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Brand Equity as Mediator in the Effect of Viral Marketing and Online Reviews on Impulsive Buying of Fashion Product

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A R T I C L E   I N F O

A B S T R A C T

This study aims to analyze potential strategic factors that marketers can leverage, particularly considering the impulsive nature of Indonesian consumers when purchasing fashion products. This study offers novelty by integrating viral marketing, online customer reviews, brand equity, and impulse buying into a single empirical framework within the context of the Indonesian fashion industry. It also provides context-specific insights for online fashion businesses in emerging markets, contributing both theoretically and practically to digital consumer behavior research. This research is categorized as an explanatory study based on a causal approach. The population consists of individuals who frequently purchase fashion products through e-commerce platforms, specifically, those who have made more than one purchase per month over the past three months. A total of 150 respondents were selected as the sample for this study. This research is a primary data type research using a questionnaire via Google Form. Data were processed using Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares), a statistical analysis tool suitable for examining complex variable relationships. This study contributes scientifically by integrating viral marketing, online customer reviews, and brand equity into a single framework that explains impulse buying behavior in the digital fashion industry. It provides empirical evidence that brand equity acts as a key mediating factor, strengthening the indirect influence of digital marketing strategies on consumers' impulse buying decisions.

INTRODUCTION

The growth of the digital era and technological advancements have significantly influenced and transformed Indonesia's fashion industry. This shift is closely linked to changes in consumer lifestyles, transitioning from traditional offline shopping to modern online platforms. Additionally, evolving consumer profiles have altered the way people shop, select products, and make purchasing decisions (David, 2025). According to data, fashion consistently ranks as one of the most sought-after product categories, with 70 percent of consumers showing a strong interest (Jauhari, 2023). Revenue from the fashion sector on Indonesian e-commerce platforms is expected to exceed seven billion US dollars in 2024 and grow to over nine billion by 2029 (Rafli, 2024).

Fashion remains a major point of interest among the public, and it is common for individuals to compete in showcasing their adherence to the latest trends (Halim et al., 2024). The rapid evolution of fashion styles often drives consumers to make impulsive purchases (Nursanti et al., 2023). Each year, fashion products continue to be highly sought after. Most recently, in mid-2024, fashion items remained among the most purchased products online. Popular items include clothing, cosmetics, and footwear (Bashir, 2024). This trend reflects a strong public obsession with owning fashion-related products, as demonstrated by the frequency of impulsive buying behavior (Gunawan & Iskandar, 2020).

Impulsive purchasing behavior is inherently influenced by the strategic efforts of marketers and the continuous evolution of online platforms, both of which actively seek to optimize consumer acquisition through a range of targeted approaches (Gunawan & Iskandar, 2020). Among these, viral marketing has emerged as one of the most widely adopted strategies in contemporary digital commerce (Wiyono et al., 2023). This approach utilizes online dissemination mechanisms that encourage individuals to voluntarily transmit marketing messages or product information to others, thereby fostering the potential for exponential growth in both message exposure and persuasive impact (Widiyawati & Patrikha, 2023). Beyond the implementation of viral marketing strategies, consumer-generated reviews particularly positive evaluations from previous buyers also constitute a critical component of marketing effectiveness, as they contribute significantly to building consumer trust and shaping purchasing intentions (Melisa & Damayanti, 2022; Rosniati et al., 2023).

Prior empirical investigations Anggraini et al. (2023), Erliana et al. (2023), Hamidi (2020) and Liyanapathirana (2021) have consistently demonstrated that viral marketing exerts a significant influence on impulse buying behavior. Viral marketing, as a strategic digital communication tool, capitalizes on short-form content such as images and videos disseminated via social media platforms, enabling rapid and extensive reach. This form of marketing often stimulates voluntary consumer engagement, whereby individuals share content organically across their networks (Wiyono et al., 2023). Such exposure may provoke spontaneous purchase intentions,

even among individuals who had previously not contemplated buying the product. As a result, viral content can serve as a catalyst for unplanned or impulsive purchasing behavior (Shao, 2024).

