



**THE ROLE OF BRAND IMAGE AS A MEDIATOR OF THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN VIRAL MARKETING AND WORD OF MOUTH ON THE
PURCHASE DECISION OF THE SUMENEP ONLINE NOODLE HOME
BUSINESS**

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of brand image as a mediator in the relationship between viral marketing and word of mouth on purchasing decisions for online noodle home businesses in Sumenep. The background of this study is based on the implementation of viral marketing, the effectiveness of which is still unknown. Word of Mouth The extent to which the brand image formed among consumers of Mie Daring Sumenep cannot be ascertained in terms of its contribution in influencing purchasing decisions and the emergence of a gap in brand perception among potential consumers. The number of samples in this study was 100 people. The data analysis technique in this study used Partial Least Square (PLS) method. The results of the study show that Viral Marketing has a significant influence on Buying decision, either directly or indirectly through Brand Image, which emphasizes the important role of viral strategies in shaping positive brand images and driving consumer decisions. Meanwhile, Word of Mouth does not have a direct significant influence on purchasing decisions, but has been proven to have a significant influence on Brand Image, so that it can indirectly influence purchasing decisions by strengthening brand image. Furthermore, Brand Image proven to have a significant influence on Buying decision.

Keywords: Viral Marketing, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, Buying Decision



INTRODUCTION

The culinary business is one of the fastest-growing businesses in Indonesia. This is influenced by several factors, including population growth, economic growth, and lifestyle. According to (Yahya, 2023) The Food and Beverage (F&B) industry contributes significantly to the national economy. Businesses in the F&B sector are considered to produce certainty because they sell products that meet everyone's basic needs, especially food. One culinary product that is highly sought after by the public is noodles. Noodles are a food that is very popular with almost everyone and are easy to prepare with a variety of flavors such as sweet, savory, and spicy. Furthermore, they are also relatively affordable. Given these conditions, there is a significant opportunity for noodle businesses, especially those on a home-based scale. However, the emergence of many home-based business concepts can create increasingly fierce competition, requiring business owners to develop appropriate marketing strategies to attract consumer interest.

Changes in the digitalization era have an impact on various aspects of life, especially on business development and marketing aspects. (Ardena et al., 2025) This is marked by changes in the platforms used to market a product. The advent of social media has enabled people to disseminate new information to a wider audience. Social media provides content that can be accessed by a wider audience, facilitating, influencing, and interacting with individuals. (Yuliantoro et al., 2019) Viral Marketing is a marketing strategy that spreads information about a product by word of mouth to the surrounding environment by utilizing existing digital media. (Safitri, 2023) This strategy can spread like a virus, thus benefiting the spread phase.

The key to viral marketing success lies in attracting a large number of visitors to a social media platform and recommending it to others who are then deemed interested. Increasingly competitive business competition relies not only on viral marketing but also on the power of consumer recommendations. Consumers tend to trust recommendations from others through word of mouth, commonly known as word of mouth. WOM is defined as the process of spreading information about a product from one consumer to another through digital communication or verbally (in person) (Pamungkas, 2017). In addition, WOM also plays a role in strengthening a product's brand position.

Viral marketing and word of mouth are becoming increasingly dominant marketing strategies, especially for small businesses and home businesses with limited promotional budgets. The success of viral marketing and word of mouth is determined not only by the extent to which information is disseminated, but also by consumers' assessment of a brand. Brand image is a crucial factor in shaping consumer trust, perceived quality, and confidence in a product. A positive brand



image will make viral marketing messages and consumer recommendations more likely to drive purchasing decisions. Conversely, a weak brand image can cause marketing messages to lose their impact.

Mie Daring is a popular home business in Sumenep Regency, established in 2021 and producing a variety of noodle varieties, including original noodles, soy sauce noodles, Jebbew noodles, and grilled noodles. They offer not only a variety of noodles, but also a choice of spiciness levels, ranging from 0 to 10. Although the Mie Daring Sumenep *Home Business* has utilized social media as a promotional tool through a Viral Marketing strategy, the resulting influence on consumer purchasing decisions is not yet known with certainty its effectiveness. Marketing information spread virally will not necessarily be able to encourage consumers to make a purchase if it is not supported by a strong and positive brand perception. Furthermore, the Word of Mouth formed among Mie Daring Sumenep consumers is uncertain to what extent its contribution in influencing purchasing decisions. Recommendations from other consumers are often influenced by subjective experiences, thus creating differences in perceptions among potential consumers regarding the quality and brand image of Mie Daring Sumenep.

