THE INFLUENCE OF VIRAL MARKETING ON PURCHASE DECISIONS MODERATED BY CELEBRITY ENDORSERS
(A Study on Skintific Consumers in Denpasar City)

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Abstract

The trend of using cosmetic and skincare products in Indonesia has increased since the Covid-19 pandemic, in line with the growing public awareness of self-care. Skintific, as a beauty brand, has leveraged viral marketing and celebrity endorsers to promote its products, particularly among the youth. This study aims to analyze the influence of viral marketing on purchase decisions and examine the role of celebrity endorsers as a moderating variable. The research was conducted on Skintific consumers in Denpasar City, with a total sample of 120 respondents determined using purposive sampling. The data analysis technique used was Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA). The results indicate that viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions. Additionally, celebrity endorsers are proven to moderate the relationship between viral marketing and purchase decisions, where the presence of celebrities strengthens the influence of viral marketing in encouraging consumers to make purchases. These findings contribute to the reinforcement of consumer behavior theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory in the context of digital marketing for beauty products.

Keywords: Viral Marketing, Celebrity Endorser, Purchase Decision

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology has significantly facilitated the dissemination and retrieval of information. According to a 2024 APJII survey, internet penetration in Indonesia reached 79.5%, indicating that the internet has become an integral part of daily life. This development has made it easier to access information on products and services, particularly in the beauty industry (Ardianti & Widiartanto, 2019). In Indonesia, the beauty industry has experienced significant growth alongside the rising awareness of skincare use. Skincare involves activities that support skin health, alleviate facial skin conditions, and enhance appearance.

The trend of cosmetic and skincare products has risen since the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on a 2020 BPS report, the cosmetics industry grew by 5.59%. According to Statista (Mutia, 2022), the revenue generated from the beauty and personal care market reached USD 7.23 billion or IDR 111.83 trillion in 2022. The market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.81% from 2022 to

2027. As consumer demand for high-quality and innovative skincare increases, both local and international skincare brands in Indonesia face intense competition. Skintific, one of the international skincare brands, has gained considerable popularity in Indonesia. According to Kompas.com, Skintific has been on the rise since its introduction in early 2022, largely due to its unique product formulations.

The name Skintific is a combination of "skin" and "scientific," reflecting the brand's commitment to serving all individuals seeking effective skincare. The brand's use of high-quality active ingredients, intelligent formulations, and advanced technology has garnered a strong following in Indonesia and other Asian countries. This success is also attributed to Skintific's effective promotional strategies and responsiveness to current trends (Andirwan et al., 2023). These strategies have secured a significant market share, with Skintific becoming one of the best-selling moisturizers in Indonesia.

However, data from Compas indicate a decline in Skintific's sales from September 2022 to mid-April 2023. The Compas team analysis noted the strong performance of Whitelab, a competing brand, which surpassed Skintific's market position. This demonstrates the intense competition not only among local brands but also among imported ones. As a result, companies such as Skintific have begun to enhance their marketing strategies to influence consumer purchase decisions.

According to Kotler and Keller (2016:194), a purchase decision is part of consumer behavior that involves selecting, buying, and using goods or services. This process begins when a consumer identifies a need, triggered by internal or external stimuli, in order to satisfy desires. Companies can influence consumers by building communication through marketing strategies and product innovation. Purchase decisions are shaped by products, technology, media, and promotional tools that drive consumer behavior (Rimbasari et al., 2023). Before making a purchase, consumers typically seek product information to build confidence. Factors influencing purchase decisions include accessibility, store and product appearance, availability of information, product quality, pricing, attractive promotions, customer service, user testimonials, friendliness, and delivery speed (Dewi et al., 2022). An effective marketing campaign that captures consumer attention can stimulate purchase interest.

Promotion, according to Kotler and Keller (2016:582), functions to inform, persuade, and influence customer decisions. One effective promotional tool is **viral** marketing, which aims to spread information about a product or service rapidly through the internet, email, social media, and advertising. Viral marketing relies on emotionally engaging content that encourages users to share it. When successful, it boosts consumer activity on social media platforms, increasing product discussions and brand awareness. Viral marketing is perceived as a powerful strategy for introducing products and boosting sales (Rimbasari et al., 2023).

Skintific has adopted viral marketing as a key strategy to enhance brand awareness and influence consumer purchase decisions. Studies show that TikTok has surpassed other platforms such as Instagram and Facebook in popularity, due to its video-sharing features that allow engagement through likes and comments (Endarwati & Ekawarti, 2021). Leveraging TikTok, Skintific has successfully reached a

wider audience and generated buzz in the skincare market, driving consumer interest and purchases based on widely shared content (Razali et al., 2023).

