationship between content quality and consumer engagement, implying that UGC's influence on behavior often operates indirectly through trust formation.

However, most previous studies have concentrated on Western and Asian contexts, focusing mainly on traditional consumer sectors such as electronics, fashion, and tourism. In contrast, the alternative medicine products sector has recently witnessed a growing reliance on user recommendations and experiences as a primary source of information. This trend is largely due to weak regulatory oversight, product diversity, and variations in consumer attitudes toward such products. Nevertheless, scientific research in Algeria remains very limited in addressing the relationship between digital user-generated content (UGC) and purchase decisions within this sector, highlighting the need for an in-depth study that considers the cultural and behavioral specificities of Algerian consumers.

II. Theoretical Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of this study is based on explaining the potential relationships between User-Generated Content (UGC) marketing, trust, and purchase decisions, particularly in the context of sensitive products such as alternative medicine. It is assumed that content created by users on digital platforms influences consumers' perceptions of product quality and credibility, which, in turn, enhances their trust and increases the likelihood of making a purchase decision.

II.1 User-Generated Content Marketing (UGC Marketing)

User-Generated Content (UGC) marketing is considered one of the modern trends in digital marketing practices, as it relies on content created by consumers themselves -such as reviews, recommendations, photos, videos, or comments- as a primary source of influence on consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions (Dessart et al, 2020, pp. 865–887). This type of marketing differs from traditional advertising in that it reflects real experiences shared by genuine users, making it more credible and persuasive (Rachel et al, 2023, p. 7). It is characterized by being organic and unpaid, relying on the social credibility derived from peer recommendations.

The characteristics of user-generated content are a crucial variable in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in terms of content quality and content credibility. The more accurate, objective, and up-to-date the information provided by users, the higher the level of trust consumers place in that content and consequently, the greater the likelihood of making a purchase decision (Erkan et al, 2016, pp. 47–55).

The study by (Ramos et al, 2025, p. 5) indicated that the type of content (textual, visual, or interactive) plays a significant role in determining its impact. Consumers tend to trust visual or experiential content- such as short videos on

TikTok- more than purely textual content, as it conveys realistic and sensory experiences that enhance credibility and engagement.

Based on previous literature, User-Generated Content (UGC) marketing can be measured through the following dimensions:

1. Content Quality:

- The clarity, accuracy, and timeliness of the information provided.
- The usefulness of the content in supporting decision-making.

2. Content Credibility:

- The degree of objectivity of the content and its distance from direct promotional intent.
- The level of consumer trust in the source (e.g., the reviewer or video publisher).

3. Content Type:

- The consumer's preferred format (textual, visual, or interactive).
- The extent to which each type influences the consumer's perception of the product.

II.2 Trust as a Mediating Variable

Trust is considered a central concept in digital marketing, as it forms the foundation upon which consumers engage with information originating from non-official sources on the Internet (Pongchatorn & Sumaman, 2024, p.6). In this context, trust refers to the consumer's confidence in the credibility of the information and the expectation that the supplier's or product's behavior will align with their best interests.

In the context of user-generated content (UGC) marketing, trust functions as a connecting link between the characteristics of the content and the consumer's final behavior. The study by (Zakaria et al, 2024, pp. 743- 760) confirmed that the quality and credibility of user-generated content contribute to building trust, which in turn enhances purchase intention and increases the likelihood of making an actual purchase decision.

Moreover, digital trust plays a crucial mediating role in transforming intention into actual purchasing behavior, particularly in sectors involving high perceived risk, such as health and pharmaceutical products (Hajli N, 2018, pp. 799-810). This can be explained by the fact that consumers in these fields tend to rely more heavily on peer testimonials and user experiences to reduce uncertainty.

The conceptual dimensions of trust in this research context and its relationship with other variables can be summarized as follows:

- 1. Trust in content:** The extent to which the published information is accurate and truthful. (Filieri, 2015, pp. 1261- 1270)

2. Trust in the source: The degree of confidence in the users who share the content on digital platforms. (Dessart et al, 2020, pp. 865-887)

3. Trust in the product: The consumer's perception that the product is safe and effective based on other users' opinions (Hajli, 2018, pp. 799-810)

II.3 Purchase Decision

Purchase decision is defined as the final outcome of the cognitive process that the consumer undergoes before acquiring a particular product or service, influenced by a combination of psychological, social, and marketing factors (Kotler & Keller, 2020, p. 65). In the modern digital environment, interactive content and user experiences have become among the most influential factors shaping this decision.

