

The Role of Viral Marketing Value “Instagram” in Building Customer Relationships Performance: Perspectizing S-DL Theory

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Abstract

In the context of social media platforms, it is important for MSMEs to differentiate themselves in order to attract the attention of potential customers. This study uses the Viral Marketing Value Effect Model to examine the role of social media platforms in customer relationship performance. Data from 219 culinary MSMEs in Central Java shows that social media influencers and characteristics have an effect on customer relationship performance, while social media influencers do not. The study also explores how viral marketing value moderates the relationship between social media influencers and social media characteristics on customer relationships. The findings provide insights that extend the Service Dominant Logic (SDL) theory to social media marketing literacy in MSMEs.

Keywords: Social Media Influencers, Social Media Characteristics, Viral Marketing Value, Customer Relationships Performance, Instagram, Service Dominant Logic (S-DL) Theory



INTRODUCTION

Social media is evolving into a platform that consumers not only use to communicate and share their lives, but also as an online marketing channel to buy clothes, food, and daily necessities. It has been suggested by some researchers that online social media has changed the way consumers interact with products and opened up new opportunities for companies to market their products. It is estimated that social media platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and Twitter are among the most widely used in the world, including in Indonesia, where they are utilized by 191.4 million users (<https://www.statista.com>, 2023). It seems that the role of social media has expanded beyond its initial function as a mere communication tool for personal relationships. It has also become a significant platform for the exchange and dissemination of news and information. It has been observed that the adoption of social media has contributed to a notable expansion in the realm of communication and promotion, encompassing both novel products and well-established services (Eisenbeiss et al., 2023; Fergus et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023).

Social media networks are the main channel for people to communicate and share the lives of customers and potential customers. They also play an important role in disseminating and getting informed of the value people want. It is important for companies to be aware that these value knots can offer valuable insights into the dynamics of information diffusion. Additionally, they can assist in the effort to mitigate the propagation of rumors and false information about the company (Hamzah et al., 2023; Liu & Chong, 2023; Ooi et al., 2023). It has been suggested that identifying these important nodes may be useful in searching for information, as well as in opinion monitoring, viral marketing, and rumor control (Wang et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2020). Therefore, the objective of this study was to develop the "Viral Marketing Value" model. In order to better understand the dissemination of information in real social scenarios, it is necessary to focus on the identification of important nodes based on the targeted network.

This study explored the potential of Instagram as an extension of the Service Dominant Logic Theory (S-DL) approach. The S-DL Theory could be a promising theoretical framework for the market. It has gained wide recognition in the business literature and has been used in marketing and other fields (Gao et al., 2024; Sung & Lee, 2023; Vargo et al., 2023). The development of S-DL Theory is an example of a theory development process that aims to develop a marketing theory. It is my understanding that S-DL Theory can be applied to all levels of aggregation (macro, meso, micro) and can be used to investigate a wide range of market contexts and diverse market phenomena. It seems that S-DL Theory provides the flexibility to adapt to various market



situations and existing phenomena ((Akter et al., 2023; Kaiser et al., 2023; Mero et al., 2022). This study hopes that S-DL Theory will shed light on the phenomenon of viral marketing on Instagram, which, in 2022, holds the third largest market share in Indonesia, after Facebook and YouTube.

