



The role of brand image in mediating the influence of user generated content credibility on brand trust

Ryan Fernando¹, Siska Fatimah², Dr. Jumadi³

^{1,2}Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Gunung Jati Swadaya University, Cirebon, Indonesia

³Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Widya Mataram University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Riwayat article:

Received May 05 , 2026

Revised May 13 , 2026

Accepted May 26, 2026

Keywords:

Brand Image;
Brand Trust;
Ugc Credibility.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of user generated content (UGC) credibility on brand image and brand trust, as well as test the role of brand image as a mediating variable in Mykonos perfume products. The background of this research is based on the increasing role of social media in shaping consumer perception and trust in brands, especially through user-generated content. The research method used is a quantitative approach with a descriptive type. The research sample amounted to 120 respondents who were selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data analysis was carried out using the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method using SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results of the study show that UGC credibility has a positive and significant effect on brand image and brand trust. In addition, brand image has also been proven to have a positive and significant effect on brand trust. Other findings show that brand image is able to significantly mediate the relationship between UGC credibility and brand trust. This indicates that the credibility of user-generated content will be more effective in increasing brand trust if it first forms a positive brand image. The value of the determination coefficient shows that the model has a strong ability to explain the brand trust variable. Thus, this study confirms the importance of authentic content-based marketing strategies in building an image and trust in local brands. The practical implication of this research is the need for companies to encourage the creation of credible user content to increase competitiveness in the digital era.

This is an open access article under a [CC BY-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) license.



Corresponding authors:

Ryan Fernando,

Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Gunung Jati Swadaya University, Cirebon

Jl. Pemuda Raya No.32, Sunyaragi, Kesambi District, Cirebon City, West Java, 45132, Indonesia.

Email: ryan.122020295@ugj.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has fundamentally changed the pattern of interaction between consumers and brands in the past decade. In today's digital era, social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and Shopee Live are not only a means of entertainment but also serve as the main source for consumers to find

information, compare products, and form perceptions of a brand. Digital report 2024: Indonesia by we are social and Melwether (2024) noted that 88% of internet users in Indonesia use social media to find information about products, while more than 75% find new brands through digital platforms. Interestingly, around 60% of consumers admit to trusting other users' recommendations more than commercial ads. This fact confirms the important role of user-generated content (UGC) such as product reviews, video testimonials, and user experience content in shaping consumer perceptions, image, and trust in brands, especially in lifestyle products such as cosmetics, fashion, and perfumes (Usman Ullah Pasha et al., 2024);(Tan et al., 2022).

This phenomenon marks a shift in the paradigm of marketing communication from the brand-to-consumer relationship to consumer-to-consumer, where consumers are no longer just the recipients of messages, but also play a role as shapers of public opinion (Al-Abdallah & Wright, 2025) emphasizing that the credibility of UGC has a significant influence on brand trust because honest, relevant, and authentic content is able to foster a positive brand image that leads to increased trust. However, on the other hand, the rapid growth of UGC also poses new challenges not all content produced is credible, some are created with hidden commercial purposes or even misleading public opinion. As a result, consumers' perceptions of brands have become diverse, some believe honest testimonials but others doubt the authenticity of reviews that have an overly sponsored impact. In this context of sensory products such as perfumes where the user experience cannot be tested directly before purchase, the credibility of UGC becomes a crucial element that determines the image and trust in the brand.

One of the local brands that is interesting to research in this context is Mykonos, a local Indonesian perfume brand that is on the rise with a strategy to present a similar scent to international luxury perfumes at a more affordable price. The concept of "dupe of luxury perfumes" has succeeded in attracting the interest of the young market, especially generation Z and millennials who are active on social media. The phenomenon of 'dupe brands' introduces a unique challenge in digital marketing, as consumers often associate alternative local products with skepticism regarding their quality consistency. Consequently, establishing a strong brand image is vital for a dupe brand to bridge this perception gap, signaling high-quality authenticity that systematically converts consumer curiosity into strong brand trust. Mykonos' popularity has increased rapidly thanks to the spread of UGC content in the form of scent comparison videos, customer satisfaction testimonials and user reviews on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Shopee Live. This kind of UGC creates the perception that even local perfumes are able to offer premium quality. However, increasing popularity does not always go hand in hand with increasing trust. Some consumers consider that not all testimonials are authentic, and some are even exaggerated or created by accounts that don't actually use the product. This has led to a different perception of the Mykonos brand image, with some viewing it as a creative local brand with good quality, while others see it as merely a "dupe brand" that imitates luxury perfumes with no guarantee of scent consistency.

