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## Understanding How User Generated Content and Viral Marketing Drive Tumblers Purchase Decisions Among Gen Z: The Mediating Role of Sustainable Marketing

Arsyva Levina<sup>1</sup>, Donni Junipriansa<sup>2</sup>, Alma Syifa Maulidina<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia, [levinaarsyva@gmail.com](mailto:levinaarsyva@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia, [donnijunipriansa@telkomuniversity.ac.id](mailto:donnijunipriansa@telkomuniversity.ac.id)

<sup>3</sup>Telkom University, Bandung, Indonesia, [almasyifamaulidina@telkomuniversity.ac.id](mailto:almasyifamaulidina@telkomuniversity.ac.id)

Corresponding Author: [donnijunipriansa@telkomuniversity.ac.id](mailto:donnijunipriansa@telkomuniversity.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** The aim of this study is to analyze the influence of user-generated content and viral marketing on Gen Z's purchasing decisions regarding Stanley tumblers in Indonesia, by using sustainable marketing as mediating variable. This study is done based on the increasing role of social media in shaping consumption behavior and the importance of sustainability values in purchasing decisions. Quantitative approach is applied by utilizing a cross-sectional design and purposive sampling technique involving 100 respondents who had been exposed to Stanley tumbler content on TikTok. The data collected through questionnaire and analyzed by using statistical analysis techniques. The results indicate that user-generated content and viral marketing have a positive and significance influence on purchasing decisions, both directly and through sustainable marketing. Furthermore, sustainable marketing strengthen the relationship between digital marketing stimuli and purchasing decisions. This study conclude that the integration of digital content and sustainability values is a key factor in influencing Gen Z consumers' purchasing decisions.

**Keyword:** User Generated Content, Viral Marketing, Sustainable Marketing, Purchase Decisions.

### INTRODUCTION

The global creator economy's growth has surpassed 200 billion USD is driven by the rapid developments of social media platforms (Sachs, 2023). This phenomenon also happened in Indonesia, with over 185 million social media users and the country as Tiktok's second-largest market, projected to reach 107.69 million users in 2025 (Statista, 2025). In this digital ecosystem, viral content has proven able to shape consumer behavior, as demonstrated by the Stanley tumbler phenomenon, which gained 98.9 million views and 9.2 million interactions, and pushed the growth of global revenue from 94 million USD in 2020 to 750 million USD in 2023. This phenomenon shows that digital engagement through social proof is not only boosts brand awareness but also influences consumer purchase intention. On the other hand, Generation Z, as a group of digital natives, exhibits purchasing behavior influenced by the

exposure of digital content, with a willingness to pay Rp44,645, as well as a tendency to place greater trust in tangible evidence of quality than in traditional brand claims when making purchasing decisions. This indicates that the dynamics of digital interactions play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in the purchasing decision-making process. This situation indicates that exposure to digital content not only serves as a source of information but also influences consumers' psychological processes in shaping their behavior. To understand this mechanism more comprehensively, this phenomenon can be explained through the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) approach, which states that individual behavior is the result of external stimuli that influence internal conditions before producing a specific response (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In this context, exposure to digital content such as user-generated content and viral marketing acts as a stimulus that influences consumer perception as an organism, which subsequently shapes the response in the form of a purchasing decision. Accordingly, this study positions user-generated content and viral marketing as external stimuli, sustainable marketing as the organism reflecting consumers' internal perceptions toward sustainability values, and purchase decision as the behavioral response.

Utama et al., (2024) argue that the purchase decision is the final step in the process that consumers go through before making a transaction. At this stage, consumers have already selected the desired product or service, proceeding to make the purchase and use the product or service. Meanwhile, Gunawan et al., (2019) explain that the purchasing decision is a process that drives consumers by identifying the needs, considering various options, and selecting specific products or brands. This process is viewed as a series of decisions occurring prior to the purchase. In the context of digital marketing, purchase decisions are influenced not only by consumers' characteristics but also by several external factors, such as user-generated content, viral marketing, and sustainability values communicated through sustainable marketing, which, in this study, are positioned as variables influencing consumer purchasing behavior. Therefore, an understanding of sustainable marketing is essential to assess the extent to which sustainability values can influence consumer purchasing decisions amidst the dominant influence of digital content.

