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The Effect of Influencer Credibility, Visual Content, and Viral Marketing on Purchase Decision of Wardah Cosmetics on Instagram

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Abstract: In the face of intense competition in Indonesia's cosmetics industry, Wardah needs to implement effective marketing strategies through social media to enhance consumer purchase decisions. This study aims to examine the influence of influencer credibility, visual content, and viral marketing on cosmetic product purchase decisions on Instagram, both partially and simultaneously. A quantitative research method was employed, gathering data from 220 respondents via a questionnaire. Regression results revealed a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.157, indicating that the independent variables explained 15.7% of the variance in purchase decisions. Partially, significant influences were found for Influencer Credibility (t = 2.923), Visual Content (t = 5.549), and Viral Marketing (t = 4.286) on purchase decisions. The F-test result showed a calculated F value of 8.193 > the F table value of 2.65, indicating a significant simultaneous effect. Hence, it can be concluded that influencer credibility, visual content, and viral marketing have a significant impact on consumer purchase decisions, both individually and collectively. This suggests that a marketing strategy leveraging these three variables can effectively boost cosmetic product purchases on Instagram.

Keywords: Influencer Credibility, Visual Content, Viral Marketing, Purchase Decision

INTRODUCTION

Social media enables users to create and share content online, promoting interaction, collaboration, and network growth (Christin et al., 2025), especially Instagram, has evolved from a platform for social interaction into a primary marketing channel for a variety of products (Roshni & Nattassha, 2024). Instagram, the second most popular social media platform in Indonesia, is used by 85.3% of individuals aged 16-64, with 76.4% of women relying on it for beauty product information (Annur, 2024; Zukhaer et al., 2025). Beauty products, in particular, are purchased frequently through social media, with a 43% purchase rate, following fashion items at 61% (Populix, 2022). The convenience of online shopping has transformed consumer behavior, making purchase decisions dependent on both product characteristics and the speed of information access via digital channels and social media (Harahap & Amanah, 2018). Hence, this shift in consumer behavior is driven by Gen Z, aged 18-25, who dominate the online beauty

shopping trend, heavily influencing purchase decisions through Instagram content. As digital natives, Gen Z sees Instagram as their primary platform for consumption, inspiration, and social engagement, including views influencers not only as role models but also as active sources of lifestyle and beauty inspiration they engage with daily (Tamara et al., 2021). Also generation Z is drawn to products that offer good quality, affordable prices, and attractive designs, aligning with their lifestyle and aesthetic preferences (Fajriah & Susilo, 2024). This demographic's preference for aesthetically pleasing visuals and affordable products aligns well with Wardah's marketing strategy, positioning it as a leading brand for beauty products in Indonesia. In the context of global digital marketing, social media is a major tool in the beauty industry, with platforms like Instagram playing a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior (Global WebIndex, 2024). A significant portion of global beauty consumers 68% report that social media content influences their purchasing decisions, with Instagram being the primary source of visual inspiration (We Are Social, 2025).

In Indonesia, where Instagram boasts over 109 million active users, this platform has become indispensable for brands like Wardah to drive consumer awareness, engagement, and purchasing decisions (We Are Social, 2025). The rapid growth of the Indonesian beauty industry has spurred the emergence of local cosmetic brands, such as Make Over, Emina, and Wardah. Wardah, produced by PT. Paragon Technology and Innovation, holds a 48% market share in Indonesia, offering high-quality, affordable, halal-certified products that resonate with consumers' desire for beauty solutions that support skin health (Annur, 2024; Rahayu et al., 2024). As the Indonesian beauty market continues to expand, reaching USD 7.23 billion in 2022 with a projected growth rate of 5.81% from 2022-2027, beauty brands like Wardah must leverage digital marketing strategies effectively to maintain and expand their market presence (2022-2027). Hence, the decision to purchase cosmetic products on Instagram is not driven by a single factor, but rather by the accumulation of various digital marketing communication elements (Nadila et al., 2024).

