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The Impact of TikTok UGC Videos on Online Purchase Intention: Mediating Role of Cognitive States

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Abstract

Background: *User-Generated Content (UGC) videos have received considerable attention in recent years thanks to their great potential for buyers and sellers. However, the effect of this content on consumer behavior remains unclear, especially in the context of developing countries (e.g., Vietnam). By applying the Stimulus-Organism-Response model (S-O-R model), this paper examines the effect of UGC videos on online purchase intention. Moreover, the mediating role of cognitive responses, consisting of perceived credibility, perceived diagnosticity, and mental imagery, is also examined to offer valuable insights to businesses, enabling them to leverage and effectively promote the trends of UGC videos.*

Method: *A convenience sampling method was employed to collect the data. A total of 318 valid respondents participated in this survey. The data was analyzed with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling method (PLS-SEM).*

Results: *The findings show that UGC videos have a direct impact on online purchase intention. This paper also verified that cognitive states mediate the relationship between stimuli and subsequent behavioral intentions.*

Conclusion: *Our research findings enrich the literature on consumer's online purchase intentions by applying the S-O-R framework by highlighting the role of cognitive responses, and improving generalizability by contributing additional consumer behavior findings in developing Asian nations. Moreover, this paper offers businesses insights into the formation of customers' purchase intentions while watching UGC videos. Based on that, this paper raises practical recommendations regarding promoting the UGC video trend and creating UGC videos effectively to improve the cognitive states perceived by customers, including credibility, diagnostic value, and mental imagery.*

Keywords: S-O-R model, UGC Videos, Online Purchase Intention, Ho Chi Minh City.

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Introduction

The widespread of social media, together with technological advancement, has played a substantial role in driving the popularity of e-commerce and social commerce (Jiang et al., 2019; Vijay et al., 2017). It is undeniable that the extensive usage of the internet has changed the way people live and consume (Kim & Kim, 2004) by facilitating online commerce (Avinash & Akarsha, 2017) thereby allowing consumers to complete their purchases without traveling to stores (Ling et al., 2010). Especially in the post-pandemic era, Kakar and Kakar (2020) have found that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a shift in shopper perception, with online shopping gaining a significant advantage over in-store shopping in terms of convenience dimensions, leading to a preference for online shopping that is likely to become a long-term habit in the future.

Vietnam's retail e-commerce market is forecasted to grow by 300%, from \$13 billion in 2021 to \$39 billion in 2025 (Nhien, 2022). Vietnam's e-commerce market has enormous potential to grow, but its growth rate has not fully reached its potential. According to the E-commerce White Book, there were approximately 50 million consumers shopping through e-commerce (VietnamPlus, 2021), compared with a population of nearly 100 million people in Vietnam (General Statistics Office of Vietnam, 2021). This raises questions about how online businesses could improve their practices to seize the full opportunity of this emerging market.

In Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City is one of two ASEAN cities to make it to the top 10 most dynamic cities globally and has the largest population in Vietnam (Pham, 2022). At a growing pace, the e-commerce market in Ho Chi Minh City is growing constantly, with total online spending increasing by more than 12% per year since 2015. Citizens in HCM City are also increasingly showing an interest in social networks (Do Thi Anh Phuong, 2021). This provides a background to study the users' online purchase intentions within the scope of HCM City.

The COVID-19 epidemic caused a 443% surge in people's internet usage habits (Fuaddah et al., 2022). However, the lack of opportunities to physically test products also leads to potential risks associated with online buying. In this situation, trustworthy reviews generated and shared by actual customers are helpful to address this pre-purchase uncertainty (Vijay et al., 2017). Going through the social distancing period of the COVID-19 pandemic to the current time with the new normal state, online reviews have appeared in many forms, including the rise of TikTok with User-Generated Content videos (UGC videos). The rapid expansion of TikTok and recent advances in digital and electronic imaging have created opportunities for users to create many types of video-based content, especially product review videos, which help businesses reach more customers. Furthermore, videos are more suitable for fragmented time to browse because of their convenience and are favorable due to the similar in-store shopping experience that videos bring to consumers (Kumar & Tan, 2015). Therefore, this study focuses on TikTok to examine the impact of UGC videos on consumer purchase intention.

In previous studies, some scholars have pointed out the important role of consumers' online reviews (Moloi et al., 2022), especially UGC, in their purchase intention and behavior (see more in Appendix A). When referring to specific types of online consumer reviews, on the one hand, several scholars have proved that video-based reviews have much higher outstanding quality than other types of reviews, such as text or image (Wu et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2015). On the other hand, studies about the impact of consumers' text-based reviews on shoppers' behavioral intentions prevail, while the number of studies highlighting the influence of online reviews in video format, especially UGC videos, is quite limited. In fact, there are few researchers investigating the effects of UGC videos, but most of them have a tendency to compare UGC videos with brand-generated content (Diwanji & Cortese, 2020) or marketer-generated content (Zhao et al., 2022). Additionally, these studies hardly mention the cognitive responses of customers while watching UGC videos, which are critical for buyers to process information and evaluate products before making a final decision. In conclusion, it is still

unclear how UGC videos have an impact on consumers' behavioral intentions through the mediating role of their cognitive efforts.

To gain a better understanding of this problem, in this study, we applied the S-O-R framework to gain a better comprehension of the process by which consumers watch TikTok UGC videos and then intend to buy products. Regarding geographical gaps, most of the studies investigating UGC were conducted in developed countries, especially the USA (Diwanji & Cortese, 2020; Rajamma et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2022). In addition, there has been an increasing trend of conducting research about UGC and purchasing intention in developing countries, such as Indonesia, Jordan, and Malaysia (Muda & Hamzah, 2021; Nosita & Lestari, 2019; Nusairat et al., 2021), developing an interest in exploring UGC's potential recently. However, in Vietnam, a densely populated developing country with impressive e-commerce growth, there were a limited number of papers carried out on this topic.

While studying existing research, the authors have identified gaps and questions that require further investigation. Specifically, the authors have raised two research questions:

1. How do UGC videos affect consumers' online purchase intentions?
2. How do cognitive responses (perceived credibility, perceived diagnosticity, and mental imagery) mediate the relationship between UGC videos and consumers' online purchase intentions?

To address these questions, the study applies the S-O-R framework to examine the internal information processing of consumers towards UGC videos, which contributes to enhancing online purchase intention in the context of Vietnam. Specifically, the study aims to investigate the impact of TikTok UGC videos on purchase intention in HCM City with a further discussion about the mediating role of the cognitive states of consumers. As such, this research is expected to offer both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it could enrich the literature on the consumer's online purchase intention, specifically through the mediating role of buyers' cognitive responses while watching UGC videos on TikTok. Practically, this paper offers valuable managerial insights for e-commerce enterprises and marketers regarding the significance of UGC videos so that they can propose effective marketing plans or strategies to expand their customer reach, thereby improving business performance not only in Vietnam but also in other Asian nations.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Key Definition

UGC Videos

Social media platforms have permeated every aspect of our lives for the past 20 years. They have influenced not only how we communicate with one another but also how we conduct business, access information, think, and make decisions (Kim & Desai, 2021; Kumar & Gupta, 2023; Nascimento & Da Silveira, 2017). The rapid expansion of social media platforms like TikTok has also brought about new media expressions such as UGC. UGC refers to media content that is generated by the general public who have experienced the product rather than by endorsers and is primarily distributed online (Daugherty et al., 2008). Users create content and distribute it via social media without a profit motive (Haven et al., 2007). Wunsch-Vicent and Vickery (2007) also defined UGC as content that is created openly and accessible on the internet with a considerable level of creative effort and is outside the professional range. Besides, Mathur et al. (2021) describe UGC as self-generated content created by users according to their personal experiences, conveyed in various forms of media (such as texts, images, or videos) by using different platforms (e.g., TikTok). Furthermore, videos displaying

products that include a variety of sensory elements, such as vibrant colors, visually stimulating cues, lively motion, and a diverse range of auditory features, can more effectively enhance customers' perception of the quantity of information available compared to photo products (Park et al., 2008).

