

From Viral to Vital Business Strategy Amidst the Social Media Trend Explosion

Nurul Annisa Aprianti

Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: nurulannisaaprianti_1201621037@mhs.unj.ac.id

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Abstract: Amid the explosion of social media trends, the phenomenon of viral content has drastically changed the digital marketing landscape. Content that is able to spread quickly through social networks not only creates momentary popularity but also holds strategic potential for sustainable business growth. This study aims to explore how viral content can be transformed into a vital business strategy that has a long-term impact on companies. Using a qualitative approach with a literature study method, this study analyzed ten selected scientific articles that discuss elements of viral marketing, social media communication strategies, and their impact on consumer loyalty and competitive advantage. The results of the study show that elements such as emotional narratives, digital trust, collaboration with influencers, and strategic content management are the main factors in the success of viral marketing. Furthermore, the transformation from viral to vital requires a strong digital infrastructure, integration with CRM systems, and careful use of social media algorithms. These findings provide insight for business actors to not only pursue popularity in cyberspace but also build a solid business foundation through targeted virality management. This study also opens up new space for the development of value-based marketing strategies and long-term relationships with consumers.

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INTRODUCTION

The viral phenomenon in the contemporary digital landscape has become a major driver in shaping public opinion, disseminating information, and transforming consumer behavior (Sholikhah, 2024). Social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter are not only interpersonal communication tools, but also the main distribution channels in delivering business messages quickly and widely (Rongkong et al., 2025). In this context, viral content often has the power to shape brand image, increase consumer awareness, and influence purchasing decisions (Apriyansyah & De Yusa, 2024; Hasnah et al., 2024). Therefore, understanding the dynamics of virality is crucial for modern business actors who want to stay relevant in the competitive digital era.

In the context of social media, the term viral refers to the massive and rapid distribution of content through digital platforms, such as Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok. Content is said to be viral when it gains widespread attention in a short time, marked by the number of likes, shares, and comments from users. This phenomenon resembles the biological spread of viruses—fast, widespread, and difficult to control. Viral content often contains strong emotional elements (such as humor, empathy, anger), shock value, or collective identity (e.g., nationalism, pop culture). Sholikhah (2024) highlights the expansion of the meaning of "viral" which now includes not only entertainment content, but also political campaigns, advertisements, and social activism in cyberspace. This phenomenon has become an important object in the study of digital media and communication because of its significant influence on public opinion.

Strategically, the concept of viral marketing has evolved from this phenomenon and is now an important part of digital marketing communication strategies. Viral marketing utilizes social networks and user interactions as the main medium for distributing commercial messages organically, without large advertising costs. Arianto (2020) notes that buzzers and influencers play a central role in creating viral content that can shape consumer perceptions and expand the reach of products or messages (Arianto, 2020). Meanwhile, Isnawati (2022) emphasizes that the success of virality depends on the cultural context and the audience's connection to the narrative of the content (Isnawati, 2022). Therefore, virality is not only a matter of algorithmic techniques, but also of emotional resonance, social values, and digital community involvement.

The paradigm shift in marketing from a conventional approach to a social media-based approach has created a new strategic space in the business world (Nurintan et al., 2024). Viral marketing, which leverages the power of social networks and user-generated content, is now an integral part of a company's communication strategy (Trifiyanti et al., 2024). The success of viral marketing campaigns such as the "Cookie Bomb Challenge" and local product campaigns on TikTok show that the reach of a business message no longer depends on the size of the advertising budget, but on creativity and the ability to touch the public's emotions (Nurintan et al., 2024; Sinuraya, 2022).

However, not all viral content has a positive impact on business. Many companies experience a reputation crisis due to negative virality, or fail to convert virality into long-term profits due to the lack of a follow-up strategy (Mulyaputri & Sanaji, 2021; Tangjaya, 2024). This is what distinguishes between content that is merely viral and a truly vital business strategy—one that is able to generate sustainable customer growth and loyalty (Susanti et al., 2024). Therefore, the transition from viral to vital is not only about becoming famous, but also how to utilize the viral moment to build lasting business value.

