



## Influence of Social Networking Sites' Content on Consumer Decision Making: A Systematic Literature Review

Asadullah Lakho<sup>1</sup>, Shahzaib Zulfiqar<sup>2</sup>, Wajiha Saghir<sup>3</sup>, Sundas Rauf<sup>4</sup>

### Abstract

Social media has largely influenced consumer behavior as per hundreds of researches in the past decade. Organizations are investing a lot into understanding how to increase their brand awareness, leads and sales by utilizing in this medium on communication. Stimuli-organism-response model has been largely used for investigating social media content and its influence on users; this influence can be related to perception or intention to perform and act. This research aims to investigate to utilization of SOR model in social media content research. Initially 60 papers were selected. Through steps of filtration, the number of papers short-listed was 20; these papers were selected based on a certain inclusion and exclusion criteria set prior to research. The pre-analysis highlighted three main pre-codes; these codes are, SOR Model, Content Post-Consumption and brand. After deep text analysis and coding, first level and second level codes were identify with detailed dimensions if each pre-code. Analysis showed wide variety of applications of SOR Model in social media research, it terms of affective and cognitive responses. Social media content consumption major influence on customer attitude towards brand and eWOM. SOR model has been majorly used in investigating brand management, especially in context of brand equity and customer engagement with brand-related content.

**Keywords:** Social networking sites, user generated content, marketer generated content

### 1. Introduction

In the last decade, there have been exponential acceleration in the development of role of social media user generate content (UGC) and marketer generated content (MGC). Irrespective of the industry, UGC and MGC are being used in many aspects of marketing in the digital world. The influence of UGC and MGC is high on the perspective and intention of the consumer of this digital world. For this literature research paper, the main objective has been to research different aspects of UGC and MGC and their influence in consumer behaviour in different aspects and industries according to the present literature.

Now-a-days, social media communication is absolutely unavoidable. There is much more depth the social media user generated content to be studied at this point, but the currently present research also shows the importance of influence of social media on human behavior. In traveling sector, social media is playing a major role when it comes to formalizing the perception of travelers towards the traveling destination that is pre and post the event of traveling. On pre travel perception or expectation of the travelers, social media has a major influence in terms of coming experience VS the expectation of travelers.

Social media user generated content help these travelers to plan their traveling plans effectively as they get all the necessary information for social media UGC; this method of searching for related information is considered to be highly trusted by the traveling community; it helps them to interact with each other and share their experiences. This makes them well aware of what to expect from the journey and prepare accordingly. According to literature, influence generated through social media platforms and online consumer engagement can have a major influence on the progression of customer satisfaction towards a certain product or a service; In this regard, there is a major influence of Facebook group comments of building and sustaining judgment towards customer satisfaction.

There is always the role of the source of social media UGC, that either if its strong-tie or weak-tie etc. comments and recommendations from strong-tie consumers have a much higher influence as there is a stronger link in terms of trust between the two customers or users. As for the wear-tie, there a lack of trust, as the user providing feedback or reviews is unknown the user seeking advice from social media platforms through UGC on Facebook groups. Also, there are two kinds of effects of UGC on consumer response, emotional and informational. Informational UGC has a stronger influence when it comes to weak-tie and vice versa for the emotional UGC and strong-tie.

Although many dimensions of UGC have been in study, there is much more that can be further explored in UGC research in terms of UGC type and source. In most researches, the source of UGC is analyzed based on its application on that certain industry, like for traveling, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube content has been analyzed. A more streamlined approach towards understanding UGC source is still needed to be implemented for deeper characterization.

#### 1.1. Social Networking Sites' (SNS) Content

The world of online collaboration is growing day by day since the concept of web 2.0 was introduced. This connectivity has enabled people and businesses to collaborate and grow together (Fuller, Muhlbacher, Matzler, & Jawecki, 2009). Such connectivity has been enabled by SNS's. A very famous example of such platforms is Wikipedia, a platform that facilitates information sharing (Y. Chen, Fay, & Wang, 2011).