Fullstop (2023) explains that in the context of growing awareness of environmental issues, the use of reusable products such as tumblers is increasingly viewed as part of a sustainable lifestyle. However, the phenomenon surrounding Stanley tumblers reveals a paradox: the popularity driven by viral content and user-generated content on platforms like TikTok has actually fueled excessive consumption. It indicates a gap between the communicated sustainability values and consumer purchasing behavior, making it crucial to examine the role of sustainable marketing in influencing purchasing decisions. Sustainable marketing is increasingly vital in today's era as consumer awareness of environmental issues continues to rise (Sheth & Parvatiyar, 2020). According to Trang et al., (2023), sustainable marketing involves the creation and promotion of products or services that meet consumer needs while reducing environmental impact, enhancing social well-being, and supporting long-term sustainability. Meanwhile, Kumar et al., (2012) argue that sustainable marketing is more explicitly linked to the sustainable development agenda, defined as the process of building and maintaining long-term harmonious relationships with customers, the social environment, and the natural environment. This means that sustainable marketing does not merely focus on selling products but is also aligned with the goals of sustainable development. The importance of sustainable marketing in shaping consumer perceptions is closely tied to how consumers interpret this information as specific signals. From the perspective of signaling theory, information communicated by companies, including that related to sustainability, serves as a signal that helps consumers evaluate a product's quality and credibility (Spence, 1973). Thus, sustainable marketing acts as a communication tool and psychological mechanism that shapes consumers' perceptions and trust in a product. Based on research by Maulidah et al., (2024),

Dhingra & Rani (2024), and Sudirjo et al., (2024) it is concluded that sustainable marketing influences purchasing decisions. It means that the better the implementation of sustainable marketing, the higher the tendency for consumers to make purchasing decisions. This is in contrast to the research conducted by Mulyaningsih & Tobing (2023), which concluded that sustainable marketing does not influence purchasing decisions. This means that the quality of sustainable marketing implementation, whether good or bad does not determine the extent of consumers' tendency to make purchasing decisions.

In addition to the sustainability values communicated through sustainable marketing, consumer purchasing decisions in the digital age are also heavily influenced by information from other users, particularly through *user-generated content* (UGC). According to Encinas, as reported in USA Today (2023), the phenomenon of *user-generated content* (UGC) is increasingly demonstrating its crucial role in shaping consumer behavior in the digital age. A viral video uploaded by a user on TikTok showing a Stanley tumbler remaining intact after a car fire is one of the real example. The content, which initially stemmed from the user's personal experience, quickly spread widely and gain public attention without any direct intervention from the company. This event was further amplified by the company's response, which offered compensation to the user, thereby increasing brand exposure and trust. This phenomenon demonstrates that authentic and emotional UGC not only generates virality but also plays a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and driving purchasing decisions.

*User-Generated Content* (UGC) is a social media marketing strategy that involves content created by users (Mega Prasanti & Rufaidah, 2024). Mathur et al., (2022) explain that UGC is content created, published, and managed by social media users based on their personal experiences. By leveraging unique content created by users, brands can spread more authentic and engaging stories, thereby increasing the likelihood of consumer interaction and purchases (Hasanah & Miftahul Huda, 2023). In the context of purchase decisions, *user-generated content* (UGC) plays a crucial role in influencing consumers' perceptions and trust in a product. Information derived from other users' experiences tends to be more trusted than corporate marketing messages, thereby enhancing consumers' confidence in making purchase decisions (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). The phenomenon of high consumer trust in user-generated content indicates that the source of information plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions. Theoretically, the influence of user-generated content can be understood through the concepts of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and social proof theory, in which individuals tend to trust information from other users as a reference in decision-making (Cheung & Thadani, 2012); (Cialdini, 1984). Therefore, UGC is considered a credible source of information compared to marketing messages delivered directly by companies. Several studies have examined the influence of UGC on purchase decisions. The findings of Alghaniy & Mukaram (2025), Putri & Komaryatin (2025), Ramadhan et al., (2025), Gupta (2023), Nur Aulia et al., (2025) indicate that UGC has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. This means that the higher the intensity and quality of user-generated content received by consumers, the higher the tendency for consumers to make purchasing decisions. This is in contrast to the research conducted by Wafiyah & Wusko (2023), which found that UGC does not have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. This implies that the amount of user-generated content, whether high or low, does not directly influence consumers' tendency to make purchasing decisions.

Those findings indicate that the role of user-generated content (UGC) is not limited to its direct influence on purchasing decisions but also has the potential to shape consumers' perceptions of a product's sustainability value as communicated through sustainable marketing. Several studies indicate that UGC has a positive influence on the formation of perceptions and sustainable consumption behavior. UGC disseminated through social media can enhance environmental awareness and shape consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly

products (Tran & Thu Hang, 2025). Additionally, UGC promotes sustainable consumption practices by conveying authentic, user-experience-based information (Ghurab & Ng, 2025). In the context of digital marketing, UGC has been proven to influence purchase interest in sustainable products, thereby reinforcing its role in shaping perceptions of sustainable marketing (El-Shihy & Awaad, 2025). Furthermore, the role of user-generated content (UGC) does not only stop at shaping perceptions of sustainable marketing but also potentially influence purchasing decisions through these variables. UGC that enhances consumer awareness and understanding of environmental issues has been shown to foster sustainable consumption attitudes and behaviors. Research by Tran & Thu Hang (2025) indicates that UGC plays a role in increasing environmental awareness and driving shifts in consumers behavior toward more sustainable consumption. Furthermore, Ghurab & Ng, (2025) explain that UGC plays a role in promoting sustainable consumption practices through the dissemination of authentic, user-experience-based information, thereby fostering positive attitudes toward eco-friendly products. Once perceptions of sustainability value are established, consumers tend to have stronger confidence in making purchasing decisions regarding products considered eco-friendly. Thus, sustainable marketing can serve as a mediating variable bridging the influence of UGC on purchasing decisions. This is further supported by the research of El-Shihy & Awaad (2025), which found that social media content, including UGC, influences interest in purchasing sustainable products, thereby reinforcing the role of sustainable marketing in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

In addition to user-generated content, the phenomenon of digital marketing is also inseparable from the role of viral marketing, which can rapidly spread information on a large scale in a short period of time. Viral marketing has become an effective strategy for capturing consumers attention through engaging, emotional, and shareable content across various social media platforms. An example of viral marketing can be seen in the case of the Stanley tumbler, which went viral after a video circulated showing that the product survived a car fire. The content quickly spread widely on social media and garnered massive public attention. This virality was further amplified by the company's response, which offered the user compensation in the form of a new car, a move that strategically enhanced brand image and built consumer trust (Fullstop, 2023; Nadeem et al., 2021). The impact of this virality was not limited to increased brand exposure but also appeared to influence rising market interest and demand. According to Shah (2024), within weeks of the video going viral, Stanley experienced a significant surge in demand. This was evidenced by increased online searches for Stanley products, such as tumblers and thermoses, as well as heightened consumer interest in these items. Additionally, several retailers reportedly faced stock shortages, while Stanley's website traffic reportedly increased by over 300%. Although exact sales data was not published, marketing analysts estimate that the company's revenue increased by approximately 30% during the viral period. This illustrates how a product that was once a practical choice for outdoor enthusiasts became a cultural phenomenon in almost overnight. This situation demonstrates that the viral spread of information on social media can drive widespread consumer attention and boost purchasing decisions.

This phenomenon indicates that viral marketing has the potential to influence consumer purchasing decisions; therefore, it is important to understand its concept and role in the context of this study. According to Bampo et al., (2008), viral marketing is a form of interpersonal communication that encourages individuals to spread promotional messages to others through their social networks. Meanwhile, K. Ramadhan & Wiraguna (2024) explain that viral marketing is a form of word-of-mouth communication that develops online, where consumers are encouraged to share information or experiences related to a product with others. Additionally, Chaffey & Chadwick (2022) state that viral marketing is a marketing method that

leverages the internet's network effects to reach consumers widely and quickly, where marketing messages can spread like a virus among users.

In the context of consumer behavior, viral marketing not only plays a role in increasing dissemination of information but also potentially influence the consumer purchasing decisions. Viral marketing utilizes various digital platforms to spread the information or product promotions to the consumers. When the information spreads widely and goes viral, it can encourage consumers to buy (Saifudin et al., 2025). Beberapa peneliti seperti Ahmed (2018), Sihombing & Husein (2025), Magisa et al., (2024), Saifudin et al., (2025), Agesti et al., (2021), Pane et al., (2024), Azzahra & Prakoso (2025), Diamanda & Rachmad (2024), Irawan & Misbach (2020), Indrastati & Roosdhani (2026), Syamsya & Purwanto (2023), Ningsih & Faraby (2025) conclude that viral marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. However, this is different from the research conducted by Sari & Darma (2024), Doloksaribu & Purba (2024), Katiandagho & Hidayatullah (2023), which explains that viral marketing does not have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. This means that the level of virality of a piece of content, whether high or low, does not directly determine consumers' purchasing decisions.

In addition to influencing purchasing decisions, viral marketing also has the potential to shape consumer perceptions of the sustainability values communicated through sustainable marketing. The viral spread of content on social media allows messages related to the environment and sustainability to reach a wider audience in a short period of time. This phenomenon is evident in the rising trend of using reusable products like tumblers, which are promoted through various digital content, thereby shaping the perception that they are part of an eco-friendly lifestyle. The viral spread of content on social media enables environmental and sustainability-related messages to reach a broader audience in a short period of time. This phenomenon is evident in the rising trend of using reusable products such as tumblers, which are promoted through various digital content, thereby shaping the perception that they are part of an eco-friendly lifestyle (Fullstop Indonesia, 2023). This indicates that the spread of viral content does not always consistently reflect sustainability values but can shape consumer perceptions influenced by digital trends (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Furthermore, social media marketing also plays a role in driving preferences for eco-friendly products and sustainable consumption behaviors (K. Kumar et al., 2024). Thus, the higher the level of viral content dissemination containing sustainability values, the stronger consumers' perceptions of sustainable marketing tend to be. Empirically, research directly examining the influence of viral marketing on sustainable marketing remains limited. However, several studies indicate that digital marketing activities and the dissemination of information via social media play a role in raising awareness and shaping consumer perceptions regarding sustainability issues (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