This condition shows that brand image has an important role as a bridge between UGC credibility and trust in the brand. Research (Shin & Choi, 2021) shows that UGC has a significant influence on brand trust through brand image as a mediating variable. This means that the more credible the content produced by users, the more positive the brand image that is formed and the higher the consumer trust in the brand. A similar thing was also found by (Ellitan et al., 2022) who emphasized that digital marketing through social media contributes positively to the formation of brand image and trust, especially in the beauty industry. However, similar research on the local perfume sector in Indonesia is still very limited, even though the characteristics of these products are emotional and sensory dimensions that are difficult to measure online. This is what creates an important research gap in the context of digital marketing of sensory products.

This study focuses on analyzing the influence of user generated content (UGC) credibility on brand image and brand trust, as well as examining the role of brand image as a mediating variable in the relationship between UGC credibility and brand trust in Mykonos perfume products. The specific purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of UGC credibility on the brand image of Mykonos perfumes, test the influence of brand image on brand trust, and assess the extent to which brand image mediates the relationship between the two. The importance of this research lies in understanding how the credibility of user-generated content can strengthen the image and trust of local brands in the midst of increasingly fierce and digitally transparent competition in the perfume industry (Hartina et al., 2023).

The novelty of this research is that there has not been much previous research on the relationship between UGC credibility, brand image, and brand trust. This study offers an update by integrating these three variables in the context of the local brand, namely Mykonos perfume, which represents a unique phenomenon of UGC driven brand perception in Indonesia. Unlike previous research that focused on the influence of influencer marketing or digital promotion, this study uses a mediation model with brand image as a connecting variable between UGC credibility and brand trust, therefore it shows that brand image can play a role as a mediating variable in strengthening the influence of digital information on brand trust, but it has not highlighted the characteristics of sensory products that are difficult to evaluate online such as perfumes. Therefore, this research is expected to make a practical contribution to local brands in building community-based communication strategies and authentic content to increase consumer trust. Specifically, this study contributes to community-based digital marketing by revealing that local brands cannot merely rely on passive organic content; instead, they must strategically cultivate and manage brand communities. The empirical insights from this research provide a framework for brands to incentivize highly credible community interactions, transform casual users into authentic brand advocates, and leverage peer-to-peer validation to systematically enhance corporate image and trust in sensory-product markets.

2. LITERATURE RIVIEW

2.1 The relationship user generated content (ugc) credibility against brand trust

User generated content (UGC) is any form of digital content created by consumers to share experiences, opinions, and recommendations for a product or brand on various online platforms such as social media, forums, and marketplaces. According to (Islam et al., 2024), UGC has a great influence on consumer behavior because the content is sourced from the user's actual experience, not from company promotions. (Rahman et al., 2025) added that the presence of UGC helps reduce information uncertainty and strengthen consumer confidence in brands, especially due to the increased reliance on online reviews in the purchase decision-making process.

The credibility of UGC is closely related to the formation of brand trust because the reliability of user content can strengthen consumers' confidence in the honesty, integrity, and expertise of the brand. According to (Islam et al., 2024), UGC credibility is built from three main dimensions, namely (1). trustworthiness, expertise, and information quality.

2.2 The Relationship User Generated Content (Ugc) Credibility Against Brand Image

Brand image reflects the overall perception, belief, and emotional association that consumers have towards a brand based on the experience, interaction, and communication received. (Yusuf, 2021) and (Amrina Rosyada & Ridho Riadi Akbar, 2024) stated that a strong brand image has a significant influence on purchasing decisions and customer loyalty, because a positive image creates a sense of trust and emotional value

that is inherent in consumers' minds. Meanwhile, Hartina et al. (2025) added that brand image plays a strategic role in increasing brand equity through intense digital relationships between companies and customers

The relationship between brand image and UGC credibility shows that the more positive the consumer's perception of a brand's image, the higher the level of authenticity of the content provided to the consumer. Brand image includes three main dimensions, namely product image, corporate image, and user image.

2.3 The Relationship Between Brand Image And Brand Trust

Brand trust describes consumer confidence that a brand will consistently deliver on promises and deliver value as expected. (Umiyaroh et al., 2025) and (Saniyyah et al., 2024) emphasized that brand trust is an important foundation in creating long-term loyalty, because consumers who trust a brand tend to maintain relationships and make repeat purchases. (Chandra & Adiwijaya, 2023) also mentioned that brand trust not only increases loyalty but also strengthens consumers' emotional connection with brands through consistent and transparent digital interactions.

The relationship between brand image and brand trust shows a close relationship between consumers' positive perception of the brand image and their belief in the reliability of the brand. In this context, brand trust has three main dimensions that function as indicators of trust formation, namely (1) reliability is the reliability of the brand in fulfilling promises and providing consistent product quality, (2) integrity is honesty and transparency of the brand in communicating with consumers, and (3) benevolence is the company's goodwill to pay attention to customer needs and satisfaction (Saniyyah et al., 2024).

