

The Influence of Brand Ambassador, Viral Marketing, and Brand Awareness on the Purchase Decision of Korean Skincare Products among University Students

Original Article

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Abstract

This research aims to explore how brand ambassadors, viral marketing, and brand recognition impact the buying choices of COSRX skincare items among college attendees in Medan. The study is motivated by the increasing craze for South Korean skincare in Indonesia, particularly among young people. COSRX, a leading K-beauty brand, has leveraged modern marketing strategies including celebrity endorsements and viral digital campaigns to strengthen its brand presence. A quantitative, associative research approach was employed, involving 100 student respondents in Medan who had purchased COSRX products. The study utilised a non-probability sampling method and gathered data through questionnaires, backed by a review of existing literature. Various analytical techniques, such as validity and reliability testing, tests of classical assumptions, multiple linear regression, and hypothesis testing (including t-tests, F-tests, and R^2) were employed. The results suggest that brand ambassador, viral marketing, and brand awareness each have a positive and significant impact on consumers' purchasing choices. Significance was observed in the t-tests for brand ambassador ($t = 5.462, p < 0.05$), viral marketing ($t = 4.710, p < 0.05$), and brand awareness ($t = 4.812, p < 0.05$). Furthermore, the F-test indicated a substantial combined effect ($F = 40.524, p < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination (R^2) stood at 55.6%, revealing that these three variables collectively explain more than half of the variation in purchase decisions, leaving 44.4% to be influenced by factors not considered in the study.

Keywords: Brand Ambassador, Brand Awareness, Purchase Decision, University Students, Viral Marketing.

1. Introduction

The beauty and skincare industry are one of the fastest-growing industries worldwide. According to Wiraputri (2023), this industry continues to experience significant growth, especially in today's digital age. The rise in beauty and skincare products on the market, along with advancements in technology used in their creation, demonstrates a clear trend towards healthier and more sustainable living worldwide. The global shift towards a more health-conscious lifestyle is a major driving force behind the growth of the beauty and skincare sector. Moreover, the beauty and skincare industry heavily rely on technological innovations for its continuous development. Many manufacturers are now incorporating advanced technology into the production of beauty and skincare products to achieve optimal results. Furthermore, the ease of internet access has made it simpler for consumers to obtain information about beauty and skincare products available in the market.

According to data from indocareb2b.web (Databoks, 2023), revenue in the beauty and personal care sector reached 7.23 billion US dollars or equivalent to Rp 111.83 trillion



(exchange rate Rp 15,467.05) in 2022. As a result, this sector is projected to experience an annual growth rate of 5.81% CAGR from 2022 to 2027. The phenomenon of digital marketing in the social media era has brought significant changes to company strategies, particularly in the beauty and skincare industry. One brand that has successfully capitalised on this trend is COSRX, a South Korean skincare brand that now has a global consumer base. As part of their marketing strategy, the use of viral marketing and brand ambassadors has proven to be an effective tactic in increasing consumer purchase intention.

As one of the top-selling brands on the Tokopedia e-commerce app in 2022, this success is attributed to COSRX's use of natural, skin-friendly ingredients and its more affordable pricing for today's young consumers. Additionally, COSRX is renowned and successful due to its attractive packaging, excellent formulas, and high-quality products. From the beginning of 2022, COSRX has been actively engaging in various global marketing initiatives on TikTok. With a focus on Millennials and Gen Z, the brand hosted seasonal challenges on the platform which resulted in a significant increase in the use of the brand's hashtag #COSRX. Within a short span of 18 months, views on TikTok surged from approximately 200 million in January 2022 to an impressive 2.1 billion by June 2023, highlighting a remarkable growth rate of 749%.

COSRX leverages platforms like TikTok to build brand awareness among young consumers, particularly Gen Z and Millennials. Campaigns such as #SlapSnail and #SnailDanceChallenge have made products like the Advanced Snail 96 Mucin Power Essence go viral worldwide. From January 2022 to June 2023, (PR Newswire, 2023). One notable example is a viral campaign on TikTok, where review videos and product usage demonstrations by influencers garnered millions of views. This phenomenon demonstrates how viral marketing can significantly influence consumer behaviour. Wiraputri (2023) explains that the presence of brand ambassadors also plays a crucial role in shaping a positive brand image in consumers' minds. Through celebrities or influencers with a large fan base, COSRX successfully attracted a broader audience, strengthened their brand identity, and increased consumer trust in their products. Additionally, brand awareness plays a critical role in building long-term connections with consumers. Consumers with high brand awareness are more likely to consider the brand when making purchases, especially in the highly competitive skincare category.

This phenomenon demonstrates that in today's digital age, viral marketing, brand ambassadors, and brand awareness are key elements that not only increase product visibility but also drive purchase intention and consumer purchasing decisions. COSRX has successfully leveraged these elements, making it one of the fastest-growing brands in the global skincare industry.

COSRX is a South Korean skincare brand known for its natural-based products and minimalist formulations. Established in 2013, COSRX targets a more specific market, namely consumers with skin problems such as acne, irritation, and premature ageing. The brand emphasises effective formulas with high concentrations of active ingredients while remaining gentle on sensitive skin. Another key advantage is the transparency of its ingredients, making it one of the most trusted skincare brands among global consumers. As a solution-based brand, COSRX products such as the AHA/BHA Clarifying Treatment Toner and Advanced Snail 96 Mucin Power Essence remain popular staples.