In addition to having a direct influence on purchasing decisions, viral marketing is also believed to influence purchasing decisions indirectly through sustainable marketing as a mediating variable. In this context, the viral spread of information not only increases product exposure but also shapes consumers' perceptions of sustainability, which ultimately influences purchasing decisions. Consumers' perceptions of sustainable marketing can enhance a brand's positive image and build trust in the brand. When consumers perceive a product as environmentally friendly and supportive of sustainability, the likelihood of making a purchase decision increases. This indicates that sustainable marketing plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behavior (Joshi & Rahman, 2015); (Kotler & Keller, 2016); (Chen & Chang, 2012). Furthermore, the dissemination of information through viral marketing on social media enables sustainability messages to reach a broader and faster-growing audience, thereby reinforcing consumer perceptions of sustainable marketing practices (Dwivedi et al., 2021). In this context, viral content containing sustainability values not only increases product exposure but also

shapes consumer awareness and understanding of environmental issues. Thus, viral marketing capable of widely disseminating sustainability messages can strengthen consumer perceptions of sustainable marketing, which ultimately drives purchasing decisions. Therefore, sustainable marketing is hypothesized to mediate the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions.

This study aims to explore and understand the extent to which User-Generated Content (UGC) and viral marketing influence purchasing decisions, with sustainable marketing serving as a mediating variable among Generation Z users of Stanley tumblers. Additionally, this study aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the factors influencing consumers' purchasing decision-making processes, particularly those related to the development of digital marketing and sustainability issues. Although previous studies have examined the influence of user-generated content, viral marketing, and sustainable marketing on purchase decisions, the findings remain inconsistent. Moreover, the psychological mechanism underlying the relationship between digital stimuli and consumer responses has not been sufficiently explained. Existing studies tend to position sustainable marketing merely as a marketing communication strategy rather than as an internal psychological mechanism that shapes consumers' perceptions and trust toward sustainability values. In particular, limited studies have examined the mediating role of sustainable marketing in explaining how digital stimuli such as user-generated content and viral marketing influence consumers' purchase decisions.

Therefore, this study attempts to reconceptualize sustainable marketing not merely as a marketing communication strategy, but as a psychological mechanism that mediates the influence of digital stimuli on consumers' purchasing decisions.

## **METHOD**

This study aims to analyze the influence of user-generated content (UGC) and viral marketing on purchasing decisions, with sustainable marketing serving as a mediating variable. This study employs a quantitative method. According to Sugiyono (2019), the quantitative method is a research approach grounded in the philosophy of positivism and is used to study a specific population or sample, involving data collection via research instruments and quantitative or statistical data analysis to test formulated hypotheses.

This study adopts a cross-sectional design with a one-shot data collection approach, meaning data is collected at a single point in time to capture respondents' perceptions and behaviors during a specific period (Savitz & Wellenius, 2022). The population in this study consists of Generation Z in Indonesia who have been exposed to content regarding Stanley tumblers on TikTok via the @Danimarielettering account. Since the population size is unknown, the sample size was determined using Lemeshow's formula, which calculates the minimum sample size by considering the confidence level and margin of error (Lemeshow et al., 1990). Based on calculations with a 95% confidence level and a 10% margin of error, a minimum sample size of 96 respondents was obtained, which was then rounded up to 100 respondents.

Purposive sampling was applied in this study, which involves selecting respondents based on specific criteria, specifically Generation Z individuals in Indonesia who have been exposed to Stanley tumbler content on TikTok via the @Danimarielettering account. Although this technique is a form of non-probability sampling, respondents were selected specifically according to the characteristics of the study population, making it considered relevant for representing the target group in line with the study's objectives. Thus, the sample used is assessed to have a high level of fit in describing the phenomenon under study, particularly in the context of Generation Z consumer behavior in the digital environment.

The selection of the TikTok platform as the research source was based on its high level of interaction and the speed of information dissemination, particularly among Generation Z. However, this study has limitations because data collection focused on users exposed to content

