'I See It, I Want It, I Buy It': The Role of Social Media Marketing in Shaping Brand Image and Gen Z's Intention to Purchase Local Product

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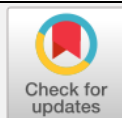North Minahasa, North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia
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ABSTRACT

Although the interplay of social media marketing (SMM) on brand image and purchase intention has been studied extensively, insights into the link between these variables in the context of the local product remain scarce, specifically from generation Z's customer point of view. Therefore, this study aims to fill this theoretical gap by investigating the role of SMM on brand image and purchase intention of local products in the perception of generation Z. A survey-based data was collected using purposive sampling from 184 respondents of generation Z. The data were then analyzed using SmartPLS statistical software. The result reveals that SMM positively and significantly influences the brand image and Gen Z's intention to purchase the local product. Meanwhile, brand image was a positive predictor of purchase intention. Additionally, brand image mediates the relationship between SMM and purchase intention, such that SMM influences brand image, leading to purchase intention.

1. Introduction

Generation Z often called Gen Z, has emerged as a powerful force that affects consumption patterns and how consumers interact with products or brands. This young generation was growing up surrounded by digital communication in everyday decision-making, proclaiming them as digital natives, iGeneration, net generation, or internet generation (Djafarova & Bowes, 2020; Reinikainen et al., 2020). The presence of technology indirectly affects their personality in making decisions to buy certain products (Andriyanty & Wahab, 2019). Recent data shows that Gen Z accounts for 32% of the global consumer (Miller & Lu, 2018) and will continue to influence consumption patterns, trends, and preferences.

The characteristics of Gen Z consumers who demand an instant decision-making process combined with the digitalization trend encourage a paradigm shift in modern marketing. The concept of conventional marketing strategies such as door-to-door is no longer relevant, especially for Gen Z (Ninan et al., 2020). This paradigm shift is characterized by using social media as the main marketing channel to reach customers dominated by Gen Z and millennials. According to Djafarova & Bowes (2020), this generation has a high attachment and even dependence on social media as an integral part of their daily activities. Furthermore, the intensity of social media use makes this generation very easily exposed to digital advertising and quickly follows online trends. Responding to customer behaviour and preferences towards social media, marketers, especially local products, have begun to adopt social media as a marketing communication channel. Social media has become a means to implement marketing strategies to help local product manufacturers deliver product values to fulfil customer needs, wants, and preferences, especially Gen Z.

Local product manufacturers in Indonesia have been increasing over time. This is evidenced by the increasing number of entrepreneurs and the emergence of new local brands in Indonesia (Dewi, 2018; Elisabeth, 2022). Local products include all products or services from a region or country where the producers, owners, materials, tools, and labour come from the same region or country (Simanjuntak & Yuliati, 2019). On the other hand, globalization and free trade have caused a challenge for the local product by facilitating foreign products to flood the domestic market, leading to high competition in the domestic market. In addition, many local customers are interested in foreign products because they carry the image of the country of origin, which is perceived as higher quality or cheaper by local customers.

Meanwhile, awareness for the community to buy and consume local products starts to increase. When local customers are aware of the contribution of local products and decide to buy more local products than an imported ones, it will then optimize the use of resources and encourage the country's economic growth (Simanjuntak & Yuliati, 2019). One of the efforts made by the government to encourage customers to choose local products is through the love domestic products movement which is campaigned through social media.

Gen Z's decision to consume local products will impact a country's economy, including developing countries such as Indonesia. Increased purchases of local products by generation Z will drive national income growth, while the lack of purchase and consumption of local products can jeopardize the Indonesian economy (Andriyanty & Wahab, 2019). However, Andriyanty & Wahab (2019) research shows that Generation Z in Indonesia prefers local products at 80.28% compared to imported products.

Recent studies have documented empirical evidence that social media marketing is an important factor that shapes the perception and behavior of Gen Z towards a brand or product (e.g., Andreani et al., 2012; Anjel et al., 2022; Mandagi & Aseng, 2021). Social media marketing is a key ingredient that influences brand favorability (Anjel et al., 2022), brand image (Anjel et al.,

2022; Priporas et al., 2019), brand loyalty (Mandagi & Aseng, 2021) and purchase decisions (Andreani et al., 2012). Although the role of social media on Gen Z's perception and behavior towards brands has attracted the interest of many researchers in recent years, there are not many empirical studies that examine the effectiveness of social media marketing on Gen Z's perception and behavior towards local products. Therefore, this study was created to fulfill this theoretical gap which aims to determine how effective social media is in influencing the perception and behavior of Gen Z towards local products. More specifically, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1) Does SMM influence Gen Z's intention to purchase local products?
2) Does SMM influence the brand image of the local product?
3) How does brand image affect Gen Z's intention to purchase local products?
4) Does brand image mediate the influence of SMM on the intention to purchase local products?

