The Authenticity Factor: Understanding the Impact of User-Generated Content

Sponsorship on Consumer Behaviour for Value-Expressive Products

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A Thesis in the
John Molson School of Business
Master of Science Program

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science (Option Marketing) at Concordia University
Montreal, Québec, Canada

February 2023

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

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Entitled: The Authenticity Factor: Understanding the Impact of User-Generated Content

                Sponsorship on Consumer Behaviour for Value-Expressive Products

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science (Marketing)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Date: February 22nd, 2023

Abstract

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Sarah-Yusra Jabado

In a world where social media has transformed the way consumers make purchasing decisions, user-generated content (UGC) has become a powerful tool for marketers to reach and engage with their target audience. This study examines the impact of UGC sponsorship on consumer behaviour, focusing on the mediating role of perceived authenticity and the moderating impact of source familiarity, specifically in the context of value-expressive products within the fashion industry. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing two online questionnaires to gather data. The findings demonstrate that non-sponsored UGC is perceived as more authentic than sponsored UGC and has a stronger influence on consumer intentions to search, share, and purchase. On the other hand, source familiarity was found to have no significant impact on these effects. Given the limited research on this topic, the findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the factors that determine the effectiveness of sponsored and non-sponsored UGC. The study will also contribute to the existing literature on UGC and offer practical implications for marketers in effectively managing user-generated marketing messages and a better understanding of the importance of perceived authenticity in shaping consumer intentions.

Key words: User-Generated Content (UGC), Perceived Authenticity, Consumer Behaviour, Value-Expressive Products, Source Familiarity, Sponsorship, Marketing Strategy

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my co-supervisor, Dr. Darlene Walsh, for her exceptional guidance throughout this process. Her advice, patience and support were instrumental in the successful completion of my thesis. I would also like to thank my co-supervisor, Dr. Michel Laroche and committee member Dr. Kamila Sobol who provided insightful support. To my dad, Maher Jabado, thank you for always having my back and encouraging me to achieve what might have seemed impossible at the time. To my late mother, Manal Kassar, you will always hold a special place in my heart and I will always strive to make you proud. I would also like to express my gratitude to the closest people in my life who provided me with motivation and encouragement. This thesis is dedicated to all of you who have played a significant role in my academic journey. Thank you.

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Introduction

Imagine you are scrolling through your social media feed when you come across a video of a girl showing off a stylish jacket she purchased from an emerging fashion brand. She is excitedly talking about how much she loves her new jacket and how it has quickly become her favourite piece of clothing. You are not familiar with the girl or the brand in the video. She suggests that viewers check out the brand's website and encourages them to share the brand with friends and family. Given this, do you have any doubts about the girl's motives behind the video and her genuinity in endorsing the brand? Would you be inclined to visit the brand's website or share the brand as suggested in the video?

Now imagine seeing the same video, but this time with a caption indicating that it is sponsored. Sponsored content is created by consumers who are paid or compensated by brands (Burmann, 2010). In this context, do you believe there are specific motives behind the video? Would you follow the girl's suggestion and check out, share or even purchase from the brand? Would you think differently if the girl was someone you were familiar with?

This type of content is known as user-generated content (UGC), which is content created and shared by consumers rather than professionals (Daugherty et al., 2008; Tang et al., 2014). Previous research has established that the influence of UGC on consumer purchase decisions is highly significant on social media platforms (Lu et al., 2014; Rossmann et al., 2016). The proliferation of social networking platforms and online brand communities has supported the growth of UGC (Gangadharbatla, 2008). In light of this, marketers have increasingly been using UGC as a marketing strategy (Rossmann et al., 2016). Effective UGC is known to elicit favourable consumer responses, such as positive brand attitudes and increased intentions to follow suggestions given in the UGC. This is partly due to its perceived independence from advertisers (Jeong & Koo, 2015). When marketers are not involved in creating UGC, it is referred to as organic or non-sponsored. This can happen when consumers genuinely enjoy a product and choose to share their experience on their own accord or when brands send products to consumers without any expectation of compensation or promotion, and those consumers willingly create and share content about the product. Previous research has demonstrated that

when compared to sponsored sources, information from non-sponsored UCG resulted in higher credibility (Sparkman, 1982) and an overall better attitude towards the source and the brand (Moore et al., 1994; Straughan & Lynn, 2002). One recent example of a brand using non-sponsored UGC as a marketing strategy is the #ShowUs campaign launched by American Eagle Outfitters in 2020. The brand encouraged customers to share pictures of themselves wearing American Eagle clothing on social media using the hashtag #ShowUs. This campaign successfully created a sense of community among customers and promoted a more diverse and inclusive image for the brand. Additionally, the campaign helped to drive sales as it provided potential customers with a more realistic view of how the clothes look on real people rather than just models. However, not all UGC on social media is purely driven by consumers and free from the influence of marketers. A growing number of marketers reward customers for sharing brand-related UGC as it strongly influences consumer decision-making (Wood & Burkhalter, 2014).

The questions remain: Would brands benefit more from using sponsored or non-sponsored UGC campaigns to achieve their marketing objectives? When is UGC most effective in shaping consumer intentions to search, share and purchase? Should marketers use known creators that consumers are likely to be familiar with in their campaigns? This study aims to explore these questions in more detail and gain a deeper understanding of how consumers react to sponsored versus non-sponsored UGC. Specifically, this study investigates how perceived authenticity and source familiarity play a role in this relationship for value-expressive products.

This thesis will begin by conducting a review of the existing literature on UGC. The focus of the literature review will be on the distinction between sponsored and non-sponsored UGC and its effects on perceived authenticity and consumer behaviour for value expressive products. Using the attribution theory, this thesis will examine the motives and attributions consumers make regarding the creation of UGC for value-expressive products. The study will also examine the literature on source familiarity and how it may moderate the relationship between authenticity and consumer reactions to UGC sponsorship. Based on the literature findings, this thesis proposes five hypotheses which will be tested through two quantitative

studies. Finally, this thesis will conclude with a discussion of the results and their practical implications for marketers and researchers. It will also highlight future research directions and limitations.

Theoretical Background

Non-Sponsored versus Sponsored UGC

Brand-related UGC refers to online content consumers create and share about a specific product or a brand (Muntinga et al., 2011). This can encompass a variety of forms, such as product reviews, testimonials, photos, videos, and other types of media that are shared online, mostly on social media platforms. The use of UGC in organizations' marketing strategies has significantly increased in recent years (Malthouse et al., 2016; Martínez-Navarro & Bigné, 2017). Organizations use UGC for various purposes, including advertising, promotions, and customer service (Shim & Lee, 2009). Research has shown that UGC is often considered more authentic and reliable than content produced by companies, as consumers create it rather than marketers with known promotional motives (Wei & Lu, 2013; Berthon et al, 2008). However, it is yet to be determined if sponsorship affects consumers' perception of UGC and its impact on their behaviour towards it.

UGC can be divided into two main categories: sponsored and non-sponsored. Non-sponsored UGC refers to content created and shared by consumers without any compensation or influence from marketers. Research has shown that this type of UGC is considered a form of word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing and is highly effective as it is usually perceived as more credible and trustworthy by consumers (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Murray 1991). On the other hand, sponsored UGC refers to content created and shared by consumers that is partially controlled by a company or a brand and may involve compensation.

Consumers may be more skeptical of the information provided in sponsored UGC (Kim & Sundar, 2010). This is because the presence of sponsorship raises questions about the authenticity of the content and the motivations of the person sharing it. DeCarlo (2005) suggests that sponsorship can affect how consumers perceive and respond to the message. For instance,

when a consumer encounters a sponsored UGC related to a brand, the fact that it is sponsored may lead them to question the authenticity and credibility of the message, potentially causing them not to engage with the brand or follow the suggestions made in the UGC. This study will examine how UGC sponsorship may influence consumer intentions to search, share, or purchase from a brand by understanding the impact of consumer attributions toward the message.

UGC Sponsorship and Consumer Attributions

Social media has become a primary means for consumers to discover new products and services (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). However, this has also heightened consumers' awareness of the potential manipulation tactics used by marketers. For example, in the fashion industry, marketers may use models with idealized bodies, enhance the appearance of fabrics through the use of photoshop and other editing software, and create visually appealing advertisements using good angles, strong lighting, and other special effects. This has led consumers to question the authenticity of the messages they are presented with and marketers to seek new ways to connect with consumers and influence their brand attitudes and purchasing decisions (Brodie et al., 2011).

As previously mentioned, research has shown that consumers often perceive consumer-generated messages as more reliable than marketing communications (Woodside & Bernal Mir, 2019; Trusov et al., 2009; Christodoulides et al., 2011; Ertimur & Gilly, 2012). Cheong and Morrison (2008) showed that consumers have a high level of trust in UGC and often use it as a source of information when making product decisions. Similarly, Demba et al. (2019) found that UGC advertising positively impacts consumer attitudes and trust, affecting their intention to check out and purchase products from a brand. These studies suggest that UGC has the potential to be a powerful tool for brands to shape consumer perception and behaviour.

Nonetheless, the type of UGC may influence consumers' perceptions of it, which can affect their responses to the message. The attribution theory suggests that when consumers are exposed to a persuasive message, they tend to consider the motivations of the person communicating it (Eagly & Chaiken, 1975). Previous research has demonstrated that the effectiveness of sponsored UGC compared to non-sponsored UGC may depend on the attributes

that consumers associate with the message (Friestad & Wright, 1994; Lee et al., 2013; Reeder, 2009).

The study by Park and Lee (2021) showed that content creators share UGC for various reasons, including social validation, information sharing, and personal fulfillment. The results also revealed that the motives behind UGC sharing significantly affect the intention to share UGC. Kim and Lee's (2017) study is one of the first to compare the effects of non-sponsored and sponsored brand-related UGC based on the attribution theory. Their findings suggest that, compared to sponsored UGC, non-sponsored UGC leads to fewer attributions of monetary gain and higher attributions of information-sharing. This suggests that consumers perceive non-sponsored UGC as less motivated by financial gain and more motivated by a desire to share helpful information. This perception of non-sponsored UGC being more credible, trustworthy, and genuine compared to sponsored UGC is consistent with previous research (Moore et al., 1994; Tripp et al., 1994; Wei et al., 2008). By understanding the motives consumers attribute to UGC, marketers can refine their marketing strategies and create more effective campaigns. While Kim and Lee (2017) examined the effectiveness of sponsored versus non-sponsored UGC for a utilitarian product, this study will focus on UGC for value-expressive products.

Consumer Attributions for Value-Expressive Products

Shavitt (1989) found that participants perceived products in different categories as either value-expressive or utilitarian based on their function. Value-expressive products are chosen to express the buyer's values, social status, or self-image, such as wedding rings. Utilitarian products, on the other hand, are chosen for their practical benefits and functionality, such as air conditioners. Similarly, Ratchford (1987) used the Foote, Cone and Belding (FCB) grid model to categorize popular products into two dimensions, closely tied to utilitarian and value-expressive functions. The model is based on the idea that products can be classified based on the degree of involvement of the consumer with the product and the degree of differentiation of the product from other similar products. Consumers considering purchasing a new phone may be looking for honest opinions about the phone's functionality and practical features as it is a utilitarian product, while for value-expressive products like fashion items, which are chosen for their self-expressive or personal value, consumers may be looking for genuine and personal opinions about the

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clothing's value. Dichter (1966) has shown that motives behind messages may differ depending on the product category being discussed. Thus, motives for creating UGC for value-expressive products are expected to be more personal and less structured than utilitarian products.