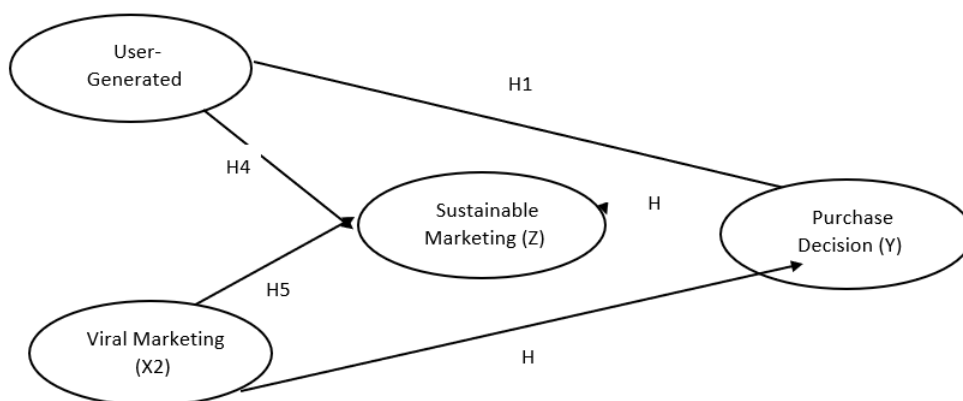
from a single social media platform, potentially leading to single-platform bias. Nevertheless, this platform was chosen because it is one of the most widely used by Generation Z for accessing and interacting with digital content. Therefore, this study positions TikTok as a specific context relevant to the phenomena of user-generated content and viral marketing. Consequently, the study’s findings possess strong contextual relevance, although generalization to other platforms should be approached with caution.

To mitigate the potential for common method bias (CMB), this study conducted tests employing the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) approach via SmartPLS. This test aims to evaluate whether there is multicollinearity among constructs, indicating the presence of common method bias. According to Kock (2015), a VIF value below 3.3 indicates that the model is free from significant common method bias. Based on the test results in Table 1, the analysis shows that all VIF values in this study range from 1.695 to 2.728, meaning all are below the 3.3 threshold. Thus, it can be concluded that common method bias is not a significant issue in this study.

*Table 1 VIF Values*

Indicator	VIF
ADV	1.813
AEV	1.948
ALT	1.902
CIE	2.149
DA	2.142
ENT	1.912
ENV	1.853
IS	2.080
ISH	1.925
MED	1.801
MP	2.609
MSG	1.874
NR	1.695
PMA	2.728
PPB	1.949
PUD	1.731
QCDC	2.148
SC	2.377
SEO	2.015
SEPRO	1.971
USM	2.284

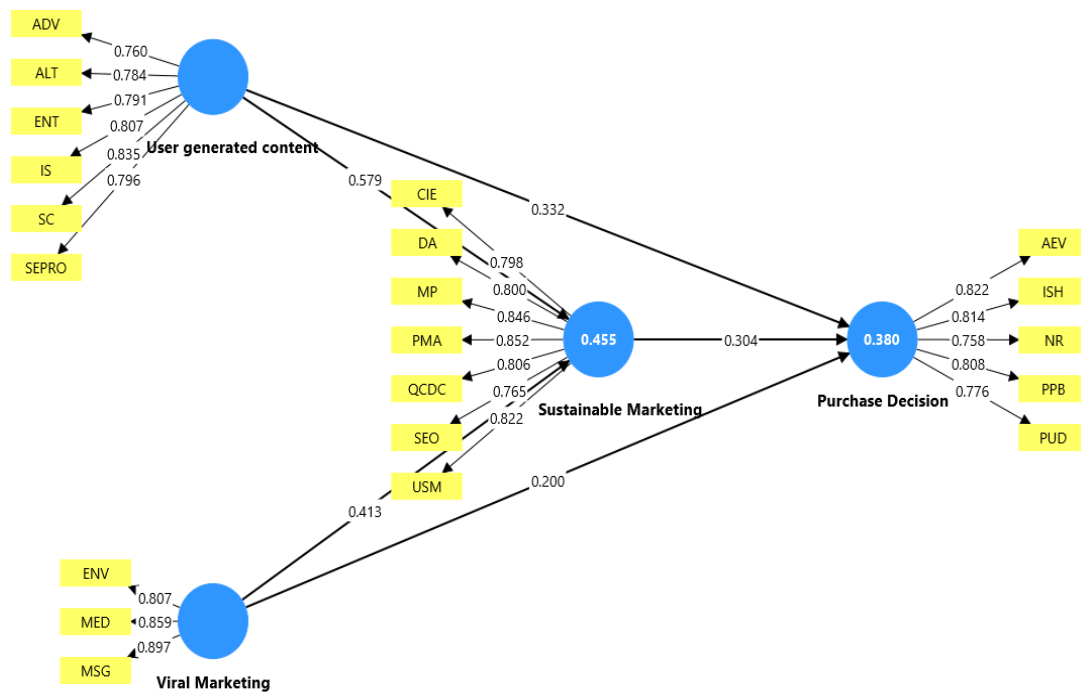
Source: Smart-PLS 4 (2025)



*Figure 1 Conceptual Framework*

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The outer model test includes several procedures to assess validity and reliability (Hair et al., 2010).



