Gen Z's Interest in Buying Le Minerale Products: Seen From the Influence of Social Media Advertising, Word of Mouth And Brand Image As Intervening Variables

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Abstract— Le Minerale is one of the bottled water brands that is in great demand by the public. This means that the product must continue to innovate to maintain its position as the top brand of drinking water in Indonesia. This study aims to analyze the influence of social media advertising and word of mouth on consumer buying interest with brand image as an intervening variable. This study used a quantitative method through a questionnaire to 115 respondents who were Gen Z. The data analysis technique used was PLS SEM analysis to examine the inter-variables of the study. The results of the study show that social media advertising and word of mouth have a positive effect on brand image, which in turn affects consumer purchase interest in Le Minerale products. These findings underline the importance of being the brand's mind through social media advertising and socializing with the public about Le Minerale products to attract their buying interest.

Keywords: Social Media Advertising; Word of Mouth; Brand Image; Purchase Interest; Le Minerale

INTRODUCTION

Currently, the bottled drinking water (AMDK) industry in Indonesia is showing significant growth. Data from the Soft Drink Industry Association (ASRIM), shows that sales of the beverage industry will grow by 3.1% in 2023. This number is dominated by the mineral water category, which reaches 60% of total sales. This number reflects an increase in public awareness of the importance of consuming clean and healthy water (Nurdifa, 2024)

Le Minerale, as one of the brands in the bottled water industry, is currently showing promising growth since its launch in 2015 by PT Tirta Fresindo Jaya, a subsidiary of the Mayora Group. Currently, Le Minerale products rank first with a market share of 47.4% of the mineral water product category. A case study in the Malaya Mart and Ranggon Mart areas in Bangkinang City shows that the most popular sales of bottled drinking water (AMDK) in order are the mineral water brands Aqua, Le Minerale, Ades, Club, and Vit (Prince, 2024), (Sartikawati et al., 2020). Le Minerale products continue to innovate in order to expand their market reach. This is evidenced by the innovation of a 15 L single-use bottled water variant.

Table 1. Top Brand Index 2021-2023

Dwond	Top Brand Index			
Brand	2021	2022	2023	
Aqua	62,50	57,20	55,50	
The Mineral	4,60	12,50	14,50	
Ades	7,50	6,40	5,30	
Club	5,80	3,80	3,50	
Cleo	3,70	4,20	4,20	

Based on the table above, it shows that Le minerale is ranked fifth with an achievement of 4.60% in 2021 and has increased by 7.9%, which is 12.50% in 2022, and has increased by 2% to 14.50% in 2023. This condition shows that Le Minerale must continue to improve its marketing strategy to expand its market share (Rice, 2024).

In today's digital era, marketing strategies through *social advertising* and *word of mouth* (WOM) are very important. *Social advertising* allows companies to reach consumers widely through social media platforms. Good advertising not only provides information about the product but also creates positive brand associations and encourages the desire to buy. while WOM, both in person and through online reviews, has a huge influence on consumer buying interest. Both of these strategies can form a strong brand image, which in turn influences consumer buying interest (Andriyani & Wibowo, 2024) (Diana Warpindyastuti et al., 2022).

However, there is still a gap in understanding how much social advertising and WOM influence consumer buying interest, especially in the context of Le Minerale products. Currently, there are not many studies that specifically examine the role of brand image as an intervening variable in the relationship between social advertising, WOM, and buying interest. Therefore, this study aims to examine the gap by analyzing the influence of social advertising and WOM on interest in purchasing Le Minerale products, with brand image as an intervening variable.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Buying Interest

According to Kotler and Keller (2009), consumer buying interest is how likely consumers are to buy a brand or how likely it is for consumers to move from one brand to another. According to Japarianto et al (2020), buying interest can be identified through four. The following indicators:

- 1. Transactional interest, i.e., a person's tendency to buy a product
- 2. Referential interest, which is a person's tendency to reflect on products to others.
- 3. Pre-emptive interest, which is an interest that describes the behavior of a person who has a primary preference for the product. This preference can only be overridden if something happens to the product.
- 4. Exploratory interest: This interest describes the behavior of a person who is always looking for information about the product he is interested in and looking for information to support the positive nature of the product.

