

## The Influence Of Viral Marketing And Influencer Marketing On Purchase Decision For Facetology Sunscreen Products With Online Customer Reviews As Mediating Variable

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji pengaruh viral marketing dan influencer marketing terhadap keputusan purchase decision facetology, dengan online customer review sebagai variable mediasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan metode purposive sampling, melibatkan 150 responden genZ dijepara yang sebelumnya telah membeli produk tersebut. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner daring dan dianalisis menggunakan structural equation modeling berbasis partial least squares (SEM-PLS) dan menggunakan perangkat lunak smartpls 4.0. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa viral marketing memberikan dampak positif yang signifikan terhadap purchase decision, yang menunjukkan bahwa konten yang menarik, informatif, dan menghibur dapat mendorong perilaku konsumen, sebaliknya, influencer marketing menunjukkan pengaruh negative dan tidak signifikan terhadap purchase decision, yang menunjukkan bahwa dukungan berlebihan, kurangnya keaslian, atau citra public yang negative dapat mengurangi kepercayaan konsumen. Online customer review menunjukkan efek mediasi yang signifikan antara influencer marketing dan purchase decision, yang menyoroti peran mereka dalam memperkuat kredibilitas dan kepercayaan konsumen. Namun, online customer review tidak secara signifikan memediasi hubungan antara viral marketing dan purchase decision. studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa meskipun viral marketing efektif dalam mendorong perilaku pembelian konsumen, peran influencer marketing kurang dapat diandalkan kecuali didukung oleh online customer review yang kredibel. hasil penelitian ini memberikan wawasan praktis untuk merancang strategi pemasaran digital yang memanfaatkan konten viral dan umpan balik konsumen, tidak hanya mengandalkan dukungan dari influencer marketing saja.

**Kata kunci:** viral marketing; influencer marketing; online customer review; purchase decision.

### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to examine the effect of viral marketing and influencer marketing on purchase decision facetology, with online customer reviews as a mediating variable. This study uses a quantitative approach with purposive sampling, involving 150 Gen Z respondents in Jepara who had previously purchased the product. Data were collected through an online questionnaire and analyzed using structural equation modeling based on partial least squares (SEM-PLS) and use of SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results showed that viral marketing had a significant positive impact on purchase decisions, indicating that interesting, informative and entertaining content can drive consumer behavior. Conversely, influencer marketing shows a negative and insignificant influence on purchase decisions, indicating that excessive endorsement, lack of authenticity, or a negative public image can reduce consumer trust. Online customer reviews show a significant mediating effect between influencer marketing and purchasing decision, highlighting their role in strengthening consumer credibility and trust. However, online customer reviews do not significantly mediate the relationship between viral marketing and purchasing decision. This study concludes that although viral marketing is effective in driving consumer purchasing behavior, the role of influencer marketing is less reliable unless supported by credible online customer reviews. The results of this study provide practical insight for designing digital marketing strategies that utilize viral content and consumer feedback, rather than relying solely on support from influencer marketing.*

**Keywords:** viral marketing; influencer marketing; online customer review; purchase decision.

## INTRODUCTION

Technological developments have progressed rapidly. Technological advances have brought many changes to all aspects of human life. The internet as a communication medium, learning, information, and shopping in people's daily lives is an example of technological development (Theresia 2023). marketing through social media and the role of Celebrity Endorsers have become popular strategies among companies to promote their products (Ali, Taufiqurrohman et al. 2023) Combining market observation capabilities with digital marketing strategies enhances the company's ability to acquire data in real time and analyze market trends (Komariyatin, Roosdhani et al. 2025). Increasingly sophisticated digital technology helps businesses carry out promotional activities on the internet, known as digital marketing. As we move into the era of digital marketing, traditional messages through television, etc., no longer have a significant influence on consumers (Nggilu, Tumbel et al. 2019). Conversely, internet-based strategies such as viral marketing and influencer marketing are becoming increasingly dominant because they can spread marketing messages quickly, widely, and personally. The effectiveness of social media in promoting products or services can attract consumer interest (Roosdhani, Arifin et al. 2024). In the local context, this is particularly relevant for the SME sector and the beauty industry (skincare) in Indonesia, where many new brands are competing in the digital market. One example is the sunscreen product Factology, which utilizes social media to build consumer trust and encourage online customer reviews. This research is based on Signaling Theory (Spence 2002) which states that influencer marketing figures send positive signals to consumers regarding quality and credibility. Through signaling theory, online customer reviews and endorsements by influencers act as signals of brand quality and credibility, thereby increasing consumer trust.