**Figure 2** Outer Model Diagram  
Source: Smart-PLS 4 (2025)

The evaluation of the measurement model demonstrated robust indicator reliability, with all item loadings surpassing the minimum threshold of 0.55 and the majority exceeding the critical 0.70 benchmark. This statistical performance signifies that the indicators possess sufficient commonality and adequately capture the variance of their respective latent constructs (Hair et al., 2022). Consequently, the measurement instrument satisfies the rigorous psychometric standards required for structural equation modeling, confirming both the validity and reliability of the indicators employed (Sarstedt et al., 2022) (Cheah et al., 2023).

**Table 2** Outer Loading

Dimension	Purchase Decision	Sustainable Marketing	UGC	Viral Marketing
ADV			0.760	
AEV	0.822			
ALT			0.784	
CIE		0.798		
DA		0.800		
ENT			0.791	
ENV				0.807
IS			0.807	
ISH	0.814			
MED				0.859
MP		0.846		
MSG				0.897
NR	0.758			
PMA		0.852		
PPB	0.808			
PUD	0.776			
QCDC		0.806		

Dimension	Purchase Decision	Sustainable Marketing	UGC	Viral Marketing
SC			0.835	
SEO		0.765		
SEPRO			0.796	
USM		0.822		

Source: Smart-PLS 4 (2025)

The assessment of internal consistency reliability confirmed the psychometric robustness of the measurement model, with all latent constructs yielding Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients surpassing the critical threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019). These findings validate the instrument’s stability and homogeneity, thereby justifying the reliability of the latent variables for subsequent structural analysis (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

*Table 3 Reliability dan validity*

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	AVE
Purchase Decision	0.855	0.859	0.896	0.633
Sustainable Marketing	0.914	0.915	0.932	0.661
UGC	0.884	0.885	0.912	0.633
Viral Marketing	0.822	0.876	0.890	0.731

Source: Smart-PLS 4 (2025)

The construct reliability assessment evidences exceptional internal consistency across all latent variables. Specifically, Cronbach’s Alpha coefficients ranged from a minimum of 0.822 for viral marketing to a high of 0.914 for sustainable marketing, with purchase decision (0.855) and UGC (0.884) also surpassing the conventional threshold of 0.70. This psychometric robustness is further corroborated by CR metrics, where rho\_a values spanned from 0.859 to 0.915 and rho\_c values ranged from 0.890 to 0.932. These very high composite scores underscore the stability of the research instrument, affirming that the indicators consistently reflect the underlying constructs with greater precision than alpha coefficients alone.

Regarding convergent validity, the AVE values for all four variables viral marketing (0.731), sustainable marketing (0.661), and both purchase decision and UGC (0.633) comfortably exceed the critical 0.50 benchmark. Consequently, these findings establish that the measurement model possesses strong convergent validity and reliability, providing a rigorously validated empirical foundation for analyzing the complex interrelationships between UGC, Viral Marketing, and Purchase Decisions, particularly within the context of Sustainable Marketing’s mediating role.

*Table 4 Latent Variable Correlations*

Variables	Purchase Decision	Sustainable Marketing	User Generated Content	Viral Marketing
Purchase Decision	1.000	0.552	0.473	0.272
Sustainable Marketing	0.552	1.000	0.535	0.351
UGC	0.473	0.535	1.000	-0.107
Viral Marketing	0.272	0.351	-0.107	1.000

Source: Smart-PLS 4 (2025)

**Structural Model (Inner Model)**

The assessment of the structural model focuses on examining the causal dependencies and predictive capabilities of the latent constructs. The model's explanatory power is primarily assessed through the Coefficient of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>), while its out-of-sample predictive

relevance is validated using Stone-Geisser’s Q<sup>2</sup> metric Subsequently, the statistical significance of the hypothesized relationships is rigorously tested via a bootstrapping procedure, wherein path coefficients are confirmed as significant if t-statistics exceed the critical threshold of 1.96 and p-values remain below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2022).

All direct and indirect effects were tested using a bootstrap procedure, and the findings show that every hypothesized relationship is statistically significant. Hypothesis H1 proposes that UGC has a significant positive effect on purchase decision, supported by a t-statistic of 5.111 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). H2 states that UGC significantly affects sustainable marketing, which is validated by a t-statistic of 11.511 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). H3 suggests that viral marketing positively affects purchase decision. The relationship is confirmed with a t-statistic of 2.690 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.001 (<0.05). H4 viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on sustainable marketing, evidenced by a t-statistic of 8.596 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). H5 proposes that sustainable marketing positively influences purchase decision. This is confirmed by the t-statistic of 3.706 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05), indicating a significant positive effect. H6 indicates that UGC influences purchase decision through sustainable marketing. The mediation effect is significant, with a t-statistic of 3.343 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.001 (<0.05), confirming partial mediation. Similarly, H7 suggests that viral marketing affects purchase decision through sustainable marketing, and this indirect relationship is also significant, as shown by a t-statistic of 3.517 (>1.96) and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). Overall, all hypotheses (H1–H7) are supported, indicating that UGC and Viral Marketing both have direct and indirect positive influences on Purchase Decisions, with Sustainable Marketing serving as a significant mediating variable within the proposed research model.