Several recent studies have shown that online purchase decisions are not solely determined by economic factors but are also shaped by emotional and cognitive experiences created through interactions with user-generated content. When a consumer engages with content that is high-quality, credible, and consistent with their expectations, the likelihood of making a purchase decision increases.

In the context of alternative medicine products, this decision becomes even more sensitive due to the nature of the products, which rely heavily on trust in their efficacy and safety. Consequently, the indirect influence of user-generated content—through trust—becomes greater (Powell, 2024, pp. 203–219). The conceptual dimensions of the purchase decision can be summarized as follows:

1. Purchase Intention – The consumer's readiness to acquire the product.
2. Preference – The degree of inclination to choose the product based on user-generated content.
3. Actual Purchase Behavior – Whether the consumer actually purchased the product after exposure to the content.

II.4 The Relationship Between Variables According to the Theoretical Framework

Based on the above, the theoretical framework of this study is grounded in Social Influence Theory, which posits that individuals are influenced by the opinions and experiences of others when making decisions. It is also partially supported by E-Trust Theory (Gefen, 2002, pp. 725–737), which explains the role of trust in digital environments as a key driver of purchasing behavior.

Accordingly, the present study assumes that:

1. The characteristics of user-generated content (quality, credibility, and type) positively influence trust - the higher the quality and credibility of the content, the greater the consumer's trust in the product and the source.

2. Trust, in turn, affects the purchase decision, serving as the main catalyst that transforms purchase intention into actual buying behavior.
3. Additionally, the type of content may strengthen or weaken the relationship between user-generated content and the purchase decision.

III. Research methodology

This study adopts the descriptive-analytical approach, which combines an objective description of the phenomenon with an explanatory analysis of causal relationships, following these steps:

- 1. Descriptive Phase:** This stage involves collecting field data related to consumers' opinions and behaviors toward user-generated content and alternative medicine products in Algeria.
- 2. Analytical Phase:** In this stage, the study's results are analyzed, and the hypotheses are tested using statistical analysis tools (such as correlation and multiple regression analysis) to determine the effect of each variable on the others.

This approach is deemed appropriate since the study aims not only to explore but also to measure causal relationships, thereby enhancing the validity and generalizability of the findings to broader consumer groups.

III.1 Research Population

The study population consists of all Algerian consumers who use digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to search for information or review user experiences related to alternative medicine products (such as medicinal herbs, natural supplements, and therapeutic oils).

This population represents the target group of the study because they:

- Are directly exposed to user-generated content related to alternative medicine products;
- Are influenced by recommendations and reviews published on these platforms;
- Represent the segment that makes purchasing decisions based on this type of content.

III.2 Research Sample

This study relied on a purposive non-probability sample, deliberately selected to include individuals possessing characteristics relevant to the research topic—specifically, those who use digital platforms to browse and follow content related to alternative medicine. This sampling method aims to ensure the collection of accurate data from respondents with actual knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under investigation.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to a sample of 200 consumers who actively use digital platforms in Algeria and have shown interest in alternative medicine products and related user-generated content. This

group was chosen for its ability to provide realistic assessments of how digital content influences their purchasing decisions.

III.3 Research tools

The study employed an electronic questionnaire as the primary data collection tool, given its ability to reach a wide segment of active users on digital platforms and its suitability for a topic centered on online interaction and user-generated content. The questionnaire was carefully designed to ensure clarity and precision of the questions and consisted of four main sections covering the study's key variables, as follows:

Section 1: Personal Information: Includes questions about gender, age, educational level, income, frequency of internet use, and preferred types of alternative medicine products.

Section 2: User-Generated Content (UGC) Marketing: Comprises **9 items** covering the following dimensions: content quality, content credibility, and content type.

Section 3: Trust: Based on an adapted scale and includes **6 items** measuring: trust in content, trust in the source (user), and trust in the product.

Section 4: Purchase Decision: Contains **7 items** covering purchase intention, actual purchase decision, and post-purchase satisfaction.

The questionnaire also included closed-ended questions based on a five-point Likert scale to measure participants' attitudes and opinions with varying degrees of agreement or disagreement.