Based on a pre-study conducted by distributing questionnaires to 40 COSRX product consumers in Medan City, the data analysis results indicate a significant influence between brand ambassadors, viral marketing, and brand awareness collectively on consumer purchasing decisions for COSRX products in Medan City. These three variables (brand ambassador, viral marketing, and brand awareness) account for 55.6% of purchasing

decisions, while the remaining 44.4% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study. In the context of this research, the analysed object is the COSRX skincare brand, one of the leading brands from South Korea.

COSRX is famous for its range of skincare products designed to tackle a variety of skin concerns, including acne and signs of ageing. The main aim of this investigation is to delve into the impact of viral marketing, brand ambassadors, and brand recognition on the choices consumers make when buying COSRX items. The topic of this study is important due to COSRX's ability to create a favourable image and solid standing in the international marketplace, specifically among the younger demographic who are engaged on social networking platforms.

The study looks into various factors such as viral marketing, brand ambassadors, brand recognition, and consumer purchasing behaviour. Viral marketing refers to the use of online platforms to rapidly and extensively promote a product. Brand ambassadors are people who endorse and help promote a brand. Brand recognition is how well consumers know and remember a brand. Consumer purchasing decisions are influenced by different factors, including the ones mentioned earlier. This research aims to investigate how these elements interrelate and affect the buying choices of COSRX products.

The existing research gap shows that although there have been many studies discussing the influence of viral marketing and brand ambassadors, few have specifically examined its impact on specific cosmetic brands, such as COSRX. Most previous studies have focused on other skincare brands, so there has been no in-depth study of COSRX in this context. This creates an opportunity to explore how this brand can leverage existing marketing strategies to enhance its appeal in the market, as well as provide a better understanding of consumer behaviour in this sector.

The urgency of this research becomes increasingly relevant given the rapid growth of the skincare industry, particularly products from South Korea, which are becoming increasingly popular in Indonesia. Consumers are now more likely to seek information about products through social media, so this research can provide insights for marketers in developing more effective strategies. As stated by Nurhayati and Hendar (2020), understanding the halal products and various factors that impact buying choices is vital for enhancing product appeal in the market. This research serves a purpose not only for scholars but also for marketing professionals aiming to enhance the efficiency of their marketing tactics. With all these factors in mind, this investigation is anticipated to offer valuable suggestions for COSRX and other similar brands in devising more powerful marketing plans.

The outcomes of this research are projected to enhance comprehension of the elements affecting purchasing decisions and how brands can leverage these factors to attain success in a growingly competitive market. This study is focused on investigating the impact of brand ambassadors, viral marketing, and brand awareness on the purchasing behaviour of COSRX skincare products among students in Medan. It aims to analyse how these factors influence consumer decisions both on their own and in combination.

This study is expected to benefit various parties involved. For researchers, this study can expand knowledge and understanding of the impact of brand ambassador, viral marketing, and brand awareness marketing strategies on consumer purchasing decisions, while also applying the theories learned during their studies. The findings from this study are anticipated to offer COSRX insightful guidance on shaping effective marketing strategies in order to boost company profits. The data gathered may also aid in the identification of successful marketing tactics. On the other hand, within the Business Administration Study Programme, this research is seen as a valuable addition to the curriculum and a helpful resource for students

investigating similar topics. Moreover, this study can be used as a reference for those exploring customer purchasing behaviour in various contexts.

2. Methods

2.1. Marketing

Marketing is a managerial process that creates value through the exchange of products or services to meet consumer needs (Syah, 2021). Indrasari (2019) expands this definition as a comprehensive and planned activity to accommodate market demand through the creation of valuable products, pricing, communication, and exchanges that are beneficial to all parties. Marketing does not only focus on products, but also involves pricing strategies, effective communication, and building mutually beneficial relationships between producers and consumers (Siregar & Nasution, 2023b).

According to Saleh and Said (2019), marketing encompasses ten marketable entities, namely goods, services, events, experiences, people, places, properties, organisations, information, and ideas. Goods and services are the main forms of products, both tangible and intangible. Events and experiences are offered to create a lasting impression on consumers. People can be marketed through personal branding, while places and properties are high-value assets. Organisations offer services through legal and non-legal structures. Information is an important commodity in the digital age, while ideas are original products that give rise to various innovations. This scope reflects the broad dimensions of marketing in meeting market needs.

2.2. Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is a fundamental factor that influences purchasing decisions, including considerations of price, quality, and product functionality (Indrasari, 2019; Siregar & Nasution, 2023a). Wibowo (2020) explains that consumer behaviour is the culmination of various economic theories that result in consumer attitudes or actions. There are four types of consumer behaviour: complex purchasing behaviour, dissonance reduction behaviour, habitual purchasing behaviour, and product diversity seeking behaviour.

2.3. Brand Ambassador

A brand ambassador is a popular individual who understands a brand (Azzuhra & Adlina, 2023) and is able to influence consumers to purchase that product (Wang & Hariandja, 2016). Ummat and Hayuningtias (2022) define it as a representative contracted by a company to market products, usually from among artists, athletes, or public figures. Brand ambassador indicators include attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise (Firmansyah, 2020). The benefits of using brand ambassadors are to provide testimonials, encourage purchases, act as advertising actors, and become company spokespersons.

