

## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the influence of user-generated content (UGC) on brand trust among smartphone users of Xiaomi in Semarang City, while also examining the role of brand engagement as an intervening variable bridging the relationship between the two. Although Xiaomi has made efforts to build brand trust through the utilization of UGC, these efforts have yet to yield optimal results. Furthermore, prior studies have been limited in examining whether brand engagement must first be achieved as a mediating mechanism through which UGC influences brand trust, making this gap the primary foundation for conducting the present study.*

*This study employed a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), processed with AMOS 24 software. Data were collected through questionnaire distribution to Xiaomi smartphone users in Semarang City using a purposive sampling technique within a non-probability sampling framework, on the grounds that respondents with direct experience using Xiaomi products were considered capable of providing relevant assessments of all research variables. Through this procedure, 213 respondents meeting the established criteria were obtained and subsequently served as the basis for analysis in this study.*

*The findings indicate that UGC has a positive and significant effect on both brand engagement and brand trust, simultaneously addressing a gap in the literature that has rarely examined the role of brand engagement as a mediating pathway in this relationship. Brand engagement was also found to have a positive and significant effect on brand trust, suggesting that user involvement with the brand constitutes a crucial stage in the process of trust formation. These findings further provide empirical validation for Xiaomi's marketing strategy, which has long been characterized by active community building and the encouragement of organic content through platforms such as Mi Community. The researchers argue that authentic UGC alone will not readily generate trust unless accompanied by meaningful brand engagement. Accordingly, brand engagement is confirmed to function as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of UGC on brand trust, both directly and indirectly.*

**Keyword:** UGC, brand trust, brand engagement, SEM.