Social Media Advertising

The definition of *social media advertising* is an effort made by marketing in conveying messages (ideas, ideas, necessities) to consumers by playing a direct role in social ties in the internet medium, so that they can interact, communicate and collaborate with potential target consumers and actively promote products or services (Prakoso et al., 2016). Social media is a medium for a company or brand to promote its products. The definition of *social media*, according to Nasrullah (2015), is a medium on the internet that allows users to represent themselves or interact, collaborate, share, communicate with other users, and form social bonds virtually. Some of the social media advertising indicators used in this research, according to Suziana & Games (2020), include:

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1. Informativeness, consumers seek information online because it is more convenient and accessible at any time. Informativeness is associated with the ability of advertising to inform consumers about product information

- 2. Entertainment, the value of advertising offers better communication by satisfying the hedonistic needs of consumers by offering pleasure and emotional release, distraction with content that provides entertainment value, interactivity, and message appeal
- 3. Credibility plays an important role in determining the effectiveness and value of advertising. The increase in trust in online media is due to its ability to be open by providing trustworthy reviews

Word Of Mouth

According to Kotler (2008), WOM is a personal communication about the product between the buyer and the people around them. WOM is a personal influence, which is closely related to expensive and risky products. Expectations of acceptable possible risks are reduced when consumers seek advice from relatives. WOM is also a marketing strategy to get customers talking, promoting, and selling to other customers.

According to Babin et al (2005) Word Of Mouth has indicators including:

- 1) Telling Consumers will provide information related to a product that is known to others, for example, family or friends, it can be in the form of positive or negative information.
- 2) Recommending Consumers who have a positive opinion about an item will recommend the product to others so that it can be the main choice in choosing a product.
- 3) Inviting consumers who are satisfied with a product will invite others to also use the product because the benefits or advantages have been felt.

Brand Image

Brand Image is the interpretation of the accumulation of various information received by consumers. The results of interpretation depend on two things, namely first, how consumers interpret and second, what information is interpreted (Purnama et al., 2021). A product with a good brand image will have a good interpretation also from the perspective or view of the consumer. There are three indicators of brand image according to Hartanto (2019), namely:

- 1. Corporate image is a set of associations that consumers have with the company that makes a product or service. Includes: popularity, credibility, and company network.
- 2. Consumer Image (*User Image*) is a set of associations that consumers have with companies that make goods or services. Includes: the wearer himself, lifestyle/personality, and social status.
- 3. Product Image is a set of associations that consumers have with the company that makes a product. Includes: the attributes of the product, benefits for consumers, users, and guarantees.

The Influence of Social Media Advertising on Brand Image

Social media marketing supports marketers to advertise, offer products, and promote sales. Advertising through social media itself can provide visual stimuli that shape the attention and perception of potential consumers (Septiarini et al., 2024). Social media advertising is something that needs to be done to make social media users pay

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attention to something (Goya, 2013). The great market potential of marketing through social media advertising can increase revenue receipts. Therefore, a marketer must develop an appropriate and effective advertising strategy on social media so that it can substantially generate trust that can affect the brand image of the product. The research that has been conducted by Raji et al. (2019), (Al Haddad (2015) has found that social media advertising has a positive effect on Brand Image.

 \mathbf{H}_1 : Social Media Advertising has a positive effect on the brand image of Le Minerale products in Gen Z

The Influence of Social Media Advertising on Buying Interest

Social Media Advertising is an effort made by marketers to convey messages (ideas, ideas, values) to consumers by playing a direct role in social ties of the community on the internet medium, so that they can interact, communicate and collaborate with potential target consumers and at the same time actively promote products or services (Nita, 2021). Social media advertising is an advertisement that is presented to social media users. Advertising through social media is believed to be able to present advertisements with more relevant content (Yulita, 2012).

Based on research conducted by Herawati (2020), there is a positive and significant influence of social media advertising on consumer buying interest. Social media improves communication skills in the form of creatively packaged photos is one of the most important factors in attracting the interest or attention of users. In line with research from Suharsono (2012), social media advertising has a significant effect on purchase intention. The information presented by social media ads can influence consumers to be interested in buying products.

