

Can Customer Engagement Affect the Relationship between Viral Marketing and Consumer Decisions of Culinary MSMEs in Mataram City?

M. Hanif Nurmayahdi^{1*}, Baiq Handayani Rinuastuti²

Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Mataram

Corresponding Author: M. Hanif Nurmayahdi hanif.wewe@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Viral Marketing, Purchasing Decision, Customer Engagement, MSMEs

Received : 09, June

Revised : 01, July

Accepted: 14, July

©2025 Nurmayahdi, Rinuastuti :
This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of viral marketing on consumer purchasing decisions on culinary MSME products in the city of Mataram, with customer engagement as a mediating variable, using a quantitative approach. Data were collected from 134 respondents, and the research data were processed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method with the SmartPLS4 program. The results showed that viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, and customer engagement is proven to mediate the influence between the two variables. This research is expected to contribute to the marketing development of culinary MSMEs in Mataram city.

INTRODUCTION

The world's transition to the digital era has changed the way people live, especially with economic activities (Oktareza et al., 2024). The development of digitalization, as evidenced by internet usage, has produced significant figures year after year. According to data from the World Population Review, there have been 5.56 billion internet users worldwide in the last 10 years alone, around 69.5% of the global population. This represents a 29.1% increase since 2015, when there were approximately 2.95 billion internet users – 40.4% of the global population. Indonesia is one of the countries with the largest internet user base. According to data from the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII), approximately 79.5% of Indonesians have internet access. This massive number of internet users has created spaces filled with information on various topics. In the context of marketing, information about products ranging from beauty products to food products is easily accessible.

The surge in internet usage offers tremendous potential for economic activity, including promoting and selling products online, also known as digital marketing. Digital marketing operates not only in large markets dominated by big companies but also in smaller markets where Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) play an essential role in Indonesia's economy. (Aliyah, 2023). According to Hartono and Deny (2016), SMEs are business groups that operate independently and are owned by individuals or small groups. They have relatively small capital and are capable of producing only limited quantities of products. They can serve as an alternative source of employment for the community and support Indonesia's economic growth (Widjaja et al., 2018).

High internet usage directly impacts MSME players in both positive and challenging ways. For instance, insufficient knowledge to integrate digital technology into economic activities causes low competitiveness, which results from limited technological implementation skills and suboptimal product promotion outcomes (INDEF, 2024). On the other hand, the abundance of product alternatives offered by competitors provides consumers with multiple options that align with their needs and preferences, which makes products less noticeable and appealing. SMEs must highlight their products' advantages and uniqueness to attract consumer interest and encourage purchases (Haris et al., 2024).

MSME industries, particularly those in the culinary sector, have limited capacity to adopt technology in their business because of the rapid pace of technological changes, and the complexity of these technologies can make them less effective for other competitors (Sharabati et al., 2024). Besides that, new competitors who have begun implementing technology in their promotional activities pose a significant challenge in competing for consumer attention (Barus

et al., 2023). In Mataram City, it shows that SME culinary businesses still lack adequate mastery of social media, low promotional content output, and limited promotional content from influencers, despite the significant number of viewers for such content and influencers. This does not guarantee that social media users will make purchases of the products. In addition, the lack of consistency in posting promotional content is a key factor in the low level of audience engagement, as evidenced by the limited insights into content metrics such as likes, comments, and shares.

Digital marketing provides opportunities for small-to-medium enterprise (SME) entrepreneurs, this is proven by the large number of culinary SMEs using digital platforms as a tool for promotion and sales, such as social media, which offer extensive market reach. Through data on social media activity, they can also analyze consumer activities in real time (Khairunnisa & Dwi, 2024). As part of digital marketing, social media provides culinary SMEs with an attractive promotional medium (Erwin, 2023). The increase in active social media users significantly impacts public discussion over time. This phenomenon attracts many people to join the discussion, making the topic more noticeable and widely recognized. This is commonly known as viral marketing. In the context of digital marketing, viral marketing must be appealing to heighten consumers' curiosity about the product and enable them to understand it better (Erwin, 2023).

Viral marketing is a powerful tool that can rapidly disseminate content through social media platforms. It plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behavior and decision-making. By highlighting information in a way that is easily accessible and appealing to consumers, it can effectively capture and sustain their interest (Jumbri et al., 2025). This behavior has given rise to public discussion spaces featuring interactive communication among internet users, known as E-wom or viral marketing (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Viral marketing is used to disseminate information in the form of social media posts, videos, photos, or other formats from one consumer to another voluntarily (Kotler & Keller in Fauziyah et al., 2024), thereby creating a public discussion space that can generate brand awareness for a product.