Similarly, studies by Masitoh et al. (2024), Rosniati et al. (2023), and Sanapang et al. (2024) indicate that online customer reviews also exert an influence on impulse buying. Online customer reviews are evaluations provided by current or past users of a product or service, detailing their experiences (Pocchiari et al., 2025). These reviews often include personal opinions or recommendations (Syahriyanti et al., 2024). In today's marketplace, the success of a product or service is increasingly shaped by customer-generated evaluations, which serve as primary sources of information for potential buyers and significantly affect their impulse purchasing decisions (Rosniati et al., 2023).

While theoretical frameworks underscore the efficacy of marketing strategies in stimulating impulsive purchasing, practical implementations often fall short of expectations. This discrepancy suggests the necessity of incorporating brand equity as an intervening or complementary construct. This study thus posits that brand equity defined as the value embedded in a brand through consumer perception can amplify the effectiveness of marketing strategies aimed at triggering impulse buying (Li et al., 2025). Strong brand equity enhances a product's perceived credibility and desirability, fostering consumer trust and psychological readiness to purchase without deliberation (Hashem et al., 2020). Once trust is firmly established, consumers are more inclined to engage in impulsive purchasing behavior toward the brand (Kathiravan & Mahalakshmi, 2022).

Given the absence of prior studies that examine the integrated relationship among viral marketing, online customer reviews, brand equity, and impulse buying within a unified analytical framework, the present study seeks to address this gap. Specifically, it aims to identify and empirically validate the interrelationships among these variables in the context of fashion product consumption. The research problem addressed in this study is how to formulate effective strategies that drive consumers toward impulsive purchases in the fashion product sector. Moreover, the findings of this study are expected to provide practical recommendations for online fashion business practitioners seeking to incorporate these strategies into their sales systems. The form of the research framework is as follows:
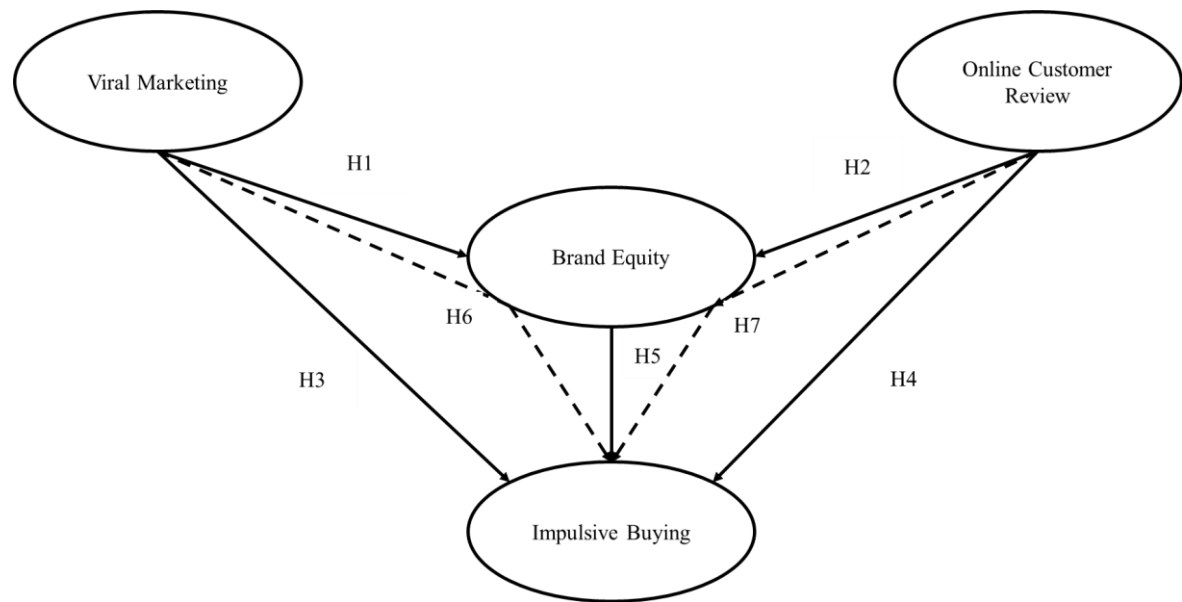
Figure 1. Research Framework

H1: It is suspected that viral marketing has a positive and significant influence on brand equity

H2: It is suspected that online customer reviews have a positive and significant influence on brand equity

H3: It is suspected that viral marketing has a positive and significant influence on impulsive buying