The high popularity of Mie Daring, accompanied by strong consumer interest, does not fully align with the results of previous research related to the variables studied, thus indicating a gap between empirical phenomena and academic findings. From an academic perspective, this research is highly urgent given the limited empirical studies that specifically examine the role of *Brand Image* as a mediating variable in the relationship between *Viral Marketing* And *Word of Mouth* on purchasing decisions, especially in the context of *Home Business Online Noodles* in the Sumenep region. Most previous studies tend to place viral marketing and word of mouth as variables that directly influence purchasing decisions and focus on large-scale companies or national brands. Therefore, the findings are not fully relevant to describing the dynamics of digital marketing in micro and small businesses.

Furthermore, this research is practically valuable as evaluation material and a basis for strategic decision-making for the owner of the Sumenep Online Noodles Home Business in designing a more effective marketing strategy. The results are expected to provide concrete recommendations for optimizing viral marketing and word-of-mouth by strengthening brand image, thereby increasing purchasing decisions and business sustainability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Kotler (2018) stated that Viral Marketing is a digital form of word-of-mouth marketing communication, where companies design various marketing content such



as videos, advertisements, and other promotional materials that have high appeal, thus encouraging consumers to actively search for, watch, or share them with others. Liu-Thompkins (2012) identified 3 main determinants that influence the effectiveness of viral marketing, namely: 1) Message characteristics; 2) Characteristics of the sender and recipient and 3) Characteristics of the social network.

Sugiyono (2013) states that there are six forms of testing or measurement indicators used to assess the effectiveness of viral marketing, which are adapted from research. Ho, JYC, Dempsey (2009) titled "*Viral Marketing: Motivation to Forward Online Content*" These include: 1) Inclusion – need to belong, which is an aspect to assess the extent to which an individual has a need to be part of a group; 2) Inclusion – individuation, which is an indicator to measure a person's need to appear different among their social group; 3) Control – personal growth, which is related to influencing and controlling the social environment through personal achievement; 4) Curiosity, which describes the level of an individual's curiosity about digital content; 5) Content forwarding, which is an assessment of how often they send or share information online; and 6) Content consumption, which is an assessment of the frequency of respondents spending time on certain online activities.

According to Dwiyanti, AY, & Arifiansyah (2023) Word of mouth is a form of communication where consumers share their experiences after using a product or service, which is then shared with the public through various social media platforms. An individual's ability to influence others through word of mouth is a crucial element for organizations, especially when the product or service offered has characteristics that are difficult to assess before experiencing it directly.

Sernovitz (2020) Word of mouth has a dimension known as 5T, namely: 1) Talkers, in this element we must know consumers who have consumed the product or service that has been provided; 2) Topics, in this element there is a word of mouth because a message or matter is created that makes them talk about the product or service; 3) Tools, a tool to help the message be conveyed; 4) Taking, in this element the company's participation in responding to the product or service and 5) Tracking, monitoring the results of WOM Marketing after a tool is used and responsiveness in responding to potential consumers.

Consumer perceptions of brand image vary, companies always strive to maintain a good brand image for their consumers. (Wicaksono, 2022) Brand image is the customer's overall understanding of a brand. Furthermore, it reflects how a brand is perceived by the audience, both emotionally and rationally. Brand image is also considered crucial, as consumers' memory of a brand influences whether or not they will return to the store. There are four indicators of brand image: 1) Recognition; 2) Reputation; 3) Affinity; and 5) Domain.