In a dynamic business environment, adapting to social media trends is no longer an option, but a necessity. The strategic use of viral marketing can increase brand awareness, expand

market reach, and create stronger emotional connections with consumers (ARITONANG, 2025; Reza, 2024). Moreover, this approach is very relevant in reaching the young generation of digital natives who are very responsive to creative, interactive, and fast-viral content. Therefore, research that explores the transition of the viral to vital concept is very important to fill the knowledge gap in the realm of modern digital marketing strategies.

The urgency of this research lies in the need for a scientific approach in identifying how viral content can be optimally capitalized within a sustainable business framework. Many companies take advantage of virality without understanding the basic principles of value conversion and consumer retention strategies, so that the campaign only has a momentary impact (DIASEVI, 2024; Kholiq, 2023). This study will provide a deeper understanding of the structure, elements, and impact of viral marketing strategies on long-term business vitality.

Previous studies have examined the influence of viral marketing on purchasing decisions and brand image (Sholikhah, 2024; Hasnah et al., 2024; De Yusa & Apriyansyah, 2024), but few have examined the integration between viral phenomena and long-term business strategies as an interrelated system. Therefore, this article offers a new perspective by emphasizing the importance of converting virality into sustainable business value.

The purpose of this study is to critically analyze how companies can transform viral momentum into a vital business strategy, by utilizing social media platforms as strategic marketing infrastructure. The focus of the study will include mapping the key elements of viral marketing, identifying the success factors for converting viral into business value, and the implications for the company's competitiveness and growth holistically.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study type (library research) as the main method. Literature studies were chosen because they are appropriate for examining theoretical concepts and developing social phenomena, especially in the context of viral marketing strategies in the era of social media. This type of research allows researchers to explore and understand the meaning and strategic implications of viral content on business sustainability, through searching and analyzing various relevant library sources (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Zed, 2018).

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data obtained from national and international scientific journal articles, research reports, academic books, and trusted digital documents that discuss the topics of viral marketing, digital business strategies, social media consumer behavior, and the dynamics of viral content. All sources are taken from academic repositories such as Google Scholar, Garuda Ristekbrin, and SINTA and DOAJ indexed journal platforms published in the last five years (2019–2024) to ensure the actuality and relevance of the data.

The data collection technique was carried out through a systematic review of documents and articles that met the inclusion criteria: containing discussions about viral marketing, social media marketing strategies, and digital transformation in the business world. This process was complemented by thematic coding to mark patterns of ideas, important quotes, and recurring central themes from the various literatures reviewed. This approach allows researchers to formulate an integrative conceptual framework regarding how the transition from a viral phenomenon to a vital business strategy can be interpreted in depth (Miles et al., 2020; Sugiyono, 2019).

The data analysis method used was content analysis, which was carried out inductively with a thematic approach. Data were analyzed through three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. At this stage, researchers grouped findings based on similar themes, such as elements of virality, strategies for converting content into business value, and implications for customer loyalty and brand image. The verification process was carried out through source triangulation by comparing various literature from different methodological backgrounds and geographical areas to increase the validity of the results (Bowen, 2009; Patton, 2002)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following is a table of selected bibliography from 10 selected academic articles that became the basis for analysis in a literature study entitled *From Viral to Vital: Business Strategy Amidst the Social Media Trend Explosion*.

These articles were selected through a systematic review process of 20 related scientific documents, considering the relevance of content, methodology, and contribution to the understanding of viral marketing, social media strategy, and its impact on the business world.

Table 1. Bibliography Data

No	Author	Title	Findings
1	Rasmussen & Grure (2023)	#Beautytok Going Viral	Emotional and community elements are important in virality leading to business conversions..
2	Silberschneider (2018)	Social Media Marketing Concept for Food & Beverages	Viral content strategy is effective as a catalyst for overseas market growth.
3	Dobele, Steel & Cooper (2015)	Sailing the Seven C's of Blog Marketing	The "7C" model helps shape strategically targeted viral content.
4	Kilpelä (2019)	Social Media Plan for Small Luxury Hotel	Visual content strategy and guest experience as drivers of virality.
5	Hamill (2016)	The End of Marketing As Usual	Viral marketing needs to be measured based on clear business objectives.
6	Swani, Milne & Brown (2013)	Facebook Message Strategy	Informative viral content increases positive response and brand reputation.
7	Rodriguez & Peterson (2012)	The Role of Social CRM	Social media and CRM boost B2B marketing efficiency.
8	Kumar & Nanda (2023)	Social Media Marketing for MSMEs	Perlu sinergi SEO, influencer, dan konten viral untuk dampak optimal.
9	Ogbuji (2018)	Platform Evaluation in Social Media Strategy	Evaluasi platform dan pencocokan strategi penting dalam efektivitas viralitas.
10	Van Looy (2022)	Social Media Management	Viral content management requires a supportive organizational structure.