The phenomenon of viral marketing generates interactions among social media users regarding a product, involving their emotions and decisions. These phenomena in social media usage enhance consumer engagement, particularly for small and medium-sized culinary businesses in promotional activities (Erwin, 2023). Customer engagement aims to build trust and actions such as purchasing decisions and word-of-mouth promotion (Sya'idah, 2022). This is crucial for businesses to gain broader recognition among consumers and potential customers and to expand their Business.

Promotional strategies using viral marketing techniques can yield significant results for product promotion activities (Pratiwi et al., 2023), as this strategy combines conventional and online methods in its execution, enabling promotional activities to be carried out effectively and on a large scale (Febrianto et al., 2023). With the proper application of the strategy, this will attract significant attention from consumers to participate in the promotional campaign, which then influences their emotions in making purchasing decisions.

Despite its increasing relevance and potential to influence consumer purchasing decisions, viral marketing has yielded inconsistent results in previous studies. For example, Mustikasari (2019) and Razali (2023) discovered a positive correlation between viral marketing and purchasing decisions on Instagram, whereas other studies, such as those by Fajriyah et al. (2023) and Pratiwi et al. (2024), revealed negative correlations between viral marketing and customer engagement. These conflicting results underscore the need for further research to understand the true impact of viral marketing on consumer purchasing decisions, especially in the context of culinary MSMEs in Mataram City, where businesses struggle to adapt to technology and digital promotion.

Additionally, the role of customer engagement as a mediating variable has largely been overlooked in the existing literature. Customer interaction, emotional involvement, and sharing behaviour on social media are crucial in converting viral content into purchasing decisions. The absence of this variable in previous studies may have led to incomplete insights into the dynamics of viral marketing.

This study aims to address this gap by re-examining the effect of viral marketing on consumer decisions regarding culinary SME products in Mataram City. Formulating specific research questions and hypotheses will allow this study to provide more understanding of how MSMEs can effectively leverage viral marketing strategies to drive purchasing decisions through customer engagement.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Purchasing Decision

The purchase decision is the process of a customer to buy a product based on information they gather about several alternative brands or products, which they evaluate and select as the best options (Gunarsih 2021). The purchasing decision involves the stages consumers go through, starting from recognizing needs, gathering product information, evaluating relevant options, eliminating unsuitable choices, selecting the most appropriate product, and ultimately deciding to make a purchase (Engel in Zed et al., 2025).

The purchasing decision is a process of customer to buy a product based on information they gather about several alternative or product, the process

might be complex than it looks, customer have to collecting some information from the products, and evaluate and selecting the best option between the products (Gunarsih, 2021). Engel in Zed et al., (2025) outline the purchasing decision involves the stages consumers go through, evaluating relevant option, which is include the recognizing needs, gathering information of products, eliminating unsuitable choices, selecting the most appropriate product and suddenly deciding to make a purchase of the products. This model known as AIDA (Attention, Interest Desire, Action) The AIDA model, proposed by Elmo Lewis in 1898, is a seminal model of advertising effect. AIDA, an acronym representing the four fundamental principles of persuasive communication, stands for attention, interest, desire, and action. The text delineates the psychological progression consumers undergo from the initial encounter with an advertisement to the eventual act of making a purchase. The AIDA model is a widely utilized framework in the domains of advertising planning and evaluation, with the primary objective of assisting advertisers in the development of effective promotional messages (Liu et al., 2025).

As the one of the crucial elements in measuring marketing performance where aims to see the result of the marketing operational process (Lestari et al., 2024) purchasing decision measured the customer interest by how much they would be willingness to spend on a product. The higher the purchase amount, the more favourable the purchasing decision is considered (Putri, 2024). There are several indicators that can influence consumer purchasing decisions, including: purchase stability, purchase considerations, and the alignment of needs and desires (Amrullah, 2016).

Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is a strategy that uses social networks to achieve specific marketing goals. The main objective is to introduce a product to a large audience (Ridho, 2022). Viral marketing can be likened to a virus that spreads quickly because marketing messages can be conveyed quickly and at minimal cost (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Viral marketing has historically focused on word-of-mouth communication, whereby individuals share their experiences and recommendations with their networks. Digital technology has transformed this landscape, however, by enabling marketers to integrate traditional word-of-mouth strategies with digital tools to reach a broader audience. In the modern business landscape, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have emerged as highly effective tools for viral marketing campaigns. These digital platforms offer an unprecedented opportunity for brands to engage directly with consumers, fostering a sense of personal

connection and motivating shared content, thereby amplifying the reach and impact of their messages.

The effectiveness of viral marketing lies in its ability to capture consumer attention and foster engagement. Thus, viral marketing attracts consumer attention. Additionally, it can help consumers find information about products that align with their preferences, making it easier for them to decide to purchase a product (Fauziyah et al., 2024) The utilization of electronic commerce in the context of search engine activity warrants further investigation. Product information facilitates the search process by offering a variety of features, including search and price category filters. This expedites and enhances the efficacy of product elimination, enabling consumers to swiftly reach decision to making a purchase. Indicators for measuring viral marketing include: reach, conversion, brand awareness, and customer loyalty (Pasaribu et al. 2023).

Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is a comprehensive concept that encompasses the interactions and relationships between consumers and companies or entrepreneurs. In the current digital era, customer engagement has evolved to include new dimensions, primarily through social media platforms and online channels. These platforms serve as vital spaces where consumers can interact with brands, share their experiences, and express their opinions. Rohadian (2019) asserts that customer engagement is comprised of various integral components, including actions like liking, commenting, sharing content, and participating in discussions.

The fundamental objective of customer engagement is to exert influence over consumers' psychology and motivation, thereby ultimately shaping their product preferences and driving favourable outcomes for brands and business entities (Said, 2018). Engaged customers have been shown to develop a sense of loyalty and attachment to a brand, which can result in increased purchasing behaviour and long-term relationships. This emotional connection is of paramount importance, as it fosters trust and encourages consumers to advocate for the brand within their own networks.

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that customer engagement fosters the establishment of emotional bonds between consumers and the brands with which they interact. The emotional connections forged through these experiences are of paramount importance in shaping consumer preferences, thus influencing the decisions individuals make regarding purchasing. When consumers feel a personal connection to a brand, they are more likely to choose that brand over competitors, even in the face of similar products or pricing. This emotional engagement can be cultivated through various strategies, including storytelling,

personalized marketing, and community-building initiatives. The successful establishment of a sense of belonging and community among consumers by brands can result in a substantial enhancement in customer loyalty and retention. According to Kusdianti et al. (2024), indicators of customer engagement include identification, attention, enthusiasm, and absorption.

The influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions

The dissemination of information can be expedited by leveraging an effective viral marketing strategy (Ridho, 2022). Research conducted by Rimbasari (2023) suggests a positive and significant relationship between viral marketing and consumer purchasing decisions, attributable to trends that consistently underscore viral content. These trends facilitate consumer access to content, fostering an inclination to try new products. This study finds support in the extant literature, specifically study by Irawan (2019), who concluded that viral marketing variables exert a significant impact on purchasing decisions among users of Oppo smartphone products in Makassar City.

H1: Viral Marketing Has a Positive and Significant Influence on Purchasing Decisions

The Influence of viral marketing on customer engagement

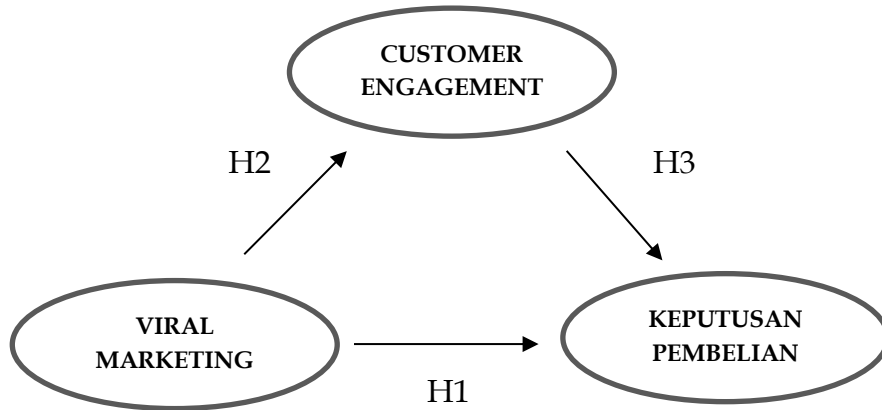
A high level of viral marketing has been shown to lead to consumer interest, as indicated by interaction with the product. Ridho's (2022) findings indicate that the implementation of viral marketing, particularly through the use of influencers and giveaway strategies in content distribution, exerts a positive and significant impact on customer engagement. This phenomenon amplifies the probability of content disseminating rapidly and attaining substantial reach, thereby yielding notable outcomes. However, this phenomenon exclusively pertains to giveaway content; regular content does not generate significant engagement.

H2: Viral Marketing Has a Positive and Significant Impact on Customer Engagement

The Influence of customer engagement on Purchase decision

The engagement of consumers in business activities is an integral component of effective business management. The establishment of trust between customers and products or brands is a critical component of customer engagement, as previously outlined by Devanny et al. in 2022. This research aligns with Fahmi's (2024) study, which posits that active customer engagement with products or brands tends to yield significant results that influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

H3: Customer engagement has a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions.



Source: Research Data

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative method with a causal research approach, which is related to determining the cause and effect of a phenomenon. The aim is to understand the relationship between exogenous variables (X), mediating variables (Z), and endogenous variables (Y) (Situmorang, 2022: 23). A survey method using questionnaires as the primary data source was used, which was distributed to respondents. The population in this study consists of social media users who have made purchases of culinary SME products promoted through social media and reside in Mataram City. The sampling technique used in this study is non-probability sampling with the purposive sampling method. Since the population size is unknown, the minimum sample size for this study is determined. The sample size should be 5-10 times the number of indicators to be analyzed (Ferdinand, 2014). With 11 indicators, the minimum sample size required is $10 \times 11 = 110$.