<sup>1</sup>PhD scholar, Business Administration Department, Iqra University, Karachi, Pakistan, [asadullah.lakho@Indus.edu.pk](mailto:asadullah.lakho@Indus.edu.pk)

<sup>2</sup> Digital Marketing Manager, Group M, Karachi, Pakistan, [shahzebzulfiqar@hotmail.com](mailto:shahzebzulfiqar@hotmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Lecturer, Institute of Business & Health Management, Dow University of Health Sciences, Karachi, Pakistan, [wajiha.saghir@duhs.edu.pk](mailto:wajiha.saghir@duhs.edu.pk)

<sup>4</sup> IMBA/MPhil, Department of Business Administration, Chongqing University, , Chingqong, China, [sundas.rauf28@gmail.com](mailto:sundas.rauf28@gmail.com)

There are also many ecommerce platforms like Amazon.com, that enable people to review products according to their experiences (Chris, Anindya, & Batia, 2008). This enables people to share important information that facilitates online purchasing for other people (Fuller et al., 2009). This online network enables people to share information without any hurdles and its quick (McLure & W. Sc Samer, 2005).

This enables everyone to create content and share; hence, it has started a new industry of online content creation, which translates to experience sharing (Y. Chen et al., 2011). These online communities are a key part of modern businesses in terms of customer attraction and good system to manage customers (Ridings C. M. & Gefen, 2004). These platforms provide customers an opportunity know each other and this may lead to generation of trust (Lu & Zhao, n.d.). This trust may lead to influence customers buying behavior (D. Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003)(D. Gefen et al., 2003). Ecommerce has evolved into many branches, one of them is social commerce, which is all about social media interactions of customers (Hajli, 2013). In the next section, the literature related to the interdisciplinary model and its factors are discussed to develop a theoretical foundation for this model.

Perceived Usefulness is one of the two main variables of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989). The basis for this research was based on how user accepts new technology. since then, many advancements and extensions have been introduced to it (Adams, Nelson, & Todd, 1992; Davis et al., 1989; D. Gefen et al., 2003; Gefen D. Sc Straub, 2000). The original definition is by Davis (Davis et al., 1989) that it is the believe of any person about any system about how it may enhance job performance. TAM has a proposition that PU has a strong control over acceptance of any new technology (Pavlou, 2003). The concept of TAM has a wide range of applicability. For Ecommerce, TAM may determine online consumer buying behavior (D. S. S. Gefen, n.d.; Pavlou, 2003). The Validity of this model that TAM proposes has also been validated in different researches (Pavlou, 2003).

Now a days, there are many social networking websites that are advancing the content generation process (Y. Chen et al., 2011). People are attracted to online communities and forums for the purpose of information exchange (Ridings C. M. & Gefen, 2004). These may include Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube etc. On Social Networking Sites, one of the most important factors is the participant feedback or also known as review. These comments may be related to a product or a service which may be posted by the firm or potential customers (Nambisan, 2002). These platforms provide an environment that ensures that people provide their opinions (Bronner & de Hoog, 2010). The concept of word of mouth is also promoted by it, this becomes very handy for people to make their decision before any purchase (Pan & Chiou, 2011).

The reviews gathered from these social media platforms play a crucial role in marketing research for Ecommerce platforms. Such as Amazon.com, it uses millions of customer responses (Do-Hyung, Jumin, & Ingoo, 2007). Else then the information provided by the firm about the product, recommendations by the customer plays an important role in generating a customer perception because, people don't always trust information provided by the service or product provider but rather than the experienced customer (Ridings C. M. & Gefen, 2004). So, this information that is from multiple sources, that also includes other customers as well is much more reliable and believable which makes it more trust worthy for customers.