One of the most effective strategies in modern digital marketing is influencer partnerships. Influencers, especially those active on platforms like Instagram, have significant sway over consumer behavior due to their ability to form emotional and psychological connections with their followers (Gubalane & Ha, 2023). Influencers' credibility, built on expertise, trustworthiness, and relatability, plays a crucial role in shaping the opinions of their audience (El-Maura & Bharata, 2023). Influencers with high trust levels are more effective in shaping opinions and influencing consumer purchase decisions for the cosmetic products they promote (Adrianto & Kurni, 2021). Tasya Farasya, a beauty influencer with millions of followers, exemplifies the impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavior. Through her reviews of Wardah products, Tasya has successfully swayed the purchasing decisions of her audience, particularly among Gen Z consumers who value authenticity, personal expression, and product customization (Hanifah & Sudrajat, 2024). Credibility, however, is not the only factor influencing purchasing decisions, visual content such as beauty tutorials and product reviews also plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer perception (Santoso & Nurhajati, 2024). Instagram's features, including stories, reels, and IGTV, have proven highly effective for engaging consumers, reaching audiences quickly and interactively, also building positive product perceptions (Aprilia & Arifin, 2023). Engaging visual content, combined with influencer collaborations, helps to create a compelling narrative that can lead to quicker purchase decisions (Amini & Salahudin, 2023). Viral marketing strategies, leveraging narratives and influencer involvement, further amplify the reach of beauty campaigns and drive rapid consumer engagement also encourage users to voluntarily share information (Hasna et al., 2024; Pratama et al., 2024). Wardah has capitalized on these strategies, establishing a strong digital presence through influencer marketing, visually engaging content, and viral promotions (Pratiwi et al., 2023). Despite these successes, product quality and user experience remain paramount to sustaining consumer loyalty and satisfaction. Consumer reviews, which act as

vital feedback, play an important role in shaping purchasing decisions by providing consumers with reassurances regarding product effectiveness and safety (Sari & Realize, 2023; Rombe et al., 2023).

This research aims to examine the influence of influencer credibility, visual content, and viral marketing on purchasing decisions, particularly for Wardah products on Instagram. Key questions include: How does influencer credibility affect consumer trust and purchasing choices? What role does visual content such as, tutorials and reviews play in shaping perceptions? How effective are viral marketing strategies in driving cosmetic purchases on Instagram? These questions are essential for understanding how digital marketing elements impact consumer behavior. The study is grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model Osgood (1957), which explains how external stimuli, such as visual content and influencer endorsements, trigger internal consumer responses leading to purchase decisions by McQuail (1989) with the S-O-R theory explaining how digital stimuli influence buying behavior on platforms like Instagram (Watonia et al., 2024). It will also explore the impact of influencer credibility, visual content, and viral marketing strategies on consumer engagement and purchase intent (Wibowo & Heryjanto, 2020; Arumsari & Utama, 2018; Rohman et al., 2023). This research will provide valuable insights for improving digital marketing strategies in the beauty industry.

METHOD

This research utilizes a quantitative approach, employing a five-point Likert scale for measurement, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. According to Sugiyono (2023), the subject of research is crucial for obtaining data, as it refers to individuals possessing information about the variables being investigated. In this study, the subjects are consumers of Wardah cosmetic products who have made purchases or engaged with promotions through Instagram. Sugiyono (2023) defines the object of research as the attributes or characteristics of people, objects, or activities selected by the researcher for study. In this case, the object consists of influencer credibility, visual content, and viral marketing, which are believed to influence purchase decisions of Wardah products on Instagram.

Sampling was conducted using purposive sampling, a method where samples are selected based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2020). The criteria for respondents include: 1) individuals who have seen promotional content for Wardah products through influencer Tasya Farasya on Instagram, 2) participants aged 15 or older, who are considered mature enough to understand and complete the questionnaire independently, and 3) individuals who have made purchasing decisions influenced by the influencer.

According to Hair et al. (2021), the sample size should be at least 5 to 10 times the number of indicators for the variables being studied. With 21 indicators in this research, the required sample size is 105 to 210 respondents. The study achieved a sample size of 220 respondents, which is deemed sufficient. Data collection was conducted online through a Google Form questionnaire, distributed via social media to reach the target respondents. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, with validity and reliability tests, coefficient of determination, and hypothesis testing (t-tests and f-tests) to examine the relationships between variables. This methodology ensures a robust analysis of the factors influencing purchasing decisions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data in this study were collected through a questionnaire distributed to 220 respondents meeting specific criteria: Instagram users, familiar with influencer Tasya Farasya, and Gen Z who have seen her Wardah promotions. Based on the analysis of the characteristics of 220 respondents, it can be concluded that the majority of participants in this study are female, comprising 83% of the respondents, while 17% are male. In terms of age, the largest group falls within the 21-25 years range, representing 56% of the respondents, followed by those aged 15-

20 years (23%) and 26-28 years (21%), indicating that the respondents are predominantly from Generation Z. Regarding educational background, most respondents have a high school (40%) or bachelor's degree (43%), with smaller proportions holding diplomas (11%), master's degrees (6%), or doctorates (0.45%). In terms of occupation, 38% of the respondents are students, 36% are private employees, 13% are civil servants, 10% are entrepreneurs, and 3% are housewives. Regarding income, most respondents earn between 1-5 million (39%), followed by 5-10 million (29%), under 1 million (24%), and above 10 million (8%). Additionally, all respondents (100%) are active users of Instagram, meeting the criteria set for the study. These characteristics provide a comprehensive overview of the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1. Results of Validity Test, Reliability Test, and Coefficient of Determination

