

**IMPACT OF VIRAL MARKETING ON THE CUSTOMER PURCHASE INTENTION TO
NATURAL COSMETICS IN HANOI CITY*****Luc Manh Hien**

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Abstract

The study aims to evaluate the impact of testing spillover marketing factors on the intention to buy cosmetic products in the Hanoi market and test the relationship between the impact variables. This study's multivariate regression model included survey results of 240 consumers, reliability analysis techniques, exploratory factors, and five factors. The analysis results show that emotional value, social value, brand awareness, and subjective norms for the content of pervasive marketing positively impact consumers' purchase intention towards natural cosmetic products. However, the research results did not show any relationship between the perception of safety and the purchase intention of Hanoi consumers for natural cosmetic products.

Keywords: Viral marketing, Purchase intention, cosmetic products, Hanoi's customer.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the digital age helps promote the growth of many industries and fields, including the cosmetics and personal care market in Vietnam, which affects and changes consumers' shopping behavior significantly. Consumers have more choices in learning, choosing products/services, and shopping channels. In 2019, Vietnam's spending on cosmetics and healthcare reached 6.6% of GDP. This index is expected to achieve a compound growth rate of 11.7% by 2023. Currently, living needs are improving, and living standards are increasing. A woman considers cosmetics essential, helping to take care of her like improving her beauty. Therefore, this is a potential market, especially facing Vietnam. Security for the user is why women are so interested in natural cosmetics. Beauty from natural cosmetics has flourished as a modern beauty trend chosen by many people. Today, before the fear of rampant chemical cosmetics containing many harmful chemicals. Progressive compounds are replaced with natural ingredients and pure herbs. The ingredients are extracted from nature without going through any chemical processing centers. Users can easily use smart mobile devices to access the Internet. Thanks to that, consumers can connect, look up, access the latest beauty trends, and find products more efficiently. At the same time, the shopping process becomes simple and easy, allowing users to buy and pay with just a simple operation. Besides, social media generates interest and stimulates consumers to user interaction. Famous Beauty Bloggers have promoted many customers and often share beauty secrets and methods on major social networking platforms such as Facebook, Tik Tok, and Instagram. Pervasive marketing is considered a new solution for businesses, especially businesses cosmetics. Improve communication efficiency to customers and play an increasingly important role in business activities. All individuals tend to receive shared content from acquaintances, friends, and family members and consider this information necessary for personal buying and selling decisions.

Viral marketing has several advantages over other communication tools, such as lower costs, closer company-customer relationships, and better-designed distribution (Tiago *et al.*, 2012). Viral marketing has become a promising option in the future, especially for international businesses, because marketing messages are delivered quickly with minimal cost.

On this basis, it is essential to evaluate the pervasive marketing factors affecting consumer behavior (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2020). Businesses should consider using the Internet as a marketing tool because the use of the Internet for communication and shopping is still an ongoing trend for customers. New utility media, including online, mobile, and social are today emerging as a growing utility advertising medium for manufacturers and retailers (Naik *et al.* and Peters, 2009). As a result, besides changing how people receive information, the Internet has also changed how they shop. Therefore, businesses need to understand the impact of viral marketing and optimize it by identifying customer behavior toward viral marketing (Wei, 2014). In Vietnam, many multinational corporations in the cosmetics industry have had many pervasive marketing activities to create success in their corporate image and product communication strategies at a low cost. Studying the factors of viral marketing affecting the intention to buy natural cosmetic products will further strengthen the theory of viral marketing in this field.

LITERATURE REVIEW**Viral marketing**

Viral marketing is transmitting virus-like messages from one member to another within the Internet framework. The customer is the transmitter of the message, and the recipient is encouraged to forward the message to others. The power of viral marketing lies in the message's strength and the customer's willingness to share and forward it to others. Viral marketing has the opportunity to reach a large number of potential customers with minimal costs. Viral marketing has proven to be an effective, low-cost tool for online advertising by using individuals to email friends and colleagues without a