This study examines the effects of UGC sponsorship on consumer intention to search, share, and purchase products from a brand for value-expressive products. In this study, search intention refers to the consumer's desire to seek additional information about a product or brand. It can be a key indicator of interest in making a purchase. Intention to share refers to the consumer's willingness to share UGC with others, which can impact brand awareness and reputation. Finally, intention to purchase refers to the consumer's likelihood of purchasing after seeing UGC, which is a key measure of the impact of UGC on consumer behaviours. Thus, the following is proposed:

H1: Consumers exposed to a non-sponsored UGC video about a value-expressive product will have a stronger intention to search for information about the brand, a greater willingness to share the brand, and a higher likelihood of purchasing from the brand, compared to when they are exposed to a sponsored UGC video.

UGC Sponsorship and Perceived Authenticity for Value-Expressive Products

Given that motives for creating UGC for value-expressive products are expected to be more personal and less structured than utilitarian products, perceived authenticity becomes an important factor to consider when evaluating the impact of UGC sponsorship on consumer intention to search, share and purchase. Perceived authenticity refers to the extent to which consumers believe a message or communication is genuine or real (Taylor, 1991). In this study, the focus will be on value-expressive products within the fashion industry. Authenticity is particularly important within the fashion industry as it differs from other industries due to its hedonic nature (Choi et al., 2012). Consumers may express their inner selves by consuming a specific brand (Escalas & Bettman JR, 2005), and this self-expressiveness can be a driving force behind their purchase decisions (Sirgy, 1982). According to Shao (2009), different forms of UGC, such as blogging and video sharing, allow consumers to showcase their true selves and

have their identities recognized by others. Examples of fashion-related UGC include styling videos, try-on hauls, and reviews or recommendations of clothing items.

Mathur et al. (2022) found that factors such as perceived usefulness, credibility and perceived trust in UGC significantly impact consumer attitudes toward UGC and online purchase intention. Brown et al., (2003) revealed that authenticity is considered to boost message effectiveness as it allows the recipient to identify with the message and the sender. Brand authenticity was found to positively impact consumers' behavioral intentions (Fritz et al., 2017) as consumers are more likely to trust and engage with content that is seen as authentic and genuine rather than content that is perceived as solely created for commercial gain (Smith et al., 2011). Considering that non-sponsored UGC is often seen as more credible and genuine compared to sponsored UGC, this highlights the importance of considering the perceived authenticity when investigating the effects of UGC sponsorship when examining its impact on consumer intentions. Thus, the following is proposed:

H2. Consumers exposed to a non-sponsored UGC video will perceive the source of the video to be more authentic relative to those who are exposed to a sponsored UGC video.

H3. Perceived authenticity will mediate the effect of non-sponsored versus sponsored UGC on intentions to search for information about the brand, willingness to share the brand and likelihood of purchasing from the brand.

Figure 1

Framework of the Mediating Effects of Perceived Authenticity
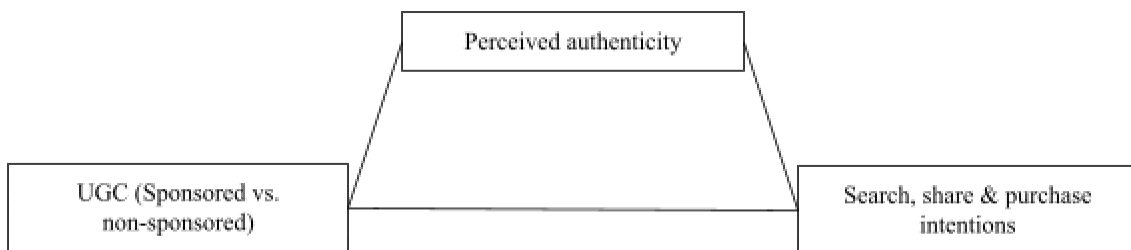
Moderating Role of Source Familiarity

Source familiarity can also have a significant impact on consumer behaviour and attitudes towards a product or brand (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2019). Familiarity results from repeated exposure which forms associations and knowledge of a source (Myers, 2021). In this study, the focus will be on familiarity through social media platforms. On social media, familiarity is established when a creator consistently posts content, leading to a feeling of closeness and recognition with consumers, especially if the consumer has been following the content creator for an extended period (Martensen et al., 2018).

Consumers tend to view WOM generated by familiar sources as more influential than those created by unfamiliar sources (Steffes & Burgee, 2009). For example, Chapple and Cownie (2017) found that consumers regularly follow the product recommendations of known creators, whether by purchasing or recommending the products. Similarly, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) observed that social media influencers have a significant impact on the purchase behavior of young female users. Overall, familiarity has been demonstrated to enhance persuasive outcomes and increase purchase intentions (Carrillat et al., 2013; Garcia-Marques & Mackie, 2001). Several studies also revealed that familiar sources such as social media influencers and content creators have a greater impact on consumer preferences compared to traditional advertising or well-known celebrities, due to their increased authenticity and credibility (De Vries et al., 2012; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Giles, 2017).

Based on these findings, this study proposes that source familiarity will moderate the effects of UGC sponsorship on consumer intention to search, share, and purchase value-expressive products. Source familiarity is also expected to moderate the effects of UGC sponsorship on perceived authenticity. Thus:

*H4. Source familiarity will moderate the effect of UGC sponsorship on consumers'
intentions (to search, share and purchase) when exposed to a non-sponsored UGC video
relative to a sponsored UGC video; such as when consumers are familiar with the source
there will be no effect of UGC sponsorship on consumer intentions. However, when they
are unfamiliar with the source, UGC sponsorship is expected to have effects on consumer
intentions.*

*H5. Perceived authenticity will mediate the effect of the moderating relationship between
UGC sponsorship and source familiarity on consumers' intentions (to search, share, and
purchase) such as consumers who are unfamiliar with the source will perceive a source in
a non-sponsored UGC as more authentic relative to a sponsored UGC, leading to their
intentions to search, share, and purchase. However, consumers familiar with the source
will perceive no difference in authenticity across UGC sponsorship conditions.*

Figure 2

Framework of the Moderating Effects of Source Familiarity
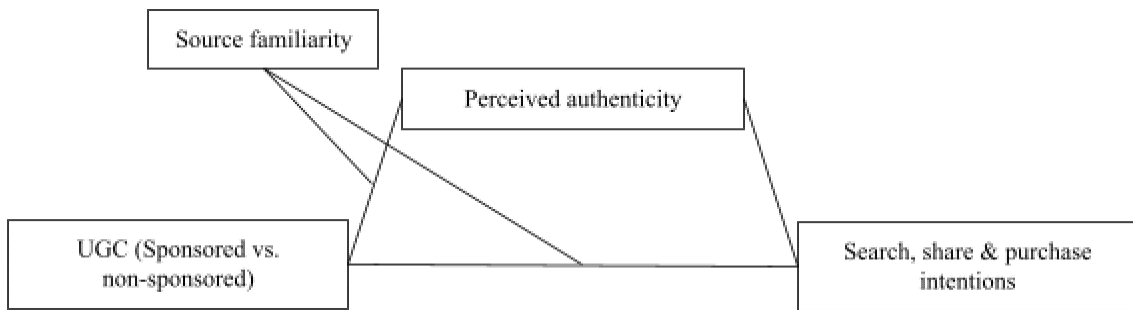
Studies Overview

The five hypotheses proposed above will be tested across two studies. The first study
uses a jacket as the value-expressive product and focuses on testing Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3,
which investigate the influence of UGC sponsorship type on consumers' intention to search,
share, and purchase and the extent to which perceived authenticity acts as a mediator in this

relationship. The second study was designed to build upon the findings of the first study by testing Hypotheses 4 and 5, which explores the moderating role of source familiarity in the relationship between UGC sponsorship, perceived authenticity and consumer intentions. A different value-expressive product was used in study 2 (a watch) to increase the generalizability of the results. The focus of both studies centered around TikTok as it is widely recognized as a platform for UGC. The surveys were administered exclusively to females aged 18 to 35, as previous research has shown that women and younger individuals tend to have a stronger interest in fashion and exhibit higher levels of fashion enthusiasm compared to men and older individuals (O'Cass, 2001; Pentecost & Andrews, 2010). By selecting only females as participants, it is possible to control for any gender-specific factors that may impact the perceptions and behaviours towards the product under study. The age range was determined based on the average age of TikTok users (Statista, 2022).

Study 1: Examining the Impact of UGC Sponsorship on Consumer Intentions and the Mediating Role of Perceived Authenticity

The first study aimed to test Hypothesis 1, which investigates the impact of UGC sponsorship on consumers' search, share, and purchase intentions. Additionally, the study aimed to test Hypotheses 2 and 3, which explore the impact of UGC sponsorship on the perceived authenticity of the source and its mediating role in the relationship between UGC sponsorship and consumers' behaviours. The study specifically aimed to determine if non-sponsored UGC about value-expressive products, such as a jacket, would result in a greater likelihood of consumers searching, sharing, and purchasing from a brand than sponsored UGC. Furthermore, the study aimed to assess whether non-sponsored UGC leads to a higher perceived authenticity of the UGC source compared to sponsored UGC, with perceived authenticity serving as a mediator in the relationship between UGC sponsorship and consumers' behaviours.

Design and Participants

In this study, participants were recruited using CloudResearch and participated in a one-factor (UGC sponsorship: sponsored UGC versus non-sponsored UGC) between-participants design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: sponsored UGC or

non-sponsored UGC. The survey was distributed to only females between the ages of 18 and 35. In exchange for their participation, the participants received monetary compensation. However, the incentive was only given if the individual answered the attention-check questions correctly. When a total of 200 responses were collected, the study was closed.

Procedure

Participants were told that they would be participating in two tasks. In the first task, participants were asked to imagine themselves scrolling through TikTok and coming across a video of a girl named Emma showing a stylish jacket from a new, emerging fashion brand. In the video, Emma expresses her love for the jacket, describing it as made of high-quality fabric, fitting her perfectly, and having a unique design that sets it apart from other jackets she owns. She also praises the brand for its attention to detail and excellent customer service. She encourages viewers to check out the brand and share it with friends and family. Unknown to the participant, their intention to check out the brand and to share the video with friends and family will be later measured, to assess whether they follow the recommendations made in the TikTok. To manipulate the UGC sponsorship type, participants saw one of two different disclosures. In the non-sponsored condition, they read that the video is not labelled as sponsored content, indicating that it is not a paid promotion. In the sponsored condition, they read that the video is labelled as sponsored content, indicating that it is a paid promotion. As a manipulation check question to ensure that they understood the sponsorship status of the UGC they were exposed to, participants were then asked, based on the scenario they had just read, whether the TikTok video was labelled as sponsored content or not. The scenarios can be found in Appendix A.