2.4. Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is a marketing strategy that creates momentum for the spread of messages or information through social media networks (Oktarini, 2022). Putri and Nawawi (2022) describe it as internet-based word-of-mouth promotion to attract consumers at low cost and with wide reach. According to Haque et al. (2022), viral marketing strategies can be implemented through various approaches such as contests, apps, videos, infographics, and images with engaging captions. Contests or giveaways encourage consumers to share products with their networks, while app development helps expand service reach practically. Funny, inspirational, or surprising videos have high potential for voluntary sharing. Similarly,

informative and engaging infographics and images with strong quotes can spark widespread engagement on social media.

Meanwhile, according to Alfifto et al. (2022), there are three main indicators in viral marketing: product engagement, product knowledge, and product discussion. Engagement reflects the role of opinion leaders in spreading information. Product knowledge refers to consumers' ability to understand and convey the advantages of a product. Meanwhile, product talk shows the extent to which consumers are encouraged to discuss the product with others spontaneously, which is influenced by the clarity and appeal of the information received.

2.5. Brand Awareness

The concept of brand awareness encompasses the capacity of individuals to recall, identify, and connect with logos, brand names, and other components associated with a specific brand (Mervin et al., 2022). Arora and Kumar (2018) add that Brand awareness refers to how easily potential customers can identify and recall a brand within a specific product category. Alfifto (2022) suggests that brand awareness is measured through three key components: brand memorability, which involves consumers being able to remember a brand within a product category; brand recognisability, which shows the connection between a brand and a specific type of product; and brand preference, which occurs when customers consistently choose a particular brand when making a purchase.

2.6. Purchase Decision

According to Nst (2023), purchase decisions play a crucial role in a company's marketing strategy. Therefore, companies must understand consumer needs, desires, and preferences in order to develop the right strategy. Further, Qomariyah & Febriyah (2022) explains that purchasing decisions are influenced by the emotional bond between customers and producers that is created after using a product or service. The value dimensions influencing these decisions include emotional value (positive feelings of consumers when using the product), social value (the product's ability to enhance consumers' social image), quality value (reduction of short-term and long-term costs), and functional value (direct benefits from the product's attributes).

Alfifto (in Siringoringo, 2022) identifies purchase decision indicators through three stages: first, problem recognition, when consumers become aware of a need influenced by internal or environmental information; second, information search, where consumers actively seek data related to the product both internally and externally; and third, alternative evaluation, the process of weighing various options based on preferences and purchasing situations.

2.7. Research Framework

In consideration of the prior background, the following hypotheses are proposed as illustrated in the figure of research framework below:

H_{a1}: There is a positive and significant influence of brand ambassadors on the purchasing decisions of COSRX skincare product consumers in Medan.

H_{a2}: There is a positive and significant influence of viral marketing on the purchasing decisions of COSRX skincare product consumers in Medan.

H_{a3}: There is a positive and significant influence of brand awareness on the purchasing decisions of COSRX skincare product consumers in Medan.

H_{a4}: There is a positive and significant influence of brand awareness, viral marketing, and brand awareness on the purchasing decisions of consumers of skincare products in Medan City.

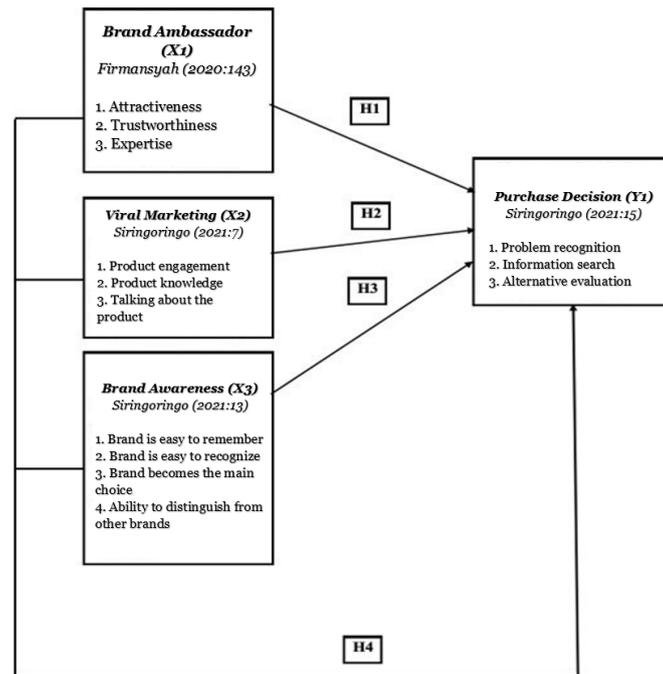


Figure 1. Research Framework

3. Methods

3.1. Research Design

This research employs a quantitative methodology with an associative perspective, which seeks to identify the connections between multiple variables.

3.2. Research Population and Sample

The study focuses on individuals in Medan City who have bought COSRX products. The actual size of this population has yet to be determined as it has never been quantified. In this study, the sampling method used is non-probability sampling. The criteria for the sample established by the researcher include:

- Students in Medan City
- At least 17 years old
- Using COSRX skincare
- Have purchased COSRX skincare at least 1 time

$$n = \frac{N^2}{4(Moe)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,96^2}{4(10\%)^2} = 96,04$$

Description:

n = sample size

N = 1.96 score at a certain significance

MoE = Margin of Error, the maximum error rate is 10%

Based on the formula above, the number of samples to be used in this study were 96 respondents but the researcher decided to round up to 100 respondents to make it easier to calculate.