This study discusses the importance of viral marketing and influencer marketing in creating online customer reviews among consumers of Facetology sunscreen, which in turn influences their purchase decisions. This research is unique because previous studies have only examined the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions, or influencer marketing on purchasing decisions, or online customer reviews on purchasing decisions. However, this study combines all three and assesses whether online customer reviews act as a bridge or mediator that strengthens or weakens the influence of viral marketing and influencer marketing on purchasing decisions. With the creation of digital platforms and technologies in consumers' lives, it is increasingly important for businesses to understand digital consumer behavior. This knowledge can be applied to specific marketing strategies and initiatives to effectively engage consumers and drive purchasing decisions. To date, several variables have emerged as important factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions in the digital space. One such variable is viral marketing, which leverages the power of social networks and online communities to spread business messages quickly (Bukit, Femmy et al. 2023).

The research gap that forms the basis of this study is found in the research by (Sarpiana, Hamid et al. 2023), which states that viral marketing can have a positive impact on the purchasing decisions of TikTok Shop customers among the millennial generation. From these results, it can be interpreted that consumers trust social media used as a promotional medium through viral marketing strategies. The research by (Sandala, Massie et al. 2019) and (Wiyanti 2022), which states that viral marketing has a positive influence and significant on purchasing decisions However, research conducted by (Rukmana 2021) discovered that the

factors related to viral marketing did not significantly influence purchase decision. This conclusion was drawn from outcomes indicating that viral marketing lacked a meaningful impact on purchasing decisions at Distro88. This is the same as research from (Huddin, Nafiudin et al. 2025), which indicated that viral marketing had a notable negative impact on purchase decisions.

The study aims to examine how viral marketing and influencer marketing influence purchase decision for Facetology sunscreen, considering online customer feedback as a mediating factor.

## **THEORETICAL STUDY AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

This study uses Signaling Theory (Spence 2002) because it explains that when information is exchanged between sellers and buyers, sellers will send certain signals to indicate product quality. In this study, viral content and endorsements from influencers serve as positive signals that convince potential buyers of the credibility and value of the product. Furthermore, according to signaling theory, the popularity of a product can be a social indicator that the product has high quality or value. Thus, viral marketing functions as a social signal that encourages consumers to evaluate the product more positively.

Viral marketing is a customer-oriented communication and distribution concept that sends digital marketing messages about products via electronic messages or the internet to potential customers within their social circle and influences potential customers to send similar product messages. The indicators of viral marketing are Informativeness, Entertainment, Irritation, and Credibility (Indrawati, Rizqullah et al. 2022). Viral marketing is video content presented in a Very interesting, informative, and entertaining content can influence consumer purchase decision. A study (Sarpiana, Hamid et al. 2023) discovered that viral marketing positively affects consumer buying decisions in a significant way.

Influencer marketing in research (Uyuun and Dwijayanti 2022) states that influencer marketing are important people in influencing purchase decision and providing information. Businesses utilize influencer marketing as the top strategy for creating impact. Naturally, the influencer marketing they engage in must align with the company's standards and be in line with the characteristics of the product being marketed. The indicators of influencer marketing are popularity, credibility, attractiveness, and strength (Devi, Savitri et al. 2024). Messages sent by influencers tend to be accepted more quickly and are more credible. This aims to influence potential buyers in their purchasing decisions. Research by (Eilene and Nirmalasari 2023) demonstrates that marketing through influencers can greatly and beneficially impact buyers' choices.

Online customer reviews are defined as a channel for consumers to find out about specific products, services provided by a company, and the company's production methods from other consumers. Online customer reviews are an example of a feature that includes consumer reviews and customer ratings of products purchased from online stores. When shopping via social media, consumers can see product reviews from previous consumers (Nanda, Sudarwati et al. 2024). If the product offered is bad and does not meet consumer expectations, it will indirectly make people not want to buy the product (Setyowibowo,