H4: It is suspected that online customer reviews have a positive and significant influence on impulsive buying

H5: It is suspected that brand equity has a positive and significant influence on impulsive buying

H6: It is suspected that brand equity is able to significantly mediate the influence of viral marketing on impulsive buying

H7: It is suspected that brand equity is able to significantly mediate the influence of online customer reviews on impulsive buying

RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts an explanatory design grounded in causal inference, intended to empirically test and analyze the relationships among multiple variables (Fadilla et al., 2021). The study population comprised individuals who frequently purchase fashion products through e-commerce platforms, specifically those who have made more than one transaction per month over the past three months. The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with an incidental sampling scheme, with a minimum sample size requirement of 150 respondents. This

figure is determined based on the guideline proposed by J. F. Hair et al. (2021), wherein the minimum sample size is calculated by multiplying the total number of indicators by a factor of ten.

The study encompasses 15 indicators derived from four main constructs. The impulse buying construct comprises four indicators adapted from Azizah & Fauzi (2024) and John et al. (2024), including spontaneous purchase behavior, impulsive purchase intention, unplanned purchasing without consideration of consequences, and high purchase intensity. The brand equity construct includes three indicators adapted from Alsaraireh et al. (2022) and Niken & Waris (2024), namely product-related trust, product attractiveness, and repurchase interest. The viral marketing construct consists of three indicators drawn from Theresia et al. (2023): product knowledge, clarity of product information, and interpersonal product discussion. Meanwhile, the online customer review construct incorporates five indicators from Rosniati et al. (2023), including perceived usefulness, source credibility, argument quality, valence, and review volume.

This study employs primary data obtained directly from respondents through an online survey distributed via Google Forms. Measurement of variables is conducted using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), in accordance with established methodological practices (Sugiyono, 2022). The statistical analysis is performed using SmartPLS, a variance-based structural equation modeling (SEM) technique deemed appropriate for predictive and exploratory research contexts (Garson, 2016; Wardhana, 2024). The analytical procedures consist of three stages: assessment of the measurement model (outer model), evaluation of the structural model (inner model), and hypothesis testing. The outer model evaluation assesses the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments through convergent validity, discriminant validity, AVE, cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. The inner model evaluation determines the explanatory power and fit of the structural model using the coefficient of determination (R^2). Hypothesis testing is conducted using multivariate statistical procedures within the SmartPLS environment, employing path coefficient estimation and T-statistics to assess the significance of the hypothesized relationships.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Outer Model. The assessment of the outer model involves several tests, including convergent validity (evaluated through outer loadings), discriminant validity (assessed via cross loadings and HTMT), and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for overall validity testing. Meanwhile, reliability is examined using cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values (Latan, 2017).

The results of the convergent validity test are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Convergent Validity

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loadings	Average Outer Loading Of The Variable
Impulsive Buying	IMB1	0,869	0,880
	IMB2	0,867	
	IMB3	0,910	
	IMB4	0,874	
Brand Equity	BRE1	0,923	0,928
	BRE2	0,942	
	BRE3	0,920	
Viral Marketing	VIM1	0,857	0,857
	VIM2	0,806	
	VIM3	0,908	
Online Customer Review	OCR1	0,845	0,911
	OCR2	0,928	
	OCR3	0,919	
	OCR4	0,935	
	OCR5	0,930	

Source: Research data processing using Smart-PLS, 2025

The results of the convergent validity test show that the outer loading of the indicators on each variable of impulsive buying, brand equity, viral marketing and online customer review shows a value above 0,7. This indicates that each indicator of this research variable has valid criteria.

In the impulsive buying variable, the indicator with the highest value is unplanned purchasing without consideration of consequences (IMB3) with a loading of 0.910. This indicates that consumers' impulsive behavior is primarily characterized by the tendency to make spontaneous purchases without planning and without considering possible consequences. Furthermore, in the brand equity variable, the indicator product attractiveness (BRE2) obtained the highest loading of 0.942, suggesting that product attractiveness is the strongest indicator in shaping consumers' perceptions of brand equity. Meanwhile, in the viral marketing variable, the dominant indicator is interpersonal product discussion (VIM3) with a loading of 0.908. This finding demonstrates that interpersonal discussions about a product, whether directly or through digital media, serve as the main aspect that reinforces the influence of viral marketing. Finally, in the online customer review variable, the indicator valence (OCR4) emerges as the most dominant with a loading of 0.935. This means that the positive or negative tendency of online reviews is the most determining factor in assessing the impact of consumer reviews on buyer perceptions. Thus, these dominant indicators reflect the core dimensions of each construct,

which deserve primary attention both in the context of theoretical development and practical implementation strategies.