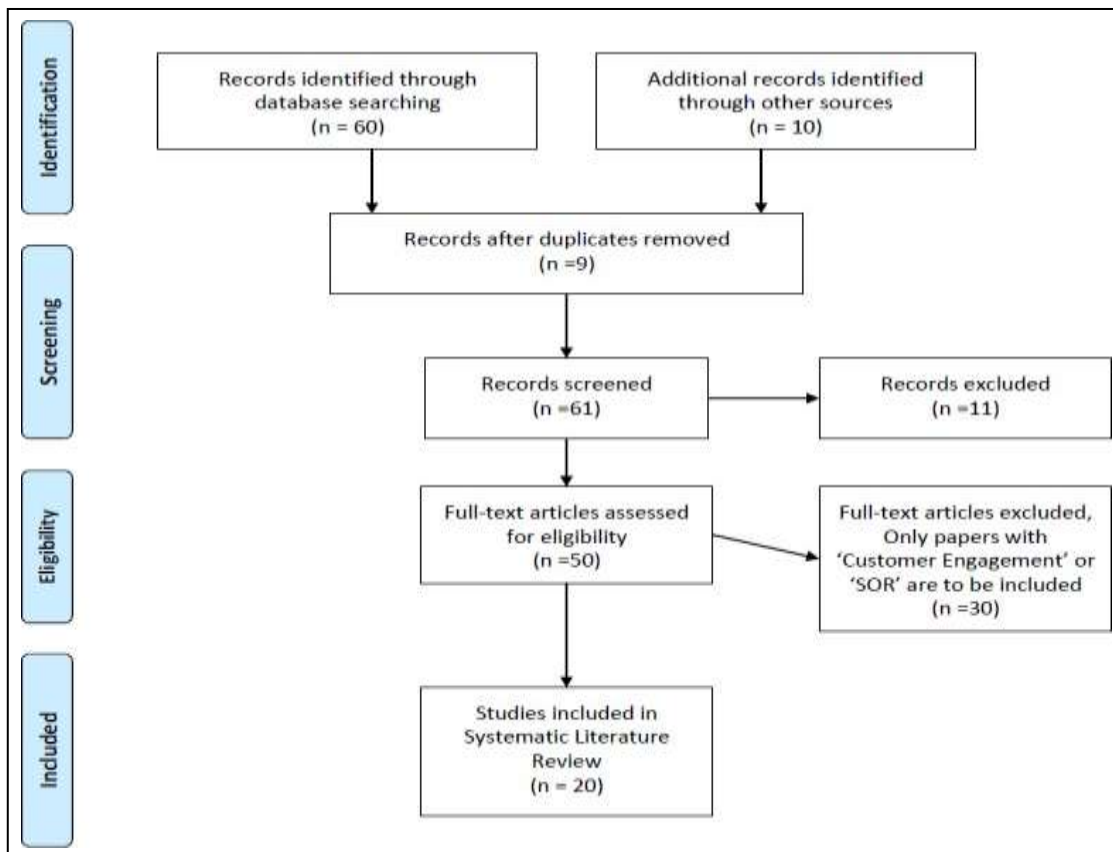
This system of online communities is a new way to share information. It is providing people opportunities' of learning by doing (Mueller, Hutter, & Fueller J. Sc Matzler, 2011). The quality and credibility of the reviews and recommendation also depends upon the factor of anonymity of online platform users (J. Chen, Xu, & Whinston, 2011). People not only come on these social networking platforms for information, but also for socialization, be a part of a group and support (Ballantine & Stephenson, 2011; Cobb, 1976). All these online social networking platforms enable organization to manage customer support in a better way. Past researches established a relationship between social media marketing with trust and social media marketing with perceived usefulness (Elkaseh, Wong, & Fung, 2016).

If we talk about online purchasing, the trust of customer on the e-seller plays a crucial role in knowing the level of risk involved in the purchase (McKnight & Choudhury, n.d.). In the world of ecommerce, where buyer and seller has no physical connection, trust plays a crucial part (Aljifri, Pons, & Collins, 2003). For trust, the two main measurements are benevolence and credibility (Ba & Pavlou, 2002) are what, we will be focusing on for this study. Credibility is when other party reliable for purchase and benevolence is based on buyer-seller relationship (Ba & Pavlou, 2002). The relationship of trust among SNSs and member along with relationship among members of the online community will be considered. This trust in a SNS enables it to keep member loyal and part of the platform.

## 1.2. PRISMA

During the literature review process, there were 60 papers that were identified from past papers; out of these, past papers, 20 were finally short-listed for final analysis. Duplicates were removed in the screening process and eligibility of the papers was judged on the relevance of the paper to our research questions.