Matyani et al. 2024). Customers have limitations in directly confirming the condition of the product they wish to purchase, so if the product condition does not match the original, the product is not authentic, damaged, the packaging is damaged, and so on, consumers will be disappointed for several reasons. The damage is not good. Therefore, there is an online customer review feature that optimize it customers to make purchasing decisions (Theresia 2023). Online customer reviews can be taken into opinion by potential customers when making a purchase. Online customer feedback reflects the experiences of shoppers regarding the services offered by sellers across various online platforms and marketplaces. The indikator online customer review feedback include perceived value, trustworthiness of the source, quality of the arguments presented, and the amount of reviews (Theresia 2023). Online customer reviews are based on real experiences in online transactions and are provided voluntarily; therefore, online customer reviews can influence the purchasing decision process. Research by (Amalia and Nurlinda 2022) and (Wahyudi and Mulyati 2023) online customer reviews can have a positive and significant effect on purchase decision.

Purchase decision in research (Kawilarang, Tumbuan et al. 2022) It explains that the buying decision is the phase where consumers evaluate their options, leading them to select from various brands within their consideration group and develop the desire to make a purchase. The indicators is stability in a product, habits in purchasing a product, and speed in purchasing a product (Kawilarang, Tumbuan et al. 2022).

## HYPOTHESIS

Viral marketing strategy is to provide an interesting messages that are interesting and easy to share through social media. When consumers are exposed to creative, funny, emotional, or informative content, they are more likely to trust the product and be interested in buying it. According to (Indrawati, Rizqullah et al. 2022), viral content creates high brand awareness and triggers spontaneous purchasing decisions. Research (Sarpiana, Hamid et al. 2023) also proves that viral marketing has a significant positive on purchase decision on TikTokShop. Therefore, if the viral marketing strategy is effective, the higher the chance of consumers buying the product.

### **H1: Viral marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchase decision**

Well-known influencer marketing has high appeal, popularity, and credibility that can influence public opinion. Their recommendations are often considered more convincing than traditional advertising. According to (Uyuun and Dwijayanti 2022), influencer marketing is effective because consumers tend to trust figures they admire. Research by (Eilene and Nirmalasari 2023) and (Fernando, Riorini et al. 2023) found that influencer marketing has a positive on purchase decision for beauty products. Therefore, the stronger the influence and credibility of influencer marketing, the greater the chance that consumers will buy the products they promote.

### **H2: Influencer marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchase decision**

Online customer reviews provide social proof and trust for potential buyers. Consumers tend to read other users' experiences before purchasing a product. According to (Theresia 2023), high-quality and credible reviews can strengthen the confidence of potential consumers. Research findings (Wahyudi and Mulyati 2023) also indicate that online customer reviews

have a significant positive influence on purchase decisions. The more Favorable and Trustworthy the customer reviews available, the greater the likelihood that consumers will decide to purchase the product.

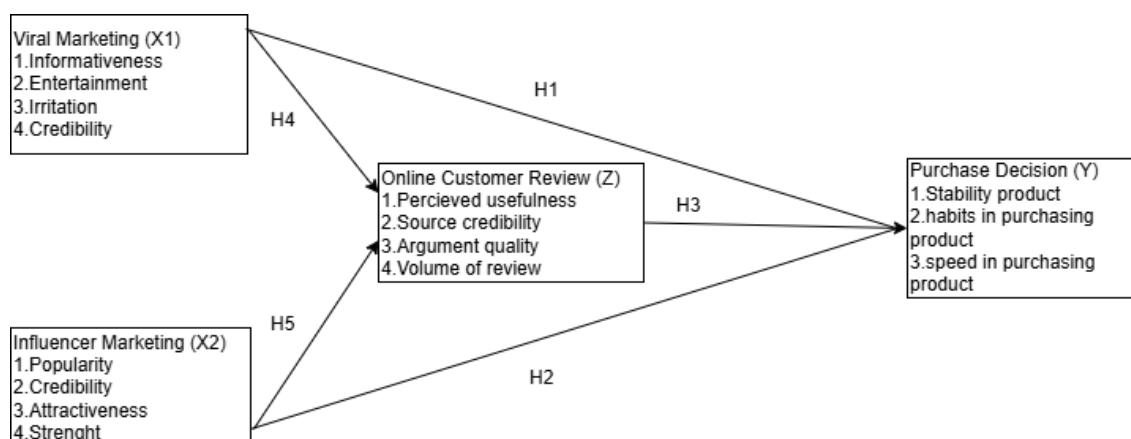
**H3: Online customer reviews have a positive influence on purchase decisions**

Viral content often triggers consumer interaction on social media, including comments, testimonials, and appraisals. When a product goes viral, increasing consumer base try it and then write about their experiences online. (Pasaribu, Rahma et al. 2023) explains that viral marketing can increase consumer participation in sharing experiences. Therefore, the more interesting and massive the viral marketing campaign, value continues to increase of online customer reviews will be.