Skintific implements viral marketing through digital tools such as TikTok live streaming, affiliate programs, endorsements, and user-generated content. TikTok's algorithm enables rapid and wide content dissemination, making it an effective platform for promotional messages (Kompasiana.com). Viral marketing acts as a strategic approach, while tools like endorsements and livestreams function as supportive media. However, not all promotional content becomes viral. Viral content must capture attention, be widely shared, and elicit significant market response (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). An example is the 5x Ceramide Barrier Repair Moisture Gel, which went viral and drove significant sales through TikTok Shop, leading to a broader industry trend toward ceramide-based skincare (Hudiyono & Ismail, 2023).

Based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory (McQuail, 1994), individuals actively use media to fulfill needs such as information and entertainment. Social media, especially TikTok, serves as both an entertainment platform and a source of product information. Informative viral content can satisfy user needs and stimulate interest in the product. Consumers today seek rapid access to product information, and viral marketing helps businesses meet this demand, thereby influencing purchase decisions (Anindya & Indriastuti, 2023).

Studies on the relationship between viral marketing and purchase decisions have shown mixed results. While some (Auliyah et al., 2023; Irawan & Misbach, 2020) confirm a positive effect, others (Katiandagho & Hidayatullah, 2023) argue that viral marketing may lose impact amid competing viral content. Therefore, this study introduces celebrity endorser as a moderating variable. Marketing becomes more effective when supported by celebrity endorsements that enhance consumer confidence (Munawaroh et al., 2022).

According to the Uses and Gratifications Theory (McQuail, 1994), consumers use media to satisfy needs for information, identity, social integration, and entertainment. In this context, celebrity-endorsed content can inform users about product specifications, reflect personal identity, and foster social engagement. This leads to stronger purchase decisions, as consumers perceive the endorsed product to align with their values and needs. Belch and Belch (2019:178) define an endorser as a public figure who conveys advertising messages, influencing consumer attitudes and behaviors. Celebrities are considered more appealing than non-celebrities due to credibility, attractiveness, and charisma (Andrianto et al., 2016). However, employing a celebrity with strong popularity and credibility requires substantial investment (Suprapti in Mardiana, 2010:173). Skintific applies this strategy by collaborating with celebrities such as Tasya Farasya, Nicholas Saputra, **and** Raline Shah to build consumer trust through product reviews.

Tasya Farasya, a well-known beauty influencer, effectively promoted Skintific products, leading to increased consumer interest and purchases. This demonstrates the success of Skintific's endorsement strategy. The effectiveness of a celebrity endorser depends on their acceptance and compatibility with the target audience (Belch & Belch, 2017). The delivery style of each influencer, influenced by internal factors, also affects consumer attitudes and ultimately purchase decisions.

Viral marketing offers several advantages in online advertising, such as targeting specific consumers and triggering purchases (Andora & Yusuf, 2021). Consistent with Pratama et al. (2022), viral marketing significantly influences purchase decisions. Key factors include message efficacy, accessibility, consumer dependency, and security (Haryani & Motwani, 2015).

Another key marketing strategy is the use of celebrity endorsers, which has been shown to significantly impact consumer purchase decisions (Munawaroh et al., 2022). Celebrity-generated viral content can influence followers' interest and stimulate purchases (Takaya, 2017). However, previous studies show varying results. Tri Wahyuni (2022) found a weak effect, while Samsudin et al. (2023) identified a significant influence. Similarly, Parmariza (2019) reported no effect of viral marketing, whereas Raturandang (2022) found a strong correlation. Motivated by these inconsistencies and limited prior explanations, this study seeks to further investigate the moderating role of celebrity endorsers and reassess the influence of viral marketing on purchase decisions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with an associative design to examine the relationship between viral marketing and purchase decisions, with celebrity endorser as the moderating variable (Sugiyono, 2024). The research was conducted in Denpasar City, selected due to its high internet penetration and social media usage, reaching 92.75% of residents aged five and above (BPS Kota Denpasar, 2024). The research object comprises users of Skintific products in Denpasar who meet specific criteria, such as having seen Skintific advertisements on social media and having made a purchase.

The study includes three main variables: viral marketing (independent variable), purchase decision (dependent variable), and celebrity endorser (moderating variable). The indicators are adapted from Mulyaputri & Sanaji (2021), Katiandagho & Hidayatullah (2023), and Bilqist (2024).

Sampling was conducted using non-probability purposive sampling, with a total of 120 respondents. Primary data were collected through questionnaires, while secondary data came from literature and official websites. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale and was tested for validity and reliability. Validity testing showed all indicators had correlation coefficients above 0.30, and reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha produced values above 0.60, indicating that the instrument is appropriate and consistent (Sugiyono, 2024).