H₂: Social Media Advertising has a positive effect on Gen Z's buying interest in Le Minerale products

The Influence of Word Of Mouth on Brand Image

According to Kotler (2008), WOM or Word Of Mouth is a personal communication about the product between the buyer and the people around them. Word Of Mouth is one of the marketing strategies that is implemented to give a sense of security to every consumer who is new to a brand of a product, because the information brought by customers who have bought products from customers or new consumers is credible information based on the experience that the customer or consumer gets. The research conducted by Arif & Pulungan (2021), (Arif, 2021), (Muis et al., 2020) found that Word Of Mouth has a positive effect on Brand Image.

Information and recommendations that consumers convey informally to others, either directly or through digital platforms, can form a strong perception of brand image. When consumers share their positive experiences about Le Minerale, such as the fresh taste, health benefits, or unique packaging. This not only increases public trust in the product but also strengthens the brand's position as a high-quality drinking water. A consistent and positive WOM serves as a form of social validation that accelerates the spread of a good brand image without having to rely entirely on paid advertising. Thus, WOM is one of the important elements in building and maintaining a superior brand image in the market.

H₃: Word of Mouth has a positive effect on the brand image of Le Minerale products in Gen Z

The Influence of Word of Mouth on Buying Interest

According to Sumarwan (2011), Word Of Mouth is "an exchange of ideas, thoughts, and comments between two or more consumers, and none of them are marketers. There is an experience that is obtained at the time of buying a product as the beginning for one consumer to be able to convey information about a product to other consumers, especially those who have a close relationship; therefore, Word Of Mouth can influence the perception of consumers to be interested in buying a product. The research conducted by Pranjaya & Kartini (2025), (Umamy et al. (2016) found that Word Of Mouth has a positive effect on buying interest.

These findings indicate that recommendations between consumers, both directly and through social media, can form a significant positive perception of product quality and value. The trust that arises from this informal communication strengthens Le Minerale's appeal amid the competition of the bottled water market, as consumers tend to consider information coming from close people or the real experiences of other consumers. Thus, WOM becomes an effective strategy in building loyalty and expanding market reach through a more authentic and cost-effective way.

H₄: WOM has a positive effect on the buying interest of Le Minerale products in Gen Z

The Influence of Brand Image on Buying Interest

Buying interest itself is defined as the willingness of consumers to buy products provided by certain brands (Ravenica & Ekawati, 2025). In addition, buying interest can be considered as a customer's consideration when buying a product or service (Clarence & Keni, 2022); therefore, the product or company must be able to maintain its interest so that it can influence consumer perception to be interested in buying the product. The research conducted by Pranjaya & Kartini (2025), (Peronika et al. (2020) found that brand image has a positive effect on buying interest.

A strong brand image, which reflects quality, freshness, and health, can create a positive perception in the minds of consumers and drive purchasing decisions. Le Minerale has managed to build an easily recognizable brand identity through distinctive packaging, consistent advertising campaigns, and an image as a healthy, high-quality drinking water product. This positive image gives confidence and confidence to consumers that the products they choose not only meet basic needs, but also reflect a healthy and modern lifestyle. Therefore, strengthening brand image is an important strategy in increasing competitiveness and attracting people's buying interest.

H₅: Brand Image has a positive effect on the buying interest of Le Minerak products in Gen Z

The Influence of Social Media Advertising on Buying Interest through Brand Image

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2012), consumer purchase intention is closely related to consumer behavior. This happens when consumers are stimulated by external factors that ultimately give rise to the intention to buy based on the characteristics of each individual. These factors can be categorized as brands, products, retailers, time of purchase, and quantity of purchase. With the existence of social media marketing, it will have an impact on product information to customers, which will also increase the brand image of a product, which will further influence consumer purchase decisions. Social media advertising can be thought of as an online Advertisement that incorporates user interactions that consumers have agreed to display and share. The resulting ads display

these interactions along with the user's person (image and/or name) in the Ad content (Ertemel & Ammoura, 2016). The research conducted by (Ali & Naushad, 2023), (Salhab et al., 2023) found that social media advertising affects buying interest and is mediated by brand image because the delivery of social media advertising can expand market reach according to the target consumer and can have an impact on improving a good brand image on the product so that consumers' buying interest in the product is more optimal.

