GENERATION Z'S RELIANCE ON UGC AND VLOGS FOR DRIVING BUYING INTEREST IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY

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Abstract:

Background: Generation Z's frequent engagement with social media platforms significantly shapes their purchasing intentions. They actively use these platforms and tend to trust authentic content, such as reviews and user-shared experiences, more than traditional advertising.
Purpose: This study aims to analyze how User-Generated Content (UGC) and vlogs influence Generation Z's purchasing intentions in the fashion industry, providing insights for businesses to develop effective and authentic marketing strategies.
Design/methodology/approach: Using the Slovin formula, 400 respondents were sampled. Data analysis was conducted through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).
Findings/Results: The study reveals that UGC and vlogs affect Generation Z's purchasing interest by offering personalized, relatable, and interactive content that fosters emotional connections and conveys product information authentically. These findings can guide businesses in refining their marketing strategies for Gen Z.
Conclusion: UGC and vlogs moderately influences consumer purchase intentions, emphasizing the importance of authentic, content-driven marketing approaches.
Originality/value (State of the art): This article's contributes originality by examining the combined impact of UGC and vlogs on Gen Z's purchasing intentions, offering fresh perspectives on effective marketing strategies within the fashion industry.

Keywords: UGC (User-Generated Content), vlogs, purchasing intention, Generation Z, fashion industry

How to Cite:

Rahman, I. J., Rachmayandi, F., Fatimah, S. E., & Rahmadi, R. (2025). Generation Z's reliance on UGC and vlogs for driving buying interest in the fashion industry. Jurnal Aplikasi Bisnis dan Manajemen (JABM), 11(3). https://doi.org/10.17358/jabm.11.3.917

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an indispensable tool for businesses, enabling them to disseminate product information and execute highly targeted marketing strategies (Aldiansyah et al. 2024). Populix data indicates that Gen Z dominates e-commerce activity, with individuals aged 18–28 comprising the majority of online shoppers. These platforms have become central to Gen Z's product discovery and brand interaction. Their ability to target users based on behavior, interests, and demographics further enhances marketing effectiveness (Ernawati & Curatman, 2024). Consumers increasingly seek authentic, peer-driven content, making social media an important medium for sharing such content and building trust-based networks (Ismail et al. 2022). User-generated content offers credible insights that assist consumers in evaluating products and shaping purchase intentions. Because UGC often contains both positive and negative reviews, it is generally perceived as trustworthy (Israfilzade & Baghivora, 2022). Brands that enhance the quality and interactivity of UGC can significantly strengthen purchase intention (Ismail et al. 2022; Lyu et al. 2023). For example, in Bangladesh, visually appealing posts, compelling captions, and celebrity endorsements have been shown to positively influence Gen Z's buying intentions (Shetu, 2023), suggesting that similar strategies may also be effective in other emerging markets.

As influential communicators, vloggers play a vital role in shaping Gen Z's purchasing interest (Wang, 2022). This generation tends to view vloggers as relatable figures capable of forming emotional connections, with engaging, honest, and creative presentation styles proving more persuasive than traditional advertising (Salikin et al. 2023). Since purchase intention reflects the initial desire to buy a product (Wulandari et al. 2023), vlogs serve as valuable sources of information, particularly when consumers cannot directly experience products. Vlogger endorsements have been shown to enhance product acceptance and stimulate purchase interest (Octaffiana & Rahmiati, 2022). Popular on platforms such as YouTube, vlogs are widely used across industries like beauty, health, travel, and food, where authentic storytelling helps foster trust and engagement (Diwanji & Lee, 2022; Zahrah et al. 2024).

Consumer purchase intention refers to an individual's conscious plan or willingness to buy a product in the future (Kao, 2022). In the fashion industry, strategic marketing cues can effectively influence this intention (Nguyen et al. 2024). Generation Z demonstrates a strong preference for authentic and experiential content, particularly UGC and vlogs, which foster trust, enhance engagement, and significantly shape purchasing intentions (Kao, 2022; Wulandari et al. 2023).