The discriminant validity test can be seen in table 2 and 3 as follows.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Indicator	Impulsive Buying	Brand Equity	Viral Marketing	Online Customer Review
Spontaneous Purchase Behavior	0,869	0,697	0,627	0,724
Impulsive Purchase Intention	0,867	0,846	0,669	0,674
Unplanned Purchasing Without Consideration Of Consequences	0,910	0,632	0,509	0,908
High Purchase Intensity	0,874	0,597	0,501	0,748
Product Related Trust	0,710	0,923	0,665	0,594
Product Attractiveness	0,733	0,942	0,669	0,570
Repurchase Interest	0,752	0,920	0,577	0,579
Product Knowledge	0,621	0,585	0,857	0,431
Clarity Of Product Information	0,419	0,519	0,806	0,339
Interpersonal Product Discussion	0,617	0,651	0,908	0,483
Perceived Usefulness	0,651	0,587	0,441	0,845
Source Credibility	0,776	0,580	0,407	0,928
Argument Quality	0,841	0,534	0,481	0,919
Valence	0,845	0,590	0,474	0,935
Review Volume	0,840	0,567	0,445	0,930

Source: Research data processing using Smart-PLS, 2025

The results of the discriminant validity test as seen from the results of the cross loading values show that each indicator of each variable of impulsive buying, brand equity, viral marketing and online customer review shows a value that is greater than the correlation value of the autonomy indicator in other constructs. This indicates that each indicator of this research variable has valid criteria.

Table 3. HTMT

Variable	Brand Equity	Impulsive Buying	Online Customer Review	Viral Marketing
Brand Equity				
Impulsive Buying	0,864			
Online Customer Review	0,671	0,889		
Viral Marketing	0,784	0,748	0,552	

Source: Research data processing using Smart-PLS, 2025

The results of the discriminant validity test, as seen from the HTMT value, show that none of the variable relationship constructs have a value above 0,9, so it can be said that all constructs are valid (J. Hair & Alamer, 2022).

In the AVE (average variance extracted) test, it can be seen in table 4 as follows.

Table 4. AVE

Variable	AVE
Impulsive Buying	0,775
Brand Equity	0,862
Viral Marketing	0,736
Online Customer Review	0,832

Source: Research data processing using Smart-PLS, 2025

The AVE results show that the construct values of impulsive buying, brand equity, viral marketing and online customer review variables show values above 0,5. This indicates that each variable in this study meets valid criteria.

The Cronbach's alpha test can be seen in Table 5 as follows.

Table 5. Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's alpha
Impulsive Buying	0,903
Brand Equity	0,920
Viral Marketing	0,721
Online Customer Review	0,949

Source: Research data processing using Smart-PLS, 2025

The results of Cronbach's alpha show that the values of the impulsive buying, brand equity, viral marketing and online customer review variables show values above 0,6. This indicates that each variable in this study meets reliable criteria.

The composite reliability test can be seen in table 6 as follows.

Table 6. Composite Reliability

Variable	Composite reliability
Impulsive Buying	0,932
Brand Equity	0,949
Viral Marketing	0,893
Online Customer Review	0,961

Source: Research data processing using Smart-PLS, 2025

The Composite Reliability results show that the values of the impulsive buying, brand equity, viral marketing and online customer review variables show values above 0,7. This indicates that each variable in this study meets reliable criteria.

