

The Role of Viral Marketing in Social Media on Brand Recognition and Brand Preference in Property Sales

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Abstract

Viral marketing is one of the most effective marketing strategies and important. The digital technology and social media together have increased the importance of viral marketing campaigns to increase of cost efficiency and enable them to reach an audience that was expected to quickly. This study attempts to test the influence of viral marketing strategies in the introduction of brand and brand preference by developing a framework for the effectiveness of viral marketing in the context of social media and test the relationship between some variables, the introduction of brand, and brand preference. The methodology with a structured questionnaire as a means of quantitative research or partial least squares (PLS) in data processing. By the total number of 58 respondents in the gallery property pt jababeka residence. The structural modeling (SEM) is used to test hypotheses put forward. The results showed that effective positive associated viral marketing.

1. Introduction

The world of marketing is currently experiencing very rapid development in line with the changes of times towards a more modern approach. The condition of society, which leads to the concept of marketing, also experiences change. If people used to buy goods they needed with awareness (aware), looked for information (attitude), then bought the item (act), and if satisfied, would buy again (act again), marketing activities now prioritize opinions in communities. This indicates that there is another factor that plays a very important role in marketing activities, namely the communication factor. According to Morrisson, communication is an effort to make all marketing activities or promotions of a company produce an image or identity that is consistent for the company (Siswanto, 2018).

In line with this opinion, Etaswara stated that nowadays marketing has been placed strategically in business processes where communication is a determining factor. Marketing in this reform era is communication, and communication is marketing; the two can never be separated. This is what differentiates modern marketing from traditional marketing, which has been running so far. Modern marketing demands more than simply

developing a good product, pricing it attractively, and making it available to target customers. Companies also must communicate with current and prospective customers, and what they communicate should be carefully prepared to be successful, not based on considerations of chance (Chrismardani et al., 2014).

The combination of communication and marketing has had a positive impact on the progress of business, so that the term Marketing Communication is applied by many business actors and has even become a mainstay in achieving success. Marketing communication has an essential role in creating positive brand equity and building strong brand loyalty. Through marketing communication efforts that are effective and consistent, several brands become so well known that they can be remembered by everyone with a standard level of intelligence. For example, most people who are familiar with computers would tend to mention Windows if asked to name a software package designed as an operating system (Putri, 2018).

The application of marketing communication currently makes extensive use of social media, which greatly facilitates and benefits marketers in promoting their products

because it offers the concept of "low budget, more effect." The power of using social media provides opportunities for local and international products to enter the Indonesian market. Zarella emphasized that social media is the latest development of new web technologies based on the Internet, making it easy for all people to communicate, participate, share with each other, and form an online network, allowing them to disseminate their brand's content. Posts on blogs, tweets, or YouTube videos can be produced and viewed directly by millions of people for free (R. K. Sari, 2019).

The enormous attraction of social media triggers its users to be more creative in creating and packaging the contents of messages that they will deliver to audiences. Interesting content will be liked by many readers, even opening up the possibility of being disseminated to other parties and becoming viral in cyberspace. These opportunities allow marketers to promote their products quickly and cost-effectively. That is why viral marketing is widely used in marketing campaigns in this modern era of technology. The term viral marketing was coined by Jeffrey F. Rayport in an article entitled "The Virus of Marketing." In the article, it is written that a virus can be used as a marketing program because a marketing message will spread with very little time, a budget that doesn't need much, and has a wide impact.

Thus, 'viral' leads to the word 'virus' that infects and spreads quickly and widely. Viral marketing uses the same concept, allowing marketing to spread in a short time without extensive promotional efforts and costs. The way viral marketing works is very clear, namely, utilizing various communication facilities available on the Internet. Pride and Ferrell explain that viral marketing involves a strategy to get consumers to share a marketer's message, often through email or online videos such as YouTube, in a way that spreads dramatically and quickly.

This means that promotional content can be delivered through email or online videos, attracting audience attention in a short time.

Apart from these two media, there are other media that can be used in the application of viral marketing, namely blogs on the Internet, social network sites, and e-books (Situmorang, 2019). However, even though there are many conveniences and advantages from implementing viral marketing, there are still shortcomings that marketers must understand and anticipate, as described by Richardson, namely the difficulty of controlling the distribution of messages and the delivery of content because distribution cannot be controlled accurately (R. K. Sari, 2019).