Figure 1: PRIMSA



**2. Methodology**

This study has four main stages: code, extract, analyze and interpret. The steps include the process of shortlisting the right papers, pre-analysis of the papers and the final write up of the results based on shortlisted papers. The aim for this research paper is to answer the following identified questions:

- How does SNSs content associates to SOR Model?
- What are the influences of consuming SNSs Content as stimuli on consumer behavior?
- What is the role of SNSs Content on Brand Management?

**2.1. Criteria of Studies**

A certain criteria has been used in this paper for the purpose of including past papers in our systematic literature review. The following table identifies the criteria based upon which paper are included and excluded.

**Table 1: Paper Inclusion Criteria**

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Full-text Published within selected between 2017-2020 Published in impact factor journals (3 or more) Only English Language Publications. In the domain of User/Firm Generated Content	Studies not complete Languages other than English Not from 2017-2020

**2.2. Pre-Analysis and Coding**

This pre-analysis stage consists of steps that are essential for the final analysis of our research. Based on our research questions for this research, pre-coding nodes are created. These pre-coding nodes are the representation of 3 research questions by the names of SOR Model, Content Consumption and Brand. These 3 nodes answer the SLR questions mentioned in methodology section.

The aim of this pre-coding is to capture all related content of main themes. Based on the pre-codes, sub-codes were

extracted at the first level through full-text study of selected papers. From first level, further in-depth is conducted to extract pre-codes at second level. These codes at second level are further representation in-depth understanding of each of the three pre-codes. The coding scheme was reviewed by a second coder (Master Coder) at first and second level to ensure the relevance of codes pre, first level and second level codes.

**Table 2: Pre-Analysis**

	SOR			Post-Consumption		Brand	
First Level	Stimuli	Organism	Response	eWOM	Attitude	Equity	Engagement
Second Level	Types of content (stimuli)  Stimuli attributes  UGC MGC/FGC Internal/External Stimuli	Cognitive (organism)  Emotional (organism)	Purchase intention  Content creation  Content contribution	Recommendations and referrals	Attitude towards Ad  Attitude towards Brand	Brand equity  COBRA  Outcomes  Brand centrality  Brand loyalty  Brand sentiment    Brand sentiment	Brand related Functional Social Customer direct engagement

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. SOR Framework

The Stimuli Organism Response (SOR) model has been used in context of understanding consumer response when exposed to a piece of social media content or UGC/MGC. Many researches have been conducted to examine the influence of different types of social media content on cognitive and emotional response social media user. The types of stimuli used include pictures, videos, text content or mix of multiple types. Response in the context of social media has been analyzed based on behavior and intention; these may include intention to recommend, eWOM and buying decision.

Social media content/UGC/MGC has been used as stimuli in many researches to examine the influence of UGC/MGC on consumer intention or decision making. Different aspects of UGC have been examined in past researches to study the impact. These aspects of UGC include types of UGC, Attributes, comparison of user-generated VS firm-generated content and external/internal stimuli. Also, past researches have shown that different social media platforms have different impact on user intention. Different types of UGC that have been prominent in past researches are text, image and video.

Organism represents the internal state of an individual's perceptions, feelings and thinking. In social media marketing, there are many internal states that have been worked upon in past researches.

These states include arousal, pleasure, perceived information quality and perceived usefulness etc. These states are examined to understand the influence of social media content on internal states of social media user.

There are many dimensions of consumer response that have been researched in social media context using SOR model. The main focus has been in understanding purchase intention, buying decision and customer engagement etc. E-Commerce firms use such researches to understand the types of representation of their products in e-commerce sphere and its influence on lead generation as online sales conversion activities.

#### 3.2. Post-Consumption

Literature shows that content consumption habits of social media users constantly evolving. This requires marketers to constantly research and examine potential changes and adapt to it. User generated videos are also a type of eWOM; they are published on many ecommerce websites like Amazon and EBay created by the user of the firm itself; it facilitates the decision making process of the end consumer. There is large amount of literature supporting the fact the text based UGC has a high impact on consumer attitude towards a brand or a product. Latest researches are investigating the same post consumption attitude of users after video UGC consumption.

