

Factors Influencing the Purchase Decisions of TikTok Users for Skintific Skincare in Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of viral marketing and brand awareness on purchasing decisions for Skintific products via TikTok in Surabaya. A purposive sample of 115 consumers was surveyed, and data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The study tests two variables: viral marketing and brand awareness, both as predictors of purchasing decisions. Data were collected over a defined observation period from active TikTok shoppers. Results reveal that both viral marketing and brand awareness significantly and positively affect purchasing decisions, with viral marketing exerting a slightly stronger influence. These findings imply that optimizing viral marketing strategies on social media can enhance consumer engagement and drive sales, while strong brand awareness reinforces consumer trust and purchase intent.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of digital technology has transformed the way consumers interact with brands, especially through social media platforms such as TikTok, which integrates e-commerce features that facilitate online purchasing anytime and anywhere (Gita Segara & Irwan Padli Nasution, 2025). In Indonesia, the surge of internet users reaching over 215 million in 2023 has created significant opportunities for brands to implement digital marketing strategies, particularly viral marketing, to expand their market reach. Viral marketing leverages social sharing culture, short-form videos, and influencer endorsements to create rapid brand exposure, which in turn can strengthen brand awareness and influence purchase decisions (Pane et al., 2024)

The growth of online shopping in Indonesia is not merely a shift in purchasing channels but also reflects a broader transformation in market dynamics. The increasing integration of e-commerce with social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube has reshaped consumer behavior, with short-form video content becoming a dominant medium for brand communication (Wibowo, 2024). In Indonesia, internet penetration has reached over 78% of the population, with social media adoption continuing to rise each year, creating fertile ground for innovative marketing strategies. Among these, viral marketing has emerged as one of the most impactful approaches, leveraging the power of networked communication to spread promotional messages rapidly, widely, and often at a lower cost compared to traditional advertising methods (Pane et al., 2024)

In parallel, brand awareness plays a vital role in shaping consumer purchasing decisions. Consumers who are familiar with a brand and associate it with positive attributes are more likely to prioritize it over competing options (El-Haq & Nurtjahjani, 2023). In the context of social commerce platforms such as TikTok, viral marketing can be a powerful driver of brand awareness by creating consistent, engaging, and memorable interactions between the brand and its target audience. This is particularly relevant in the beauty and skincare industry, where consumer preferences are heavily influenced by social trends, peer recommendations, and visually appealing content that circulates widely on social media (Hantika et al., 2023)

One example of a brand that has effectively utilized viral marketing and built strong brand awareness is Skintific, a skincare company that has experienced rapid growth in Indonesia through TikTok Shop. By employing engaging short-video content, influencer collaborations, and user-generated reviews, Skintific has succeeded in creating buzz that translates into increased sales. Despite these successes, there remains a need for empirical evidence to quantify the impact of viral marketing and brand awareness on consumer purchasing decisions within the Indonesian skincare market.

This study seeks to address that gap by analyzing how viral marketing and brand awareness influence purchasing decisions for Skintific skincare products on TikTok Shop. The research contributes to the enrichment of marketing theory by examining these factors in the context of digital consumer behavior in emerging markets. Furthermore, the findings are expected to provide

actionable insights for marketers and business owners in designing more effective digital strategies, strengthening brand positioning, and sustaining competitiveness in the increasingly dynamic online marketplace.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is recognized as a modern digital marketing strategy that combines creative content, the culture of sharing on social media, and the involvement of influencers to extend the reach of promotional messages Wilson, as cited in Isnawati (2022). It is considered a natural progression from traditional word-of-mouth marketing, reformulated to suit the digital landscape through the use of email, video, and various social media platforms. These channels enable the distribution of promotional materials that are both engaging and highly shareable, allowing messages to spread quickly and organically.

Viral marketing is a digital marketing strategy that evolves the traditional concept of word-of-mouth into a form integrated with modern technology. This approach leverages channels such as email, video content, and social media platforms, as well as the influence of key opinion leaders, to disseminate creative, engaging, and easily shareable marketing messages, enabling brands to reach a broad audience effectively. (Nugraha et al., 2023)

In essence, viral marketing can be understood as a promotional method that mobilizes consumers. Both through direct interaction and digital engagement to generate significant influence on target audiences.

Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is a key component in shaping consumer purchasing decisions. Aaker cited in Rachmawati (2025) explains that a brand functions as an identity that distinguishes one product from another. Consumers with high brand awareness can quickly associate a brand with its product category. High brand awareness not only increases the likelihood of initial purchases but also fosters customer loyalty and repeat buying. Such loyalty develops when consumers repeatedly have positive experiences with a brand, reinforced by consistent marketing strategies and strong brand trust (Hantika et al., 2023)). Brand awareness can be strengthened through repeated advertising campaigns, social media promotions, collaborations with public figures or influencers, and data-driven personalized marketing, as it reflects how well a brand is recognized and remembered in the minds of consumers (Audric et al., 2025)

Consumer Behavior

A purchase decision refers to the process by which consumers identify a need Purchase decision is the process in which consumers recognize a need or desire, seek information, evaluate alternatives, and ultimately choose a product or service, influenced by both internal factors such as motivation and perception, and external factors such as culture and social influence (You et al., 2022) In the digital era, this process is increasingly shaped by social media and online reviews, where factors like credibility, review volume, and reviewer

characteristics significantly impact consumer choices (Ibrahim, 2023). Beyond rational considerations such as price and product specifications, psychological and emotional aspects—such as perception, motivation, and even low self-control—also play a critical role, often leading to impulsive purchases (Tamami, 2023; Fadillah & Sosialita, 2024).

This perspective highlights the importance of understanding both the rational and emotional drivers behind consumer behavior in order to design effective marketing strategies.

Empirical studies consistently show that viral marketing plays a significant role in shaping consumer purchase behavior. Putri and Silvianita (2024) found that engaging and easily shareable content in viral marketing strategies can substantially increase product appeal, with viral marketing and brand awareness jointly contributing 62% to purchase decisions. Similarly, Anindya and Indriastuti, (2023) observed that effective viral marketing enhances brand awareness and positively impacts purchasing behavior by encouraging consumers to share relevant and appealing product information, thus boosting brand exposure. Supporting these findings, Mandataris, (2024) reported that rapid and extensive information dissemination through viral marketing positively influences purchase decisions among Shopee users by stimulating interest and purchase intention. Collectively, these results suggest that viral marketing can improve product visibility, build brand awareness, and drive consumer engagement.

H1: Viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions for Skintific skincare products on the TikTok platform.

Brand awareness plays a critical role in shaping buying intentions, which can ultimately lead to purchase decisions. Izaak et al., (2023) found that higher consumer awareness of a brand increases the likelihood of the brand being considered during the decision-making process, as strong brand awareness fosters familiarity and trust, reduces uncertainty, and boosts consumer confidence in choosing the brand over competitors. In the context of digital marketing, consistent exposure through various social media platforms is instrumental in building brand awareness, which can directly influence purchase decisions or do so indirectly by enhancing purchase intention. The same study also revealed that consumers with high brand awareness are more likely to experience strong emotional engagement, prompting them to take immediate purchasing action. Supporting these findings, Putri and Silvianita (2024) demonstrated that brand awareness significantly impacts purchase decisions by strengthening positive brand perceptions and enhancing consumer trust and buying intention. Likewise, Anindya and Indriastuti (2023) confirmed that high brand awareness increases the probability of consumers selecting a product over competing alternatives, highlighting the importance of effective marketing strategies to elevate brand recognition.

H2: Brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions for Skintific skincare products on the TikTok platform.

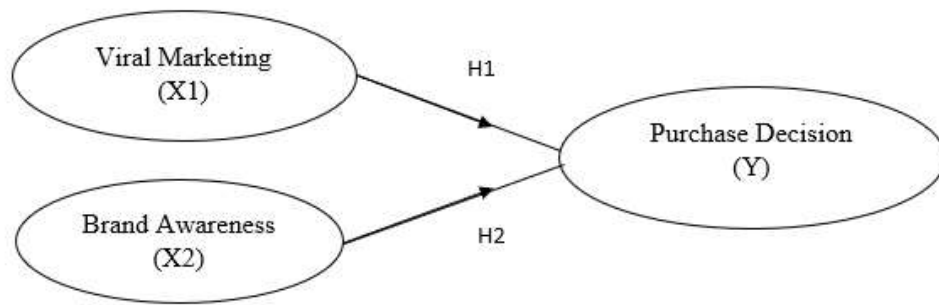


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This quantitative study investigates viral marketing and brand awareness as independent variables affecting purchase decisions for Skintific skincare products on the TikTok platform. Data were obtained from online sources, books, academic journals, research papers, and a Google Forms survey. The analysis utilized Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method, chosen due to the sample size of 115 respondents. SmartPLS software was employed to perform component-based SEM analysis, facilitating the evaluation of relationships between the variables in the research model.