The percentage of the Indonesian population who own mobile phones in 2023 for the urban population is 69.53 percent, while the rural population is 54.31 percent (bps.go.id). The number of smartphone users continues to increase over time, presenting a big potential for business actors in the country. The use of smartphones by people provides added value for business actors to connect with consumers using IT devices. The number of active social media users based on reports from We Are Social in Indonesia increased by 12.35 percent, reaching 191 million people in January 2022. YouTube has become one of the most popular social media platforms nowadays.

The various content videos uploaded on the platform have attracted much attention. This also makes YouTube users reach fantastic numbers. Based on We Are Social reports, there are 2.56 billion users of the YouTube platform as of January 2022. India is the country with the largest YouTube users in the world, with 467 million. The United States follows with 240 million users. The third position is occupied by Indonesia, with 127 million YouTube users. Meanwhile, YouTube's market share in Indonesia reached 21.42% as of April 2022, the second highest after Facebook. Brazil ranks next with 107 million YouTube users. There are 99 million YouTube users in Russia. Japan has 93.8 million YouTube users. After that, there are Mexico and Germany, with the number of platform users amounting to 74.1 million and 66 million, respectively. YouTube is an online

video hosting service that enables people to share videos.

Groups of business people and individuals use YouTube to share or discover videos, including entertainment, promotions, and tutorials. YouTube is the most popular video hosting service, followed by other similar services such as Facebook, Vimeo, Vine, Blip, and Flickr. YouTube enables people all over the world to interact, share, and create content through online communities. Because of its popularity and features, YouTube can be a useful marketing channel for businesses. This article will focus on examining whether viral marketing through social media influences people's awareness and tendency to buy property.

The growing importance of digital marketing, driven by the rise of social media and other digital platforms, has made viral marketing a crucial component of modern marketing strategies. Journals on viral marketing can provide valuable insights into how businesses can effectively leverage social media to increase brand recognition and preference. However, it is also important to consider that not all viral marketing campaigns are successful or have long-term effects. Some campaigns may fail to create lasting impact or may not achieve the desired outcomes, which can serve as important case studies for understanding the limitations and potential pitfalls of viral marketing. In today's highly competitive marketplace, businesses must differentiate themselves from their competitors to stand out. A journal focusing on brand recognition and preferences can offer strategies for creating a strong brand identity and developing a loyal customer base. The impact of brand recognition and preference on consumer decision-making and sales is significant, as a well-recognized and preferred brand can greatly influence purchasing behavior and ultimately drive sales.

Journaling on the topic can give businesses insight into how to increase brand recognition and preference, which can increase sales and revenue. The need for data-driven

marketing with the availability of data and analytical tools allows businesses to measure the effectiveness of their marketing campaigns. Journaling on viral marketing, brand recognition, and preferences can provide businesses with data-based insights into the effectiveness of their marketing strategies. The importance of customer experience is closely linked to brand recognition and preference. A journal on the topic can give businesses insight into how to create positive customer experiences, which can lead to increased brand recognition and preference (Pratama et al., 2022).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Viral Marketing

The theory of viral marketing via social media is a marketing strategy concept that utilizes social media to disseminate information and promote products or services from a brand in an engaging and entertaining way, allowing it to spread quickly and widely like a virus (Hinz et al., 2011). Unlike traditional marketing methods that require significant costs, viral marketing via social media is done organically and does not require large expenses. Consumers become part of the marketing campaign by sharing content via social media. Thus, the more content that is shared, the greater the opportunity to reach a wider audience.

This viral marketing concept requires several important elements, including: 1. Interesting and Unique Content: Interesting and unique content more easily grabs attention and is shared by consumers. The content can be in the form of images, videos, articles, or other media. Contradictory Emotions: Content that evokes contrasting emotions (such as humor and sadness) tends to attract consumers' attention more than content that displays only one emotion. Encouraging User Participation: Viral marketing involves consumers in marketing campaigns, making them feel like part of the brand. Encouraging user participation can be achieved by creating sweepstakes programs, contests, or asking

consumers to share their experiences with products or brands.

Creating a Lasting Impression: Content that tends to go viral and attract attention is that which leaves a lasting impression on consumers. For example, content that demonstrates how a brand's products or services improve consumers' quality of life. In its application, viral marketing strategies via social media must be carried out precisely and in a targeted manner to achieve the desired goals. The success of a viral marketing strategy is not always measured by the number of followers or likes but also by the number of conversions, whether they be registrations, sales, or loyal customers.