Table 1. Definition Operational Variable

Variabel	Definisi	Indikator	Item
Viral marketing	A marketing strategy that uses social networks to spread information quickly.	Reach	Products are often seen by consumers.
			Many people know about the product.
		Conversion	Interest in buying arises.
			Viral content makes consumers want to try to buy

		Brand awareness	Consumers know the product well from viral content on social media.
			Viral content makes consumers recognize the product.
		Customer loyalty	Desire to consume products regularly
			Desire to recommend products to others
Keputusan pembelian	The process of consumers making purchasing decisions based on information about products	Purchase stability	Consumers feel confident in buying the product
			Consumers are confident in their decision to buy the product.
		Purchase consideration	Product purchases are made spontaneously by consumers.
			Consumers choose products directly.
		Compability of needs and desires	Products match consumer preferences.
			Consumer preferences align with viral content recommendations.
Customer engagement	Efforts to build interactions between consumers and businesses to build consumer preferences for products	identification	Product reflects the consumer's personality
			Consumer preferences match the product.
		Attention	Consumer interest in product information
			Consumers take the time to look at product information.
		enthusiasm	Consumers follow product activities or promotions.
			Consumers enjoy participating in product activities.
		absorption	Consumers' full engagement in interaction with product content.

			Consumers feel happy interacting with product content.
--	--	--	--

The data collection method is carried out with a sample survey with data collection techniques in the form of a questionnaire, the data collection tool uses a questionnaire distributed in the form of a google form to consumer respondents of culinary MSME products in the city of Mataram with questions about how influential marketing through viral marketing on social media, consumer engagement with products/customer engagement in influencing consumer decisions to buy a product from culinary MSMEs in Mataram City.

RESULTS

Respondents in this study were dominated by women with a percentage of 61.94%, most of whom were students, indicating that this research sample was dominated by academics, in terms of income, the majority of respondents had an income of less than Rp.500,000 (44.78%), besides that in terms of preferences for using social media, the majority of respondents used both social media, such as TikTok and Instagram as their main platforms (81.34%).

Table 2. Respondent Characteristic

Characteristic		Person	Percentage
Age	13 - 17 Years	2	1.49%
	18 - 22 Years	112	83,58%
	23 - 29 Years	19	14.18%
	30 Years above	1	0.75%
Social Media Preference	Tiktok	4	2,99
	Instagram	21	15,67%
	Both	109	81,34%
Gender	Male	51	38.06%
	Female	83	61.94%
Education	Junior High School	2	1.49%
	High School	89	64.6%
	S1	4	29.9%
	D3	37	2.8%
	S2	2	1.4%
Income	<Rp.500.000	60	44,78%
	Rp.500.000 - Rp.1.000.000	27	21,15%
	Rp.1.000.000 - Rp.1.500.000	7	5,22%
	Rp.1.500.000 - Rp.2.000.000	2	1,49%
	Rp.2.000.000 - Rp.2.500.000	4	2,99%
	Rp.2.500.000 - Rp.3.000.000	5	2.73%

	> Rp.3.000.000	17	12,69%
	Others	12	8,96%
Profession	Student,	113	86.2%
	Entrepreneur	8	4.2%
	Civil Servant	2	1.4%
	Private Sector Worker	8	6.3%
	Others	3	0.7%

Source: Research data processed using SmartPLS

The results in this study were processed and analyzed using SmartPLS 4, which produced data such as Loading Factor, Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), as well as direct and indirect hypothesis testing.

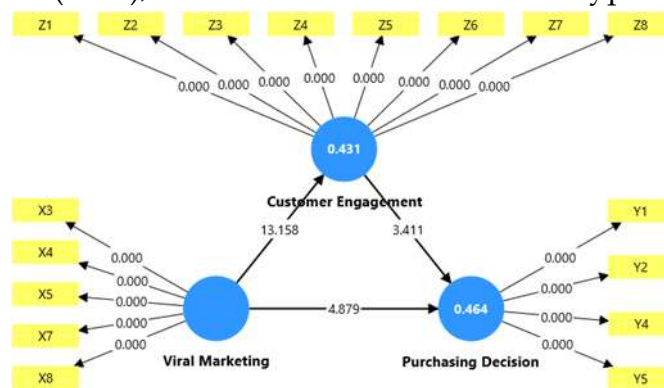


Figure 2. Result of Bootstrapping

Loading Factors

Loading factors are the relationship between items in the indicators of each variable, where this relationship aims to elaborate on how well the variable measurement items are (Hair et al, 2021).