2.4 The Relationship Of Ugc Credibility To Brand Trust Through Brand Image Mediation

The relationship between UGC credibility and brand trust through the mediating role of brand image shows that the credibility of information disseminated by users has an important influence on the formation of consumer perception and belief in a brand. According to (Islam et al., 2024), credible UGC creates a perception of authenticity and increases trust in information because it comes from the user's real experience. In the context of digital marketing communication, UGC that has a high level of honesty, delivery expertise, and information quality will create a positive association with the brand. The association then forms a brand image that describes the reputation, professionalism, and identity of brand users which are the emotional basis in building trust in the brand.

The role of brand image mediation in the relationship between UGC credibility and brand trust is explained through the mechanism of shaping consumer perception. (Putri & Fauzi, 2023) and (Amrina Rosyada & Ridho Riadi Akbar, 2024) affirm that brand image formed from credible user content is an important bridge that transforms the perception of digital information into real brand trust. A positive brand image provides psychological assurance to consumers that the product has reliable quality and integrity, thereby increasing trust in the brand. In this case, brand trust is formed through three main dimensions, namely reliability, integrity, and benevolence (Saniyyah et al., 2024). In the context of Mykonos perfumes, credible user content on social media platforms not only reinforces the perception of scent quality and authenticity but also increases consumers' belief that the local brand has integrity and reliability comparable to international perfume brands. Thus, brand image serves as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between the credibility of user content and trust in the brand.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive type, which aims to test the relationship between variables statistically and describe consumer perception of Mykonos perfume, especially in the context of trust in digital content on social media. The quantitative approach allows testing objective theories through the measurement of relationships between variables in the form of numbers (Creswell, n.d.). The research population was all Mykonos perfumes in the city of Cirebon, chosen because of the high adoption rate of social media and online shopping trends. The number of samples was determined using the (Lemeshow, n.d.) formula with a confidence level of 95% ($Z = 1.96$), a population proportion of 0.5 ($p = 0.5$), and an error margin of 10% ($d = 0.1$), so that a minimum of 96 respondents were obtained. To increase the validity and anticipate data that is not suitable for processing, the number was rounded to 120 respondents, according to the recommendation of Hair et al. (2010) for analysis using PLS-SEM. The sampling technique was carried out by purposive sampling, because respondents were determined based on certain criteria.

Data analysis was carried out using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software version 4.0. This method was chosen because it is effective in analyzing complex research models, including testing of mediating variables. According to Hair et al. (2017), PLS-SEM is a variant-based approach that is suitable for relatively small sample sizes and aims to predict relationships between latent variables. The analysis was carried out in two stages, namely the outer model to test the validity and reliability of the construct through the loading factor, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR), as well as the inner model to test the relationship between variables through the determination coefficient (R^2) test, bootstrapping for direct and indirect influence, and mediation test to see the role of brand image as an intermediate variable between UGC Credibility and Brand trust.

Brand trust in this study is measured using six measurement items adapted from Saniyyah et al. (2024), which encompass three main dimensions: reliability, integrity, and benevolence. Specifically, reliability is evaluated through the brand's consistency in maintaining scent quality and fulfilling promises; integrity is assessed based on the honesty and transparency of marketing information; and benevolence focuses on the brand's goodwill toward customer satisfaction. These dimensions correspond directly to indicators Y1.1 through Y1.6 utilized in the structural model analysis. Furthermore, brand image in this study is measured through four key indicators adapted from Saniyyah et al. (2024). These factors include corporate image, user image, product image, and the brand's perceived value in providing premium scent quality at an affordable price, represented as indicators M1.1 through M1.4.

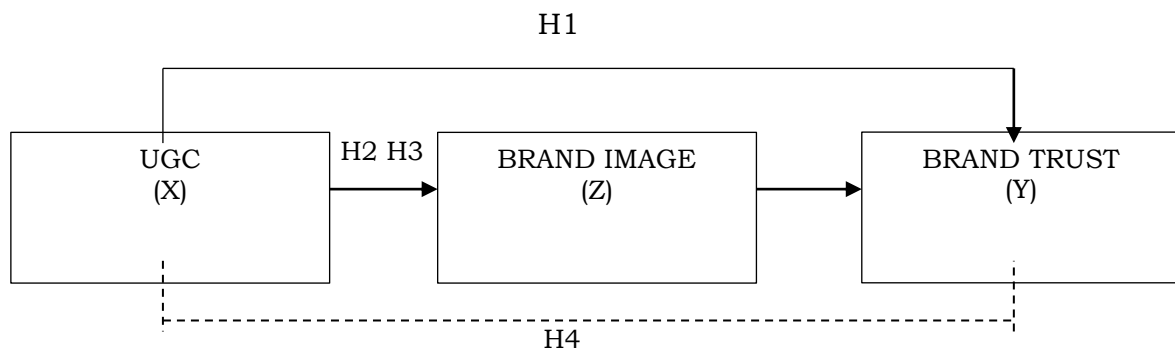


Figure 1. Research Model

Hipotesis :

