



Regular article

The Influence of Instagram Social Media and User-Generated Content on Purchase Decision Through Brand Trust at Alligator Roastery Medan

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia ranks fourth globally in coffee production, yet faces challenges in domestic market penetration. This study examines how Instagram social media marketing and User-Generated Content (UGC) influence purchase decisions through brand trust at Alligator Roastery Medan, a specialty coffee business experiencing declining customer visits from 680 daily visitors in 2022 to 420 in 2024. Using quantitative methodology with PLS-SEM analysis on 161 respondents selected through purposive sampling, data were collected via structured questionnaires. Results indicate that Instagram positively influences brand trust ($\beta=0.423$, $p=0.004$) and purchase decisions ($\beta=0.298$, $p=0.005$). UGC significantly affects brand trust ($\beta=0.428$, $p=0.004$) but shows no significant direct effect on purchase decisions ($\beta=0.194$, $p=0.097$). Brand trust mediates both relationships significantly and demonstrates the strongest direct effect on purchase decisions ($\beta=0.456$, $p=0.000$), explaining 80.8% of the variance in purchase decisions. Findings suggest that digital marketing strategies must prioritize building brand trust through consistent, authentic content and leveraging consumer-generated content to enhance credibility and drive purchase behavior in the specialty coffee market.

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Introduction

Indonesia is the fourth largest coffee producer in the world, with production reaching 789,000 tons in the 2022-2025 period (Ministry of Agriculture, 2025). Despite having a comparative advantage in flavor diversity, the national coffee industry faces structural challenges in the form of low productivity, limited technology adoption, and the threat of climate change. On the other hand, domestic consumption actually decreased from 368,000 tons to 361,000 tons, indicating limited market penetration that has not been optimally utilized (Kompas, 2025).

The development of the specialty coffee industry in Indonesia shows great potential, especially among the younger generation who are increasingly consumerist towards quality coffee products. This transformation of consumer behavior requires business actors,

especially coffee MSMEs, to adopt a more adaptive digital marketing strategy. Instagram social media has become a strategic platform in shaping consumer perceptions and driving purchasing decisions (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020; Loureiro et al., 2022).

Alligator Roastery, a specialty coffee MSME in Medan that was established in 2020, experienced significant fluctuations in visits. After reaching a peak of 680 visitors per day in 2022, the number of visits decreased to 500 people (2023) and 420 people (2024). This decline indicates a shift in consumer behavior that requires an in-depth study of the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.

Previous research has shown mixed results on the influence of Instagram and User-Generated Content (UGC) on purchase decisions. Djafarova and Bowes (2020) found that visual and emotional content on Instagram drives purchasing behavior, while Lim and Zhang (2022)

indicate that content effectiveness is highly dependent on influencer-product suitability and ad transparency. Regarding UGC, Brooks et al. (2022) stated that UGC is more credible because it is considered authentic, but Sang and Nah (2022) found that its influence becomes insignificant when personal factors are more dominant.

Brand trust is a crucial variable that mediates the relationship between digital marketing activities and purchase decisions (Salman & Prasetyo, 2025; Sumantri & Aisjah, 2023). However, some studies show that brand trust does not always have a significant effect (Rahman et al., 2024; Jevica, 2024), indicating the need to contextualize certain sectors and consumer characteristics.

This study aims to analyze the influence of Instagram social media and User-Generated Content on purchasing decisions through brand trust in consumers of Alligator Roastery Medan, with the hope of making a theoretical contribution to the development of digital marketing models for specialty coffee MSMEs, as well as practical implications for more effective marketing strategy management.

Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with an associative research type to identify causal relationships between variables. The location of the research is Café Alligator Roastery, Jl. Kenanga No.17, Medan, held from September to December 2025. The study population is Alligator Roastery consumers, the exact number of which is unknown. The sampling technique used was nonprobability sampling with the purposive sampling method.

Based on the provisions of Hair et al. (2019), which recommend a

sample size of 5-10 times the number of indicators, with 23 indicators in this study, the sample size was set at 161 respondents (7×23). Respondent criteria include: (1) consumers are at least 17 years old; (2) know and view Alligator Roastery's Instagram content; (3) have seen User-Generated Content about Alligator Roastery.