**H4: Viral marketing has a positive effect on online customer reviews**

Promotions carried out by celebrities can encourage consumers to respond in review columns. Influencer marketing often invites followers to try products and share their experiences on online platforms. Research (Wahyudi and Mulyati 2023) shows that influencer marketing is significantly related to online customer review activity. The stronger the influence of influencer marketing in building trust, the more active consumers are in writing positive appraisals.

**H5: Influencer marketing has a positive effect on online customer reviews**



**Figure 1. Theoretical Framework**

**RESEARCH METHODS**

The approach utilized in this research is quantitative: “a methodology grounded in positivism philosophy, aimed at examining specific groups and samples, employing typically random sampling methods, gathering data through research tools, and analyzing quantitative/statistical data with the purpose of evaluating established hypotheses” (Adil, Liana et al. 2023). The focus of this research is on Viral Marketing and Influencer Marketing, which serve as independent variables, while Purchase Decision acts as the dependent variable, and Online Customer Review functions as the mediating variable. This investigation took place in Jepara during the months of April and May 2025. The target group for this study consisted of Generation Z individuals who had bought Facetology sunscreen products. Primary data was collected directly from participants via online surveys distributed through

Google Forms. The Likert scale applied in this research ranges from 1 to 10. A purposive sampling method was employed, selecting individuals aged between 13 and 28 years who had made purchases of Facetology sunscreen products. The sampling was carried out according to the formula outlined by (Ferdinand 2002), which indicates that the sample size should be based on the number of estimated indicators. The suggested sample size should be 5 to 10 times the number of these indicators. Consequently, for a study with 21 indicators, the minimum sample required came to 147 respondents. To streamline the data collection and enhance the reliability and adequacy of the research findings, the sample size was adjusted to 150 respondents. The data analysis method used was Partial Least Squares-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) to test the direct and indirect relationships between variables. SEM-PLS was chosen because it is suitable for predictive models and mediation variable testing. The analysis process was assisted by SmartPLS version 4.0 computer software. The analysis involved two main stages: evaluating the outer model for construct validity and reliability, as well as assessing the inner model.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Outer model

This research employs two assessment techniques, known as Validity Test and Reliability Test.

### Convergent Validity Test

The aim of this assessment is to determine the effectiveness of the indicator in reflecting the concept has undergone a transformation. Test outcomes are viewed as satisfactory if the AVE value is greater than 0.5 (Hair, Risher et al. 2019).

**Tabel 1. Convergent Validity**

Variabel	Indikator	Outer Loading	AVE	Hasil
Viral Marketing	VM1	0.721	0.529	VALID
	VM2	0.649		
	VM3	0.670		
	VM4	0.815		
	VM7	0.618		
	VM8	0.857		
Influencer Marketing	IM1	0.737	0.560	VALID
	IM2	0.696		
	IM3	0.800		
	IM4	0.756		
Online Customer Review	OCR1	0.513	0.505	VALID
	OCR2	0.521		
	OCR3	0.830		
	OCR4	0.822		
	OCR5	0.792		
Purchase Decision	PD1	0.815	0.570	VALID
	PD2	0.839		
	PD3	0.700		
	PD4	0.649		

Sourche: The data was processed using SmartPLS version 4.0.

The chart provided demonstrates that every factor examined in this research is deemed valid. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that the outer loading values for every indicator exceed 0.7, although certain specialists believe that an outer loading factor value of at least 0.

50 is sufficient. (Hair, Risher et al. 2019). All indicators meet the criteria mentioned above, with values greater than 0.50, which indicates a good loading factor value, as presented in the table above. However, in the viral marketing variable, there are indicators that do not meet the  $\geq 0.50$  value and have therefore been removed.

### Realibility Test

Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha are indicators seen as dependable, ranging from a score of zero to one. A score above 0.7 indicates that the reliability assessment is deemed trustworthy.