Data were analyzed and the hypotheses were tested using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) through a set of appropriate statistical techniques, including:

- Descriptive analysis to characterize the sample's demographic features;
- Cronbach's Alpha test to assess the reliability of the research instrument;
- Correlation analysis and multiple linear regression to examine the relationships between variables and determine the degree of influence of each factor.

IV. Presentation and Discussion of Findings

IV.1 Research Tool Validity

To ensure the face validity of the questionnaire, it was reviewed by a panel of expert professors in the same field. After incorporating their feedback and recommendations, the questionnaire was distributed to the target sample. Subsequently, the construct validity of the instrument was tested to determine the extent to which each item accurately measures the variable for which it was designed. This was done using Pearson's correlation coefficient, and the results were as follows:

Table (01): Results of the Pearson Correlation Test

Item	r (Item-Total)	Sig. (p)	Item	r (Item-Total)	Sig. (p)	Item	r (Item-Total)	Sig. (p)
UGC1	0.673	0.000	Trust1	0.712	0.000	Purchase1	0.701	0.000
UGC2	0.702	0.000	Trust2	0.689	0.000	Purchase2	0.682	0.000
UGC3	0.659	0.000	Trust3	0.664	0.000	Purchase3	0.659	0.000
UGC4	0.642	0.000	Trust4	0.641	0.000	Purchase4	0.641	0.000
UGC5	0.681	0.000	Trust5	0.682	0.000	Purchase5	0.667	0.000
UGC6	0.690	0.000	Trust6	0.653	0.000	Purchase6	0.654	0.000
UGC7	0.655	0.000	/	/	/	Purchase7	0.632	0.000
UGC8	0.634	0.000	/	/	/	/	/	/
UGC9	0.621	0.000	/	/	/	/	/	/

Each item is considered valid if its **correlation coefficient with the total score is (r) $\geq$ 0.30** and statistically significant (**p** < 0.05).

Source: Designed by Researcher Based on The Outputs of SPSS V 25.

Based on the results presented in Table 01, it is evident that all questionnaire items satisfy these criteria: the significance values (p-values) for all items are below the 0.05 threshold, confirming statistical significance. Furthermore, the item-total correlation coefficients range from 0.621 to 0.712 across the three constructs—User-Generated Content (UGC), Trust, and Purchase Decision. These values are well above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.30, indicating a strong positive relationship between each item and the mean of its respective construct.

Specifically:

- For UGC, the item-total correlations ranged from 0.621 to 0.702, reflecting that each item effectively captures aspects of content quality, credibility, and type as perceived by respondents.
- For Trust, the correlations ranged from 0.641 to 0.712, demonstrating that all items consistently measure respondents' digital trust in alternative medicine products.
- For Purchase Decision, correlations ranged from 0.632 to 0.701, confirming that each item accurately reflects consumer intentions and behaviors regarding purchasing decisions.

These high correlation coefficients indicate that the items within each construct are coherent and consistently represent the underlying theoretical dimensions. This provides strong evidence of internal consistency and construct validity. The observed positive and substantial correlations also suggest that the items are capable of discriminating between respondents' different levels of agreement or experience with the constructs.

Moreover, the results imply that the questionnaire is suitable for subsequent statistical analyses, such as regression or correlation tests, as the items reliably measure the intended variables. In summary, the analysis confirms that the questionnaire is both valid and reliable for assessing the influence of UGC on trust and purchase decisions in the context of alternative medicine consumers in Algeria.

IV.2 Reliability of the Research tool:

To test the reliability of the study instrument, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was calculated, and the results were as follows:

Table (02): Results of Cronbach's Alpha Test

Dimension	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Reliability Level
User-Generated Content (UGC)	9	0.911	Very High
Trust	6	0.884	High
Purchase Decision	7	0.897	Very High
Overall Scale	22	0.932	Very High

Source: Designed by Researcher Based on The Outputs of SPSS V 25.