The research variables consisted of independent variables (Instagram Social Media and User-Generated Content), dependent variables (Purchase Decisions), and intervening variables (Brand Trust). Instagram Social Media is measured using the dimensions of Instagram Marketing Activities developed by Dabbous and Barakat (2020): interaction, entertainment, customization, and trendiness. User-Generated Content is measured based on the dimensions of content quality, content component, relevance, and emotional response (Heng Wei et al., 2023; Yamagishi et al., 2023). Brand Trust is measured by the dimensions of reliability and benevolence (Hernandez-Fernandez & Lewis, 2019), while Purchase Decision uses the dimensions of need fulfillment, perceived product quality, recommendation influence, and purchase decision certainty.

Data collection was carried out through a structured questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1-5. Validity and reliability tests were performed on 30 respondents outside the study sample, showing all items were valid (corrected item-total correlation > 0.361) and reliable (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.972). Data analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0 software includes the evaluation of the outer model (convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability) and inner model (R-square, path coefficient, effect size) with a significance level of 5%.

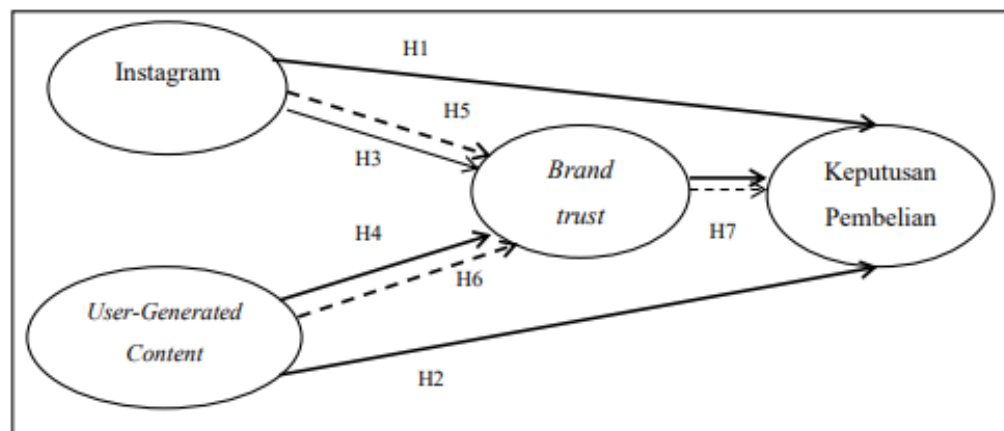


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Results

Respondent Characteristics

The results of the descriptive analysis showed that the majority of respondents were women (55.9%), aged 21-25 years (52.8%), with jobs as private employees (36.6%) and students (32.3%). A total of 45.3% of respondents visited Alligator Roastery more than 3 times, with 32.9%

having known the brand for more than a year. An interesting finding is that 40.4% of respondents know Alligator Roastery through User-Generated Content on social media, indicating the significant role of consumer content in shaping brand awareness.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents (N=161)

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Woman	90	55,9
	Man	71	44,1
Age	21-25 years old	85	52,8
	17-21 years old	31	19,3
	26-30 years	29	18,0
Work	Private Employees	59	36,6
	Student	52	32,3
	Self employed	42	26,1
Resources	UGC on Social Media	65	40,4
	Website/E-commerce	33	20,5
	Friend Recommendations	30	18,6

Evaluation of Measurement Models (Outer Model)

The results of the outer model evaluation showed that all indicators were valid with an outer loading value of > 0.6. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all constructs is above 0.5 (Instagram = 0.653; UGC = 0.562; Brand Trust = 0.615; Purchase Decision = 0.615), confirming good convergent validity. The composite reliability of all constructs is > 0.7 (ranging from 0.882 to 0.928), indicating excellent instrument reliability.