Next, perceived authenticity was measured (see Appendix B for items used to measure the key constructs). Specifically, participants were asked to what extent they think that Emma is genuine and real in her endorsement of the brand. Both questions were structured with a seven-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all," 7 = "very much so"). The authenticity scale was adapted from the scale found by Smith et al. (2021). To measure intention to search, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "Based on Emma's endorsement of the brand, how likely are you to check out the brand's website?" using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all likely," 7 = "very likely"; Jones & Kim, 2010). To

measure intention to share, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement: "Based on Emma's endorsement of the brand, how likely are you to share this brand with a friend or family member?" using a seven-point Likert scale, with the same anchors used to measure search intentions. Lastly, to measure purchase intention, participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with three statements: "Based on Emma's statements in her TikTok, how interested are you in purchasing clothing by this brand?" using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all interested," 7 = "very interested"), "Based on Emma's statements in her TikTok, how likely are you to try clothing by this brand?" using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all likely," 7 = "very likely"), and "Based on Emma's statements in her TikTok, how likely are you to actually purchase clothing by this brand?" using a seven-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all likely," 7 = "very likely"). These statements were averaged to obtain a composite score for purchase intention. These scales have been used in previous studies (Smith et al., 2021) and were adapted to align with the current research.

The second survey task aimed to first gather information on participants' TikTok usage. By assessing participants' usage of this platform, it was possible to identify potential covariates that could impact the relationships being studied. To measure TikTok usage, participants were asked how frequently they use the platform, with options to choose between "never," "daily," "weekly," "monthly," or "every other month." Additionally, to ensure that participants paid attention throughout the survey, they were asked to answer two attention-check questions related to the scenario they were presented with. The first question asked participants to recall the product that Emma was promoting in the video, to which the correct answer was a jacket. The second question asked participants to recall the social media platform on which the video was presented, and the correct answer was TikTok. These questions were included to ensure that participants were fully engaged and attentive to the task at hand, and to ensure the validity of the results. If they could not answer both questions correctly, they were directed to a screen explaining why they would not receive the promised payment. If, however, they answered both attention-check questions correctly, then they advanced to the last part of the study, where they were asked to provide demographic information such as age, education, income, and ethnicity.

Education was measured by asking participants to indicate their highest level of education, with options to choose from "High school diploma or below," "Bachelor/college degree," and "Master's degree or above." Income level was measured by asking participants to indicate their income range, ranging from "Less than $20,000" to "$100,000 and above". Ethnicity was measured by asking participants to choose one or more races they considered themselves to be, with options such as "white or Caucasian," "Black or African American," "Asian," and "Other" or "prefer not to say." They were also asked to indicate what device they used to complete the survey, and whether they encountered any technical issues. To measure the device used to complete the survey, participants were asked to indicate the device they used, with options to choose from "Desktop," "Laptop," "Tablet," "phone," or "Other." Technical issues encountered during the survey were measured by asking participants if they experienced any technical issues, with options to select from "Yes" or "No"; if yes, then they were prompted to specify the technical issue they encountered in an open-ended text box. This set of questions aimed to understand participants' backgrounds and examine potential covariates in the relationships being studied.

Results

Data Exclusion

In order to ensure the validity of the data, a screening process was conducted prior to data analysis. First, participants who did not qualify (i.e., those who made duplicate entries) were removed resulting in the exclusion of five individuals (2.5% of the entire sample). Then, participants were excluded based on three criteria: age, failing the manipulation check questions, and reporting technical issues. Participants outside the age range of 18-35 were removed from the study, resulting in the exclusion of one individual above the age of 35. Participants who did not pass the manipulation check question were also excluded, resulting in the removal of four individuals. Technical issues were also checked, however, none of the participants reported any technical issues. In total, five participants were removed from the study due to the set of criteria. Thus, the final sample consisted of n=190 female participants with an average age of 26.61 (SD = 3.69); see table 1 for additional demographics. Excluding non-qualifying participants, as well

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as those who were removed based on our three exclusion criteria, ensured that the sample was composed of individuals who met the specific inclusion criteria, had passed the manipulation checks, had not experienced any technical difficulties and completed the survey, thus increasing the validity and reliability of the data.

Table 1

Demographics (Study 1)

Education background	Percentage
High school diploma or below	37.4%
Bachelor/college degree	52.1%
Masters degree of above	10.5%

Income	Percentage
Less than $20,000	26.8%
$20,000 - $39,999	24.7%
$40,000 - $59,999	24.7%
$60,000 - $79,999	11.6%
$80,000 - $99,999	6.8%
$100,000 or above	5.3%

Ethnicity	Percentage
White or Caucasian	66.8%
Black or African American	13.2%
American Indian/ Native American or Alaska	1.6%

Native	
Asian	6.8%
Other	3.7%
Prefer not to say	2.1%
Mixed	5.7%

Testing for Potential Covariates

To investigate potential covariates that may influence the relationship between UGC sponsorship and the main dependent variables (intention to search, share and purchase), four variables were considered: age, income, education, and TikTok usage. To begin with, the purchase intention measure was created by averaging participants' answers to three questions: how likely participants are willing to try clothing from the brand discussed in the UGC, how interested they are in purchasing clothing from the brand and how likely would they actually make a purchase (Cronbach's α = .948). It was not anticipated that age and education would show significant results as covariates. Nevertheless, running tests to confirm these expectations and ensure the validity of the data was necessary. Income was considered a potential covariate in the relationship as individuals with higher income may have been more willing to consider aspects related to a purchase. Because platform familiarity may influence how participants view and interact with the platform's content, TikTok usage (i.e., whether they used the platform or not) was also added as a potential covariate.

Age. As expected, the correlation between age and 1) intention to search (r = .02, p = .784), 2) intention to share (r = -.01, p = .858) and 3) purchase intention (r = -.06, p = .451) were not significant; thus, age was not included as a covariate in further analysis.

Education. The correlation between education and 1) intention to search (r = -.02, p = .815), 2) intention to share (r = -.01, p = .945) and 3) purchase intention (r = -.02, p = .775) were not significant; thus, education was not included as a covariate in further analysis.

Income. The correlation between income and 1) intention to search ($r = .05$, $p = .516$), 2) intention to share ($r = .02$, $p = .793$) and 3) purchase intention ($r = -.06$, $p = .389$) were not significant; thus, income was not included as a covariate in further analysis.

TikTok Usage. The correlation between TikTok usage (where 0 = non-users and 1 = users) and 1) intention to search ($r = .25$, $p < .001$), 2) intention to share ($r = .20$, $p < .001$) and purchase intention ($r = .28$, $p < .001$) were all positively significant. Given these results, we ran additional analyses to test whether TikTok usage should be included as a covariate. The results of a first ANOVA yielded a nonsignificant effect of UGC sponsorship on TikTok usage; $F(1, 188) = .52$, $p = .470$. This indicates that there were no significant differences among UGC sponsorship conditions on TikTok usage, thus passing the homogeneity of variance assumption. Additional ANOVAs yielded a nonsignificant effect of UGC sponsorship × TikTok usage on intention to search ($F(1, 186) = 2.12$, $p = .147$), intention to share ($F(1, 186) = 1.38$, $p = .241$) and purchase intentions ($F(1, 186) = 1.43$, $p = .234$). Given that the assumption of homogeneity of regression was also met, TikTok usage was included as a covariate in all analyses.

Effects of UGC Sponsorship on Intention to Search, Share, and Purchase

To begin with, a MANOVA was conducted to analyze differences in participants' intention to search, share, and purchase as a function of UGC sponsorship. The UGC sponsorship that participants were exposed to (0 = non-sponsored and 1= sponsored) was entered as the independent variable, TikTok usage (0 = non-user and 1= user) was entered as a covariate, and the three main dependent variables (all continuous) were entered as dependent variables. The results revealed a significant effect of UGC sponsorship on search intentions ($F(1,187) = 26.21$, $p < .001$), indicating that participants in the non-sponsored condition were more likely to check the website ($M = 4.40$, SD = 1.71) relative to those in the sponsored condition ($M = 3.17$, SD = 1.57). The results also revealed a significant effect of UGC sponsorship on intention to share ($F(1,187) = 24.91$, $p < .001$), indicating that participants in the non-sponsored condition were more likely to share the brand ($M = 3.44$, SD = 1.68) relative to those in the sponsored condition ($M = 2.34$, SD = 1.32). Finally, the results revealed a significant effect of UGC sponsorship on purchase intention ($F(1,187) = 24.42$, $p < .001$), indicating that

participants in the non-sponsored condition had higher purchase intentions (M = 3.83, SD = 1.55) relative to those in the sponsored condition (M = 2.76, SD = 1.39). Overall, these findings support H1 stating that non-sponsored UGC leads to more intentions to search, share and purchase than sponsored UGC.

Effects of UGC Sponsorship on Perceived Authenticity

A correlation test was conducted to examine the relationship between the variables used to measure the mediator construct of perceived authenticity (genuineness and realness). The results of this test revealed a strong positive correlation between genuineness and realness (r =.83, p < .001), indicating that individuals who scored high on measures of genuineness also tended to score high on measures of realness. This suggests that these two dimensions of perceived authenticity are highly related and likely measure similar underlying constructs. Thus, the genuineness and realness variables were averaged to create a composite measure of perceived authenticity.

An ANOVA was then conducted to analyze differences in perceived authenticity as a function of UGC sponsorship. The UGC sponsorship that participants were exposed to (0 = non-sponsored and 1= sponsored) was entered as the fixed factor, TikTok usage (0 = non-user and 1= user) was entered as a covariate and perceived authenticity was entered as a dependent variable. The results revealed a significant effect of UGC sponsorship on perceived authenticity (F(1,187) = 80.5, p < .001), indicating that participants in the non-sponsored condition were more likely to perceive what the source said in the UGC as authentic (M = 5.07, SD = 1.21) relative to those in the sponsored condition (M = 3.42, SD = 1.29). These findings support H2, stating that non-sponsored UGC on value-expressive products will lead to more perceived authenticity relative to sponsored brand-related UGC.

Testing for Mediation (Perceived Authenticity)

To test whether perceived authenticity is a mediator in the proposed model, three separate analyses were conducted with PROCESS using Model 4 proposed by Hayes (2022). In the first analysis, the focus is on the intention to search. Thus, the UGC sponsorship that participants

were exposed to (0 = non-sponsored and 1= sponsored) was entered as the independent variable, TikTok usage (0 = non-user and 1= user) was entered as a covariate, perceived authenticity (continuous) as a mediator and intention to search (continuous) was entered as the dependent variable. Bootstrapping results (5,000 resamples) supported an indirect effect of UGC sponsorship on intentions to search (indirect effect = -1.26, SE = .17, 95% CI = [-1.61, -.93]). Consistent with the findings reported above, results indicate that UGC sponsorship had a significant effect on search intentions (b = -1.19, t(187) = -5.12, p < .001, 95% CI = [-1.65, -.73]) and a significant effect on perceived authenticity (b = -1.63, t(187) = -8.97, p < .001, 95% CI = [-1.99, -.1.27]. Results also showed that perceived authenticity had a significant effect on search intentions (b = .77, t(186) = 10.44, p < .001, 95% CI = [.62, .92]). When perceived authenticity was accounted for, the impact of UGC on search intentions was no longer significant (b = .07, t(186) = .32, p = .753, 95% CI = [-.37, .51]), indicating support for H3. The pattern of results with the other dependent measures (i.e., intention to share and purchase intentions) were consistent, as shown in Table 2 and in Appendix C.

