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Viral Marketing: Mixue the King of Snow Ice Cream—How does this franchise affect the market?

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KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT The food and beverage (F&B) industry in Indonesia is experiencing rapid growth with an estimated increase of five to seven percent by the end of 2023. One of the main players attracting attention is Mixue, a snow ice cream franchise that has utilized viral marketing strategies to expand its market share. the market. This research aims to analyze the impact of Mixue's viral marketing strategy on consumer interest and purchasing behavior in the Indonesian market. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research combines literature analysis from scientific journals published in the last five years. Data was collected through searches on Google Scholar, Vosviewers, Harzing's Publish, or Perish, with the keywords: "viral marketing", "ice cream franchise", "Mixue", and "consumer purchasing behavior". The research results show that Mixue's viral marketing strategy is successful in increasing brand image and brand awareness, which in turn has a significant impact on consumer interest and purchasing behavior. Additionally, the study found that the combination of product uniqueness and innovative marketing techniques played an important role in Mixue's success in the market.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the food and beverage (F&B) industry in Indonesia has shown significant development (Amperawati, 2024; Correia, 2023). This growth was driven by an increase in people's purchasing power and changes to a more modern and practical lifestyle (Malodia, 2022; Marín, 2020; Souto, 2020). However, amid increasingly fierce competition, the main challenge faced by business actors is how to create effective and innovative marketing strategies to attract consumer interest

(Dhounchak, 2023; Tu, 2022; T. Zhang, 2022). Previous research has shown that conventional marketing is often not effective enough in reaching more digitally connected millennial and Gen Z consumers (Bene, 2022; Krishnan, 2022; Taufik, 2022).

One of the main challenges in previous research is the lack of understanding of how viral marketing strategies can be implemented effectively in the context of ice cream franchises. For example, research conducted by Smith et al. (2020) show that although there is a lot of potential in viral marketing, many companies fail to utilize this strategy optimally due to a lack of knowledge about the dynamics of social media and consumer behavior on digital platforms. In addition, research by Johnson and Lee (2019) highlights that the success of viral marketing is highly dependent on the uniqueness of the product and the company's ability to create content that is engaging and easy to publish.

In recent years, the food and beverage (F&B) industry in Indonesia has shown significant growth. With an estimated increase of five to seven percent by the end of 2023, this sector is one of the promising pillars of the economy. One player that has managed to attract attention in the industry is Mixue, a snow ice cream franchise that has utilized viral marketing strategies effectively. This research is important because it can provide in-depth insight into how viral marketing strategies can influence consumer interest and purchasing behavior (Mora, 2021; Robles, 2020), especially in the dynamic Indonesian market context.

Mixue's viral marketing strategy has succeeded in creating a buzz among consumers, which in the audience increases brand awareness and image. Mixue's success lies not only in the uniqueness of its product but also in its ability to utilize social media and other digital platforms as a powerful marketing tool. For example, creative and easily disseminated marketing campaigns have helped Mixue attract widespread attention. Empirical evidence from scientific journals shows that viral marketing can significantly increase consumer engagement and influence purchasing decisions (Cheng & Liu, 2020; Zhang et al., 2021).

In today's digital era, viral marketing has become one of the most effective strategies for expanding market share and increasing brand awareness (Cho, 2020; Gulati, 2022). One interesting example of implementing this strategy is Mixue, a snow ice cream franchise that has succeeded in attracting the attention of consumers in Indonesia (Setiawan, 2020; Shatnawi, 2024). This research aims to dig deeper into how Mixue utilizes viral marketing to position itself in the market and what impact it has on the F&B industry in Indonesia.

Furthermore, this research will also highlight how Mixue has succeeded in positioning itself in the market through a combination of product uniqueness and innovative marketing techniques (Ghayoori, 2021; Shao, 2022; Tavasoli, 2021). Previous studies show that this combination can create competitive advantages that are difficult for competitors to overcome (Kim & Ko, 2012; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). Thus, this research will not only provide an overview of the impact of viral marketing on Mixue but will also offer broader insight into marketing strategies that can be implemented by other companies in the F&B industry in Indonesia.

This research is important because it tries to fill this gap by focusing on Mixue, a snow ice cream franchise that has successfully utilized viral marketing strategies to expand its market share in Indonesia. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this research will not only analyze the impact of these strategies on consumer interest and purchasing behavior but will also identify the key factors that contribute to Mixue's success. Through literature analysis and empirical data, it is hoped that this research can provide useful insights for other F&B business actors in developing more effective and innovative marketing strategies.

2. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method to analyze the impact of Mixue's viral marketing strategy on consumer interest and purchasing behavior in the Indonesian market. This method was chosen because it can provide a deep understanding of the phenomena that occur and allows comprehensive analysis of existing data. The steps of this research are explained systematically as follows:

1. Determining Research Topics and Problems

Researchers started by determining research topics that were relevant to viral marketing trends in the F&B industry, especially in the Mixue ice cream franchise (Abri, 2020; Pourkarim, 2022). Problem identification was carried out through initial observations and a literature review regarding the impact of viral marketing on consumer behavior.

2. Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data was collected from various sources that have been published in the last five years (Sharma, 2020). Searches were carried out through databases such as Google Scholar, Vosviewers, and Harzing's Publish or Perish using the keywords: "viral marketing", "ice cream franchise", "Mixue", and "consumer purchasing behavior". Relevant literature is selected based on inclusion criteria such as topic relevance, research methods used, and validity of research results.

3. Data Analysis

The data collected was collected using a thematic approach to identify patterns and themes that emerged from the selected literature (Çakirkaya, 2024; Yu, 2020). This analysis includes mapping the main concepts related to Mixue's viral marketing strategy and its impact on consumer behavior.

4. Data Validation and Triangulation

To ensure the validity of the data, researchers carried out triangulation by comparing findings from various literature sources. Validation is also carried out by reviewing the findings against existing marketing theories and consumer behavior.

5. Presentation of Results

The research results are presented in narrative form which describes the impact of Mixue's viral marketing on brand image, brand awareness, and consumer purchasing behavior. This finding is supported by empirical evidence from previous studies which shows the success of viral marketing strategies in increasing sales and consumer loyalty.

Table 1	1: Researc	h Steps
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No.	Research Steps	Description
1.	Determining Topics and	Determine relevant topics and identify problems through observation and
	Problems	literature review.
2.	Secondary Data Collection	Collecting data from sources that have been published in the last five years.
3.	Data analysis	Analyze data using a thematic approach to identify main patterns and themes.
4.	Data Validation and Triangulation	Comparing findings from various sources to ensure the validity of the data.
5.	Presentation of Results	Presenting the results of the analysis in narrative form supported by empirical evidence.

With this systematic and detailed method, the research is expected to provide comprehensive insight into the impact of Mixue's viral marketing strategy on the ice cream market in Indonesia.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Effect of Viral Marketing on Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is an important foundation in marketing strategy, especially in highly competitive industries such as food and beverage. Viral marketing, which leverages the power of social media and engaging content, has proven to be an effective tool for increasing brand awareness. Mixue, as one of the fastest-growing ice cream franchises in Indonesia, has successfully utilized this strategy to expand its reach and increase the appeal of its products.

The study by Zhang et al. (2021) shows that effective social media campaigns can increase brand awareness up to 30% higher compared to traditional marketing methods. This research highlights the importance of using platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook to reach a wider audience at a relatively low cost. This is also supported by research from Kotler and Keller (2020) which shows that viral content can create significant buzz, which in turn increases brand visibility and awareness.

Table 2: Effect of Viral Marketing on Brand Awareness in Several Countries			
Country	Increase in Brand Awareness (%)	Reference Study	
United States of America	35%	Smith et al. (2019)	
China	40%	Zhang et al. (2021)	
Indonesia	30%	Priyanto & Anwar (2022)	
India	28%	Gupta & Mehta (2020)	

According to Priyanto and Anwar (2022), in Indonesia, Mixue's viral marketing which utilizes trends and memes on social media has succeeded in attracting the attention of young consumers (Castiglione, 2021; Morărescu, 2020), who are their main market segment. This is in line with Gupta and Mehta's (2020) findings in India, which show that relevant and interesting content can increase consumer engagement, which ultimately increases brand awareness.

In conclusion, viral marketing is a very effective strategy for increasing brand awareness. The combination of interesting content, the use of social media (Fox, 2020; Jendoubi, 2020), and a deep understanding of consumer behavior is the key to Mixue's success in expanding its market share in Indonesia (Fard, 2020; Putri, 2020). This research underlines the importance of innovation and adaptation in marketing strategies to achieve optimal results.

3. 2 Increasing Consumer Interest through Viral Content

Viral content can create hype among consumers, which in turn increases interest in the product. Mixue has succeeded in creating interesting and relevant content for its target market so that consumer interest in trying its products has increased significantly (Sungkawati et al., 2024; Zehmakan, 2024). This company uses various social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to spread humorous, informative, and entertaining content. With this approach, Mixue can attract the attention of the millennial generation and Gen Z, which are known to be the most active groups on social media.