Table 2. Measurement Model Evaluation Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Posted on Instagram	0,824	0,882	0,653
User-Generated Content	0,913	0,928	0,562
Brand Trust	0,843	0,889	0,615
Purchase Decision	0,843	0,889	0,615

Evaluation of Structural Models (Inner Model)

The R-square value shows that Instagram and UGC explain 69.6% of the variance in brand trust, while Instagram, UGC, and brand trust simultaneously explain 80.8% of the variance in purchase decisions. These results indicate that the model has strong predictive power (Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing Results

Relationship	Path Coefficient	t-Statistics	P-Value	Decision
Instagram → Brand Trust	0,423	2,916	0,004	Accepted
Instagram → Purchase Decision	0,298	2,818	0,005	Accepted
UGC → Brand Trust	0,428	2,918	0,004	Accepted
UGC → Purchase Decision	0,194	1,662	0,097	Rejected
Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	0,456	6,414	0,000	Accepted
Instagram → Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	0,193	2,420	0,016	Accepted
UGC → Brand Trust → Purchase Decision	0,195	2,914	0,004	Accepted

Discussion

The Influence of Instagram on Brand Trust and Purchase Decisions

Instagram has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on brand trust ($\beta=0.423$) and purchase decisions ($\beta=0.298$). These findings are consistent with the research of Salman and Prasetyo (2025) and Aji et al. (2020), who affirm that Instagram marketing activities increase consumer trust through quality content, responsive interaction, and visual consistency. Instagram content analysis @alligator.roastery shows consistency of visual tone, use of interactive features (Reels, Stories), and engagement in digital trends that reinforce the perception of brand professionalism.

Instagram's influence on purchasing decisions is supported by the findings of Dabbous and Barakat (2020) that the entertainment and customization dimensions create emotional engagement that accelerates the decision-making process. However, this effectiveness is highly contextual, depending on the quality of the content and the transparency of communication (Lim & Zhang, 2022).

The Influence of UGC on Brand Trust

UGC showed a significant influence on brand trust ($\beta=0.428$), even slightly stronger than Instagram. This confirms the view of Kwon et al. (2020) that consumer content is more trusted due to authenticity and non-bias. Empirical data shows UGC content on TikTok about Alligator Roastery is gaining high engagement (182,000-216,000 views), with a rating of 4.5/5 on Google and 4.8/5 on TikTok, reflecting the consistency of positive perceptions across platforms.

The dimensions of content quality, relevance, and emotional response in UGC function as social proof that strengthens consumers' cognitive and affective trust in brands (Waqas et al., 2025).

The Influence of UGC on Purchase Decisions

Interestingly, UGC did not have a significant effect directly on purchasing decisions ($\beta=0.194$, $p=0.097$), although it showed a positive direction. This finding is in line with Sang and Nah (2022) that the influence of UGC weakens when personal factors and direct experience are more dominant. In the context of coffee shops, purchase decisions are often influenced by taste preferences, location, and social conditions that are not fully captured in digital content.

These results show a gap between cognitive effects (awareness, perception) and conative effects (purchasing behavior), indicating that UGC plays more of an initial role as an initial stimulus in the consumer evaluation process (Li & Xie, 2023).

The Role of Brand Trust Mediation

Brand trust was shown to significantly mediate the relationship between Instagram and UGC on purchase decisions, with the strongest direct influence ($\beta=0.456$). These findings confirm the view of Nosi et al. (2021) and Kamalaseana & Sirisena (2021) that trust is a psychological mechanism that bridges exposure to digital content with the act of purchase.

The dimensions of reliability (consistency of quality, product safety) and benevolence (care, responsiveness) are the main determinants in shaping consumer confidence. The higher the trust formed through digital activities, the lower the perception of risk, and the greater the tendency to make purchases (Liu & Wang, 2023).

This study confirms that digital marketing strategies through Instagram and User-Generated Content are effective in building brand trust, which in turn drives purchase decisions on specialty coffee products. Instagram has a direct effect on brand trust and purchase decisions, while UGC only has a significant effect through the mediation of brand trust. Brand trust shows the most powerful role in driving purchase decisions, explaining 80.8% of the variance in the model.

Conclusion

The managerial implication of this study is that Alligator Roastery needs to: (1) optimize the consistency and quality of Instagram content by increasing public interaction; (2) actively encourage and curate positive User-Generated Content as social proof; (3) prioritize brand trust development through consistency of product quality, information transparency, and service responsiveness; and (4) integrating digital strategies with direct consumer experiences to strengthen conversions from awareness to actual purchases.

The limitations of this study are the focus on a single research object (single case study) and the use of cross-sectional design. Future research is suggested to compare the effectiveness of other social media platforms (TikTok, YouTube), analyze the specific characteristics of UGC that are most influential, as well as use longitudinal design to capture the dynamics of changes in consumer behavior over the long term.

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