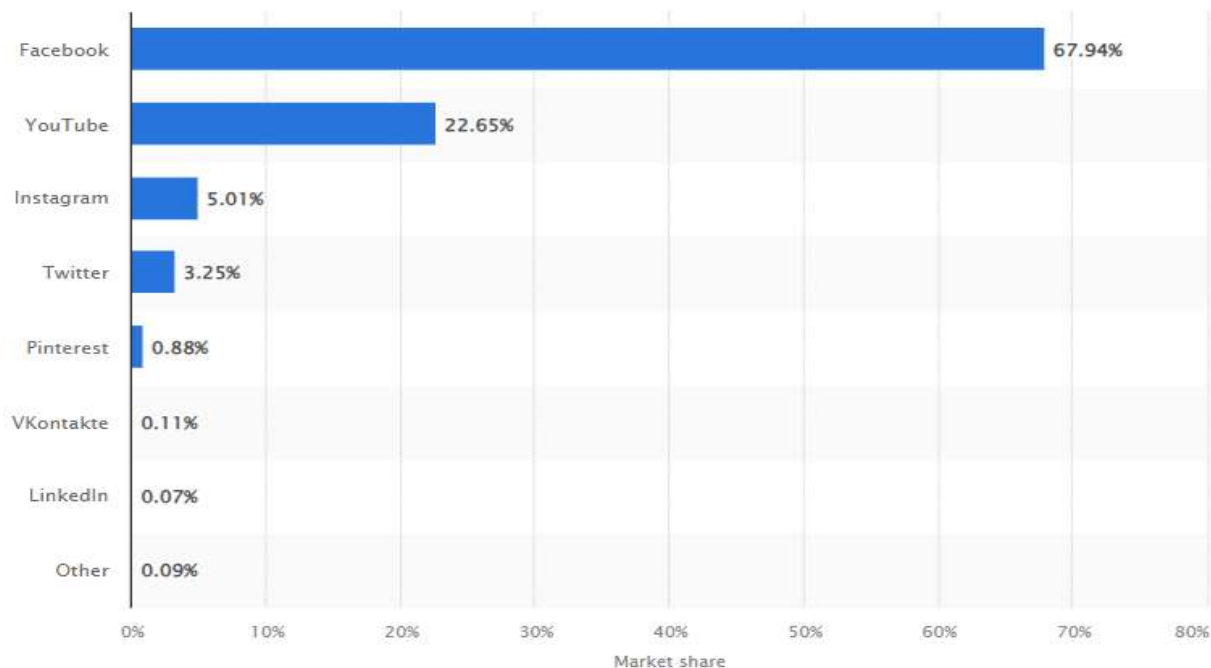


Figure 1. Market share of leading social media platforms in Indonesia in 2022

Source; <https://www.statista.com> (2023)

A number of studies confirm that there is a gap in the role of social media in viralizing company products and services in the process of value co-creation (Wu et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2023). This is because the success of an online social media marketing program depends on customer feedback and potential customers have different understandings and positions on the products sold in online social media marketing (Ooi et al., 2023; Sohaib & Han, 2023). These different approaches are due to creating a virtual, intuitive, and visible face-to-face transaction environment, which the company communicates through will simultaneously get a diverse response (Li et al., 2023; Liu & Chong, 2023).

This study focused on Central Java's culinary MSMEs, particularly those located in Central Java, with the aim of understanding how MSMEs specializing in culinary snacks, such as dessert boxes, Seblak, Tahu Walik, Bakso Aci, Basreng, cupcakes, modern market snacks, various fried

foods, and more, found in hidden locations can contribute to the creation of co-creation value for customer relationships and performance through viral marketing. Secondly, it is worth considering the potential opportunities for MSMEs in Central Java's snack culinary sector. It is possible that these opportunities could help them achieve a superior position in market share and profits from the destination market with the help of Instagram (<https://www.statista.com>, 2023). Third, the resurgence of culinary in Central Java presents a valuable opportunity for snack culinary MSMEs in the region to utilize viral marketing to reach and satisfy the demand for snack culinary products in Central Java's destination market. The findings of the aforementioned study have provided the foundation for this study, which aims to introduce the concept of "viral marketing value" as an extension of S-DL.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Viral Marketing Value

The concept of Viral Marketing Value (VMV) is a novelty in this study. It seems that this concept is based on the thinking of S-DL Theory. If I'm not mistaken, marketing activities are basically not only about discussing value exchange activities involving the relationship between sellers and buyers. It is my understanding that the development of marketing activities occurs due to a cause-and-effect relationship with regard to the creation of value co-creation (Ahn et al., 2020; Saunila et al., 2019). It seems that, particularly through the use of social media, companies have found an established way to engage in marketing (promotion) program activities. One of the research themes of the use of social media and marketing winning programs is viral marketing. At present, viral marketing programs are a tool that companies can use to establish shared values with customers and potential customers. Companies encourage consumers to share campaign messages on social media as a way to create shared value for a common goal. Companies often encourage consumers to share their campaign messages, with the potential benefit of increasing their marketing visibility and brand reputation. It has been demonstrated by a number of studies that viral marketing has the potential to enhance marketing performance, given the level of virality that companies and customers can create (Wang et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2024; Wen et al., 2023).