Sari & Listyowati (2020) states that the purchasing decision is the stage in the purchasing decision-making process where the consumer actually makes a purchase. At the end of a purchasing process, the consumer will stop searching and evaluate a product or service to make a purchase. In general, the factors that influence final consumer purchasing decisions can be grouped into four categories (Tjiptono, 2016), namely: personal, psychological, social and cultural factors.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses quantitative research methods. This research involves the use of numerical data, from data collection and interpretation to results or conclusions. In its presentation, quantitative research mostly displays and interprets numbers accompanied by images, tables, and graphs (Machali, 2021). This research uses primary data which sourced from the online questionnaire answers of respondents of the Sumenep Online Noodle Home Business (google form). The population in this study is all consumers whose number is unknown because there is no personal data recorded from consumers. *Home Business* Sumenep Online Noodles. The sample size for this study was 100 people. Purposive sampling was used, a sampling method based on criteria relevant to the research objectives. Data collection techniques included interviews, questionnaires, and library research. Data analysis techniques used were: Partial Least Squares (PLS) method. PLS is a multivariate statistical technique that compares the relationship between several dependent and independent variables simultaneously. This method is included in the variance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach. The variables studied in this study consist of independent variables, namely: Viral Marketing (X1), Word of Mouth (X2); dependent variables, namely: purchasing decisions (Y); and mediating variables, namely: Brand Image.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics Test

Descriptive statistics on the research variables are used to describe the level of achievement of each indicator formulated as question items on each variable, namely Viral Marketing, Word of Mouth, Brand Image, and Purchasing Decisions at the Sumenep Online Noodle Home Business, which are measured using a Likert scale, as follows:

Table 1.
Descriptive Analysis Results

Variables	Average	Information
<i>Viral Marketing</i>	4.36	Very high

Word of Mouth	4.33	Very high
Brand Image	4.41	Very high
Buying decision	4.08	Very high

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Based on the table above, it can be seen that:

1. Regarding the Viral Marketing variable, it is 4.36 with an interpretation value that is classified as very high, meaning that this mean answer can be interpreted that respondents give very high appreciation to the Viral Marketing statement item.
2. On the Word of Mouth variable 28.56% is 4.33 with an interpretation value that is classified as very high, meaning that this mean answer can be interpreted that respondents give very high appreciation to the Word of Mouth statement item.
3. About Brand Image is 4.41 with an interpretation value that is classified as very high, meaning that this mean answer can be interpreted that respondents give very high appreciation to the Brand Image statement item.
4. Regarding Purchasing Decisions is 4.08 with an interpretation value that is classified as very high, meaning that this mean answer can be interpreted that respondents give very high appreciation to the Purchase Decision statement item.

Hypothesis Testing

Smart PLS (Partial Least Square) Analysis

The results of the analysis using Partial Least Squares (PLE) included two measurement models: an outer model and an inner model. Test criteria were applied to both models. The initial model is as follows:

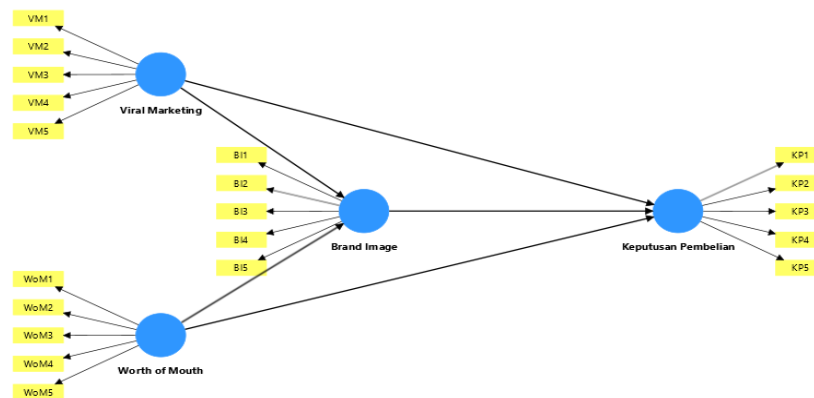


Figure 1.

Initial Research Model

Source: Smart PLS 4 Output

Outer Model Test

The results of the Outer Model test can be seen in the following table:

