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**THE ROLE OF XIAOHONGSHU IN SHAPING THE PURCHASE  
BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG ADULTS IN MALAYSIA**

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**DANG DAI VEN**

## DECLARATION

I declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of my own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources be they printed, electronic or personal.

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### Approval Form

This research paper attached hereto, entitled “THE ROLE OF XIAOHONGSHU IN SHAPING THE PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG ADULTS IN MALAYSIA” prepared and submitted by DANG DAI VEN in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Corporate Communication (HONS) is hereby accepted.

\_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor

Ms. Chew Wee Lee

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **ABSTRACT**

XiaoHongShu (XHS), a social media platform merging e-commerce and user-generated content (UGC), has become a significant influence on young adult purchasing behavior in Malaysia. This research aims to study the role of XiaohongShu's features influencing the purchasing decisions of young adults; the impact of XiaoHongShu on the purchase decision of young adults; evaluate the impact of user-generated content (UGC) on young adults' purchasing decision. The quantitative research method was adopted to collect data from samples. A total of 200 Malaysians aged 18-26 participated in the research. The results indicate that the majority of young adults purchase decision are influenced by XiaoHongShu and User Generated Content (UGC). The results of this study aligns with previous studies in this context. By examining how XiaoHongShu and User Generated Content (UGC) influence the purchase decision of young adult, the research offers valuable insights for Malaysian businesses seeking to leverage XHS for marketing purposes and for young adults navigating the platform's influence.

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## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to determine the role of XiaoHongShu in shaping the purchasing decision of young adults in Malaysia. This chapter will begin with a research overview, followed by a problem description, research objectives, research questions, and the significance of this study.

### **1.1 Background of study**

#### **XiaoHongShu**

According to Pamarathna (2019), Xiaohongshu (Little Red Book) is a social e-commerce app in China that focuses on luxury, beauty, and fashion items which was launched in 2013 with the slogan "Tag my life", has developed an online community for sharing lifestyles and acting as a platform for e-commerce (Behrooz, 2023). It encourages users to share information, ideas, and shopping recommendations, creating a "safe space" for like-minded shoppers to connect and learn from each other. It has become one of the fastest-growing social e-commerce apps in China, highlighting its popularity and influence in the online shopping landscape. Moreover, it is also among the social media applications that have been downloaded the most in China, and it has more than 100 million users worldwide (Liu, 2023).



XiaoHongShu is more than just a social media platform; it's a hybrid of social networking, e-commerce, and content creation that has revolutionised the way Chinese consumers shop. According to Cheng (2021), XiaoHongShu is a young-oriented lifestyle platform in China which has achieved remarkable growth due to its unique "social + e-commerce" model. This model blends a content community showcasing lifestyle trends with an integrated e-commerce platform, allowing users to discover and purchase products seamlessly. By serving as a natural "advertising area" and "publicity platform" for the shopping section, the content community drives purchases organically. This innovative approach has positioned Xiaohongshu as a leading force in China's e-commerce market, particularly among young adults, highlighting the power of social commerce to transform online shopping.

Moreover, XiaoHongShu also offers a variety of interesting content forms that may be customised to the user's interests and learning preferences. Examples of this varied content include reviews, tutorials, hauls, and live streaming. Users may share suggestions and experiences on XiaoHongShu to help foster a sense of community and trust. As a result, users seek advice and ideas from one another, creating a powerful social influence network. According to (Xu et al., 2022), XiaoHongShu is an e-commerce platform based on UGC (user-generated content) social networking. Users can share their lives on Xiaohongshu by sending brief videos, messages, and other types of media. With the tagline "Inspire Lives, share and discover the wonders of the world," Xiaohongshu enables its users to share their lifestyles, engage in interest-based interactions, and chronicle their lives through brief videos and words.

According to (Yu et al., 2023), Xiaohongshu is a well-known platform that has gained recognition worldwide as China's Instagram, spearheading Chinese purchasing and cultural exchanges abroad. These platforms are now essential to regular interactions such as commerce, entertainment, communication, and information sharing, among others. According to Octoplusmedia, Taiwan is the largest Xiaohongshu international market, followed by Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Singapore. A considerable quantity of Xiaohongshu material is produced outside of China, especially in Singapore and Malaysia. According to the Official Xiaohongshu's Data Management Platform (DMP) data, there are estimated 2.5 millions of active Xiaohongshu's users in Malaysia.

### **Social Commerce**

According to Algharabat et al. (2020), Social commerce is a combination of e-commerce and SNSs that intends to enhance shoppers' experience online. Social commerce is the newest form to combine communication technology and information. The advancement in technology within social media encouraged consumer to interact with their peers and hence invites them to be an essential part of the social community. According to (Zhou et al., 2013), social commerce combines the power of social media with traditional commerce, reducing the boundaries between the online and offline worlds. In both digital and physical markets, it's an energetic routine where people interact, curate, and share interests around goods and services.

Community e-commerce provides a platform for communication with consumers by linking people with the same interests and preferences, and gathers consumers with consumption potential. According to Algharabat et al. (2020), community e-commerce is where the consumer communicates, rate other products, review others' opinions, participate in forums, share their experiences and recommend products and services. According to Hajli (2015), social commerce is mediated by social media and mostly related to online communities and SNSs. These social platforms give opportunities to consumers to support each other with information exchange and with the content they generate there (Hajli, 2013).

### **Purchase behaviour**

The study of what encourages individuals and organizations to buy specific products and support certain brands is known as consumer behaviour (Peek, 2023). According to Diventy et al. (2020), Purchase behaviour is the combination of purchase intention and purchase decision. Purchase intention is a pre-decision stage in consumer behavior, where positive feelings like interest, desire, and belief towards a product ignite a willingness to own it, often triggered by external stimuli. This favorable attitude, born from sensory experiences and marketing messages, propels consumers towards the final act of purchase, cementing the connection between desire and decision.

Purchase choices are the stage of decision-making where customers actually purchase an item. The term "purchasing decision behaviour" describes the ultimate purchasing actions of individuals and households who make purchases of goods for their own use. Problem

identification, information search, alternative assessment, purchase decisions, and post-purchase behaviour are the steps in the decision-making process for purchases.

According to Lin et al. (2023), purchase intention is a consumer's subjective tendency to choose a product. It is made up of both external factors and customer opinions towards certain brands and goods. It is also a subset of consumer psychology activity that deals with the likelihood and willingness of customers to buy a certain item. The decision-making process that consumers go through after weighing their options is making a purchase. Nowadays, consumers are beginning to like certain brands above other items or services and plan to buy the preferred brand (Al-Azzam et al., 2021). According to Hasan (2020), trust was an important factor to influence consumers' purchase intention for online purchase decisions. He also mentioned that a positive relationship was found between trust and purchase intention in the grocery shopping context.

In today's digital landscape, social media has become a powerful force shaping consumer behavior. One critical aspect of this influence lies in the impact positive interactions can have on purchase intentions. As Onofrei et al. (2022) point out, engaging in positive exchanges on social media platforms can significantly elevate a consumer's likelihood to purchase a product or service. This phenomenon can be attributed to the intricate psychological process that unfolds when consumers engage with online information and make purchasing decisions, as explored by Chen and colleagues (2022).

