



## Social Media Marketing, Product Quality, and Viral Marketing Effects on Scarlett Skincare Purchase Decisions with Brand Awareness as Mediator

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### Abstract

Purchase decisions are an important indicator of the success of marketing strategies in the skincare industry. Understanding the factors that influence consumer purchase decisions is essential for companies to strengthen competitiveness and build sustainable customer relationships. This study aims to examine the influence of social media marketing, product quality, and viral marketing on the purchase decisions of Scarlett skincare products, with brand awareness acting as a mediating variable. This research uses a quantitative approach with an associative design. The population of this study consists of consumers who have used or purchased Scarlett skincare products. The sample was determined using purposive sampling based on specific criteria related to product usage experience. Data were collected through an online questionnaire using a Likert scale. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS to test the measurement and structural models. The results indicate that social media marketing, product quality, and viral marketing have a positive influence on brand awareness. Furthermore, these variables also positively affect consumers' purchase decisions. Brand awareness also plays a mediating role in strengthening the relationship between marketing activities, product quality, and consumer purchase decisions. These findings support the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theory, which explains that external marketing stimuli and product attributes influence consumer responses through internal cognitive processes such as brand awareness.

**Keywords:** *Brand awareness, product quality, purchase decision, social media marketing, viral marketing.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The beauty and skincare industry in Indonesia has experienced rapid growth over the past ten years, in line with the increasing public attention to self-care and the importance of maintaining healthy skin in the long term (Katerina et al., 2023; Kristyani and Kristyana, 2022). The development of information technology and social media also accelerates consumer access to education, recommendations, and product reviews through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, so that literacy about the content and benefits of skincare is increasing. In line with that, the market value of Indonesia's beauty industry is projected to grow by more than 4.73% per year, with the skincare category as the main contributor to growth (Statista, 2025). In today's tough market, where local brands are getting stronger, a brand's success depends on more than just price. It also relies on how well it uses digital marketing, how good people think the product is, and how effectively it connects with customers through social media (Zagita and Dewi, 2025).

Despite this growth, a significant gap remains between high digital exposure and actual consumer purchasing behaviour, as reflected in the fluctuating sales performance of Scarlett products. Previous studies examining the effects of social media marketing, product quality, and viral marketing have reported inconsistent findings, with some showing significant positive relationships with purchase decisions and brand awareness, while others found weak or insignificant effects. Moreover, prior research tends to examine these variables separately, and only limited studies integrate them simultaneously within a single model, particularly in the context of local skincare brands (Bukit et al., 2023; Hardiana and Mulasih, 2024; Hidayat and Rayuwanto, 2022; Hidayati, 2018; Martini et al., 2022; Othysalonika et al., 2022; Priatni et al., 2019; Rimbahari et al., 2023; Sigar et al., 2021). More importantly, the role of brand awareness as a mediating variable in explaining how marketing stimuli are transformed into consumer purchase decisions remains underexplored, especially within the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework.

This study offers novelty by integrating social media marketing, product quality, and viral marketing within a single model while positioning brand awareness as a mediating variable, thereby providing a more comprehensive explanation of how digital marketing stimuli influence consumer purchase decisions in the context of local skincare brands. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of social media marketing, product quality, and viral marketing on the purchase decisions of Scarlett skincare products, with brand awareness serving as a mediating variable. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of marketing theory, particularly in the application of the S–O–R framework, as well as provide practical insights for companies in designing more effective digital marketing strategies to strengthen brand awareness and encourage sustainable consumer purchasing behaviour.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The conceptual framework places Social Media Marketing (X1), Product Quality (X2), and Viral Marketing (X3) as independent variables that influence Purchase Decisions (Y), with Brand Awareness (Z) as the mediating variable. This model refers to the findings of previous research that affirm the paths of direct and indirect influence through brand awareness (Bukit et al., 2023; Kurniawati and Susilowati, 2025; Pratama et al., 2022; Rasaela et al., 2024).

