



Brand Awareness as a Bridge: Connecting E-WoM and Purchase Decisions for TikTokShop Perfumes

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Abstract: This research investigates the impact of viral marketing and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) on consumer decisions to purchase HMNS perfumes, with a focus on the mediating role of brand awareness. A quantitative approach with an explanatory design was used, collecting data from 195 respondents through purposive sampling and Google Forms questionnaires. Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis using SmartPLS 4.0 software revealed a surprising finding: viral marketing did not directly influence purchase decisions. However, e-WoM had a direct and significant positive effect. Additionally, brand awareness directly and positively influenced purchase decisions. The analysis further confirmed a significant positive mediating role of brand awareness, indicating that it amplifies the impact of both viral marketing and e-WoM on purchase decisions for HMNS perfumes.

Keywords: Viral Marketing, E-WoM, Brand Awareness, Purchase Decision, Parfum

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1 Introduction

The rapid technological advancements of Industry 5.0 within a globalized world have fueled the development of applications reaching broader audiences. This has facilitated the rise of "social commerce," a feature that leverages social interaction for commercial purposes. Social commerce, according to [1] is a trade phenomenon that originates from social media practices by applying popular Web 2.0 technology features as tools for consumers to share commercial information and also to socialize and design product. This social commerce facilitates social media users who just want to socialize through social media or simultaneously want to shop online without having to switch applications. A social media platform that has recently adopted the social commerce feature is TikTok, known as TikTok Shop, which was launched in 2021. This feature encourages entrepreneurs to market their products on TikTok Shop. One of the products that has been a topic of conversation lately is HMNS, a local perfume brand known as "Humans," which has become a favorite on TikTok Indonesia over the past few years. Founded with the concept of "Made for Humans" under the auspices of PT Hadir Mengharumkan Nusantara, HMNS was conceived by Rizky Arief, the founder and CEO.

HMNS has become one of the local perfume brands that has successfully attracted consumer attention on the TikTok and Instagram platforms in Indonesia over the past few years. HMNS markets its perfume products entirely online. Although for consumers, smelling a perfume before buying is essential, HMNS has managed to sell its products despite this limitation. HMNS utilizes compelling and strong storytelling strategies for each of its products, making the brand memorable and viral on social media. Therefore, based on this data, I am interested in conducting research on HMNS Perfume as a research object on social media. Purchase decision is the part of the consumer process when deciding on a transaction for a product or service offered. In the contemporary

digital landscape, brands can leverage social media platforms to disseminate product information efficiently, saving consumers time and fostering brand attraction [2]. It is important for companies to conduct engaging marketing on social media to encourage consumers to make transactions. Getting consumers to purchase products is not easy, especially for HMNS perfume products marketed through social media, as for consumers, smelling the perfume is a must before buying. HMNS should conduct a comprehensive analysis to identify and evaluate the key factors that influence consumer purchasing behavior on the TikTok platform..

Armstrong (2018) defines viral marketing as leveraging social media to rapidly disseminate marketing content (videos, advertisements) across a wide audience. Consumer interest is piqued, leading to further exploration and sharing with their social circles [3]. Studies by Hamade (2021), (Luc & Hien, 2023) and Aprillio & Widodo (2020) support this notion, demonstrating a significant positive impact of viral marketing on purchase decisions [4][5][6]. Sulaksono et al. (2022) define e-WoM as positive or negative customer statements about products or companies encountered online [7]. Research by Williams et al. (2022) in the cosmetics industry and Sulaksono et al. (2022) for Oriflame products highlight the positive influence of e-WoM on purchase decisions [8][7]. However, Afif et al. (2020) found that for Si.Se.Sa syar'I clothing, e-WoM only influences customers' initial interest, not necessarily leading to a purchase decision [9]. Rama (2015) emphasizes brand awareness as a crucial factor, representing a customer's ability to recognize and recall a specific brand within a product category. Afif et al. (2020) found a significant positive influence of brand awareness on purchase decisions in the clothing industry [9]. However, Ansari et al. (2019) reported contrasting findings, suggesting a low yet significant correlation between brand awareness and purchase decisions [2].

Beyond its direct impact on purchase decisions, viral marketing is also influenced by brand awareness. Recognizing a brand's existence is a key factor in determining the effectiveness of viral marketing strategies. Research by Algista et al. (2022) suggests that a combination of viral marketing and brand awareness positively impacts the purchase of Wardah sunscreen products [10]. Similarly, Irawan & Misbach (2020) found that viral marketing significantly influences brand awareness [11]. Consequently, HMNS should strategically utilize online platforms to attract consumer attention and increase brand visibility on social media.