In general, UGC literature offers readers common themes related to the definition of UGC as content generated and publicized on social media by the general public or customers with the purpose of sharing actual experiences and feelings about products without financial motivations.

In existing studies, UGC was recognized as content created in various formats (including ratings, reviews, articles, blogs, photos, podcasts, or videos originating from users) rather than specific ones (Hautz et al., 2014). Most previous studies investigated several forms of online reviews at the same time in different contexts, such as the USA (Kim & Johnson, 2016; Xu et al., 2015), Korea (Park et al., 2021), and China (Geng & Chen, 2021; Wu et al., 2020). However, the influence of a particular type of UGC remains underexplored, which makes it difficult for marketers to determine whether UGC photos or UGC videos illustrate a more significant impact on consumer behavioral intention.

Therefore, this study focuses solely on TikTok UGC videos, which would be defined as online product information videos describing the experiences and feelings about the products created and shared by consumers that can influence other users' online purchase intentions.

Online Purchase Intention

Purchase intention indicates the likelihood that consumers will plan or be willing to purchase a certain product or service in the future (Wu et al., 2011). Watson et al. (2020) define purchase intention as future consumer behaviors, including interest, potential purchases, and purchasing decisions. It is a subjective condition in consumers that allows the consumer's desire to purchase goods or services but has not yet entered the actual purchase stage (Li et al., 2020).

Online purchase intention originated from purchase intention (Close & Kukar-Kinney, 2010), and in the context of online shopping, it was defined as the customers' readiness to purchase through the Internet (Meskaran et al., 2013). Online purchase intention, according to Close and Kukar-Kinney (2010), is the desire of online consumers to acquire products and services online or using virtual shopping carts. In the context of e-commerce, purchase intentions reflect consumers' inclination to make purchase transactions at e-retailers (Rosillo-Díaz et al., 2019).

Theoretical Framework

Stimulus-Organism-Response Framework

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model is a theoretical framework that was initially applied in the field of environmental psychology and was first introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974). There are three elements that make up the S-O-R framework: a stimulus, an organism, and a response. According to the traditional S-O-R framework, a stimulus (S) is any circumstance that has an impact on individuals' internal states (Eroglu et al., 2001; Lin & Lo, 2016). The following component is organisms (O), which refers to internal structures and processes that stand between external stimuli and a person's ultimate actions, reactions, or responses emitted (Bagozzi, 1986). Finally, a response (R) is a behavior carried out by a person in response to an external stimulus and an internal information process (Liu et al., 2019). To summarize, the S-O-R model represents a process in which different environmental stimuli influence a person's cognitive or emotional experiences, and following a series of internal psychological activities, behavioral responses to stimuli are produced (Amirpur & Benlian, 2015; Hu et al., 2016). In other words, particular external stimuli affect people's perceptions and attitudes, shaping their intentions and behaviors. According to several studies, the

organisms also function as mediators between stimuli and reactions (Eroglu et al., 2003; Kihlstrom, 1987).

The S-O-R theory has been validated as a viable model for examining the impact of external stimulation on individuals' internal states and subsequent behavioral responses in a wide range of fields (Chen & Yao, 2018; Chen et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2020). Furthermore, it is one of the theoretical models that have been widely applied to explain why and how a consumer behaves (Arora et al., 2020; Laato et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2020). Initial research applying the S-O-R framework mainly focused on investigating the effect of in-store atmospheric cues on offline purchasing behavior (Kaur et al., 2017). Nowadays, with the prominent emergence of e-commerce, the model has been extended towards investigating in an online shopping context to examine how an individual recognizes and interprets sensory information (i.e., UGC) and then comes to subsequent shopping behaviors (Tong et al., 2022).

Application of the S-O-R Model

In this study, the S-O-R model is used as the theoretical basis for a variety of reasons. The S-O-R model provides a good conceptual framework corresponding to the purpose of this study, which is to examine the direct relationship between UGC video (stimulus) and purchase intention (response) and to identify the mediating effect of cognitive responses (organism). Furthermore, the S-O-R model offers scope for distinguishing the impact of environmental stimuli on consumers' internal states and external responses. Therefore, it would provide a better understanding of the purchase intention process.

The term stimulus, the first component of the S-O-R model, refers to outside influences that affect consumer perception and function as the starting point of the decision-making process for purchases. Additionally, in the e-commerce context, the stimulus is the total number of cues that can be seen or heard by customers (Eroglu et al., 2001). In previous research, several scholars have used visual complexity as a stimulus to explain how customers make decisions. For instance, the impacts of visual complexity on consumers' perceived and behavior-related intentions regarding mobile shopping were discussed by Sohn et al. (2017). For these reasons, in this study, the construct of UGC videos—the visual contents with the auditory function- was adopted as a stimulus influencing the internal states of consumers.

The organism, the second component of the S-O-R model, refers to the cognitive and affective aspects of the message recipient in processing the stimulus and response given (Fitriani et al., 2020). Both of these aspects help process the stimulus so that it becomes meaningful information that can support decision-making regarding the response behavior based on what the individual wants to do (Loureiro et al., 2011). Moreover, in the latter stage of consumers' two-stage decision-making process, buyers tend to carry out a complex cognitive process before making final choices (Li et al., 2017) rather than an emotional one. Thus, this study focuses on the cognitive states to have a better understanding of consumer information processing. Following Briñol et al. (2004), cognitive responses are considered as thoughts and ideas that are commenced by distinctive advertisements and sources of persuasive messages. According to Eroglu et al. (2001), cognition includes consumers' understanding, attitudes, and beliefs, and perceived credibility is conceptualized as consumers' positive beliefs about information (Eisend, 2015). Therefore, in this study, in terms of organism components, perceived credibility, perceived diagnosticity, and mental imagery, which are evoked by watching UGC videos on TikTok platforms, are adopted to explore the cognitive processes of consumers.

The last component in the S-O-R framework is a response, referring to the subsequent response of individuals towards the external stimulus (Robert & John, 1982). Additionally, prior studies applying the S-O-R model in online settings have found that purchase behavior is linked to UGC (Cheung et al., 2022; Kim & Johnson, 2016). Therefore, it can be argued that in

this study, online purchase intention reflects behavioral responses that may be linked to UGC exposure in a social media scenario and subsequently form the response component.

In online shopping settings, consumers are unable to physically view all the products. Therefore, they tend to make decisions through a two-stage process. In the first stage, consumers need to select products that will be further viewed from the large number of products on the list page. In the second stage, consumers will deeply evaluate the products that they chose before (Häubl & Trifts, 2000), and they tend to use complex and more cognitively effortful decision rules (Weathers et al., 2015). In the context of this research, when it comes to purchase intention, consumers need to evaluate the product deeply in many ways, including accessing the UGC videos on TikTok. At this time, consumers are in the later stage of the decision-making process and want to obtain more products using experience information to make evaluations and purchase decisions (Li et al., 2017; Weathers et al., 2015). At this stage, customers evaluate experience products with a higher degree of subjectivity and perceived risk (Hoch & Deighton, 1989; Huang et al., 2009), which might make them uncomfortable (Luo et al., 2012), and more cognitive effort must be used to evaluate experience attributes. To solve this situation, UGC videos provide consumers with more nuanced information about product experiences, requiring them to exert more cognitive effort. In addition, UGC videos provide customers with information on the product experience, which satisfies their informational demands and encourages them to perceive the product experience, improving their likelihood of making a purchase. Therefore, this study proposes UGC videos as a predictor of consumer online purchase intention.