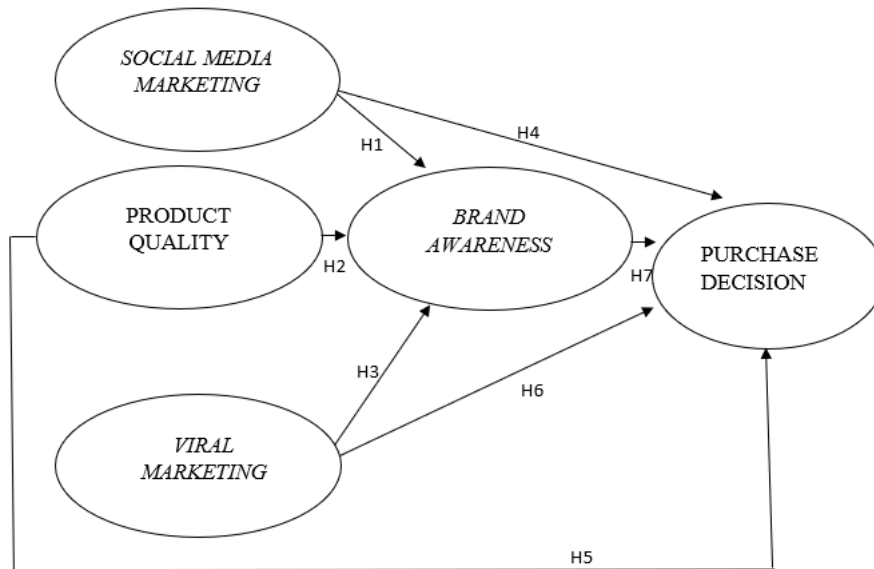


FIGURE 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis:

- H1: Social Media Marketing has a positive effect on the Purchase Decision of Scarlett Skincare products.
- H2: Product Quality has a positive effect on the Purchase Decision of Scarlett Skincare products.
- H3: Viral Marketing has a positive effect on the Purchase Decision of Scarlett Skincare products.
- H4: Social Media Marketing has a positive effect on Brand Awareness of Scarlett Skincare products.
- H5: Product Quality has a positive effect on Brand Awareness of Scarlett Skincare products.
- H6: Viral Marketing has a positive effect on Brand Awareness of Scarlett Skincare products.
- H7: Brand Awareness has a positive effect on the Purchase Decision of Scarlett Skincare products.

### 2.1 Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) Theory

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theory explains that external stimuli do not directly produce behavioral responses, but are first processed through internal cognitive and emotional states before influencing individual actions. In the context of digital marketing, recent studies emphasize that online stimuli such as social media content, product information, and viral campaigns shape consumers’ internal evaluations, which ultimately determine their behavioural responses (Hochreiter et al., 2023). In this study, social media marketing, product quality, and viral marketing are conceptualized as stimuli that influence consumers’ internal states, represented by brand awareness as the organism. Brand awareness reflects consumers’ cognitive processes in recognizing and recalling a brand, which subsequently influences their purchase decisions as the final response. Recent empirical findings support this mechanism, indicating that brand awareness plays a crucial mediating role in translating digital marketing efforts into actual consumer behaviour (Pratama et al., 2022; Singh et al., 2024).

#### 2.1.1 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing refers to the use of digital platforms to communicate with consumers, share product-related information, and build relationships that influence purchasing behaviour. Recent studies highlight that social media marketing not only increases brand visibility but also enhances consumer engagement and trust through interactive content and user-generated information (Ascani and Ancillai, 2025; Pahlevi and Trianasari, 2023).

Empirical evidence shows that effective social media strategies significantly influence both brand awareness and

purchase decisions, particularly when content is engaging, informative, and encourages interaction (Rasaela et al., 2024). Within the SOR framework, social media marketing functions as a stimulus that shapes consumer perceptions and strengthens brand awareness before influencing purchasing behavior.

### 2.1.2 Product Quality

Product quality shows the extent to which a product is able to meet consumer expectations through aspects of performance, reliability, durability, and conformity with the promised specifications. In the context of skincare, quality assessment mainly relies on the safety of the ingredients used and the effectiveness of the results of use felt by consumers (Putra, 2024). In SOR, product quality acts as a stimulus that generates trust, satisfaction, and brand awareness, thereby increasing consumers' tendency to make purchases and strengthening brand awareness as mediation.