The foundation of this influence lies in the inherent human desire for connection and belonging. Positive social interactions online, whether through comments, reviews, or direct engagement with brands, create a sense of community and shared experience. This fosters trust and strengthens brand perception, transforming consumers from passive observers into active participants in a brand's narrative. When consumers see others engaging positively with a product or service, it triggers a psychological validation, making them more likely to consider it themselves. This "social proof" phenomenon, as described by Cialdini (2009), plays a powerful role in influencing purchasing decisions, especially in today's information-saturated world.

Beyond simply creating a sense of community, positive interactions on social media also influence purchase intentions through the way they impact our cognitive processes. Chen et al. (2022) highlight the combination of vision and information processing that occurs when consumers read online comments. Positive reviews and testimonials trigger positive emotions, activating reward centres in the brain and enhancing brand associations. This emotional response, coupled with the factual information gleaned from reviews, creates a cognitive framework that favours the product or service. When positive interactions become prevalent, they form a dominant cognitive narrative, influencing how consumers perceive the brand and ultimately, their decision to purchase. According to (Von Helversen., et al.2018),the effect of consumer reviews on online decisions is widely recognized. Consumer evaluations and ratings influence people's intents and purchase behaviour as well as their attitudes towards items and stores, according to a number of studies.

According to Ngo et al. (2021), social media has developed into a vital platform for people to connect with one another and exchange information, ideas, and personal messages. The advancement of the Internet changes people's consumption behavior remarkably (Zhao et al., 2020). Young people, in particular, use social media platforms regularly and spend a lot of time on them (Ngo et al., 2021). Simultaneously, a number of issues arise when consumers, particularly young people, purchase goods via social networking networks (Ngo et al., 2021). According to Von Helversen et al. (2018), research suggests that young adults' purchasing decisions are strongly influenced by average consumer ratings. In this social commerce era, social commerce platform like XiaoHongShu is where consumers interact and their social interaction can influence other consumers (Algharabat et al., 2020). Social media platforms, through their constant stream of information and targeted advertising, can significantly influence what people want to buy, especially among young users who engage with them regularly (Shi, N. P. 2021).

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Xiaohongshu is a China Social Media Platform that is widely used in Malaysia. Compared to other social media, Xiaohongshu is not only a social platform, it plays a role as a consumer decision-making portal. Users are free to post content on Xiaohongshu and have the chance to be reached by the whole platform. Due to these features, more and more merchandise choose to advertise and promote their business on Xiaohongshu (Lin, 2023). According to (Lin ., et al. 2023), most previous studies on consumers' purchase intentions are based on the traditional e-commerce platform model and its development. While the new community model has been a hot topic, limited research has comprehensively analyzed its

influence on consumers' purchase intentions. Previous study indicates that XiaoHongShu users have negative attitudes towards many aspects of their experience, such as content push, content audit mechanism, advertising, etc( Tian ., et al.2021). Therefore, research of Xiaohongshu's features is needed to provide important decision-making references for the operation managers of other community e-commerce (Lin ., et al. 2023).

Apart from the advertisement features of Xiaohongshu, there are also many "soft advertisements". Soft advertisements are content generated by the user. UGC is becoming more and more influential in purchase decisions. (Shuqair ., et al. 2016). However, previous study indicates that the quality of User-Generated Content failed to reach the proper standard of adequate socialisation. Research on UGC in XiaoHongshu is beneficial for Malaysian merchants to promote their business.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

**The research objectives in this study are :**

RO1:To analyse the role of XiaoHongShu's features influencing the purchasing decisions of young adults.

RO2: To study the impact of XiaoHongShu on the purchase decision of young adults.

RO3:To evaluate the impact of user-generated content (UGC) on young adults' purchasing decision.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

**The research questions in this study are:**

RQ1: What is the role of XiaoHongShu's features in shaping the purchasing decisions of young adult?

RQ2: What is the impact of XiaoHongShu on the purchase decision of young adults?

RQ3: Does user-generated content (UGC) influences the purchase decisions of young adult?

## **1.5 Significance of study**

This study aims to determine how XiaoHongShu's features, user-generated content, and social influence shape young adult purchase decisions, providing valuable insights into their unique decision-making processes. This is because social media can influence what young adult want to buy through their constant stream of information and targeted advertising (Shi, N. P. 2021).

Furthermore, analyzing the role of XiaoHongShu's specific features can help identify what drives engagement and conversion among young adults. This knowledge can help XiaoHongShu in improving its features and offering consumers a better experience. It can also offer beneficial data and references for other social e-commerce sites. Thus, XiaoHongShu is better at optimising the features. (Tian., et al. 2021).



Moreover, understanding the key factors that motivate young adults to make purchases based on XiaoHongShu recommendations and reviews helps Malaysian businesses refine their marketing strategies to better engage with the young adults. This knowledge allows them to better target their messaging and resonate with this influential demographic. The elements or traits that this study indicates will influence young people's purchase decisions can also help Malaysian businesses create more effective and customised communications for their target audiences, helping them to attract new customers while maintaining existing ones.

UGC acts as a powerful social proof mechanism, influencing young adult perceptions and decisions. This study explores the specific content types and creators that hold sway, providing valuable insights for brands and marketers seeking to leverage UGC effectively.

Lastly, there is less research about How XiaoHongShu affect the consumer behaviour of young adult in Malaysia. Thus, this research can fill this crucial gap, offering valuable insights for academics and businesses.

## Chapter 2 Literature review

### 2.1 The impact of XiaoHongShu on the purchase decision

Numerous research on social media, social media marketing, and consumer behaviour have been conducted. This is due to the fact that social media greatly affects how consumers discover products, explore them, and make decisions about their purchases (Chopra & Gupta, 2020). Social media has transcended niche interests and becoming an essential part of our everyday lives. For instance, people utilise it to remain educated, entertained, and connected, regardless of their age or background. It's a great place to target potential customers because of its broad reach and capacity to build relationships. (Mohamed et al., 2021). Additionally, social media platforms act as a discovery engine, enabling users explore a wide range of information, follow trusted brands and influencers, and discover new goods and services by serendipity. This exposure, along with recommendations, customer reviews and ratings, celebrity endorsements, and positive social proof like likes or shares, strongly impact their buying choices (Talib et al., 2017).

According to Lin (2023), Xiaohongshu users are influenced by soft advertisements, but the key to converting that influence into purchases lies in authentic, entertaining, and personalized content on trusted platforms like TaoBao. Consumers on community e-commerce platforms are drawn to high-quality, innovative products, engaging content, and vibrant communities. These factors contribute to their perceived value of the platform, which ultimately drives their purchase intentions (Lin et al., 2023).

Chen, X et al. in 2021 studied whether consumers were influenced by others in deciding whether to purchase an item or not on e-commerce platforms. They found that imitation has a significant impact in increasing consumers' purchase intentions. It implies that consumers' intentions to make purchases are impacted by the purchasing behaviours of others through processes of imitation. According to Lin et al. (2023), recommendations from community opinion-leaders and experience sharing during social interactions influence the purchase decisions of consumer.