In synthesizing the literature on UGC, it is evident that the existing body of research converges on several fundamental themes. Primarily, UGC, spanning various formats like reviews, articles, blogs, photos, podcasts, and videos, serves as an authentic representation of consumers' experiences and sentiments about products across different social media platforms. Studies by Hautz et al. (2014), Karahanna et al. (2015), Kim and Johnson (2016), and others underscore the significance of UGC as a pivotal influence on consumer behavior and decision-making processes in the digital landscape. However, despite the substantial attention given to UGC's impact, a notable gap in the current literature revolves around the comparative analysis between distinct types of UGC formats, such as images versus videos, and their differential effects on consumer behavioral intentions. While previous studies have explored diverse forms of UGC across various geographical contexts, there remains an underexplored realm concerning the specific influence and nuances of UGC video content, particularly within the context of platforms like TikTok. Our study aims to fill this gap by focusing specifically on TikTok UGC videos and their impact on shaping consumers' online purchase intentions. Our theoretical framework, rooted in the S-O-R model, offers a lens through which we seek to unravel the cognitive processes and behavioral responses triggered by UGC videos, elucidating their role in the online shopping context.

Hypotheses Development

Effect of UGC Videos on Online Purchase Intention

There are previous studies supporting the effect of UGC videos on consumer behavior (see more in Appendix A). With the development of electronic media as a strong and reliable source of information (Shukla, 2011), the influence of UGC on purchase intentions has significantly increased (Nosita & Lestari, 2019). Park et al. (2007) stated that online reviews act as strong informants and recommenders and significantly influence the purchase intention and actual purchase. Studies investigating modality effects found that messages conveyed through audio and visual combinations exert greater influence on persuasion, facilitate message recall, and enhance the salience of communicator-related information (Chaiken & Eagly, 1983), which ultimately influences consumers' behavioral intentions (Hautz et al., 2014). The video format of online reviews, moreover, could enhance message effectiveness through peripheral routes

where color, motion, and sound make the message more attractive, vivid, and salient (Nisbett & Ross, 1980) and have a considerable effect on consumer perceptions and purchase intentions (Xu et al., 2015). These dynamic videos capture attention by vividly presenting stimuli for different processing channels to enhance cognition (Weathers et al., 2007).

Considering all of this evidence, the authors suggest that UGC videos are suitable interfaces for cognitively acquiring information about experienced products by better representing “spatial relationships and movements integral to the products” (Vessey, 2006), consequently influencing customers’ purchase intention (Figure 1). On this basis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: UGC videos have a positive impact on online purchase intention.

The Mediating Effect of Perceived Credibility

Perceived credibility refers to the extent to which information is perceived as true by an individual (Eisend, 2015). When a recipient assesses the information generated by a sender, a particular degree of credibility is perceived. Since perceived credibility is determined by what the audience considers to be credible, even if a presenter lacks extensive product knowledge, the audience may still find the review credible (Cheng & Ho, 2015). Additionally, the online reviews generated by ordinary consumers who have made the same or similar purchase are considered credible since the viewers believe that reviewers are able to discuss both positive and negative aspects of the problem without being biased (Zhang et al., 2014), as opposed to endorsers or online sellers, who would only highlight the positive aspects of the merchandise for economic interests (Ansari & Gupta, 2021). Besides, since contributors can falsify and flexibly change their online identity, UGC is easily abused for nefarious purposes, such as deceiving other users (Ertz et al., 2017). Therefore, customers acquire more cognition when watching UGC videos, which can be argued that perceived credibility is representative of consumers’ cognitive state.

Consumers will look for reliable information to use as a foundation for purchase intention while making purchases online (Sharma & Aggarwal, 2020). An online review is believed to be helpful as a source of information for the decision-making process if it is credible (Chen et al., 2015), which will favorably influence consumers’ purchase intentions (Khan et al., 2018). Consumers typically perceive UGC as credible since UGC is based on customer experience, which makes it more reliable, useful, and unbiased (Bae & Lee, 2011; Verhellen et al., 2013). As a result, they will engage more with social media and be more likely to trust recommendations and advice generated by video-owned users (Dang-Pham et al., 2021; Filieri, 2016). In other words, it is possible to state that perceived credibility in UGC positively impacts consumers’ purchase intentions (Mir & Rehman, 2013). In an economic situation, consumers’ purchase intentions, which represent consumers’ behavioral responses (R) during the shopping process, are based on the reliability of products and UGC (Ert et al., 2016), and they are easily convinced to buy products if they supportively believe in the information, irrespective of the information sources (Waldt et al., 2009).

In prior studies, credibility has been determined as a factor that mediates the relationship between different kinds of source models and consumers’ intent to purchase (Spry et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2017). In addition, Saima and Khan (2020) highlighted that in the context of influencer marketing, credibility plays a mediating role in affecting consumers’ purchase intentions through attributes of trustworthiness, entertainment value, information quality, and the credibility of influencers. This suggests that consumers’ purchase intention is not directly influenced by source attributes but instead mediated by other factors. Besides that, Hautz et al. (2014) indicated the relevance of source credibility as a mediator impacting consumers’ behavioral intentions relating to user-generated video viewing. However, these studies have been mainly conducted on other platforms or fields (i.e., YouTube) or in the context of being

influenced by celebrities in general. In short, when the viewer is exposed to videos on TikTok, UGC videos (S) stimulate their perception in terms of the credibility of the content generated (O) and consequently impact their shopping intention (R). Thus, perceived credibility is expected to have a mediating effect on the relationship between UGC videos and the online purchase intention of consumers (Figure 1). On this basis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Perceived credibility mediates the effect of UGC videos on online purchase intention.

The Mediating Effect of Perceived Diagnosticity

Kempf and Smith (1998) described perceived diagnosticity as the degree to which consumers believe specific aspects of their shopping experiences to be useful in assessing products. It is determined by the perceived correlation between the information and the judgment and is often operationalized as the information's helpfulness for making a judgment in empirical studies (Dick et al., 1990; Skowronski & Carlston, 1987). Following previous studies, Jiang and Benbasat (2004) applied perceived diagnosticity in the context of e-commerce to describe how consumers perceive an interface's ability to provide product information that aids them in assessing a product's performance and quality, regardless of its positive or negative characteristics (Ho & Hsu, 2022; Hong et al., 2020). Furthermore, according to Crilly et al. (2004), the judgements derived by a consumer drawing conclusions about a product from information gathered by their senses and evaluating the subject's perceived qualities are determined as cognitive responses. Therefore, it can be said that perceived diagnosticity is indicative of cognitive response.