company's involvement. Viral marketing has its roots in word-of-mouth marketing. Pervasive marketing works on spontaneous human communication through meaningful stories and human experiences that create a ripple effect in the community (Mindcomet Corporation, 2008). There are many reasons why consumers want to talk about the products and services they have used, be it because they want to share their shopping experience with other consumers or to discuss the products and services they have used. Discuss the image and reputation of the brand that customers have experienced. Pervasive marketing involves exchanging information about a particular product or service through a peer-to-peer network, where users can easily and often exchange information with each other. In addition, they also believe that financial tools should not be used to control the spread of messages because viral marketing is not a form of advertising (Cruz and Fill, 2008). In terms of terminology, "viral marketing" was applied by Steve Juvetson and Tim Draper in 1997 to describe how the free Hotmail (email) service is promoted and promoted. Specifically, the signature lines of all emails sent through Hotmail, the first free online email agent, include an invitation for the user to create a free hotmail.com account. This method of trade promotion is considered "viral" because the message has been transmitted from the user to other users. The word "viral" comes from "virus" and symbolizes how messages spread like viruses without any negative connotations (Rodić and Koivisto, 2012). In addition, the advancement of technology has allowed consumers to share product-related information over the Internet, thus increasing the potential for word of mouth (Cheung and Thadani, 2012; Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006). Through social media, consumers can create, exchange and share their content and opinions through electronic word of mouth (eWOM). According to Hennig-Thurau *et al.* (2004), "eWOM is any positive or negative statement by potential, current or former customers about a product or company, provided made available to people and organizations through the Internet." This has expanded the concept of viral marketing not only in the media environment but also in the online environment, especially with the appearance of social networks (Facebook) and social media channels (youtube) and pervasive marketing applications (toll-free) (Nguyen *et al.*, 2020). In a nutshell, viral marketing is a form of marketing spread from an individual or a group with diverse content expressed in terms of distribution through traditional media (word of mouth) or electronic word of mouth (eWOM) to the community.

Buying behavior intention

According to Solomon (2014), intention is a factor that represents an individual's ability to perform a future behavior. Purchase intention is a stage in a customer's behavioral stages and is an essential antecedent to a purchase decision (Kotler, 2009). Two factors influence the purchase intention to purchase a decision outside of the individual: the attitude of others and the element of surprise (Kotler, 2009). Purchase intention can be measured by the consumer's expectations and consideration for that item/service (Laroche *et al.*, 1996). Considering the relationship between viral marketing campaigns, Pescher *et al.* (2013) showed that developing entertainment applications on mobile devices is the critical key to attracting customers. Consumer purchase intention is influenced by information, entertainment applications, reliability, and arousal (Zernigah and Sohail, 2012). Haryana and Motwani (2015) defined viral marketing as the voluntary

dissemination of information, especially on the Internet. Information, access support, and security are important factors affecting consumer purchase intention (Nguyen, 2018). When the Internet becomes popular, the stronger the digital transformation, the more widespread marketing will be an effective and popular communication tool (Botha and Reyneke, 2013). When information is flooded and inconsistent on the Internet, marketing content that wants to spread must be engaging and give viewers a reason to share and spread (Ho and Dempsey, 2010). Alsamydai (2016) affirmed that purchase intention is driven by viral advertisements related to products, services, ideas, or anything else.

Relationship between viral marketing and purchase intention

Emotional value: Haryana and Motwani (2015) and Pescher *et al.* (2013) suggested that emotional value positively impacts consumer purchase intention. When accessing viral marketing content that is entertaining and worth watching, consumers tend to be more willing to receive information and buy the products mentioned in such marketing content. Previously, Chiu *et al.* (2007) also confirmed that advertising messages bring valuable benefits, rich in emotional value, and have better transmission ability. Customers with positive emotions, such as comfort, joy, excitement, and sympathy, will tend to keep this information in mind after accessing viral content from other people or the community stay longer and have a good impression of that information. Even colors associated with advertising messages have an emotional impact on consumers and have an impact on spillover actions (Eckler and Bolls, 2011). When researching emotional value and pervasive marketing, Brown *et al.* (2010) also confirmed that content that induces negative emotions leads to more electronic word of mouth. Therefore, the study builds hypothesis H1 as follows:
H1: The emotional value positively influences consumers' intention to buy natural cosmetic products.