Recent studies indicate that perceived product quality is a key determinant of both brand trust and purchase decisions, as it reduces perceived risk and increases consumer confidence (Azizah et al., 2024; Ekasari and Mandasari, 2022; Saragi and Hikmah, 2025). Moreover, positive product experiences contribute to stronger brand awareness, as consumers tend to associate satisfaction with the brand itself. Within the SOR framework, product quality acts as a stimulus that generates positive cognitive and emotional responses, which ultimately influence purchasing decisions.

### 2.1.3 Viral Marketing

Viral marketing is a digital marketing strategy that aims to rapidly disseminate information through highly shareable content across online platforms. Recent research highlights that viral marketing is particularly effective in increasing brand exposure and stimulating consumer interest through emotional appeal, social sharing, and influencer involvement (Kurniawati and Susilowati, 2025).

Empirical findings show that viral marketing can influence both brand awareness and purchase decisions, especially when the content is perceived as credible, relevant, and informative (Amalia and Nurlinda, 2022; Bukit et al., 2023; Kristyani and Kristyana, 2022). Within the SOR framework, viral marketing serves as a stimulus that enhances brand visibility and shapes consumer perceptions, which subsequently influence purchasing behaviour.

### 2.1.4 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness refers to the extent to which consumers are able to recognise and recall a brand when considering a product category. It represents an important cognitive process that influences consumer decision-making (Lathifah et al., 2024).

Recent studies confirm that brand awareness plays a central role in bridging marketing activities and purchase decisions, as consumers are more likely to choose brands that are familiar and easily recalled (Hasanain et al., 2024; Rahman and Aribowo, 2024; Sopini and Susanti, 2024). Within the SOR framework, brand awareness acts as the organism, reflecting internal cognitive states formed by external stimuli such as marketing activities and product experiences.

### 2.1.5 Purchase Decision

Purchase decision is the final stage of consumer behaviour in which individuals evaluate alternatives and choose a product that best meets their needs. In digital environments, purchase decisions are increasingly influenced by online information, reviews, and social interactions (Ahmadi et al., 2024).

Recent studies show that purchase decisions are shaped by a combination of marketing stimuli, perceived product quality, and cognitive factors such as brand awareness (Alifyanti et al., 2022; Julianti et al., 2023; Manalu et al., 2024). Within the SOR framework, purchase decisions represent the responses that result from the processing of external stimuli through internal cognitive mechanisms.

## 2.2 Influence Between Variables

In general, the literature shows: (1) social media marketing encourages purchase decisions through increased information, interaction, and trust as well as the formation of brand awareness; (2) product quality improves purchasing decisions because it strengthens the perception of value, safety, and satisfaction; (3) viral marketing expands exposure and triggers buying interest through content that spreads easily. In addition, social media marketing, product quality, and viral marketing tend to increase

brand awareness, while brand awareness strengthens confidence and drives purchasing decisions.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with an associative research design to examine the relationships among variables and their influence on consumer behaviour. Data were collected through an online survey using a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. In addition to primary data obtained directly from respondents, secondary data were collected from relevant literature such as academic journals, books, and official reports. The population of this study consists of consumers in Indonesia who have used or have the potential to use Scarlett skincare products. The sampling technique applied was purposive sampling, where respondents were selected based on specific criteria, including being active social media users, having been exposed to Scarlett marketing content, and having purchased Scarlett products within a certain period. This approach was chosen to ensure that the respondents have sufficient experience and knowledge relevant to the research variables being studied. The data collection process was conducted over a period of approximately three months through various social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. To improve the representativeness of the sample, the questionnaire was distributed across diverse social media channels targeting users from different demographic backgrounds, thereby increasing the variation of respondents in terms of age, gender, and usage experience. The sample size consisted of 130 respondents, which meets the minimum requirement for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis. The determination of the sample size was based on the number of indicators used in the model, ensuring that the data are adequate for reliable statistical analysis. Overall, this sampling procedure was designed to ensure that the collected data are relevant, valid, and representative of the targeted consumer group.