Variable	Instrument	Rhitung	Rtabel	Cronbach's Alpha	R^2
Influencer Credibility (X1)	IC1	0,402	0,132	0,734	0,275
	IC2	0,510	0,132		
	IC3	0,652	0,132		
	IC4	0,697	0,132		
	IC5	0,698	0,132		
Visual Content (X2)	VC1	0,558	0,132	0,679	0,322
	VC2	0,536	0,132		
	VC3	0,444	0,132		
	VC4	0.445	0,132		
	VC5	0,560	0,132		
	VC6	0,434	0,132		
Viral Marketing (X3)	VM1	0,475	0,132	0,677	0,253
	VM2	0,310	0,132		
	VM3	0,178	0,132		
	VM4	0,712	0,132		
	VM5	0,662	0,132		
	VM6	0,549	0,132		
Purchase Decision (Y)	PD1	0,566	0,132	0,713	0,157
	PD2	0,580	0,132		
	PD3	0,590	0,132		
	PD4	0,533	0,132		
	PD5	0,548	0,132		

Source: Data processed by the researcher (2025)

Based on the results presented in Table 1, the validity test, reliability test, and coefficient of determination reveal that all five items in the influencer credibility questionnaire have r-values greater than the critical r-value, indicating that the questions are valid (Sugiyono, 2020). Similarly, all six items for visual content and viral marketing also show valid results. For the purchase decision variable, all five items are valid as well. Regarding reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha scores for the variables are as follows: Influencer Credibility (0.734), Visual Content (0.679), Viral Marketing (0.677), and Purchase Decision (0.713), all indicating reliable measures as the values exceed 0.60 (Sugiyono, 2020). The coefficient of determination for Influencer Credibility on Purchase Decision is 0.275, indicating a 27.5% effect. For Visual Content, it is 0.322 (32.2%), and for Viral Marketing, it is 0.253 (25.3%). The combined effect of these three variables on Purchase Decision is 0.157, explaining 15.7% of the variation, suggesting a moderate correlation and indicating the need for additional predictors to improve the model.

Table 2. Results of t-test

Model	Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized	Std. Error	t	Sig (t-test)

			Coefficients (Beta)			
Regression	(Contant)	18,271	-	1,187	15,397	0,000
	Influencer Credibility (X1)	0,163	0,195	0,056	2,923	0,004
Regression	(Contant)	13,110	-	1,556	8,424	0,000
	Visual Content (X2)	0,331	0,353	0,060	5,549	0,000
Regression	(Contant)	16,202	-	1,294	12,525	0,000
	Viral Marketing (X3)	0,222	0,279	0,052	4,286	0,000

Source: Data processed by the researcher (2025)

Based on Table 2, the t-test results indicate that the calculated t-values exceed the critical t-value of 1.971: 2.923 for Influencer Credibility (X1), 5.549 for Visual Content (X2), and 4.286 for Viral Marketing (X3). Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted, confirming the significant impact of each independent variable in explaining the variation in the dependent variable (Ghozali, 2023). A significance level of < 0.05 indicates a significant effect, while > 0.05 indicates no significant effect.

Table 3. Results of f-test

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	sig
Regression	65,376	3	21,792	8,193	0,000
Residual	574,533	216	2,660		
Total	639,909	219			

Source: Data processed by the researcher (2025)

Based on Table 3, the F-test results show that the calculated F-value of 8.193 exceeds the critical F-value of 2.65, rejecting the null hypothesis (Ho) and accepting the alternative hypothesis (Ha). This indicates a significant simultaneous effect of Influencer Credibility (X1), Visual Content (X2), and Viral Marketing (X3) on Consumer Purchase Decisions (Y) at a 0.05 significance level, where F-value > F-table and significance < 0.05 indicates a significant effect (Sugiyono, 2020).

In the digital era, influencer marketing is an effective strategy to reach Generation Z, especially for brands like Wardah aiming to build emotional connections with consumers. The study shows that influencer credibility, encompassing trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, significantly influences purchase decisions with a contribution of 27.5%. This suggests that the higher the consumer's trust in the influencer, the greater the likelihood they will purchase the promoted product. This finding is supported by Gubalane & Ha (2023) and Napitupulu et al. (2025), who emphasize trustworthiness as a dominant factor in purchase evaluation and interest. Wardah effectively applied this strategy by collaborating with Tasya Farasya, an influencer who not only has high credibility but also aligns with the brand's values. This strategy strengthens Wardah's image as a modern halal beauty brand, resonating with young Muslim women in Indonesia. Hence this finding is supported by Anggrainy & Supriyono (2024), instagram significantly influences purchase decisions, with effective marketing activities accelerating consumer decision-making by providing easy access to product information.