Data analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis described respondent responses for each variable, while inferential analysis involved simple regression and Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) to test the moderating effect of celebrity endorser on the relationship between viral marketing and purchase decisions (Ghozali, 2018). The model was also tested for classical assumptions (normality and heteroscedasticity), F-test, t-test, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) to evaluate model fit and the contribution of independent variables. This comprehensive statistical validation aims to ensure accurate interpretation and reliable findings (Utama, 2016; Sugiyono, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Inferential Analysis Results
      Inferential statistics refer to statistical techniques used to analyze sample data and generalize the results to a broader population (Sugiyono, 2024). In this study, inferential statistics were employed to test the proposed hypotheses. The primary inferential technique used is the Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA).
Results of Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA)
      Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA), also known as interaction testing, is a specialized application of multiple linear regression where the regression equation includes interaction terms representing the multiplication of two or more independent variables (Ghozali, 2016). In this study, the interaction variable between viral marketing (X) and celebrity endorser (M) serves as the moderating variable. This interaction term illustrates the moderating effect of the celebrity endorser (M) on the relationship between viral marketing (X) and purchase decision (Y).

Table 1. Results of Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA)

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1,003	0.554		1,810	0.073
Viral Marketing	0.518	0.109	0.399	4,732	0.000
Celebrity Endorser	0.078	0.097	0.067	0.804	0.423
Viral Marketing * Celebrity Endorser	0.637	0.304	0.173	2,094	0.038

Source: Data attached to the author's thesis, 2025

      Based on the results of the MRA test in Table 1 above, the following equation can be written:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 Z + \beta_3 X_1 * Z + e..........$$
$$Y = 1.003 + 0.518X_1 + 0.078Z + 0.637X_1 * Z$$

      The regression equation shows the direction of each independent variable on the dependent variable after entering the moderating variable. The regression equation with the moderating variable can be described as follows:
1) The viral marketing variable (X) has a beta coefficient of 0.518. This coefficient is positive, meaning that the better the viral marketing perceived by consumers, the higher their purchasing decisions for Skintific products.
2) The interaction variable between viral marketing (X) and celebrity endorser (Z) has a beta coefficient of 0.637. This coefficient is positive, meaning that the presence of celebrity endorsers strengthens the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions for Skintific products.

Classical Assumption Test Results
      Classical assumption testing aims to further confirm the feasibility of the model created, especially for prediction purposes (Matama, 2016:99). A regression model is

considered good if it is independent of the classical regression assumptions, which include normality and heteroscedasticity tests.

a) Normality Test

Table 2. Normality Test Results

	Unstandardized Residual
N	120
Test Statistics	0.076
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.081

Source: Data attached to the author's thesis, 2025

Table 2 shows that the Asymp.sig.(2-tailed) value is 0.081. This indicates that the regression equation model is normally distributed because Asymp.sig.(2-tailed) is greater than the alpha value of 0.05.

b) Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test is used to determine whether there is inequality in residual variance in a regression model. A good regression model has homogeneous residual variance or does not show signs of heteroscedasticity, as its presence can lead to deviant prediction results. One way to detect heteroscedasticity is through the Glejser Test. If the test results show a significance value greater than 0.05 (α = 5%), then the model is considered not experiencing heteroscedasticity (Utama, 2016:112).

Table 3. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Variables		T	Sig.
Viral Marketing		-1,424	0.157
Celebrity Endorser		-.419	0.676
Viral Marketing * Celebrity Endorser		1,465	0.146

Source: Data attached to the author's thesis, 2025

Based on Table 3, it is shown that each model has a significance value greater than 5 percent (0.05). This indicates that the independent variables used in this study do not significantly influence the dependent variable, namely the absolute residual, and therefore this study is free from symptoms of heteroscedasticity.

F-Test Results (Model Feasibility Test)

Table 4. F Test Results

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5,409	3	1,803	11,177	.000b
	Residual	18,713	116	.161		
	Total	24,122	119			

Source: Data attached to the author's thesis, 2025

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that the significance value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 (0.000 < 0.05) so that the model is feasible or the independent variable is able to

explain the dependent variable, in other words the independent variable simultaneously influences the dependent variable.

Results of the Determinant Coefficient (R2)

Table 5. Results of the Determinant Coefficient Test

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0.474a	0.224	0.204	0.40165

Source: Data attached to the author's thesis, 2025

Based on Table 5, the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable indicated by the total determination value (Adjusted R Square) of 0.204 means that the variation of viral marketing variables and the interaction of viral marketing variables with celebrity endorsers are able to explain 20.4% of the variation in purchasing decision variables, while the remaining 79.6% is explained by other factors not included in the research model.

T-Statistic Test Results

The t-test statistic is used to determine the extent to which each independent variable individually influences the dependent variable. This test is performed by examining the t-value significance in the Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) output, displayed in Table 6 using SPSS. If the significance value is ≤ 0.05, H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, indicating a significant influence between the independent and dependent variables.