Inner Model. This test aims to evaluate the adequacy of the structural model by using the R-Square (R^2) value and Q-Square (Q^2) value. The R-square statistic is utilized to determine the extent to which the independent variables collectively explain the variance in the dependent variable. An R^2 value below 0.19 is considered weak, around 0.33 is regarded as moderate, and values above 0.67 are interpreted as strong (Chin, 2010; Wardhana, 2024). Meanwhile, Q-Square is employed to assess the overall predictive relevance of the model, reflecting the extent to which the model can accurately predict the observed empirical data. The interpretation of Q^2 values generally follows established thresholds, where a value between 0.02 and 0.15 indicates weak predictive relevance, a value ranging from 0.15 to 0.35 reflects moderate predictive relevance, and a value equal to or greater than 0.35 demonstrates strong predictive relevance (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

The R-Square results are presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7. R-Square

| Variable	R-Square	Q-Square
Impulsive Buying	0,865	0,646
Brand Equity	0,580	0,496

Source: Research data processing using Smart-PLS, 2025

The results show that impulsive buying in this study produced a value of 0.865, this means that the r-square of impulsive buying is strong. This means that brand equity, viral marketing and online customer reviews can influence impulsive buying by 86.5%. In other words, the model has a high explanatory power in predicting impulsive buying behavior. The implication is that strategies aimed at strengthening brand equity, utilizing viral marketing, and optimizing online

customer reviews are highly crucial to encourage consumers' impulsive purchases. With such a strong explanatory value, firms can be confident that these factors are indeed the key determinants of impulsive buying behavior. Meanwhile, brand equity in this study produced a value of 0.580, which means that the r-square of brand equity is moderate. This means that viral marketing and online customer reviews can influence brand equity by 58%. The implication is that although both variables have a fairly strong influence, there are still 42% of other factors outside the model that also affect brand equity. This provides room for researchers and practitioners to consider additional factors in strategies to strengthen brand equity.

The Q-square (Q^2) values obtained in this study indicate that the model has strong predictive relevance. Specifically, impulse buying yielded a Q^2 value of 0.646, which is categorized as strong, indicating that the constructs of brand equity, viral marketing, and online customer reviews are not only statistically significant but also highly predictive in predicting consumer impulse buying behavior. This strengthens the robustness of the model and implies that managerial strategies focused on these factors can effectively anticipate and influence consumer purchasing impulses. Meanwhile, brand equity yielded a Q^2 value of 0.496, which is also categorized as strong. Although the model's explanatory power for brand equity is moderate ($R^2 = 0.580$), the high predictive relevance indicates that viral marketing and online customer reviews are reliable predictors of brand equity. This demonstrates that digital-based strategies remain important in shaping brand equity, while also opening up opportunities for future research to incorporate additional variables that could further enhance the model's predictive accuracy.

Hypothesis Testing. The hypothesis testing was conducted using multivariate statistical analysis through Smart PLS, employing the Path Coefficients approach along with T-statistic values. A hypothesis is considered supported when the original sample value is positive (Wardhana, 2024). Additionally, statistical significance is confirmed when the p-value is less than 0,05 and the T-statistic exceeds the critical value of 1,96 (Wardhana, 2024). Conversely, the hypothesis is rejected if the p-value exceeds 0,05 and the T-statistic is below the threshold of 1,96 (Wardhana, 2024).
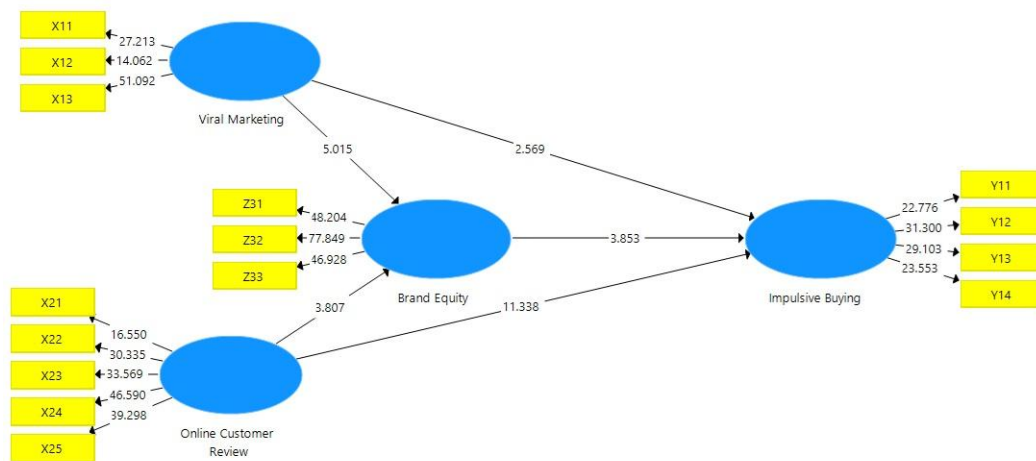
Figure 2. Hypothesis Testing Path Diagram
Source:Research data processing using Smart-PLS, 2025