3.3. Data Collection Techniques

The researchers used a Likert scale questionnaire to gather primary data from students in Medan City who use COSRX skincare products. In addition, secondary data was gathered from a variety of sources including books, reports, and journals.

3.4. Data Analysis Technique

3.4.1. Instrument Test

a. Validity Test

Validity test is used to measure the validity of research instruments using the product moment correlation method with a significance level of 0.05 (Riyanto & Hatmawan, 2020). The formula used is:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{n\sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{(n\sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2)(n\sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2)}}$$

Description:

r_{xy} = Correlation Coefficient (rvalue)

$\sum x$ = Independent Variable Score

$\sum y$ = Dependent Variable Score

$\sum xy$ = Product of Score per Question Item with Total Score

n = Number of Respondents

b. Reliability Test

Reliability tests use Cronbach's Alpha (α) statistics to measure instrument consistency (Sutha, 2021). Decision-making criteria: if $\alpha > 0.60$ then the data is reliable, otherwise if $\alpha < 0.60$ then the data is not reliable.

3.4.2. Classical Assumption Test

a. Normality Test

The Normality Test uses Kolmogorov-Smirnov analysis, histogram graphs, and P-P Plot graphs to determine whether variables have a normal distribution. Criteria:

- a) If the Significance value (Sig.) < 0.05 means that the sample distribution is not normal.
- b) If the Significance value (Sig.) > 0.05 means that the sample distribution is normal.

b. Multicollinearity Test

To test for multicollinearity is to use the Tolerance and VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) methods for each independent variable.

- a) If the Tolerance value is greater than > 0.10 , it can be concluded that the data is free from multicollinearity symptoms.
- b) If the VIF value is < 10 , it can be concluded that the data is free from multicollinearity symptoms.

c. Heteroscedasticity Test

The Heteroscedasticity Test is conducted to examine the consistency of the residual variance. A good regression model does not exhibit symptoms of heteroscedasticity.

3.4.3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis is used to analyse the relationship and influence between the dependent variable (purchase decision) and the independent variables (brand ambassador, viral marketing, and brand awareness) (Usman & Zuhurifa, 2022). The following regression equation is used:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

Description:

Y = Purchase Decision

a = Constant

b₁,b₂,b₃ = Regression Coefficient

X₁ = Brand Ambassador

X₂ = Viral Marketing

X₃ = Brand Awareness

e = Standard Error

3.4.4. Hypothesis Test

a. Partial Significance Test (T Test)

The Partial Significance Test (T Test) tests the individual effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. Criteria:

- a) T-value < T-table then the independent variable has no effect on the dependent variable or H₀ is accepted and H_a is rejected.
- b) T-value > T-table then the independent variable affects the dependent variable or H₀ is rejected and H_a is accepted.
- c) If the probability (sig.) < 0.05 then H₀ is rejected.
- d) If the probability (sig.) > 0.05 then H₀ is accepted.

b. Simultaneous Significance Test (F Test)

Simultaneous Significance Test (F Test) tests the effect of all independent variables together on the dependent variable by comparing the calculated F value in the ANOVA table.

c. Test Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The Coefficient of Determination (R²) test measures the ability of the regression model to explain data variations. The R² value ranges from 0-1, where a value close to 1 indicates a high predictive ability of the model, while a value close to 0 indicates a low predictive ability.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Research Results

4.1.1. Respondent Identity

Table 1. Respondent Identity

No	Category	Sub-Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender	Male	11	11
		Female	89	89
2	Age	19 Years Old	17	17
		20 Years Old	30	30
		21 Years Old	40	40
		22 Years Old	10	10
		24 Years Old	3	3
		3	University	Universitas Sumatera Utara
Universitas Negeri Medan	25	25		
Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumut	25	25		
Universitas Prima Indonesia	10	10		
Universitas Panca Budi	10	10		
4	Purchase Frequency	Once		14
		2-3 Times	28	28
		5 Times	37	37
		More than 5 Times	21	21
		Respondent in Total		100

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

From the table 1 above, it can be seen that the majority of respondents are female (89%), which is in line with the characteristics of the skincare market where women are more active and interested in skincare products. Most respondents are at the age of 21 (40%), which shows that this age group has significant attention to COSRX skincare. In terms of college origin, the University of North Sumatra dominates with 30% of respondents, which may be due to wider access to information and networks on campus. Meanwhile, the highest frequency of purchase is 5 times (37%), indicating consumers tend to make repeat purchases, which illustrates loyalty to the product.

4.1.2. Instrument Test

1) Validity Test

Table 2. Validity Test Results

No	Variable	Description	R-value	R-table	Description
1	Brand Ambassador (X1)	X1.1	0,586	0,196	Valid
2		X1.2	0,692		Valid
3		X1.3	0,472		Valid
4		X1.4	0,755		Valid
5		X1.5	0,746		Valid
6		X1.6	0,565		Valid
7	Viral Marketing (X2)	X2.1	0,656	0,196	Valid
8		X2.2	0,654		Valid
9		X2.3	0,555		Valid
10		X2.4	0,646		Valid
11		X2.5	0,702		Valid
12		X2.6	0,675		Valid
13	Brand Awareness (X3)	X3.1	0,472	0,196	Valid
14		X3.2	0,674		Valid
15		X3.3	0,730		Valid
16		X3.4	0,754		Valid
17		X3.5	0,604		Valid
18		X3.6	0,661		Valid
19	Purchasing Decision (Y)	Y.1	0,713	0,200	Valid
20		Y.2	0,794		Valid
21		Y.3	0,610		Valid
22		Y.4	0,628		Valid
23		Y.5	0,763		Valid
24		Y.6	0,674		Valid

Source: Processed Data (2024)

The validity test for the variables Brand Ambassador, Viral Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Purchase Decision, shown by an r-table of 0.196 (except for the Purchase Decision variable, which uses 0.200), shows that all item statements for each variable have r value greater than the r-table values. This indicates that all items are valid and can be used as reliable measurement instruments in the study. Thus, the instruments employed are capable of accurately reflecting the constructs of each variable, thereby supporting the reliability of the research data.