In the online environment, products are limited by certain sensory information, such as physical inspection of the product (Gabisch & Gwebu, 2011). Moreover, the discrepancy between online products and actual products, which results from information deficiency, may lead to consumer dissatisfaction, less favorable product evaluations, and reduced purchase intentions (Kaltcheva & Weitz, 2006; Urban et al., 1997). As mentioned before, in the latter stage of the decision-making process, customers are interested in learning more about product experiences (Li et al., 2017; Weathers et al., 2015). Customers are assured of evaluating product quality and have more confidence in their buying decisions if they believe that the product information is diagnostic (Kempf & Smith, 1998). In fact, when the diagnosticity of the presented attribute information is low, consumers may form judgements with a low degree of confidence (Maheswaran et al., 1992). Otherwise, if the viewer assesses a well-built UGC video on TikTok, which represents a stimulus (S), to help their perceived diagnosticity (Organism) rise, consumers are more inclined to purchase the products consequently as a behavioral response (R) (Verhagen et al., 2016). This reasoning is in line with prior research (Berger, 1994; Kempf, 1999), which shows that when consumers feel well-informed about a product, the decision-making process will be accelerated.

Regarding the S-O-R framework, several researchers (Wang & Chang, 2013; Zhang et al., 2021) have shown that the relationship between a stimulus and purchase intention (R) is mediated by perceived diagnosticity (O) (see more in Appendix A). Perceived diagnosticity has been explored to mediate the effect of online product presentation videos on consumers' purchase intentions over the years (Cheng et al., 2022; Jiang & Benbasat, 2007; Verhagen et al., 2016). Considering all of this evidence, the more helpful UGC videos (S) have likely been for evaluating a product, the greater influence the perceived diagnosticity (O) will have on the relationship between UGC videos and online purchase intention (R) (Figure 1). On this basis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Perceived diagnosticity mediates the effect of UGC videos on online purchase intention.

The Mediating Effect of Mental Imagery

In individuals' memory processing, mental imagery is the process by which it represents sensory or perceptual experiences, such as thoughts and emotions (MacInnis & Price, 1987). It was defined as the "mental invention or recreation of an experience that, in at least some respects, resembles the experience of actually perceiving an object or an event, either in conjunction with or in the absence of direct sensory stimulation (Neck & Manz, 1992). Working memory generates mental images through recall, recreation, or combinations of stored information (Amit et al., 2017; Borst & Kosslyn, 2008) which serve as a primary source of information available to help consumers make a judgment (Schwarz, 1986). Additionally, when referring to the online shopping process, consumers tend to acquire information from not only product experiences but also mental simulations of consumption situations during pre-purchase deliberation. Hence, it can be concluded that mental imagery is also a key indicator of cognitive states in the online shopping process.

In the context of lacking a physical product experience in online shopping, it is crucial to present vivid and rich information about product features and consumption to help consumers generate mental imagery (Flavián et al., 2017). According to Roggeveen et al. (2015), product presentation videos enhance consumers' mental imagery and improve their participation in the product experience in a manner that is comparable to that of the real product experience. By facilitating the formation of mental imagery, it further influences subsequent behaviors, such as purchase intention (Gavilan et al., 2014). Various studies have demonstrated that text and visual information in advertisements evoke consumers' mental imagery, which has an impact on consumers' evaluations and behaviors (such as purchase intention) (Maier & Dost, 2018; Walters et al., 2007; Wu et al., 2020). Furthermore, the study by Cheng et al. (2022) also revealed that mental imagery, which characterizes an organism (O), mediates the influence of product presentation videos (S) on consumers' purchase intention (R). Although previous studies have demonstrated the mediating role of mental imagery in the relationship between different types of information and consumers' behaviors, its mediating role in the relationship between UGC videos and online purchase intention has remained unexplored (see more in Appendix A).

In the context of this research, UGC videos representing the stimuli in the S-O-R framework (S), enable consumers to mentally imagine and simulate the shopping experience, thereby generating their mental imagery (O). As a result, they are more likely to have a mental simulation experience similar to the actual product experience, leading to higher online purchase intention, which reflects their behavioral response (R) (Maier & Dost, 2018) (Figure 1). As such, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Mental imagery mediates the effect of UGC videos on online purchase intention.

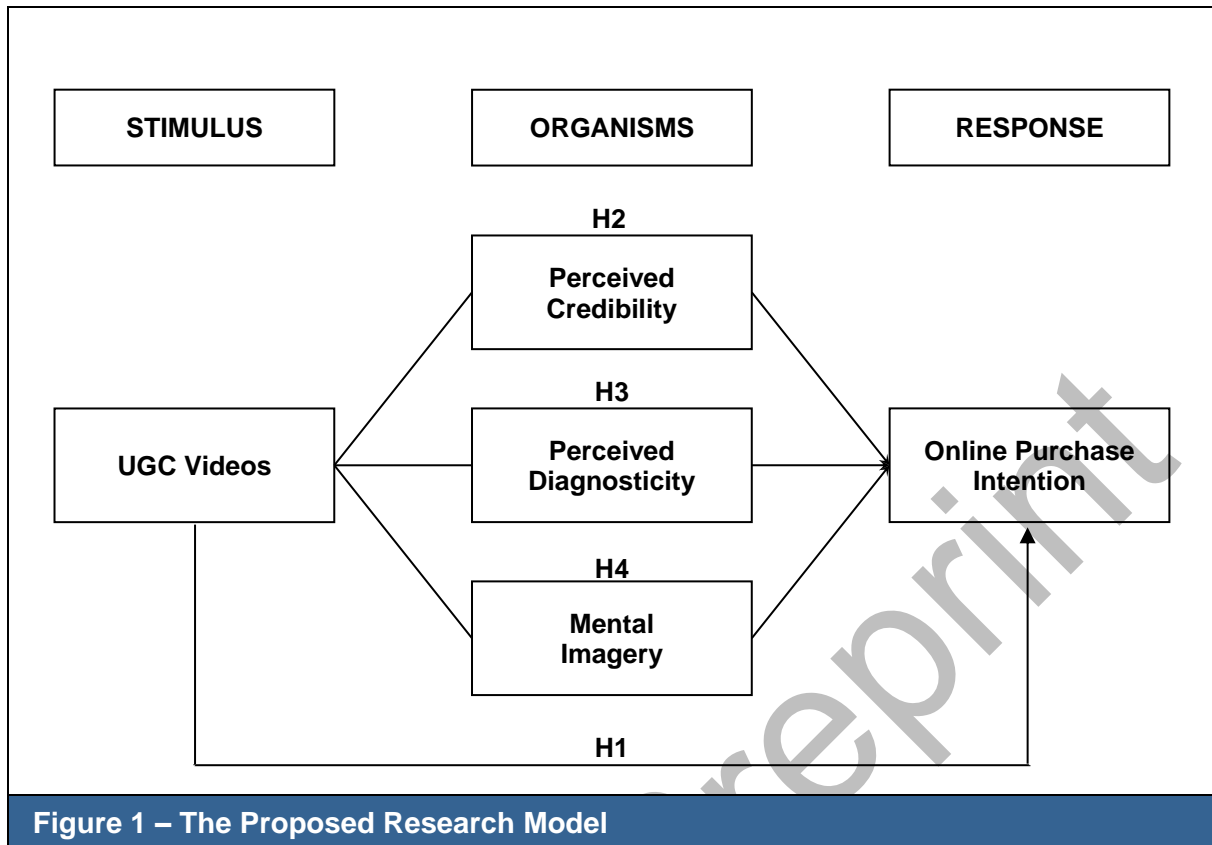


Figure 1 – The Proposed Research Model

Methodology

This study follows the quantitative method with an empirical survey technique. Based on an extensive literature review, the author developed a questionnaire to measure five constructs, including UGC videos, perceived credibility, perceived diagnosticity, mental imagery, and online purchase intention (see more in Appendix B).