Brand awareness is a crucial factor influencing e-WoM. Increased sharing of e-WoM among current, potential, and former customers, as well as online postings, directly enhances brand awareness. Studies by Aljumah et al. (2023) and Discipline et al. (2021) confirm this relationship, demonstrating the positive impact of e-WoM on brand awareness among Facebook users. . Lin et al., (2023) further emphasize the role of e-WoM as an intermediary between social media communication and brand equity.

While viral marketing and e-WoM influence purchase decisions, brand awareness also plays a pivotal role. However, research findings on the relationship between these factors vary. Sakinah & Widjaya (2022) found a significant influence of e-WoM on purchase decisions through brand awareness. In contrast, Gabriella et al. (2022) did not observe a direct influence of viral marketing on purchase decisions through brand awareness, sparking further

research interest in this area [12].

2 Methods

An explanatory research type is used in this quantitative approach. Explanatory research is a study that can explain how the relationship between two or more variables relates to the situation and phenomena that occur Darwin (2021) [13]. This study uses an explanatory study because it aims to explain the position of the research variables consisting of viral marketing ($X1$), e-WoM ($X2$), purchase decision (Y) and brand awareness (Z) as a mediation variable.

The research employed a Google Forms questionnaire distributed online to a targeted audience. This audience consisted of Instagram and TikTok followers who have previously made purchases at the TikTok Shop account @hmns.id. Descriptive statistical analysis and Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) were utilized to analyze the collected data. The research variables were established based on existing literature, with specific indicators and items detailed in Table 1.

2.1 Hypothesis Development

The variable viral marketing can be defined as HMNS's marketing technique that utilizes online platforms through a chain communication process. The variable E-WoM refers to the interaction of HMNS consumers involving communication elements such as the communicator, stimulus, message receiver, and response to the message. The variable brand awareness refers to consumers' perception to distinguish and recall the HMNS perfume brand from other perfume brands. The variable purchase decision is defined as the process in which HMNS consumers are actively involved in selecting products or services tailored to their needs.

Hypothesis (H1): Viral marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions.

Multiple studies, including those by Nurulita et al., 2022 and Sindy Yulitaningrum & Lestari Andjarwati, 2024) support the positive and significant relationship between e-WoM and customer purchasing decisions for perfume products. Increased e-WoM activity is directly correlated with higher consumer propensity to purchase perfume. Additionally, Sulaksono et al. (2022) demonstrate the direct influence of e-WoM on customer purchase decisions for Oriflame products, further reinforcing the hypothesis that e-WoM positively and significantly impacts purchase decisions

Hypothesis (H2): Electric word-of-mouth (e-WoM) has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions.

Several studies, including Afif et al. (2020) and Sari Dewi et al. (2020) support the positive influence of brand awareness on purchase decisions. Afif et al. (2020) specifically highlight the positive relationship between brand awareness and purchase decisions in the clothing industry. Sari Dewi et al. (2020) further demonstrate the direct influence of brand awareness on purchase decisions. Based on these findings, the third hypothesis is that brand awareness has a positive and significant impact on purchase decisions [9], [13].

Hypothesis (H3): Brand awareness has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions.

The fourth hypothesis is viral marketing on brand awareness. Several studies support

this hypothesis, such as research conducted on the Lemonilo product brand which has been embedded in the minds of consumers because it implements the share of voice (SOV) strategy as a healthy and natural green instant noodle, so it is proven that this strategy has a significant effect on brand awareness according to Luh Putu Gangga Rahayu & Made Wulandari Kusumadewi (2023) [15]. In line with Algista et al. (2022) that the strategy used by Wardah cosmetic, namely viral marketing with brand awareness, has a positive influence. So the fourth hypothesis can be said to have a positive effect.

Several studies support a positive relationship between viral marketing and brand awareness. Luh Putu Gangga Rahayu & Made Wulandari Kusumadewi (2023) highlight the effectiveness of the share of voice (SOV) strategy in embedding the Lemonilo brand in consumer minds, demonstrating the significant impact of viral marketing on brand awareness. Algista et al. (2022) further reinforce this finding, highlighting the positive influence of viral marketing combined with brand awareness, as exemplified by Wardah Cosmetic's strategy. Based on these findings, the fourth hypothesis suggests that viral marketing has a positive effect on brand awareness.

Hypothesis (H4): Viral marketing has a positive and significant influence on brand awareness.

Several studies support a positive relationship between e-WoM and brand awareness. Aljumah et al. (2023), Pebrianti, Arweni, & Awal, (2020) [16]. demonstrate that an increase in e-WoM activity, generated by current, prospective, and former customers, directly contributes to heightened brand awareness among consumers. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that e-WoM significantly influences brand awareness.