The validity and reliability of the research instrument were thoroughly assessed to ensure its suitability for measuring the intended constructs. Construct validity was evaluated using item-total correlations, with an item considered valid if $r \geq 0.30$ and $p < 0.05$. The results indicated that all items met these criteria, with correlations ranging from 0.621 to 0.712 across the three constructs: User-Generated Content (UGC), Trust, and Purchase Decision. This demonstrates a strong positive relationship between each item and the mean of its respective construct, confirming the internal coherence and accuracy of the questionnaire in capturing the theoretical dimensions. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha (α), which showed very high internal consistency for UGC ($\alpha = 0.911$) and Purchase Decision ($\alpha = 0.897$), and high consistency for Trust ($\alpha = 0.884$), with the overall scale achieving $\alpha = 0.932$. These high values indicate that the items reliably measure their intended variables, are coherent within each construct, and minimize overlap across constructs. Taken together, the validity and reliability analyses confirm that the questionnaire is both robust and suitable for subsequent statistical analyses, including hypothesis testing and assessing causal relationships among the studied variables.

IV.3 Personal Characteristics of the Research Sample

The characteristics of the study sample can be illustrated in the following table:

Table (03): Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	88	44.0
	Female	112	56.0
Age	18–24 years	60	30.0
	25–34 years	80	40.0
	35–44 years	40	20.0
	45 years and above	20	10.0
Education Level	Undergraduate	124	62.0
	Postgraduate	50	25.0
	Other	26	13.0
Monthly Income	< 50,000 DZD	44	22.0
	50,000–100,000 DZD	96	48.0

	> 100,000 DZD	60	30.0
Social Media Usage	Daily	140	70.0
	Weekly	40	20.0
	Occasionally	20	10.0

Source: Designed by Researcher Based on The Outputs of SPSS V 25

The results of Table 03 show that the study sample consists of individuals of both genders, with a slightly higher representation of females (56%) compared to males (44%). Regarding age, most respondents belong to the 25–34 years group, accounting for 40% of the total sample, followed by the 18–24 years group at 30%, indicating that the study primarily includes a youthful segment that is active in digital consumer behavior. In terms of educational level, the majority of respondents hold a university degree (approximately 62%), while 25% have attained postgraduate studies, reflecting a high educational level that may influence their awareness and interaction with digital marketing content. Concerning monthly income, most participants reported earning between 50,000 and 100,000 DZD, representing the typical middle-income segment of online consumers in Algeria.

Finally, the results indicate that more than 70% of respondents use social media daily, confirming the importance of these platforms as effective marketing channels for alternative medicine products.

IV.4 Normality Distribution of the Research variables

To verify the normal distribution of the study variables, skewness, kurtosis, and the Shapiro-Wilk test were used. The results are presented in the following table:

Table (04): Results of the Normality Test

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis	Shapiro-Wilk (Statistic)	Sig. (p)	Normality
UGC (9 items)	0.152	-0.421	0.971	0.093	Normal
Trust (6 items)	-0.201	-0.365	0.964	0.075	Normal
Purchase Decision (7 items)	0.178	-0.289	0.972	0.102	Normal

Source: Designed by Researcher Based on The Outputs of SPSS V 25

The results of skewness and kurtosis indicate that all variables fall within acceptable limits (-2 to +2 for skewness and -7 to +7 for kurtosis), suggesting a balanced distribution free from severe deviations or outliers. Additionally, the Shapiro-Wilk test results show that the Sig. (p) values for all variables exceed the significance level of 0.05, confirming that the data follow a normal distribution. Accordingly, parametric statistical analyses, such as Pearson's correlation and linear regression, can be used to examine the relationships and effects between variables, providing a reliable basis for data analysis and drawing scientific conclusions.

IV.5 Presentation and Analysis of the Sample's Trends toward the Research Variables

The means and standard deviations of the study variables were calculated to identify the general trends in respondents' opinions regarding user-generated content marketing, trust, and purchase decision in the context of alternative medicine products. The following results were obtained:

Table (05): Sample Respondents' Attitudes toward the Research Variables

Variable	Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level
User-Generated Content (UGC)	9	4.12	0.68	High
Trust	6	3.95	0.72	High
Purchase Decision	7	4.05	0.64	High

Source: Designed by Researcher Based on The Outputs of SPSS V 25

The results presented in Table (05) indicate that respondents showed a high level of agreement with the statements related to user-generated content marketing (mean = 4.12, standard deviation = 0.68). This suggests that consumers engage strongly with content created by other users and perceive it as valuable and credible.

Regarding the trust variable, the mean value was 3.95 with a standard deviation of 0.72, reflecting a high level of trust. This implies that user-generated content significantly contributes to enhancing consumers' confidence in alternative medicine brands and products.