H₆: Social media advertising has a positive effect on buying interest in Le Minerale products through brand image in Gen Z

The Influence of Word of Mouth on Le Minerale's Buying Interest in Le Minerale Products through Brand Image

Buying interest is a consumer's desire or plan to buy a certain amount of product in a certain amount of time (Tjiptono & Chandra, 2019). Brand image is a representation and overall perception of the brand and is formed from information and experience of the brand (Pandiangan et al., 2021). Word of mouth is a form of promotion in the form of recommendations from word of mouth, from one person to another about the goodness of a product (Lupiyoadi, 2006). The existence of good and positive WOM will have a good impact on the image of a brand, as it has an impact on increasing consumer or customer interest in buying the product. Research conducted by Kusuma & Wijaya (2022) with the existence of Word of Mouth will convey information and experience about products to customers or other consumers, which will also increase the *brand image* of a product, which will further affect consumers' buying interest in the product.

 H_7 : WOM has a positive effect on the buying interest of Le Minerale products through brand image in Gen Z

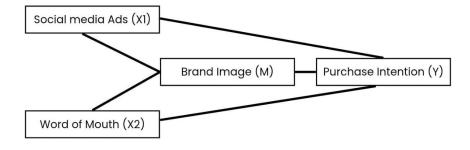


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory method to test the influence of independent variables (Social Advertising and Word of Mouth) on dependent variables (Purchase Interest) with Brand Image as the intervening variable. The data analysis technique used is Structural Equation Modeling based on Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The population in this study is consumers or potential consumers who have seen Le Minerale advertisements and/or received information from others about Le

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Minerale products. The sampling technique was carried out by purposive sampling with the criteria of respondents, namely generation Z or Gen Z. The number of samples used was 120 respondents, following the minimum provisions in SEM-PLS, which recommends a minimum of 10 times the maximum number of indicators in one latent construct. The research instrument was in the form of a questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1–5. The SEM-PLS analysis steps include external model evaluation and inner model validation (Wagner & Grimm, 2023).

RESULTS

Evaluation Results of Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Gen Z's interest in buying bottled drinking water from the Le Minerale brand can be seen from the instruments that have been tested for validity. According to experts, this is done to ensure that the instrument can be used (Nurrahman, 2023). Furthermore, the instrument is used for data collection. The results of data analysis used structural equations with the partial least quadratic model (SEM-PLS). It is used to present the relationship between the variables Social Media Ads (SM), Word of Mouth (WOM), and Brand Image (BI). Furthermore, a validity test analysis was carried out to determine that the structural model is good and the reliability of the variables. The results of the discriminatory validity test are presented in Table 2.

Table 22. Discriminating Validity Test

	\mathcal{C}				
	BI	PI	SM	WOM	
Brand Image (BI)	0.912				
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.676	0.838			
Social Media Ads (SM)	0.596	0.691	0.788		
Word of Mouth	0.569	0 720	0.592	0.849	

Source: Author

Table 2 illustrates the results of the discriminant validity test from the comparison of the root value of AVE with the correlation between latent variables. The value of the square root in the diagonal column is fulfilled with the condition that it is smaller than the number below it, or it can be interpreted that all variables in this study are valid. This is because it exceeds the correlation value between constructions by >0.7, so that it meets the criteria for discrimination validity (Hair, 2022). After it is known that the results of the validity of the discrimination are declared valid, then an analysis of the construction reliability criteria is carried out about the values of the Alpha Cronbach coefficient and the Composite Reliability Coefficient. The results of construction reliability are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Construct Reliability Test

	Cronbach's	Composite
	Alpha	Reliability
Brand Image (BI)	0.899	0.937
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.855	0.906
Social Media Ads (SM)	0.847	0.891
Word of Mouth	0.902	0.928

Source: Author

Based on Table 3, it is shown that the variable meets the reliability coefficient criteria with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.847-0.902 > 0.6 and a Composite Reliability



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value of 0.891-0.937 > 0.6. Based on the amount of these values, it can be known that all variables meet reliable criteria. This is because it has a variable value of more than 0.6 (Hair et al., 2021).

Results of Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Table 4. Results of Structural Models and Interactive Effects

Hypotesized paths	Beta	T Statistics	p-value	Conclusion
$SM \rightarrow BI$	0.399	3.515	0.000	Significant
$SM \rightarrow PI$	0.296	4.493	0.000	Significant
$WOM \rightarrow BI$	0.333	3.585	0.000	Significant
$WOM \rightarrow PI$	0.384	4.184	0.000	Significant
BI→ PI	0.281	5.707	0.000	Significant

Source: Author

The results of SEMP-PLS show that Social Media Advertising affects Brand Image with significant results with a standard coefficient of 0.399 (significant at alpha 0.001 < 0.05) and has a positive effect of 0.240 (significant at alpha 0.000 < 0.05), which means that H_3 and H_4 are supported.