2.2 Properties

Property refers to any physical or intangible object owned by an individual, group, or legal entity. The word "property" is derived from English, meaning something that can be owned by someone. In Indonesia, the term "property" is synonymous with real estate, houses, land, shophouses, buildings, or warehouses. Recently, the term property has shifted from its original meaning to a more specific meaning of immovable objects (land/buildings) (Pandiangan & Martini, 2021).

2.3 Social Media

Social media is an online platform where users can easily participate, share, and create content, including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds. Blogs, social networks, and wikis are the most common forms of social media used by people worldwide. Another definition suggests that social media is an online medium supporting social interaction, turning communication into interactive dialogue using web-based technology. Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, enabling the creation and exchange of user-generated content." Social networks are sites where anyone can create a personal web

page, then connect with friends to share information and communicate.

The largest social networks include Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter (Puspitasari et al., 2022). Social media, as described by Boyd (Nasrullah & Dudi Rustandi, 2016), is a collection of software that allows individuals and communities to gather, share, communicate, and, in certain cases, collaborate or play with each other. Social media has the power of user-generated content (UGC), where content is generated by users rather than editors, as in mass media agencies. (Nasrullah & Dudi Rustandi, 2016) states that social media is a media platform focusing on the existence of users who facilitate activities and collaboration. Therefore, social media can be seen as an online medium (facilitator) that strengthens relationships between users as well as a social bond.

2.4 Brand

A brand is the most valuable intangible asset of an entity. Therefore, branding must be taken seriously, including logo design, which reflects the brand's essence. The logo must embody the brand's personality and have uniqueness that distinguishes one entity from another. The widespread practice of fast and cheap logo services should not be taken lightly, as it results in generic logos that diminish the brand's value. To improve this condition, cooperation between brand owners and designers is needed. Awareness from both parties must be raised for the common good (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2012).

Brand recognition refers to the ability of consumers to identify a brand based on its attributes, such as its logo, color scheme, or tagline. It is a crucial factor in consumer decision-making because a well-recognized brand is often associated with trust and quality. Brand preference, on the other hand, is the inclination of consumers to choose one brand over its competitors based on perceived value, quality, and emotional connection. Together, brand recognition and preference form the foundation of customer loyalty, driving repeat

purchases and long-term business success. Strong brand recognition leads to higher visibility in the marketplace, while brand preference ensures that consumers consistently choose the brand, even when alternatives are available.

The term "viral marketing" was proposed by Harvard Business School lecturer Jeffrey Rayport in his article titled "The Virus of Marketing" in **Fast Company** magazine in 1996. As a model or method, viral marketing was later developed by Steve Juvertson and Tim Draper from the venture capital company Draper Fisher Juvertson in 1996. At that time, a marketing strategy was developed for the free e-mail service Hotmail, where every e-mail from a Hotmail account included the tagline "Get your private, free e-mail from Hotmail at <http://www.hotmail.com>." The results were extraordinary, as with an investment of US\$ 500,000, they managed to gain 12 million customers over two years.

This method was defined simply as "network-enhanced word of mouth," which translates to "network-enhanced word of mouth marketing." Tim Draper and Steve Juvertson were able to accomplish this because Hotmail, one of the first free e-mail service providers in the world, was founded by Shabeer Bathia and Jack Smith but funded by Draper Fisher Juvertson. Hotmail was later sold to Microsoft in 1997 for US\$ 400 million, becoming MSN (Berger & Milkman, 2012).

2.6 Hypothesis

Based on the background of the problem and literature review, the first hypothesis in this research is that viral marketing influences brand recognition to increase property sales at PT. Jababeka Residence Tbk. Previous research by Nggilu et al. (2019) states that the influence of the viral marketing variable on brand awareness has a significant coefficient value; viral marketing positively affects brand awareness. Other research results (Mustikasari & Widaningsih, 2019) show that viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand awareness, meaning that the higher the viral

marketing, the stronger the brand awareness felt by consumers. H1: Viral marketing influences brand recognition to increase property sales at PT. Jababeka Residence Tbk.