H1 : UGC credibility has a positive effect on brand trust

H2 : UGC credibility has a positive effect on brand image

H3 : Brand image has a positive effect on brand trust

H4 : Brand image mediates the influence of ugc credibility on brand trust

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

a. Validitas Konvergen (Convergent Validity)

Table 2. Validitas Convergent Validity

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_A)	AVE	Interpretation
BRAND IMAGE (M)	M1.1	0,830	0,914	0,933	0,700	Valid
	M1.2	0,815				Valid
	M1.3	0,850				Valid
	M1.4	0,837				Valid
	M1.5	0,828				Valid
	M1.6	0,859				Valid
UGC CREDIBILITY (X)	X1.1	0,791	0,889	0,916	0,645	Valid
	X1.2	0,822				Valid
	X1.3	0,792				Valid
	X1.4	0,775				Valid
	X1.5	0,770				Valid
	X1.6	0,864				Valid
BRAND TRUST (Y)	Y1.1	0,786	0,891	0,917	0,648	Valid
	Y1.2	0,859				Valid
	Y1.3	0,786				Valid
	Y1.4	0,807				Valid
	Y1.5	0,824				Valid
	Y1.6	0,767				Valid

Based on the results of table 2 above, the convergent validity in this study is evaluated through the loading factor value of each indicator. The criteria used refer to the provision that the value of the loading factor must be greater than 0.70. Values between 0.60-0.70 are still acceptable, especially in exploratory studies, while indicators with loading factor values below 0.40 must be removed from the model. The test results of all indicators used in this study have met the required criteria, so it is worthy of further analysis in the measurement model.

In the Brand Image (M) variable, the M1.1 to M1.6 indicator has a loading factor value that ranges from 0.815 to 0.859. All indicators show values above the recommended minimum limit with the M1.2 indicator as the highest value of 0.859. These results show that all indicators in the Brand Image variable are declared valid and are able to represent the constructs measured consistently in the SEM-PLS model.

Furthermore, in the UGC Credibility (X) variable, the X1.1 to X1.6 indicator has a loading factor value between 0.770 to 0.864. Although the X1.5 indicator shows a low value of 0.770, the value is still above acceptable limits. Meanwhile, in the Brand Trust (Y) variable, indicators Y1.1 to Y1.6 have a loading factor ranging from 0.767 to Y1.6 has a loading factor value ranging from 0.767 to 0.859, with indicators Y1.6 as the lowest value and Y1.2 as the highest value. Thus, all indicators in the UGC Credibility and Brand Trust variables are declared valid. Overall, the results of this test show that all indicators on all three variables have met the convergent validity criteria, so there is no need to remove the indicator in the measurement model.

b. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Based on the results of table 3 above, this study is also evaluated through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, with the criterion that the AVE value must be

greater than 0.50, which shows that this variable is able to explain more than 50% of the variance of the forming indicators. The results of the test of the brand image variable (M) have an AVE value of 0.700, which means that this construct is able to explain 70% of the variance of the indicator so that it is declared valid in a convergent manner. Furthermore, the UGC Credibility (X) variable obtained an AVE value of 0.645, which indicates that more than 64% of the indicator's variance can be explained by more than 50% of its indicator variance. Thus, all variables in the measurement have met the criteria of convergent validity based on AVE values, so there is no need to remove the indicator from the model.

c. Reliability Test

Based on the results of table 4 of the construct reliability test, all variables in this study have shown a good level of reliability. The Brand Image (M) variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.914 and a Composite Reliability of 0.933, while the UGC Credibility (X) variable shows a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.889 and a Composite Reliability of 0.916. Meanwhile, the Brand Trust (Y) variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.891 and a Composite Reliability of 0.917.

All of these values have exceeded the recommended minimum limit, which is greater than 0.70, which indicates that each construct has excellent internal consistency. Thus, the question items in the questionnaire were able to measure constructs consistently, and the measurement model of this study has met the requirements of good reliability.