Based on the results of the literature selection conducted in this study, there are ten main articles that have a significant contribution in forming a comprehensive understanding of the transformation of business strategy from viral to vital amidst the explosion of social media trends. This study seeks not only to highlight how viral content works, but also to explore how this phenomenon can be transformed into a sustainable business strategy with a real impact on

the growth and competitive position of the company.

The study by Rasmussen and Grure (2023) in their article entitled #Beautytok Going Viral is one of the important highlights because it provides insight into how the beauty industry, especially through the TikTok platform, utilizes viral elements that are emotional, authentic, and community-based. Their main findings show that high audience emotional involvement in content - such as personal testimonials and short tutorials - can drive conversions not only in the form of engagement, but also in the form of sales. This article is a real example of how viral trends can be utilized by companies to create measurable and consistent business impacts (Grure & Rasmussen, 2023).

Furthermore, Silberschneider (2018) through a case study in the food and beverage industry highlights the importance of viral strategies in expanding international markets. In his article, he emphasized that viral marketing is not only a local promotional tool, but can also be a bridge to internationalization when content is created with cultural values that are acceptable across borders in mind. The author emphasized that the visual appeal and narrative power of content play an important role in reaching diverse global consumers (Silberschneider, 2018).

A study by Dobeles, Steel, and Cooper (2015) introduced the Seven C's of Blog Marketing model, which includes content, context, clarity, credibility, consistency, capability, and connectivity. This model is designed to help marketers design blog and social media content that has the potential to go viral while maintaining the strategic direction of the business. They concluded that although virality can occur organically, companies still need a structured framework so that its impact does not stop at the awareness level, but continues to the conversion and consumer loyalty stages (Dobeles et al., 2015).

In the context of the hospitality industry, Kilpelä (2019) developed a social media marketing strategy for a small luxury hotel. This study showed that a strategy that combines aesthetically packaged guest experiences and personal narrative-based content is more likely to go viral. These findings reinforce the idea that personalization and authentic storytelling are key elements in building strong emotional connections, which ultimately contribute to brand reputation and high occupancy rates (Kilpelä, 2019).

Hamill (2016), in his paper titled *The End of Marketing as Usual*, highlights a major shift in the marketing paradigm, from a traditional approach to one that relies heavily on digital social engagement. He emphasizes the importance of aligning viral strategies with measurable business goals and the existence of evaluative metrics such as KPIs. Without this integration, virality can become a temporary phenomenon that does not generate real benefits for the company (Hamill, 2016).

Meanwhile, a study by Swani, Milne, and Brown (2013) evaluated the messaging strategies on the Facebook pages of B2B Fortune 500 companies. They found that informative and educational content was more effective than directly promotional content in generating positive interactions. This study provides evidence that successful viral strategies in a business-to-business context require a different approach than those for end-consumers (B2C), namely by emphasizing intellectual added value (Swani et al., 2013).

Rodriguez and Peterson (2012) explored the relationship between social media-based customer relationship management (social CRM) and the effectiveness of viral marketing in the lead generation process. They concluded that combining an integrated CRM system with social media activities can increase the efficiency and personalization of communication with potential customers. This approach suggests that the success of viral marketing comes not only from its content, but also from the supporting system that manages customer responses and engagement

on an ongoing basis (Rodriguez & Peterson, 2012).

In the context of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), Kumar and Nanda (2023) examined the social media strategies used by MSMEs and the challenges they face. They suggested that the success of a viral marketing strategy in this sector depends on a combination of using SEO, SEM, and influencer engagement to increase product exposure. In addition, resource constraints require MSMEs to design viral content that is cost-effective but has high emotional value in order to compete with big brands (Kumar & Nanda, 2023).