Hypothesis (H5): Electric word-of-mouth (e-wom) has a positive and significant influence on brand awareness.

Multiple studies, including Gabriella et al. (2022) and Sakinah & Widjaya (2022) support the mediating role of brand awareness in the relationship between e-WoM and purchase decisions. These studies demonstrate that e-WoM positively influences brand awareness, which in turn, positively impacts purchase decisions. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis suggests that higher brand awareness mediates the positive relationship between e-WoM and purchase decisions [12][17].

Hypothesis (H6): e-wom has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions mediated by brand awareness

The seventh hypothesis explores the mediating role of brand awareness in the relationship between viral marketing and purchase decisions. Irawan & Misbach (2020), found that brand awareness partially mediates the influence of viral marketing on consumer decisions to purchase OPPO cellphone products. Similarly, Aprilia's (2023) research suggests that brand awareness can control the influence of viral and supporting advertising on skincare product decisions, such as Ms. Glow products on Shopee. Therefore, the seventh hypothesis proposes that brand awareness is positively correlated with both viral marketing and purchase decisions. **Table 1** provides a detailed list of the indicators and items used in this research [11].

Hypothesis (H7): Viral marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchase decisions mediated by brand awareness.

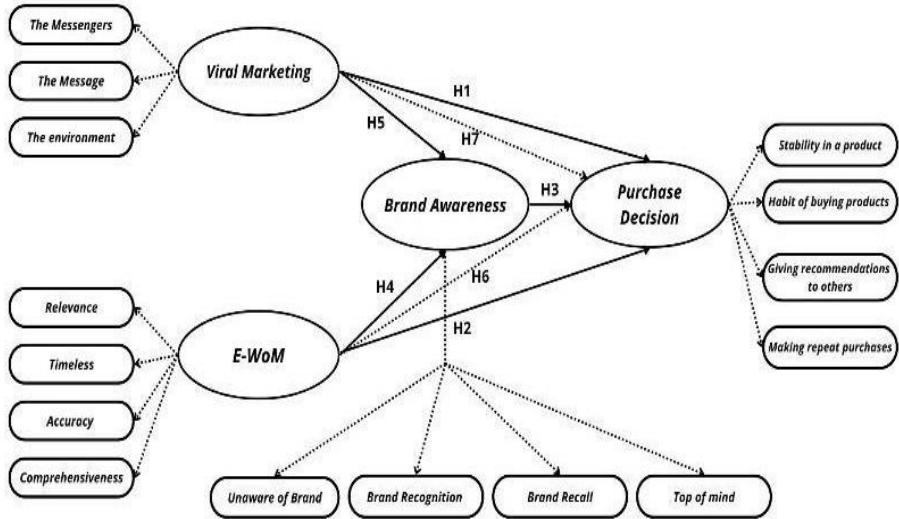


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

Table 1. Variabel, Indikator, Item, Measurements

<i>Variabel</i>	<i>Indikator</i>	<i>Measurements</i>
<i>Viral Marketing</i> Algista et al. (2022)	<i>The messengers (celebrity endorser)</i>	Influencers can promote marketing campaigns faster
		Influencers honestly convey HMNS advertising messages
		Influencers are consistent in conveying HMNS advertising messages
		Advertisements delivered by influencers can be trusted
	<i>The message</i>	Share posts/messages with friends or family if they are interested in a product
		Buying a product after reading it from friends or family
		Share positive experiences with the HMNS brand with friends or family
	<i>The environment (social media marketing)</i>	Purchase products from HMNS advertisements on social media

<i>Electronic Word of-Mouth</i> (Lugina & Azis, n.d.)	<i>Relevance</i>	The information found is reliable
		The information shared by HMNS consumers is able to meet needs
	<i>Timeless</i>	Information on reviews as recommendations for purchasing products
		Assessment of up to date HMNS products
	<i>Accuracy</i>	Promotion of E-WoM from consumer to consumer is considered credible
		E-WoM's credibility influences HMNS brand awareness
	<i>Comprehensiveness</i>	Talking about positive things online regarding HMNS products
		When buying HMNS products, other people's reviews make you more confident in buying them
<i>Brand Awareness</i> (Kertamukti, 2015)	<i>Unaware of Brand</i>	Quickly remember the HMNS brand
		Recognize the HMNS brand among other perfume brands
	<i>Brand Recognition</i>	Always be aware of the HMNS brand
		Recognize the characteristics of the HMNS brand
	<i>Brand recall</i>	The "HMNS" logo on HMNS product packaging is easy to remember
		Have an impressive experience with the HMNS brand
	<i>Top of mind</i>	HMNS is always in consumers' minds
		Buy HMNS products as the first choice
<i>Purchase Decision</i> (Kotler and Keller, 2020)	<i>Stability in a product</i>	HMNS matches the consumer's aroma
		The HMNS brand suits consumer needs
	<i>Habit of buying products</i>	Viral advertising content motivates or attracts consumers to buy HMNS products
		Purchase decisions from the influence of friends / family who share posts
	<i>Giving recommendations to others</i>	Consumers are influenced to buy products because the product goes viral on social media
		Looking for information related to your shopping experience at
	<i>Making repeat purchases</i>	TikTok Shop HMNS through friends who have shopped before
		Buying various types of HMNS products according to your needs