Previous studies, such as Diwanji and Lee (2022), compared the persuasive effectiveness of user-generated vlogs with brand-generated advertisements on YouTube, highlighting the superior impact of peer-created content in enhancing consumer trust and engagement. More recently, Jia et al. (2023) applied the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) to analyze the differential influence of cross-platform UGC e-commerce reviews (Tmall) versus third-party vlogger reviews (Bilibili) on cosmetic product sales. Their findings revealed that UGC on e-commerce platforms had a stronger direct impact on sales, while third-party vlogger content affected sales indirectly through consumer purchase intentions. However, these studies were largely quantitative, China-centric, and demographically broad, offering limited insights into the specific behavioral patterns of Generation Z or the sociocultural context of smaller urban centers such as Cirebon. Thus, empirical understanding remains limited regarding how UGC and vlogs influence fashion-related purchase intentions among Gen Z in local contexts. Addressing this gap is critical given this demographic's increasing digital fluency and the rapid growth of Cirebon's e-commerce ecosystem.

To address this research gap, this study examines how UGC and vlogs affect Gen Z's fashion purchase intentions in Cirebon by surveying local consumers. The analysis focuses on key factors such as authenticity, trust, and appeal, and explores how these elements shape purchasing behavior.

This study seeks to generate insights into the mechanisms driving Gen Z's fashion purchase intentions, thereby providing guidance for tailoring local marketing strategies that effectively engage this demographic.

METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative approach to empirically test the proposed theoretical framework by examining the relationships among key variables, following the methodological guidelines of Kapoor et al. (2022). The objective is to facilitate hypothesis testing and generate objective, measurable insights into the influence of User-Generated Content (UGC) and vlogs on Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI). The target population consists of Generation Z individuals residing in Cirebon, a secondary urban area in Indonesia. Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire, allowing for a systematic evaluation of attitudes and behavioral tendencies. This methodological choice ensures the reliability and generalizability of findings within the specified demographic context.

Primary data were gathered using a Likert-scale questionnaire. The instrument was carefully developed to capture responses directly relevant to the research objectives through a series of targeted questions. Each item was designed to reflect the core issues under investigation, enabling respondents to answer based on their personal views and experiences. This method facilitated the collection of structured and quantifiable data for more precise and comprehensive analysis (Mahalakshmi et al. 2023).

All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire items were adapted from previously validated instruments, with minor contextual modifications. Specifically, UGC indicators were based on (De Vera, 2024). They compromised three dimensions: content trustworthiness (credibility and source reliability), content valence (emotional tone and sentiment), and information richness (clarity and completeness), totaling seven items. Vlog indicators were adapted from (Santiago & Su, 2023), including four dimensions: perceived usefulness (ease of use of technology and recommendations from vloggers can be helpful to consumers), Trustworthiness (information must be reliable and convincing information), Information Quality (vlog videos are explicit and videos are easy to understand), Perceived benefits (information helps and benefits), totaling eight items. Consumer Purchase Intention was measured using 10 items adapted from (Salikin et al. 2023), categorized into five dimensions: buying interest in product information search (interest and needs), gathering more information about the

product (comparing similar products, information on products of interest), starting to be interested in the product (choosing a product, choosing a product brand), digging about product specifications (digging into product details, looking for product price information), wanting to buy a product (wanting a product, trying a product).

The target population consisted of residents of Cirebon City aged 14 to 28 years, totaling 88,221 individuals (Source: Dukcapil Cirebon City). Using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 400 respondents was determined. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who met the following criteria: (1) within the specified age group, (2) active users of social media, and (3) individuals with experience engaging with UGC and fashion-related vlogs. This sampling method ensured that the selected respondents were relevant to the study's aims.

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which combines factor analysis and path analysis to assess complex relationships among variables. The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method was employed to test both the measurement and structural models, using SmartPLS software. This method was chosen for its suitability in processing complex models and accommodating moderate sample sizes (Dennis Cook & Forzani, 2024). The analytical process involved the evaluation of: The measurement model, assessing construct reliability and validity (including indicator reliability, composite reliability, and average variance extracted), the structural model, evaluating the strength and significance of hypothesized relationships.