The study looks at several factors. Social Media Marketing, Product Quality, and Viral Marketing are the main factors that influence others. These are called exogenous variables. Brand Awareness acts as a mediator between these factors and the final outcome. Purchase Decision is the main result that we are interested in, and it is called an endogenous variable. Each of these factors is measured using specific indicators that have been chosen based on earlier studies. The data goes through steps like editing, coding, tabulating, and scoring. Then, tests for validity and reliability are done to make sure the tools used are accurate and consistent (Sugiyono, 2022).

Data analysis was done using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through AMOS. This method includes Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to check if the indicators properly represent each construct, and it also uses regression weights to examine how different variables are related to each other in the model. The model used in the test had two equations:  $Y1 = b1 \times X1 + b2 \times X2 + b3 \times X3 + e$ , and  $Y2 = b4 \times X1 + b5 \times X2 + b6 \times X3 + b7 \times Y1 + e$ . In this model, Y1, which stands for brand awareness, was affected by X1, which is social media marketing, X2, which is product quality, and X3, which is viral marketing. Y2, which is purchase decision, was influenced by the same three factors plus Y1, which acted as a mediator. The letter e in each equation represents the error or the part that isn't explained by the model (Hair Jr et al., 2021; Ferdinand, 2016). The model's feasibility was checked using the Goodness-of-Fit index, for example. The model fit was checked using Chi-square, RMSEA, and GFI, with RMSEA being less than or equal to 0.08 and GFI at least 0.90. The hypothesis test was based on CR and p-value, where the p-value was less than 0.05 and CR was greater than 1.645 for a one-sided test. Mediation testing was done by looking at both direct and indirect effects to see if Brand Awareness could help explain how independent variables influenced Purchase Decisions. The study also focuses on ethics, such as making sure people join willingly, keeping their names and details private, and using the information only for learning and research.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 RESULTS

#### 4.1.1. Respondent Description

The study respondents were Scarlett consumers in Indonesia with the following criteria: active social media (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook), had seen Scarlett promotions, and had bought at least 1 time in the last 6 months. The questionnaire was distributed as many as 160 through Google Form; returned 132, but 2 was incomplete so the data used was 130. The return rate of the questionnaire was 82.5% (132/160), while the questionnaire was worth processing was 81.2% (130/160). Based on the characteristics of the respondents, the majority were at the age of 18–35 years (53.1%), followed by the age of 36–49 years (30.8%), the age of <17 years (14.6%), and >49 years (1.5%). Respondents were dominated by women (76.9%), while men were 23.1%. In terms of domicile, the most respondents came from Central Java (90.77%), while other provinces each had a small proportion. The most frequently used social media by respondents was Instagram (69.23%), followed by Facebook and YouTube (11.54% each), and TikTok (7.69%).

**TABLE 1 | Respondent Description**

| Characteristics | Options             | Frequency | Presentation |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Age             | < 17 years old      | 19        | 14.6%        |
|                 | 18 -35 Years        | 69        | 53.1%        |
|                 | 36 -49 Years        | 40        | 30.8%        |
|                 | > 49 years old      | 2         | 1.5%         |
| Total           |                     | 130       | 100%         |
| Gender          | Male                | 30        | 23.1%        |
|                 | Women               | 100       | 76.9%        |
| Total           |                     | 130       | 100%         |
| Domicile        | Central Java        | 118       | 90.77%       |
|                 | DKI Jakarta         | 2         | 1.54%        |
|                 | East Java           | 2         | 1.54%        |
|                 | West Java           | 3         | 2.31%        |
|                 | IN Yogyakarta       | 1         | 0.77%        |
|                 | North Sumatra       | 1         | 0.77%        |
|                 | West Kalimantan     | 1         | 0.77%        |
|                 | South Sulawesi      | 1         | 0.77%        |
|                 | Bali                | 1         | 0.77%        |
|                 | Total               |           | 130          |
| Social Media    | Posted on Instagram | 90        | 69.23%       |
|                 | Tiktok              | 10        | 7.69%        |
|                 | Posted on Facebook  | 15        | 11.54%       |
|                 | Youtube             | 15        | 11.54%       |
|                 | Others              | 0         | 0%           |
| Total           |                     | 130       | 100%         |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

#### 4.1.2. Measurement Model

The results from the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) test indicated that the whole construct satisfied convergent validity, as each variable's AVE value was higher than the minimum requirement of 0.50. Social media marketing has an AVE of 0.729, product quality is 0.755, viral marketing is 0.728, brand awareness is 0.725, and purchase decision is 0.733. These results show that each main idea explains more than half of the variation in the related measurement, meaning all the variables are considered useful and ready to be used in the next part of the SEM analysis.