Table 3. Outer Loadings Result

Item	Variable	Outer Loading	Description
X3	Viral Marketing	0,786	Valid
X4		0,728	Valid
X5		0,702	Valid
X7		0,827	Valid
X8		0,815	Valid
Y1	Purchasing Decision	0,820	Valid
Y2		0,824	Valid
Y4		0,773	Valid
Y5		0,754	Valid

Z1		0,762	Valid
Z2		0,832	Valid
Z3		0,721	Valid
Z4	Customer Engagement	0,796	Valid
Z5		0,841	Valid
Z6		0,823	Valid
Z7		0,826	Valid
Z8		0,815	Valid

Source: Data Research Using SmartPLS 4

Based on the table of outer loading results above, it indicates that some question items do not reach 0.7, such as X1, X2, X6, Y3, and Y6, so they are declared invalid, then these items are excluded from the data analysis process in the future. Conversely, other data shows validity with values above 0.7, which indicates a strong contribution in measuring each latent variable.

Composite Reliability

Composite reliability aims to measure how far the reliability of variables with a minimum value of 0.7, in addition to composite reliability, other measures such as Cronbach's alpha can be used as an illustration of the level of reliability or internal consistency of reliability (Yamin, 2023).

Table 4. Composite Reliability Result

Variabel	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Description
Customer Engagement	0,921	0,922	Reliable
Purchasing Decision	0,804	0,803	Reliable
Viral Marketing	0,832	0,843	Reliable

Source: Research data processed using SmartPLS4

In this test, each variable meets the standards of internal reliability consistency as indicated by the Cronbach's alpha value and also composite reliability above 0.7. The viral marketing variable produces a cornbach's alpha value of 0.921 and a composite reliability of 0.922, this value being the largest among other variables, the purchase decision produces a cornbach's alpha of 0.804 with a composite reliability of 0.803, while the customer engagement variable produces a cornbach's alpha of 0.832 and a composite reliability of 0.843. The results of this test indicate that each indicator item is reliable in future tests.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measures how far the variable can interpret the variation of each measurement item owned by the variables, this measurement can also visualize how well the variable converges. According to the opinion of Hair et al (2021), the value of Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is approximately 0.5 or higher, which indicates adequate convergent validity.

Table. 5 Average Variance Extracted (AVE) Result

Variabel	Average Variance Extracted
Customer Engagement	0,645
Purchasing Decision	0,629
Viral Marketing	0,598

Source: Research data processed using SmartPLS4

The results of each variable show the Average Variance Extracted value, which meets the minimum value criteria of more than 0.5 with the customer engagement variable which has the highest value among other variables, namely 0.645. Then other variables such as purchasing decisions produce a value of 0.629 and viral marketing produces a value of 0.598, both show adequate convergent validity, and the results of this value indicate that the indicators in each variable are able to be interpreted properly.

R-Square

R-square measurement aims to measure and describe how much variance in endogenous variables can be interpreted by exogenous variables (Yamin, 2023).

Table. 6 R-Square Result

Variabel	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
Customer Engagement	0,431	0,427
Purchasing Decision	0,464	0,455

Source: Research data processed using SmartPLS4

Based on the data above, it shows that the variation in customer engagement can be interpreted by exogenous variables with an R-Square value of 0.431, meaning that 43.1% of the variance in the customer engagement variable can be explained by exogenous variables, while the Adjusted R-Square value is 0.427 which is a more appropriate value adjustment to consider the number of indicators. Purchasing decisions have an R-Square value of 0.464, which explains

that 46.4% of the variance in purchasing decision variables can be explained by exogenous variables, with an Adjusted R-Square value of 0.455 as a more appropriate adjustment value.

Direct Effects Hypothesis Testing

Direct hypothesis testing looks at how the direct effect of endogenous variables on exogenous variables with a hypothesis that is considered to have a positive and significant effect if the T-statistic value exceeds 1.96 and the significance value (P-value) is below 0.05.

Table. 7 Hasil Direct Effects Hypothesis Testing

Hipotesis	T Statistik	P-Values	Decsription
Customer Engagement -> Purchasing Decision	3,411	0,001	Diterima
Viral Marketing -> Customer Engagement	13,158	0,000	Diterima
Viral Marketing -> Purchasing Decision	4,789	0,000	Diterima

Source: Research data processed using SmartPLS4

From the results of this direct hypothesis testing, it shows that all variable hypotheses are accepted which indicates a strong and significant relationship between variables, with the hypothesis between viral marketing and customer engagement as the highest value of 13,158 with P-Values of 0.000, this value indicates that the relationship between variables is very strong and has a significant effect. Likewise, the relationship between customer engagement and purchasing decisions whose T Statistic value is 3.411 with P Values of 0.001 and also the relationship between viral marketing with purchasing decisions with a T statistic of 4.789 and a P-Values of 0.000, the hypothesis of both is indicated to be accepted and influences each other positively and significantly.