Attitude towards a brand or product is defined as the evaluation of the end consumer towards brand or product after being exposed to video as stimuli; this evaluation can be favorable or unfavorable, both. To understand the attitude towards brand being marketer, researchers are also working to understand the impact of online ads and its impact on the attitude of users towards ads. The attitude towards ads work as moderating variable in understanding the influence of digital marketing onlineads on consumer attitude. Current researches are exploring the post consumption behavior of video marketing content on consumers as video marketing is the fastest growing medium of online branding.

The literature also highlights the association of eWOM to social media UGC. There are many surveys done to understand the types and attributes of brand or product related UGC and its impact on consumers' willingness to share their experiences using social networking sites (SNSs). Recent researches show that the trend towards online buying is growing rapidly; so people who are willing to buy online tend to look for online recommendations and reviews by previous users of the same product or service they intend to buy. Although there is a wide range of suppliers online for every product, buyers tend to prefer products that have more recommendations by previous buyers. Current researchers are investigating video testimonials of previous customers in the context of eWOM and buying decision.

### 3.3. Brand

All the reviews and recommendations that user post of social networking sites in form of online forms or comments, these all are a part of online brand related eWOM. Literature shows that researches have researched the influence of different types of UGC in different social media platforms on consumer decision making. Most of such researches have been conducted in context of facebook, as it is one of the most used social media platform for the purpose of promoting business online. Researchers have found that feature products on e-commerce website have a higher impact on consumers' willingness to recommend a product online in form of recommendation or review on social networking sites. Researches show that product attributes play an important role on nature on review (positive or negative). Hence, product attribute are included and excluded from online portfolio on e-commerce websites based on such researches.

Recent published studies elaborate the use of social media content not just for the purpose of an additional communication channel, but also a system to build brand communities and creating relationships with new and old customers. These online brand communities help companies to keep their customers closer to the brand; facebook group is a simple example of how organizations manage these online brand communities. Research shows that brand communities such as brand related facebook groups have a positive impact of customer attitude towards product or brand and it encourages positive electronic word of mouth. These communities create a sense of loyalty, commitment towards the brand, satisfaction and trust. For this reason, many UGC researches are focused upon investigating the impact of these online brand communities on consumer engagement.

## 4. Conclusion

In context of social media marketing research, SOR model has been used extensively in the past decade. There are many dimensions of social media content that have been researched using qualitative, quantitative and mixed-method research methodology. UGC as stimuli has many forms based on types of UGC, attribute of UGC and source that generated content (UGC/MGC/FGC). For social media marketing research with SOR model, past researches have investigated end customer decision and intention. Consumption of social media content has a certain impact on consumers' mindset that has been investigated in SRO related researches; the main attributes more investigate are consumer attitude towards the brand and eWOM after consumption on social media brand related UGC.

In the process of building brand using online mediums such as social networking websites, one of the core elements focused upon by past researches is customer engagement. In context of social media content of different social media platforms, impact of brand related social media content on customer engagement have been extensively examined. Past researches discuss customer engagement as a multi-dimensional concept that includes emotional, behavioural and cognitive. There are many empirical studies that investigate the impact of UGC videos that are brand related and not brand related. These impacts primarily include attitude towards the brand and willingness to share positive experiences with other potential users.

There are certain limitations to this research. This SLR is based on 20 papers, there are much more papers that could be added to understand the role of SOR model in social media marketing research. Also, the applications of SLR model are in many contexts, this research is based on a broader context on social media marketing content; future research can focus on more specific areas of social media marketing to conduct SLR, such as video marketing, podcasts or a specific social media platform (i.e. facebook, twitter).