Ogbuji (2018) focused on the evaluation and implementation of social media strategies in companies. He highlighted that choosing the right platform (e.g. Instagram for visual products, Twitter for discussion campaigns) and adjusting communication styles are key to the effectiveness of a viral strategy. Evaluating the performance of each platform allows companies to allocate resources more efficiently and increase the ROI of their digital campaigns (Ogbuji, 2018).

Finally, Van Looy (2022) highlighted the importance of social media management as a structured organizational tool, not just a communication function. He explained that the long-term success of viral marketing depends on the extent to which the organization is able to manage the rhythm, frequency, and consistency of content professionally. Viral content is not only created, but also managed—from planning, scheduling, responding to audiences, to analyzing its impact (Van Looy, 2016).

All of these articles collectively provide a complete picture of how the phenomenon of virality can be optimized into a vital, sustainable business strategy. These findings form the basis of the argument that the success of viral content is not only determined by creativity or luck alone, but by the integration of communication strategies, consumer understanding, digital technology, and a structured content management system. Therefore, this literature review emphasizes the importance of the paradigm evolution from simply "chasing virality" to "managing brand vitality" as the foundation of today's social media-based business ecosystem.

Discussion

In the digital era marked by the explosion of social media trends, marketing strategies have undergone a fundamental transformation. The viral phenomenon is no longer considered a momentary explosion in cyberspace, but rather a strategic potential that, if managed properly, can become a driver of long-term business growth. In this context, companies are not only required to be creative in creating content that attracts public attention, but are also challenged to be able to turn the viral momentum into a vital and sustainable business strategy.

The results of the analysis of various literatures show that the transition from viral to vital requires a deep understanding of digital consumer behavior and the ability to integrate social media as a strategic marketing infrastructure. Virality is not enough to be seen as achieving popularity, but as a gateway to deeper engagement between brands and audiences. The conversion from spontaneous interest to loyalty and real action from consumers requires a mature digital infrastructure, starting from marketing funnels, utilizing real-time analytical data, to effective retargeting.

Studies on the strategies of big brands on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram underline the importance of using algorithms and creator collaboration to keep viral momentum relevant. Meanwhile, elements such as digital trust, emotional engagement, and message consistency are key to building lasting brand value. In this context, AI-based personalization also plays a significant role in strengthening the relationship between consumers and brands through more

relevant and meaningful interactions.

The transformation from viral to vital also has strategic implications for the competitiveness of companies. Organizations that are able to internalize the social media approach into their entire operational and strategic systems tend to be more adaptive to market changes and more resilient in facing competitive challenges. This comprehensive approach involves integrating social media into CRM systems, reputation management, and developing products that are responsive to trends.

Thus, today's companies are not only required to pursue virality as the ultimate goal, but rather to make it a stepping stone towards strengthening their sustainable business position. Those who are able to carefully design and execute a "viral-to-vital" strategy will have a greater chance of growing in a dynamic and highly competitive digital ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that viral content on social media is not the end of a marketing strategy, but rather the beginning of a long process towards strengthening sustainable business value. Viral content that is able to lift brand image and create emotional engagement is only the first step; transforming into a vital strategy requires good content governance, a deep understanding of consumer digital behavior, and systemic support through digital technology and CRM. Successful companies are not those that only go viral once, but those that are able to make virality part of a sustainable growth system.

For business practitioners, it is important to build a viral marketing strategy that is not only oriented towards sensation, but also on relevance and sustainability. Collaboration with content creators, the use of real-time analytical data, and integration with customer relationship management (CRM) systems are strategic steps to ensure that virality generates real conversions. In addition, it is also important to maintain message consistency and quality of interaction with the audience so that brand trust is maintained.

Further research is recommended to examine more deeply the effectiveness of various types of viral content based on specific industries, as well as develop quantitative models that can measure the extent to which virality contributes to business metrics such as ROI, customer lifetime value, or brand equity. In addition, empirical research that combines survey and experimental methods will be very helpful in validating the conceptual framework that has been built through this literature study.

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