**TABLE 2 | Average Variance Extracted (AVE)**

| Variable               | AVE   | Cut of Value | Remarks |
|------------------------|-------|--------------|---------|
| Social Media Marketing | 0.729 | 0.50         | Valid   |
| Product Quality        | 0.755 | 0.50         | Valid   |
| Viral Marketing        | 0.728 | 0.50         | Valid   |
| Brand Awareness        | 0.725 | 0.50         | Valid   |
| Purchase Decision      | 0.733 | 0.50         | Valid   |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the results of the Construct Reliability (CR) test, all the constructs in this study were found to be reliable because each variable's CR value was higher than the minimum required limit of 0.70. Social Media Marketing has a customer rating of 0.915, product quality is rated 0.925, viral marketing scores 0.930, brand awareness is 0.929, and purchase decision has a score of 0.932. These results show that each idea is measured well by the indicators used, meaning the indicators reliably capture the hidden concepts and can be confidently used for more analysis.

**TABLE 3 | Construct Reliability**

| Construct              | CR    | Cut of Value | Remarks  |
|------------------------|-------|--------------|----------|
| Social Media Marketing | 0.915 | 0.70         | Reliable |
| Product Quality        | 0.925 | 0.70         | Reliable |
| Viral Marketing        | 0.930 | 0.70         | Reliable |
| Brand Awareness        | 0.929 | 0.70         | Reliable |
| Purchase Decision      | 0.932 | 0.70         | Reliable |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

The results from the discriminant validity test show that the root value of AVE on the diagonal for each construct is higher than the correlation values between different constructs (which are the values outside the diagonal). This means that each part of the model is different in its own way, and can explain its own measurements more effectively than explaining other parts. For example, Social Media Marketing has an AVE value of 0.854, which is higher than its correlations with Product Quality (0.294), Viral Marketing (0.280), Brand Awareness (0.703), and Purchase Decision (0.638). The same pattern is also found in other factors, like Product Quality, with an AVE root of 0.869, Viral Marketing with 0.853, Brand Awareness with 0.851, and Purchase Decision with 0.856. All of these values are higher than the related correlations. So, we can say that the model satisfies the requirement for discriminant validity, which means that each concept is distinct enough and ready for use in further structural equation modelling analysis.

**TABLE 4 | Discriminat Validity**

|                        | Social Media Marketing | Product Quality | Viral Marketing | Brand Awareness | Purchase Decision |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Social Media Marketing | 0.854                  |                 |                 |                 |                   |
| Product Quality        | 0.294                  | 0.869           |                 |                 |                   |
| Viral Marketing        | 0.280                  | 0.272           | 0.853           |                 |                   |
| Brand Awareness        | 0.703                  | 0.577           | 0.636           | 0.851           |                   |
| Purchase Decision      | 0.638                  | 0.634           | 0.599           | 0.850           | 0.856             |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

### 4.1.3. Structural Model

Based on the Standardized Regression Weights, all relationships between variables in the model point in a positive direction. In the Brand Awareness (Y1) equation, Social Media Marketing (X1) has the largest influence with a coefficient of

0.494, followed by Viral Marketing (X3) of 0.411, and Product Quality (X2) of 0.320. This indicates that increasing marketing activities on social media, strengthening viral strategies, and good product quality will increase Brand Awareness, with the strongest relative contribution coming from Social Media Marketing.

In the Purchase Decision equation (Y2), the largest direct influence comes from Brand Awareness (Y1) with a coefficient of 0.414, indicating that the higher the brand awareness, the greater the tendency of consumers to make purchases. Meanwhile, the direct influence of exogenous variables on Purchase Decisions was also positive, namely Product Quality (0.279), Social Media Marketing (0.209), and Viral Marketing (0.201). Overall, these results confirm that Purchase Decisions are influenced not only by marketing strategies and product quality directly, but also strongly through increased Brand Awareness as a key driving factor.