2) Reliability Test

Table 3. Results of the Reliability Test

No	Variable	N of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Description
1	Brand Ambassador (X1)	6	0,662	Reliable
2	Viral Marketing (X2)	6	0,701	Reliable
3	Brand Awareness (X3)	6	0,690	Reliable
4	Purchasing Decision (Y)	6	0,790	Reliable

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Based on the results of the reliability test using the Cronbach's Alpha method, all variables in this study (Brand Ambassador, Viral Marketing, Brand Awareness, and Purchasing Decisions) show alpha values greater than 0.6. This shows that all statement items in each variable have good internal consistency and are reliable as measurement instruments in this study. Thus, the questionnaire used is reliable and suitable for further analysis.

4.1.3. Classical Assumption Test

1) Normality Test

Table 4. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		100
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	1,47076949
	Absolute	,084
Most Extreme Differences	Positive	,084
	Negative	-,070
Test Statistic		,084
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,077 ^c

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

In table 4, the value obtained through the Kolmogorov-smirnov test was found to be 0.077. Based on the provisions, this value exceeds the specified limit value to be able to say that the data is normally distributed, namely 0.05. So, it can be said that the data obtained in this study are normally distributed and fulfil the assumptions of the normality test.

2) Multicollinearity Test

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test Results

Model	Coefficients ^a				Collinearity Statistics		
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T		Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
(Constant)	4,086	1,820		2,246	,027		
Brand Ambassador	,121	,058	,140	2,093	,039	,805	1,243
Viral Marketing	,204	,077	,224	2,646	,010	,508	1,970
Brand Awareness	,546	,072	,591	7,564	,000	,594	1,683

a. Dependent Variable: Purchasing Decision

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

According to the data in table 5, it is evident that the tolerance value for the brand ambassador variable is 0.805, indicating that it exceeds 0.10. The viral marketing variable has a tolerance value of 0.508, also greater than 0.10. Likewise, the brand awareness variable has a tolerance value of 0.594, exceeding 0.10. The VIF value for the brand ambassador variable is 1.243, below 10.00. The VIF for the viral marketing variable is 1.970, likewise below 10.00. The VIF for the brand awareness variable is 1.683, also below 10.00. These findings suggest

that there are no signs of multicollinearity among the three independent variables, making the regression model viable and suitable for regression equations.

3) Heteroscedasticity Test

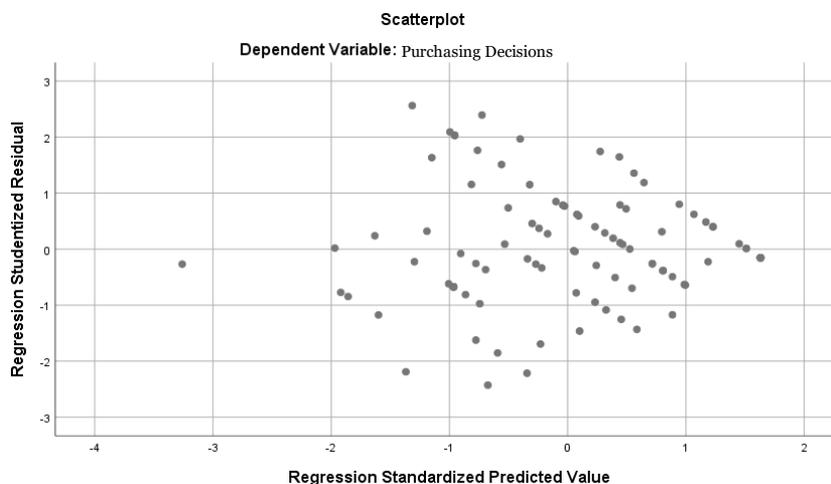


Figure 4. Heteroscedasticity Test Results
Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Based on Figure 4 above, it can be seen that the points spread above zero and below zero and do not form a certain pattern, and the distribution is random, so we can conclude that the characteristics are met so that in the regression model the influence of brand ambassadors (X1), viral marketing (X2), and brand awareness (X3) on (Y) there is no heteroscedasticity problem.