Based on the theoretical foundations and literature gaps identified in the Introduction, the following hypotheses were formulated and are visually summarized in the conceptual framework (Figure 1):

H1: User-generated content (UGC) has a positive influence on consumer purchase intention.
H2: Vlogs have a positive influence on consumer purchase intention.
H3: User-generated content (UGC) and vlogs jointly have a positive influence on consumer purchase intention.
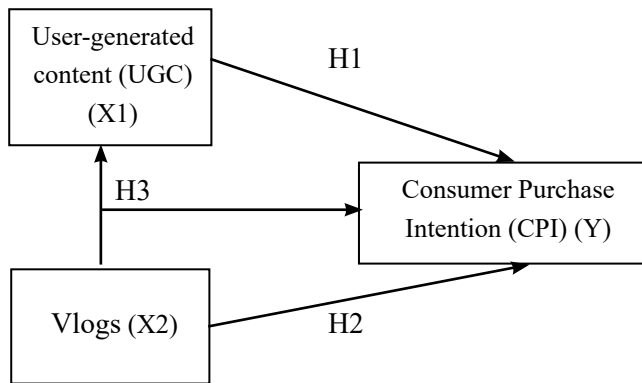
Figure 1. Hypothesis Framework

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

This research involved the completion of a questionnaire by 400 respondents. The demographic characteristics and relevant attributes of the respondents are presented in Table 1. These data provide an overview of the sample profile, which is important for understanding the context of the findings.

The study surveyed a total of 400 respondents, as indicated in Table 1. The gender distribution is balanced, with a marginally higher percentage of female participants (207 respondents, 50.9%) than male participants (193 respondents, 49.1%). The most significant proportion of respondents is aged 19 to 23 years (59.0%), followed by those aged 14 to 18 years (28.7%) and 24 to 28 years (12.3%). Regarding educational background, the majority of participants indicated they had completed higher education (62.2%), while lesser percentages possessed high school diplomas (27.7%), junior high school education (7.1%), or academy-level education (3.4%). A substantial percentage of respondents (36.9%) indicated that they use social media for over five hours daily, with 34.2% using it for 3–5 hours, 22.1% for 1–2 hours, and 6.9% for 30 minutes. The demographic characteristics align with the literature on Generation Z, a cohort recognized for its extensive engagement with digital platforms and dependence on social media for communication, entertainment, and information acquisition.

Model Fit Analysis

To evaluate the model fit, several statistical indicators were assessed, including Root Mean Square Theta (RMS_theta), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), and Normed Fit Index (NFI). For the model to be considered acceptable, the RMS_theta value must not exceed 0.102, the SRMR must be no greater than 0.10 (or 0.08 under stricter criteria), and the NFI should be at least 0.9. As shown in Table 2, the results indicate that the model meets the required thresholds for all three indicators, confirming a satisfactory overall fit. This suggests that the model is appropriately structured to represent the relationships among the variables under investigation. Meeting these criteria further confirms the model's reliability in explaining and analyzing the interrelationships between variables, thereby supporting its validity and effectiveness in achieving the research objectives.

Measurement Test Results

An outer model analysis was conducted to evaluate the appropriateness of the measurement model used in this study. This evaluation focused on assessing the model's validity and reliability. Several analytical tests were employed to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the research data, including Outer Loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability (CR). Each of these measures was used to determine the degree to which the indicators accurately reflect their corresponding constructs and to verify the internal consistency of each variable in the research model.

Table 3 summarizes the results of the measurement model evaluation. The constructs of User-Generated Content (UGC), Vlog, and Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI) demonstrate strong item reliability, with outer loading (OL) values for all indicators surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.70. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct exceed the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.50, thereby confirming adequate convergent validity. The constructs exhibit a high degree of internal consistency, as indicated by their Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA) values, all of which surpass the established threshold of 0.70. UGC attained a CR of 0.925 and a CA of 0.952; Vlog recorded a CR of 0.930 and a CA of 0.906; CPI achieved a CR of 0.959 and a CA of 0.914. The findings indicate that the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory reliability and validity. The instrument used in this study is deemed appropriate for further structural model analysis and hypothesis testing.