Social value: Information shared on social media or through any channel will reflect the nature and personality of the messenger and influence how others think and judge. Therefore, people tend to share information that is more socially beneficial or helps the person sharing the information make a good impression on others to show a part of their personality and ego that they want others to see. When sharing content, sharers can realize social value by satisfying their need to develop relationships and attachments and by satisfying their cognitive needs with those who share the same standards, values, and benefits (Gangadharbatla, 2008). In the virtual space of social media networks and the Internet, people also want to influence online communities through shared content (Kietzmann *et al.*, 2015). Individualistic or altruistic Internet users tend to retweet more content online than others (Ho and Dempsey, 2010).

Furthermore, today's social value is connected and built through electronic applications such as social networks, forums, and social media channels. Using these applications to spread information is also an inevitable need of consumers in the digital age (Shen and Bissell, 2013). Therefore, the study builds hypothesis H2 as follows:

Hypothesis H2: Social value positively influences consumers' intention to buy natural cosmetic products.

Brand awareness: Brand awareness is an essential component of brand equity that refers to the ability of a customer to recognize or remember a brand as a constituent element of a given product (Aaker, 1991). Rossiter and Percy (1987) describe brand awareness as essential to the communication process because it precedes all other steps. Without brand awareness, no communication effect would be considered adequate. For a consumer to buy a product from a brand, they must first know about it (Nguyen, 2020). Brand attitudes cannot be formed, and purchase intentions can only occur if brand awareness emerges (Rossiter and Percy, 1987; Rossiter, 1991). In memory theory, brand awareness is considered an essential first step in building brand associations in memory (Stokes, 1985). A brand is generalized as a point in memory that allows other information about the brand to be associated with it (Aaker, 1991). Many other researchers have mentioned the concept of a network of brand associations in memory with the brand as the central core (Keller, 1993; Holden and Lutz, 1992).

According to a multi-component attitudinal model, brand awareness is a component of consumer attitudes toward a brand. The multi-component model suggests that consumer attitudes include: (1) perception, (2) evaluation or liking, and (3) behavioral tendencies (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000). According to Keller's (1993) brand equity model, brand awareness refers to the ability of a customer to identify and distinguish the characteristics of a brand in a set of brands available in the market. When shopping through websites, customers have brand awareness of the website through the information and services provided; this brand awareness has created customer satisfaction and has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and electronic loyalty (Nguyen *et al.*, 2020). David and Khazanchi (2008) stated that brand awareness profoundly impacts customers' purchase intention. When consumers are familiar with a brand or find a company's image attractive, they are likelier to like and share content, leading to an intention to purchase services from the company. Haryana and Motwani (2015) also show that brand awareness positively and significantly impacts customer attitudes, leading to purchase intention. In addition, customers often buy a familiar brand because they feel comfortable with that familiarity. A familiar brand may be more reliable because of its consistent quality. Therefore, a familiar brand is more accessible in the market than an unknown brand (Nguyen *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, the study builds hypothesis H3 as follows:

Hypothesis H3: Brand awareness positively affects consumers' intention to buy natural cosmetic products.

Perceived safety value: The perceived safety of a product is the degree to which consumers perceive the use of a product as non-hazardous because it does not contain chemical ingredients (Bauer *et al.*, two thousand and thirteen). Furthermore, consumers are willing to change their consumption behavior to reduce perceived risks (Yeung and Morris, 2001). Many studies have shown that safety values are essential in deciding consumer buying behavior for organic products (Davis, 2010). Research results of Yin *et al.* (2010) show that 67.5% of consumers respond that they are motivated to use natural foods for the first time because food does not contain chemicals. In addition, the link between food safety and consumption behavior of environmentally friendly products was also demonstrated in a study on consumer

behavior in Korea (Kim, 2007). For cosmetics, there have been many cases of consumers suffering long-term effects from daily cosmetic use, which contributes to warning consumers to be more concerned about the safety of the products they use. In addition, Ghazalia *et al.* (2017) study demonstrated a positive effect of the perceived safety value of natural cosmetics on consumers' intention to buy natural cosmetics. Therefore, the spread of safety values about natural cosmetic products will impact the intention and behavior of customers. Therefore, the study builds hypothesis H4 as follows:

Hypothesis H4: Perceived safety value positively affects consumers' intention to buy natural cosmetic products.