Table 2

Mediation Effects (study 1)

Effects	Search Intention	Share Intention	Purchase Intention
UGC sponsorship on dependent variables (indirect effect)	indirect effect = -1.26 SE = .17 95% CI = [-1.61, -.93]	indirect effect = -1.04 SE = .16 95% CI = [-1.38, -.75]	indirect effect = -1.14 SE = .17 95% CI = [-1.48, -.83]

UGC sponsorship on dependent variables (total effect)	$b = -1.19$ $t(187) = -5.12$ $p < .001$ 95% CI = [-1.65, -.73]	$b = -1.07$ $t(187) = -4.50$ $p < .001$ 95% CI = [-1.50, -.65]	$b = -1.02$ $t(187) = -4.94$ $p < .001$ 95% CI = [-1.43, -.61]
UGC sponsorship on perceived authenticity	$b = -1.63$ $t(187) = -8.97$ $p < .001$ 95% CI = [-1.99, -.1.27]	$b = -1.63$ $t(187) = -8.97$ $p < .001$ 95% CI = [-1.99, -.1.27]	$b = -1.63$ $t(187) = -8.97$ $p < .001$ 95% CI = [-1.99, -.1.27]
Perceived authenticity on dependent variables	$b = .77$ $t(186) = 10.44$ $p < .001$ 95% CI = [.62, .92]	$b = .63$ $t(186) = 8.66$ $p < .001$ 95% CI = [.49, .78]	$b = .70$ $t(186) = 10.69$ $p < .001$ 95% CI = [.57, .83]
UGC sponsorship on dependent variables (direct effect)	$b = .07$ $t(186) = .32$ $p = .753$ 95% CI = [-.37, .51]	$b = -.04$ $t(186) = -.18$ $p = .858$ 95% CI = [-.47, .39]	$b = .12$ $t(186) = .63$ $p = .531$ 95% CI = [-.26, .51]

Discussion

Overall, study 1 results support H1 stating that non-sponsored UGC on value-expressive products will lead to more intention to search, share and purchase products from a brand than sponsored brand-related UGC. The results also indicate a significant effect of UGC sponsorship on consumers' perceived authenticity. Specifically, the findings support H2 by showing that non-sponsored brand-related UGC on value-expressive products will lead to more perceived authenticity relative to sponsored brand-related UGC. The results also show that higher levels of perceived authenticity resulted in higher search, share, and purchase intentions, which mediated the relationship between UGC sponsorship and search, share, and purchase intentions, as suggested by H3. Taken together, these results highlight the importance of sponsorship in understanding how UGC impacts consumer intentions (to search, to share and to purchase) for value expressive products, as well as the mediating role that perceived authenticity plays in this relationship.

Study 2: Examining the Moderating Effect of Source Familiarity

The second study first aimed to further support H1, H2 and H3 by examining the impact of UGC sponsorship on consumer intentions and the extent to which authenticity plays a mediating role in this relationship and validate the findings from the first study. Additionally, the study aimed to test H4, which examines the moderating role of source familiarity on the relationship between UGC sponsorship and consumer intention to search, share and purchase, as well as H5 testing the moderating role of source familiarity between UGC sponsorship and perceived authenticity. The focus remained on value-expressive products, but to increase the generalizability of the results, the product used in this study was changed from a jacket to a watch. This modification allows the study to explore the impact of different value-expressive product categories, thus enhancing the scope of the results.

Design and Participants

Similar to the first experiment, female participants aged 18-35 were recruited using CloudResearch. This time, participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions in a 2

(source familiarity: familiar source vs. unfamiliar source) × 2 (UGC sponsorship: sponsored UGC vs. non-sponsored UGC) between-subject design. Consistent with the first study, participants received monetary compensation in exchange for the participation, though the incentive was only given if the individual answered both attention-check questions correctly. When a total of 280 responses were collected, the study was closed.

Procedure

Similar to the first study, participants were asked to complete two tasks. In the first task, participants were presented with a scenario almost identical to the one used in study 1. The scenarios can be found in Appendix D. This time, they were asked to imagine themselves scrolling through TikTok and coming across a video of a girl named Emma showing a stylish watch from a new, emerging fashion brand, instead of a jacket. To manipulate source familiarity, participants in the familiar condition were told that they are familiar with Emma as they have seen her content on TikTok or other platforms before; those in the unfamiliar condition were told that Emma does not feel familiar to them and that they don't usually see her content on TikTok or anywhere else. To manipulate the UGC sponsorship type, participants saw one of two different disclosures in the scenario. The disclaimer of sponsorship was revised in this study to make it more reflective of a typical TikTok feed, and served to make the scenario more realistic.Thus, instead of defining sponsorship as we did in the first study, terms such as "paid partnership" and "#ad" were included to indicate whether a UGC was sponsored or not. Apart from these changes, the rest of the scenario remained unchanged.

Next, the participants were asked to answer two manipulation checks to ensure that participants knew whether the scenario they received included a sponsored or non-sponsored UGC and a familiar or unfamiliar source. Specifically, participants were asked, based on the scenario they read, whether the TikTok video was labelled as sponsored content or not and whether it was indicated that they were familiar with the source, whose content is commonly seen on TikTok and other platforms or not. Perceived authenticity was then measured using the same genuineness and realness questions from the first study to determine the extent to which participants thought Emma was authentic in her endorsement of the brand. Intentions to search,

share and purchase were also measured using the same questions as in the first study, but edited (when required) to reflect the new product category (i.e., accessories). Participants then had to answer two attention check questions; if they did not answer both correctly, participants were directed to a screen explaining why they would not receive the promised payment. As in study 1, those that answered both questions correctly were then asked to complete the second task, where they were asked about their TikTok usage. The final task required them to provide demographic information and report any technical issues they encountered.

Results

Data Exclusion

Similar to study 1, and to maintain the validity of the data, a screening process was carried out before data analysis. The first step was to eliminate participants who did not meet the eligibility criteria, such as those who made duplicate entries. As a result, four individuals (1.8% of the sample) were excluded. Next, participants who did not pass the manipulation check questions were also excluded, resulting in the removal of 28 individuals, with 20 failing the familiarity question, 6 failing the UGC sponsorship question, and 2 failing both. Two other criteria were used for this screening process: age and technical issues. There were no participants outside the age range of 18-35 and only one participant was removed as she experienced technical issues. In total, 29 participants were removed from the study due to our set of exclusion criteria. The final sample consisted of 247 female participants with an average age of 28.44 (SD = 3.43); see table 3 for additional demographics.

Table 3

Demographics (study 2)

Education background	Percentage
High school diploma or below	39.3%
Bachelor/college degree	46.6%
Masters degree of above	14.2%

Income	Percentage
Less than $20,000	27.1%
$20,000 - $39,999	24.7%
$40,000 - $59,999	21.9%
$60,000 - $79,999	14.2%
$80,000 - $99,999	6.5%
$100,000 or above	5.7%

Ethnicity	Percentage
White or Caucasian	72.5%
Black or African American	11.7%
American Indian/ Native American or Alaska Native	0.4%
Asian	5.3%
Other	0.4%
Prefer not to say	2%
Mixed	7.7%

Testing for Potential Covariates

To examine potential factors that might impact the relationship between UGC sponsorship and consumer intentions to search, share, and purchase, four variables were considered as in the previous study: age, income, education, and TikTok usage. The purchase intention was measured by taking the average of the answers to the same three questions as in the first study (Cronbach's α = .951). It was not expected that age, education and income would have

significant results as covariates, as they did not in the first study, but it was important to test and confirm these expectations to ensure the validity of the data.

Age. The correlation between age and 1) intention to search ($r = .02$, $p = .728$), 2) intention to share ($r = .07$, $p = .303$) and 3) purchase intention ($r = .04$, $p = .559$) were not significant; thus, age was not included as a covariate in further analysis.

Education. The correlation between education and 1) intention to search ($r = .02$, $p = .721$), 2) intention to share ($r = .01$, $p = .851$) and 3) purchase intention ($r = .03$, $p = .689$) were not significant; thus, education was not included as a covariate in further analysis.

Income. The correlation between income and 1) intention to search ($r = .06$, $p = .322$), 2) intention to share ($r = .12$, $p = .061$) and 3) purchase intention ($r = .12$, $p = .088$) were not significant; thus, income was not included as a covariate in further analysis.

TikTok Usage. The correlation between TikTok usage (where $0 =$ non-users and $1 =$ users) and 1) intention to search ($r = .07$, $p = .296$) was not significant, however, the relationship with 2) intention to share ($r = .13$, $p = .038$) and purchase intention ($r = .13$, $p = .036$) were significant. Additional analysis was conducted to test whether these variables should be included as covariates in further analyses. The results of a first ANOVA yielded a nonsignificant effect of UGC sponsorship on TikTok usage; $F(1, 245) = .02$, $p = .890$. This indicates that there were no significant differences among UGC sponsorship conditions on TikTok usage, thus passing the homogeneity of variance assumption. Additional ANOVAs yielded a nonsignificant effect of UGC sponsorship × TikTok usage on intention to search ($F(1, 243) = 1.37$, $p = .244$), intention to share ($F(1, 243) = 1.71$, $p = .192$) and purchase intentions ($F(1, 243) = 1.21$, $p = .272$); thus the assumption of homogeneity of regression was also met. Despite not being a significant covariate for intention to search, TikTok usage was included as a covariate for all three dependent variables for simplicity and ease of comprehension.

Effects of UGC Sponsorship and Source Familiarity on Intention to Search, Share, and Purchase

A MANOVA was conducted to analyze differences in participants' intention to search, share, and purchase as a function of sponsorship and source familiarity. The sponsorship type (0 = non-sponsored and 1= sponsored) and the familiarity of the source (0 = unfamiliar and 1 = familiar) were entered as the independent variable, TikTok usage (0 = non-user and 1= user) was entered as a covariate, and the three main dependent variables (all continuous) were entered as dependent variables. The results revealed a significant main effect of UGC sponsorship on search intentions ($F(1, 242) = 10.17$, $p = .002$), intentions to share ($F(1, 242) = 6.77$, $p = .010$) and purchase intentions ($F(1, 242) = 8.88$, $p = .003$), which lends further support to H1. The results also revealed a significant main effect of source familiarity on search intentions ($F(1, 242) = 4.82$, $p = .029$), but not on intention to share ($F(1, 242) = 1.83$, $p = .178$) or purchase intentions ($F(1, 242) = 1.99$, $p = .159$). Further, there were no significant sponsorship × source familiarity interactions on any of the main dependent variables (all $p > .486$); see the first 3 rows in table 4 for the estimated means and standard errors per condition, and figures 3, 4 and 5 for a graphical depiction of the interaction results. Overall, these findings support H1, suggesting that non-sponsored UGC leads to higher consumers' intentions to search, share, and purchase than sponsored UGC. However, the findings also show that while source familiarity has a significant impact on search intentions, it does not impact intentions to share or purchase. Additionally, there were no significant interactions between UGC sponsorship and source familiarity on any of the dependent variables, indicating that the effect of UGC sponsorship on consumer behaviour remains consistent regardless of the familiarity of the source, thus H4 is not supported.