Indirect Effects Hypothesis Testing

Indirect hypothesis testing looks at how influential the mediating variable is on the endogenous variable, the hypothesis is considered to have a positive indirect effect and is also significant if the T-statistic value exceeds 1.96 and the significance value (P-value) is below 0.05.

Table. 8: Direct Effects Hypothesis Testing Result

Hipotesis	T Statistik	P-Values	Decsription
-----------	-------------	----------	-------------

Viral Marketing -> Customer Engagement -> Purchasing Decision	3,204	0,001	Diterima
---	-------	-------	----------

Source: Research data processed using SmartPLS4

From the results of testing this indirect hypothesis, it shows that the effect of the customer engagement variable as a mediating variable in the relationship between viral marketing and purchasing decisions is positive and significant, this is evidenced by the T-statistic value of 3.204 which exceeds the minimum value of the T statistic of 1.96 with a P-value of 0.000 below 0.05. This value indicates that customer engagement plays an important role in strengthening it towards purchasing decisions so that the hypothesis can be accepted, consumers recognize and know information about culinary MSME products from viral content on social media, then their attention to the product arises which is followed by further exploration of the product to build preferences to decide on a purchase.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Viral Marketing on Purchasing Decision

The findings in this study suggest that the viral marketing variable has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions on MSME products in the city of Mataram, this can be proven through the T-statistic value of 4.789 with a P-Value of 0.000, both of which meet the statistical significance criteria. These results indicate that viral marketing is able to spread information in a short time like a virus at minimal cost (Pratiwi, 2023) and increases consumer awareness and influences them to browse product information according to their preferences making it easier for them to decide to make a purchase.

This statement is in line with the results of research conducted by Fauziyah et al (2024) which shows that there is a positive and significant effect of viral marketing on the decision of emina brand beauty products in Indonesia, the alignment of these results strengthens the evidence that viral content can attract the attention of consumers at large and encourage consumers to take purchasing action on the product being promoted.

The Influence of Viral Marketing on Customer Engagement

The findings in this study reveal that viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer engagement on culinary MSME products in Mataram city, this can be observed in the T-statistic value of 13.158 with a P-value of 0.000, which meets the minimum value of the T-statistic and also the P-value. This result shows a very strong relationship between marketing through viral content on social media and consumer involvement in marketing activities for

culinary MSME products, content is able to reach consumers widely and following consumer preferences which leads them to interact with culinary MSME products through digital activities on social media which then forms consumer preferences for culinary MSME products (Salsabila, 2018) Indirectly, this consumer involvement also leads them to participate in marketing activities to form relationships between MSMEs and consumers to strengthen the effectiveness of promotional strategies.

This finding is reinforced by research conducted by Erwin (2022), which suggests that viral marketing has a positive influence on customer engagement of consumers on social media, viral marketing strategies can reach consumers widely at minimal cost, and make it easy for businesses to involve consumers in their product marketing activities.

The Influence of Customer Engagement on Purchasing Decision

The findings in this study reveal that customer engagement has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions on culinary MSME products in the city of Mataram, this can be proven by the T-Statistic value of 3.411 and a P-Value of 0.001, consumers who are involved in marketing indirectly build emotional bonds which then shape their preferences as reinforcement for deciding to purchase culinary MSME products (Kusdianti, 2024).

These results are in line with research conducted by Syalsabila & Hermina. (2023) which suggests that customer engagement can influence consumer purchasing decisions on culinary and fashion MSME products in West Java province, the higher the level of consumer engagement, the higher the potential to influence consumer emotions to carry out purchasing activities on MSME products, this is due to consumer attachment to the product so that they do not need to explore other product alternatives and only stick to one product.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study focuses on the substantial influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions through customer engagement on consumers of culinary MSME products in the city of Mataram, the results of this study suggest that the application of appropriate and effective viral marketing strategies can reach a very broad market and also target a target market that is relevant to the characteristics of culinary MSME products, with this strategy the product can attract the attention of consumers and encourage them to actively explore further information about the product, this process then forms an emotional response for consumers which stimulates them to form a purchase decision. In addition, this study highlights how influential the mediation of customer engagement is between viral marketing variables and purchasing decisions, the results of which show that customer

engagement variables play an important role in strengthening the relationship between viral marketing and purchasing decisions.

based on the above discussion it is recommended that culinary MSME business actors adopt effective promotional strategies, particularly through digital marketing techniques such as viral marketing and customer engagement. By strategically leveraging these methodologies, MSMEs can optimize their market potential, garner consumer attention, and wield substantial influence over purchasing decisions. By embracing digital marketing, businesses can create compelling content that resonates with their target audience, fostering meaningful interactions that encourage consumers to purchase their products.