Table 8. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Original Sample	T-statistic	P-values
Viral Marketing→Brand Equity	0,499	5,015	0,000
Online Customer Review→Brand Equity	0,379	3,807	0,000
Viral Marketing→Impulsive Buying	0,142	2,569	0,010
Online Customer Review→ Impulsive Buying	0,605	11,338	0,000
Brand Equity→ Impulsive Buying	0,312	3,853	0,000
Viral Marketing→Brand Equity→ Impulsive Buying	0,156	2,790	0,005
Online Customer Review→Brand Equity→ Impulsive Buying	0,118	3,587	0,000

Source: Research data processing using Smart-PLS, 2025

Based on the results of the hypothesis test in this study, it can be described that viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on brand equity, this can be seen from the original sample value which has a positive value, in addition the T-statistic value shows a number of 5,015 which means above the standard determination of 1,960 and the p-value shows a value of 0,000 which means significant. Then online customer reviews have a positive and significant effect on brand equity, this can be seen from the original sample value which has a positive value, in addition the T-statistic value shows a number of 3,807 which means it is above the standard determination of 1,960 and the p-value shows a value of 0,000 which means significant. Next, viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying, this can be seen from the original sample value which has a positive value, in addition, the T-statistic value shows a number of 2,569 which means it is above the standard determination of 1,960 and the p-value shows a value of 0,010 which means it is significant. Furthermore, online customer reviews have a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying, this can be seen from the original

sample value which has a positive value, in addition, the T-statistic value shows a number of 11,338 which means it is above the standard determination of 1,960 and the p-value shows a value of 0,000 which means it is significant. Then brand equity has a positive and significant effect on impulsive buying, this can be seen from the original sample value which has a positive value, in addition the T-statistic value shows a number of 3,853 which means it is above the standard determination of 1,960 and the p-value shows a value of 0,000 which means significant. The mediating role of brand equity here as a partial mediation. Meanwhile, brand equity as a mediator of the influence of viral marketing on impulsive buying shows a figure of 2,790, which means it is above the standard determination of 1,960 and the p-value shows a value of 0,005, which means it is significant. In addition, brand equity as a mediator of the influence of online customer reviews on impulsive buying shows a figure of 3,587, which means it is above the standard determination of 1,960 and the p-value shows a value of 0,000, which means it is significant.

This indicates that online customer reviews have the strongest influence on impulsive buying. In other words, consumers are highly likely to be driven to make spontaneous purchases when exposed to positive or appealing reviews from other users. The trust and experiences shared by others through online reviews serve as a dominant trigger that encourages purchasing behavior without much consideration. On the other hand, the weakest relationship is found between viral marketing and impulsive buying. Although viral marketing has a positive effect on impulsive buying, its influence is relatively weaker compared to other factors. Viral marketing tends to generate initial interest or increase brand awareness but does not necessarily drive consumers to make impulsive purchases as strongly as online reviews or brand equity do.

Viral Marketing On Brand Equity. Viral marketing has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on brand equity, particularly in the context of fashion products. This can be theoretically explained by the unique characteristics of the fashion industry, where products are not merely viewed as functional commodities but also as symbols of personal identity and self-expression. This emotional connection makes consumers more responsive to campaigns that are visually appealing, emotionally engaging, and socially relevant (Vrtana & Krizanova, 2023). Viral content which is often easily shareable, entertaining, and frequently features public figures or influencers can effectively build brand awareness and create strong brand associations in consumers' minds. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube play a pivotal role in this process, enabling viral campaigns to spread rapidly and widely (Theodorakopoulos et al., 2025). Repeated exposure to viral fashion content accelerates brand recognition and reinforces the brand image as an aspirational and trend-relevant lifestyle representation. Therefore, from a theoretical standpoint, viral marketing is not only an effective promotional strategy but also a highly relevant strategic approach in shaping and strengthening brand equity for fashion products, especially in today's fast-paced, visual, and digitally

connected era (Maria & Kusumah, 2024). This research is in line with previous research conducted by Maria & Kusumah (2024) and Awad & Aldabousi (2024)