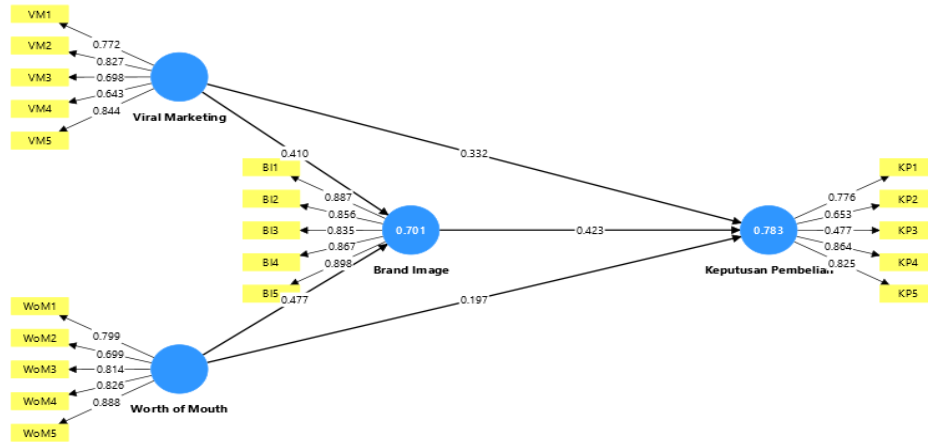


Figure 2.

First Validity Test Results

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Based on Figure 2, the First Validity Test shows that there are several indicators that have Outer Loadings values of less than or equal to 0.7, namely VM3, VM4, WoM2, KP2, KP3, so that invalid questionnaire data must be deleted first before proceeding to the next analysis.

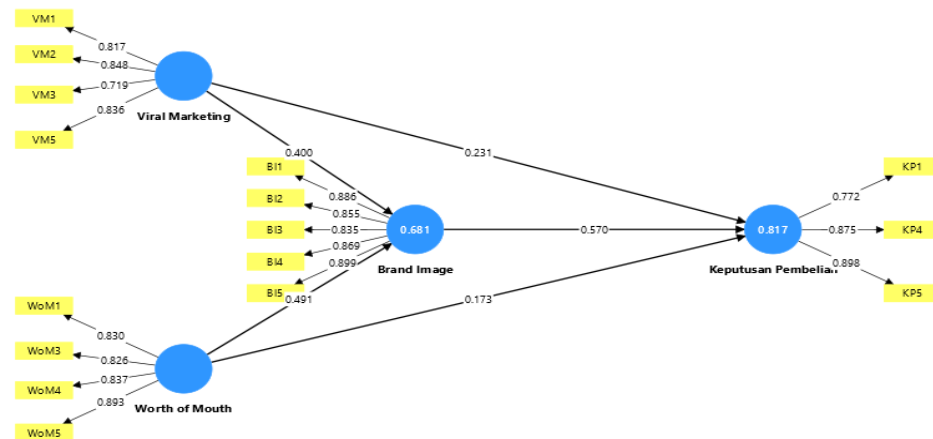


Figure 3.

Second Validity Test Results

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Based on Figure 3, the Validity Test shows that all indicators have outer loading values of more than or equal to 0.7, so that model testing can be continued.

Convergent Validity

Test Results Convergent Validity can be seen as follows:



Table 2. Convergent Validity Test Through Loading Factor

Variables	Item	Loading Factor	Information
Viral Marketing	VM1	0.817	Valid
	VM2	0.848	Valid
	VM3	0.719	Valid
	VM5	0.836	Valid
Word of Mouth	WoM1	0.830	Valid
	WoM3	0.826	Valid
	WoM4	0.837	Valid
	WoM5	0.893	Valid
Brand Image	BI1	0.886	Valid
	BI2	0.855	Valid
	BI3	0.835	Valid
	BI4	0.869	Valid
	BI5	0.899	Valid
Buying decision	KP1	0.772	Valid
	KP2	0.875	Valid
	KP3	0.898	Valid

Source:Processed Data (2025)

From the results of Table 2, it can be seen that the items measuring the variables of Viral Marketing, Worth of Mouth, Brand Image, and Purchase Decision have loading factor values greater than or equal to 0.7, thus all of the instrument items can be said to be valid in measuring the variables. However, the statement item has a loading factor value below 0.7, this indicates that the item is not valid to measure the indicator, so the statement item is deleted or eliminated because it does not meet the requirements of convergent validity.



Consistency Reliability

Test results Consistency Reliability in this study can be seen in the following table:

Table 3.

Test Results Consistency Reliability

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Information
Brand Image	0.919	0.922	0.939	0.755	Reliable
Buying Decision	0.806	0.814	0.886	0.723	Reliable
Viral Marketing	0.819	0.821	0.881	0.651	Reliable
Word of Mouth	0.869	0.875	0.910	0.717	Reliable

Source: Processed Data (2025)

In Table 3, the Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability values can be seen to be greater than 0.6 (Fomell and Larcker, 1981; Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994), thus it can be concluded that all the instrument items can be said to be reliable in measuring the variables Brand Image, Purchasing Decisions, Viral Marketing, and Word of Mouth.