3 Result

This study had a total of 335 respondents, and 195 respondents met the criteria. The majority of respondents are women aged 18 to 27 years (Generation Z) with the average student respondent spending IDR 2,000,000 on personal purchases and having

purchased HMNS perfume products on TikTok Shop >1x and following social media Instagram @hmns.id. the respondent profile as follows:

Table 2 Respondens profile

Data	Numbers	Percentage
Gender		
- Female	141	72
- Male	54	28
Age		
- 18 - 27	187	96
- 28 - 43	8	4
Profession		
- Students	151	77
- Government officer	2	1
- Private employee	29	15
- Businessman	11	6
- Others	2	1
Spending money		
- < IDR 2.000.000	132	68
- IDR 2.000.000 – IDR 4.00.000	52	27
- > Rp 4.000.000.-	11	5
Purchase HMNS products		
- 1x	83	43
- > 1x	112	57
Users follow Instagram @hmns.id	195	100
Buy @hmns.id products at TikTok Shop	195	100

This research employs descriptive statistics to analyze the central tendency and dispersion of the variables. Table 3 presents the grand means for Viral Marketing (X1), E-WoM (X2), Brand Awareness (Z), and Purchase Decision variables. The findings indicate that respondents generally agree with the statements regarding Viral Marketing (mean = 4.099), strongly agree with E-WoM (mean = 4.233), and agree with Brand Awareness and Purchase Decision statements (means = 4.066 and 4.141, respectively).

Table 3. Mean, Standard deviation, and grand mean item

<i>Variabel</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Grand Mean</i>
<i>Viral Marketing</i>	VM1	4.072	0.868	4.099
	VM2	4.067	0.866	
	VM3	4.062	0.820	
	VM4	4.185	0.749	
	VM5	4.005	1.025	
	VM6	4.077	0.865	
	VM7	4.251	0.941	
	VM8	4.072	0.862	
<i>E-WOM</i>	EW1	4.118	0.848	4.233
	EW2	4.179	0.806	
	EW3	4.421	0.700	
	EW4	4.241	0.815	
	EW5	4.128	0.816	
	EW6	4.241	0.783	
	EW7	3.979	0.911	
	EW8	4.482	0.697	
<i>Brand Awareness</i>	BA1	4.318	0.830	4.066
	BA2	4.256	0.808	
	BA3	4.072	0.862	
	BA4	4.108	0.867	
	BA5	3.815	1.046	
	BA6	4.077	0.865	
	BA7	3.795	1.052	
	BA8	4.087	0.858	
<i>Purchase Decision</i>	PD1	4.251	0.760	4.141
	PD2	4.174	0.791	
	PD3	4.272	0.806	
	PD4	3.815	1.056	
	PD5	4.077	0.865	
	PD6	4.185	0.789	
	PD7	4.174	0.791	
	PD8	4.185	0.776	

This research employs convergent validity analysis to assess the correlation between items or indicators within each construct. The loading factor values in Table 3 indicate the results of this analysis. Following Ghozali & Latan (2014), loading factor values between 0.50 and 0.60 are considered acceptable, even in the context of developing measurement scales. The analysis reveals that all items within each variable—Viral Marketing (8 items), E-WoM (8 items), Brand Awareness (8 items), and Purchase Decision (8 items)—exhibit acceptable loading factor values, indicating the validity of these variables. The detailed results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Outer Loading

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Viral Marketing</i>	<i>E-WoM</i>	<i>Brand Awareness</i>	<i>Purchase Decision</i>
X1.1	0.850			
X1.2	0.869			
X1.3	0.801			
X2.1		0.815		
X2.2		0.835		
X2.3		0.798		
X2.4		0.830		
Z.1			0.827	
Z.2			0.875	
Z.3			0.879	
Z.4			0.951	
Y1				0.929
Y2				0.856
Y3				0.934
Y4				0.933