FURTHER STUDY

This research was conducted within a regional scope, which is limited to the Mataram city area, so that the findings produced have limitations in terms of generalization, and cannot be used as a reference for other regions or regions that have different characteristics and consumer behaviour. It is recommended that future research could be conducted with a wider area coverage or using comparative studies to identify how different culturistic and demographic impact the effectiveness of viral marketing to purchasing decision through customer engagement., and , also exploring other variable that capable to influencing purchasing decision such as Fear of Missing out (FoMo), advertising effectiveness, marketing campaign to in order to enrich the findings and be able to serve as a reference.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author sincerely expresses gratitude to Allah SWT for His blessings and guidance throughout the completion of this research. Deep appreciation is also extended to all individuals and institutions who contributed to this study. Special thanks to the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Mataram, for the academic and administrative support. The author is also thankful to the culinary MSME owners and consumers in Mataram City who willingly participated in the survey and interviews, providing valuable insights for this research. Finally, heartfelt appreciation is conveyed to supervisors and peers for their constructive feedback, encouragement, and assistance during the preparation of this manuscript.

REFERENCES

Abdul Haris, Sibelawanti, Imroah Muflichah, & Imelda Dian. (2024). Strategi Pemasaran Berbasis Digital Marketing dan Ragam Produk Pada UMKM

- Gendzo Garment Untuk Meningkatkan Minat Beli Serta Pengaruhnya Pada Keputusan Pembelian Konsumen. *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi, Akuntansi, Dan Pajak*, 1(3), 104–117. <https://doi.org/10.61132/jieap.v1i3.325>
- Aliyah, A. H. (2022). Peran Usaha Mikro Kecil dan Menengah (UMKM) untuk Meningkatkan Kesejahteraan Masyarakat. *WELFARE Jurnal Ilmu Ekonomi*, 3(1), 64–72. <https://doi.org/10.37058/wlfr.v3i1.4719>
- Amrullah Amrullah, Siburian, P. S., & Saida Zainurossalamia. (2016). Pengaruh kualitas produk dan kualitas layanan terhadap keputusan pembelian sepeda motor honda. 13(2), 99–118. <https://doi.org/10.29264/jkin.v13i2.826>
- Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia. (2024, February 7). APJII Jumlah Pengguna Internet Indonesia Tembus 221 Juta Orang. [apjii.or.id. https://apjii.or.id/berita/d/apjii-jumlah-pengguna-internet-indonesia-tembus-221-juta-orang](https://apjii.or.id/berita/d/apjii-jumlah-pengguna-internet-indonesia-tembus-221-juta-orang)
- Erwin, E., Suade, Y. K. M., Tanesia, C. Y., Sharon, S., & Maichal, M. (2023). Customer Engagement Usaha Kuliner; Kontribusi Marketing Content dan Efek Viral Marketing Campaigns. *INOBISS: Jurnal Inovasi Bisnis Dan Manajemen Indonesia*, 6(3), 383–397. <https://doi.org/10.31842/jurnalinobis.v6i3.285>
- Etty Zuliawati Zed, Selvi Indriani, & Sefi Fefiana Wati. (2025). Pengaruh Digital Marketing terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Konsumen di Era E-Commerce. *Jurnal Penelitian Ekonomi Manajemen Dan Bisnis*, 4(1), 171–180. <https://doi.org/10.55606/jekombis.v4i1.4740>
- Fajriyah, A., & Karnowati, N. B. (2022). Pengaruh viral marketing, electronic word of mouth, dan kepercayaan terhadap keputusan pembelian di Bangi Cafe Cilacap. Prosiding 16th Urecol: Seri Mahasiswa, 98–112. KONSORSIUM LPPM PTMA Koordinator Wilayah Jateng & DIY
- Fauziyah, Z., & Isnaeni Darmawan, D. (2024). PENGARUH VIRAL MARKETING TERHADAP KEPERCAYAAN KONSUMEN DAN DAMPAKNYA TERHADAP KEPUTUSAN PEMBELIAN. *Jurnal Inovasi Dan Kreativitas (JIKa)*, 4(1), 92–108. <https://doi.org/10.30656/jika.v4i1.8979>
- Febrianto, R., Survival, & Dewi, D. C. (2023). Pengaruh celebrity endorser dan viral marketing yang berimplikasi pada purchase intention dengan electronic word of mouth sebagai variabel mediasi. *Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen (JIM)*, 9(2), 168–182.