The impact of social media and trust on customers' buying intentions is substantial. Trust in purchasing intentions through social networking sites is less influential than social media marketing (Manzoor et al., 2020). Social media marketing is a highly effective way in distributing brand information, increasing brand favorability and awareness, and positively influencing consumers' intention to purchase (Mu, 2023). According to He et al. (2022), the majority of social media marketing strategies used on e-commerce platforms will influence customers' preference to purchase more frequently. This is because customers engaged in online purchasing always observe social media marketing indicators such as user's experiences, quality content, and regularity of visits (Cabales et al., 2023). When consumers observe that others hold a positive attitude towards a product, they are more likely to purchase the product. Advertising, recommendations, and well-planned marketing activities on social media can stimulate consumers' need, desire and interest in specific products or brands. Thus, it will influence their purchase decision (Mu, 2023).

In another study, social media users appear to trust evaluations on the platform, and interestingly, they almost equally trust those from friends and strangers. Users through their purchase experiences will also have the chance to influence others and share their opinions through online reviews, comments and spreading E-WOM (Hanaysha, 2022). After reading favourable evaluations, social media users are more inclined to make a purchase. Positive WOM generated on social media will thus increase purchases (Mehta, Y et al., 2014).

## **2.2 The role of social media in shaping the purchase behaviour**

Nowadays, it's common for people to look for information online. The use of social media, websites, blogs, and other online communication platforms is growing rapidly, which has increased interest in both word-of-mouth(WOM) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) communication. Electronic word of mouth seems to be one the most significant factors influencing consumer purchase behaviour (Leong et al., 2022). The increased number of consumers sharing their thoughts on social media has made eWOM possess the ability to influence consumers' purchase behaviour (Leong et al., 2022),

Diventy, A. H. (2020) stated that Electronic word of mouth, or "e-wom," is a type of knowledge and information sharing that occurs online on social media platforms. It is seen to be more successful than conventional word of mouth since it allows customers to voice their opinions in a significant way. Digital word-of-mouth (e-wom) E-wom is a review, whether positive or negative, that real, prospective, or past customers have left for a business or

product which consumer can access to these information via online media. (Jalilvand and Samiei, 2012).

Zhao et al., (2020) stated that Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is an important part of social commerce which employs user-generated content as a key tool to assist online shoppers. User evaluations, comments, conversations, and suggestions pertaining to information about goods, services, business brands, and other topics are all included in the information shared via electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

According to Onofrei et al., (2022), interactive eWOM can be particularly beneficial for complex products that require additional mental efforts. Research shows that social media can influence other consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and intentions. Online reviews on purchased goods, as a means of word-of-mouth communication can influence consumers' evaluation of products, purchasing decisions and purchasing behaviors (Liu., et al. 2020).

Shen et al., (2015) stated that Word-of-mouth (WOM) on the Internet is further generated via e-commerce platforms, where customers are accustomed to rating the quality of goods and services. Surveys show that over 70% of consumers cite and even believe the opinions of other customers on goods and services, and 85% of consumers agreed that reading internet reviews can affect their purchase decision. Furthermore, many buyers pay close attention to both product details and customer reviews in addition to product information. (Li and Wang, 2018).

## **2.3 Theoretical framework**

A theoretical framework is an outline for creating the hypotheses that researchers will use for their study, based on a basic review of existing theories. Researchers create theories to make predictions, connect the dots, and explain phenomena. Researchers demonstrate that the topic of their paper or dissertation is current and based on well-established concepts by outlining the theories that can support their research in a theoretical framework (Vinz, S. 2023). Moreover, User Generated Content (UGC) will be applied as the theoretical framework of this research.

### **2.3.1 Background of User Generated Content (UGC)**

User-generated content (UGC) pertains to online information created and shared by consumers that can influence other users' purchase decisions (Geng et al., 2021). The concept of User-Generated Content, or UGC is commonly abbreviated, gained popularity in the early 2000s when media users suddenly became equipped with advanced means of production due to the widespread use of personal computers and the launch of user-friendly interfaces for search engines, video-sharing, social networking sites, etc (Bolin, G. 2021).

Hooper & Mary Woodbury (2023) stated that media created and published by individual internet contributors, as opposed to established publishers, is referred as "user-generated content." All text, photos, audio, and video uploaded by contributors to blogs, wikis, social networking sites, forums, and websites that share reviews and feedback are considered user-generated content. The first 10 years of the twenty-first century saw the

emergence of user-generated content, which has had a significant influence on publishing, copyright law, advertising and marketing, journalism, and commerce.

User-generated brand content is the latter choice and a highly discussed marketing strategy. User-generated material, which integrates seamlessly with journalistic social media content, is particularly praised by business media, such as Forbes and Adweek, as a very useful covert marketing tool for businesses (Mayrhofer et al., 2019). For instance, consumers are likely to hunt for product or service information on social media while expressing their opinions and preferences while evaluating the products or services. They also choose to utilise social networking sites to share links to their favourite brands with friends and family (Loitongbam et al., 2023). Additionally, it was discovered that social media marketing is preferred by customers over traditional media marketing (Loitongbam et al., 2023).

The importance of user-generated branded content has frequently been emphasised by media outlets. According to the subtitle of an article in the online advertising journal Adweek, "UGC (user-generated content) is not only much cheaper to implement, but it is also much more effective," Forbes has advised businesses to "take proactive steps to stimulate the creation of user-generated content" (Mayrhofer et al., 2019). Executing UGC effectively allows brands to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with consumers where they feel valued, become part of a community, and contribute to the brand's marketing efforts (Alyssa Anderson 2022). As an illustration, XiaoHongShu effectively uses UGC on their site by creating a positive feedback loop for content creation and sharing. This loop of trust among users, valuable content, and platform support boosts the creation of even more

outstanding user-generated content (UGC), enhancing XiaoHongShu's standing as a trustworthy resource for shoppers (Sun, Y. 2023). Additionally, User-generated content (UGC) is an extremely efficient strategy to market a brand. Compared to traditional advertising, this strategy is more affordable and it can be highly effective in building brand engagement and trust if executed effectively. Using the UGC advertising from XiaoHongShu as an example, a high return rate can be attained with a minimal investment. In particular, it offers various strategies like collaborating with influencers (KOLs) to use notable individuals to promote products and raise brand awareness; using live streaming to showcase products to consumers directly, leading to a more engaging experience and potentially boosting sales; and strategic advertising options which allow brands select the most cost-effective advertising formats based on their requirements and target audiences.

### **2.3.2 The influence of user-generated content (UGC) on the purchase decisions**

Xiaohongshu is an E-commerce platform based on UGC (user-generated content) social networking (Xu et al., 2022). UGC, brand communities and customer shares are forms of co-creation that can directly or indirectly influence a customer's purchasing intention (Shuqair et al., 2016). UGC, which is described as "any form of content being generated online by platform users," functions similarly to traditional word-of-mouth. UGC is becoming more and more influential in purchase decisions (Shuqair et al., 2016).

According to Bahtar et al. (2016), consumers tend to depend more on information created by other users of social media when making decisions about online purchases. This is



because online shoppers assume that reviews will include both the positive and bad aspects of a product. Scholars found that today's consumers rely more on UGC than on product advertising (Geng et al., 2021).