Table 4

Estimated Means and Standard Errors per Condition (Study 2)

	Unfamiliar Source		Familiar Source	
	Non-sponsored UGC	**Sponsored UGC**	**Non-sponsored UGC**	**Sponsored UGC**
Intention to search	3.26 (.22)	2.74 (.22)	3.88 (.20)	3.06 (.21)
Intention to share	2.53 (.19)	2.07 (.19)	2.82 (.18)	2.29 (.19)
Intention to purchase	2.88 (.18)	2.42 (.18)	3.19 (.17)	2.61 (.18)
Perceived authenticity	4.44 (.19)	3.40 (.19)	4.42 (.18)	3.53 (.18)

Note: The values in parentheses represent the standard errors. The covariate appearing in the model (i.e., TikTok usage) is evaluated at .78.

Figure 3

Estimated Marginal Means of Intention to Search

26
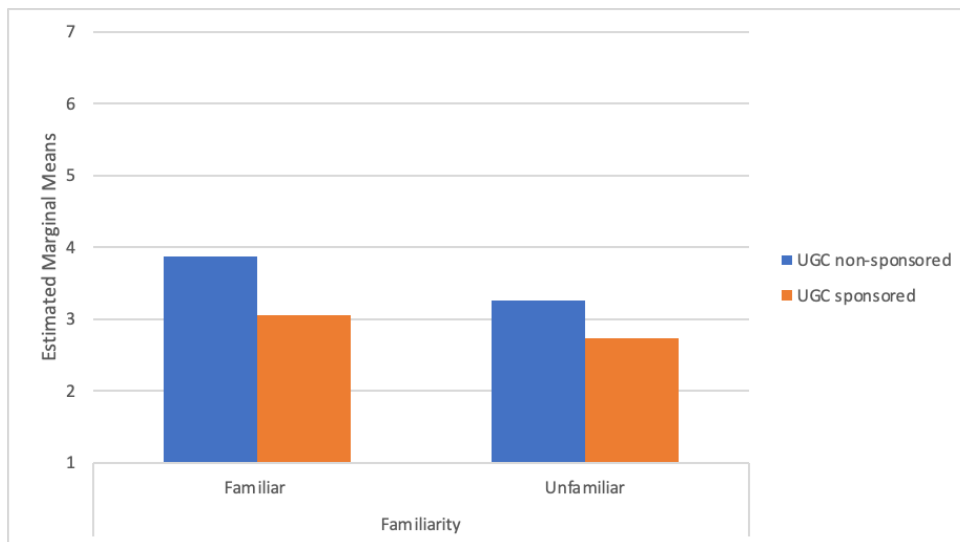
Figure 4

Estimated Marginal Means of Intention to Share
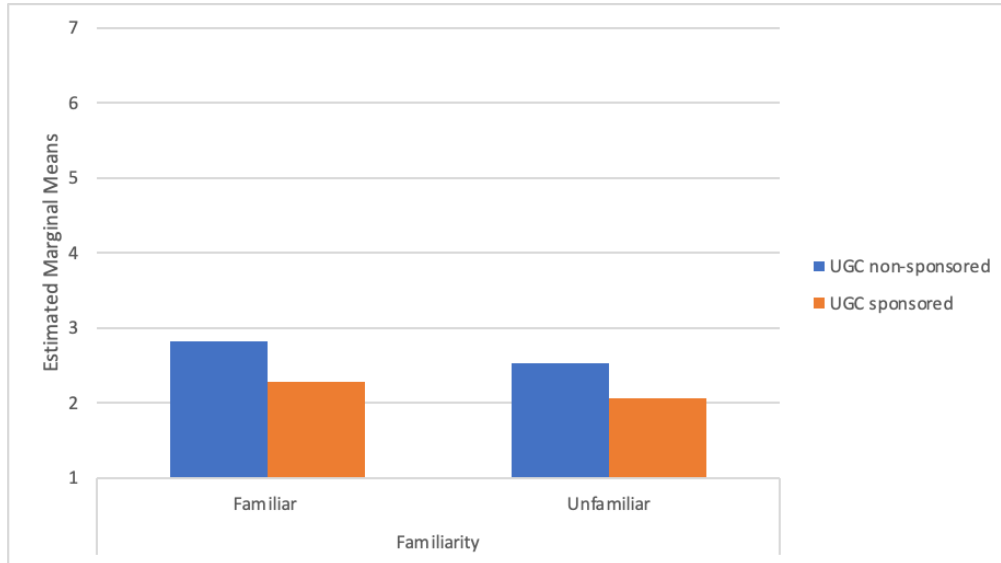
Figure 5

Estimated Marginal Means of Intention to Purchase
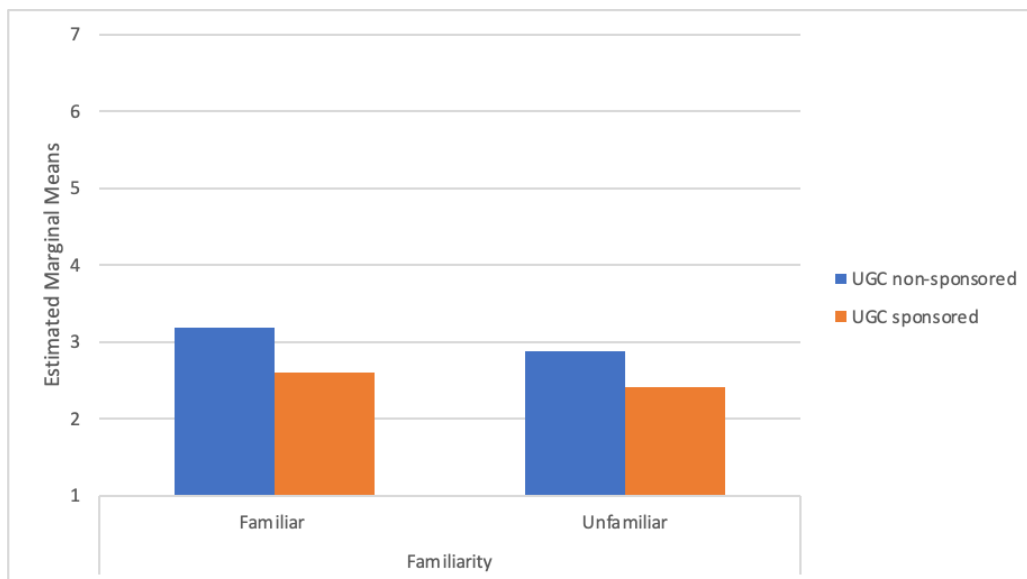
Effect of UGC Sponsorship and Source Familiarity on Perceived Authenticity

Similar to study 1, we examined the relationship between the variables used to measure the mediator construct of perceived authenticity, that is, genuineness and realness of the UGC source (Emma). The results showed a strong positive correlation between the two variables ($r =$ .82, $p <$ .001), and thus, they were averaged to create a composite measure of perceived authenticity. An ANOVA was then conducted to analyze differences in perceived authenticity as a function of UGC sponsorship and source familiarity. The sponsorship type (0 = non-sponsored and 1 = sponsored) and the familiarity of the source (0 = unfamiliar and 1 = familiar) were entered as the independent variable, TikTok usage (0 = non-user and 1= user) was entered as a covariate and perceived authenticity was entered as a dependent variable. The results revealed a significant effect of UGC sponsorship on perceived authenticity ($F(1,242) = 27.90$, $p <$ .001) indicating that participants in the non-sponsored condition were more likely to perceive what the source said in the UGC as authentic relative to those in the sponsored condition, in support of H2. On the other hand, the results showed a non significant effect of source familiarity on perceived authenticity ($F(1,242) = 0.84$, $p =$ .773), indicating that participants in the non-familiar condition were no more likely to perceive what the source said in the UGC as authentic relative to those in the familiar conditions. Additionally, the results yielded a non-significant interaction effect ($F(1,242) = .155$, $p =$ .695); see the bottom row in table 4 for the estimated means (and standard errors) for perceived authenticity per condition, and figure 6 for a graphical depiction of the interaction results. Overall, these results lend support to H2, that non-sponsored UGC on value-expressive products leads to more perceived authenticity compared to sponsored UGC. However, the results showed that the interaction between source familiarity and UGC sponsorship did not have a significant effect on perceived authenticity, thus H5, which predicts a moderated mediator effect, is not supported.

Figure 6

Estimated Marginal Means of Intention to Perceived Authenticity
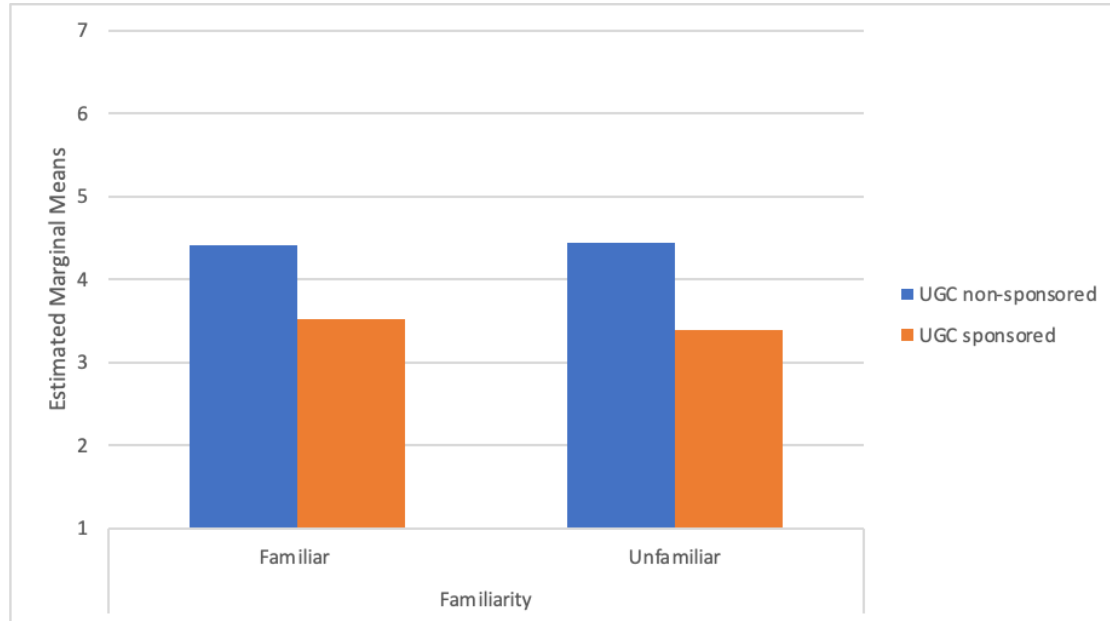
Testing for Moderated Mediation (Perceived Authenticity)

The study then examined the relationship between perceived authenticity and three dependent variables: intention to search, intention to share, and purchase intentions (where perceived authenticity was considered as the independent variable and intention to search, share and purchase were considered as the dependent variables). In line with the third hypothesis, results indicated a significant effect of perceived authenticity on intention to search ($b = .76$, $SE = .05$, $t(245) = 14.34$, $p < .001$), intention to share ($b = .57$, $SE = .05$, $t(245) = 10.68$, $p < .001$) and purchase intentions ($b = .64$, $SE = .04$, $t(245) = 14.59$, $p < .001$).