**TABLE 5 | Standardized Regression Weights ( $\beta$ )**

|                   |      |                        | Estimate |
|-------------------|------|------------------------|----------|
| Brand_awareness   | <--- | Sosia_Media_Marketing  | 0.494    |
| Brand_Awareness   | <--- | Product_Quality        | 0.320    |
| Brand_Awareness   | <--- | Viral_Marketing        | 0.411    |
| Purchase_Decision | <--- | Sosia_Media__Marketing | 0.209    |
| Purchase_Decision | <--- | Product_Quality        | 0.279    |
| Purchase_Decision | <--- | Viral_Marketing        | 0.201    |
| Purchase_Decision | <--- | Brand_Awanerss         | 0.414    |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

The R-squared value for brand awareness is 0.793, meaning that 79.3% of changes in brand awareness can be explained by social media marketing, product quality and viral marketing. The other 20.7% of the change is due to factors that were not included in this study. Additionally, the R<sup>2</sup> value for Purchase Decisions is 0.783, meaning that 78.3% of the changes in how people make purchase decisions can be explained by factors like Social Media Marketing, Product Quality, Viral Marketing, and Brand Awareness. The other 21.7% is due to different factors that weren't included in this study. These results show that the model has a good understanding of both internal variables.

**TABLE 6 | Squared Multiple Correlations**

|                   | Estimate |
|-------------------|----------|
| Brand_Awareness   | 0.793    |
| Purchase_Decision | 0.783    |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

The regression analysis showed that all the paths in the model had a positive and important effect because they satisfied the conditions of having a C.R. value higher than 1.645 and a p-value lower than 0.05. Social media marketing helps increase brand awareness a lot (Estimate = 0.462; C.R. = 7.709; p = 0.000). Product quality also makes a big difference in how much people know about the brand (Estimate = 0.309; C.R. = 5.404; p = 0.000). Viral marketing also plays an important role in raising brand awareness (Estimate = 0.396; C.R. = 6.668; p = 0.000). In addition, when it comes to making purchasing decisions, Social Media Marketing has a positive and important effect (Estimate = 0.187; C.R. = 2.309; p = 0.021), Product Quality also has a positive and important effect (Estimate = 0.258; C.R. = 3.837; p = 0.000), and Viral Marketing has a positive and important effect (Estimate = 0.186; C.R. = 2.503; p = 0.012). In addition, Brand Awareness also has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions (Estimate = 0.397; C.R. = 2.989; p = 0.003), which shows that when brand awareness increases, it plays a major role in helping consumers make buying decisions.

**TABLE 7 | Regression Weights**

|                   |      |                       | Estimate | S.E.  | C.R.  | P     | Label  |
|-------------------|------|-----------------------|----------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Brand_Awanerss    | <--- | Sosia_Media_Marketing | 0.462    | 0.060 | 7.709 | 0.000 | par_22 |
| Brand_Awanerss    | <--- | Product_Quality       | 0.309    | 0.057 | 5.404 | 0.000 | par_23 |
| Brand_Awanerss    | <--- | Viral_Marketing       | 0.396    | 0.059 | 6.668 | 0.000 | par_24 |
| Purchase_Decision | <--- | Sosia_Media_Marketing | 0.187    | 0.081 | 2.309 | 0.021 | par_25 |
| Purchase_Decision | <--- | Product_Quality       | 0.258    | 0.067 | 3.837 | 0.000 | par_26 |
| Purchase_Decision | <--- | Viral_Marketing       | 0.186    | 0.074 | 2.503 | 0.012 | par_27 |
| Purchase_Decision | <--- | Brand_Awanerss        | 0.397    | 0.133 | 2.989 | 0.003 | par_28 |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the results of the influence of Social Media Marketing, Product Quality, and Viral Marketing on Purchase Decisions, consisting of direct effect and indirect effect through Brand Awareness, resulting in a total effect. For the Social Media Marketing → Purchase Decision route, the direct influence was 0.187, while the indirect influence through Brand Awareness was 0.184, so the total influence was 0.371 (0.187 + 0.184); this shows partial mediation because Social Media Marketing remains directly influential, as well as through Brand Awareness. In the Product Quality → Purchase Decision pathway, the direct influence was 0.258, and the indirect influence through Brand Awareness was 0.123, so the total influence was 0.381; this means that product quality affects purchase decisions, especially directly, but is also strengthened through increased Brand Awareness (partial mediation). Meanwhile, the Viral Marketing → Purchase Decision pathway had a direct influence of 0.186 and an indirect influence through Brand Awareness of 0.157, so that the total influence was 0.343; This also indicates partial mediation, as Viral Marketing continues to influence purchasing decisions both directly and through the formation of Brand Awareness.