Online Customer Review On Brand Equity. Online customer reviews has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on brand equity of fashion products because peer-generated reviews play a crucial role in shaping perceptions, building trust, and forming brand image in the minds of potential buyers. In an increasingly developed digital ecosystem, consumers tend to seek additional information before making a purchase, and one of the primary sources they rely on is the experience shared by other users. Consistent, honest, and positively framed reviews can create a strong perception of product quality, especially in the fashion industry, which heavily depends on visual impressions, aesthetics, and lifestyle appeal. When consumers read reviews that describe a product as fashionable, high-quality, trendy, or even exceeding expectations, positive brand associations are formed (Alsaraireh et al., 2022). Furthermore, positive reviews also increase the level of trust among new consumers, as they feel more secure and confident in their purchase decisions. The sense of safety and satisfaction conveyed through these reviews also has the potential to encourage repeat purchases and foster long-term brand loyalty. In the context of fashion products, which are strongly influenced by public opinion and social trends, online customer reviews are not merely informational tools, but highly effective communication strategies for strengthening brand equity on emotional, perceptual, and functional levels particularly in the digital era, where consumers are increasingly interconnected and influence one another (Chakraborty, 2019). This research is in line with previous research conducted by Alsaraireh et al. (2022) and Chakraborty (2019).

Viral Marketing On Impulsive Buying. Viral marketing has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on impulsive buying, as it creates intense emotional exposure and drives spontaneous purchasing behavior. Fashion products are closely associated with trends, lifestyle, and self-image, making consumers more reactive to visually appealing content and narratives that are emotionally and aesthetically engaging. Viral content that spreads across social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok especially when supported by endorsements from influencers or digital celebrities generates a strong emotional urge to purchase the product immediately, either before it runs out or before the trend fades (Theodorakopoulos et al., 2025). Additionally, urgency elements such as limited editions, time-sensitive discounts, or real-time testimonials from other users are often included in viral campaigns, triggering the fear of missing out (FOMO) phenomenon, which further reinforces impulsive buying tendencies. In a fast-paced and visually driven online shopping environment, fashion consumers are easily encouraged to make purchasing decisions without careful prior planning. Therefore, from a theoretical standpoint, viral marketing is an especially effective strategy for stimulating impulsive buying, particularly in the fashion industry, which is heavily influenced by emotion, visual trends, and the social dynamics of digital media (Anggraini et

al., 2023). This research is in line with previous research conducted by Anggraini et al. (2023), Erliana et al. (2023), Hamidi (2020) and Liyanapathirana (2021).

Online Customer Review On Impulsive Buying. Online customer reviews has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on impulsive buying among online fashion consumers because reviews from fellow users can instantly build trust and trigger unplanned purchasing decisions. In the context of online shopping, consumers cannot physically see or try on products, which makes them highly dependent on the experiences of other users to reduce uncertainty and accelerate the decision-making process. Honest, spontaneous, and positive customer reviews can serve as strong emotional stimuli, evoking feelings such as curiosity, excitement, and the urge to try the product being discussed. In the fashion industry, which is heavily influenced by trends, visual style, and social pressure, consumers are more easily persuaded by reviews that present products as stylish, high-quality, and popular (Masitoh et al., 2024). Furthermore, reviews that emphasize exclusivity, user satisfaction, or testimonials about how quickly a product sells out can trigger a fear of missing out (FOMO), which intensifies impulsive buying behavior. In addition, features such as star ratings, brief comments, and visual reviews (e.g., photos or videos of product usage) on e-commerce platforms and social media further strengthen the instant appeal of fashion products. Therefore, from a theoretical standpoint, online customer reviews serve not only as tools for product evaluation but also as significant emotional and social triggers that drive impulsive buying among today's digital fashion consumers (Smith & Kabamba, 2022). This research is in line with previous research conducted by Masitoh et al. (2024), Rosniati et al. (2023), and Sanapang et al. (2024).