The next step was to determine whether perceived authenticity played a role in mediating the interaction between UGC sponsorship and source familiarity on consumer intentions. Although further testing for moderated mediation is not necessary given the results above, the analyses were still performed for completeness. Thus, three separate analyses were conducted using the PROCESS Model 8 provided by Hayes (2022). The results of these analyses can be found in Appendix E. In these analyses, exposure to UGC sponsorship (0 = unsponsored, 1 =

sponsored) was used as an independent variable, source familiarity (0 = non-familiar, 1 = familiar) acted as a moderator, TikTok usage (0 = non-user, 1 = user) was considered as a covariate, perceived authenticity (continuous) acted as a mediator, and intention to search, share, and purchase (all continuous) were each considered as dependent variables.

When looking at the results for the share intentions, the results showed, as expected, that the effect of perceived authenticity was not significantly influenced by the interaction between source familiarity and UGC sponsorship ($b = .14$, $t(242) = .39$, $p = .694$, 95% CI = [-.5744, .8608]). The results also showed that perceived authenticity had a significant effect on share intention ($b = .571$, $t(241) = 10.02$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [.4572, .6811]). The total effect of the source familiarity × UGC sponsorship interaction for share intention, when the mediator (perceived authenticity) was added in the model, was not significant ($b = -.16$, $t(241) = -.50$, $p = .618$, 95% CI = [-.7955, .4734]). Similar results can be found when the analyses were conducted for the other two variables (that is, intention to search and purchase intentions). These findings, unfortunately, do not lend support to H5.

Discussion

The findings of the study indicated that source familiarity did not have a significant impact on consumer intention to search, share, or purchase, leading to the rejection of H4. Similarly, the results showed that while perceived authenticity is an important factor in shaping consumer behavior, source familiarity may not play a significant role, thus leading to the rejection of H5.

General Discussion

Summary of Results

This study aimed to explore the impact of UGC sponsorship type on consumer behaviour for value-expressive products, specifically within the fashion industry. The study examined the mediating effect of perceived authenticity and the moderating role of source familiarity in the relationship between UGC sponsorship and consumer intention to search, share and purchase. The results found that non-sponsored UGC led to more consumer intention to search, share and

purchase from a brand than sponsored brand-related UGC, which supported H1. Perceived authenticity was found to mediate the effect of UGC sponsorship on consumer intention to search, share and purchase, meaning that consumers are more likely to follow UGC recommendations when they perceive the UGC as authentic, supporting H2 and H3. On the other hand, the findings indicated that source familiarity did not have a significant effect on consumer intention to search, share, or purchase from a brand and that perceived authenticity was not impacted by source familiarity, leading to the rejection of H4 and H5.

Theoretical Contributions

This research contributes to the literature in various ways. First, it addresses the gap in the literature regarding how UGC sponsorship (ie., sponsored vs. non-sponsored UGC) affects consumer perceptions and intentions in the context of value-expressive products, which are frequently featured in UGC. Although previous research has shown that UGC is often perceived as more authentic and trustworthy than company advertisements, it is crucial to understand how UGC sponsorship impacts consumer behaviour. This is particularly relevant as UGC becomes more critical for marketers who want to remain competitive. Through an examination of the impact of UGC sponsorship and perceived authenticity on consumer behaviour, this thesis offers new insights into how consumers perceive UGC sponsorship and how it affects their intentions to search, share, and purchase. Second, by focusing on value-expressive products in the fashion industry, this study provides a better understanding of consumer perceptions of UGC on an industry level. Third, this study highlights the role of TikTok usage in shaping consumer behaviour, adding to our understanding of how the type of social media platforms can impact consumer perceptions of UGC sponsorship and perceived authenticity. This highlights the need for future research to consider platform usage when examining the relationship between UGC sponsorship and consumer behaviour. Finally, the results provide insights for academic researchers and practitioners to further explore the impact of UGC sponsorship on consumer behaviour in different contexts.

Managerial Implications

This research found that UGC is most effective in shaping consumer intentions to search, share and purchase when it is perceived as authentic and not influenced by advertisers. This information is valuable for marketers and researchers looking to develop and explore effective UGC strategies. The study concluded that consumers are more likely to engage with UGC when it is seen as non-sponsored and perceived as authentic. As a result, the study suggests that brands prioritize the use of non-sponsored UGC in their marketing communications and focus on authenticity, as opposed to relying solely on sponsored content. However, if brands choose to use sponsored UGC, it is recommended that they be transparent about their involvement by clearly labelling it as sponsored, by disclosing any compensation or incentives given to the content creators and not interfering with the creator's authenticity by not giving specific instructions on what to communicate. The study found that the use of well-known creators, whom consumers are likely to recognize, did not significantly impact authenticity and consumer intentions to search, share, or purchase. Nevertheless, previous research has demonstrated that incorporating known creators into marketing campaigns can be effective, making it important for brands to carefully weigh the goals of their campaigns, target audience, and the brand's image when making such a decision. By following these recommendations, brands can effectively utilize the power of UGC and enhance their marketing performance. Finally, given the significance of authenticity in shaping consumer behaviour as highlighted by the study, brands should make authenticity a priority in their marketing strategies.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations of this study provide opportunities for future research. One limitation is that the sample size may not represent the entire population, as the survey was only sent to females aged 18-35 and in the context of UGC on TikTok. This may not accurately represent the views and behaviours of other demographic groups. Demographic groups with different ages, genders, and cultural backgrounds may have different expectations and preferences for what constitutes authenticity. For example, older adults may place a greater emphasis on traditional

sources of information, such as news outlets and experts, while younger people may be more accepting of more informal or personal sources, such as influencers and content creators. Similarly, different social media platforms may have their own norms and expectations for what constitutes authentic content, depending on the platform's target audience and features. Therefore, future studies could replicate this research using different demographic groups, such as males or older adults, and on different social media platforms, such as Instagram or Twitter.

Another limitation is that the survey included a scenario asking participants to imagine a UGC video rather than showing one. The use of a scenario-based survey design was intended to eliminate potential biases that may arise from showing actual UGC videos to participants. For example, participants may not like the person in the UGC video or their way of speaking, and this could skew their responses. Additionally, the presence of a real UGC video may lead to preconceived notions about the type of sponsorship, which may not accurately reflect the nature of the UGC. However, the use of a scenario may have resulted in a lack of realism, as participants may have responded differently if they were actually shown UGC videos. In future studies, it would be beneficial to display actual UGC videos to better understand the complexity of real-world UGC interactions.

Additionally, contrary to the findings of previous studies, the results of this research did not reveal a significant relationship between source familiarity, UGC sponsorship, perceived authenticity and consumer intentions. It is worth noting that the limitations in sample size and survey design could have influenced the outcomes. The method used to manipulate source familiarity was limited in scope, as it only considered participants' exposure to the source's content on social media. This approach may not have accurately reflected the depth of familiarity, including factors such as engagement with the source, personal relationships, and familiarity through others. Moreover, control variables such as prior experience with TikTok or attitudes towards sponsored content, could have impacted the results. Future research could seek to address these limitations through the use of a larger sample size, a more comprehensive method of measuring source familiarity and the addition of manipulation questions to verify participants' level of familiarity with the source.

Furthermore, this study focused on new and emerging brands. It is possible that the findings might not be the same for well-established brands. Well-established brands likely have a larger and more diverse customer base, which could result in different perceptions and attitudes towards UGC sponsorship. With a well-established reputation and brand image, consumers may have a different view of the perceived authenticity of UGC from these brands. Moreover, consumers may be more likely to be familiar with the source of UGC for well-established brands, as these brands typically have a higher level of visibility and presence in the market. It is therefore possible for future research to investigate this study for well-established brands and compare the results with those from this study to determine if there are any differences and to gain a better understanding of how UGC sponsorship is perceived by consumers across different types of brands.

A limitation to consider is the moderating effect of consumer skepticism and the influence of culture on the relationship between UGC sponsorship, perceived authenticity and consumer intentions. Some consumers may be skeptical of sponsored content and may view it as less authentic, regardless of the sponsorship type or source familiarity. Additionally, cultural differences may affect the way consumers perceive the authenticity of UGC sponsorship. For example, in some cultures, personal recommendations from friends and family may hold more weight than advertisements or sponsored content, whereas in other cultures, advertised marketing may be more influential. Future research could explore how consumer skepticism and cultural differences may influence the findings of this study.

Another limitation is that this study only looked at the effect of UGC sponsorship on consumer behaviour for specific types of value-expressive products within the fashion industry. Further research could examine these effects for a wider range of products and in different stages of the customer journey, such as awareness, consideration, and decision-making. Additionally, it would be interesting to see how different types of UGC content, such as images and blogs, could influence perceived authenticity and consumer behaviour. Other potential moderating factors could include the platform used, the characteristics of the UGC (such as the length and tone of the source for videos) and the frequency of UGC exposure.

While this study provides important insights into the role of UGC sponsorship, perceived authenticity, and source familiarity on consumer behaviour, there are numerous areas for future research to further investigate these effects in varying contexts and using different methods.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings suggest that perceived authenticity is a crucial factor in the effectiveness of UGC on consumer behaviour, particularly for value-expressive products within the fashion industry. Brands should incorporate non-sponsored UGC and be transparent about partnering with UGC creators to increase their perceived authenticity and effectiveness in influencing consumer behaviour.

In the scenario provided at the beginning, where you come across a UGC video promoting a fashion brand's jacket, the authenticity of the endorsement could have been a crucial factor in determining its influence on your behaviour. If the video was not sponsored and the source showing off the jacket was genuinely excited about the purchase without being compensated by a brand, there is a higher chance you would follow the endorsement and consider searching, sharing or purchasing from the brand. However, if the video was indicated as sponsored, there is a likelihood you would be questioning the authenticity of the endorsement, potentially leading to decreased interest in the brand. Thus, authenticity can play a crucial role in shaping consumer behaviour, making it a key factor to consider in marketing research.