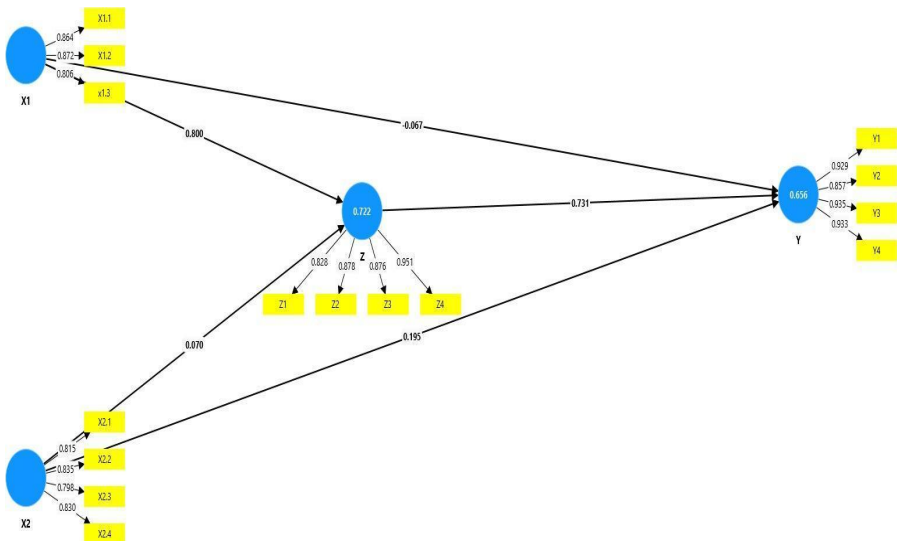


Figure 2. Outer Model

To find out discriminant validity, researchers looked at the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) value. The heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) requirement must be <0.9 to fulfill the discriminant validity assessment Hair et al (2019) Based on the research results in table 4, it was found that the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) value met the criteria. Reliability testing according to (Taber, 2018). This research ensures instrument reliability, crucial for accurate measurement. Reliability reflects consistent scores across multiple administrations. Cronbach's Alpha (>0.6) confirms instrument reliability (Table 5).

Table 5. Discriminant Validity HTMT

	<i>Viral Marketing</i>	<i>E-WoM</i>	<i>Brand Awareness</i>	<i>Purchase Decision</i>
<i>Viral Marketing</i>				
<i>E-WoM</i>	0.814			
<i>Brand Awareness</i>	0.771	0.679		
<i>Purchase Decision</i>	0.893	0.719	0.847	

Table 6. Reliability Test

Variabel	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>Composite Reliability (rho_a)</i>	<i>Composite Reliability (rho_c)</i>	<i>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</i>
<i>Viral Marketing</i>	0.792	0.794	0.878	0.706
<i>E-WoM</i>	0.837	0.841	0.891	0.672
<i>Brand Awareness</i>	0.934	0.939	0.953	0.835
<i>Purchase Decision</i>	0.907	0.918	0.935	0.782

According to Sorsted and Wanks in Hair et al. (2019) R-Square is an index used to measure how good the predictive power of an endogenous latent variable is in a model. A value of 1 indicates strong predictive power for the model, while a value of 0 indicates that the model has none. R-Square can be used to assess the model and can be used for subsequent research. . R-squared analysis (Table 7) categorized predictive power. Viral marketing and E-WoM explained 65.4% (substantial) of purchase decision variance and 60.8% (substantial) of brand awareness variance, suggesting significant influence from external factors Hair et al. (2019)

F-square analysis (Table 8) assessed the model's effect size. Viral marketing's influence was weak on purchase decisions (0.006) but strong on brand awareness (0.548). E-WoM showed a weak effect on both purchase decisions (0.034) and brand awareness (0.068). Brand awareness had a strong effect on purchase decisions (0.047).

Table 7. Result of *R Square*

	<i>R-Square</i>	<i>R-square adjusted</i>
<i>Purchase Decision</i>	0.660	0.654
<i>Brand Awareness</i>	0.612	0.608

Table 8. *F Square result*

Konstruk	<i>F-Square</i>	Hasil
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VM → PD	0.006	Weak
VM → BA	0.548	Strong
EWOM → PD	0.034	Weak
EWOM → BA	0.068	Weak
BA → PD	0.475	Strong

Structural equation modeling relies on evaluating path coefficient estimates and their statistical significance to ensure the validity of identified relationships. Non-significant path coefficients suggest unreliable connections, prompting the need for model refinement or development. The statistical significance of the independent variable's influence on the dependent variable is confirmed by a t-statistic greater than 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05 [18].