*Table 5 Hypothesis Testing*

Hypothesis Testing	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Result
UGC -> Purchase Decision	0.332	0.334	0.065	5.111	0.000	Supported
UGC -> Sustainable Marketing	0.579	0.581	0.050	11.511	0.000	Supported
Viral Marketing -> Purchase Decision	0.200	0.203	0.075	2.690	0.001	Supported
Viral Marketing -> Sustainable Marketing	0.413	0.414	0.048	8.596	0.000	Supported
Sustainable Marketing -> Purchase Decision	0.304	0.303	0.082	3.706	0.000	Supported
UGC -> Sustainable Marketing -> Purchase Decision	0.176	0.177	0.053	3.343	0.001	Supported
Viral Marketing -> Sustainable Marketing -> Purchase Decision	0.126	0.125	0.036	3.517	0.000	Supported

Source: Smart-PLS 4 (2025)

**The Influence of UGC on Purchasing Decisions**

Given a t-value of 5.111 (>1.96) and a p-value of <0.001, this indicates that UGC plays an important role in shaping purchasing decisions. These findings are consistent with prior studies that highlight the significant role of user-generated content in influencing purchasing behavior.

Conceptually, this relationship can be explained through the lens of electronic word of mouth, where user-generated content serves as a credible, authentic source of information relative to firm-generated communication. Information derived from real user experiences

reduces consumer uncertainty and strengthens confidence in product evaluation. In the context of Generation Z, this influence is more pronounced because they rely on social media and prefer peer-generated information. As a result, content such as reviews, testimonials, and product demonstrations plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and encouraging purchasing decisions.

### **The Influence of UGC on Sustainable Marketing**

Proven a t-value of 11.511 ( $>1.96$ ) and a p-value of  $<0.001$ , indicating that UGC plays a dominant role in shaping consumers' perceptions of sustainability values, indicating that user-generated content has a positive and significant influence on Generation Z's perceptions of sustainable marketing regarding Stanley tumblers in Indonesia.

From a conceptual standpoint, this relationship can be explained by how user-generated content shapes views and spreads sustainability values. Customers are better able to comprehend and internalize the significance of sustainable consumption when they are exposed to content that is based on actual user experiences, such as product durability, reusable usage, and eco-friendly lifestyles. Because Generation Z relies heavily on social media as source of information and is highly conscious of environmental issues, this influence is especially noticeable in their context. As a result, sustainability-related messages embedded in UGC are more easily accepted and contribute to the formation of positive perceptions toward sustainable marketing.

Furthermore, these findings demonstrate that UGC serve as a mechanism that enhances the dissemination of sustainability values through digital platforms in addition to being a source of information. Given that empirical studies examining the direct relationship between UGC and sustainable marketing remain limited, this study contributes by demonstrating that UGC plays a significant role in shaping sustainability perceptions among consumers, particularly among Generation Z.

### **The Influence of Viral Marketing on Purchasing Decisions**

Given a t-value of 2.690 ( $>1.96$ ) and a p-value of 0.001, the hypothesis test results show that viral marketing has a favorable and significant impact on Generation Z's decisions to buy Stanley tumblers in Indonesia. This effect is comparatively less compared to other variables, indicating that although viral marketing influences purchasing decisions, its impact is not as strong as other factors. These findings are in line with prior studies that emphasize how viral marketing influences purchasing decisions.

Conceptually, the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions can be explained by its ability to increase information exposure widely and rapidly through social media networks. Viral content is characterized by being easily shareable, attention-grabbing, and capable of reaching a large audience in a short time, thereby increasing product visibility in consumers' minds. The high intensity of this exposure encourages consumers to become more familiar with the product, which ultimately increases the likelihood of a purchase decision.

Viral marketing is also associated with psychological impacts such as the fear of missing out, which motivates customers to participate in popular trends. In this situation, viral products become more appealing and increase the urgency to purchase. Thus, viral marketing not only increases exposure but also creates social influence that shapes consumer purchasing behavior.

### **The Influence of Viral Marketing on Sustainable Marketing**

With a t-value of 8.596 ( $>1.96$ ) and a p-value of  $<0.001$ , the hypothesis test results show that viral marketing has a positive and significant impact on Generation Z's perceptions of sustainable marketing related to Stanley tumblers in Indonesia. The magnitude of this effect

can be considered strong, indicating that viral marketing plays an important role in shaping consumers' perceptions of sustainability values.