**TABLE 8 | Influence of Direct Effect, Indirect Effect, Total Effect**

| Variable Influence                          | Direct Effect | Indirect Effect | Total Effect | Remarks           |
|---|---------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Awanerss Brand ←Purchase Decision           |               |                 |              |                   |
| ←Social Media Marketing                     |               | 0.184           |              |                   |
| Social Media Marketing ← Purchase Decisions | 0.187         |                 | 0.371        | Persial Mediation |
| Awanerss Brand ←Purchase Decision           |               |                 |              |                   |
| ←Product Quality                            |               | 0.123           |              |                   |
| Product Quality ←Purchasing Decision        | 0.258         |                 | 0.381        | Persial Mediation |
| Awanerss Brand ←Purchase Decision           |               |                 |              |                   |
| ←Viral marketing                            |               | 0.157           |              |                   |
| Viral marketing ←Purchase Decisions         | 0.186         |                 | 0.343        | Persial Mediation |

Source: Data Processed (2025)

## 4.2 DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that social media marketing has a positive influence on brand awareness. This suggests that marketing activities conducted through social media platforms play an important role in strengthening consumers' familiarity with a brand. Through engaging content, interactive communication, and consistent digital exposure, companies can increase consumers' recognition and recall of a brand. In the skincare industry, social media platforms serve not only as promotional channels but also as spaces where consumers interact with brands and obtain product-related information. This interaction contributes to the formation of stronger brand awareness among consumers. These findings are consistent with previous studies which highlight the effectiveness of social media marketing in enhancing brand visibility and strengthening consumer-brand relationships (Rasaela et al., 2024).

The results also show that product quality positively influences brand awareness. When consumers perceive a product as having reliable and satisfactory quality, they tend to associate those positive experiences with the brand itself. This association strengthens brand recognition and encourages consumers to remember the brand more easily in future purchasing

situations. In the context of skincare products, consumers often evaluate product quality based on effectiveness, safety, and consistency of performance. Positive perceptions of these aspects contribute to stronger brand awareness and reinforce the brand's position in the minds of consumers. This finding aligns with previous research which emphasizes that positive product experiences can significantly contribute to stronger brand recognition (Azilla et al., 2025).

The findings further reveal that viral marketing has a positive effect on brand awareness. Viral marketing enables information about a product to spread rapidly through digital platforms and social networks, increasing the frequency with which consumers encounter brand-related messages. This repeated exposure enhances consumers' ability to recognize and remember the brand. In the digital marketing environment, viral content that encourages sharing behaviour can significantly expand brand reach and visibility. As consumers repeatedly encounter the same information through different online channels, brand familiarity gradually increases. This result supports previous studies which show that viral marketing strategies are effective in strengthening brand awareness through rapid information diffusion (Usman and Zuhurifa, 2022).

The study also found that social media marketing positively influences purchase decisions. Social media platforms provide consumers with easy access to product information, user experiences, and brand interactions that can shape their perceptions before making a purchase. In addition, social media content often includes reviews, testimonials, and demonstrations that help consumers evaluate the benefits of a product. In the skincare industry, where consumers are highly attentive to product effectiveness and safety, such information can significantly influence their purchasing considerations. Therefore, well-designed social media marketing strategies can encourage consumers to move from awareness to actual purchasing behaviour (Suryaningsih and Ningtias, 2023).