Before conducting the survey, the authors performed a preliminary study to adjust and validate the measurement scales. The focus group discussion technique was chosen due to the appropriation for adjusting the scale (Nguyen Dinh, 2014). The authors invited ten consumers in HCM City to participate in the trial survey and discussion. Firstly, participants were asked to answer the first version of the questionnaire, followed by their comments on the question items and the research framework.

The results from the preliminary study showed that all interviewees agreed that UGC videos have an impact on consumers' online purchase intention, and they also verified the mediating roles of perceived credibility, perceived diagnosticity, and mental imagery between UGC videos and online purchase intention. The interviewees mainly contributed to modifying the unclear question items so that they were easier to understand and suitable for the characteristics of Vietnamese consumers. The authors then finalized the questionnaire and continued with the survey.

Data Collection and Sampling

In the context of this research, the authors have defined the key informants in this study as online consumers in Ho Chi Minh City who have experience using TikTok and have made online purchases. This is because TikTok is a popular platform for creating and consuming UGC videos and it has a unique format and user base that may influence online purchase

behavior in specific ways. By including only those who have used the platform and watched UGC videos, we are able to focus our study on this specific group of users who are most likely to be affected by UGC videos.

Respondents needed to have made at least one online purchase, as they would have some level of familiarity with the online purchasing process, which can help to ensure that their responses are more accurate and reliable and that their experiences are more representative of the experiences of the general population who make online purchases. Furthermore, the study focuses on the mediating role of cognitive states, which refers to the mental processes that influence an individual's decision-making and behavior. Moreover, Ho Chi Minh City is the largest city in Vietnam and is known for its young and tech-savvy population. Hence, the online consumers in HCM City are the target respondents for this study, as they are likely to be early adopters of new technologies and platforms like TikTok.

The questionnaires were distributed online through the Google Form platform by adopting the convenience sampling method from June 20, 2022, to July 31, 2022, in HCM City. To implement the regression analysis, Tabachnick and Fidell (1996) suggested that the sample size must be guaranteed according to the formula $n \geq 8p + 50$, where n is the sample size and p is the number of independent factors. As for the SEM model, the sample size is five times or, better yet, ten times the number of observed variables (Kline, 2011). In this research, 318 valid responses were collected, which qualified the suggested sample size. Among 318 valid responses from TikTok-using consumers, 42.14% of the sample was male, and 57.86% was female. Survey participants have various levels of education, with bachelor's degrees accounting for the largest proportion (72.96%). Besides, those with incomes of 3 to under 5 million VND accounted for the majority (51.26%). Most respondents are young adults from 18 to 24 years of age (89.31%).

Measurement Test

In current research papers, the use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is widely applied in many fields to help researchers concretize the relationship between factors. Researchers usually use two methods: Covariance-Based SEM (CB-SEM) and Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM). Benitez et al. (2016) have shown that the PLS-SEM method is more widely used in the fields of organizational behavior and marketing research due to advantages over CB-SEM. These include analyzing both formative and reflective measurement models at the same time, analyzing the model with many mediators, observed variables, and latent variables, and the data does not need to be normally distributed.

Therefore, PLS-SEM was applied in this study with the help of SmartPLS3 software. All the constructs in this work are reflective measures. The consistent PLS-SEM (PLSc-SEM) algorithm method is preferred due to its ability to perform a correction of reflective constructs' correlations to make results consistent with a factor model (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2015). After examining the outer loadings for all latent variables, the two indicators, PC4 and OPI2, are removed since their outer loadings are smaller than the 0.7 threshold level (Hair et al., 2016).

The measurement reliability was examined by computing two main indicators, namely Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (Table 1). The results strongly confirm the reliability of the construct. The scores exceed 0.80, which is above the accepted threshold.

To evaluate the convergent validity of the variables, each latent construct's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was calculated. Henseler et al. (2015) have stated that the AVE values need to be greater than or equal to 0.5 to confirm the convergent validity of the variables. From Table 1, it can be seen that all of the AVE values are greater than 0.5, so convergent validity is confirmed for this study model.

The Fornell and Larcker criterion was used to evaluate the discriminant's validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 2 indicates that all of the correlations are smaller relative to the square root of the average variance exerted along the diagonals, implying satisfactory discriminant validity.

Finally, the research team will test whether multicollinearity occurs or not to ensure the validity and reliability of the results and to avoid biased or erroneous conclusions. According to Hair et al. (2019), if the VIF value is from 5 onward, the model has a very high probability of multicollinearity happening. If the VIF value is in the range [3;5], multicollinearity can occur. The VIF results in Table 3 for each construct, which were below the threshold value of 5.0, indicated that collinearity issues between the constructs were absent from this study.

Table 1 – The Result of the Measurement Test				
Constructs (number of items)	Outer loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Mental imagery (4)	0.759; 0.742; 0.732; 0.804	0.845	0.845	0.577
Online purchase intention (4)	0.855; 0.842; 0.817; 0.800	0.898	0.898	0.687
Perceived credibility (3)	0.780; 0.814; 0.800	0.841	0.840	0.637
Perceived diagnosticity (4)	0.778; 0.766; 0.767; 0.877	0.875	0.875	0.637
UGC videos (4)	0.822; 0.738; 0.773; 0.767	0.857	0.858	0.601

Table 2 – The Result of Discriminant Validity					
	MI	OPI	PC	PD	UGCV
Mental imagery (MI)	0.760				
Online purchase intention (OPI)	0.681	0.829			
Perceived credibility (PC)	0.558	0.637	0.798		
Perceived diagnosticity (PD)	0.482	0.622	0.473	0.798	
UGC videos (UGCV)	0.612	0.696	0.512	0.468	0.775

Table 3 – The Result of VIF for Observed Variables (Outer VIF)					
MI1	2.024	OPI5	2.466	PD4	2.212
MI2	1.768	PC1	2.567	UGCV2	1.749
MI3	1.916	PC2	1.845	UGCV3	1.812
MI4	1.872	PC3	2.011	UGCV4	2.462
OPI1	2.444	PD1	1.963		
OPI3	2.572	PD2	2.641		
OPI4	2.450	PD3	2.122		

Results and Discussion

Structural Test

After the measurement model is confirmed as valid and reliable, the next step is to measure the structural model outcomes. The Path coefficient (β value), t-value, and p-value are the key standards for concluding the hypothesis of impact relationships in the model. Specifically, a statistically significant indirect effect (t-value > 1.96, two-tailed, $p < 0.05$) should be taken as evidence for mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2004; Zhao et al., 2010). However, since our analysis models have multiple mediators, specific indirect effects must be estimated instead of total indirect effects (Memon et al., 2018).

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Table 4 presents the main results. The results confirm that Hypothesis 1 was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.316$, $t = 5.799$, $p < 0.001$). In addition, all three factors, namely perceived credibility ($\beta = 0.112$, $t = 4.231$, $p < 0.001$), perceived diagnosticity ($\beta = 0.118$, $t = 4.657$, $p < 0.001$), and mental imagery ($\beta = 0.149$, $t = 3.946$, $p < 0.001$), were found to have mediating effects on the relationship between UGC videos and online purchase intention.

Table 4 – The Results of the Structural Test					
Hypothesis	Path	St. β	t-value	p-values	Decision
H1	UGC V -> OPI	0.316	5.799	0.000	Supported
H2	UGC V -> PC -> OPI	0.027	4.231	0.000	Supported
H3	UGC V -> PD -> OPI	0.025	4.657	0.000	Supported
H4	UGC V -> MI -> OPI	0.038	3.946	0.000	Supported

As can be seen in Figure 2, the results of the analysis reveal that the relationship between UGC videos and online purchase intention is only partially mediated by cognitive states, as there is still a significant direct effect between UGC videos and online purchase intention that is not explained by perceived credibility, perceived diagnosticity, and mental imagery.