The second hypothesis in this research is that viral marketing influences brand preferences to increase property sales at PT. Jababeka Residence Tbk. Previous research (Nggilu et al., 2019) obtained a partial significance test of the variable, namely viral marketing, on purchasing decisions. This means that the regression coefficient of viral marketing on brand recognition is significant, indicating that viral marketing significantly affects purchasing decisions. Other research (Liu & Wang, 2019) has shown that viral marketing positively affects consumer preferences, meaning that better viral marketing results in higher consumer preferences. Thus, if prices increase, the consumer preference value will rise because the influence of price on consumer preferences is positive.

H2: Viral marketing influences brand preference to increase property sales at PT. Jababeka Residence Tbk. The third hypothesis in this research is that brand recognition does not affect brand preference in linking viral marketing to increasing property sales at PT. Jababeka Residence Tbk. Previous research (Karisma & Hanifah, 2023) showed that the variable Purchase Decision has a simultaneous effect with a value of 0.000. This means that the coefficient of the Viral Marketing variable, celebrity endorser, or brand awareness jointly influences purchasing decisions, with a less significant value.

Other previous research (Meistoh et al., 2022) explains that the Brand Awareness variable has a calculated value and significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$, so the brand awareness of purchasing decisions is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that partially there is no significant influence of brand awareness on purchasing decisions. H3: Brand recognition has no effect on brand preference in connecting viral marketing to increasing property sales at PT. Jababeka Residence Tbk.

3. Research Methods

The survey research method with a quantitative approach (Quantitative Research) was chosen in this study to answer the research questions. In preparing instruments or data collection tools, variables serve as the main reference for researchers in designing questionnaires. Data analysis is conducted through the responses to these questionnaire surveys. The location for this research is PT. Jababeka Residence Tbk., the first industrial area development company in Indonesia. Jababeka's head office is located at Hollywood Plaza No. 10-12, Jababeka City, Cikarang, Bekasi. The population in this research consists of all potential PT Jababeka Residence customers who have visited the Jababeka Residence Gallery, totaling 58 people.

A sample is part of the population, representing its number and characteristics (Sugiyono, 2008 in Siddiq et al., 2020). Regarding sampling techniques, it should be noted that the quality of research is not always determined by the sample size but by the strength of the theoretical foundations, the research design (assumptions, statistics), and the quality of implementation and processing (Akdon & Hadi, 2005 in Wanma et al., 2020). Based on this, the researcher used the entire population as the research sample. Thus, the researcher believes that the questionnaire

given to respondents can be completed according to the realities in their respective situations, ensuring the research is truly representative.

The questionnaire in this study used a closed-question format in all sections. Closed questions mean that the researcher provides fixed alternatives (predetermined) for respondents when answering questions, using an interval scale. The measurement method uses four scales: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree (Ruane M. Janet, 2013). The data collection method is through a survey by sending a questionnaire link via Google Forms. For quantitative research, measurements from previous research are used as references (Zia & Alzahrani, 2022). The research results will be obtained using Smart-PLS software with partial and simultaneous approaches. Below is an image of the research model:

4. results and discussion

4.1 Research result

Partial Least Squares (PLS)

The next process is to analyze the research variables using the Partial Least Square method. The research process will begin with identifying variable indicators, testing validity and reliability, and conducting R Square and T-tests for hypothesis testing (Azmy, 2021).

Table 2 . Outer Loading

Variables	Brand Introduction (PB)	Brand Reference (RB)	Viral Marketing (VM)
BRP1		0.8759	
BRP2		0.8983	
BRP3		0.8402	
BRR1	0.7831		
BRR2	0.8689		
BRR3	0.8705		
IDEA1			0.7828
IDEA2			0.7408
IDE3			0.5798
INN1			0.5974
INN2			0.7290
INN3			0.5862

INS1	0.6266
INS2	0.6786
INS3	0.5896
INT1	0.6958
INT2	0.5894
INT3	0.7052
IST1	0.6508
IST2	0.6814
IST3	0.6671
ITA1	0.6508
ITA2	0.6442

The process begins by identifying all variable indicators with an outer loading value >0.6. Table 2 is the result of outer loading. Based on this table, it can be seen that all indicators in the dimensions have values above 0.6. This stage explains that each variable dimension indicator is suitable for use in the

research model. The indicators used in Viral Marketing, Brand Recognition and Brand Preference will be able to realize this research model.