**Table 2. Composite reliability & Cronbach's alpha**

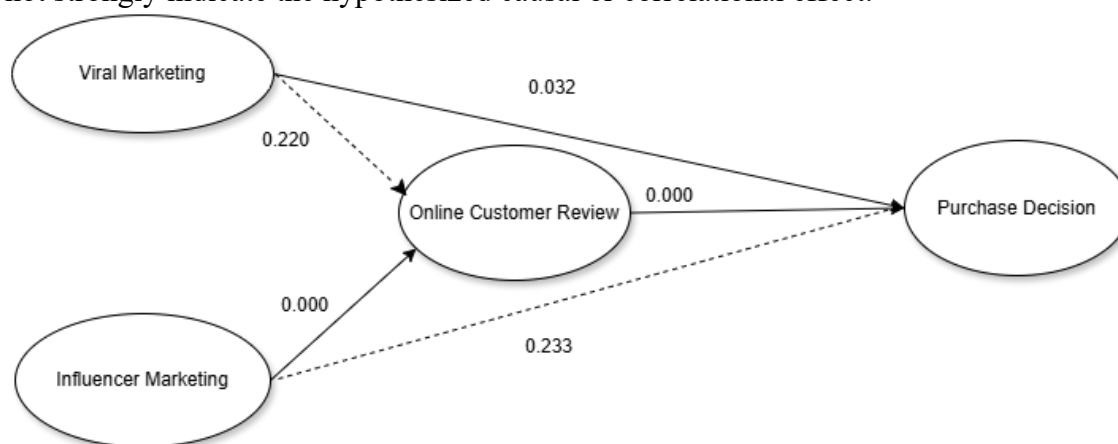
	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Hasil
VM	0.820	0.869	Reliabel
IM	0.741	0.835	Reliabel
OCR	0.743	0.830	Reliabel
PD	0.753	0.840	Reliabel

Sourche: The data was processed using SmartPLS 4.0.

In the reliability assessment, it can be verified that all the variable indicators achieved scores exceeding 0.7, and since these scores are higher than 0.7, they can be considered dependable.

### Inner Model (structural model)

Dotted lines are used to indicate statistically insignificant relationships between variables (e.g.,  $p > .05$  or low t-statistic). This means that the path is not supported by the data and does not strongly indicate the hypothesized causal or correlational effect.



**Figure 2. Structural Model**

**Table 3. R-Square Testing**

Variabel	R-square	R-square ajusted
Purchase Decision	0.446	0.435
Online Customer Review	0.328	0.319

Sourche: The data was created using SmartPLS 4.0.

The research model shows high predictive power for purchase decision (R-square= 0.446, adjusted R-square=0,435) as moderate because it is less than 0.67 and online customer review (R-square=0.328, adjusted R-square=0.319) is also moderat because it is below 0.67. this suggests that the independent variables have a major impact.

**Table 4. Path Coffien**

	Original sampel	Sampel mean	Standart deviation (STDEV)	T statistic (O STCV)	P Values
IM->PD	0.145	0.159	0.122	0.193	0.233
IM->OCR	0.438	0.444	0.116	3.793	0.000
OCR->PD	0.588	0.568	0.094	6.258	0.000
VM->PD	0.363	0.371	0.170	2.140	0.032
VM->OCR	0.194	0.211	0.158	1.228	0.220

Source: Processed data (2025)

### **The influence of influencer marketing on purchase decisions**

Based on the outcomes of the hypothesis, the P-value is 0.233 and the T-statistic value is 1.193, suggesting that influencer marketing does not significantly influence purchase decision. This aligns with the findings of the study (Rahayu, Enggrani et al. 2024) that indicates influencer marketing has a notable adverse impact pertaining to the decision to buy something products in Jambi city. This could be due to several factors, such as the negative image of influencers, scandals, or bad behavior of an influencer that can spread to the image of the promoted product, causing consumers to stay away from the product. The next factor is a lack of credibility and authenticity. If consumers perceive influencer marketing as promoting products too often (excessive endorsement), they will be considered dishonest and only money-oriented. This can reduce consumer trust in the recommendations given.

### **The influence of influencer marketing on online customer reviews.**

From the hypothesis results, the P-value is 0.000 and the T-statistic value is 3.792. This confirms that influencer marketing has a significant relationship with online customer reviews. This finding indicates that the presence of influencers as parties with appeal, credibility, and social influence can encourage consumers to share their experiences and assessments of products through digital platforms. This is relevant to the research (Wahyudi and Mulyati 2023) which states that two are related influencer marketing and online customer reviews that together or simultaneously influence purchase decision.

