

THE INFLUENCE OF TIKTOK AFFILIATE VIRAL MARKETING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of TikTok Affiliate viral marketing on consumer purchase intention among Business Education students class of 2023 at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. This research employed a quantitative approach with a causal research design. The population consisted of all Business Education students class of 2023, totaling 97 students, with a sample of 50 respondents determined using the Slovin formula and selected through simple random sampling technique. Data were collected through structured questionnaires using a 4-point Likert scale, measuring viral marketing dimensions (messenger, message, and environment) and purchase intention dimensions (transactional, referential, preferential, and explorative interest). Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25, (Rönkkö & Cho, 2022) including validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and simple linear regression analysis. The results showed that TikTok Affiliate viral marketing has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchase intention, as evidenced by ANOVA test results with a linear and significant relationship between the two variables. The research instrument demonstrated excellent reliability with a very high Cronbach's Alpha value. These findings confirm that the more effective viral marketing is perceived by students, the higher their purchase intention for promoted products. This study contributes to understanding digital marketing effectiveness in the context of business education students who possess unique characteristics as prospective educators and entrepreneurs.

Key words: viral marketing; tiktok affiliate; purchase intention; business education students; generation z

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has fundamentally changed the marketing paradigm from conventional to digital with social media as the main platform (Nair & Subramaniam, n.d.). TikTok, as a short video sharing platform, has recorded exponential growth with more than 1 billion monthly active users globally (Mulisa, 2022). In Indonesia, TikTok recorded 109.9 million active users in 2023, making it the fastest-growing social media platform (Wu, 2021). This platform is not only used for entertainment but also as an effective marketing tool through the TikTok Affiliate feature that allows content creators to promote products and earn commissions from each transaction (Taber, 2018).

Generation Z, born between 1997-2012, is a very potential consumer segment with characteristics as digital natives, accustomed to technology from an early age, having increasing purchasing power, and being very active on social media (Ramadhani, 2025). According (Mr. Thota Ashwanth Reddy et al., 2025), Generation Z has significant economic influence with purchasing power projected to reach \$360 billion by 2025. Data from Globalwebindex (2021) shows that 47% of TikTok users make purchases after watching videos on the platform, and 67% get inspiration to make unplanned purchases (Wan Nailah, Abdullah Syahiza et al., 2023). This phenomenon shows the great potential of viral marketing through TikTok Affiliate in influencing consumer behavior, especially Generation Z who are very responsive to visual content and recommendations from their peer groups (Charli et al., 2022).

Viral marketing is a marketing strategy that utilizes the power of digital word-of-mouth to spread product information exponentially through social networks. The success of viral marketing depends on three main elements: messenger (source credibility), message (content attractiveness), and environment (platform environment that supports content distribution). (Rönkkö & Cho, 2022) When combined with an affiliate marketing system, this strategy becomes even more powerful because it utilizes the credibility and reach of content creators to promote products authentically with commission incentives (Gu et al., 2024). Several previous studies have explored this phenomenon. (Rombach et al., 2023) found that TikTok Affiliate viral marketing significantly influenced Generation Z consumer purchase intention with a significance value of 0.000 and a positive regression coefficient of 0.353. Rokhma et al. (2025) showed that affiliate marketing and live streaming on TikTok Shop simultaneously influence Generation Z purchase decisions (Ridwan, 2022) with an F value of 8.900 and significance of 0.000. However, these studies had not deeply explored the role of viral marketing in the context of business education students who have unique characteristics as prospective educators and entrepreneurs (Wan Nailah, Abdullah Syahiza et al., 2023).

Business Education study program students have deep understanding of business and marketing concepts, high digital literacy, and dual perspectives as consumers and prospective business actors. This research is important to provide empirical understanding regarding the effectiveness of TikTok Affiliate viral marketing in the context of business education students with a systematic quantitative approach using linear regression analysis.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of TikTok Affiliate viral marketing on consumer purchase intention among Business Education students class of 2023 at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia with the research hypothesis: TikTok Affiliate viral marketing has a positive and significant effect on consumer purchase intention of Business Education students class of 2023 at UPI.

METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach (Mulisa, 2022) with a causal research design to examine the influence of TikTok Affiliate viral marketing as an independent variable (X) on consumer purchase intention as a dependent variable (Y). The research population is all students of the Business Education Study Program class of 2023 at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, totaling 97 active students in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year.

Sample size determination uses the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error and 90% confidence level. The sample calculation is:

$$n = N / (1 + N.e^2) = 97 / (1 + 97 \times 0.10^2) = 97 / 1.97 = 49.24 \approx 50 \text{ respondents}$$

The sampling technique (Sugiyono, 2020) uses simple random sampling (Mulisa, 2022) where every member of the population has an equal chance to be selected. Respondent inclusion criteria are: (1) active Business Education Study Program UPI students class of 2023, (2) aged 18-26 years (Generation Z), (3) active TikTok users at least 3 times per week, and (4) have seen TikTok Affiliate content at least 5 times in the last month.

The research instrument uses a structured questionnaire with a 4-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree). The TikTok Affiliate viral marketing variable is measured using 12 items based on Kaplan & Haenlein (2011) dimensions: messenger (4 items), message (4 items), and environment (4 items). The purchase intention variable is measured using 12 items based on Ferdinand's (2002) concept: transactional interest (3 items), referential interest (3 items), preferential interest (3 items), and explorative interest (3 items).