Table 5. Discriminatory Validity

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	2.50%	97.50%
UGC CREDIBILITY (X) -> BRAND IMAGE (M)	0,881	0,881	0,826	0,928
BRAND TRUST (Y) -> BRAND IMAGE (M)	1,012	1,012	0,991	1,034
BRAND TRUST (Y) -> UGC CREDIBILITY (X)	0,939	0,940	0,896	0,979

Based on the results of table 5 path analysis in the model, a path coefficient value (Original Sample) of 0.881 was obtained for the effect of UGC Credibility (X) on Brand Image (M), 1.012 for the influence of Brand Trust (Y) on Brand Image (M), and 0.939 for the effect of Brand Trust (Y) on UGC Credibility (X). All of these values have a confidence interval of 2.5%–97.5% that does not go past zero, namely 0.824–0.928, 0.990–1.035, and 0.896–0.979, respectively.

In addition, the Sample Mean value which is almost identical to the Original Sample value indicates that the model estimate is stable. This result indicates that the relationship between constructs in the model is positive and consistent, so it can be concluded that the constructs of UGC Credibility, Brand Trust, and Brand Image are empirically interrelated but still represent different constructs. Thus, the validity of the discriminator in the model is declared fulfilled. After the data is declared valid and reliable, the next stage is to test the structural relationship (hypothesis test) Multikolinearitas (VIF)

Table 6. Multicollinearity

	VIF
BRAND IMAGE	2,747
UGC CREDIBILITY	2,747

Based on the results of table 6 multicollinearity testing on the inner model, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value for the relationship between variables ranged from 1,000 to 2,747. All of these VIF values are well below the recommended critical limit, which is < 5 (or stricter < 3.3), so it can be concluded that there is no problem of

multicollinearity in the structural model. Thus, the relationship between the UGC Credibility, Brand Trust, and Brand Image variables is free from bias due to the high correlation between independent variables, so that the structural model is declared feasible, stable, and validly interpretable. Specifically, the absence of multicollinearity provides significant implications for the structural validity of the model. First, it ensures that the estimated path coefficients—such as UGC Credibility on Brand Image at 0.797 and Brand Image on Brand Trust at 0.673—are highly stable, reliable, and free from standard error inflation bias. Second, it validates that UGC Credibility and Brand Image represent empirically distinct and non-redundant predictors, thereby avoiding Type II errors in bootstrapping significance testing. Consequently, this structural framework possesses strong statistical power to robustly interpret and isolate the genuine mediating mechanism of brand image without mathematical distortion.

4.2 Path Coefficient & Significance (Direct Hypothesis Test).

This test looks at the direction and significance of the direct influence between variables

Table 7. Hypothesis Test

Variabel	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
M_BRAND IMAGE -> Y_BRAND TRUST	0.673	0.673	0.047	14.477	0.000
X_UGC CREDIBILITY -> M_BRAND IMAGE	0.797	0.798	0.027	29.684	0.000
X_UGC CREDIBILITY -> Y_BRAND TRUST	0.301	0.302	0.048	6.296	0.000

Based on the results of table 7 hypothesis testing, the entire relationship pathway in the model proved to be statistically significant. The hypothesis is accepted if the P-Values < 0.05 or the T-Statistics > 1.96.

Hypothesis H1 shows that Brand Image (M) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust (Y), with a coefficient value of 0.673, T-Statistic of 14.477, and P-Value of 0.000. These results show that the better the brand image, the higher the level of consumer trust in the brand. Furthermore, the H2 Hypothesis proves that UGC Credibility (X) has a positive and significant effect on Brand Image (M), with a coefficient value of 0.797, T-Statistic 29.684, and P-Value of 0.000, which indicates that high credibility of user-generated content is able to significantly strengthen the brand image in the minds of consumers.

In addition, the H3 Hypothesis was also accepted, which showed that UGC Credibility (X) had a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust (Y), with a coefficient value of 0.301, T-Statistic 6.296, and P-Value of 0.000. This confirms that the more credible user-generated content that consumers receive, the higher their level of trust in the brand. Overall, these results show that UGC Credibility plays a strategic role in shaping Brand Image and Brand Trust, and Brand Image is an important factor in increasing Brand Trust.

a. Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
BRAND IMAGE	0,636	0,634
BRAND TRUST	0,867	0,865

Based on the results of table 8 of the determination coefficient (R^2) test, the Brand Image (M) variable has an R^2 value of 0.636 and an Adjusted R^2 of 0.634, which is above

0.50 but below 0.75. Thus, the ability to explain the variable UGC Credibility (X) to Brand Image is categorized as moderate. These findings suggest that UGC Credibility is able to explain most of the variation in the formation of a Brand Image, although there are still influences of other factors outside the model.