This relationship can be explained by viral marketing's ability to use social media to spread content and influence consumer attitudes. Viral content enables sustainability-related messages, such as reusable product usage and eco-friendly lifestyles, to reach a wide audience, thereby increasing awareness and influencing how consumers interpret sustainability values. As Generation Z is highly engaged with digital platforms, this effect becomes more visible as viral trends help construct shared perceptions of what constitutes responsible consumption behavior.

Furthermore, these findings suggest that viral marketing functions as a tool to enhance exposure and a mechanism that shapes how sustainability is perceived by consumers. Given that empirical studies directly examining this relationship remain limited, this study contributes by demonstrating that viral marketing plays a significant role in forming sustainability perceptions in digital environments.

### **The Influence of Sustainable Marketing on Purchasing Decisions**

The results of the hypothesis test indicate that sustainable marketing has a positive and significant influence on Generation Z's purchasing decisions regarding Stanley tumblers in Indonesia, as evidenced by a t-value of 3.706 ( $>1.96$ ) and a p-value of  $<0.001$ . The magnitude of this effect can be considered moderate, indicating that sustainable marketing plays an important role in influencing purchasing decisions, although its effect is not as strong as other variables. These findings are consistent with prior studies highlighting the role of sustainable marketing in shaping consumer purchasing behavior.

This relationship can be explained through a value-driven consumption perspective, where consumers not only consider functional attributes but also social and environmental values. Sustainable marketing enables consumers to associate their purchasing decisions with contributions to environmental sustainability, thereby increasing their preference for products perceived as responsible and eco-friendly. In the context of Generation Z, this influence becomes more relevant due to their higher awareness of environmental and social issues, making sustainability-based messaging more effective in shaping positive perceptions and encouraging purchasing decisions.

### **The Influence of UGC on Purchasing Decisions through Sustainable Marketing**

A t-value of 3.343 ( $>1.96$ ) and a p-value of 0.001, demonstrating partial mediation, show that user-generated content has a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions through sustainable marketing among Indonesia's Generation Z. The magnitude of this effect can be considered moderate, suggesting that sustainable marketing provides an additional pathway that strengthens the influence of UGC on purchasing decisions.

This finding indicates that sustainable marketing serves as a mediating variable and also as a cognitive framing mechanism through which consumers interpret and assign meaning to user-generated content. UGC, based on authentic user experiences, shapes consumers' understanding of sustainability values, such as eco-friendly usage and responsible consumption. These values are then internalized and transformed into meaningful considerations that influence purchasing decisions.

Sustainable marketing serves as a process of meaning construction that links exposure to UGC with consumer behavior. This explains why the effect of UGC on purchasing decisions is directly strengthened through sustainability-based perceptions. Given that empirical studies examining this mechanism remain limited, this study contributes by demonstrating that UGC extends beyond information delivery to include the construction of sustainability meaning that drives purchasing decisions.

## The Influence of Viral Marketing on Purchasing Decisions through Sustainable Marketing

As demonstrated by a t-value of 3.517 ( $>1.96$ ) and a p-value of  $<0.001$ , which validate partial mediation, the hypothesis test results show that viral marketing has a positive and significant impact on purchase decisions through sustainable marketing among Generation Z in Indonesia. The magnitude of this effect suggests that sustainable marketing provides an additional pathway that enhances the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions.

This finding suggests that sustainable marketing serves as a cognitive framing mechanism that helps consumers understand and provide meaning to viral content, in addition to acting as a mediating variable. The viral marketing spreads quickly, increasing products' exposure and influencing consumers' perceptions of the sustainability values in the product. Consumer perceptions are more likely to be influenced by messages on responsible consumption and eco-friendly lifestyles.

Sustainable marketing serves as a process of meaning construction that links exposure to viral marketing with purchasing decisions. This explains why viral marketing influences consumer behavior through the formation of sustainability-based perceptions. Given that empirical studies examining this mechanism remain limited, this study contributes by demonstrating that viral marketing extends beyond increasing visibility to shaping sustainability, meaning that it drives purchasing decisions.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the influence of user-generated content and viral marketing on Generation Z's purchasing decisions of Stanley tumblers in Indonesia, with sustainable marketing as a mediating variable. The findings indicate that both user-generated content and viral marketing have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, both directly and indirectly through sustainable marketing. These results highlight that purchasing decisions are shaped not only by exposure to digital content but also by consumers' perceptions of sustainability values embedded in the product.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study extends the digital marketing literature by demonstrating the mediating role of sustainable marketing in linking digital stimuli and consumer behavior, particularly in the context of Generation Z, where such relationships remain relatively unexplored. From a managerial standpoint, the findings suggest that companies should integrate engaging digital content with consistent sustainability messaging to strengthen consumer perceptions and enhance purchasing decisions.

However, this study is limited to a specific demographic and context, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, in order to better understand consumer behavior in digital and sustainability-driven markets, further research is recommended to investigate other populations, include more factors, and employ longitudinal methodologies.

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