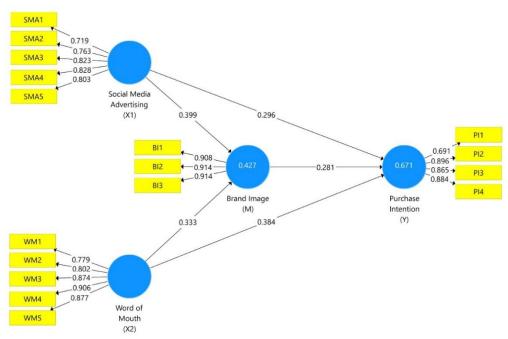


Figure 2. Path Analysis

Based on these images, an analysis was then carried out to determine the role of brand image in carrying out its role as a mediator variable between the influence of social media advertising and word of mouth on the interest in buying Le Minerale products for Gen Z. The results of the brand image mediation effect test are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Brand Image Mediation Effect Test Results

No	Structural Paths	Beta	T-Statistics	p-Value	Conclusion
1.	$SD \rightarrow BI \rightarrow PI$	0.112	2.350	0.019	Significant
2.	$WOM \rightarrow BI \rightarrow PI$	0.094	3.400	0.001	Significant

Source: Author

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Social Media Advertising on Brand Image in Le Minerale Products

The direct influence of the X1 variable (Social media advertising) on the Z variable (Brand image) has a path coefficient of 0.399 (positive), so the increase in the value of the Social media advertising variable will be followed by an increase in the Brand image variable. The influence of Social media advertising variables on brand image has a value of 0.000 < 0.05, so it can be stated that the influence of social media advertising on brand image is significant. This research is in line with the research by Raji et al (2019), findings demonstrate that there are positive and significant relationships between social media advertising content, social media sales promotion content, hedonic brand image, functional brand image, and behavioural intention. Both hedonic and functional brand images have significant mediating effects on social media advertising content, social media sales promotion content, and behavioural intention. However, the relationship between social media advertising content and behavioural intention is insignificant. And then AlHaddad (2015) found that social media advertising has a positive effect on Brand Image.

The Influence of Social Media Advertising on Buying Interest in Le Minerale products

The direct influence of the variable X1 (Social media advertising) on the variable Y (Buying Interest) has a path coefficient of 0.296 (positive), so the increase in the value of the Social media advertising variable will be followed by an increase in the Buying Interest variable. The influence of Social media advertising variables on Buying Interest has a *P-Values* value of 0.000 < 0.05, so it can be stated that the influence of Social media advertising on buying interest is significant. This research is in line with research conducted by Herawati (2020) there is a positive and significant influence between social media advertising on consumer buying interest. Promotion through advertising media helps companies in marketing their products very easily and these media affect consumers' purchasing preferences because consumers can know they want to buy the goods through available advertisements. With good promotional materials and can invite consumers to make purchases (Moniz & Nurkariani, 2024).

The Influence of Word Of Mouth on Brand Image in Le Minerale Products

The direct influence of the variable X2 (Word of mouth) on the variable Z (Brand image) has a path coefficient of 0.333 (positive), so the increase in the value of the Word of mouth variable will be followed by the increase in the Brand image variable. The influence of the Word of mouth variable on the Brand image has a P-Values value of 0.000 < 0.05 so it can be stated that the influence between the Word of mouth on the Brand image is significant. This research is in line with research conducted by Arif & Pulungan, (2021) with the delivery of information through consumers who have a positive

direct experience, of course the product's brand image will be good in the eyes of consumers, then Muis et al (2020) said that the information brought by one consumer to another consumer will affect the brand image or brand image of a product because the dissemination of positive information is faster and builds trust consumers of a product in the eyes of the public.