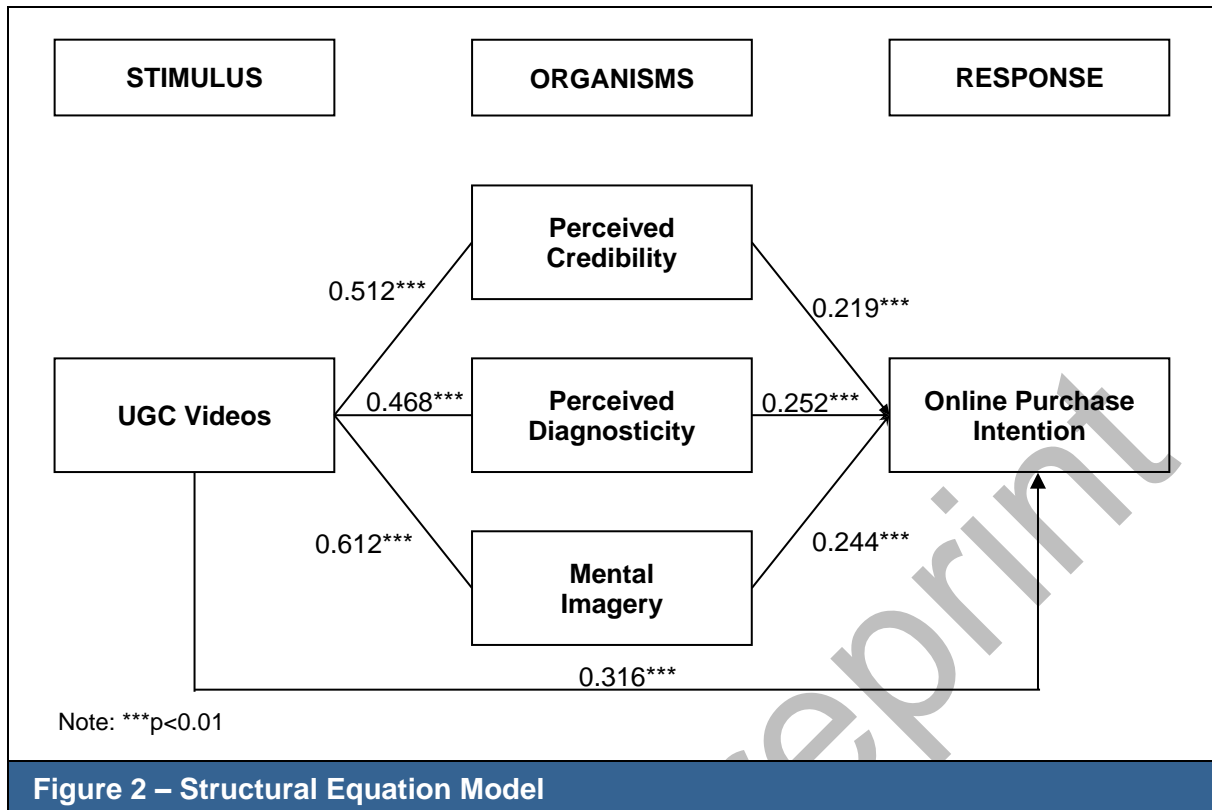


Figure 2 – Structural Equation Model

Findings and Discussions

The findings of this study successfully answer the two research questions. The first research question has been answered: UGC videos have a positive direct impact on consumers' online purchase intentions. By allowing individuals to share their experiences, opinions, and recommendations about products or services, UGC videos provide valuable and authentic information to potential buyers, which ultimately drives their purchase intention. Also, the second research question has been clarified by the partially mediating role of cognitive response, which suggests that cognitive states are an important mechanism through which UGC videos affect online purchase intention. When consumers engage with UGC videos, they are likely to form cognitive responses, including perceived credibility, perceived diagnosticity, and mental imagery, which can ultimately influence their purchase intentions. After analyzing the collected data, we found that H1, which hypothesizes that UGC videos have a positive impact on online purchase intention, was supported. This finding is consistent with the study of Nusairat et al. (2021), which found that UGC relevance has both direct and indirect influences on shopping intention through brand image. Similarly, previous studies also confirmed that product presentation videos and online video review characteristics on YouTube directly and partially impact consumers' purchase intentions as well as decision-making (Cheng et al., 2022). According to the result of the focus group discussion, the main reasons why the interviewees tend to watch UGC videos before making purchase decisions were (1) to know about other consumers' opinions and experiences with the product, (2) to validate their thoughts about the product, and (3) to see it being used. Moreover, UGC videos, with their visual cues and “show rather than tell” nature, could help consumers get a clearer perception of a product, therefore having an impact on their online purchase intention.

Furthermore, this hypothesis is also supported by the real-life context of Ho Chi Minh City, where an increasing number of people are using the social media platform TikTok, promoting the trend of shopping on TikTokShop and the development of e-commerce. Specifically, according to Statista (2022a, b), TikTok is one of the most popular social media platforms among Vietnamese youths, with 77% of users being Gen Z. Moreover, Tri Duc (2023)

highlights that TikTokShop has emerged as a new e-commerce trend and quickly overtook Lazada, becoming Vietnam's second-biggest e-commerce platform, enabling consumers to discover suitable products by watching UGC videos on TikTok. The report also notes that the e-commerce sector in Ho Chi Minh City has grown by 46% in the first quarter of 2021 compared to the same period last year, indicating the rising popularity of e-commerce in the city. Furthermore, this hypothesis is also supported by the real-life context of Ho Chi Minh City, where an increasing number of people are using the social media platform TikTok, promoting the trend of shopping on TikTokShop and the development of e-commerce.

Regarding the mediating effect, results from H2 revealed that perceived credibility mediates the effect of UGC videos on consumers' online purchase intention. The indirect effect of UGC videos on online purchase intention mediated by perceived credibility was positive and statistically relevant, with a p-value of 0.000. This finding is supported by Hautz et al. (2014), which revealed that in the context of tourism, source credibility mediated the impact of user-generated videos and agency-generated videos on consumers' behavioral intentions. Both studies have indicated that perceived credibility played a significant role in mediating the relationship between UGC videos and consumers' intentions in various contexts (e-commerce, tourism). Moreover, the results from H2 are also in line with the finding of Xu et al. (2015), which claimed that video-based online reviews generate positive impacts on consumer perceptions in terms of credibility, leading to intentions to purchase the product. Additionally, based on the respondents' opinions in quantitative research, they often perceive brand content as advertising that is exaggerated and untrustworthy. Consumers seem to prefer UGC videos due to being created by their fellow consumers to share experiences with their friends and online followers. Thus, the users are truly able to provide their actual experiences, which are usually biased when they come from KOLs or celebrities because of commercial interest. As a result, viewers would believe and rely on the information about products that UGC videos provided, which in turn had a positive impact on the purchase intentions of consumers.