Subjective norm: According to Ajzen (2002), a subjective norm is an individual's perception of having to behave by social norms. Subjective norms are determined by the beliefs that influencers think they should do and the motivations for consumers to perform the behavior that those influencers think. If consumers believe that people influence them, the information is spread from sources and individuals that customers feel that using natural cosmetics is a good idea, the intention to buy organic cosmetics will also be taller. Subjective norm is also one factor that strongly impacts buying behavior of environmentally friendly products (besides environmental considerations and price) (Griskeicius *et al.*, 2010). At the same time, there have been many studies showing that subjective norm has a significant impact on the purchase intention of eco-friendly products: organic food (Al-Swidi *et al.*, 2014; Smith and Paladino, 2010) and cosmetics derived from nature (Kim and Chung, 2011; Chia-Lin Hsu *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, the study builds hypothesis H5 as follows:

Hypothesis H5: Subjective norms positively impact consumers' intention to buy natural cosmetic products.

Based on surveying previous studies on the influence of pervasive marketing on product purchase intention, the study synthesized and selected a model with five aspects (1) Emotional value; (2) Social values; (3) Brand awareness; (4) Perceiving the value of safety; (5) Subjective standards to base our research model.

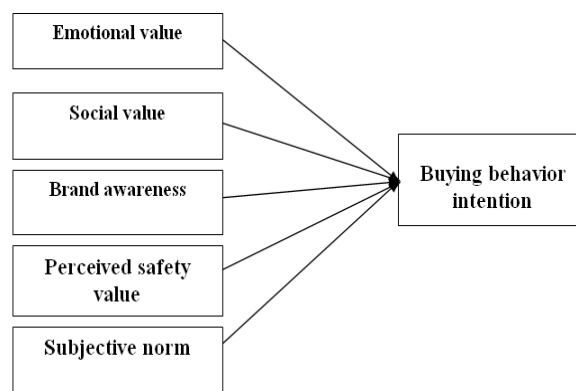


Figure 1. Research model

RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, the author uses a 5-level Likert scale (from 1: strongly disagree to 5: totally agree) to measure service quality factors' impact on insurance benefits settlement. The study

builds and codes the scale based on the research model adjusted from the preliminary research and initial survey to customer satisfaction; questions related to the demographic information of the survey sample were also built into the questionnaire. Five factors, including

Emotional value (there are three observed variables EV1-3),
Social value (there are three observed variables SV1-3),
Brand awareness (there are three observed variables BA1-3),
Perceived safety value (there are three observations PS1-3),
Subjective norm (there are three observed variables SN1-3).

Besides the dependent variable, purchase intention has four observed variables (CPI1-4).

The optimal sample population depends on the expectations of reliability, the method of data analysis, the method of estimating the parameters to be estimated, and the distribution law of the set of choices. Data is collected cross-over at the same time, so the size of survey respondents is determined according to the formula of exploratory factor analysis model EFA: According to Hair *et al.* (2006), the sample size is determined based on the minimum and the number of variables included in the model. Based on the number of scales built, the author determines the minimum size; on that basis, the research sample size can be determined. The minimum sample size is 90 (18*5). In addition, to compensate for a percentage of information that is discarded (questionnaires have many missing cells, or more than one answer box, or have a basis for determining unreliable), the study performed surveyed 240 customers who have had access to pervasive marketing content for natural cosmetic products in Hanoi city in the period of 2020 - 2023. Research Using the statistical software SPSS version 26.0 to synthesize and analyze the data collected from the survey results. The internal consistency method assesses the scale's reliability through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Use Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient method before analyzing EFA factors to eliminate inappropriate variables because these garbage variables can create dummy factors (Nguyen Dinh Tho and Nguyen Thi Mai Trang, 2009). The correlation matrix between the dependent variable and the regression model is analyzed to consider the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and the phenomenon of multicollinearity between the independent variables and the independent variable. Levene (F test): Sig > 0.05: Use t-test in the column Equal variances assumed. Sig < 0.05: Use the t-test in the column. Equal variances are not assumed. At T-test: Sig > 0.05: H0 accepted, no difference. Sig < 0.05: H0 is rejected; there is a difference. Multivariate regression at a 5% significance level tested the theoretical model with the research hypotheses.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Demographic information of the survey sample