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Appendix A

Study 1 Scenario

Organic UGC

Imagine you are scrolling through your TikTok feed when you come across a video of a girl named Emma showing off a stylish jacket she purchased from a new, emerging fashion brand. You are not familiar with Emma or the brand in the video. She is excitedly talking about how much she loves her new jacket and how it has quickly become her favorite piece of clothing. She explains that the jacket is made of high-quality fabric, fits her perfectly, and has a unique design that sets it apart from other jackets she owns. She also praises the brand for its attention to detail and excellent customer service. You can see that the jacket is well-made and has a trendy, slightly distressed look.

Emma suggests that viewers check out the brand's website to see their fashionable offerings and high-quality products. She also encourages them to share the brand with their friends and family.

The video is <u>not</u> labeled as sponsored content, indicating that it is <u>not</u> a paid promotion. Non-sponsored content is created and shared without the intention of promoting a brand or product in exchange for compensation.

Sponsored UGC

Imagine you are scrolling through your TikTok feed when you come across a video of a girl named Emma showing off a stylish jacket she purchased from a new, emerging fashion brand. You are not familiar with Emma or the brand in the video. She is excitedly talking about how much she loves her new jacket and how it has quickly become her favorite piece of clothing. She explains that the jacket is made of high-quality fabric, fits her perfectly, and has a unique design that sets it apart from other jackets she owns. She also praises the brand for its attention to detail and excellent customer service. You can see that the jacket is well-made and has a trendy, slightly distressed look.

Emma suggests that viewers check out the brand's website to see their fashionable offerings and high-quality products. She also encourages them to share the brand with their friends and family.

The video is labeled as sponsored content, indicating that it is a paid promotion. Sponsored content is created and shared with the intention of promoting a brand or product in exchange for compensation.

Appendix B

Study 1 - Survey Adapted Scales

Measure	Study 1 Questions	Study 2 Questions
Perceived Authenticity (based on Smith et. al, 2021)	Do you think that Emma is being genuine in her endorsement of the brand? (1/not at all, 7/very much) Do you believe that by endorsing the brand, Emma is being "true to herself"? (1/not at all, 7/very much)	Consistent with Study 1
Purchase Intentions (Based on Smith et al., 2021)	Based on Emma's statements in her TikTok, how likely are you to try clothing by this brand? (1/not at all likely, 7/very likely) Based on Emma's statements in her TikTok, how interested are you in purchasing clothing by this brand? (1/not at all interested, 7/very interested) Based on Emma's statements in her TikTok, how likely are you to actually purchase clothing by this brand? (1/not at all likely, 7/very likely)	Based on Emma's statements in her TikTok, how likely are you to try accessories from this brand? (1/not at all likely, 7/very likely) Based on Emma's statements in her TikTok, how interested are you in purchasing accessories from this brand? (1/not at all interested, 7/very interested) Based on Emma's statements in her TikTok, how likely are you to actually purchase accessories from this brand? (1/not at all likely, 7/very likely)
Intention to search (Based on Jones & Kim, 2010)	Based on Emma's endorsement of the brand, how likely are you to check out the brand's website? (1/not at all likely, 7/very likely)	Consistent with Study 1

Intention to share (Based on Jones & Kim, 2010)	Based on Emma's endorsement of the brand, how likely are you to share this brand to a friend or family member? (1/not at all likely, 7/very likely)	Consistent with Study 1

Appendix C

Mediation Analysis (Study 1)

Search Intention

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

*************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 beta ***************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 4
    Y  : Search Intention
    X  : UGC
    M  : Authenticity

Covariates:
 TikTokUsage

Sample
Size:  190

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Authenticity

Model Summary
          R        R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .5583       .3117     1.5621    42.3451     2.0000   187.0000      .0000

Model
             coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant    4.7736      .2285    20.8951      .0000     4.3229     5.2242
UGC        -1.6316      .1818    -8.9724      .0000    -1.9904    -1.2729
TikTok Usage  .3565      .2270     1.5704      .1180     -.0913      .8043

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
Search intention

Model Summary
          R        R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .6905       .4768     1.6242    56.4935     3.0000   186.0000      .0000

Model
             coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant    -.0979      .4254     -.2301      .8182     -.9371      .7413
```

```
UGC              .0700      .2218      .3154      .7528     -.3676      .5075
Authenticity .7710         .0746     10.3397      .0000      .6239      .9181
TikTokUsage  .7194         .2330      3.0876      .0023      .2597     1.1790


*************************** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL ***************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Search Intention

Model Summary
          R        R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .4195       .1760      2.5441    19.9736     2.0000   187.0000      .0000

Model
            coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant   3.5825       .2916     12.2879      .0000     3.0074     4.1577
UGC       -1.1880       .2321     -5.1192      .0000    -1.6458     -.7302
TikTokUsage .9942        .2897      3.4320      .0007      .4227     1.5657


************** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y **************


Total effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
    -1.1880       .2321     -5.1192      .0000    -1.6458     -.7302

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      .0700       .2218      .3154      .7528     -.3676      .5075


Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
            Effect     BootSE    BootLLCI   BootULCI
Authenticity -1.2580      .1706    -1.6049     -.9348

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ***********************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000

WARNING: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output
when some variables in the data file have the same first eight characters. Shorter
variable names are recommended. By using this output, you are accepting all risk
and consequences of interpreting or reporting results that may be incorrect.


------ END MATRIX -----
```

Share Intention


```
Run MATRIX procedure:

*************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 beta ***************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 4
    Y  : Share Intention
    X  : UGC
    M  : Authenticity

Covariates:
 TikTokUsage

Sample
Size:  190

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 mediator

Model Summary
          R        R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .5583       .3117     1.5621     42.3451     2.0000   187.0000      .0000


Model
              coeff         se          t          p        LLCI        ULCI
constant     4.7736      .2285    20.8951      .0000      4.3229      5.2242
UGC         -1.6316      .1818     -8.9724      .0000     -1.9904     -1.2729
TikTokUsage  .3565      .2270      1.5704      .1180      -.0913       .8043

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Share intention

Model Summary
          R        R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .6288       .3954     1.5681     40.5533     3.0000   186.0000      .0000


Model
              coeff         se          t          p        LLCI        ULCI
constant     -.1702      .4180      -.4072      .6843      -.9948       .6544
UGC          -.0390      .2179      -.1791      .8580      -.4689       .3909
Authenticity  .6345      .0733      8.6606      .0000       .4900       .7791
TikTokUsage   .4860      .2289      2.1230      .0351       .0344       .9376

************************** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL ***************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
```

50

Share intention

Model Summary
          R   R-sq   MSE   F   df1   df2   p
      .3894   .1516   2.1887   16.7126   2.0000   187.0000   .0000

Model
             coeff   se   t   p   LLCI   ULCI
constant   2.8588   .2704   10.5718   .0000   2.3254   3.3923
UGC   -1.0744   .2153   -4.9912   .0000   -1.4990   -.6497
TikTokUsage .7122   .2687   2.6506   .0087   .1821   1.2423

************** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y **************

Total effect of X on Y
     Effect   se   t   p   LLCI   ULCI
    -1.0744   .2153   -4.9912   .0000   -1.4990   -.6497

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect   se   t   p   LLCI   ULCI
     -.0390   .2179   -.1791   .8580   -.4689   .3909

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
              Effect   BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
Authenticity -1.0353   .1611   -1.3779   -.7455

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ***********************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000

WARNING: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output
when some variables in the data file have the same first eight characters. Shorter
variable names are recommended. By using this output, you are accepting all risk
and consequences of interpreting or reporting results that may be incorrect.

------ END MATRIX -----

Purchase Intention

Run MATRIX procedure:

*************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 beta ***************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.   www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

```
***************************************************************************
Model  : 4
    Y  : Purchase Intention
    X  : UGC
    M  : Authenticity

Covariates:
 TikTokUsage

Sample
Size:  190

***************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Authenticity

Model Summary
          R        R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .5583       .3117     1.5621    42.3451     2.0000   187.0000      .0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     4.7736      .2285    20.8951      .0000     4.3229     5.2242
UGC         -1.6316      .1818     -8.9724      .0000    -1.9904    -1.2729
TikTokUsage  .3565      .2270     1.5704      .1180     -.0913      .8043

***************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Purchase Intention

Model Summary
          R        R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .7042       .4959     1.2505    60.9877     3.0000   186.0000      .0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     -.3629      .3733     -.9724      .3321    -1.0993      .3734
UGC           .1223      .1946      .6284      .5305     -.2616      .5062
Authenticity  .6994      .0654    10.6902      .0000      .5704      .8285
TikTokUsage   .7845      .2044     3.8375      .0002      .3812     1.1878

************************** TOTAL EFFECT MODEL ***************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Purchase Intention

Model Summary
          R        R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      .4315       .1862     2.0080    21.3862     2.0000   187.0000      .0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     2.9759      .2590    11.4891      .0000     2.4649     3.4868
```

```
UGC          -1.0189       .2062     -4.9421       .0000    -1.4257      -.6122
TikTokUsage 1.0338        .2574      4.0171       .0001     .5261      1.5416


*************** TOTAL, DIRECT, AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y **************


Total effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t           p          LLCI        ULCI
    -1.0189       .2062     -4.9421       .0000    -1.4257      -.6122


Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect         se          t           p          LLCI        ULCI
      .1223       .1946       .6284       .5305    -.2616       .5062


Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
             Effect      BootSE    BootLLCI   BootULCI
Authenticity -1.1412       .1675    -1.4841      -.8298

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ***********************


Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000


Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000


WARNING: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output
when some variables in the data file have the same first eight characters. Shorter
variable names are recommended. By using this output, you are accepting all risk
and consequences of interpreting or reporting results that may be incorrect.