Al-Rawabdeh(2021) stated that consumers always review the experiences of previous buyers before purchasing electronic products. As a result, user-generated content (UGC) is one of the most effective e-marketing tools. Thus, consumers can always make recommendations that impact other consumers on social media. Numerous studies have looked at how user-generated content (UGC) affects customers' trust. For example, MacKinnon (2012) found that consumers substantially rely on and trust user-generated content from the internet. Because consumers trust peer-generated material more than any other type of marketing communication, user-generated content (UGC) has a significant influence on customers (Dennhardt 2014 ).

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **3.1 Research design**

This research is a cross-sectional study on the role of "XiaoHongShu" in shaping the purchase behaviour of Young Adults in Malaysia. Cross-sectional studies are observational studies that look at a population at a single point in time (Wang, X., & Cheng, Z.2020). This research has applied a quantitative approach to collect data from samples. Quantitative approach involves collecting and analysing numerical data. Target population of this research are Malaysians aged 18-26 and users of XiaoHongShu. This research collects data from samples through questionnaires. This research has applied descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis aims to evaluate the role of "XiaoHongShu" in shaping the purchase behaviour of Young Adults in Malaysia.

### **3.2 Research Instrument**

The research method used in this study is an online survey, which collects and analyses data from a group of people within target samples. Research instrument applied in this research is questionnaire. The questionnaire is a set of questions that are used to collect data from samples about their opinions, attitudes and experiences. It can be used to gather quantitative and qualitative data (Bhandari, 2021). The questionnaire takes 5-10 minutes to complete.

The questionnaire is created in google form, consisting of 16 questions. The questionnaire is structured into 4 sections. The first section is to verify that respondents

fulfilled the research criteria and agree to participate in the research. Section 2 to section 4 has been structured according to the role of "XiaoHongShu" in shaping the purchase behaviour of Young Adults. Each of these sections focus on the factors accordingly: Usage and function of XiaoHongshu , Purchase Behaviour and User Generated Content. These sections have multiple choice questions in which respondents can choose the answer.

### **3.3 Sample design**

This research design is focused on young adults in Malaysia. There are 200 respondents in this research. The sample is selected from the targeting population which is Malaysian age 18-26 and users of XiaoHongShu. In this research, Convenience sampling is applied due to limitation of time and budget. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method where units are chosen for inclusion in the sample due to the easiest for the researcher to access. The factors of applying convenience sampling are easy to access, geographical proximity and existing contact within the target population (Nikolopoulou, 2023).

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of systematically collecting, tidying, transforming, describing, modelling, and interpreting data (Eldridge, 2023). The data collected will undergo descriptive analysis.

### **3.4.1 Descriptive Analysis**

Descriptive analysis was applied to analyse all the data collected. Descriptive analysis is to describe the characteristics of responses (Bhandari, P. 2023). The descriptive analysis applied to all sections of the questionnaire included agreement, demographic and variables of User Generated Content.

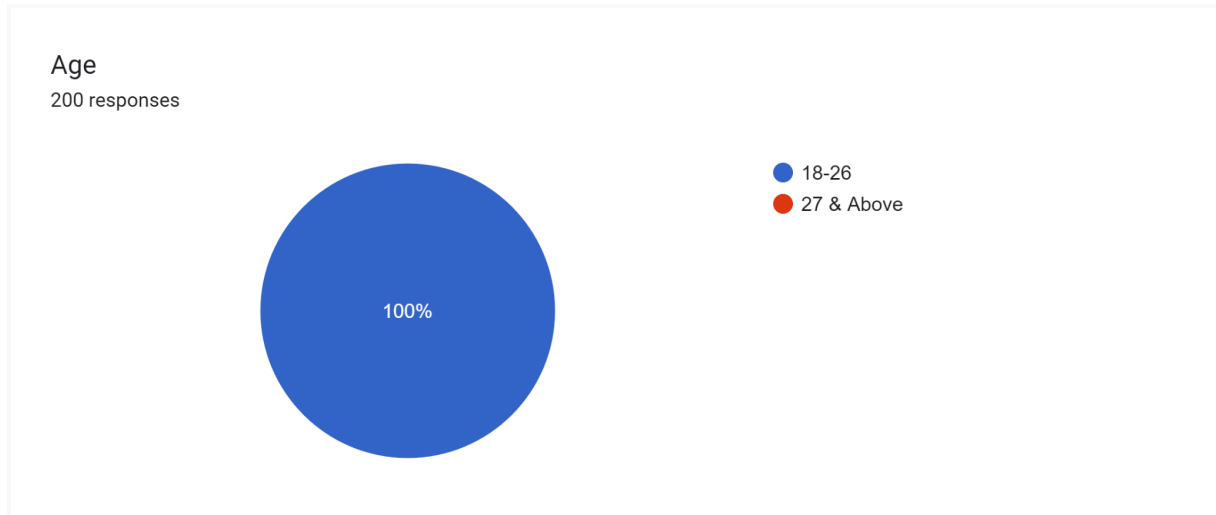
Bush (2020) stated that descriptive analysis, often known as descriptive analytics or descriptive statistics, is the use of statistical tools to represent or encapsulate a dataset. Descriptive analysis is a prominent form of data analysis that is widely recognised for its capacity to extract intelligible insights from data that wouldn't otherwise be comprehended. In contrast to other types of data analysis, descriptive analysis refrains from predicting the future. Instead, it takes all of its concepts from previous data and changes it to make it more significant. The application of descriptive analysis has several advantages. In commercial environments, descriptive analysis is very beneficial yet it can't predict the future. This is mainly because of its ability to improve data understanding, giving analysts new insights that they may use to their advantage. Descriptive analysis can also be used to go through less significant data. This is because the statistical approaches used in this type of study often focus on data trends rather than outliers.

## Chapter 4: Research findings

### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis

#### 4.1.1 Demographic

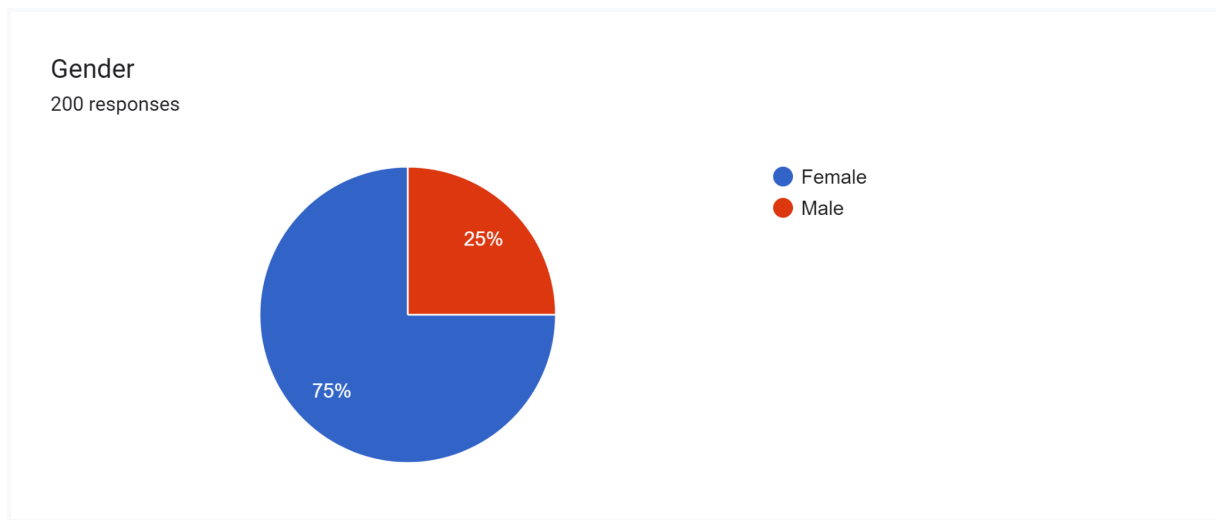
##### 1. Age



*Figure 4.1*

Total 200 respondents have participated in this research. Figure 4.1 shows 100% of the respondents fulfilled the requirements which are Malaysians aged 18-26. This has ensured the respondents are within the range target population.