Table 6. Hypothesis Test Results (t-Test)

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1,003	0.554		1,810	0.073
Viral Marketing	0.518	0.109	0.399	4,732	0.000
Celebrity Endorser	0.078	0.097	0.067	0.804	0.423
Viral Marketing * Celebrity Endorser	0.637	0.304	0.173	2,094	0.038

Source: Data attached to the author's thesis, 2025

a) The influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions

Based on Table 6, it can be seen that the β value of 0.518 means that viral marketing has a positive direction towards purchasing decisions, if the viral marketing carried out by Skintific previously was good, then purchasing decisions will increase. The significance value for the viral marketing variable is 0.000 less

than 0.05 (0.002 ≤ 0.05) with a positive coefficient value of 0.518, so H1 is accepted. In other words, viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

b) The role of celebrity endorsers moderates the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions.

Based on Table 6, it can be seen that the β value of the interaction variable between viral marketing and celebrity endorsers is 0.637. This positive coefficient value indicates that celebrity endorsers act as a moderating variable, with a positive direction of the relationship or strengthening the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions. This means that the higher the involvement of celebrity endorsers, the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions will increase. The significance value for the interaction between viral marketing and celebrity endorsers is 0.038, less than 0.05 (0.015 ≤ 0.05), which means that celebrity endorsers have a direct influence on purchasing decisions. This shows that celebrity endorsers are included in the pure moderation category, where celebrity endorsers do not have a direct influence on purchasing decisions, but play a role in strengthening or weakening the influence of the independent variable (viral marketing) on the dependent variable (purchase decisions). In other words, the effectiveness of viral marketing in driving purchasing decisions will increase if supported by the presence of celebrity endorsers who are relevant and trusted by consumers. Thus, H2 is accepted, which means that celebrity endorsers are proven to strengthen the relationship between viral marketing and purchasing decisions.

Discussion
The Influence of Viral Marketing on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the results of the first hypothesis testing in this study, it shows that viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. This result implies that the better the viral marketing carried out by Skintific, the more it will have a real impact on increasing consumer purchasing decisions for Skintific products. Conversely, the worse the viral marketing carried out by Skintific, the lower the consumer purchasing decisions for Skintific products will be. Thus, the first hypothesis in this study is declared accepted.

Viral marketingThis includes opinions, product insights, understanding of product advantages, clarity of information, and the appeal of the content. Consumers need fast, accessible information about the products they plan to use. Viral marketing can help companies promote and inform the public about customer needs (Anindya and Indriastuti, 2023). Based on consumer behavior theory, viral marketing is a marketing stimulus that influences consumer purchasing behavior. Viral marketing strategies are effective in influencing consumer behavior, which increases product purchasing decisions.

The results of this study align with research conducted by Andora and Yusuf (2020), which showed a direct positive and significant influence between viral marketing and consumer purchasing decisions. These results align with research by Pratama et al. (2022) that found viral marketing had a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Irawan and Misbach (2020) demonstrated that viral

marketing influences purchasing decisions. Raturandang (2022) found a favorable correlation between viral marketing and purchasing decisions. Pasaribu et al. (2023) confirmed that viral marketing has a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

The Influence of Viral Marketing on Purchasing Decisions Moderated by Celebrity Endorsers

The results of the second hypothesis testing in this study indicate that celebrity endorsers can moderate the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions. These results indicate that the higher consumer trust in celebrity endorsers, the greater the influence of viral marketing in driving purchasing decisions. Conversely, if consumer trust in celebrity endorsers is low, the effectiveness of viral marketing in increasing purchasing decisions is also weakened. Therefore, the second hypothesis in this study is accepted.

In consumer behavior theory, which explains that purchasing decisions are influenced by psychological factors such as perception, celebrity endorsers serve as external reference sources that can shape consumers' positive perceptions of a product. The presence of celebrity endorsers whom consumers trust helps them feel confident, satisfied, and more informed, thus encouraging them to make purchasing decisions. The results of this study align with research conducted by Noviyana (2022), who argues that companies need celebrity endorsers who act as influencers and vloggers involved in the beauty industry to increase public trust in brands seen on social media. Research conducted by Hutapea and Nofrizal (2023) states that celebrity endorsers are intended to attract consumers' attention with the aim of influencing consumers to purchase products or services.

CONCLUSION

1. Viral marketinghas a positive and significant effect on Skintific purchasing decisions, which indicates that the better the viral marketing, the higher the purchasing decisions of Skintific products among consumers in Denpasar City.
2. Celebrity endorserhas been shown to moderate the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions, indicating that celebrity presence can strengthen the relationship between viral marketing and purchasing decisions. The higher the level of consumer trust or involvement in the celebrity endorser, the stronger the influence of viral marketing in encouraging consumers to purchase Skintific products in Denpasar City.

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