RESULTS

Convergent Validity

Table 1. Outer Loadings (Mean, STDEV, T-Values)

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)
x1.1 <- (X1)	0,838	0,841	0,031	27,403
x1.2 <- (X1)	0,782	0,780	0,048	16,414
x1.3 <- (X1)	0,797	0,794	0,049	16,377
x1.4 <- (X1)	0,847	0,847	0,027	31,600
x1.5 <- (X1)	0,828	0,823	0,037	22,322
x2.1 <- (X2)	0,738	0,739	0,065	11,373
x2.2 <- (X2)	0,847	0,846	0,027	31,223
x2.3 <- (X2)	0,770	0,765	0,045	17,187

x2.4 <- (X2)	0,828	0,826	0,032	25,951
y1 <- (Y)	0,756	0,753	0,051	14,827
y2 <- (Y)	0,807	0,808	0,029	28,231
y3 <- (Y)	0,791	0,786	0,042	18,866
y4 <- (Y)	0,701	0,696	0,054	13,042

The results of the outer loading test indicate that all reflective indicators for the variables Viral Marketing (X1), Brand Awareness (X2), and Purchase Decision (Y) have factor loading values exceeding 0.70 and T-Statistics well above 1.96. These results confirm that all indicators meet the criteria for convergent validity, indicating that each construct is accurately and validly measured by its respective indicators.

Table 2. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	
Brand Awareness	0,635
Purchase Decision	0,585
Viral Marketing	0,671

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) analysis shows that all constructs in this study meet the criteria for adequate convergent validity. The AVE values for Viral Marketing (X1), Brand Awareness (X2), and Purchase Decision (Y) are 0.671, 0.635, and 0.585, respectively, all exceeding the recommended minimum threshold of 0.50. These results indicate that the indicators used effectively explain their respective latent variables.

Discriminant Validity

Table 3. Cross Loading

	Brand Awareness	Purchase Decision	Viral Marketing
x1.1	0,313	0,588	0,838
x1.2	0,014	0,392	0,782
x1.3	0,194	0,454	0,797
x1.4	0,133	0,541	0,847
x1.5	0,173	0,517	0,828
x2.1	0,738	0,459	0,168
x2.2	0,847	0,564	0,165
x2.3	0,770	0,513	0,212

x2.4	0,828	0,566	0,144
y1	0,511	0,756	0,435
y2	0,557	0,807	0,517
y3	0,476	0,791	0,496
y4	0,477	0,701	0,438

Based on the cross-loading analysis, all indicators in this study exhibited higher loading values on their respective constructs compared to other constructs. The indicators for Viral Marketing (X1), Brand Awareness (X2), and Purchase Decision (Y) demonstrated good discriminant validity.

Composite Reliability

Table 4. Composite Reliability

Composite Reliability	
Brand Awareness (X2)	0,874
Purchase Decision (Y)	0,849
Viral Marketing (X1)	0,911

Based on the Composite Reliability test results, the Viral Marketing (X1) variable achieved a value of 0.911, Brand Awareness (X2) 0.874, and Purchase Decision (Y) 0.849. All values exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating high internal consistency. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this study meet the construct reliability criteria as recommended.

Hypothesis Test

Table 5. R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Purchse Decision_	0,675	0,670

The inner model test results show that the R-Square value for the Purchase Decision variable is 0.675, indicating that Viral Marketing and Brand Awareness together explain 67.5% of the variance in the endogenous variable. The remaining 32.5% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this research model.

Table 6. Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Brand Awareness -> Purchase Decision_	0,555	0,555	0,046	11,994	0,000
Viral Marketing_ -> Purchase Decision_	0,499	0,503	0,050	9,986	0,000

H1: Viral Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision for Skintific skincare products on the TikTok platform, as indicated by a path coefficient of 0.499, a T-statistic of 9.986 (> 1.96), and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1) is accepted.