According to research conducted by Lee and Hong (2020), interesting viral content can increase consumer interest by up to 25%, especially among the millennial generation and Gen Z. This is

confirmed by research conducted by Smith and Zook (2011), who found that the success of a viral marketing campaign is greatly influenced by the quality of the content and its relevance to the target audience. They noted that content capable of containing emotional and entertaining elements tends to be easier to distribute and gain public attention.

Country	Studies/References	Increase in Consumer Interest (%)	Dominant Age Group
South Korea	Lee & Hong (2020)	25%	Millennials and Gen Z
United States of America	Smith & Zook (2011)	20%	Millennials and Gen Z
Indonesia	Rahman & Aditya (2022)	22%	Millennials and Gen Z

From the table above, it can be seen that increasing consumer interest through viral content is not only a phenomenon that occurs in Indonesia but also in various other countries such as South Korea and the United States. These studies show a consistent pattern where millennials and Gen Z are the groups most responsive to viral content. This emphasizes the importance for companies like Mixue to continue to innovate in creating content that is engaging and relevant to their target audience.

Previous studies also explain that product uniqueness and the ability to create an interesting story are key factors in the success of viral marketing. For example, Mixue not only markets its ice cream as a product but also as part of a fun and modern lifestyle, which is very attractive to the younger generation. The combination of innovative products and creative marketing strategies has proven effective in increasing consumer interest and purchasing behavior in the Indonesian market.

3. 3 The Influence of Product Uniqueness on Purchasing Behavior

The uniqueness of Mixue products, such as innovative ice cream flavors and affordable prices,

plays an important role in attracting consumers. This uniqueness makes consumers feel that Mixue products are different from others driving purchasing behavior. Unique products have their charm which makes consumers more interested in trying them and even becoming loyal customers.

Research from Kim and Park (2019) shows that products that consumers consider unique are 40% more likely to be purchased compared to products that are considered ordinary. This study observes consumer behavior in South Korea, where product uniqueness is one of the determining factors in purchasing decisions. This research also emphasizes the importance of product innovation and differentiation in creating a strong attraction for consumers.

Additionally, research by Zhang et al. (2020) in China revealed that product uniqueness influences customer loyalty. In this study, it was found that unique products not only increase consumers' initial interest but also encourage repeat purchases. The researchers suggest that companies must continue to innovate their products to maintain and increase market share.

Country	Researcher	Key Findings	Percentage Increase in Purchases
South	Kim and Park	Unique products are 40% more	40%
Korea	(2019)	likely to be purchased	
China	Zhang et al. (2020)	Product uniqueness increases customer loyalty and repeat	Not mentioned
		purchases	
Indonesia	This research	The uniqueness of Mixue products increases consumer interest and purchasing behavior	Not mentioned

From the table above, it can be seen that product uniqueness does have a significant influence on consumer purchasing behavior in various countries (Kaur, 2022; Lei, 2020). In Indonesia, Mixue's marketing strategy which utilizes the uniqueness of the product has proven to be effective in attracting

consumer interest (Gao, 2020; Utakaeva, 2020). This is in line with the findings of Kim and Park (2019) and Zhang et al. (2020) which shows the importance of product innovation in creating attraction for consumers.

The uniqueness of Mixue products, such as innovative ice cream flavors and affordable prices, makes consumers feel like they are getting more value from their purchases. In this way, companies can continue to maintain and increase customer loyalty through continuous product innovation.

Overall, this research confirms that product uniqueness is one of the key factors in influencing consumer purchasing behavior. Mixue, with its smart viral marketing strategy, has succeeded in exploiting the uniqueness of its product to expand its market share in Indonesia.

3.4 The Role of Influencers and UGC (User-Generated Content) in Marketing

3.4.1. The Role of Influencers in Viral Mixue Marketing

The use of influencers in Mixue's viral marketing strategy has proven effective in reaching a wider

audience and increasing brand awareness. Influencers can create a more personal relationship with their followers so that their messages are better received. A study by Ki and Kim (2019) shows that recommendations from trusted influencers can increase consumer purchase intentions by up to 60%. In Indonesia, local influencers such as food bloggers and celebs are often invited to subscribe and review Mixue products, which are then shared with their followers via social media platforms.

3.4.2. The Role of User-Generated Content (UGC) in Viral Mixue Marketing

User-generated content (UGC) plays an important role in Mixue's marketing strategy. UGC includes various forms of consumer-generated content, such as photos, videos, and reviews shared via social media. The authenticity and spontaneity of UGC provide more convincing testimonials to potential consumers than company-produced content. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2020) found that UGC can increase engagement rates up to 50% higher than company content. In China, for example, UGC on platforms like Weibo has helped Mixue reach younger and more diverse consumers.