Direct and indirect effect

The results in Table 9 indicate that viral marketing does not directly influence purchase decisions (H1 rejected, t-statistic = 0.563, p-value = 0.573). However, viral marketing positively impacts brand awareness (H4 accepted, t-statistic = 11.235, p-value = 0.000). Additionally, both e-WoM and brand awareness have significant positive effects on purchase decisions (H2, H3, H5, H6, and H7 accepted). Specifically, e-WoM significantly influences brand awareness (H5) and subsequently purchase decisions (H6), while brand awareness mediates the relationship between viral marketing and purchase decisions (H7).

Table 9. Direct dan Indirect Effect

Hipotesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standart Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P-value	Confirmation
H1 Viral Marketing → Purchase Decision	0.078	0.072	0.087	0.900	0.368	Rejected
H2 E-WoM → Purchase Decision	0.619	0.620	0.069	8.976	0.000	Accepted
H3 Brand Awareness → Purchase Decision	0.150	0.154	0.067	2.235	0.025	Accepted
H4 Viral Marketing → Brand Awareness	0.218	0.220	0.077	2.826	0.005	Accepted
H5 E-WoM → Brand Awareness	0.645	0.647	0.081	7.945	0.000	Accepted
H6 Viral Marketing	0.400	0.403	0.074	5.048	0.000	Accepted

	→ Brand Awareness						
	→ Purchase Decision						
H7	E-WoM → Brand Awareness → Purchase Decision	0.141	0.141	0.051	2.778	0.005	Accepted

4 Discussion

This research findings suggest that the viral marketing strategies employed in this study did not effectively influence consumer purchase decisions. While H6 was accepted, indicating that viral marketing can positively impact purchase decisions through brand awareness, stronger efforts are needed to increase brand awareness among consumers. Further analysis reveals that e-WoM and brand awareness play significant roles in influencing consumer purchase decisions for HMNS products. Specifically, consumers aged 18-43, with an average income below IDR 2,000,000, a student background, and prior experience purchasing HMNS products, are likely to be influenced by e-WoM and brand awareness. These factors contribute to their decision-making processes when considering HMNS products.

The descriptive statistical analysis reveals that the grand mean of the viral marketing variable is significantly high, suggesting that HMNS products have a strong viral presence among consumers. Likewise, the grand mean purchase decision shows that HMNS consumers agree that they have the intention to buy the product. If we look at the highest mean of viral marketing, namely sharing positive experiences with the HMNS brand with friends or family. And, the highest mean purchase decision, namely viral advertising content motivating or attracting consumers to buy HMNS products. This shows that HMNS viral marketing does not always have a direct impact on purchases because in terms of content, it may not be relevant, less informative or credible for everyone, and does not necessarily trigger consumers' need or desire to buy HMNS products.

This research findings diverge from previous studies by Putu & Made (2023), Aprillio & Widodo (2020) and Irawan & Misbach (2020) [6], which demonstrated a positive and significant influence of viral marketing on consumer purchasing decisions in the food and technology industries. While these studies suggest that viral marketing can effectively influence consumer choices by providing clear and compelling product information, the current research findings suggest that viral marketing may not have the same impact on purchase decisions in the context of the studied products.

This research also shows that E-WoM improves purchasing decisions significantly. This means that consumers who are exposed to positive reviews about a product on the internet are more likely to buy it. This shows that E-WoM can be a good tool for promoting business. to increase sales and build consumer trust. Likewise, the grand mean purchase decision shows that HMNS consumers agree that they have the intention to buy the product. If you look at the highest mean E-WoM, namely when buying HMNS products, other people's reviews make you more confident in buying them. And, the

highest mean purchase decision, namely viral advertising content that motivates or attracts consumers to buy HMNS products. This shows a positive relationship between E-WoM and viral advertising content, indicating that these two strategies complement each other and can work together to increase sales of HMNS products. E-WoM strategies and effective viral advertising can build consumer trust and buying interest, thereby encouraging them to buy HMNS products.

The results of this research are supported by (Sindy Yulitaningrum & Lestari Andjarwati, 2024) that e-WoM has a positive and significant effect on customers' choices to buy perfume products. The more E-WoM, the higher the customer's choice in deciding to buy perfume. The results of other research conducted by Sulaksono et al. (2022) also shows that e-WoM has a positive and significant impact on consumers' decisions to purchase Oriflame products. However, research results were found that were not in line with Afif et al. (2020) consumers of Si.Se.Sa syar'I clothing products can only influence customers at the purchase intention stage, but not yet at the purchase decision stage [7][9].