As for the purchase decision variable, the mean was 4.05 and the standard deviation 0.64, indicating that consumers' purchasing decisions are substantially influenced by the credibility and authenticity of information shared through user-generated content on digital platforms.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that user-generated content marketing enjoys a strong positive perception among consumers, particularly regarding its impact on trust and purchase decision-making. The high mean scores highlight that user-generated content serves as a reliable and influential source in the Algerian market for alternative medicine products.

IV.6 Correlation Analysis

The Pearson Correlation Coefficient was calculated between the main variables of the study in order to determine the strength and direction of the relationships among them, and the following results were obtained:

Table (06): Correlation Coefficients between Variables

Variables	UGC	Trust	Purchase Decision
UGC	1	0.682**	0.611**
Trust	0.682**	1	0.734**
Purchase Decision	0.611**	0.734**	1

Source: Designed by Researcher Based on The Outputs of SPSS V 25

The results indicate the existence of strong, positive, and statistically significant correlations among all variables:

- There is a strong positive relationship between user-generated content marketing and trust ($r = 0.682$).
- There is also a strong positive relationship between trust and the purchase decision ($r = 0.734$).
- In addition, a moderate-to-strong direct relationship exists between user-generated content marketing and the purchase decision ($r = 0.611$).

This indicates that consumers who interact more with user-generated content tend to develop higher levels of trust, which in turn leads to a more positive purchase decision.

IV.7 Hypothesis Testing

• **Testing the First Hypothesis (H1):** There is a statistically significant relationship between the quality of user-generated content and consumer trust in the product.

Table (07): Results of Testing the First Hypothesis (H1)

Variables	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Sig. (p)	Significance Level	Interpretation
Quality of User-Generated Content ↔ Consumer Trust	0.742	0.000	< 0.05	A strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship exists

Source: Designed by Researcher Based on The Outputs of SPSS V 25

The results indicate a strong positive correlation between the quality of user-generated content (UGC) and consumer trust, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.742$ and a significance level of $p = 0.000$, which is well below the 0.05 threshold for statistical significance. This finding suggests that higher-quality user-generated content—such as accurate, objective, and informative reviews, ratings, and experiences—substantially contributes to building trust among consumers. The strength of the correlation indicates that consumers are more likely to rely on UGC when it is perceived as credible and of high quality, which in turn positively influences their perception of the product's reliability and authenticity. From a theoretical perspective, these results support the premise of Social Influence Theory, which posits that individuals' decisions are shaped by the opinions and experiences of others, and align with research emphasizing the role of content quality in enhancing digital trust.

Consequently, based on these results, the first hypothesis (H1), which posits that the quality of user-generated content has a significant positive effect on consumer trust, is accepted. This finding underscores the importance for organizations, particularly in sensitive sectors like alternative medicine, to encourage high-quality user-generated content as a strategy to strengthen consumer trust and credibility.

- **Testing the Second Hypothesis (H2):** User-generated content credibility has a positive effect on the consumer's purchase intention.

Table (08): Results of Testing the Second Hypothesis (H2)

Model	R	R ²	β (Beta)	Sig. (p)	Interpretation
Content Credibility → Purchase Intention	0.695	0.483	0.695	0.000	A positive and statistically

Source: Designed by Researcher Based on The Outputs of SPSS V 25

The simple linear regression results show a positive and statistically significant effect of user-generated content (UGC) credibility on purchase intention, with $r = 0.695$ and $R^2 = 0.483$, indicating that 48.3% of the variation in purchase intention is explained by content credibility. The significance value ($p = 0.000$) confirms the model's statistical significance.

These findings suggest that credible and trustworthy UGC strongly influences consumers' purchase intentions by enhancing confidence and reducing perceived risk, particularly in sectors like alternative medicine. From a theoretical perspective, this supports E-Trust Theory, emphasizing the role of trust in online decision-making. Accordingly, the second hypothesis (H2) is accepted, highlighting the importance for organizations to foster credible and transparent user-generated content to promote consumer purchase behavior.

- **Testing the Third Hypothesis (H3):** The effect of user-generated content on the purchase decision varies according to the type of content (textual, visual, or audio).