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Category	Answer Option	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	193	49.1%
	Female	207	50.9%
Age	14–18 years	110	28.7%
	19–23 years	240	59.0%
	24–28 years	50	12.3%
Education Level	Junior High School	29	7.1%
	High School	111	27.7%
	Academy	10	3.4%
	Higher Education	250	62.2%
Daily Social Media Use	30 minutes	28	6.9%
	1–2 hours	90	22.1%
	3–5 hours	139	34.2%
	More than 5 hours	150	36.9%

Table 2. Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)	0.067	0.067
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.728	0.728
Root Mean Square Theta (RMS_theta)	0.190	

Table 3. Measurement Test Results

Variables	Indicator	Outer loading (OL)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cronbach's Alpha (CA)	Composite Reliability (CR)
User Generated Content	UGC 1	0.807	0.639	0.952	0.925
	UGC 2	0.770			
	UGC 3	0.798			
	UGC 4	0.798			
	UGC 5	0.822			
	UGC 6	0.792			
	UGC 7	0.807			
Vlog	VL 1	0.825	0.626	0.906	0.930
	VL 2	0.764			
	VL 3	0.703			
	VL 4	0.823			
	VL 5	0.837			
	VL 6	0.753			
	VL 7	0.783			
	VL 8	0.823			
Consumer Purchase Intention	CPI 1	0.850	0.700	0.914	0.959
	CPI 2	0.776			
	CPI 3	0.828			
	CPI 4	0.869			
	CPI 5	0.769			
	CPI 6	0.801			
	CPI 7	0.865			
	CPI 8	0.883			
	CPI 9	0.856			
	CPI 10	0.860			

Model Structure Analysis

According to (Hair Jr. et al. 2021) There are three categories of R-squared values. This value is considered strong if it exceeds 0.75, moderate if it is between 0.50 and 0.74, and weak if it is between 0.25 and 0.49. The R-squared value shows that the simultaneous effect of variables X1 and X2 on Y is 0.679, with an adjusted R-squared value of 0.678 (Table 4). This means that the two exogenous constructs (X1 and X2) together account for 67.9% of the variation in the Y variable. However, because the adjusted R-squared value is more than 0.50, the overall effect of exogenous constructs on variable Y can be categorized as moderate. An F-squared value of 0.02 is considered small, 0.15 is considered medium, and 0.35 is considered significant. Values less than 0.02 can be ignored or assumed to have no effect.

The f-squared (f^2) values provide insights into the relative effect sizes of the predictors on Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI). User-generated content (UGC) exhibits a small effect ($f^2 = 0.040$), indicating a modest level of influence, whereas vlogs demonstrate a medium effect ($f^2 = 0.322$) (Table 5), suggesting a more substantial impact on consumer decision-making. Although neither variable reaches the threshold for a significant effect ($f^2 = 0.35$), the findings highlight the greater persuasive power of vlogs compared to UGC. This underscores the strategic importance of video content in digital marketing, while also suggesting that incorporating UGC can still enhance consumer engagement when used in conjunction with more impactful formats.

Table 4. Output R Square and R Square Adjusted

Model	R^2	Adjusted R Square
User-generated content (UGC) and Vlog to Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI)	0.679	0.678

Table 5. F Square output

Variables	Consumer Purchase Intention
User Generated Content	0.040
Vlog	0.322

Hypothesis Testing

Direct hypothesis testing examines the relationships between variables through statistical methods to evaluate the proposed hypotheses. In this study, the hypotheses are as follows: H1—UGC influences Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI); H2—Vlogs influence CPI; and H3—UGC and Vlogs jointly influence CPI. These relationships are tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which assesses both the strength and direction of the effects. The process begins with model specification, which involves defining constructs such as UGC, Vlogs, and CPI, along with their respective indicators. Following data collection, the model is analyzed using statistical software to estimate the path coefficients. Significance is evaluated using t-values or p-values, where a p-value below 0.05 indicates a statistically significant effect. If the path coefficients for UGC and Vlogs are significantly positive, the corresponding hypotheses are supported. This analytical approach provides empirical validation of the influence of digital content on consumer purchasing behavior.