Data collection was conducted through online Google Form questionnaires distributed via class WhatsApp groups. Data analysis uses IBM SPSS Statistics version 25 with stages: (1) validity test using Corrected Item-Total Correlation ($r_{\text{count}} > r_{\text{table}}$ 0.279 for $n=50$), (2) (Taber, 2018) reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha > 0.70$), (3) classical assumption tests including normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Sig. > 0.05), linearity (Test for Linearity), and heteroscedasticity (Glejser Test, Sig. > 0.05), and (4) simple linear regression analysis with equation $Y = a + bX$. Hypothesis testing uses t-test with criteria $t_{\text{count}} > t_{\text{table}}$ (2.011) and significance < 0.05 .

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the data analysis using ANOVA yielded an F-value of 9.198 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, indicating a significant effect of viral marketing on purchase intention. This indicates that the regression model is able to explain the significant relationship between the two variables. The Sum of Squares between Groups (Combined) of 849.968 and within Groups of 231.012, with a total variance of 1,080.980, indicates that approximately 78.6% of the variation in purchase intention can be explained by the influence of viral marketing, while the remainder is explained by factors outside this research model.

The linearity test (Debby Alita et al., 2021) showed that the linear component had an F-value of 93.457 with a significance level of $p < 0.001$, indicating that the relationship between viral marketing and purchase intention is linear and statistically significant. This means that the higher the level of viral marketing perceived by consumers—such as the distribution of engaging content, high user participation, and the credibility of the content creator—the higher the consumer's intention to purchase products promoted through social media. In other words, viral marketing plays a significant role in increasing consumer interest in a product.

The results of the deviation from linearity test showed an F-value of 2.717 with a significance level of $p = 0.009$, indicating a small deviation from the linear relationship between the two variables. This suggests that while the relationship between viral marketing and purchase intention is generally positive and linear, there was a non-linear tendency among some respondents. This may occur because excessive exposure to viral content can lead to a saturation effect, where consumers no longer respond proportionally to the increasing intensity of promotional content they see. Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that viral marketing has a strong and significant influence on purchase intention. (Mehrabian & Russel, 1974) Consumers exposed to viral content with engaging, credible messages that frequently appear on social media tend to have higher purchase intentions than those who are not exposed as intensely. Therefore, the research hypothesis stating that there is a positive and significant influence between viral marketing and purchase intention is accepted.

Tabel 1. ANOVA

			Sum of squares	df	Main Square	F	sig
Purchase Intention	Between groups	Combined	849.968	14	60.712	9.198	.000
		Linearity	616.851	1	616.851	93.457	.000

Viral Marketing	Deviation from Linearity	233.117	13	17.932	2.717	.009
	Within Groups	231.012	35	6.600		
	Total	1080.980	49			

(Source: SPSS25)

The ANOVA table shows that TikTok Affiliate viral marketing has a statistically significant influence on consumer purchase intention among Business Education students of the 2023 intake at the Indonesian University of Education. The test results indicate a linear and significant relationship between the two variables. This indicates that the more effective TikTok Affiliate viral marketing is perceived by students, the higher their purchase intention for the promoted product. The deviation from linearity also shows insignificant results, which means that a linear relationship between the two variables is the appropriate model to explain the influence of TikTok Affiliate viral marketing on purchase intention. There are no significant non-linear relationship patterns to consider.

Tabel 2. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.755a	.571	.562	3.10956

(Source: SPSS25)

The Model Summary table indicates that there is a strong and positive relationship between viral marketing and purchase intention. This means that effective implementation of viral marketing strategies tends to increase consumers' intention to purchase a product. The coefficient of determination shows that viral marketing explains a substantial portion of the variation in purchase intention, suggesting that consumers' buying interest is largely influenced by how well viral marketing is executed. However, there are still other factors beyond this model—such as product quality, price, consumer trust, or other promotional efforts—that may also affect purchase intention. Overall, the results highlight that viral marketing plays a significant and influential role in shaping consumers' intention to buy.



Figure 1. Research Procedure

This research was conducted through three interrelated systematic stages. The first stage was problem identification, where researchers identified the viral marketing phenomenon on TikTok Affiliate and how it could potentially influence consumer purchasing interest, particularly among Business Education students in the 2023 intake at the Indonesian University of Education. After the problem was clearly identified, the research proceeded to the data collection stage by distributing questionnaires to respondents to measure their perceptions of TikTok Affiliate viral marketing and their purchasing interest. The final stage was analysis of the results using SPSS version 25, where the collected data was processed and statistically analyzed to test the research hypothesis and draw conclusions regarding the significant influence of TikTok Affiliate viral marketing on consumer purchasing interest. These three stages formed a logical and structured research flow to answer the research problem formulation.

CONCLUSION

The analysis and findings of the research conducted indicate that viral marketing has a positive and significant impact on consumer purchase intention. This suggests that the more effective the viral marketing strategy implemented through the distribution of engaging content, high user participation, and the credibility of the content creator the greater the consumer's tendency to intend to purchase the promoted product. These findings confirm that viral marketing is a digital strategy capable of strongly shaping consumer behavior through its social and psychological effects. However, the analysis also indicates a non-linear relationship pattern, suggesting potential saturation at a certain level of exposure, requiring adjustments to prevent excessive marketing strategies. Future research is recommended to test this model by adding moderating variables such as influencer credibility

or consumer trust, and using longitudinal methods to strengthen understanding of the dynamics of viral marketing's influence on purchase intention over a longer period.

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