Product quality was also found to positively influence consumers' purchase decisions. Consumers tend to choose products that are perceived as reliable, effective, and capable of meeting their expectations. In skincare products, perceived quality plays a crucial role because consumers are concerned about product suitability, safety, and long-term benefits for their skin. Positive perceptions of product quality can increase consumer trust and confidence in a brand, which ultimately encourages purchasing decisions. This finding supports previous studies that identified product quality as one of the most important determinants of consumer purchasing behaviour (Saltifa et al., 2023).

The results further indicate that viral marketing positively influences purchase decisions. Viral marketing strategies often rely on engaging content, user-generated reviews, and digital word-of-mouth that attract consumer attention and stimulate curiosity about a product. When consumers encounter viral content that appears credible and relevant, they are more likely to seek additional information and consider purchasing the product. In the skincare industry, viral marketing frequently involves beauty influencers, testimonials, and shared experiences that shape consumer perceptions and influence purchasing intentions (Zuliansyah et al., 2025).

The findings also demonstrate that brand awareness positively affects purchase decisions. When consumers are familiar with a brand and can easily recognise it, they tend to feel more confident in choosing that brand compared to unfamiliar alternatives. Strong brand awareness reduces uncertainty in the purchasing process and increases the likelihood that consumers will select a particular product among many competing options. In the highly competitive skincare market, brand awareness plays an essential role in differentiating products and influencing consumer preferences. This finding supports previous studies which highlight brand awareness as a key factor influencing consumer purchase behavior (Ramyar, 2024).

The study also shows that brand awareness mediates the relationship between social media marketing, product quality, and viral marketing with purchase decisions. This indicates that marketing activities and product attributes influence consumer behavior not only directly but also indirectly through internal cognitive processes. When marketing strategies and product experiences successfully enhance brand awareness, consumers are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward the brand and proceed to make purchasing decisions. This mediation mechanism highlights the importance of brand awareness as an internal factor that strengthens the effectiveness of marketing stimuli in influencing consumer behavior (Pratama et al., 2022; Sopini and Susanti, 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework in the context of digital marketing in the skincare industry. In this framework, social media marketing, product quality, and viral marketing function as external stimuli that influence consumers' internal psychological processes. Brand awareness represents the organism component, reflecting consumers' internal cognitive state related to brand recognition and memory. Purchase decisions represent the behavioural response that occurs after consumers process these stimuli. The findings support the SOR framework by demonstrating that external marketing stimuli influence consumer behavior through internal cognitive mechanisms.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide important insights for skincare companies in developing effective marketing strategies. Companies should focus on optimizing social media marketing activities by creating engaging and informative content that encourages consumer interaction. Maintaining consistent product quality is also essential in order to build consumer trust and strengthen brand perceptions. In addition, viral marketing strategies should be designed to ensure that information shared through digital platforms remains credible and relevant to consumers. By strengthening these aspects, companies can enhance brand awareness and ultimately encourage more sustainable consumer purchasing behaviour.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that social media marketing, product quality, and viral marketing have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions for Scarlett skincare products, both directly and indirectly through brand awareness as a partial mediator. These findings support the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, where marketing stimuli (social media activity, product quality, and viral content) shape consumers' internal state (brand awareness) which then drives behavioral responses (purchases). More broadly, these results confirm that the effectiveness of digital marketing is not only determined by promotional exposure, but primarily by the strategy's ability to build brand awareness that strengthens consumers' confidence in making purchasing decisions. Therefore, companies need to integrate social media content management, consistent product quality, and credible viral campaigns to strengthen brand awareness and increase purchases.

## 6. LIMITATION AND IMPLICATION

Limitations of this study include the cross-sectional design, which limits causal inference; the use of a self-report questionnaire, which could potentially introduce bias; purposive sampling of social media users/Scarlett buyers, which limits generalizability; and the model's sole examination of brand awareness mediation, leaving other mechanisms (e.g., brand trust, brand image, perceived value, satisfaction, e-WOM) and segment/platform differences untested.

For future research, it is recommended to test other mediators/predictors such as brand trust, brand image, perceived value, satisfaction, and e-WOM, as well as analyse differences by consumer segment and social media platform. A longitudinal/experimental design is also recommended to strengthen causal inferences and test the model's generalizability to other product categories or sectors.

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