Meanwhile, the Brand Trust (Y) variable has an R^2 value of 0.867 and an Adjusted R^2 of 0.865, which is above 0.75 so it is included in the strong category. This shows that the combination of the influence of UGC Credibility (X) and Brand Image (M) is able to explain most of the variation in Brand Trust with a high degree of certainty. Thus, based on the R^2 criteria used, the research model shows a moderate explanatory ability to Brand Image and strong to Brand Trust.

b. Effect Size (f^2)

Tabel 9. Effect Size

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
BRAND IMAGE (M) -> BRAND TRUST (Y)	1,241	1,276	0,296	4,191	0,000
UGC CREDIBILITY (X) -> BRAND IMAGE (M)	1,747	1,804	0,330	5,291	0,000
UGC CREDIBILITY (X) -> BRAND TRUST (Y)	0,248	0,258	0,084	2,947	0,003

Based on the results of table 9 effect size (f^2) tests, the relationship between UGC Credibility (X) and Brand Image (M) has an f^2 value of 1.747, which according to the criteria of 0.02 (small), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (large) is included in the large. This shows that the credibility of user-generated content has a very important role in shaping the Brand Image. Furthermore, the Brand Image (M) relationship of Brand Trust (Y) has an f^2 value of 1.241, which is also in the large category, indicating that Brand Image makes a significant contribution to increasing Brand Trust.

Meanwhile, the relationship of UGC Credibility (X) Brand Trust (Y) has an f^2 value of 0.248, which is in the medium category, confirming that the direct influence of UGC credibility on Brand Trust is relatively moderate and more effective when channeled through the formation of Brand Image. Thus, the effect size analysis shows that UGC Credibility has a very large influence on Brand Image, Brand Image has a great influence on Brand Trust, and the direct influence of UGC Credibility on Brand Trust is moderate

4.3 Discussion

Based on the results of hypothesis testing, this study proves that user generated content (UGC) credibility has a very strong role in shaping the brand image of Mykonos perfumes. This is reflected in the path coefficient value of 0.797, with a statistical T of 29.684 and a P value of 0.000, which shows a positive and statistically significant influence. A high coefficient value indicates that UGC credibility is a key determinant in the formation of brand image. These findings are in line with research by (Zhang & Hu, 2024) (Hajialiakbari, 2025) which affirm that credible user content is able to strengthen consumers' cognitive and affective evaluations of brands. In addition, (Moszyk et al., 2021) also found that consumers tend to form more positive brand perceptions when information comes from fellow users who are considered authentic and trustworthy.

In the context of Mykonos perfumes, UGC in the form of reviews of scent, durability, and user experience is the main source of information for consumers. This condition is relevant considering that perfume is a category of experience goods that is difficult to evaluate before purchase. Research by (Ismail et al., 2022) shows that in sensory experience-based products, consumers rely heavily on UGC to reduce

uncertainty. Therefore, UGC that is conveyed honestly and in detail is able to form a stronger and convincing brand image in the minds of consumers (ISRAFILZADE & BAGHIROVA, 2022).

In addition to affecting brand image, the results of the study also show that UGC credibility has a direct effect on brand trust. This is shown by the path coefficient value of 0.301, with a T statistic of 6.296 and a P value of 0.000. These findings indicate that consumers' trust in Mykonos perfumes can be formed directly from the quality of information they receive on social media, without having to go through the perception of brand image first. These results support the research of (Rahman et al., 2025) and (Ma & Lu, 2024) who stated that the credibility of UGC is a key factor in building brand trust in the digital environment.

This trust arises because consumers perceive UGC as information that is relatively independent of the company's interests. (Afiftama & Nasir, 2024) assert that consumers tend to trust content created by other users more than company content, especially when the content reflects real experiences. In this study, Mykonos perfume consumers showed a tendency to trust brands when they judged that the content circulating on social media was authentic and not excessively promotional (De Vera, 2024). This aligns with the notion that transparency in digital communication acts as a fundamental catalyst for building brand trust. When user-generated content provides honest, unedited, and unbiased product evaluations, it minimizes information asymmetry and consumer skepticism. This transparent signaling mechanism reassures consumers about the brand's integrity, thereby systematically transforming digital peer validation into enhanced long-term brand trust.

The test results also showed that brand image had a positive and significant effect on brand trust, with a path coefficient value of 0.673, a statistical T of 14.477 and a P value of 0.000. These findings show that a positive brand image plays a key role in building consumer trust. These results are in line with research by (Wu & Liu, 2022) and (Panjaitan et al., 2024) who stated that consumers who have a good perception of the quality, consistency, and reputation of the Mykonos brand tend to be more confident that the brand can meet their expectations.