4.1.4. Hypothesis Test

1) Partial Test (T-Test)

Table 7. Partial Test (T-Test) Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
	1 (Constant)	4,086	1,820		
Brand Ambassador	,121	,058	,140	2,093	,039
Viral Marketing	,204	,077	,224	2,646	,010
Brand Awareness	,546	,072	,591	7,564	,000

b. Dependent Variable: Purchasing Decision

Source: Processed Data (2024)

The table 7 above can be explained as follows:

- a. The t-value for the brand ambassador variable (X1) on purchase decision (Y) is calculated as 2.093, which is greater than the t-table of 1.984. Additionally, the significance level of 0.039 is less than 0.05, and the regression coefficient is positive at 0.121. These findings suggest that the brand ambassador variable (X1) has a meaningful impact on the purchase decision variable (Y), leading to the acceptance of Ha1.
- b. The t-value for the variable of viral marketing (X2) in relation to purchase decision (Y) is 2.646, which is greater than t-table of 1.984. The significance level is 0.010, less than

0.05, and the regression coefficient is positive, measuring 0.204. This suggests that viral marketing (X2) has a notable impact on purchase decisions (Y). Therefore, we accept hypothesis Ha2.

- c. For the parameter of brand recognition (X3) relating to the decision to purchase (Y), the t-value obtained is 7.564, exceeding the t-table of 1.984. The level of significance is 0.000, lower than 0.05 and the regression coefficient is positive at 0.546. This shows that brand recognition (X3) significantly impacts the purchasing decision (Y). In light of these findings, Ha3 is validated.

2) Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

Table 8. Results of the Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	401,487	3	133,829	59,992	,000 ^b
	Residual	214,153	96	2,231		
	Total	615,640	99			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchasing Decision

b. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Awareness, Brand Ambassador, Viral Marketing

Source: Processed Data (2024)

Based on Table 8, it is known that the significance value for the simultaneous effect of brand ambassador (X1), viral marketing (X2), and brand awareness (X3) on the purchase decision variable (Y) is $0.000 < 0.05$, and the obtained F-value is $59.992 > 2.70$. These results prove that the three independent variables: brand ambassador, viral marketing, and brand awareness have a simultaneous or joint effect on the dependent variable, namely purchase decision. Based on this, Ha3 is accepted.

3) Coefficient of Determination Test (R²)

Table 9. Results of the Coefficient of Determination Test

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,808 ^a	,652	,641	1,49357

a. Predictors: (Constant), Brand Awareness, Brand Ambassador, Viral Marketing

b. Dependent Variable: Purchasing Decision

Source: Data Processing Results (2024)

Based on the results of data processing displayed in table 9, it is known that:

- a. An R value of 0.808 was acquired, indicating a strong connection between brand ambassador variables, viral marketing, brand awareness, and purchasing decisions at a significant percentage of 80.8, suggesting a near correlation if the R value approaches 1, signifying a more accurate model.
- b. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.641 indicates that the brand ambassador variable, viral marketing, and brand awareness have an impact of 64.1% on purchasing decisions. However, 35.9% of the factors affecting purchasing decisions are not accounted for in this research model.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. The Influence of Brand Ambassadors on Purchasing Decisions

According to the findings of various past tests, it has been established that the statements concerning brand ambassador (X1), viral marketing (X2), brand awareness (X3) and purchasing decisions (Y) are accurate and trustworthy, allowing for the utilization of all data in this research. This suggests that the collected data is suitable for delving into the relationship between these variables in detail.

The outcomes of this research reveal that the data gathered from the responses of the participants highlight Attractiveness as the most significant factor, with comments about the personality and communication approach of the COSRX brand ambassador instilling confidence in consumers about the product. It can be inferred that the majority of participants, 57% strongly agreed and 39% agreed, affirming that the visual appeal and communication strategy employed by the brand ambassador play a vital role in establishing a positive perception of the product among consumers. This also indicates that an appealing brand ambassador who can effectively communicate has the power to shape consumers' view of the product, even before they try it firsthand.

The appeal of a brand ambassador goes beyond physical appearance and also includes the ability to build emotional connections through effective communication style. Students, as the target market, often feel connected to the personality or lifestyle portrayed by the brand ambassador. When that personality is considered relevant and reflects the values they hold, trust in the promoted product tends to increase. Thus, this aspect plays a crucial role in creating trust in the quality and suitability of the product, thereby encouraging consumers to be more interested in making a purchase.

Additionally, the indicator with the lowest influence is trustworthiness, with respondents stating they choose COSRX products because the brand ambassador reflects an inspiring lifestyle. It is noted that only 67% of respondents agreed with this statement, while 33% disagreed. This indicates that while many consumers are attracted to the brand ambassador's lifestyle, trust in the product is not fully established solely through the lifestyle image presented. Deeper trust often requires tangible evidence or testimonials showing how the product truly delivers the desired benefits or results. This indicates that while brand ambassadors can create a positive image, the trustworthiness factor will be more influential if supported by real-life experiences or more convincing reviews from consumers who have already tried the product.

Generally, research findings show that the attractiveness indicator has a stronger influence on purchasing decisions compared to the trustworthiness indicator. This indicates that consumers are more easily attracted and build initial trust through the physical appeal and communication style used by brand ambassadors. Although trustworthiness plays a role in building deeper relationships, visual appeal and effective communication tend to be the primary factors influencing purchasing decisions. Therefore, in marketing strategies, brand ambassadors who can combine appeal with authentic communication will be more effective in influencing consumers to purchase the products they promote.

According to the findings from the SPSS data analysis, the brand ambassador variable (X1) has a significant impact on purchasing decisions (Y) with a t-value of 2.093, which is greater than 1.984. The significance level is 0.039, less than 0.05, and the regression coefficient value is positive at 0.121. Consequently, it can be concluded that brand ambassadors have a noticeable effect on consumer purchasing behaviour. The acceptance of H_{a1} is supported by these outcomes. In summary, the study suggests that brand ambassadors

play a crucial role in influencing consumer decisions regarding the purchase of COSRX products.