This study's findings regarding e-WoM's influence on purchase decisions align with research by Sindy Yulitaningrum & Lestari Andjarwati (2024) and Sulaksono et al. (2022) [7]. Both studies demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between e-WoM and consumer purchasing decisions for perfume and Oriflame products, respectively. Increased e-WoM activity positively correlates with a higher likelihood of customers choosing to purchase perfume. However, this research deviates from the findings of Afif et al. (2020) who identified that e-WoM only influenced purchase intentions, not purchase decisions, for Si.Se.Sa syar'I clothing products [9].

This study shows that knowledge about brand awareness has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. This means that customers who are more familiar with a brand and have a better understanding of it are more likely to choose that brand when making a purchase. This shows that increasing sales and market share is an important marketing strategy for the company.

Descriptive statistics shows that HMNS consumers strongly agree that they are familiar with the HMNS brand and know a lot about the product. Likewise, the grand mean purchase decision shows that HMNS consumers agree that they have the intention to buy the product. If we look at the highest mean brand awareness, namely quick recall of the HMNS brand. And, the highest mean purchase decision, namely viral advertising content that motivates or attracts consumers to buy HMNS products. This shows that when consumers who are exposed to quick reminders regarding the HMNS brand see viral advertisements for HMNS products, they will more easily recognize and understand the advertisement. Quick brand recognition can help consumers to focus more on advertising messages and be more easily influenced by them. Studies by Afif et al., (n.d.), Anindya & Indriastuti (n.d), and Sari Dewi et al. (2020) consistently demonstrate a significant positive influence of brand awareness on purchase decisions, particularly within the clothing and consumer goods industries. These findings suggest that increased brand awareness directly leads to higher consumer likelihood of purchasing products [9][14].

This research provides empirical evidence that viral marketing has a positive and significant impact on brand awareness. This means that a successful viral marketing strategy can reach many people quickly and effectively, thereby increasing consumer recognition and understanding of the brand. This shows that viral marketing can be a useful tool for businesses to increase consumer knowledge about brands and increase brand visibility in the market.

Based on the results of descriptive statistics, seen from the grand mean of the viral marketing variable, it shows that HMNS consumers strongly agree, which means HMNS products are viral. Likewise, the grand mean brand awareness shows that HMNS

consumers strongly agree that they are familiar with the HMNS brand and know a lot about the product. If we look at the highest mean of viral marketing, namely sharing positive experiences with the HMNS brand with friends or family. And, the highest mean of the brand awareness variable, namely quickly remembering the HMNS brand. This shows that when consumers share their positive experiences with HMNS with others, it increases brand exposure and creates a buzz around their product or service. People who hear this recommendation will be more likely to increase awareness of the HMNS brand.

The results of this study are in line with Algista et al. (2022) that viral marketing with brand awareness has a significant influence on Wardah sunscreen products. In food products, research results from Luh Putu Gangga Rahayu & Made Wulandari Kusumadewi (2023) also found that viral marketing has a positive and significant influence on brand awareness. As well as the results of research by Irawan & Misbach (2020) that viral marketing has a significant positive effect on brand awareness. (Chin, 2015).

This research provides empirical evidence supporting the positive and significant influence of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) on brand awareness. Positive online reviews and recommendations can reach a wide audience, enhancing brand recognition and understanding. These findings underscore the effectiveness of e-WoM as a strategic marketing tool for companies aiming to build brand awareness and foster consumer trust.

Descriptive statistics reveal a high grand mean within the e-WoM variable, indicating strong agreement among HMNS consumers that e-WoM influences their purchase decisions. Similarly, the high grand mean for brand awareness suggests that HMNS consumers are highly familiar with the brand and possess substantial product knowledge. Notably, the highest mean score within the e-WoM variable is associated with the statement "when buying HMNS products, other people's reviews make me more confident in buying them." This aligns with the highest mean for brand awareness, which highlights "quickly remembering the HMNS brand." These findings suggest that positive reviews, particularly from past purchasers, enhance brand credibility and consumer trust in HMNS. This, in turn, can motivate potential customers to seek information about HMNS, ultimately contributing to increased brand awareness.

This research aligns with previous findings by Irawan & Misbach (2020) suggesting that brand awareness partially mediates the relationship between viral marketing and purchase decisions [11]. While [20] found a strong influence of viral marketing on purchase decisions through brand knowledge, Algista et al. (2022) reported contrasting results, indicating that viral marketing may not have a significant impact on purchase decisions through brand awareness [10].