Average Variance Extracted

Table 4.

Average Variance Extracted

Variables	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Cut Off	Information
Brand Image	0.755	> 0.5	Valid
Buying Decision	0.723	> 0.5	Valid
Viral Marketing	0.651	> 0.5	Valid



Word of Mouth	0.717	> 0.5	Valid
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Source: Processed Data (2025)

In Table 4, the AVE value for each construct of the variables Brand Image, Purchase Decision, Viral Marketing, and Worth of Mouth is very good, namely >0.5, so it has met the convergent validity criteria for each construct can be said to be quite strong and consistent in explaining their respective constructs. Thus, all constructs in the model have met the convergent validity criteria.

Discriminant Validity

Test results Discriminant Validity can be seen in the following table:

Table 5.

	Brand Image	Decision Purchase	Viral Marketing	Word of Mouth
Brand Image				
Buying decision	1,016			
Viral Marketing	0.862	0.966		
Word of Mouth	0.858	0.924	0.844	0.858

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Table 5 shows that the square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than the correlation between the other constructs in the model. The square root of the AVE in the diagonal column for Purchase Decision is 1.016, Viral Marketing is 0.966, and Word of Mouth is 0.844. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model has good discriminant validity. Each construct in the model truly measures a different concept and is not mixed or overlapping with other constructs. The constructs of Brand Image, Purchase Decision, Viral Marketing, and Word of Mouth each have relevant and unique indicators, so the results of the model analysis are more accurate and reliable.



Inner Model Test

Fit Test

The results of the Fit test can be seen in the following table:

Table 6.
Model Fit Table

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.073	0.073

Source: Processed Data (2025)

With an SRMR value of 0.073 (below the cutoff of 0.08), the model is considered to have a good fit between observed and predicted data. This means that this model is able to represent the relationship between latent constructs quite well, both in the theoretical model and the tested model.

R Square Test

The results of the R Square test can be seen in the following table:

Table 7.
R Square Test

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Brand Image	0.681	0.675
Buying Decision	0.817	0.811

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Based on Table 5.17, Brand Image is able to explain 68.1%, influenced by the Viral Marketing and Word of Mouth variables, while the remaining 31.9% is influenced by other variables outside the research model. This value is above 0.33, so it is included in the moderate category.

Purchasing Decisions can explain 58.3% of the variation in Purchasing Decisions influenced by Viral Marketing, Word of Mouth, and Brand Image, while the remaining 41.7% is influenced by other variables outside the research model. This value is above 0.33, so it falls into the Moderate category.

Path Coefficients

Results Path Coefficients can be seen in the following table:



Table 8. Table Path Coefficients

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Viral Marketing -> Purchase Decision	0.231	0.231	0.113	2,050	0.040
Word of Mouth -> Purchase Decision	0.173	0.176	0.111	1,563	0.118
Viral Marketing -> Brand Image	0.400	0.398	0.123	3,236	0.001
Word of Mouth -> Brand Image	0.491	0.497	0.123	3,999	0.000
Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	0.570	0.571	0.112	5,090	0.000
Viral Marketing -> Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	0.228	0.226	0.082	2,765	0.006
Word of Mouth -> Brand Image -> Purchase Decision	0.280	0.284	0.094	2,970	0.003

Based on Table 8 Path Coefficients above, the results of the hypothesis testing are described as follows:

H1 (Viral Marketing -> Purchase Decision)

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.040 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that Viral Marketing has a significant influence on Purchasing Decisions.

H2 (Worth of Mouth -> Purchase Decision)

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.118 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is not statistically significant. This means that Word of Mouth does not have a significant influence on Purchasing Decisions.

H3 (Viral Marketing -> Brand Image)



The test results show that the P-Value is 0.001 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that Viral Marketing has a significant influence on Brand Image.

H4 (Worth of Mouth -> Brand Image)

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.000 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that Word of Mouth has a significant influence on Brand Image.

H5 (Brand Image -> Purchase Decision)

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.000 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that Brand Image has a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

H6 (Viral Marketing -> Brand Image -> Purchase Decision)

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.006 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that Viral Marketing has a significant influence on Purchasing Decisions through Brand Image.