Social Media Influencers

The concept of social media influencers (SMI) is essentially the role of influencers in creating value that encourages consumers to use their social media accounts to help campaign for



companies and their products and services. In today's world, consumers are increasingly turning to social media as a source of information and guidance in making decisions. It is worth noting that many advertisers have emerged as influential members of the online community and have become a source of advice for other consumers. Studies suggest that advertisers with a significant number of peers may have a more substantial impact on the dissemination of information on social networks. Advertisers on social media can play a role in the dissemination of innovative ideas and new products. It has been observed that TV and movie stars have been known to make appearances in advertisements, offering positive testimonials about products. This practice has been found to have a significant psychological impact on consumers (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Pozharliev et al., 2022; Yang, 2022). Famous stars (influencers) have a certain credibility with consumers, and companies often find them useful when promoting their products. Social media users have a certain level of ability to distinguish celebrities and place a degree of trust in their opinions. In situations where a company is not very well known, using celebrities as product endorsements can be a helpful strategy for spreading the word about the brand. The S-DL theory suggests that, in order to maintain long-term sustainability, it would be beneficial for the company to successfully identify the values that are most needed by the target market (Kaiser et al., 2023). The better the social media influencers, the more viral marketing value (Al Abri & Valaee, 2020; Gao et al., 2020).

Social Media Characteristics

The concept of Social Media Characteristics (SMC) is essentially the creation of effective value to help companies maintain marketing performance in the destination market, both from competitor provocations and the dynamics of changing consumer tastes. If I'm understanding correctly, social media involves understanding and analyzing the characteristics of social media that can influence its use and implementation (Ooi et al., 2023; Sohaib & Han, 2023; Wang et al., 2023). This approach stands in contrast to structuring, which places greater emphasis on activities that influence the use of technology and organizational structure. As social media technology evolves, new features may emerge that could influence the understanding and interaction of small business executives. This process has the potential to contribute to the digital transformation that has been prompted by social media, which has a significant impact on the creation and provision of value. An integrated perspective on structuring and flavor creation may be helpful in understanding how these structures work in the adoption and assimilation of social media by small businesses. If I may offer a suggestion, it would be beneficial for MSME executives to gain an



understanding of these dynamics in order to leverage social media effectively and maximize its potential (Eisenbeiss et al., 2023; Gu et al., 2023; Kelm & Ibrahim, 2023).

Customer Relationships Performance

The concept of customer relationships performance (CRF) is essentially a value capital for the company where the concept makes the company's position in the destination market protected from competitor threats. The concept of customer relationships in this viral marketing value model aims to study the use of Instagram social media in building the value of relationships between customers and customers. Instagram social media provides a unique platform for users to engage socially with other users (Itani et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2023). It has been suggested by prior studies that positive communication between consumers who share information and experiences may have the potential to influence sales and retain consumers. Therefore, customer relationships provide guidance for companies to increase customer intent in using the Instagram social media application. The study also examined the potential impact of Instagram social media use on customer-to-customer relationships, particularly in terms of the role that shared social experiences might play in fostering these relationships (Saffanah et al., 2023; Saoula et al., 2023; Vannucci et al., 2023). It is generally understood that shared social experience is a multidimensional construct involving social tendencies and social attributes. It seems that a deeper understanding of the concept of a multidimensional shared social experience could potentially assist companies in better comprehending the role of Instagram in fostering connections between customers. It is anticipated that the viral marketing value model and customer relationships will contribute to the company's understanding of Instagram, social media, and its use in the context of business-to-customer and customer-to-customer relationships (Ampadu et al., 2023; Balaji et al., 2023; Bushara et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHODS

The objective of this study is to explore the potential relationship between social media influencers' variables, social media characteristics, viral marketing value, and customer relationships performance. The population of this study consists of MSMEs in the culinary snacks sector, including dessert boxes, Seblak, Tahu Walik, Bakso Aci, Basreng, cupcakes, modern market snacks, various fried foods, and more. These businesses are located in 35 districts and cities across Central Java, encompassing 29 districts and six cities. Meanwhile, the sampling technique used in this study is the purposive sampling method. If it would not be too much trouble, we would very



much appreciate it if you could provide us with samples from Snack Culinary MSMEs in Central Java that have been operating for at least three years. If I'm not mistaken, I believe the number of samples in this study is 219 (Hair et al., 2019). The statements in this questionnaire are made using a scale of 1–10 to obtain data that is interval and scored or valued. Model and hypothesis testing was carried out with the Regression Equation Test (Ferdinand 2014), which was divided into the first, Confirmatory factor analysis, in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which used the AMOS 25.0 computerized package in this case to confirm the most dominant factors in a group of variables. Second, Regression Weight in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) which is used to examine how big the relationship between variables is. Instrument testing uses the Reliability Test and Validity Test approaches (Ghozali 2018).

Table 1. Measures of Key Variables

Measurement Item	Item Loading	Cronbach Alpha (a)
Viral Marketing Value (VMV) (Song et al., 2024)	0.627	0.845
VMV1 We go viral with new content to entertain consumers	0.674	
VMV2 We go viral with content variants that consumers need	0.715	
VMV3 We provide access to content that consumers want	0.710	
VMV4 The content we go viral is useful in consumers' daily lives	0.627	
Social Media Influencers (SMI) (Soren & Chakraborty, 2024; Urhan et al., 2024)	0.702	0.849
SMI1 Influencers makes us feel that this Instragram platform has a good reputation	0.628	
SMI2 Influencers made us feel that the Instragram platform was trustworthy	0.696	
SMI3 Influencers made us feel that the Instragram platform was good	0.723	
SMI4 Influencers make us feel social media is more reliable than traditional media	0.702	
Social Media Characteristics (SMC) (Soren & Chakraborty, 2024; Urhan et al., 2024)	0.580	0.806
SMC <i>Instragram platform provides the content we need for our business</i>	0.626	
SMC <i>Instragram platform provides access to our latest content.</i>	0.670	
SMC <i>Instragram platform provides access to our content in sufficient quantities.</i>	0.646	
SMC <i>Instragram platform provides an adequate variety of content.</i>	0.580	
Customer Relationships Performance (CRF) (Wang et al., 2023)		0.788
CRF1 Our sacrifice to establish relationships with customers and potential	0.640	



Measurement Item	Item Loading	Cronbach Alpha (a)
customers on this Instagram platform is invaluable		
CRF2 Our relationship with our customers and potential customers my Instagram is satisfactory	0.612	
CRF3 As an Instagram user, we have a high-quality relationship with our customers and potential customers	0.569	
CRF4 With Instagram we care about the value of the relationships we have with customers and potential customers	0.579	

The results of Table 1 concluded establish α the validity and reliability of Cronbach's accepted construct.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The model analysis projected through SEM tests was used to analyze the data by AMOS software. The test of model fit shows accepted fit ($\chi^2 = 122,1077$, $df = 98$, p value = 0.084, $TLI = 0.981$, $CFI = 0,985$, $NFI = 0.922$, $IFI = 0.986$, $RMSEA = 0.030$), as displayed in Figure 1