With 300 survey questionnaires distributed, 288 were collected after coding and cleaning data (removing the answer sheets without access to pervasive marketing information about natural cosmetics), obtained 240 samples for data analysis. The study is based on three demographic characteristics to group the research sample, including gender, age, and education level. The results of descriptive statistics of the study sample are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of demographic characteristics

Variable	Valid	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	78	32.5
	Female	162	67.5
Age	From 18 to 25 years old	24	10.5
	From 26 to 35 years old	138	57
	Over 35 years old	78	32.5
Education	High school and below	19	7.9
	University	131	54.6
	Graduate	90	37.5

Regarding gender, the sample statistics showed that men accounted for 32.5% of the sample. The number of women is 162 people, accounting for 67.5%.

Regarding the age structure of the sample, it can be seen that the number of people aged 18-25, including 24 people, accounting for 10.5%; from 26 to 35 years old, including 138 people, accounting for 57.5%, the number of people are above 35 and older include 78 people, accounting for 32.5%. The sample descriptive statistics show that the education level of the samples is relatively high. The number of people with college and university degrees in the sample is 131 people, accounting for 54.6%. The number of people at graduate level is 90, accounting for 37.5%. Regarding education level, there are 19 people with high school and below, accounting for 9.6%.

Thus, descriptive statistics of the research sample show that the research sample includes a variety of respondents, ensuring the representativeness of the research sample.

Reliability testing and exploratory factor analysis

Reliability testing

Table 2. The results of Cronbach Alpha

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Emotional value	3	0.862
Social value	3	0.797
Brand awareness	3	0.801
Perceived safety value	3	0.783
Subjective norm	3	0.735
Customer purchase intention	4	0.716

Based on Table 2, the analysis results show that the value of Cronbach's Alpha fluctuates from 0.716 to 0.862, and the minimum coefficient of correlation for each variable is more significant than 0.3. Therefore, the scales have gained such confidence and will be used for exploratory factor analysis.

Exploratory factor analysis

The results show that KMO = 0.801 satisfies the condition that KMO > 0.5 (Kaiser, 1974). Thus, factor analysis is appropriate with the available data. Similarly, the results of the Bartlett test show that the Sig coefficient = 0.000 < 5% shows that the observed variables are significantly correlated with each other in the overall population. Therefore, the observations are suitable for factor analysis by the EFA test. Principal Component Analysis extraction with Varimax rotation is used in factor analysis to measure independent variables.

Table 3. EFA results

Items	Factors				
	Emotional value	Social value	Brand awareness	Perceived safety value	Subjective norm
EV1	.883				
EV2	.777				
EV3	.803				
SV1		.730			
SV2		.822			
SV3		.819			
BA1			.759		
BA2			.813		
BA3			.833		
PS1				.873	
PS2				.806	
PS3				.729	
SN1					.865
SN2					.686
SN3					.681
Eigenvalue	4.956	1.971	1.556	1.225	1.101
Cumulative variance (%)	33.037	46.176	56.550	64.714	72.054

Table 4. Correlation analysis

	EV	SV	BA	SA	SS	CIB
EV	1					
SV	.199**	1				
BA	.242**	.478**	1			
SA	.303**	.300**	.264**	1		
SS	.348**	.444**	.410**	.359**	1	
CPI	.588**	.589**	.571**	.382**	.736**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 5. Regression analysis results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Results
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	-.188	.146		-1.288	.199	
EV	.287	.029	.343	10.026	.000	Supported
SV	.178	.029	.233	6.173	.000	Supported
BA	.185	.034	.200	5.386	.000	Supported
PS	.001	.034	.001	.017	.987	Unsupported
SN	.386	.034	.430	11.294	.000	Supported

R²=0.771; F = 157.156, p<0.05
a. Dependent Variable: CPI

Variables with Factor loading less than 0.3 will be eliminated, and the stops when Eigenvalue (representing the variation explained by each Factor) > one and the total variance extracted is greater than 50% (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988). The results show that from 22 observed variables, five groups of factors can be drawn. The total explanatory variance when the group of factors is drawn is 78.138% (>50%). The eigenvalue coefficient reached 1.101 (greater than 1). These indexes are all satisfactory, and the factor loading coefficients of the observed variables are all greater than 0.5, so all observed variables are kept.