H7 (Word of Mouth -> Brand Image -> Purchase Decision)

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.003 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that Word of Mouth has a significant influence on Purchasing Decisions through Brand Image.

The Influence of Viral Marketing on Purchasing Decisions

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.040 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that Viral Marketing has a significant influence on Purchasing Decisions. Currently, Viral Marketing is one of the digital marketing strategies that utilizes the rapid and widespread dissemination of information through social media, digital content, and communication between consumers. In the context of products, *Home Business Sumenep Online Noodles* Viral marketing plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions and driving consumer purchasing decisions, particularly among younger generations who actively use social media. This indicates that the more engaging, unique, and shareable promotional content is, the more likely it is to be effective. *Home Business Sumenep Online Noodles*, the higher the consumer's tendency to make a purchase. This finding aligns with the concept of viral marketing, which emphasizes message appeal, source credibility, and ease of information dissemination.

The viral content of the *Sumenep Online Noodles Home Business*, such as short videos on social media, reviews from local food vloggers, and widely shared consumer testimonials, has increased consumer curiosity and purchasing interest. Consumers receive product information not only from the company but also from



fellow users, making the messages perceived as more authentic and trustworthy. This strengthens consumer confidence in making purchasing decisions.

The findings of this study also support consumer behavior theory, which states that strong marketing stimuli, particularly through digital media, can influence consumer responses in the form of purchasing decisions. These findings also align with research conducted by Jamal et al., (2025) which results in that Marketing through social media has a very important role in building and strengthening relationships with customers, which includes efforts to encourage consumer engagement, influence purchasing behavior, and contribute to improving purchasing decisions. The viral marketing carried out by the Sumenep Online Noodles Home Business is able to create positive value and increase brand exposure, making the product easier to remember and choose compared to similar products.

Thus, it can be concluded that viral marketing is a strategic factor in increasing purchasing decisions. Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep is advised to continue developing creative, relevant marketing content that is in accordance with the characteristics of the target market so that the resulting viral effect can be sustainable and provide an optimal impact on increasing sales.

The Influence of Word of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.118 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is not statistically significant. This means that Word of Mouth does not have a significant influence on Purchasing Decisions. This finding indicates that information or recommendations conveyed directly between consumers have not become the main factor that consumers consider in deciding to purchase the product.

The insignificant influence of WOM on purchasing decisions for Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep may be due to consumer characteristics that rely more on visual information and digital content than verbal communication. In the context of Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep products, consumers tend to be attracted to viral marketing content on social media, such as short videos, creative reviews, and visual promotions, rather than personal recommendations from those closest to them.

Furthermore, consumer exposure to word of mouth (WOM) regarding the Sumenep Online Noodles *Home Business* is relatively limited. This suggests that while there are conversations or recommendations from other consumers, the intensity and reach are not strong enough to significantly influence purchasing decisions. Consumers may have already learned about the product through advertising or viral marketing, so word of mouth only serves as additional information, not a determining factor in decision-making.



The findings of this study do not completely contradict marketing theory, as the effectiveness of WOM is highly dependent on product context, consumer characteristics, and brand strength. At the Mie Daring Sumenep Home Business, purchasing decisions were more influenced by other factors such as viral marketing, packaging appeal, price, and ease of product access. Therefore, WOM has not been able to make a significant direct contribution to purchasing decisions.

Thus, it can be concluded that Word of Mouth is not the main determinant in the purchasing decision of *Home Business* Mie Daring Sumenep. However, WOM still has the potential as a supporting strategy when combined with more intensive digital marketing and brand image strengthening, so it is hoped that in further research WOM can provide a more optimal influence on purchasing decisions.

The Influence of Viral Marketing on Brand Image

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.001 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that Viral Marketing has a significant influence on Brand Image. This finding indicates that marketing strategies that are widely and quickly disseminated through digital media are able to shape consumer perceptions of brand image effectively.

Viral Marketing's significant influence on brand image also reflects that consumers assess a brand's image not only based on product quality but also on how the brand communicates and interacts in the digital space. Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep, which delivers relevant, entertaining, and informative marketing messages, tends to be perceived as a modern, innovative, and relatable brand.

Furthermore, viral marketing plays a role in building consumer trust in the Sumenep Online Noodles *Home Business*. Widely shared content, especially that derived from real-life experiences of consumers or influencers, creates an authentic impression that strengthens brand credibility. This trust is a crucial element in building a positive and sustainable brand image.