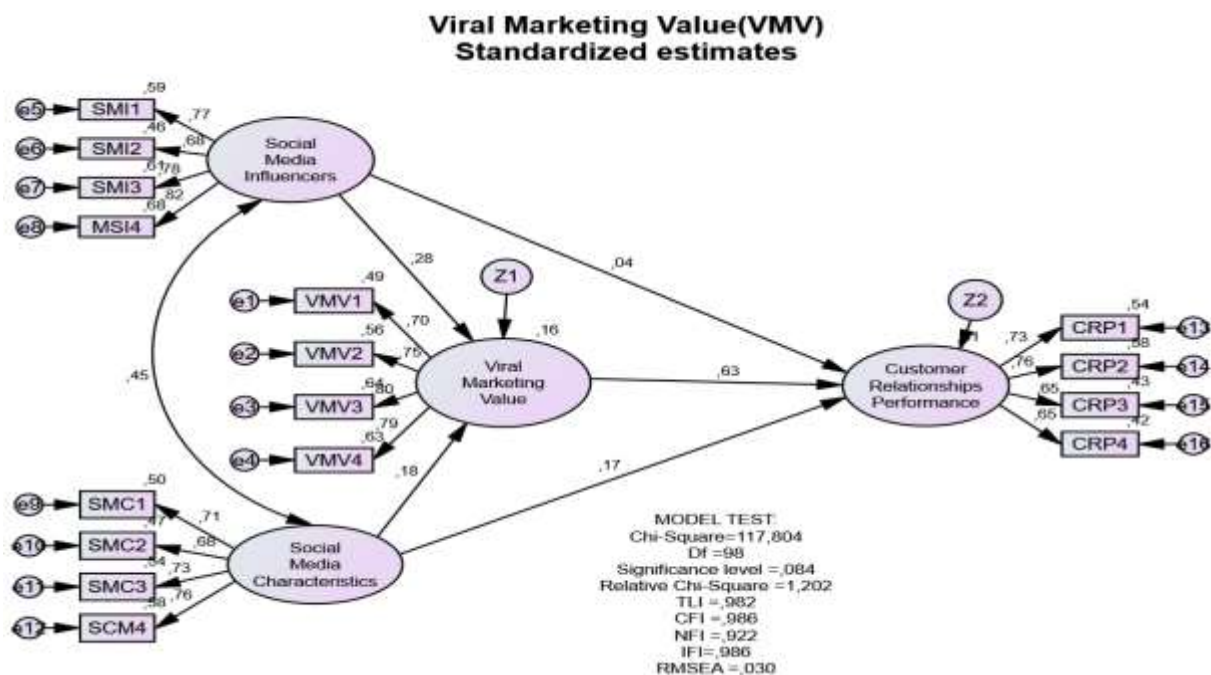


Figure 2. SEM-AMOS tests

The present study puts forth five research hypotheses to address the research problem. The study concluded based on the sample t-test results and path coefficients. Hypotheses 1, 2, 4, and 5 were accepted, while hypothesis 3 was rejected ($t = 0.462$, $p < 0.644$). The results of the hypothesis test are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of hypotheses testing

Path	C.R	P	Assessment
Social_Media_Influencers → Viral_Marketing_Value	3.103	0.002	Supported
Social_Media_Characteristics → Viral_Marketing_Value	2.010	0.044	Supported
Social_Media_Influencers → Customer_Relationships_Performance	0.462	0.644	Rejected
Viral_Marketing_Value → Customer_Relationships_Performance	6.226	0.000	Supported
Social_Media_Characteristics → Customer_Relationships_Performance	2.038	0.042	Supported

CONCLUSION

This study explores the significance of viral marketing in the acquisition of business customers, with a particular emphasis on the role of social media characteristics and influencers in enhancing the performance of MSMEs in fostering customer relationships. The findings of the study indicate that the relevance and value of viral marketing's novelty can enhance its positive impact on customer relationships. This phenomenon elucidates the dual impact of viral marketing. First, the value of viral marketing lies in its ability to leverage the relationships between social media influencers and their respective customer bases. This finding suggests that the direct impact of social media influencers on enhancing customer relationship performance is inconclusive. Secondly, viral marketing value serves as a strategic conduit for culinary MSMEs to enhance customer relationship performance. This research makes a significant contribution to the extant literature on S-DL theory by underscoring the organization's response in building shared value with customers. Furthermore, this study offers novel insights into the viral marketing value model of Instagram. A consideration of the characteristics of social media and the influencers associated with Instagram is imperative. This study offers a more profound comprehension of the manner in which viral marketing value references influence an organization's approach to customer



relationships.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The present study is subject to several limitations that require further investigation in future research. These limitations include the inability to distinguish between various social media platforms, the failure to consider social media influencers, and the neglect of social media characteristics as a mechanism between viral marketing value and customer relationships performance. Additionally, there is a need to examine other contextual factors that affect social media marketing literacy. It is recommended that future research explore the effectiveness of different viral marketing strategies across various social media platforms. Additionally, it is advised that other mechanisms underlying customer relationship performance processes be identified.

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