Correlation analysis

Pearson correlation analysis to determine the linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables before conducting regression analysis. Correlation analysis results are presented in Table 4.

Hypothesis testing

The regression analysis results show that the adjusted value of R² is 0.771, which means that the independent variables in the research model explain 77.1% of the variation in Customer purchase intention, showing the compatibility of the reasonable model. Show that the research model is consistent with reality.

The F test results are shown in Table 5, showing that F = 157.156 at p < 0.05. Thus, this relationship ensures reliability with an allowable level of 5%. Therefore, the independent variables impact Customer purchase intention, and the multiple linear regression model fits the data set and is usable. In addition, the multicollinearity test results of the model show that the variance exaggeration coefficients VIF of the control variables included in the analysis in this model are all values < 10. Thus, there is no multicollinearity in the research model. The results of testing the correlation relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable are Customer purchase intention in Table 5, showing the degree of influence of factors on Customer purchase intention as determined through standardized regression coefficient (Beta), the larger the absolute value of Beta coefficient, the greater the importance of that independent variable, that variable has a more substantial impact on the dependent variable. The relationship between the dependent variable (cohesion) and the independent variables is expressed as a standardized regression equation as follows:

The regression coefficients 4 factor have a positive sign (+), showing that the independent variables have a positive relationship with the dependent variable. The Customer purchase intention is affected as ordered: Subjective norm ($\beta = 0.340$), Emotional value ($\beta = 0.287$), Brand awareness ($\beta =$

0.185) and Social value ($\beta = 0.178$). However, The results show no positive relationship between Perceived safety value and Customer purchase intention. Thus, it can be concluded that 4/5 hypotheses are supported by the model.

DISCUSSION

This study shows certain similarities with the studies of Alsamydai (2016), Bauer *et al.* (2015) Haryani and Motwani (2015). The research results show that 4/5 hypotheses about the factors of pervasive marketing that affect the intention to buy natural cosmetics are supported, including Subjective norm, Emotional value, Social value, and brand awareness. Among the viral marketing factors that affect the intention to buy natural cosmetics, the subjective norm factor has the most substantial impact. This result confirms the research of Vu Huy Thong (2010) when it is said that the psychology of Vietnamese consumers is also easily affected by the "herd effect," which is caused by information that has not been fully and accurately captured. (Vu Huy Thong, 2010), so they often through observing the behavior of people around to find out and feel more secure when someone has used it, so the tendency to use beer will be influenced by those who have used it other. However, the study did not show the influence of safety perception on Hanoi consumers' intention to buy natural cosmetic products.

Conclusion

This research aims to study the intended behavior of the customer in buying natural cosmetic products. This study has developed the viral marketing model including five-factor (Emotional value, Social value, Brand awareness, Perceived safety value, and Subjective norm). This study has conducted a survey with a customer 240 valid questionnaires are imputed in the model. The result shows that 4/5 hypotheses about the factors of pervasive marketing that affect the intention to buy natural cosmetics are supported, including Subjective norm, Emotional value, Social value, and brand awareness. However, the study did not show the influence of safety perception on Hanoi consumers' intention to buy natural cosmetic products. The research results show that consumer evaluation of subjective standards significantly impacts consumers' choice decisions in using beer products. Therefore, marketers should focus on increasing reference group influence strategies to increase selection decisions. Strengthening viral communication strategies using social networking sites: The marketing program must be flexible in applying communication channels in the most convincing way to consumers. It is vital in marketing strategies to include groups of subjective standards to reach the audience effectively, such as the opinion of experts and experienced consultants. It focuses marketing activities on customers from 26-35 years old. Set up events that attract many participants to enhance exchanges with loyal customers and share good experiences with products. In short, consumer-led information generation strategies build trust when buying a domestic product. Building an image of brand reputation and good product quality is always an advantage of subjective standards. Although the topic has solved the proposed research objectives, there are still some limitations: Firstly, the research object is a customer in Hanoi. The sample is just reasonable. Therefore, the following study needs to conduct in other cities with a more significant sample. Secondly, The method used in this study is simple; the following study should use better

technic such as CB-SEM or PLS-SEM. Also, the third is the related model; future research should extend the model by adding more factors to the viral marketing model, such as reviewers from social networks or KOL and KOC.

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