The physical appeal and communication skills of brand ambassadors have been proven to play a greater role in attracting purchasing interest, while aspects of trust and expertise also play a role, albeit with a smaller influence. This indicates that marketing strategies that prioritise the selection of attractive brand ambassadors, who have an authentic communication style and can build emotional connections with their audience, will be more effective in influencing consumer decisions. The success of brand ambassadors in influencing purchasing decisions does not only depend on visual image, but also on the ability to build deeper and more relevant relationships with the audience. The results of this study are supported by research conducted by Clarissa and Bernarto (2022), which shows that brand ambassadors have a significant influence on purchasing decisions.

4.2.2. The Influence of Viral Marketing on Purchasing Decisions

According to the findings from various past experiments, it has been established that the claims made about brand ambassador (X1), viral marketing (X2), brand awareness (X3), and purchasing decisions (Y) are accurate and dependable. Therefore, the data collected can be utilised in this analysis. This suggests that the gathered information is suitable for examining the connections between these variables thoroughly.

Based on the results of this study, the data from respondents' answers indicate that the most influential indicator is discussing the product, with respondents often seeing people on social media discussing COSRX products. It is known that the majority, 63%, answered strongly agree, and 35% answered agree. Social media has proven to be an efficient tool for spreading information about products, leading to a significant impact on consumer buying choices. Discussions about products on social media are not limited to reviews or testimonials but also include discussions that shape consumers' perceptions and trust in the brand.

Additionally, the indicator with the lowest influence is engagement with the product, as evidenced by respondents' statements about being interested in discussing COSRX products with friends or on social media. It was found that the majority (68%) of respondents answered 'agree,' while 32% answered 'disagree.' This indicator suggests that while the product may capture attention, not all consumers feel sufficiently engaged to discuss or recommend the product to others. This may be influenced by several factors, such as consumers' comfort level in sharing personal experiences or concerns about privacy on social media. Additionally, while product engagement can be a good indicator for predicting purchase interest, not all consumers feel the need to openly discuss the product, even when they like it.

According to the data analysis using SPSS, the viral marketing variable (X2) has a t-value of 2.646 which is greater than 1.984, with a significance level of 0.010 lower than 0.05. The positive regression coefficient value is 0.204, suggesting that the viral marketing variable significantly impacts purchase decisions. This leads to the acceptance of Ha2. The impact of viral marketing can be attributed to the rapid and extensive dissemination of information on social media platforms. When more people discuss a product, it increases the chances of reaching potential consumers who are eager to try it. This creates a ripple effect where shared information influences more people to make a purchase. Therefore, it is crucial for brands to leverage social media to boost brand awareness and reinforce purchase decisions by aligning their messages with the expectations and requirements of their target audience.

Generally speaking, the outcomes of this conversation validate the idea that viral marketing plays a crucial role in determining whether people choose to buy COSRX items. Discussions on social media, which are one of the main indicators in viral marketing, have proven to be very effective in creating awareness and attracting consumers to purchase

products. Although engagement with the product has a lower influence, this does not diminish the importance of viral marketing in marketing strategies. In practice, companies must ensure that they create content that is interesting and easy to share on social media to maximise the potential of viral marketing. The results of this study are supported by research conducted by Praditya and Purwanto (2024) which shows that viral marketing has a significant effect on purchasing decisions.

4.2.3. The Influence of Brand Awareness on Purchasing Decisions

According to the results of previous tests, it can be confirmed that the variables of brand ambassador, viral marketing, brand awareness, and purchasing decisions are reliable and accurate for use in this study. This implies that the collected data is suitable for investigating the connections between these variables extensively.

Drawing from the findings of this research, it is evident from the respondents' feedback that the leading determinant of influence is the brand being chosen as the top preference, as indicated by the statement 'COSRX is my go-to option for buying skincare items.' It was found that 70% of respondents strongly agreed, and 28% agreed. This indicates that COSRX has successfully established a strong position in consumers' minds, where the product becomes their primary choice when seeking skincare products. This factor is crucial in purchasing decisions because consumers tend to choose brands they trust and are familiar with, especially when they feel the brand can meet their needs.

The high brand awareness strength provides a significant advantage for COSRX, as consumers who have recognised and chosen the brand are more likely to purchase its products compared to other brands. Additionally, strong brand awareness is more effective in increasing consumer loyalty and encouraging repeat purchases. In other words, the stronger the brand recognition in the market, the greater the opportunity for the company to expand its market share and increase sales volume. Therefore, COSRX needs to continue maintaining and enhancing brand awareness through various effective campaigns.

Additionally, there is an indicator with the lowest influence, namely 'the brand is easy to remember,' with the statement 'when looking for skincare products, the COSRX brand immediately comes to mind.' It is known that the majority, 54%, answered 'agree,' while the remaining 46% answered 'disagree.' Although more than half of the respondents stated that the COSRX brand is easy to remember, nearly half did not feel the same way. This may indicate that although COSRX products are well-known, not enough consumers directly associate the brand with the skincare product category. This could be due to the presence of many other skincare brands competing in the market, making COSRX not always the first brand that comes to mind for consumers.