This study contributes empirical evidence suggesting a positive and significant indirect effect of viral marketing on purchase decisions mediated by brand awareness for HMNS perfumes. Viral marketing strategies, when successful, can enhance brand awareness, leading to increased consumer confidence and purchase motivation. Descriptive statistics revealed that "sharing positive experiences with the HMNS brand" had the highest mean score within the viral marketing variable, followed by "viral advertising content motivating or attracting consumers to buy HMNS products" as the highest mean for purchase decisions, and "quickly remembering the HMNS brand" as the highest mean for brand awareness. These findings suggest a potential sequence where positive brand experiences shared through viral marketing can pique consumer interest in viral advertisements. This combined effect can lead to higher brand recognition and recall, ultimately influencing purchase decisions. As brand awareness increases, consumers are more likely to consider HMNS products when seeking similar options.

The results of this research are in line with research by Irawan & Misbach (2020), which

found that brand awareness partially regulates the relationship between viral marketing and purchase decisions on OPPO cellphones [11]. Others study supports [20]) that viral marketing has a strong influence on purchasing decisions through brand knowledge. However, research by Algista et al. (2022) found different results, indicating that viral marketing does not have a strong impact on purchasing decisions through brand awareness [10].

This study aligns with previous findings by Irawan & Misbach (2020) suggesting that brand awareness plays a mediating role in the relationship between viral marketing and purchase decisions. While Anagnostou, n.d. and Mani et al., n.d. found a strong influence of viral marketing on purchase decisions through brand knowledge, Algista et al. (2022) reported contrasting results, indicating that viral marketing may not have a significant impact on purchase decisions through brand awareness [11].

This research shows that E-WoM contributes positively and significantly to purchasing decisions through brand awareness. This shows that positive reviews from other consumers, both online and offline, can build credibility and trust in the HMNS brand. Consumers who are more aware of and trust a brand are more likely to buy its products.

Based on the results of descriptive statistics, seen from the highest mean E-WoM, namely when buying HMNS products, other people's reviews make you more confident in buying them. And, the highest mean purchase decision, namely viral advertising content motivating or attracting consumers to buy HMNS products. Then, the highest mean brand awareness, namely quickly remembering the HMNS brand. This shows that positive reviews from other consumers, especially previous buyers and viral content of HMNS products can increase trust in HMNS and encourage other people to seek information about the brand. This increases brand awareness and motivates purchases.

This study aligns with previous research by Aljumah et al. (2023) (2023) and Aff et al. (2020)), which collectively demonstrate the positive influence of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) on brand awareness. Increased online customer engagement, such as brand searches and discussions on social media, contributes significantly to enhanced consumer awareness.

5 Managerial Implication

While viral marketing has gained popularity in recent years, as evidenced by studies like Irawan & Misbach (2020) this research suggests that its impact on consumer purchase decisions for HMNS perfumes is minimal. Instead, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) and brand awareness appear to be more influential factors in shaping consumer choices.

Enhancing consumer purchase decisions for HMNS perfumes necessitates a strategic focus on Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WoM). Leveraging the power of online and offline communities, loyalty programs, and positive review generation through marketing efforts can cultivate a robust e-WoM environment. This, in turn, has the potential to amplify brand awareness and positively influence customer purchase behavior. Notably, the study suggests a direct correlation between the volume of positive e-WoM and the likelihood of consumers choosing HMNS perfumes. To ensure the effectiveness of this strategy, HMNS should continuously monitor consumer trends and behaviors, conduct regular evaluations of marketing campaign performance, and make data-driven adjustments to optimize business goals.

7 Conclusion

This research investigates the impact of viral marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM), and brand awareness on consumer purchase decisions for HMNS perfumes. While viral marketing may not directly influence purchase decisions, it can be a complementary factor when combined with strong brand awareness. The research suggests that ineffective viral content lacking motivational elements and brand recognition limited the effectiveness of HMNS's viral marketing efforts. To strengthen brand awareness and promote positive purchase decisions, the study recommends a focus on content quality, ad retention, and audience preferences (e.g., video length, storytelling sequence). Additionally, fostering positive e-WoM through social media testimonials and reviews is identified as a crucial factor in building trust and influencing consumer behavior. The study concludes that a combined strategy emphasizing e-WoM and strategic viral marketing efforts that prioritize brand awareness can be highly effective in driving purchase decisions.

8 Recommendations

This research evaluates the effectiveness of marketing strategies incorporating viral marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM), and brand awareness in driving consumer purchase decisions for HMNS perfumes. While the study highlights the significance of e-WoM and brand awareness, it suggests that HMNS's viral marketing strategies could benefit from optimization. Future research should focus on the broader applicability of these findings across various industries and with larger sample sizes. HMNS is advised to prioritize cultivating positive online communities and incentivizing consumer reviews on e-commerce platforms and their website. Regular evaluation and data-driven adjustments to marketing strategies are crucial for maximizing the impact of e-WoM and brand awareness on sales and customer loyalty.

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