The Influence of Word of Mouth on Buying Interest in Le Minerale Products

The direct influence of the variable X2 (Word of mouth) on the variable Y (Buying Interest) has a path coefficient of 0.384 (positive), so the increase in the value of the Word of mouth variable will be followed by an increase in the Buying Interest variable. The influence of the Word of mouth variable on Buying Interest has a value of 0.000 <0.05, so that it can be stated that the influence of Word of mouth on buying interest is significant. Umamy et al (2016) said that the more critical consumers are before making a purchase, consumers look for information about a product before making a purchase. Experience, suggestions, and *reviews* obtained from other people become information input that is then processed as knowledge that can later influence a person to make a purchase decision, so this shows that with word of mouth, the product can direct consumers to be interested before deciding to buy a product.

The Influence of Brand Image on Le Minerale Product Buying Interest

The direct influence of the Z variable (*Brand image*) on the Y variable (Purchase Decision) has a path coefficient of 0.281 (positive), then the increase in the value of the *Brand image variable* will be followed by an increase in the purchase interest variable. The influence of *the Brand image* variable on buying interest has a value of 0.000 < 0.05, so it can be stated that the influence of *Brand image* on buying interest is significant. Peronika et al., (2020) said that Brand Image plays an important role in marketing strategy, and can increase consumer buying interest in the products they sell, the better the image of a product, the higher the consumer interest in the product because consumers tend to make *a brand image* as a mess to decide on a purchase. Research conducted by Pranjaya & Kartini (2025) found that brand image has a positive effect on buying interest.

The Influence of Social Media Advertising on Le Minerale's Buying Interest in Le Minerale Products through Brand Image

The value of P Values the indirect influence of the X1 variable on Y is 0.019 <0.05, thus it can be stated that Brand image mediates the influence of Social Media Advertising on buying interest. Based on the description and previous research above related to the research conducted on the Influence of Social Media Advertising on buying interest with Brand Image as an intervening variable in Le Minerale products, it is concluded that Brand Image mediates the influence of Social Media Advertising on buying interest. This research is in line with research conducted by (Ali & Naushad, 2023), (Salhab et al., 2023) found that social media advertising affects buying interest and is mediated by brand image.

The Influence of Word of Mouth on Le Minerale's Buying Interest in Le Minerale Products through Brand Image

The value of P-values. The indirect influence of the X2 variable on Y is 0.001 < 0.05; thus, it can be stated that the brand image mediates the influence of Word of mouth

on buying interest. Based on the description and previous research above related to the research conducted on the Influence of Word of Mouth on buying interest with Brand Image as an intervening variable in Le Minerale products, it is concluded that Brand Image mediates the influence of Word of Mouth on buying interest. This research is in line with research conducted by Kusuma & Wijaya (2022) found that word of mouth affects buying interest and is mediated by brand image.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out in this study, the following conclusions are obtained:

The results of this study provide empirical evidence that supports this hypothesis, namely that Brand Image can mediate the relationship between Social Media Advertising and Word of mouth to buying interest. Social Media Advertising has a positive effect on Brand Image. This suggests that through social media promotion, Le Minerale products can increase the image of their products among Gen Z because the delivery of information through social media is very fast and massive. Social Media Advertising has a positive effect on buying interest. This shows that with the right and optimal expansion of social media advertising, it can increase the interest in buying Le Minerale products in generation Z, because social media is a means or media that is dominated by people used directly by generation Z. This shows that WOM can distribute information or experience about Le Minerale products by generation Z so that it can build trust in the Le Minerale brand in the public. There is a positive influence of WOM on buying interest. This shows that WOM can be an effective channel or medium to convey positive information about Le Minerale products to Generation Z. There is a positive influence of Brand Image on buying interest. This shows that with a good brand image, the interest in buying Le Minerale products among Generation Z can increase. There is a positive influence of Social Media Advertising on buying interest through brand image. This shows that advertising or promotion through social media can be a stimulus to increase the positive image of the Le Minerale product brand and the buying interest of Generation Z. There is a positive influence of WOM on buying interest through brand image. This shows that WOM communication can foster brand image awareness and have an impact on the buying interest of Generation Z in Le Minerale products.

LIMITATION

Based on the results of the research conducted, the limitations of the research are explained as follows:

- 1. This study still uses only three variables that affect purchasing decisions, namely social media advertising, word of mouth, and brand image, while the variables that influence buying interest are still very much.
- 2. The process of distributing questionnaires or questionnaires still uses manual techniques, so it needs to be done with a Google form to get faster results. The sample in this study was limited to only 115 Gen Z respondents, so it was not possible to generalize buying interest in Le Minerale products in general.

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