The limitations of this indicator suggest that while brand awareness can significantly influence purchasing decisions, its recall may need further improvement. If the brand is more frequently exposed on social media and other platforms, it is likely to be more easily remembered by consumers when they need skincare products. Therefore, brand awareness does not only depend on brand recognition, but also on how often consumers are exposed to the brand in their daily lives.

According to the findings from data tests conducted with SPSS, the brand awareness factor (X₃) in relation to purchasing decisions (Y) showed a t value of 7.564, which is greater than 1.984, with a significance level of 0.000, less than 0.05, and a positive regression coefficient value of 0.546. This suggests that the brand awareness factor (X₃) significantly impacts the purchasing decision factor (Y). In light of these outcomes, it can be concluded that H_{a3} is supported. In general, the discussion highlights that brand awareness plays a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions for COSRX products. Brands that are better known

and appear more often in consumers' memories are more likely to be selected in the purchasing process. Therefore, companies need to focus on efforts that can increase their brand visibility through a variety of more strategic and creative marketing channels.

Given the importance of brand awareness in influencing purchasing decisions, COSRX can strengthen its efforts in building better relationships with consumers, which in turn will increase loyalty and repeat purchases. The results of this study are supported by research conducted by Pratama and Rakhman (2022) which shows that brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions.

4.2.4. The Influence of Brand Ambassador, Viral Marketing, and Brand Awareness on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the results of the data that has been obtained through several previous tests, it is known that all statements on brand ambassador variables (X1), viral marketing (X2), brand awareness (X3) and purchasing decisions (Y) are valid and reliable so that all data can be used in this study. This indicates that the data obtained can be used to explore the relationship between these variables in depth.

The highest indicator in this study, namely the alternative evaluation indicator in the answer about respondents assessing various skincare product options to determine whether COSRX meets their needs, it is known that the majority of 66% answered strongly agree and 32% answered agree. This shows that the majority of respondents not only consider COSRX as a top choice, but also compare it with other skincare products before making a purchase decision. This consideration process is important as it allows consumers to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the products they are considering. This also indicates that COSRX products must have a strong enough appeal to attract consumers' attention amidst the many skincare products available in the market.

Moreover, there is a factor that holds the least weight, specifically the indicator regarding recognizing skin issues and its impact on selecting COSRX products. The survey revealed that a large majority of 91% agreed with this statement, while 9% disagreed. Even though most participants admitted that their skin problems played a role in their decision to purchase COSRX items, there were still a few who did not feel the same. This could be attributed to other influences like personal preferences for different brands or recommendations from friends and family. Skin concerns can be a driving force for consumers to explore skincare solutions, however, it is not the sole determinant in their buying choices.

Following the outcomes of simultaneous hypothesis testing, it has been determined that the joint impact of brand ambassadors (X1), viral marketing (X2), and brand awareness (X3) on the purchasing decision factor (Y) is statistically significant at $0.000 < 0.05$, with an Fvalue of $59.992 > 2.70$. These findings demonstrate that the three independent variables - brand ambassadors, viral marketing, and brand awareness - collectively have a concurrent impact on the dependent variable, purchasing decisions.

Consequently, Ha3 is confirmed while Ho4 is refuted, indicating a noteworthy correlation between the independent variables - brand ambassadors (X1), viral marketing (X2), and brand awareness (X3) - collectively influencing the dependent variable, purchasing decisions (Y).

The results of this study also show that the combined effect between the three independent variables on purchasing decisions is quite strong. This indicates that in order to influence consumer purchasing decisions, companies need to utilise these three factors simultaneously in their marketing strategies. When these three elements are effectively applied, they will reinforce each other, creating a greater impact on purchasing decisions. Therefore, this study provides evidence that good management of brand ambassadors, viral

marketing, and brand awareness can provide a significant competitive advantage for companies.

In general, the findings of this research support the idea that brand ambassadors, viral marketing, and brand awareness have a significant impact on the purchasing decisions of COSRX skincare products. These factors work together to influence consumer choices. Companies should not concentrate on just one factor, but should instead make use of all three elements in their marketing strategies. If managed properly, these components can enhance brand-consumer relationships, foster loyalty, and drive sales growth.

Moreover, the coefficient of determination test revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.808, indicating a strong connection between brand ambassadors, viral marketing, brand awareness, and purchasing decisions. This close relationship accounts for 80.8% of the variance. The Adjusted R Square value for this study is 64.1%, suggesting that 35.9% of the variation is influenced by factors not included in the model, such as price, perceived risk, and online customer feedback. So, these results can prove that the Ha4 hypothesis is accepted.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that brand ambassadors, viral marketing, and brand awareness have a significant effect on purchasing decisions for COSRX skincare for students in Medan City. Brand ambassadors have a positive influence with the most dominant indicator, namely attractiveness. The personality and communication style of the brand ambassador can increase trust in the product. Viral marketing also has a positive influence, especially through the activity of talking about products on social media which accelerates the spread of information and strengthens trust between users. Brand awareness shows the strongest influence; high brand recognition makes COSRX the first choice when consumers are looking for skincare products.

The three variables simultaneously explain the purchase decision by 64.1%, the rest is influenced by other factors outside the study. To improve purchasing decisions, COSRX is advised to optimise the use of brand ambassadors with visual appeal and good communication, strengthen viral marketing strategies through creative content on social media, and continue to build brand awareness through digital campaigns, user testimonials, and collaboration with influencers. This strategy will strengthen COSRX's position as the top choice in the student skincare market.

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