Table (09): Results of Testing the Third Hypothesis (H3)

Type of User-Generated Content	Mean	Standard Deviation	F Value	Sig. (p)	Interpretation
Textual Content	3.88	0.69	4.216	0.016	Statistically significant difference
Visual Content	4.21	0.61	—	—	
Audio Content	3.95	0.65	—	—	

Source: Designed by Researcher Based on The Outputs of SPSS V 25

The results of the One-Way ANOVA test indicate statistically significant differences in the influence of user-generated content (UGC) on purchase decisions depending on the type of content, with $F = 4.216$ and $\text{Sig.} = 0.016$ (< 0.05). This confirms that the effect of UGC on purchase decisions varies according to whether the content is textual, visual, or audio.

The mean scores reveal that visual content (mean = 4.21) exerts the strongest influence on consumers' purchase decisions, followed by audio content (mean = 3.95) and textual content (mean = 3.88). This suggests that consumers are more responsive to content that provides rich visual information, likely because it conveys product characteristics more clearly and creates a stronger sense of trust and engagement compared to text or audio alone.

• **Testing the Fourth Hypothesis (H4):** Trust plays a mediating role in the relationship between user-generated content and the purchase decision among consumers of alternative medicine products.

Table (09): Results of Testing the Fourth Hypothesis (H4)

Path	Standardized Coefficient (β)	Sig. (p)	Type of Mediation	Interpretation
User-Generated Content $\rightarrow$ Trust	0.742	0.000	—	Statistically significant
Trust $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision	0.658	0.000	—	Statistically significant
User-Generated Content $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision (Direct)	0.311	0.029	Partial Mediation	Trust partially mediates the relationship

Source: Designed by Researcher Based on The Outputs of SPSS V 25

The mediation analysis, following the approach of Baron and Kenny (1986), indicates that trust partially mediates the relationship between user-generated content (UGC) and purchase decision. The direct effect of UGC on purchase decision decreased to $\beta = 0.311$ ($p = 0.029$) after including trust as a mediating variable, while both paths—UGC $\rightarrow$ Trust ($\beta = 0.742$, $p = 0.000$) and Trust $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.658$, $p = 0.000$)—remained statistically significant. These results suggest that UGC influences purchase decisions both directly and indirectly. The indirect effect operates through enhancing consumer trust, meaning that higher-quality, credible, and engaging UGC increases trust in the product, which in turn positively affects the likelihood of purchase. This highlights the crucial role of trust as a psychological mechanism through which digital content can shape consumer behavior, especially in sensitive sectors such as alternative medicine where confidence in product efficacy and reliability is essential.

Consequently, the fourth hypothesis (H4), which posits that trust mediates the relationship between UGC and purchase decision, is accepted. These findings underscore the importance for organizations to not only promote high-quality and credible UGC but also to actively foster consumer trust as a strategic pathway to enhance purchasing behavior.

V. Discussion of Results

The results of this study demonstrate a deep understanding of the role played by user-generated content in influencing the purchase decisions of alternative medicine consumers in Algeria. The findings confirm that this type of content represents a crucial and multidimensional factor in shaping consumer behavior, which aligns with several recent studies in the field of digital marketing and consumer trust. These studies have highlighted the shift from a one-way

communication model (organization-to-consumer) to an interactive model based on participation and individual consumer experience.

- Regarding the first hypothesis (H1), which proposed a statistically significant relationship between the quality of user-generated content (UGC) and consumer trust in the product, the results revealed a positive and significant correlation between the two variables. This indicates that a higher level of content quality produced by users—reflected in clarity, accuracy, completeness, and consistency of information—substantially contributes to strengthening consumer trust in alternative medicine products. High-quality UGC reduces uncertainty and perceived risk, providing consumers with reliable insights that help them evaluate the effectiveness and safety of products. These findings are consistent with previous research, such as Filieri (2015), who confirmed that the quality of information presented in online reviews is a key determinant of digital trust. In addition, the results align with the principles of Social Influence Theory, which posits that individuals' perceptions and decisions are shaped by the opinions and experiences of others. Practically, this underscores the importance for organizations to encourage the creation of high-quality, informative, and reliable user-generated content to build and maintain consumer trust, particularly in sensitive sectors like alternative medicine where credibility and confidence are critical.