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Brand Introduction (PB)	0.796	0.822	0.879	0.709
Brand Preference (RB)	0.843	0.848	0.905	0.760
Viral Marketing (VM)	0.919	0.923	0.929	0.437

The next feasibility is to test the question components in the research questionnaire through validity and reliability tests. The indicators used are Cronbach Alpha>0.7, Composite Reliability>0.7, and Average Variance Extracted>0.5 (Ringle et al., 2020). Table 3 is the results of validity and reliability tests. The table shows that all questionnaires used are suitable for the research analysis

process. Cronbach Alpha value >0.7, Composite Reliability >0.7, and AVE >0.5. The Rho-a values shown in all variables can meet indicators that are above 0.8-0.9 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). All indicators are able to show reliability as indicated by Cronbach Alpha and Rho-a. All questions asked to respondents can be answered well.

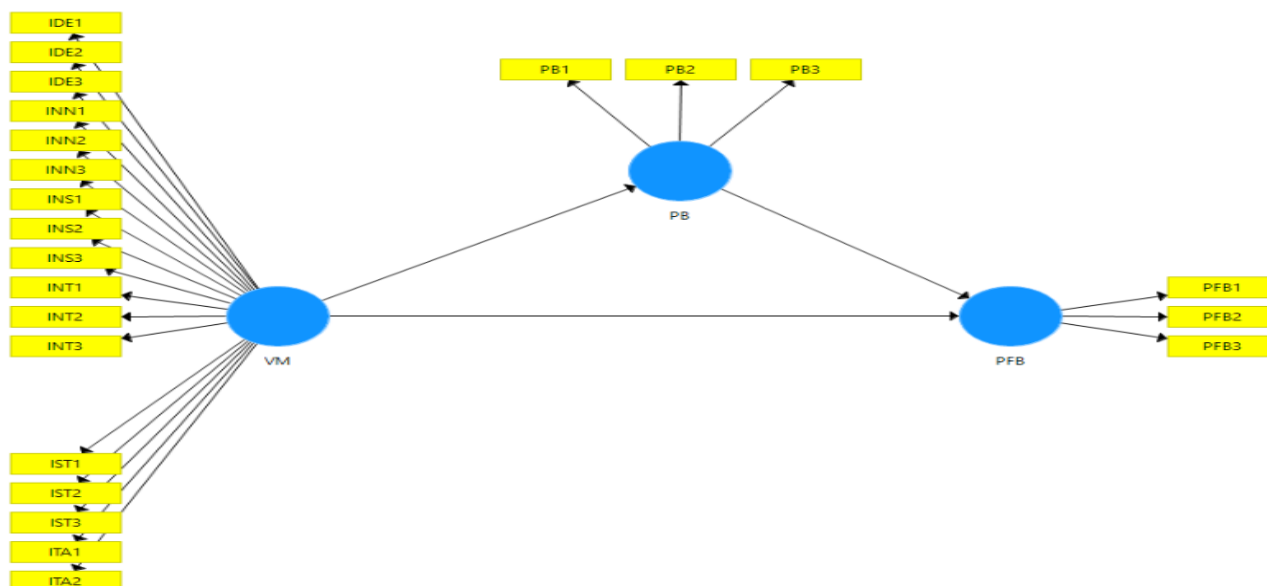
Table 4. R-Square

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Brand Introduction (PB)	0.545	0.537
Brand Preference (RB)	0.232	0.204

Viral Marketing Variables, Brand Recognition, Brand Preference, and Generational Differences will be analyzed via R-Square and T-Test. The results in Table 4

explain that Brand Recognition and Brand Preference are able to provide a determining influence of 70% and the remaining 30% is outside the research variables.

Figure 2 . Research Model



Source: Smart Output - PLS

Figure 2 is a research model that has been analyzed using this method. This picture shows that there are two indirect effects, namely Viral Marketing and Brand Recognition. These two things are analyzed to see the magnitude of

Brand Preference in Property Sales. Brand Recognition is a connecting variable for Brand Preference. Indicator analysis by looking at the number of p-values <0.05 and T-Statistics > T-Table.