- Ferdinand, A. (2014). *Metode Penelitian Manajemen: Pedoman Penulisan untuk Skripsi, Tesis dan Disertasi Ilmu Manajemen*. Univ. Diponegoro Press.
- Gunarsih, C. M., Kalangi, J. A. F., & Tamengkel, L. F. (2021). *Pengaruh harga terhadap keputusan pembelian konsumen di Toko Pelita Jaya Buyungon Amurang*. *Productivity*, 2(1), 69–72.
- Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review*.
- Hartono, H., & Hartomo, D. D. (2016). FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI PERKEMBANGAN UMKM DI SURAKARTA. *Jurnal Bisnis Dan Manajemen*, 14(1), 15. <https://doi.org/10.20961/jbm.v14i1.2678>
- Irawan, A. (2019). *Pengaruh viral marketing dan endorser terhadap keputusan pembelian dengan brand awareness sebagai variabel intervoening (Studi pada pengguna produk smartphone merek Oppo di Kota Makassar)* (Skripsi, Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar). Repositori UIN Alauddin. <https://repositori.uin-alauddin.ac.id/15876/>
- Khairunisa, A. N., & Misidawati, D. N. (2024). *Pemanfaatan digital marketing dalam meningkatkan penjualan produk UMKM di Indonesia*. *Jurnal Sahmiyya*, 3(1), 184–190
- Isma Addi Jumbri, Pozi, A., Fauzan Fauzan, Jamal, F. N., Kurnianingrum, D., & Mulyani Karmagatri. (2025). Consumer Attitudes Towards Viral Marketing in Promoting Melaka's Historical and Culinary Tourism: A Quantitative Study. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, IX(II), 4134–4151. <https://doi.org/10.47772/ijriss.2025.9020323>
- Liu, X. T., & Zhang, Q. (2025). Optimizing Digital Advertising Effectiveness: An Empirical Study Integrating Two-Factor Theory and the AIDA Model. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Convergent Research Interchange*, 11(1), 121–131. <https://doi.org/10.47116/apjcri.2025.01.09>
- Mustikasari, A., & Widaningsih, S. (2019, May 1). *The Influence of Viral Marketing toward Brand Awareness and Purchase Decision*. *Www.atlantis-Press.com*; Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icebef-18.2019.138>
- Oktareza, D., Noor, A., Saputra, E., & Yulianingrum, A. V. (2024). *Transformasi Digital 4.0: Inovasi yang menggerakkan perubahan global*. *Cendekia: Jurnal Hukum, Sosial & Humaniora*, 2(3), 661–672. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12742216>

- Putri, T. A., & Djawoto. (2024). *Pengaruh kualitas produk, citra merek, dan harga terhadap keputusan pembelian smartphone merek Vivo (Studi kasus terhadap Generasi Z Kota Sidoarjo)*. *Jurnal Ilmu dan Riset Manajemen*, 13(6). <https://jurnal.stiesia.ac.id/index.php/jirm/article/view/19>
- Rimbasari, A., Rina Eka Widjayanti, & Agniya Thahira. (2023). PENGARUH VIRAL MARKETING DAN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING TERHADAP KEPUTUSAN PEMBELIAN DI PLATFORM TIKTOK. *Capital*, 6(2), 457-457. <https://doi.org/10.25273/capital.v6i2.15304>
- Rohadian, S., & Amir, M. T. (2019). UPAYA MEMBANGUN CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT MELALUI MEDIA SOSIAL INSTAGRAM. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Management and Industry (JEMI)*, 2(4). <https://doi.org/10.36782/jemi.v2i4.1925>
- Said, S. R., Rania Ariqah Yasir, & Kristaung, R. (2024). Faktor Penggunaan Kosmetik Halal Di Kalangan Muslim Generasi Z. *JURNAL MANAJEMEN DAN BISNIS*, 3(1), 118-131. <https://doi.org/10.36490/jmdb.v3i1.1293>
- Sharabati, A.-A. A., Ali, A., Allahham, M. I., Hussein, A. A., Alheet, A. F., & Mohammad, A. S. (2024). The Impact of Digital Marketing on the Performance of SMEs: An Analytical Study in Light of Modern Digital Transformations. *Sustainability*, 16(19), 8667-8667. MDPI. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su16198667>
- Situmorang, Syafrizal H. (2022) *Riset pemasaran 23*. USU Press, ISBN: 979-458-
- Sya'idah, E. H., & Jauhari, T. (2022). PENGARUH CONTENT MARKETING TERHADAP CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT PADA TESTOEFL.ID. *Jurnal Ecoment Global*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.35908/jeg.v7i2.2193>
- Syalsabila, N., & Hermina, N. (2023). The Interrelations Of Celebrity Endorsement, Social Media Use, And Customer Engagement In Achieving Customer Purchase Decision. *Jurnal Manajerial*, 10(01), 1. <https://doi.org/10.30587/jurnalmanajerial.v10i1.4650>
- Yani Restiani Widjadja, Doni Purnama Alamsyah, Heni Rohaeni, & Bambang Sukanjie. (2018). *Peranan Kompetensi SDM UMKM Dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja UMKM Desa Cilayung Kecamatan Jatinangor, Sumedang*. 1(3). <https://doi.org/10.31294/jabdinas.v1i3.4012>