The findings of this study align with marketing theory, which states that effective digital marketing communications can shape brand image by creating consistent experiences and perceptions in the minds of consumers. *Viral Marketing* Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep not only increases the popularity of the product, but also strengthens the brand's identity and positioning in the market.

Thus, it can be concluded that Viral Marketing is a strategic factor that significantly influences the Brand Image of Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep. Therefore, Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep is advised to continue developing a Viral Marketing strategy that is creative, consistent, and in accordance with the



characteristics of the target market so that the formed brand image is stronger and able to compete amidst the tight competition in the instant food industry.

The Influence of Word of Mouth on Brand Image

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.000 (<0.05). Description: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that Word of Mouth has a significant influence on Brand Image. This finding indicates that informal communication between consumers plays an important role in shaping brand perception and image in the minds of the public.

In the context of the Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep product, WOM emerges in various forms, such as recommendations from family, friends, and colleagues who have tried the product. Directly shared consumption experiences regarding the taste, quality, and uniqueness of Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep can create a positive impression that sticks with the brand. Information conveyed personally tends to be perceived as more credible, thus contributing strongly to the formation of brand image.

Furthermore, word of mouth (WOM) plays a role in expanding the reach of a brand's image without requiring significant promotional expenditures. Positive conversations about the Sumenep Online Noodles Home Business, spreading from one consumer to another, gradually and sustainably build a positive brand reputation. This significantly supports the formation of a strong brand image, especially in a market sensitive to social recommendations.

The findings of this study align with marketing theory, which states that word of mouth (WOM) is one of the most trusted sources of information for consumers in shaping brand perceptions. In this case, positive word of mouth (WOM) related to Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep can increase trust and strengthen brand identity amidst increasingly fierce competition in instant noodle products.

Thus, it can be concluded that *Word of Mouth* has a strategic role and significantly influences the brand image of Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep. Therefore, Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep is advised to maintain product quality and consumer satisfaction so that positive WOM continues to grow and is able to strengthen the brand image sustainably.

The Influence of Brand Image on Purchasing Decisions

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.000 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that *Brand Image* has a significant influence on purchasing decisions. This finding indicates that a strong and positive brand image can encourage consumers to choose and purchase a product over similar products.

The significant influence of Brand Image on purchasing decisions also indicates that consumers do not solely consider the functional aspects of the product,



such as price or availability, but also the psychological aspects attached to the brand. Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep, which is perceived as a modern, high-quality brand that suits consumers' tastes, tends to be the main choice when consumers are faced with various alternative instant noodle products.

Furthermore, a positive brand image plays a role in reducing the level of risk perceived by consumers. With a well-known and trusted brand image, consumers feel more secure and confident in their purchasing decisions. This speeds up the decision-making process and increases the likelihood of repeat purchases.

The findings of this study align with marketing theory, which states that brand image is a key determinant of consumer purchasing behavior. A strong brand image will shape consumer preference and loyalty, ultimately impacting purchasing decisions. In the case of Mie Daring Sumenep Home Business, a positive brand image can strengthen the brand's market position and increase competitiveness in the competitive instant noodle industry.

Thus, it can be concluded that brand image has a strategic role and has a significant influence on purchasing decisions. *Home Business* Mie Daring Sumenep. Therefore, the Mie Daring Sumenep Home Business is advised to continue maintaining and enhancing its brand image through product quality, innovation, and consistent marketing communications to continuously improve consumer purchasing decisions.

The Influence of Viral Marketing on Purchasing Decisions through Brand Image

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.006 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that *Viral Marketing* has a significant influence on purchasing decisions through brand image. This finding indicates that viral marketing not only directly influences purchasing decisions but also indirectly through the formation of a positive brand image in the minds of consumers.

The role of brand image as a mediating variable shows that consumers don't necessarily make purchases simply because they're exposed to viral content. Consumers first form an assessment of a brand's image based on the messages and experiences conveyed through viral marketing. When the brand image is positive, consumer trust and confidence increase, thus driving purchasing decisions.

Besides that, *Viral Marketing* The Sumenep Online Noodles Home Business, which includes reviews from content creators or other consumers, creates an authentic and credible impression. This strengthens the brand's image as a quality product worth trying. This positive brand image then serves as a psychological factor that reduces perceived risk for consumers, thus accelerating the purchasing decision-making process.