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Methodology	Survey Questionnaire, Quantitative	Mixed Method
Qual vs Quant	Quantitative	Mixed-method
Mod/Med Variables	Expectation with Core Resources Expectation with Supporting Factors	Greater Brevity
DV	Tourist Satisfaction with the destination	Greater Focus on Gist
IV	Strong-tie Sources Weak-tie Sources Toursim-tie Sources	Smartphone
TS	The proposed framework enables tourist firms to identify impact of UGC on pre and post tourist perception and expectation.	Smartphone (vs. PC) use leads consumers to generate briefer content, which encourages them to focus on the overall gist of their experiences. Smartphone use drives the creation of more emotional and mostly positive WOM, this happens because
PS	-Tourist destination firms cant identify the UGC that is most influential towards tourist satisfaction.	Firms are struggling in identifying the UGC that might be most influential—that is, smartphone-generated content.
Title	-User-Generated Content Sources in Social Media: A New Approach to Explore Tourist Satisfaction	-Selectively Emotional: How Smartphone Use Changes User-Generated Content
Paper #	1	2

Mixed Method	Mixed Method	Facebook API used, Mixed Method
Mixed-method	Mixed-method	Qualitative
MGC Sentiment of customers	Price Intrinsic UGC	
Customer Direct Engagement	Comsuner Spending	Number of Likes Number of Comments
MGC Event Outcomes	Price Promotion	Post Valence, Post Content Categories
MGC enhances a firms' ability to influence the sentiment of customers' digital engagement. MGC can influence the sentiment of customers' digital engagement beyond their performance during customers' interactions, and for unfavorable event	The proposed framework gives hotel marketing managers a better understanding of UGC management in terms of valence, volume and content, to increase consumer spending on luxury hotel services.	The proposed framework gives marketing managers a better understanding of how Facebook page UGC is different from other user reviews, hence providing a better understanding of utilizing Facebook page UGC for social media marketing
Firms are struggling in identifying most influential ways to deal with unfavorable customer engagement outcomes.	Due to ineffective UGC management in hoteling, hotel marketing managers are not able to utilize hotel promotion UGC to its optimal level.	Due to lack of research on UGC, marketing managers are not able to utilize UGC for social media marketing to its optimal level
-The Role of Marketer-Generated Content in Customer Engagement Marketing	-Do price promotions drive consumer spending on luxury hotel services? The moderating roles of room price and user generated content.	-Understanding User-Generated Content and Customer Engagement on Facebook Business Pages
3	4	5
SOR Model was used.	Qualitative research	Systemmatic literature review
Quantitative	Qualitative	Literature Review
Conceptual Persuasion Knowledge Attitudinal	-	-
Brand Attitude	-	-
Content Type	-	-
The proposed framework gives marketing managers a better understanding of how UGC and	We propose a machine-learning approach to facilitate qualitative analysis by selecting	This paper presents literature review on UGC that allows researchers to build good literature review for

MGC are differ, hence providing a better understanding of utilizing UGC and MGC for Brand Management	content for efficient review; hence, making it possible for firms to use UGC more effectively for identifying customer needs.	UGC that covers all its aspects.
Due to lack of research on UGC, marketing managers are not able to optimally utilize UGC for brand management	Firms are unable to effectively use UGC as a tool to understand consumer needs, as analyzing millions of UGC with traditional methods (manual interpretation) is impossible.	Due to multi-disciplinary nature of UGC, researchers are unable to effectively review research on UGC from all aspects. This leads to literature review not highlighting all aspects of UGC as a research area.
-Content is king – But who is the king of kings? The effect of content marketing, sponsored content & user-generated content on brand responses	-Identifying Customer Needs from User- Generated Content	-Studies of user-generated content: A systematic review
6	7	8