Brand Equity On Impulsive Buying. Brand equity has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on impulsive buying because fashion products are inherently closely linked to self-expression, appearance, and social status. Therefore, brands with high brand equity are able to capture consumers' attention emotionally and instantly. When consumers encounter fashion brands they already know, trust, or admire, they tend to make spontaneous purchase decisions with minimal deliberation, driven by the belief that the product will meet their expectations (Hashim et al., 2015). Moreover, brand equity creates added value such as exclusivity, prestige, and self-confidence, which further strengthens the emotional impulse to buy. In other words, the stronger the brand equity of a fashion product, the greater the likelihood that consumers will make unplanned purchases due to the brand's inherent appeal embedded in their minds (Erislan, 2025). This research is in line with previous research conducted by Hasim et al. (2025), Kathiravan & Mahalakshmi (2022) and Wirawan & Syahputra (2025).

Brand Equity as A Mediator of the Influence Viral Marketing On Impulsive Buying. Brand equity significantly mediates the influence of viral marketing on consumers' impulsive buying behavior in the fashion industry because viral marketing essentially plays a role in shaping consumer perceptions of a brand. When a viral campaign successfully builds brand equity, consumers tend to feel more confident, familiar, and emotionally attached to the

brand(Maulina et al., 2024; Zahrah et al., 2025). This creates a psychological state that supports spontaneous purchasing decisions, especially in the context of fashion, which is strongly influenced by emotions, lifestyle, and trends. In other words, viral marketing enhances brand appeal, and it is this strong brand appeal that ultimately drives impulsive buying behavior. Therefore, brand equity serves as a crucial bridge that explains how the influence of viral marketing is translated into unplanned purchasing actions by consumers (Haeruddin, 2021; Rahmawati et al., 2023).

Brand Equity as A Mediator of the Influence Online Customer Review On Impulsive Buying. Brand equity significantly mediates the influence of online customer reviews on consumers' impulsive buying behavior in the fashion industry because, in the context of impulsive purchases, consumers tend to rely on quick and convincing information and online reviews provide exactly that. However, the effect on impulsive actions does not occur directly. Positive online reviews first enhance various elements of brand equity, such as brand awareness, brand trust, and perceived quality. Once brand equity is established or strengthened, consumers feel more comfortable, confident, and emotionally driven to make sudden, unplanned purchases (Erislan, 2025). This is particularly true in the fashion industry, where buying decisions are often triggered by visual appeal, emotions, and brand image. Therefore, brand equity acts as a catalyst for spontaneous decision-making. In this way, online customer reviews influence impulsive buying indirectly through the development of stronger brand equity (Gulfraz et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION & SUGGESTION / KESIMPULAN & SARAN

Conclusion. This study confirms that viral marketing and online customer reviews play a crucial role in influencing consumers' impulsive buying behavior in the fashion industry, both directly and indirectly through brand equity as a mediating variable. Viral marketing has proven effective in building brand awareness and brand image through emotionally, aesthetically, and socially engaging content, thereby encouraging spontaneous purchasing behavior. Similarly, online customer reviews significantly contribute to shaping positive brand perceptions by conveying real user experiences, which in turn enhance trust and trigger quick, unplanned purchase decisions. Brand equity plays a significant mediating role in both relationships. In the context of fashion where image, emotions, and trends heavily influence consumer behavior brand equity amplifies the emotional effects of viral marketing and online reviews on impulsive buying. High brand equity serves as a foundation that increases consumer confidence and emotional drive to make sudden purchase decisions. Therefore, it can be concluded that digital marketing strategies that emphasize the power of viral content and customer reviews will be more effective when aimed at building and strengthening brand equity, as brand equity has been shown to be a key linkage that increases the likelihood of impulsive buying in today's digital fashion industry.

Suggestion. For future practice, fashion brands should focus on integrating emotionally-driven viral content and authentic customer reviews into their digital marketing strategies with the goal

of strengthening brand equity. Marketing efforts should be aligned not only to attract attention but also to build lasting trust, relevance, and emotional connection with consumers. Additionally, businesses are encouraged to actively monitor and manage online reviews, collaborate with trusted influencers, and ensure consistent brand messaging across digital platforms. For future research, it is recommended to explore the role of other potential mediating or moderating variables, that may influence the relationship between digital marketing efforts and impulsive buying behavior. Longitudinal studies may also provide deeper insight into how brand equity develops over time and how its effects on consumer behavior evolve in a dynamic digital environment.

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