## 2. Gender



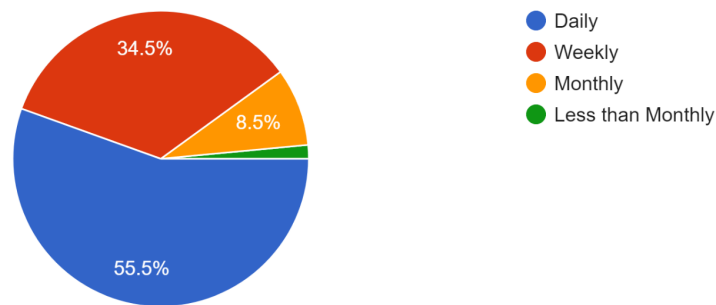
**Figure 4.2**

Figure 4.2 presents the number of female respondents is more than male respondents. The responses are shown in the pie chart as 150 women (75%), and 50 men (25%).

## 4.1. 2 The role of XiaoHongShu's features in shaping the purchasing decisions of young adult

### 1.Respondent usage on XiaoHongShu

How frequently do you use XiaoHongShu?  
200 responses

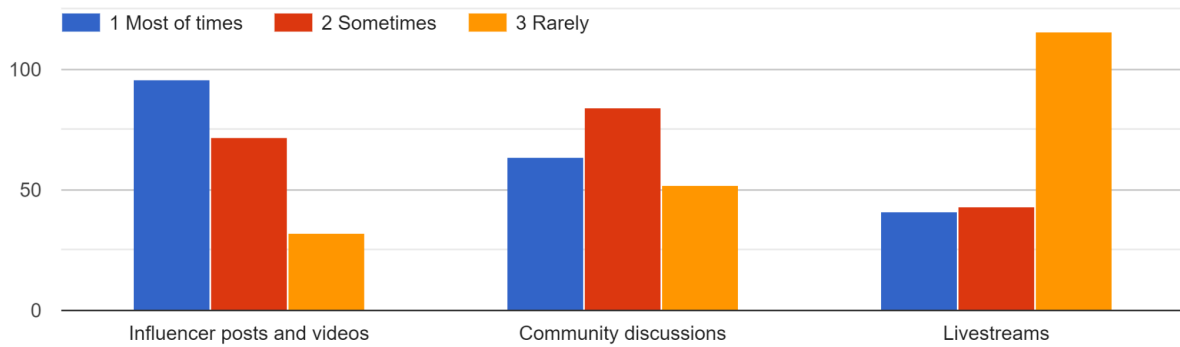


**Figure 4.3**

According to Figure 4.3, over 55% of the participants use XiaoHongshu on a daily basis. There is 69 respondents (34.5%) use it weekly, 17 (8.5%) use it monthly, and 3 (1.5%) use it less frequently than once a month.

## 2.Contents that respondents mainly engage on XiaoHongShu?

What types of content do you mainly engage on XiaoHongShu? Rank the element as follows:



**Figure 4.4**

Figure 4.04 demonstrates that, on XiaoHongShu, 96 respondents mostly engage in influencer posts and videos most of the time, 72 respondents sometimes and 32 respondents rarely.

Furthermore, 84 respondents sometimes and 52 respondents rarely participate in community discussions on XiaoHongShu, but 64 respondents do so most of the time.

Furthermore, 41 respondents stream live on XiaoHongShu most of the time, 43 respondents sometimes and 116 respondents rarely.



### 3.How respondents discover new products on XiaoHongShu

How do you discover new products on XiaoHongShu? Rank the element as follows:

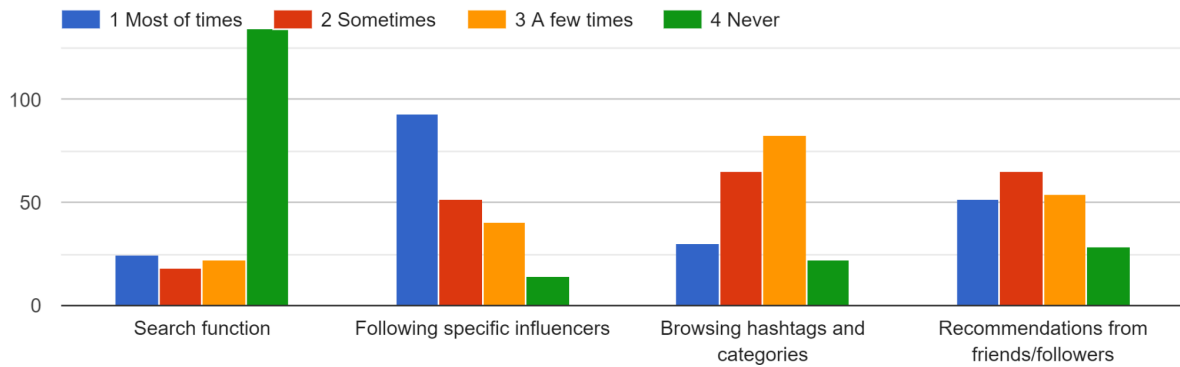


Figure 4.5

Figure 4.5 shows the results of respondent ranking on elements used to discover new products on XiaoHongShu. “Following specific influencers” are ranked first by most respondent, followed by “ Recommendations from friends/ followers”. And “browsing hashtags and categories”. The least in the rank is “search function”.

There are 25 respondents discover new products on XiaoHongShu through search function most of the times, 18 respondents sometimes, 22 respondents rarely and 135 never.

Additionally, 93 respondents discover new products on XiaoHongShu most of the time by following a certain influencer, 52 respondents sometimes, 41 respondents rarely, and 14 respondents never.

Furthermore, 30 respondents discover new products on XiaoHongShu most of the time by exploring categories and hashtags, 65 respondents sometimes 83 respondents rarely, and 22 respondents never.

Lastly, 52 respondents discover new products on XiaoHongShu most of the time through recommendations from friends and followers; 65 respondents do so sometimes; 54 respondents do so rarely; and 29 respondents never.