The results of the hypothesis testing provide significant insights into the impact of User-Generated Content (UGC) and Vlogs on Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI). For H1, the path coefficient of 0.220, accompanied by a t-value of 3.996 and a p-value of 0.000, indicates that UGC has a statistically significant positive effect on CPI (Table 6). H2 demonstrates an even more pronounced influence, with a path coefficient of 0.628, a t-value of 11.744, and a p-value of 0.000, suggesting that Vlogs exert a substantial impact on consumer purchasing decisions (Table 6). Regarding H3, which assesses the combined influence of UGC and Vlogs, the reported path coefficient of 0.679 suggests a strong positive effect when both elements are considered simultaneously (Table 6). However, specific t-value and p-value data for this combined path are not provided. These findings underscore that both UGC and Vlogs, whether independently or jointly, significantly shape consumer purchase intentions, with Vlogs emerging as the more influential factor.

Table 6. Hypothesis testing results

	Hypothesis Variable	Path Analysis	t Value	P Value
H1	UGC → Consumer Purchase Intention	0.220	3.996	0.000
H2	Vlog → Consumer Purchase Intention	0.628	11.744	0.000
H3	UGC and Vlog → Consumer Purchase Intention	0.679	-	-

Influence of User-Generated Content (UGC) on Consumer Purchase Intentions

The statistical analysis confirms H1, indicating that UGC exerts a significant yet modest positive effect on Generation Z's fashion purchase intentions in Cirebon (path coefficient = 0.220; t = 3.996; p < 0.001)(Table 6). This finding aligns with prior research (Ismail et al. 2022; Israfilzade & Baghivora, 2022), which emphasizes the authenticity and informational value embedded in peer-generated content. However, the relatively low coefficient suggests that, while UGC is effective, its persuasive impact may depend on content quality, richness, and contextual relevance. In scenarios where UGC lacks specificity, such as generic captions or poorly presented fashion visuals, Gen Z consumers may process such cues peripherally, resulting in limited behavioral change. Conversely, when UGC incorporates credible sources, emotionally resonant messages, and rich product information, as outlined by De Vera (2024), it can prompt central route processing, thereby increasing trust and enhancing purchase intention. Therefore, while H1 is statistically supported, the modest path coefficient implies that UGC alone is not a dominant predictor unless it fulfills key elaboration and credibility conditions.

Influence of Vlogs on Consumer Purchase Intentions

The results strongly validate H2, indicating that vlogs have a more significant influence on consumer purchase intentions (path coefficient = 0.628; t = 11.744; p < 0.001) (Table 6). This supports existing literature that highlights the persuasive power of vlogs, particularly among Gen Z audiences who value emotional engagement, visual storytelling, and perceived authenticity. (Li & Zheng, 2021; Salikin et al. 2023). These findings are grounded in the Source Credibility Theory, which posits that message effectiveness is enhanced when the source is perceived as trustworthy and relatable. In this context, vloggers serve as parasocial influencers, bridging emotional and informational gaps for consumers unable to interact with products in person (Joseph et al. 2022; Santiago & Su, 2023). The data suggest that structured, emotionally compelling, and informative vlogs—featuring try-on hauls, product comparisons, and personal reviews—are highly effective in shaping consumer perceptions and activating the affective components of attitude formation, which are essential in fashion consumption. The high path coefficient reinforces this, positioning vlogs as central route influencers within the ELM framework, in contrast to the more peripheral role typically played by static UGC.