Sampling was purposive, Quantitative	Mixed Method	Mixed Method	Quantitative Research With SOR model
Quantitative	Literature Review	Literature Review	Mixed-method
COBRAs Brand	Community Engagement:	Cognitive Reaction Affective Reaction	
Consumption Contribution Creation	OBC Outcomes Brand Outcomes Organizational Outcomes	Off-line Reactance Online Reactance	Behavioural intention
Brand awareness brand loyalty brand association 16onsidera quality	Engagement Drivers: Brand Related Social Functional	External Stimuli – Marketing External Stimuli – Situational Internal Stimuli	online review credibility online review informativeness online review persuasiveness online review
IThe proposed framework gives marketing managers a better understanding of how brand equity impacts consumer engagement with UGC in SNS's, hence providing a better understanding of utilizing UGC for Brand Management.	IThis literature review provides a core understanding of the term 'engagement' in terms of online and offline communities. II	ITo address this research gap the current study systematically reviewed the existing literature and has attempted to classify consumer reactance variables by using the stimulus–organism–response (S–O–R) framework. II	-This literature review provides a core understanding that how conflicting online reviews challenge the consumer's decision-making processes!
IMarketing managers are not able to optimally utilize UGC in SNS's for brand management. II	IDue to lack of Systematic literature on customer engagement, the core understanding of this term remains ambiguous in available literary resources in research community. II -The Drivers and Outcomes of Customer Engagement in Brand Communities!	IProliferation of intrusive marketing and promotion efforts across communication channels induce negative reactions from significant number of consumers. Little effort has been made in reviewing and	-Due to lack of Systematic literature on UGC related to restaurant online reviews, restaurant businesses lack core understanding on how conflicting online reviews challenge the consumer's decision-making conflicting online reviews and consumer decision-making: The stimulus-organism-response model revisited!
-Influencing COBRAs: the effects of brand equity on the consumer's propensity to engage with brand-related content on social media		-Toward an integrated model of consumer reactance: a literature analysis!	
9	10	11	12

Mixed Method Research with data extracted with social media APIs	Mixed Method Research with data extracted with SNSs APIs	Online survey, Quantitative	Online survey, Quantitative
Mixed-method	Mixed-method	Quantitative	Quantitative
response to online marketer action	power space appearance	information pass-along impulse buying future-purchase intention	Social shipping intention
Self-presentation brand certainty marketer directed communication factually/informative about the brand brand sentiment	UGC accessed from a website about a car company	Brand Related UGC	Ratings and reviews Recommendations and referrals
-This study presents a statistical comparison of 3 most popular SNS's for the purpose of understanding of their varying impact on customers.	-This paper explores the usage of UGC in accessing competitive advantage through machine learning	-this paper examines stimulus impact of UGC on customer purchase intention using SOR model	-this research explores the impact of social commerce on customer engagement through SOR model
-Marketers do not completely understand the varying influence of different social media platforms on their customers.	-organization need a quicker method to access product competitive advantage.	-marketers need better understanding of how stimulus impact of UGC influences customer purchase intention	-Marketers are unable to use social commerce at full-potential to maximize customer engagement
-How does brand-related user-generated content differ across social media? Evidence reloaded	-Assessing product competitive advantages from the perspective of customers by mining user-generated content on social medial	-Power of consumers using social media: Examining the influences of brand-related user-generated content on Facebook	-How social commerce constructs influence customers' social shopping intention? An empirical study of a social commerce website
13	14	15	16

11 Brands selected as a sample. Facebook API used to get Page data from all brands on three months time.	Online survey, Quantitative	Online survey, Quantitative	Data collected and sampled from YouGov BrandIndex
Mixed-method	Quantitative	Quantitative	Quantitative
mod:content qualitycontrol	control: perceived usefulness	persuasion knowledge	mod: corporate
brand equity	perceived usefulness attitude towards the ad	Purchase intention	Awareness   Consideration purchase intention satisfaction
Content quality content valence content volume	UGC MGC	UGC MGC Disclosed Ad UGC	UGC FGC/MGC
-This research explores the comparative impact of facebook mgc and ugc on brand equity.	-This research explores the comparative impact of brand vs user generated video content on customer intention.	-This research investigates the impact of persuasion knowledge of UGC on purchase intention.	This research investigates the impact of social media content on all stages of marketing funnel.
-marketers need to better understand the impact of social media content on brand equity to increase efficiency.	-marketers need to better understand the impact of social media video content on customer intention to increase efficiency.	-marketers need to better understand the impact of social media content persuasive knowledge on purchase intention to increase efficiency.	-Marketers lack an efficient understanding of how social media content impacts their marketing processes at all levels of marketing funnel.
-How does marketers' and users' content on corporate Facebook fan pages influence brand equity?	-Contrasting user generated videos versus brand generated videos in ecommerce.	-User generated content presenting brands on social media increases young adults' purchase intention.	-Modeling the relationship between firm and user generated content and the stages of the marketing funnel.
17	18	19	20