------ END MATRIX -----
```

Appendix D

Study 2 Scenario

Unfamiliar

Imagine you are scrolling through your TikTok feed when you come across a video of a girl named Emma showing off a stylish watch she purchased from a new, emerging brand. Emma doesn't feel familiar to you as you don't usually see her content on your TikTok feed or anywhere else. She is excitedly talking about how much she loves her new watch and how it has quickly become her favorite piece of jewelry. She explains that the watch is made of high-quality materials, fits her comfortably, and has a unique design that sets it apart from other watches she owns. She also praises the brand for its attention to detail and excellent customer service. You can see that the watch is well-made and has a modern, unique look.

Emma suggests that viewers check out the brand's website to see their fashionable offerings and high-quality products. She also encourages them to share the brand with their friends and family.

There is (no) indication of a "paid partnership" with the brand in her video, and there are (no) #ad hashtags or other markers of brand sponsorship present.

Familiar

Imagine you are scrolling through your TikTok feed when you come across a video of a girl named Emma showing off a stylish watch she purchased from a new, emerging brand. Emma feels familiar to you as you usually see her content on your TikTok feed and on other platforms. She is excitedly talking about how much she loves her new watch and how it has quickly become her favorite piece of jewelry. She explains that the watch is made of high-quality materials, fits her comfortably, and has a unique design that sets it apart from other watches she owns. She also praises the brand for its attention to detail and excellent customer service. You can see that the watch is well-made and has a modern, unique look.

Emma suggests that viewers check out the brand's website to see their fashionable offerings and high-quality products. She also encourages them to share the brand with their friends and family.

There is (no) indication of a "paid partnership" with the brand in her video, and there are (no) #ad hashtags or other markers of brand sponsorship present.

Appendix E

Moderated Mediation Analysis (Study 2)

Search Intention

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

*************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 beta ***************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
      Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 8
    Y  : Search Intention
    X  : UGC
    M  : Authenticity
    W  : Familiarity

Covariates:
 TikTokUsage

Sample
Size:  247

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Authenticity

Model Summary
            R          R-sq        MSE          F         df1         df2           p
        .3340         .1116      2.0431     7.5977      4.0000    242.0000        .0000

Model
               coeff        se           t           p         LLCI         ULCI
constant      4.1714     .2485     16.7869       .0000       3.6819       4.6609
UGC          -1.0339     .2632     -3.9287       .0001      -1.5523       -.5155
Familiarity  -.0187     .2555      -.0733       .9416       -.5221        .4846
Int_1         .1432     .3643       .3932       .6946       -.5744        .8608
TikTokUsage   .3384     .2208      1.5323       .1268       -.0966        .7733

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :         UGC      x        Familiarity

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
      R2-chng          F         df1          df2           p
X*W      .0006        .1546      1.0000     242.0000        .6946
----------
    Focal predict: UGC       (X)
```

```
        Mod var: Familiarity (W)


Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.


DATA LIST FREE/
   UGC        Familiarity   Authenticity   .
BEGIN DATA.
      .0000       .0000     4.4358
    1.0000       .0000     3.4019
      .0000     1.0000     4.4171
    1.0000     1.0000     3.5264
END DATA.
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=
 UGC      WITH     authenticity BY      Familiarity .

***************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Search intention


Model Summary
          R         R-sq        MSE           F        df1        df2          p
      .6898       .4759     1.5450     43.7643     5.0000   241.0000       .0000


Model
             coeff         se          t          p        LLCI        ULCI
constant     -.1219      .3179      -.3835      .7017      -.7482       .5043
UGC           .2677      .2360     1.1341      .2579      -.1973       .7326
Authenticity .7671      .0559    13.7226      .0000       .6570       .8772
Familiarity  .6265      .2222     2.8193      .0052       .1888     1.0642
Int_1        -.4045      .3169    -1.2763      .2031     -1.0287       .2198
TikTokUsage  -.0232      .1930      -.1202      .9044      -.4033       .3569


Product terms key:
 Int_1   :        UGC       x        Familiarity


Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
      R2-chng          F         df1        df2          p
X*W      .0035     1.6289     1.0000   241.0000       .2031
----------
    Focal predict: UGC       (X)
        Mod var: Familiarity (W)


Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.


DATA LIST FREE/
   UGC        Familiarity   Search Intention   .
BEGIN DATA.
      .0000       .0000     2.8942
    1.0000       .0000     3.1619
      .0000     1.0000     3.5207
    1.0000     1.0000     3.3839
```

```
END DATA.
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=
 UGC      WITH    Search Intention BY       Familiarity .


****************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y ****************

Conditional direct effects of X on Y
   Familiarity   Effect        se         t          p        LLCI        ULCI
      .0000      .2677      .2360     1.1341      .2579     -.1973       .7326
     1.0000     -.1368      .2247     -.6088      .5432     -.5793       .3058


Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:
 UGC         ->    Authenticity    ->    Search Intention

   Familiarity   Effect     BootSE    BootLLCI   BootULCI
      .0000     -.7931      .2133    -1.2246     -.3749
     1.0000     -.6832      .1913    -1.0639     -.2975


Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):
             Index     BootSE    BootLLCI   BootULCI
Familiarity   .1099      .2836     -.4597       .6571

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ***********************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000

WARNING: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output
when some variables in the data file have the same first eight characters. Shorter
variable names are recommended. By using this output, you are accepting all risk
and consequences of interpreting or reporting results that may be incorrect.

------ END MATRIX -----
```

Share Intention

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

*************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 beta ***************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.        www.afhayes.com
     Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3


*************************************************************************
Model  : 8
    Y  : Share intention
```

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```
   X  : UGC
   M  : Authenticity
   W  : Familiarity

Covariates:
 TikTokUsage

Sample
Size:  247

****************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Authenticity

Model Summary
          R        R-sq        MSE          F         df1         df2           p
      .3340       .1116     2.0431     7.5977     4.0000   242.0000       .0000

Model
            coeff         se          t          p         LLCI        ULCI
constant    4.1714      .2485    16.7869      .0000      3.6819      4.6609
UGC        -1.0339      .2632    -3.9287      .0001     -1.5523      -.5155
Familiarity -.0187      .2555     -.0733      .9416      -.5221       .4846
Int_1        .1432      .3643      .3932      .6946      -.5744       .8608
TikTokUsage  .3384      .2208     1.5323      .1268      -.0966       .7733


Product terms key:
 Int_1   :        UGC         x         Familiarity


Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng           F         df1         df2           p
X*W       .0006       .1546     1.0000   242.0000       .6946
----------
    Focal predict: UGC        (X)
         Mod var: Familiarity (W)


Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

DATA LIST FREE/
   UGC         Familiarity  Authenticity    .
BEGIN DATA.
     .0000       .0000      4.4358
    1.0000       .0000      3.4019
     .0000      1.0000      4.4171
    1.0000      1.0000      3.5264
END DATA.
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=
 UGC       WITH     Authenticity BY      Familiarity .

****************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Share intention
```

```
Model Summary
          R         R-sq        MSE          F         df1         df2           p
      .5752       .3308      1.5959     23.8298      5.0000    241.0000        .0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p        LLCI        ULCI
constant      -.2149       .3231      -.6652      .5065      -.8514       .4215
UGC            .1308       .2399       .5452      .5861      -.3418       .6034
Authenticity  .5691       .0568     10.0174      .0000       .4572       .6811
Familiarity   .3098       .2259      1.3717      .1714      -.1351       .7547
Int_1         -.1610       .3221      -.5000      .6175      -.7955       .4734
TikTokUsage   .2759       .1961      1.4066      .1608      -.1105       .6622

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        UGC        x         Familiarity

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng          F         df1         df2           p
X*W      .0007       .2500      1.0000    241.0000        .6175
----------
    Focal predict: UGC        (X)
          Mod var: Familiarity (W)

Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

DATA LIST FREE/
   UGC         Familiar    Share intention    .
BEGIN DATA.
      .0000       .0000      2.2518
     1.0000       .0000      2.3826
      .0000      1.0000      2.5616
     1.0000      1.0000      2.5314
END DATA.
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=
 UGC       WITH     Share intention BY  Familiarity.


****************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****************

Conditional direct effects of X on Y
   Familiar    Effect         se          t          p        LLCI        ULCI
     .0000       .1308      .2399       .5452      .5861      -.3418       .6034
    1.0000      -.0302      .2283      -.1324      .8947      -.4800       .4195

Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:
 UGC         ->     Authenticity    ->    Share intention

   Familiarity  Effect     BootSE    BootLLCI    BootULCI
      .0000      -.5884      .1560      -.9087      -.2864
```

60

```
    1.0000      -.5069       .1460       -.8031       -.2336
```

Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):
```
              Index     BootSE    BootLLCI   BootULCI
Familiarity   .0815      .2081      -.3340      .4863
```

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
    95.0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
    5000

WARNING: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output
when some variables in the data file have the same first eight characters. Shorter
variable names are recommended. By using this output, you are accepting all risk
and consequences of interpreting or reporting results that may be incorrect.

------ END MATRIX -----

Purchase Intention

Run MATRIX procedure:

*************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 beta ***************

            Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.   www.afhayes.com
      Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

****
Model : 8
    Y : purchase intention
    X : UGC
    M : Authenticity
    W : Familiarity

Covariates:
 TikTokUsage

Sample
Size: 247

****
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Authenticity

Model Summary
          R   R-sq   MSE   F   df1   df2   p
      .3340   .1116   2.0431   7.5977   4.0000   242.0000   .0000

Model
            coeff   se   t   p   LLCI   ULCI
```

```
constant     4.1714      .2485    16.7869      .0000     3.6819     4.6609
UGC         -1.0339      .2632    -3.9287      .0001    -1.5523     -.5155
Familiarity  -.0187      .2555     -.0733      .9416     -.5221      .4846
Int_1         .1432      .3643      .3932      .6946     -.5744      .8608
TikTokUsage   .3384      .2208     1.5323      .1268     -.0966      .7733


Product terms key:
 Int_1   :        UGC       x        Familiarity


Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng          F        df1        df2           p
X*W     .0006       .1546     1.0000   242.0000        .6946
----------
    Focal predict: UGC       (X)
         Mod var: Familiarity (W)


Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.


DATA LIST FREE/
   UGC        Familiarity Authenticity   .
BEGIN DATA.
      .0000       .0000      4.4358
     1.0000       .0000      3.4019
      .0000      1.0000      4.4171
     1.0000      1.0000      3.5264
END DATA.
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=
 UGC       WITH     Authenticity BY       Familiarity .


*************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 Purchase intention


Model Summary
         R        R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2           p
     .6915       .4781     1.0580    44.1556     5.0000   241.0000        .0000


Model
            coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant    -.1362      .2631      -.5176      .6052     -.6544      .3820
UGC          .2056      .1953     1.0525      .2936     -.1792      .5903
Authenticity .6415      .0463    13.8671      .0000      .5503      .7326
Familiarity  .3254      .1839     1.7694      .0781     -.0369      .6876
Int_1       -.2218      .2622     -.8458      .3985     -.7384      .2948
TikTokUsage  .2184      .1597     1.3681      .1726     -.0961      .5330


Product terms key:
 Int_1   :        UGC       x        Familiarity


Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng          F        df1        df2           p
X*W     .0015       .7154     1.0000   241.0000        .3985
```

```
----------
    Focal predict: UGC        (X)
          Mod var: Familiarity (W)


Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

DATA LIST FREE/
   UGC        Familiarity   purchase intention   .
BEGIN DATA.
      .0000       .0000      2.5718
     1.0000       .0000      2.7774
      .0000      1.0000      2.8972
     1.0000      1.0000      2.8810
END DATA.
GRAPH/SCATTERPLOT=
 UGC       WITH      purchase intention BY      Familiarity .


****************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y ****************


Conditional direct effects of X on Y
   Familiar    Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      .0000     .2056      .1953     1.0525      .2936     -.1792      .5903
     1.0000    -.0162      .1859     -.0873      .9305     -.3824      .3500


Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:


INDIRECT EFFECT:
 UGC          ->    Authenticity    ->     purchase intention


   Familiarity   Effect      BootSE    BootLLCI    BootULCI
       .0000    -.6632      .1765    -1.0187      -.3256
      1.0000    -.5713      .1590     -.8977      -.2633


Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):
             Index     BootSE    BootLLCI    BootULCI
Familiarity  .0919      .2343     -.3672       .5526

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ***********************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95.0000


Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000


WARNING: Variables names longer than eight characters can produce incorrect output
when some variables in the data file have the same first eight characters. Shorter
variable names are recommended. By using this output, you are accepting all risk
and consequences of interpreting or reporting results that may be incorrect.


------ END MATRIX ----
```