#### 4. Making Purchase Decisions based on the recommendation or review found on the Xiaohongshu platform.

Have you ever made a purchase based on the recommendation or review found on the Xiaohongshu platform?  
200 responses

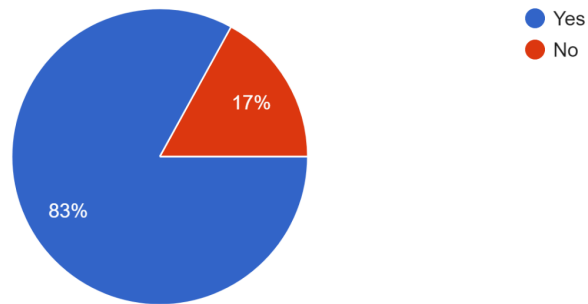


Figure 4.6

According to Figure 4.6, majority of respondents made a purchase based on the recommendation or review they found on the XiaoHongShu platform. There are 166 respondents (83%) stated yes whereas 34 respondents (17%) did not.

## 5. Influence of XiaoHongShu on your purchase decisions compared to other platforms.

How does XiaoHongShu influence your purchase decisions compared to other platforms?  
200 responses

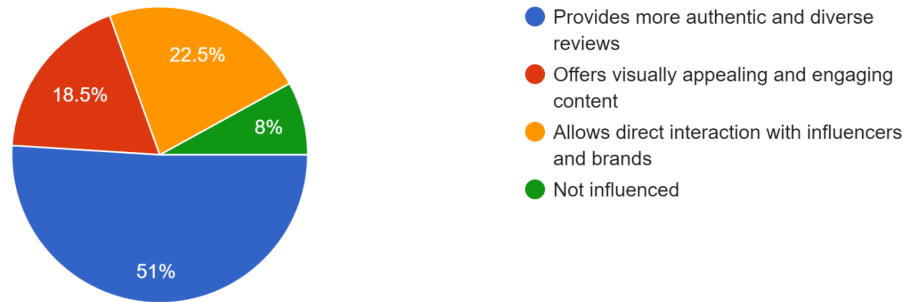


Figure 4.7

According to the data shown in Figure 4.7, 102 (51%) of the participants stated that XiaoHongShu's authentic and diverse reviews had affected their decision for purchase. 46 respondents (22.5%) claimed that XiaoHongShu had influenced their decision by offering visually appealing and appealing content; 37 respondents (18.5%) claimed that XiaoHongShu had influenced their decision by enabling them to communicate with brands and influencers directly; and 16 respondents (8%) claimed that the platform had no impact on their choice.

### 4.1.3 Purchase Behaviour

#### 1. Consideration of XiaoHongShu as primary source of information.

Do you consider XiaoHongShu as a primary source of information before making online purchases?

200 responses

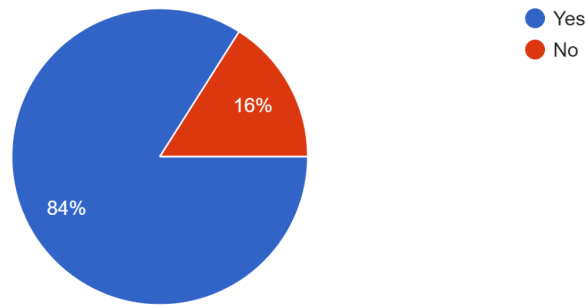


Figure 4.8

The data shown in Figure 4.8 indicates that 168 (84%) of the respondents consider XiaoHongShu as their primary source of information before making online purchase, whereas 32 (16%) do not share this sentiment.

## 2. View on content of XiaoHongShu

I agreed that XiaoHongShu content makes me purchase new product  
200 responses

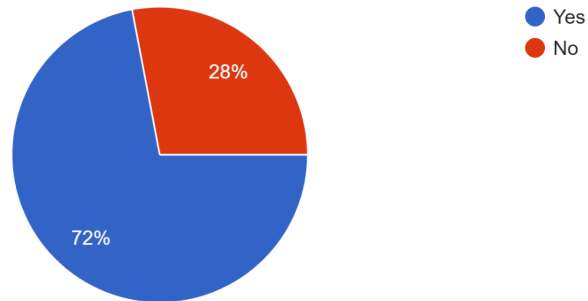


Figure 4.9

According to Figure 4.9, 144 respondents (72%) agree that XiaoHongShu contents makes them purchase new products, whereas 56 respondents (28%) disagree.

### 3. Agreement on Whether XiaoHongShu Reviews Help in Decision To Purchase.

I agreed that XiaoHongShu reviews help me decide whether or not to purchase a product.

200 responses

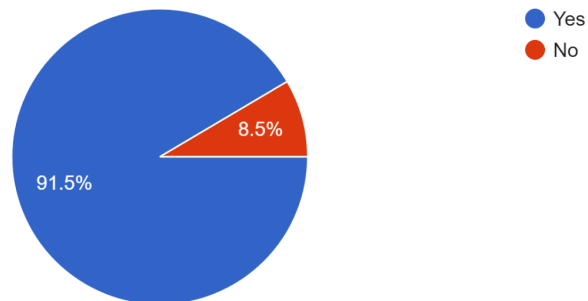


Figure 4.10

Figure 4.10 demonstrates that 183 (91.5%) of the respondents agree that XiaoHongShu reviews help them on purchase decision , whereas 17 (8.5%) disagree.

4. Positive user experiences showcased on XiaoHongShu, such as photos and videos, can influence consumers towards making a purchase.

I am more likely to purchase a product if I see positive user experiences on XiaoHongShu (e.g., photos, videos).

200 responses

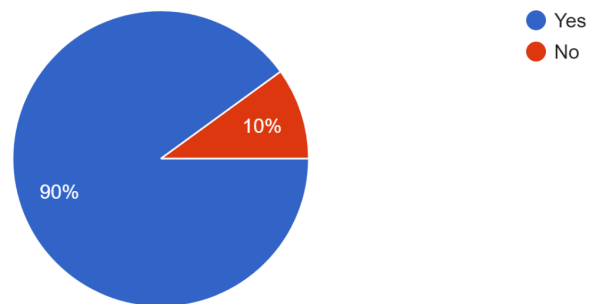


Figure 4.11

Figure 4.11 demonstrates that 180 respondents (90%) agree that seeing positive user experiences on XiaoHongShu increases their likelihood of making a purchase, whereas 20 respondents (10%) disagree.



#### 4.1.4 Influence of User Generated Content (UGC) on Purchase Decision

1. Consumer reviews and influencer recommendations are factors Young Adult consider when evaluating potential purchases.

Before making a purchase, do you read reviews or watch influencer recommendations?  
200 responses

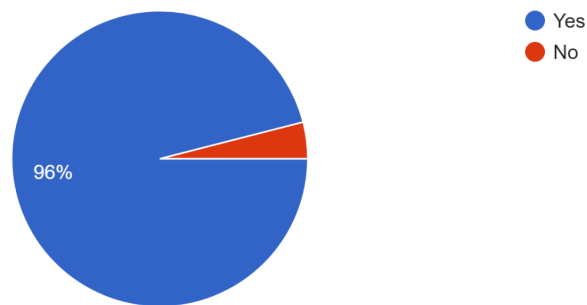


Figure 4.12

Figure 4.12 demonstrates that 192 (96%) of the respondents agreed that they looked up reviews or watched recommendations from influencers before making a purchase, whereas 8 (4%) disagreed.

## 2.Effect of Positive Reviews on UGC Platforms.

Positive reviews on UGC platforms can convince me to try a product I wasn't considering before.