Moreover, the results of H3 indicated that perceived diagnosticity mediates the effect of UGC on consumers' online purchase intention. The p-value of the indirect effect of UGC videos on online purchase intention by perceived diagnosticity shows strong statistical significance, which equals 0.000. This finding is supported by Cheng et al. (2022), who claimed that perceived diagnosticity mediates the effect of product presentation video types (appearance videos and usage videos) on consumers' purchase intention. This statement was also verified by Verhagen et al. (2016), which showed that online product presentation formats increase perceived diagnosticity, making consumers feel well-informed about a product and thereby increasing their purchase intention. Similarly, the study of Geng and Chen (2021) reveals that UGC interaction quality is positively related to purchase intention, and this relationship is mediated by perceived usefulness, which is close to perceived diagnosticity. Additionally, it can be explained that when watching diagnostic UGC videos, consumers feel that the information meets their needs, helps them know better about a product, and raises confidence in their purchase decisions; as a result, they are more likely to make a purchase. Besides, respondents also stated that UGC videos give them a feeling that the product information embedded is diagnostic, resulting in their assurance about evaluating product quality and a higher probability of obtaining the product. Therefore, while exposing product-related UGC videos, the perceived diagnosticity would improve evaluations, leading them to develop higher levels of purchase intentions.

Finally, H4, which posits that mental imagery mediates the effect of UGC videos on consumers' online purchase intention, was supported. The indirect effect of UGC videos on online purchase intention through mental imagery had a p-value of 0.000. These results were supported by the previous study, which examined the mediating effect of mental imagery on the impact of product-related videos on consumers' intentions to purchase (Cheng et al., 2022). Moreover, the research of Wu et al. (2020) has revealed that product feature videos trigger mental imagery, which is positively associated with consumer intention to purchase wearable

devices even without a direct product experience on the shopping website. Additionally, the interviewees interpreted that UGC videos, which are audio-visual forms, have various outstanding advantages that are more likely to impact the different senses of consumers. Therefore, while watching these videos, it is easier for them to imagine themselves in a shopping context, trying and experiencing the products. In addition, mental images are created in the minds of consumers while watching videos as a source of information about the products, specifically about how to use them. Thanks to these mental images, consumers may better understand the product and the experiences associated with it, thereby boosting their purchase intention for the products presented in the videos.

Implications

Theoretical Implications

This study enriches the literature by offering a better understanding of consumer-to-consumer information sharing in an online medium using UGC videos. It investigates how customers evaluate UGC videos and explains the formation of consumers' purchase intentions elicited by watching UGC videos by proposing and validating the mediating effect of cognitive responses, which is a new finding in the field of consumer behavior research. Our findings also reaffirm and extend the literature on online shopping behavior by examining three theoretical constructs, including perceived credibility, perceived diagnosticity, and mental imagery, which explain in detail the process by which consumers perceive stimuli.

Our study contributes to bridging the research gap by (1) focusing on a particular format of UGC video that can convey product information and (2) highlighting the importance of UGC video as well as cognitive states as mediating factors in enhancing online purchase intention. Thanks to visual movements with auditory functions, UGC videos can transfer unbiased information and real-life experiences to the viewers more effectively than other formats of UGC. These videos are found to have significant impacts on customers' cognitive states, subsequently boosting purchase intentions, especially in online shopping settings where customers lack the ability to physically interact with or visually inspect the products. In addition, by bringing new insights into the process, UGC videos influence consumers' purchase intentions in the Vietnam context, particularly in Ho Chi Minh City. This study could enhance the generalizability of findings in developing nations in Asia with different consumption habits and behavioral intentions compared to many previous ones done in the literature.

Moreover, in terms of theoretical basis, the study enriches prior work in the area of consumers' responses to informational stimuli by applying S-O-R theory to understand how UGC videos facilitate the decision-making process. The study extends the existing S-O-R theoretical framework via a detailed exploration of both the direct and indirect relationship between the stimulus (UGC video) and the response (online purchase intention). The direct effect indicates obvious implications for marketers and businesses, while understanding the indirect effects through the S-O-R model could provide a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms and guide more targeted interventions. Our study expands the S-O-R framework by outlining how emotional responses triggered by UGC videos are related to cognitive assessments, shaping online purchase intentions. This contribution reveals the layered dynamics within the S-O-R model, highlighting how emotions and thoughts interact in the context of UGC videos.

Practical Implications

Considering the underexploited e-commerce potential in Asian countries in general and in Vietnam in particular, the findings of our study have strong practical implications by informing businesses and marketers of the importance of UGC videos with regard to consumer online purchase intention and the critical role of consumers' cognitive states in online shopping.

Consumers' online purchase intention could be enhanced when watching UGC videos because, through this process, they could know more about the products through other consumers' opinions, thereby helping them to judge the items. Therefore, based on that relationship, this study's findings imply that Asian e-commerce corporations should consider adopting UGC videos in their social media marketing, communication, and advertising strategies. Companies should embed UGC videos in their marketing activities, either by re-uploading UGC videos or embedding the corresponding links in their digital promotion activities (e.g., homepages or blogs), and credit the original author. By doing so, UGC videos may offer companies an effective alternative to other videos (e.g., endorsement videos) created by KOLs, celebrities, or companies themselves. As a result, these contents can advance consumers' product and service evaluations and, ultimately, enhance the target audience's online purchase intentions toward the presented products. Moreover, these activities can also show the companies' appreciation of content created by consumers, which inspires them to make more UGC videos in the future. In addition, gathering a variety of content for other customers to refer to and choose from should also be appreciated and focused on by businesses. As mentioned before, consumers tend to rely on reviews from previous users as a reference. Therefore, creating a "library" of UGC videos - a collection of review videos of previous customers - will be a good thing for customers to refer to. As a result, this may stimulate the desires of potential customers and accelerate the speed of making purchasing decisions.

The findings of this study imply that not only Vietnamese e-commerce businesses but also Asian ones should build UGC marketing campaigns related to product information, especially in video format, to encourage customers to create their content and post it on social media, such as TikTok. These campaigns can be contests related to the product and have some recognition or rewards for the winners. This will motivate consumers to make well-organized content or videos about the products, through which useful information can be conveyed. Moreover, these campaigns need to set specific requirements for images, sounds, or information in consumers' content to enhance the impact of those forms on the mental imagery of other consumers. By doing so, potential consumers can experience the feeling of trying or experiencing the product, which helps them in their decision-making process. Moreover, special incentives such as free products or price discounts should be offered as a post-purchase stimulus to consumers if they post product reviews (e.g., images and videos) on e-commerce platforms. In this way, UGC is much more credible, and ultimately, consumer confidence in products can also increase.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study has some limitations that could be addressed in future research. Firstly, by applying a convenience sampling method, the respondents in this study, who come from a limited number of customers in HCM City, were mainly young people, which reduces the representativeness of this research. Therefore, future research should apply other appropriate sampling methods and expand the scope of the sampling groups.

Secondly, the internal information processing of consumers was somewhat limited since this study concentrated on cognitive states. This limitation may be addressed by evaluating the effect of other potential variables in both cognitive and affective states, such as perceived risk, perceived enjoyment, pleasure, or arousal, to give better insights into how customers respond to UGC videos.

Finally, the proposed model was verified for general products, which may not be applicable to some specific backgrounds. In fact, the impact of UGC videos on purchase intentions towards different products does not remain the same. Future studies should focus on certain product categories (e.g., food, beauty, fashion, and healthcare) to provide useful implications for a specific assortment of products and services.

Conclusion

The study has applied the S-O-R framework to investigate the influence of UGC videos on TikTok on online purchase intentions in the context of Vietnam. The research was conducted by employing the convenience sampling method and the structural equation model, using questionnaires to survey a sample of 318 participants in Ho Chi Minh City.

All hypotheses are supported, which shows that UGC videos have both direct and indirect impacts on online purchase intention. Accordingly, the study also confirmed the mediating role of cognitive states, including perceived credibility, perceived diagnosticity, and mental imagery. Based on the research findings, valuable theoretical and practical implications have been offered for this topic.