Combined Influence of UGC and Vlogs on Consumer Purchase Intentions

The cumulative path coefficient of 0.679 for H3 indicates a synergistic impact when UGC and vlogs are combined (Table 6). Although particular t-values and p-values are not provided for this hypothesis, the size of the coefficient alone shows that the combination of two content kinds has a greater impact on customer purchase intention than each alone. This empirical evidence for H3 emphasizes the complementary functions of UGC and vlogs, with UGC providing factual richness, peer-based validation, and social proof, and vlogs providing emotional resonance, narrative engagement, and visual clarity, therefore increasing their aggregate persuasive power. These findings provide fresh empirical insights into the influence of User-Generated Content (UGC) and vlogs on Consumer Purchase Intention (CPI), especially in the sociocultural setting of Generation Z in a secondary metropolitan center like Cirebon. While previous studies, such as Diwanji and Lee (2022), emphasized the persuasive superiority of user-generated vlogs over traditional brand-generated advertisements due to higher perceived authenticity, and Jia et al. (2023) demonstrated that platform-specific UGC (e.g., Tmall reviews and Bilibili vlogs) influences consumer behavior either directly or indirectly via purchase intention using the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), these investigations remained geographically In contrast, the current study provides a localized, outcome-driven analysis that quantitatively validates the strong direct benefits of both UGC and vlogs on CPI, as well as highlights their combined

usage as a particularly effective strategy. This increases the practical importance of the findings for digital marketers looking to reach Generation Z customers in growing metropolitan areas.

Managerial Implications

Considering Cirebon's developing digital marketplace and Generation Z's rising online participation, this study emphasizes the need for fashion manufacturers to combine UGC openness with vlog emotional relatability. Encourage customers to share individualized style experiences and partner with regionally relevant influencers or micro-vloggers to boost authenticity, cultural relevance, and trust in hyper-localized situations. This study experimentally validates how UGC and vlogs influence fashion purchase intentions through diverse cognitive and emotional processing pathways, adding to academic conversation. UGC promotes attitudinal and normative ideas, whereas vlogs increase emotional involvement and perceived behavioral control, expanding Gen Z's digital persuasive processes. These content types provide a strategic framework for integrated content production that can be applied in Cirebon and other digital contexts. This study provides meaningful, context-sensitive information for practitioners and enriches consumer behavior models by placing them in a regional and generationally distinct digital ecosystem. This lays the groundwork for future study on how content type, cultural context, and generational media literacy affect purchasing behavior.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

UGC and vlogs affect Generation Z's fashion buy intentions in Cirebon, Indonesia, an emerging market. This study improves digital marketing efficacy by experimentally confirming this effect. According to the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Source Credibility Theory, media content that meets informational requirements and is supplied by reliable sources is most compelling. Vlogs positively affect purchase intention (path coefficient = 0.628), while UGC has a small but significant effect (0.220). Their cumulative impact (0.679) suggests a synergistic connection that

boosts their persuasiveness. Both material formats are significant, but vlogs are strategic owing to their audiovisual nature, perceived authenticity, and informative depth. User-generated content (UGC) and vlogs add dimension, social evidence, and peer validation. Emotional resonance, narrative engagement, and visual clarity boost the effect of vlogs. The current study is more localized and outcome-oriented than Diwanji and Lee (2022) and Jia et al. (2023), which used quantitative methods and focused on China without demographic concerns. This study indicates that user-generated content and vlogs directly affect customer purchase intentions and fills a gap in the literature by focusing on Generation Z in a growing urban market. These findings have significant implications for digital marketers and brand managers trying to reach younger customers in similar socio-demographic circumstances with targeted content. This study found that fashion retailers targeting Gen Z may increase their effect by combining vlog-based content with high-quality user-generated material. Further study should examine how localized digital behavior, content quality, and platform dynamics mediate these impacts for theoretical and practical insights.

Recommendations

The report outlines various strategies for fashion companies to engage with Generation Z, particularly in emerging markets such as Cirebon. The significant impact of user-generated content (UGC) indicates that marketers ought to prioritize the selection of high-quality user contributions over the promotion of content production. Clear product images, context-specific style recommendations, and authentic testimonials can enhance the legitimacy of user-generated content and foster customer trust. The persuasive nature of vlogs renders them an effective marketing instrument. Businesses ought to engage with culturally relevant influencers to produce visually compelling, emotionally resonant, and informative video content. The combination of user-generated content and vlogs highlights the need for a cohesive content strategy that harmonizes authenticity driven by peers with substantial narrative elements. Fashion marketers must assess engagement metrics, analyze customer feedback, and modify content strategy based on data. These methods enhance campaign performance, foster brand loyalty, and contribute to sales growth among Gen Z.

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