In the context of Wardah's digital marketing on Instagram, visual content proves to be highly significant in influencing purchase decisions, particularly among Generation Z. The study shows that visual content (X2) has the largest impact on purchase decisions (Y), with a t-value of 5.549 and a coefficient of determination of 32.2%. This indicates that attractive,

informative, and aesthetically pleasing product visuals build interest and increase purchase intent (Kawet et al., 2022; Rubiyati et al., 2024). Which lead to purchase decisions are a component of consumer behavior, involving a series of stages in selecting, buying, using, and evaluating products or services to meet needs (Kotler & Keller, 2018). Hence, Wardah utilizes various content types, such as video tutorials, product images, and testimonials, creatively packaged by influencer Tasya Farasya, to not only introduce products but also foster positive brand perceptions. Previous studies, such as Arumsari & Utama (2018), emphasize the importance of visuals in Instagram promotions, while Krisdanu & Sumantri (2023) highlight that emotional and linguistic visual characteristics enhance user engagement. In cosmetics marketing, where decisions are often influenced by visual perception and real testimonials, such content is a crucial element driving consumer action.

Viral marketing has proven to be an effective approach in influencing consumer purchase decisions, especially in the fast-paced, interconnected digital era. The research reveals that viral marketing (X3) significantly affects purchase decisions with a t-value of 4.286 and an R^2 of 25.3%. This indicates that the greater the exposure and audience engagement with viral content, the more likely consumers are to purchase the promoted product. In Wardah's campaign, the spread of content through influencer Tasya Farasya strengthened the organic reach through reposts, comments, and story shares on Instagram. Beyond its wide reach, viral marketing creates emotional resonance and high user engagement. The practice of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) plays a key role, where consumers act as promoters by sharing reviews, recommendations, and comments digitally, as described by Rijki et al. (2024). For Wardah, viral marketing not only broadens promotion reach but also builds consumer trust through natural social interactions on social media, positively contributing to purchase decisions.

This study shows that an integrated approach combining influencer credibility, the power of visual content, and viral marketing significantly influences purchase decisions, especially among Generation Z Instagram users. These three variables not only impact decisions independently but also have a simultaneous effect, contributing 15.7% to the purchase decision. In Wardah's digital campaign, these elements complement each other. Influencer credibility builds initial trust with the audience, which is then reinforced by visually appealing content that also conveys clear information. Meanwhile, viral marketing acts as the main driver, expanding campaign reach and generating buzz that accelerates purchase decisions. The synergy of these elements creates a comprehensive brand perception in the minds of digital-native consumers, who are sensitive to visual messages and public opinion. These findings align with Napitupulu et al. (2025), where trustworthiness was found to significantly affect purchase interest, supporting Wardah's strategy that credibility is the key to attracting attention and influencing consumer behavior. This can be explained through the SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory, where the stimuli of influencer credibility, visual content, and viral marketing, such as the promotion of Wardah's cushion by Tasya Farasya, influence the consumer's internal state, triggering the response of a purchase decision. Thus, the synergy of digital strategies employed by Wardah is not only statistically effective but also strategically relevant in practice. Influencer credibility builds trust, visual content serves as the primary communication tool, and viral marketing strengthens message dissemination. This approach is aligned with Generation Z's responsiveness to two-way communication, content authenticity, and emotional engagement through social media, further cementing Wardah's position as a modern halal cosmetic brand that understands and adapts to the dynamic behaviors of today's digital consumers.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the influence of influencer credibility, visual content, and viral marketing on purchasing decisions for cosmetic products on Instagram. The findings indicate that influencer credibility has a significant, though relatively small, effect on purchase decisions. The trust, expertise, and honesty of influencers like Tasya Farasya positively

influence consumer confidence in product quality and relevance. Visual content, proves to be the most dominant factor, as engaging and informative visuals effectively capture audience attention, simplify product understanding, and foster emotional connections, thereby significantly enhancing purchase interest. Viral marketing also plays a crucial role, as the organic spread of promotional messages strengthens brand awareness and purchasing intent. The synergy of these factors collectively drives consumer decisions

For companies like Wardah, it is recommended to prioritize visually appealing and emotionally engaging content across platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, leveraging the dominant role of visual content. While influencer credibility has a smaller influence, it remains important for brand alignment. Wardah should also utilize data analytics to understand consumer behavior better. For future research, given that the R^2 value is only 15.7%, further studies should explore additional factors influencing purchasing decisions. Comparisons across different platforms and expanding the research to include consumers beyond Generation Z would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the broader cosmetics market in Indonesia.

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