200 responses

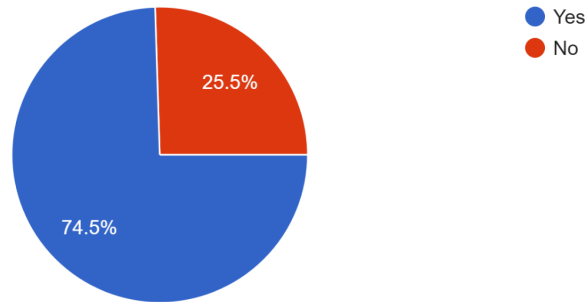


Figure 4.13

According to Figure 4.13, 149 respondents, or 74.5%, agreed that reading positive reviews on UGC platforms could convince them to try a product they had not previously considered, whereas 51 respondents, or 25.5%, disagreed.

### 3. Influence of Negative User Experiences on UGC Platforms.

Negative user experiences on UGC platforms can deter me from purchasing a product.

200 responses

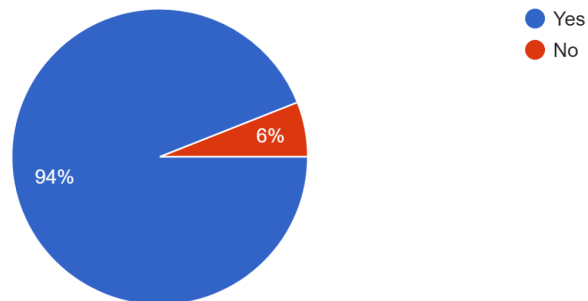


Figure 4.14

Figure 4.13 demonstrates that 188 (94%) of the respondents agreed and 12 (6%) disagreed that negative user experiences on UGC platforms can deter them from making a purchase.

#### 4. Authenticity of UGC

I think UGC is more authentic than traditional advertisement.

200 responses

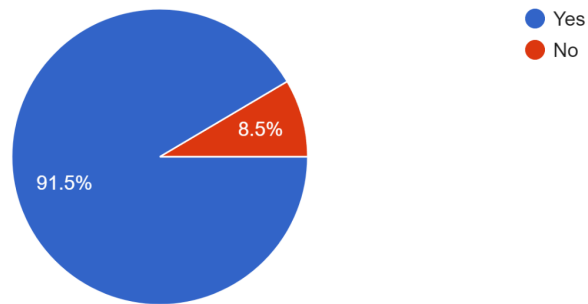


Figure 4.14

According to Figure 4.14, 183 (91.5%) of the respondents believed that user-generated content (UGC) is more authentic than traditional advertising, while 17 (8.5%) disagreed.

## 5. “Trust on UGC Elements”

Which UGC elements do you trust the most? Rank the element as follows:

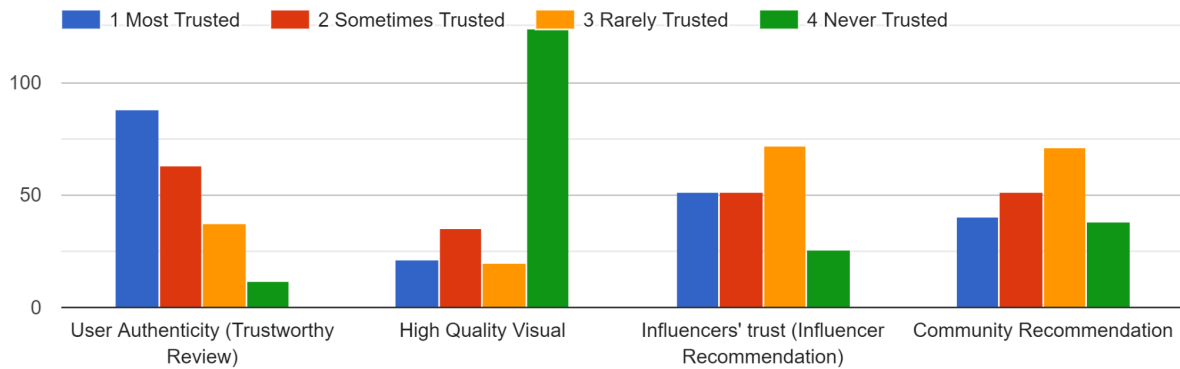


Figure 4.15

Figure 4.15 shows that 88 respondents most trust User Authenticity, 63 respondents sometimes trust , 37 respondents rarely trust and 12 never trust.

Additionally, 21 respondents most trust high quality visual, 35 respondents sometimes trust , 20 respondents rarely trust and 124 never trust.

Furthermore, 51 respondents most trust influencer’s trust , 51 respondents sometimes trust , 72 respondents rarely trust and 26 never trust.

Lastly, 40 respondents most trust community recommendation, 51 respondents sometimes trust , 71 respondents rarely trust and 38 never trust.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion**

### **5.1 Discussion**

**RO1: To analyse the role of XiaohongShu's features influencing the purchasing decisions of young adults.**

Results indicate that 48% (96) of the respondents, or the majority, mostly engage with XiaoHongShu influencer posts and videos. Studies have also revealed that the majority of respondents, 46.5% (93) agreed that they discovered new products by following particular XiaoHongShu influencers, and 26% (52) agreed that they discovered new products through obtaining recommendations from friends or followers. Thus, it demonstrates that the findings are consistent with the earlier research by Lin et al. (2023), which found that customer purchasing decisions are influenced by suggestions made by opinion leaders in the community and experience sharing during social interactions.

**RO2: To study the impact of XiaoHongShu on the purchase decision of young adults.**

According to the results founds, it indicate majority of the respondent 51% (102) agreed that authentic and diverse review from XiaoHongShu can influence their purchase decision compare to other platform. Moreover, it was also discovered that 72% (144) of the respondents agreed that XiaoHongShu content can makes them purchase new product. Thus, the findings are consistent with Lin's (2023) earlier research, which found that authentic, entertaining and personalized content content had an impact on Xiaohongshu users purchase decision.

Likewise, positive user experience on XiaoHongShu has the ability to persuade young adults to buy a product; the majority of these individuals have done so in response to recommendation or review they read on Xiaohongshu platform. According to result found, it shows that 90% (180) of respondents agreed that they are more likely to buy a product if they see positive user experiences on XiaoHongShu, and 74.5% (149) of respondents agreed that positive user experiences on XiaoHongShu have the power to encourage them to buy a product. Therefore, the results align with previous study (Chen, X et al., 2023) that finds that consumers' intentions to make purchases are influenced by other people's purchasing behaviours. Furthermore, the outcome is also consistent with (Mu, 2023) research showing that positive reviews from others about a product can persuade consumers to purchase it.

Finally, XiaoHongShu is considered as a young adult's main information source before making online purchases, helping them make a smart choice about whether or not to buy a product. For instance, 91.5% of respondents (183) said that XiaoHongShu reviews help them in deciding whether or not to buy a product, and 84% of respondents (168) said that XiaoHongShu is their main source of information before making online purchases. Thus, the results are match with the earlier study (Lin et al., 2023) which discovered that experience sharing during social interactions and recommendations from community opinion leaders can influence customer buying decisions.