- supporting the second hypothesis (H2) confirmed a positive and significant effect of the credibility of user-generated content (UGC) on consumers' purchase intention. This indicates that consumers are more likely to make purchasing decisions when they perceive the content as authentic, unbiased, and reflective of genuine user experiences. Credible content reduces perceived risk, enhances confidence in the product, and provides consumers with reliable information that facilitates informed decision-making. This finding is consistent with Erkan and Evans (2016), who emphasized that credibility is a critical determinant in translating purchase intention into actual consumer behavior, especially in digital markets where social interaction and peer influence play a dominant role. Practically, these results highlight the importance for organizations to encourage trustworthy and transparent user-generated content, as high credibility not only strengthens consumers' intentions but also increases the likelihood of converting those

- As for the third hypothesis (H3), the results revealed that the impact of user-generated content varies according to the type of content. Specifically, visual content (images and videos) was found to have the strongest influence on purchase decisions compared to textual or audio content. This finding is consistent with Smith & Gallicano (2019) and Khan et al. (2023), who argued that visual stimuli are more effective in digital persuasion, as they facilitate the

communication of real-life experiences, build trust, and enhance consumers' emotional engagement.

- Finally, the results supporting the fourth hypothesis (H4) confirmed the partial mediating role of trust in the relationship between user-generated content (UGC) and purchase decisions. This indicates that UGC affects purchase decisions both directly and indirectly through the enhancement of consumer trust. In other words, high-quality and credible content not only has a direct impact on consumers' willingness to purchase but also strengthens their confidence in the product, which further reinforces the likelihood of purchase.

This finding aligns with previous studies, such as Hajli (2018) and Wang & Yu (2021), who emphasized that trust serves as a critical link between electronic content and consumer behavior. The presence of partial mediation suggests that while trust significantly channels part of the effect of UGC on purchase decisions, other factors associated with UGC—such as engagement, social influence, and perceived relevance—may

VI. Conclusion

This study sought to analyze the impact of user-generated content on purchase decisions, with a particular focus on the mediating role of trust and the moderating effect of content type in the context of alternative medicine products in Algeria. By employing a quantitative approach and statistical analysis, the results revealed that user-generated content has a positive and significant effect on consumers' purchase decisions. The findings further demonstrated that trust serves as a key mediating factor explaining how user-generated content enhances purchase intention, and that this effect varies depending on the type of content, with visual content showing the strongest influence compared to textual or audio forms. This underscores the importance of visual appeal and credibility in digital content when influencing consumer behavior.

At the theoretical level, this study contributes to enriching the academic literature in the fields of digital marketing and consumer behavior by confirming the multidimensional role of user-generated content, particularly within emerging markets such as Algeria. On the practical level, the findings highlight the need to integrate authentic user experiences into marketing strategies to foster greater trust and brand engagement.

In conclusion, user-generated content is no longer merely a marketing tool; it has evolved into a strategic communication mechanism in the digital era that shapes consumer perceptions and guides purchase decisions—especially in sectors that rely heavily on credibility and trust, such as alternative medicine. Therefore, companies are encouraged to integrate this form of content into their future digital marketing strategies, emphasizing interactive content and authentic consumer participation in the marketing process by engaging them in content

creation and enhancing direct communication to strengthen product and brand credibility.

VII. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies that rely on user-generated content (UGC) within the context of alternative medicine products in Algeria:

•**Enhancing digital marketing strategies based on user-generated content (UGC):** Companies producing and marketing alternative medicine products in Algeria should encourage consumers to share their experiences and opinions through digital platforms by organizing interactive campaigns and online competitions that promote the creation of authentic and trustworthy content.

•**Focusing on the quality and credibility of published content:** The study recommends that companies monitor the quality of the content shared about their products and engage positively with user comments, as this helps strengthen digital trust and maintain a positive brand image.

•**Developing digital awareness campaigns to strengthen consumer trust:** Consumers should be encouraged to verify the sources of information related to alternative medicine products through official pages and trusted influencers to ensure the dissemination of accurate and balanced content.

•**Prioritizing visual content as the main source of influence:** The findings revealed that visual content (videos and illustrative images) has the greatest impact on purchase intentions; therefore, it is recommended to increase the use of such media in digital marketing campaigns.

•**Enhancing communication between companies and consumers:** The study recommends building an interactive relationship between brands and customers through prompt responses and personalized content that foster trust and brand loyalty.

•**Integrating user-generated content marketing into formal marketing plans:** Companies should make user-generated content an essential component of their communication strategies rather than a supplementary activity, while adopting digital analytics tools to measure the impact of this content on consumer intentions and behavior.

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