### **The Influence of Online Customer Reviews on Purchase Decisions.**

From the findings of the hypothesis test, a P-value of 0.000 and a T-statistic of 6.258 were found. This suggests that online customer review has a important role in purchase decision. Consumers tend to use online customer reviews as an important source of information in evaluating the quality, benefits, and credibility of a product before making a purchase. Online customer reviews play a role in reducing the level of uncertainty and risk perceived by consumers, thereby increasing trust and confidence in the decision-making process. This supports the study by (Alfiansyah, Kristiyana et al. 2025), which claims that online customer review can act as a mediator between product knowledge and purchasing decisions among members of the Gupolo and Polorejo Youth Organizations in Babadan District, Ponorogo Regency.

### **The Influence of Viral Marketing on Purchase Decisions.**

From the outcomes of the hypothesis testing, a P value of 0.032 and a T-statistic of 2.140 were achieved. This indicates that there is a meaningful connection between viral marketing and purchase decision. Viral marketing that is widely and rapidly disseminated through social media can influence consumer attitudes and behavior in making purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to have a fairly high level of trust in marketing content disseminated through social networks, especially when the information comes from fellow users or digital

communities that are considered relevant. This aligns with the finding of research (Sarpiana, Hamid et al. 2023) which claims that viral marketing positively affects the purchasing decisions of millennial shoppers at TikTok Shop. These findings suggest that consumers have confidence in social media when it serves as a channel for promotion through viral marketing techniques.

### The Impact of Viral Marketing on Online Customer Reviews.

The hypothesis test results yielded a P value of 0.220 and a T-statistic value of 1.228. These findings indicate that although viral marketing is effective in increasing product exposure and encouraging purchasing decisions, its influence is not necessarily strong enough to actively motivate consumers to provide reviews after making a purchase. This means that viral marketing has an insignificant relationship with online customer reviews. This may be because viral marketing tends to influence awareness and purchasing decisions but is not compelling enough to prompt consumers to write online customer reviews.

**Table 5. Spesific Inderect Effect**

	Original sampel (O)	Sampel mean	Standart deviation	T statistic (O STDEV)	P Values
VM->OCR->PD	0.114	0.121	0.093	1.228	0.219
IM->OCR->PD	0.257	0.251	0.074	3.459	0.001

Source: Processed data (2025)

Table 5 illustrates the indirect influence that exists between variables, which is facilitated by other variables. VM-> OCR -> PD (0.114, P value 0.219) The indirect connection from VM to PD through OCR has a coefficient of 0.114 and a P value of 0.219, indicating that it is not statistically significant. This suggests that OCR does not partially mediate the effect of viral marketing on purchasing decisions. On the other hand, IM -> OCR -> PD (0.257, P-value 0.001) The indirect connection between IM and PD mediated by OCR (Online Customer Review) shows a coefficient of 0.257 along with a P-value of 0.001, demonstrating that Online Customer Review significantly mediates the influence of Influencer Marketing on Purchase Decision. It can be concluded that while Online Customer Reviews do not mediate the relationship between VM and PD, they effectively mediate the interplay between IM and PD.

## CONCLUSION

Known from research objective to ascertain the effect of viral marketing and influencer marketing on the purchase decision of Facetology sunscreen with online Customer feedback as an intermediary factor, the findings indicate that viral marketing positively influences purchase decision significantly, so that content that is interesting and easy to share can encourage consumer behavior. On the other hand, influencer marketing does not greatly impact purchahse decision, suggesting that the fame or charm of influencers doesn't necessarily lead to consumer confidence. Reviews from online customer review are crucial as they significantly influence purchasing decisions and have shown to act as a bridge between viral marketing and purchase decision. These findings confirm that in the context of facetology sunscreen products, viral content is the main driver of purchase decisions, while the effectiveness of influencers depends on credible online customer reviews. The implications of the present study point to the importance of prioritizing authentic viral content strategies and encouraging positive online customer reviews as a foundation for consumer trust. Online customer review feedback is essential in enhancing the consequence of influencer marketing on purchase decision. It can be concluded that OCR do not act as a mediates in the relationship VM and PD, while OCR mediates in the relationship IM and PD.

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