Furthermore, the results of the mediation test showed that brand image mediated the influence of UGC credibility on brand trust. This is reinforced by the R² brand trust value of 0.867, which shows that the combination of UGC credibility and brand image is able to explain 86.7% of brand trust variations. In addition, the effect size value (f^2) showed that the influence of UGC credibility on the image brand was relatively large (1,747), while the influence of brand image on brand trust was also large (1,241). These findings are consistent with the research of (Tan et al., 2022) which confirms that brand image functions as a psychological mechanism that bridges the influence of digital information on consumer trust. Thus, the results of this study confirm that UGC credibility will have a maximum impact on brand trust when it is first able to form a positive brand image (Nizarikhutama & Murwanti, 2024).

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion that has been carried out, it can be concluded that User Generated Content (UGC) credibility has a significant role in shaping the brand image and brand trust of Mykonos perfume in the city of Cirebon, the results of the study show that UGC that is considered credible is able to build a positive brand image, which in turn increases consumer trust in the brand. In addition, UGC credibility has also been shown to have a direct effect on brand trust, which indicates that consumers tend to trust brands when the information they receive comes from the real experiences of other users. Furthermore, this study proves that brand image plays a mediating variable in the relationship between UGC credibility and brand trust. This

means that the influence of UGC credibility on brand trust becomes stronger when it first forms a positive brand image. Theoretically, this study significantly enriches the literature on digital consumer behavior, particularly within the framework of Source Credibility Theory and Signaling Theory applied to sensory products. While conventional literature often argues that experiential or sensory products (such as perfumes) require physical interaction to establish brand trust, this research proves that highly credible User-Generated Content (UGC) can effectively bridge this evaluation gap. By establishing brand image as a powerful psychological mediator, this study maps out how digital validation and peer-to-peer cues transform consumer skepticism into cognitive brand trust in the online marketplace. Furthermore, this study highlights distinct implications regarding the use of organic UGC versus sponsored influencers for brand trust development. While influencer marketing excels in generating immediate broad awareness, organic UGC is significantly more powerful in fostering genuine brand trust. Organic content is perceived by digital consumers as unbiased and socially authentic, making it a more credible source for mitigating the skepticism often associated with 'dupe brands' in sensory-product markets. These findings confirm that consistent brand image management supported by authentic user content is an important factor in building consumer trust in local brands like Mykonos.

REFERENCES

- Afiftama, I., & Nasir, M. (2024). The Effect of Brand Image, Brand Trust and Customer Experience on Brand Loyalty. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Kesatuan*, 12(1), 191–202. <https://doi.org/10.37641/jimkes.v12i1.2403>
- Al-Abdallah, G., & Wright, L. T. (2025). User-generated content vs. firm-generated content: do consumers trust fellow consumers more than firms? Evidence from the Saudi telecommunication sector. *Cogent Business and Management*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2025.2508928>
- Amrina Rosyada, R., & Ridho Riadi Akbar. (2024). Pengaruh Brand Image Dan Harga Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Body Lotion Scarlet Whitening (Studi Pada Pengguna Body Lotion Scarlett Whitening Di Shopee Mall Indonesia). *JEMSI (Jurnal Ekonomi, Manajemen, Dan Akuntansi)*, 10(4), 2791–2800. <https://doi.org/10.35870/jemsi.v10i4.2961>
- Chandra, J. R., & Adiwijaya, M. (2023). PENGARUH CUSTOMER EXPERIENCES DAN BRAND TRUST TERHADAP REPURCHASE INTENTION DENGAN MODERASI SALES PROMOTION PADA SPBU SHELL SURABAYA. *Jurnal Manajemen Pemasaran*, 17(1), 41–52. <https://doi.org/10.9744/pemasaran.17.1.41-52>
- creswell. (n.d.).
- De Vera, R. M. (2024). The Content Effectiveness of User-Generated Content to the Purchasing Decision of Consumers. *Latin American Business and Sustainability Review*, 1(1), 49–58. <https://doi.org/10.70469/labsreview.v1i1.5>
- Ellitan, L., Harvina, L. G. D., & Lukito, R. S. H. (2022). The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Brand Image, Brand Trust, and Purchase Intention of Somethinc Skincare Products in Surabaya. *Journal of Entrepreneurship & Business*, 3(2), 104–114. <https://doi.org/10.24123/jeb.v3i2.4801>
- Hajialiakbari. (2025). *Journal of New Approaches in Management and Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.22034/jnamm.2025.516198.1083>
- Hartina, E., Hendra Saputro, A., & Abdul Aziz Mubarak, D. (2023). Pengaruh Harga, Brand Image Dan Keragaman Produk Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Sabun Mandi Cair Lifebouy di Kota Bandung. *JEMSI (Jurnal Ekonomi, Manajemen, Dan Akuntansi)*, 9(6), 2768–2778. <https://doi.org/10.35870/jemsi.v9i6.1727>
- Islam, Md. A., Kaium, Md. A., Zahan, I., & Rahman, Md. S. (2024). Does user-generated content trigger university graduates' online purchase intention? Mediating role of brand image. *Asian Management and Business Review*, 105–121. <https://doi.org/10.20885/ambr.vol4.iss1.art7>
- Ismail, F. R., Jantan, A. H., Othman, N., & Islam, M. A. (2022). User-Generated-Content and Millennial Moms' Birthplace Decision-Making Process. *Environment-Behaviour Proceedings Journal*, 7(22), 77–83. <https://doi.org/10.21834/ebpj.v7i22.4151>