Studies	Location	Key Findings	
Ki and Kim (2019)	South Korea	Influencer recommendations increas purchase intent by up to 60%.	
Hennig-Thurau et al. (2020)	German	UGC increases engagement rates up to 50% higher than company content.	
Jin and Phua (2014)	United States of America	Positive UGC can improve brand image and consumer trust.	
De Veirman et al. (2017)	Belgium	Influencers with lots of followers, but low engagement, are less effective.	

Previous research supports the important role of influencers and UGC in marketing. Jin and Phua (2014) found that positive UGC can improve brand image and consumer trust. This is in line with the findings of De Veirman et al. (2017) in Belgium, which shows that influencers with a large number of followers, but with a low level of engagement, are less effective than influencers with fewer followers but a high level of engagement (Choshaly, 2022; R. Zhang, 2023). Thus, Mixue succeeded in combining these two strategies to strengthen its position in the Indonesian market.

Through the combined use of influencers and UGC (Al-Dwairi, 2024; Das, 2021; Moustafa, 2020), Mixue was able to not only increase brand awareness but also create a loyal community of customers (Nguyen, 2020; Sung, 2021). This strategy had a significant impact on consumer interest and purchasing behavior, which ultimately contributed to Mixue's success in the ice cream market in Indonesia.

3.5 Impact of Viral Marketing on Consumer Loyalty

Viral marketing strategies are proven to not only increase initial awareness and interest in a brand but also play an important role in building long-term consumer loyalty (Afifah, 2022; Liao, 2020; Puriwat, 2021). Consumers who feel connected to a brand through viral content tend to have a stronger emotional connection and are more likely to become loyal customers (Serrano, 2022; Sung, 2021; Yuniati, 2021). This research will deepen the analysis of how viral marketing can influence consumer loyalty, supported by empirical evidence from various previous studies.

Table 6: I	Table 6: Impact of Viral Marketing on Consumer Loyalty in Several Countries		
Country	Researcher	Year	Key Findings
United States of America	Oliver	2018	Customers who engage through viral content are 35% more likely to become loyal customers.
Indonesia	Wati & Suharto	2020	Mixue's viral marketing increased consumer loyalty by 28% through interactions on social media.
South Korea	Kim & Lee	2019	Consumers who engage in viral campaigns show a 40% increase in loyalty compared to conventional campaigns.

According to research by Oliver (2018) in the United States, customers who engage through viral content have a 35% higher tendency to become loyal customers compared to those who are not involved. This is due to deeper and more effective interactions between consumers and brands. Viral content often has entertainment, information and emotional elements that make consumers feel more connected.

A study conducted by Wati and Suharto (2020) in Indonesia showed that viral marketing of Mixue via social media increased consumer loyalty by 28%. Consumers who engage with Mixue's viral content feel closer to the brand and are more likely to make repeat purchases. This research highlights the importance of interaction on social media as a tool for building long-term relationships with consumers.

Kim and Lee's (2019) research in South Korea also supports this finding. They found that consumers who engaged in viral marketing campaigns showed a 40% increase in loyalty compared to conventional marketing campaigns. Interesting and relevant viral content can create a positive consumer experience, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty.

From the results of this research, it is clear that viral marketing strategies have a significant impact on consumer loyalty. The combination of product uniqueness and innovative marketing techniques, such as that of Mixue, not only increases initial interest but also builds a stronger emotional connection with consumers. Therefore, brands in the F&B industry in Indonesia and other countries may consider adopting viral marketing strategies as part of their efforts to increase consumer loyalty.

4. CONCLUSION

This research highlights the significant impact of the viral marketing strategy implemented by Mixue on the ice cream market in Indonesia. Mixue, with its unique snow ice cream product, has succeeded in attracting consumer attention through innovative and effective marketing methods. Based on literature analysis from recent scientific journals, it was found that Mixue's viral marketing strategy was not only successful in increasing brand awareness among consumers but also strengthened a positive brand image.

The research results show that Mixue's success in expanding market share is greatly influenced by a combination of product uniqueness and a creative marketing approach. Promotion via social media, viral content, and collaboration with influencers have proven effective in attracting consumer attention and encouraging purchasing interest. Apart from that, this marketing strategy also contributes to more loyal purchasing behavior from consumers, which ultimately strengthens Mixue's position in the ice cream franchise market in Indonesia.

Overall, this research concludes that Mixue's viral marketing approach has a significant positive impact on consumer interest and purchasing behavior. Mixue's success can be an example for other franchises in the F&B industry who want to utilize digital marketing strategies to expand market reach and increase sales.

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