This research's findings align with marketing theory, which states that the effectiveness of digital marketing communications depends heavily on its ability to build brand image. Effective viral marketing will create strong and consistent brand associations, ultimately impacting consumer purchasing behavior. In the case of the Mie Daring Sumenep Home Business, brand image serves as the bridge connecting viral marketing strategies with purchasing decisions.

Thus, it can be concluded that *Brand Image* Viral marketing plays a crucial role in mediating the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions for the Sumenep Online Noodles Home Business. Therefore, it is recommended that the Sumenep Online Noodles Home Business not only focus on creating viral content but also ensure that the messages delivered are able to build a positive, consistent brand image and meet consumer expectations in order to optimally increase purchasing decisions.

The Influence of Word of Mouth on Purchasing Decisions through Brand Image

The test results show that the P-Value is 0.003 (<0.05). Note: This hypothesis is statistically significant. This means that *Worth of Mouth* has a significant influence on purchasing decisions through brand image. This finding indicates that communication between consumers not only plays a role in disseminating product information but also contributes to shaping brand image, which ultimately influences purchasing decisions.

In the context of the Sumenep Online Noodles Home Business, WOM emerges through recommendations, consumption experiences, and positive reviews shared directly by consumers within their immediate environment. Information based on these real-life experiences tends to be perceived as more credible and trustworthy, thus shaping a positive perception of the Sumenep Online Noodles Home Business. This perception then builds the brand image as a high-quality product suitable for consumption.

The role of Brand Image as a mediating variable shows that WOM does not always drive purchasing decisions directly, but rather through the process of forming a brand image first. Consumers who receive positive WOM will form trust in the Home Business Mie Daring Sumenep brand, so that when faced with a purchasing choice, this positive brand image becomes the main basis for decision-making.

In addition, positive WOM contributes to reducing the level of uncertainty and risk perceived by consumers. With the experience and recommendations of others, consumers feel more confident in the quality of the product. *Home Business* Mie Daring Sumenep. This belief strengthens brand image and indirectly increases consumer purchasing tendencies. In the case of Mie Daring Sumenep *Home Business*, brand image serves as a link between word of mouth (WOM) and purchasing



decisions, allowing positive communication between consumers to have a more optimal impact on purchasing behavior.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the tests and discussions that have been carried out, several things can be concluded as follows:

1. Viral Marketing has been shown to have a significant influence on purchasing decisions. These findings indicate that viral marketing strategies can encourage consumers to make purchasing decisions. Content that is engaging, easy to share, and emotionally appealing has been shown to be effective in influencing consumer purchasing behavior.
2. Word of Mouth was shown to have no significant influence on purchasing decisions. These results indicate that recommendations or communication between consumers are not yet the primary determining factors in purchasing decisions. Consumers tend not to make purchases based solely on WOM, but rather consider other, more dominant factors.
3. Viral Marketing has been shown to have a significant impact on brand image. This demonstrates that viral marketing plays a crucial role in shaping and strengthening brand image. Repeated exposure to viral content can create positive brand perceptions, thereby increasing consumer recall and association with the product.
4. Word of Mouth proven to have a significant influence on Brand Image. This finding confirms that informal communication between consumers has a high level of credibility and plays a role in building perception and brand image. Positive WOM can create a good brand impression and increase consumer trust.
5. Brand Image has been shown to have a significant influence on purchasing decisions. These findings confirm that a strong and positive brand image serves as a key foundation in the consumer evaluation process, building trust, and reducing uncertainty in decision-making. A good brand image not only influences consumer preferences but also accelerates and strengthens purchasing decisions amidst the multitude of available product alternatives.
6. Viral Marketing proven to have a significant influence on Purchasing Decisions through Brand Image. These results indicate that brand image acts as a mediating variable that strengthens the influence Viral Marketing on purchasing decisions. Effective viral marketing will first build a positive brand image, which will then encourage consumers to make purchases.



7. Word of Mouth It has been proven to have a significant influence on purchasing decisions through brand image. Although word of mouth does not have a significant direct influence on purchasing decisions, through the formation of a positive brand image, WOM can indirectly influence purchasing decisions. This confirms the strategic role of brand image as a link between WOM and purchasing decisions.

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