- ISRAFILZADE, K., & BAGHIROVA, S. (2022). Comparing the Impact of Brand and User-Generated Video Content on Online Shoppers' Purchasing Intentions. *Management of Organizations: Systematic Research*, 88(1), 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.2478/mosr-2022-0013>
- Lemeshow. (n.d.).
- Ma, W., & Lu, Y. (2024, January 25). *Research on Value Co-Creation Behavior and Its Influence on Consumers' Purchase Intention in User-Generated Content Communities*. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.27-10-2023.2342025>
- Moszyk, K., Deja, M., & Dobrzynski, M. (2021). Automation of the road gate operations process at the container terminal—a case study of dct gdańsk sa. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 13(11). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13116291>
- Nizarikhutama, M. B., & Murwanti, S. (2024). Analysis of the Effect of Brand Resonance and Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Kesatuan*, 12(1), 155–162. <https://doi.org/10.37641/jimkes.v12i1.2399>
- Panjaitan, F. A. B. K., Juharsah, J., Muhamat, A. A., Damau, U. O., & Panjaitan, H. (2024). The Role of Price Perception in Interest in Buying Smartphones Through Optimization of Product Quality and Brand Image. *Jurnal Aplikasi Bisnis Dan Manajemen*. <https://doi.org/10.17358/jabm.10.2.447>
- Putri, C. N., & Fauzi, T. H. (2023). THE EFFECT OF E-WOM AND BRAND IMAGE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS OF AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS: MEDIATING ROLE OF BRAND TRUST. *Jurnal Aplikasi Manajemen Dan Bisnis*, 9(3). <https://doi.org/10.17358/jabm.9.843>
- 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*, 11(3), 917. <https://doi.org/10.17358/jabm.11.3.917>
- Saniyyah, J. (jurnal, Manajemen, D., & Akuntansi,) E-Issn. (2024). *Pengaruh Brand Image, Brand Trust dan Electronic Word of Mouth Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Body Lotion Nivea (Studi pada Pengguna Shopee Mall di Bandung)*. 10(6), 3331–3340. <https://doi.org/10.35870/jemsi.v10i6.33775>
- Shin, H. R., & Choi, J. G. (2021). The moderating effect of 'generation' on the relations between source credibility of social media contents, hotel brand image and purchase intention. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 13(16). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13169471>
- Tan, Z., Sadiq, B., Bashir, T., Mahmood, H., & Rasool, Y. (2022). Investigating the Impact of Green Marketing Components on Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Brand Image and Brand Trust. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 14(10). <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14105939>
- Umiyaroh, Oktavani, I. D. L., Fatimah, S. E., & Maulany, S. (2025). The Impact of Customer Testimonials and Brand Trust in Women's Hijab Repurchase Intention in Cirebon. *Indonesian Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship*, 11(3), 519. <https://doi.org/10.17358/ijbe.11.3.519>
- Usman Ullah Pasha, S., Sayeed Siddiqui, M., Ali, R., Hassan Kamal, M., & Rahman Khan, A. (2024). Social Network Marketing and the Consumer Purchase Intention: Mediation Role of Brand Trust and Brand Image. *Journal of Asian Development Studies*, 13(2), 1961–1971. <https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2024.13.2.153>
- Wu, L., & Liu, Z. (2022). The Influence of Green Marketing on Brand Trust: The Mediation Role of Brand Image and the Moderation Effect of Greenwash. *Discrete Dynamics in Nature and Society*, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6392172>
- Yusuf, A. (2021). The Influence of Product Innovation and Brand Image on Customer Purchase Decision on Oppo Smartphone Products in South Tangerang City. *Budapest International Research and Critics Institute (BIRCI-Journal): Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 472–481. <https://doi.org/10.33258/birci.v4i1.1629>
- Zhang, N., & Hu, W. (2024). Do Psychological Ownership and Communicative Presence Matter? Examining How User-Generated Content in E-Commerce Live Streaming Influences Consumers' Purchase Intention. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(8). <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14080696>