**RO3:To evaluate the impact of user-generated content (UGC) on young adults' purchasing decisions.**

The research findings indicate that before making a purchase, young adults will read reviews or watch recommendations from influencers. For instance, 96% (192) of the respondent agreed that they will read reviews or watch recommendation from influencers before making any purchase. The outcome is in line with study conducted in 2016 by Bahtar et al., which discovered that people generally depend more on information created by other social media users when making purchases online.

Secondly, the outcomes show that user-generated content (UGC) has a higher level of authenticity than traditional advertising. For instance, according to 91.5% (183) of the participants, user-generated content (UGC) is considered more genuine than traditional marketing. It so found agreement with research (Geng et al., 2021) indicating consumers in this era rely more on user-generated content than product advertising. The outcome is also found to be consistent with research (Dennhardt 2014) stating that consumers are greatly influenced by user-generated content (UGC) as they put more confidence in peer-generated content than in any other kind of advertising.

Lastly, the findings indicate that while negative experiences on user-generated content platforms can discourage young adults from making a purchase, positive ratings on same platforms can persuade people to try a product they hadn't previously given much thought to. For instance, 94% (188) of the respondents agreed that unfavourable user experiences on UGC platforms can discourage them from buying a product, and 74.5% (149) of the



respondents said that positive reviews on UGC platforms can convince them to try a product they weren't considering previously..As a result, it is discovered to be consistent with research (MacKinnon 2012) that discovered how much customers rely on and trust online user-generated material.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the research is focused on the role of "XiaoHongShu" in shaping the purchase behaviour of Young Adults in Malaysia.The research objective has been achieved which is to analyse the role of XiaohongShu's features influencing the purchasing decisions of young adults ; to study the impact of XiaoHongShu on the purchase decision of young adults ;to evaluate the impact of user-generated content (UGC) on young adults' purchasing decision.

This research can contribute to a broader understanding of young Adult behavior in the digital age, particularly among young adults in Malaysia.Additionally, it illuminates the influence that XiaoHongShu has upon consumer decisions, offering important new information for studies on social commerce and its effects for the future.For instance, it helps Malaysian e-commerce businesses identify new patterns and trends in customer behaviour on XiaoHongShu. As a result, the businesses may improve and tailor their offerings by building a strong social media presence that includes lifestyle content and product recommendations.Additionally,understand how young Malaysians use XiaoHongShu for social commerce can assist Malaysia E-commerce business to integrate similar features on their platform to create a more engaging and user-friendly online shopping experience for young Malaysians.(*Yin, Y et al ,. 2023*).

Overall, the findings show that XiaoHongShu and user-generated content (UGC) have positive impact on Malaysia young adults purchase decision. The results indicate that the majority of young adults purchase decision is influence by XiaoHongShu and user-generated content (UGC). The results align with the literature review's study, which claims that user-generated content (UGC) is king since it greatly influences consumers' decisions to buy. UGC is defined as the opinions, suggestions, and images posted by other young Malaysians on XiaoHongShu. Finally, young customers respond favourably to Xiaohongshu's features like the "Little Red Book" suggestions and influencer postings that subtly promote products.

### **5.3 Research Limitation**

Although the research objectives have been achieved, there are some limitations in the research. The first limitation is the small sample size of the research. The sample size of the research is only 200 respondents which is not enough to represent the target population. Furthermore, the respondents are mainly from Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. There is a lack of samples from other states in Malaysia.

The second limitation is the imbalance gender of respondent. The sample size of male respondents is inadequate as there are only 50 of them, accounting for 24.8% of the total respondents.

The third limitation is the method used to collect data. Quantitative research has limited the answers from respondents. Questionnaires might frame the opinions of respondents and have difficulties collecting their real opinions. The closed-ended question also limits the ideas of respondents.

#### **5.4 Recommended areas for further research**

To have a more in-depth study on this topic, some recommendation areas can be applied for future research. The first recommendation is to employ a diverse sampling method to capture a broader range of young adults in Malaysia. This can help to collect more data and enlarge the coverage of respondents in Malaysia. By extending the sample size and sample geographical coverage, the result can be more accurate to represent the target population.

Additionally, a comparative study may be conducted. Future studies can, for instance, analyse how XiaoHongShu influences young adults' purchasing decisions in Malaysia among populations living in urban and rural areas. Furthermore, future studies can compare XiaoHongShu's gender usage patterns. Lastly, to acquire a greater understanding of the behaviour, qualitative or mixed methodologies can be used in subsequent studies.

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## APPENDIXES

### APPENDIX B – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1 of 4

# A Study on the role of "XiaoHongShu" in shaping the purchase behaviour of Young Adults in Malaysia

**B** *I* U  

Thank you for participating in this survey! This study aims to understand how XiaoHongShu influences the purchase decisions of young adults. Your honest responses will be invaluable in helping us gain insights into this increasingly important platform.

Age \*

18-26

27 & Above

Gender \*

Female

Male

### The role of XiaoHongShu's features in shaping the purchasing decisions of young adult ✕ ⋮

To analyse the role of XiaohongShu's features influencing the purchasing decisions of young adults.

How frequently do you use XiaoHongShu? \*

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Less than Monthly



What types of content do you mainly engage on XiaoHongShu? Rank the element as follows: \*

	1 Most of times	2 Sometimes	3 Rarely
Influencer posts and vid...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community discussions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Livestreams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



How do you discover new products on XiaoHongShu? Rank the element as follows: \*

	1 Most of times	2 Sometimes	3 A few times	4 Never
Search function	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Following specific ...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Browsing hashtag...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recommendations...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Have you ever made a purchase based on the recommendation or review found on the Xiaohongshu platform? \*

- Yes
- No

How does XiaoHongShu influence your purchase decisions compared to other platforms? \*

- Provides more authentic and diverse reviews
- Offers visually appealing and engaging content
- Allows direct interaction with influencers and brands
- Not influenced

Section 3 of 4

**Purchase Behaviour**



To study the impact of XiaoHongShu on the purchase decision of young adults.

Do you consider XiaoHongShu as a primary source of information before making online purchases? \*

- Yes
- No



I agreed that XiaoHongShu content makes me purchase new product \*

Yes

No

I agreed that XiaoHongShu reviews help me decide whether or not to purchase a product. \*

Yes

No

I am more likely to purchase a product if I see positive user experiences on XiaoHongShu (e.g., \* photos, videos).

Yes

No

Section 4 of 4

Does **User Generated Content (UGC)** influence your **purchase Decision**?  

\*User-Generated Content (UGC) refers to any content created by individuals rather than brands or professional creators. Think of it as the internet's version of word-of-mouth, spreading experiences and opinions through various online platforms.

Before making a purchase, do you read reviews or watch influencer recommendations? \*

Yes

No



Positive reviews on UGC platforms can convince me to try a product I wasn't considering before. \*

Yes

No

Negative user experiences on UGC platforms can deter me from purchasing a product. \*

Yes

No



I think UGC is more authentic than traditional advertisement.

Yes

No

Which UGC elements do you trust the most? Rank the element as follows: \*

	1 Most Trusted	2 Sometimes Trust...	3 Rarely Trusted	4 Never Trusted
User Authenticity (...)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High Quality Visual	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Influencers' trust (l...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community Reco...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## APPENDIX B – TURNITIN REPORT

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### FYP

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