On the one hand, this paper enriches the literature on customer behaviors and enhances the generalizability of empirical findings in developing Asian nations. On the other hand, the research offers valuable insights and practical recommendations to promote the trend of UGC videos in an effective way by improving the cognitive states perceived by customers, thereby fully leveraging advantages and increasing purchase intentions.

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Appendix A. Summary of Research Articles

Table A – Summary of Research Articles					
Source	Origin	Research Purposes	Conceptual/ theoretical background	Methodology	Key findings
Kim & Johnson (2016)	U.S.	To investigate the impact of brand-related UGC on consumer decision-making within the Facebook context.	S-O-R model	Data was collected from 533 Facebook users and then analyzed by applying the quantitative method.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brand-related UGC stimulated emotional and cognitive responses in consumers. - Emotional and cognitive responses significantly affected behavioral responses. - Pleasure and perceived information quality served as the mediators between brand-related UGC and all of the behavioral responses examined.
Cheng et al. (2022)	China	To investigate how customers' purchase intentions are influenced by product presentation video' type (appearance video vs. usage video), as well as the moderating effect of the product rating (low vs. high). To verify the mediating role of perceived diagnosticity and mental imagery.	Resource matching theory, Mental imagery theory Cue utilization theory.	This study used experimental method, and through the "Wenjuanxing" platform, the authors have collected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pre-experiment 1: 81 - Pre-experiment 2: 95 - Pre-experiment 3: 58 - Experiment 1: 163 (144 completed) - Experiment 2: 202 (188 completed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The product presentation video type significantly influences consumers' purchase intention. - Perceived diagnosticity and mental imagery mediate the impact of product presentation video type on consumers' purchase intentions.
Park et al. (2021)	Korea	To estimate the relationship between several forms of online reviews' (text, rating, photo) and purchase intentions and, as well as the mediating role of the perception of trust on online reviews regarding pictures.	Superiority effect	A 2x2x2 factorial experimental design was applied. Participants (n=239) were online buyers using online reviews for buying products within the most recent three months.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviews with pictures were shown to be more effective and positively impacted trust. - Accordingly, this research supported the moderated mediation effects of trust on purchase intention.

Table A – Summary of Research Articles					
Source	Origin	Research Purposes	Conceptual/ theoretical background	Methodology	Key findings
Xu et al. (2015)	U.S.	Evaluating the effect of online reviews demonstrated in three presentation formats—text, image, and video—on three products—a digital camera, backpack, and videogame.	Cognitive fit theory Elaboration likelihood model	A laboratory experiment was conducted to examine the data of undergraduate business students, 16-22yr (with a median of 18; n=110).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consumer perceptions are significantly impacted by the presentation format. - The relationship between presentation format and consumer perceptions is strongly moderated by product type.
Nusairat et al. (2021)	Jordan	To examine how UGC impacts consumers' intentions to purchase cosmetics while taking into account the mediating role of brand image.	S-O-R model	This cross-sectional descriptive research employed the data of 361 cosmetic product buyers subjected to data analysis using Smart PLS 3.0.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UGC and brand image both have a positive impact on consumer buying intentions. - UGC strongly predicted brand image, and it mediated its impact on consumer purchasing intentions.
Muda & Hamzah (2021)	Malaysia	To investigate how university students' attitudes toward UGC, eWOM, and purchase intention are affected by their perceptions of source homophily and source credibility in the setting of beauty product UGC on YouTube.	Social identity theory Source homophily theory	The data of 372 Gen Y university students in Malaysia (17-26yr) was collected by utilizing snowball sampling and then analyzed with the PLS-SEM method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attitudes toward UGC play the mediating role in the relationship between purchase intention and eWOM. - The impact of perceived source homophily on attitudes toward UGC is mediated by perceived source credibility.
Wu et al. (2020)	China	To research how and when individual purchase intentions of wearable devices in China are influenced by online product presentation. To see if mental imagery promotes buy intent by lowering perceived social risk and producing good feelings, revealing the psychological process of new product adoption or purchasing habits.	Unclear	Data was collected from 254 undergraduate students from Anhui University of Technology via a 2x2 laboratory experiment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The use of scenario presentation influences mental imagery when exposed to visuals rather than written material. - Mental imagery indirectly increases purchase intention.

Table A – Summary of Research Articles					
Source	Origin	Research Purposes	Conceptual/ theoretical background	Methodology	Key findings
Nosita & Lestari (2019)	Indonesia	To determine whether the attitude towards UGC, perceived credibility, and user activity of UGC on YouTube influence the purchase intention toward a beauty product.	Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative method. - Data was collected from 200 people who had watched beauty product review videos on YouTube at least once (> 18yr) and then was analyzed employing multiple regression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purchase intentions are affected by attitudes towards UGC content on YouTube and perceived credibility. - User activities do not correlate with purchase intentions on beauty products.
Geng & Chen (2021)	China	<p>To explain how the interaction quality of UGC affects its credibility as a source and the usefulness of its information, as well as how it influences consumers' online purchase intention.</p> <p>To examine the moderating effect of product involvement.</p>	Social cognition theory and Value theory.	The SPSS and Amos were used to analyze the data collected from 272 social media users in China and test the hypotheses in this empirical research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UGC interaction quality is positively related to purchase intention, and this relationship is mediated by perceived usefulness and trust. - Consumers' product involvement negatively moderates the effect of perceived usefulness and trust on purchase intention.

Appendix B. Measurement Items

Table B – Measurement Items		
Code	Measurement items	Source for Adaptation
User-generated Content Video (UGCV)		
UGCV1	The user-generated content videos on TikTok describe the functions of the product.	Kim & Johnson (2016)
UGCV2	The user-generated content videos on TikTok describe the product experience.	
UGCV3	The user-generated content videos on TikTok describe the benefits of the products.	
UGCV4	The user-generated content videos on TikTok create positive feelings about the products.	
Perceived credibility		
PC1	I can trust the user-generated content videos on TikTok.	Fitriani et al. (2020)
PC2	I feel that the user-generated content videos on TikTok are in accordance with reality.	
PC3	I feel that user-generated content videos on TikTok are not biased.	
PC4*	I can rely on the user-generated content videos on TikTok to make judgments on products.	
Perceived diagnosticity		
PD1	User-generated content videos on TikTok are helpful for me to evaluate the products.	Jiang & Benbasat (2007)
PD2	User-generated content videos on TikTok are helpful in familiarizing me with the products.	
PD3	User-generated content videos on TikTok are helpful for me to understand the performance of the products.	
PD4	User-generated content videos on TikTok provide me with information to understand the product quality.	
Mental imagery		
MI1	I imagined that I was actually trying/experiencing the products while watching user-generated content videos on TikTok.	Walters et al. (2007)
MI2	Watching user-generated content videos on TikTok made it easy for me to visualize how to use the products.	
MI3	Whilst reviewing the user-generated content videos on TikTok, many images came to mind.	
MI4	The images that came to my mind acted as a source of information about the products.	
Online purchase intention		
OPI1	After watching user-generated content videos on TikTok, I became interested in making an online purchase.	Shaouf et al. (2016); Muda & Hamzah, (2021)
OPI2*	I would consider purchasing online the products presented in the UGC videos on TikTok.	
OPI3	It is likely that I will purchase online the products presented in the UGC videos on TikTok in the near future.	
OPI4	My willingness to purchase online the products presented in the UGC videos on TikTok is high.	
OPI5	I will definitely buy online the products presented in user-generated content videos on TikTok in the near future.	

Note: Items with (*) are rejected from the Structural Equation Model

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