H2: Brand Awareness has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision for Skintific skincare products on the TikTok platform, supported by a path coefficient of 0.555, a T-statistic of 11.994 (> 1.96), and a P-value of 0.000 (< 0.05). The second hypothesis (H2) is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that Skintific's viral marketing strategy on TikTok has a strong and significant influence on consumer purchase decisions. This is reflected in the high level of TikTok user engagement with Skintific's viral promotional content, including short videos featuring product reviews, usage tutorials, and spontaneous testimonials from influencers and ordinary users. Such content effectively captures consumer attention, stimulates curiosity, and ultimately drives purchasing actions.

The success of Skintific's viral marketing lies in delivering information that is clear, easy to understand, and relevant to consumer needs. Consumers reported that TikTok content was highly useful in their decision-making process, particularly because it is visually appealing, concise, and engaging. A key influencing factor is the ease with which consumers understand the content and their tendency to search for product information on TikTok before making a purchase. Therefore, the strength of viral marketing lies in its ability to deliver persuasive messages through social media, shaping positive perceptions and influencing buying intentions. The results confirm that the more effective and appealing the viral marketing strategy, the higher the likelihood of purchase. These findings align with previous studies by Suhaemi, (2023), Putri & Silvianita, (2024), and Anindya & Indriastuti (2023), which also demonstrate that viral marketing positively and significantly impacts purchase decisions.

The study also reveals that consumer brand awareness plays a significant role in influencing purchase decisions for Skintific skincare products on TikTok.

Consumers with high brand awareness tend to feel more confident in choosing and purchasing the product. This awareness is built through brand elements such as the product name, logo, packaging, and other visual identifiers that are easily recognizable and memorable. The more familiar consumers are with Skintific's visual identity, the greater the likelihood they will consider and decide to purchase the product.

These findings highlight the importance of building a strong and consistent brand image on social media, particularly TikTok, which is a key platform for reaching younger consumers. One of the most influential aspects in increasing brand awareness is the ability of consumers to recognize Skintific products solely through their visual appearance, without explicitly seeing the brand name. This demonstrates that effective visual branding—through packaging design, colors, and logo has the power to embed brand identity in consumers' minds. Consequently, Skintific's efforts in strengthening brand awareness have significantly contributed to purchase decisions among TikTok users. These findings are consistent with studies by Sari (2022), Indriastuti (2023) and Silvanita, (2024) which conclude that stronger brand awareness increases the likelihood of purchase.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of data analysis and the preceding discussion regarding the influence of Viral Marketing and Brand Awareness on Purchase Decisions for Skintific skincare products on the TikTok platform, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The findings indicate that Viral Marketing contributes to Purchase Decisions for Skintific skincare products on TikTok. This suggests that the more effective the viral marketing strategy, the greater the likelihood that consumers will decide to purchase Skintific products.
2. The results also show that Brand Awareness contributes to Purchase Decisions for Skintific skincare products on TikTok. This implies that higher levels of consumer brand awareness toward Skintific increase the probability of purchase decisions being made.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, several recommendations can be proposed:

1. Skintific should continue to optimize its viral marketing strategy through the TikTok platform, as this approach has been proven to have a significant impact on consumer purchase decisions. Educational, easy-to-understand content delivered by credible influencers should be maintained and enhanced to reach a broader audience, particularly younger generations who are active on social media.
2. Skintific should also strengthen its brand awareness by ensuring consistent packaging design, a recognizable logo, and expanding its presence across various social media channels and e-commerce platforms.

Given that brand awareness significantly influences purchase decisions, reinforcing brand image and identity will be an essential step in building long-term consumer trust and loyalty.

FURTHER STUDY

Future researchers are encouraged to explore immersive technology-based marketing strategies, such as Augmented Reality (AR) shopping or AI-driven personalized marketing, which are projected to become e-commerce standards within the next 5–10 years. For instance, consumers could virtually try skincare products through AR filters on social media or receive personalized recommendations based on real-time skin analysis from AI beauty assistants, such as smart mirrors or wearable devices that monitor skin conditions. This approach could be used to examine the relationship between actual skin condition data and purchase decisions.

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