Table 5. Indirect Effect

Variables	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Results
Viral Marketing (VM) -> Brand Introduction (PB) -> Brand Referral (RB)	0.008	0.513	0.608	Rejected
Viral Marketing (VM) -> Brand Introduction (PB)	0.738	12,607	0,000	Accepted
Viral Marketing (VM) -> Brand Referral (RB)	0.563	3,263	0.001	Accepted

The next process is hypothesis testing by looking at the t-test. Table 5 explains that Viral Marketing, Brand Recognition have a significant effect on Brand Preference. The Brand Recognition variable has a p-value of 0.6 (T-Table). This means that H1 is rejected which explains that there is no influence between Brand Recognition & Brand Preference. The Viral Marketing (VM) variable has p-values 0.0 < 0.5 and 12.6 (T-Statistic) > 1.96 (T-Table). This means that H2 is accepted which explains that there is an influence between Viral Marketing and Brand Recognition. The Viral Marketing Variable on Brand Preference has pvalues 0.0 < 0.05 and 3.3 (T Statistics) > 1.98

(T-Table). This means that H3 is accepted which explains that there is an influence between Viral Marketing and Brand Preference. Viral Marketing has a positive effect on Preference by 60%.Viral Marketing on Brand Recognition These two variables have positive implications for Brand Preferences where Viral Marketing (70%) and Viral Marketing have Positive implications for Brand Preferences of (60%).

4.2 Research Discussion

The results of the structural equation modeling analysis provide additional insight into the impact of viral marketing initiatives on targeted audiences' brand recognition and preferences. Our findings confirm previous

research by (Mustikasari & Widaningsih, 2019) and (Nguyen, 2020) that effective viral marketing initiatives have a direct positive impact on brand recognition of the targeted audience. Therefore, marketers and businesses must adopt the concept of several variables above to ensure that Homepage creates suitable content for an effective viral marketing campaign.

Marketers and businesses should also utilize social media platforms as the main medium for viral campaigns. Indeed, the speed and ease with which audiences can share content via such platforms places social media among the most effective tools for business. Additionally, the results show that an effective viral marketing campaign can significantly and positively influence the brand preferences of the targeted audience. This finding is in line with (Liu & Wang, 2019) who reported that viral marketing influences customer-based brand equity and purchase intention. As a result, if an individual interacts with a viral marketing campaign, his or her Brand Preference is likely to increase, which further increases the likelihood that the individual will purchase the advertised brand, product, or service.

In addition, the results of testing the moderation effect between older and younger groups reveal that the influence of viral marketing campaigns on brand preferences is stronger among younger audiences than older ones. In different age groups respond differently to similar viral marketing campaigns. Therefore, marketers and companies must take into account certain demographic factors, such as age, before running a viral marketing campaign. The content of viral marketing messages should be customized and sent only after demographic or psychographic segmentation.

5. Closing

5.1 Conclusion

The proliferation of digital technology and internet infrastructure into consumers' lives over the last decade has changed the

nature of online advertising. Marketers now recognize and must take advantage of new opportunities to accelerate the spread of marketing messages through customer-to-customer interactions, or viral marketing. Viral marketing departs from traditional word-of-mouth marketing in its reliance on the agility of digital resources, including mobile phones and the internet. As mentioned earlier, viral marketing is more beneficial to companies than traditional above-the-line media due to the lower level of investment (cost) involved in designing a viral marketing campaign and the potential for such campaigns to reach a larger audience.

To date, only limited research has examined the elements of successful viral marketing campaigns. This research works to close this gap by providing guidance for creating effective viral marketing campaigns. This study has important implications for marketers to achieve Homepage communication goals efficiently and effectively. Based on the findings of this research, the variables above influence successful viral marketing via social media. While many marketers are fixated on the size of the audience that can be reached by a Homepage viral message (Index), this study finds that effective viral marketing through the above variable framework has a significant positive effect on brand recognition and preference. The results of testing moderation effects also revealed that the impact of viral marketing on brand preferences was greater among younger participants than among older participants. Our findings thus provide insights for academics and practitioners, showing that successful viral marketing campaigns depend heavily on content quality (Influence).

5.2 Suggestion

Although, theoretically, marketers can gain major benefits from viral marketing, the main disadvantage of such campaigns is the relative lack of control that allows marketers to exert the message and its distribution. Although we anticipate significant growth in viral marketing in the future, the results of viral

marketing initiatives can be detrimental to marketers if audiences perceive messages negatively. Companies must be aware of this risk because even high brand equity can be significantly diluted by negative messaging.

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