This research provides practical insights for local product marketers on how the influence of marketing activities or communication through social media shapes Generation Z's perception of brand image and their intention to purchase the product. This research also aims to be a consideration for local product manufacturers to determine the right social media marketing strategy for reaching Gen Z customers who are increasingly dominating the consumer market.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Generation Z

Generation Z, born between 1995 and the early 2010s (Priporas et al., 2019; Djafarova & Bowes, 2020), is a transitional generation from generation Y and the offspring of generation X (Andriyanty & Wahab, 2019). Vitelar (2019) describes several characteristics of Gen Z that are not shared by other generations. Gen Z was raised with a strong attachment to the rapid global connectedness made possible by smartphones, tablets, social media platforms and other digital tools. Thus, technology and internet connection are an inseparable part of Gen Z's life more than the predecessor generation, generation Y. Second, this generation cohort is a content creator who utilizes social media as a platform to build a personal brand or self-image. This requires active use of social media, so Gen Z is the generation most easily exposed to digital advertising. In addition, what distinguishes Gen Z from previous generations is a greater demand for an easy and instant process of obtaining information, so they prefer social media advertising over traditional advertising and are considered the most finicky generation regarding the purchase of products and services (Karim, 2019; Reinikainen et al., 2020; Giunta, 2020). According to Fromm (2022), businesses must communicate with Gen Z online to attract them as customers. Digital platforms such as social media are one of the connecting media between Gen Z and society (Giunta, 2020), making it the right medium for the business to reach this digital customer.

Gen Z is a generation that has the potential to put a country's economy in a demographic advantage position because it will reach productive age in 2030 (Genady & Michellita, 2021). Raynor (2021) revealed that the number of Gen Z reaching peak productive age is increasing, so their spending power will also increase beyond the predicted spending power in 2018 of $143 billion. This fact leads to a good opportunity for local product manufacturers to increase sales to Gen Z, which is projected to increasingly dominate consumer marketers.

2.2. Local Product Generation Z

According to Simanjuntak & Yuliati (2019), cultivating an attitude of patronizing local products is one way to improve the country's economy. Furthermore, the authors identified several consequences of the lack of local product consumption, including declining national products, especially products of small and medium enterprises, and increasing layoffs, which lead to increased unemployment and adversely affect people's welfare. Local products are provisions such as products made from domestic materials, the labor used comes from within the country, and the domestic brands and the business owners are from within the country (Aprinta, 2016).

A recent study by Andriyanty & Wahab (2019) on the consumption pattern of Gen Z customers in Indonesia uncovered an interesting result. Although despite the increase in the consumption of imported products from 1989-2017, Gen Z prefers to consume local products. The higher the income generated by Gen Z, the possibility of Gen Z consuming local products will increase by 2.843 times. Gen Z's consumption preference is critical in increasing national output as an economically established generation in the next ten years. In addition, it explained that there is an unlimited consumptive behavior of this generation and a tendency to make purchases based on wants rather than needs. It is also reported in the same study that the largest percentage of Gen Z customer preference is purchasing local products; food, beverages, clothing, gadgets, and higher education options are on price.

2.3. SMM and Purchase Intention

Social media marketing refers to all product or service promotion activities through social media (Ninan et al., 2020). Social media is a digital platform that allows users to interact with other users. The results of research conducted by Ramadhan & Simanjuntak (2018) revealed that the more often Gen Z consumers are exposed to audiovisual media advertisements, Gen Z can be encouraged to make purchases. Ramadhan & Simanjuntak (2018) further explain that an audiovisual advertisement can be more attractive to Gen Z if the advertisement has celebrities and has a creativity factor that reinforces the idea that consumers need the product. Social Media provides a wide scope for audiovisual advertising and a row of personal accounts belonging to celebrities and parties who can influence many people, generally called influencers.

Research by Kaihatu (2020) found that social media marketing in Gen Z affects purchase intention. The more Gen Z understands a product and is willing to spend time looking for more information about the product, the more likely Gen Z is to buy the product immediately. It was also found that the role of influencers in delivering informative and memorable content significantly increases consumer engagement. Interactions built through content such as likes, replying to comments, and being responded to by business owners also increase consumer engagement. An increase in consumer engagement will lead to purchase intentions at that time or later. This study's results align with the results of research conducted by Dewi (2018) on local culinary products and Giunta (2020), which states that activities towards social media marketing, such as reviews and ratings, significantly influence Gen Z's decision to buy advertised products. Business interactions with customers are the most influential factor in determining purchase intentions (Giunta, 2020).

Furthermore, Ninan et al. (2020) state that Gen Z prefers social media advertising over traditional advertising, where social media advertising contributes to increasing brand awareness, product perception, brand loyalty, business interaction, and purchase intention. In other words, purchase intentions can be formed by increasing Gen Z's awareness of brands and

changing their perception of a product to create loyalty to the brand by ensuring they always feel connected.

The most widely and commonly used social media based on the number of users are Instagram, TikTok and Facebook. However, there is a reduction in Gen Z users on Facebook social media, especially Gen Z, at younger ages (Duffy et al., 2018; Vitelar, 2019). Research conducted by Aragoncillo & Orus (2017) found that Instagram is the social media that has the most impact on impulse purchases in the fashion industry, which is also a source of inspiration that can trigger consumer purchasing behaviour. Furthermore, the study by Dewi (2018) proves that the dominant factor on Instagram influencing the decision to buy local culinary products is Ad Recall, or the ability of consumers to remember advertisements that have been seen. This research supports the results of Ramadhan & Simanjuntak (2018), which proves that the more often or higher the intensity of Gen Z is exposed to audiovisual advertising, Gen Z can be encouraged to make purchases. Thus, the more often consumers are exposed to advertisements on social media, the more consumers can remember the advertisements that have been seen will lead to the decision to buy the advertised product, such that the more favorable social media marketing, the more likely the millennials to buy the local product. Therefore, the following hypotheses were developed:

H1: Marketing local products through social media have a positive influence on Gen Z customers' purchase intention.

2.4. SMM and Brand Image

SMM is a type of marketing communication that makes it easier for customers and brands to communicate (Kim & Ko, 2012). When customers have the impression that a particular brand's social media marketing experience is memorable, helpful, or meaningful, they are more likely to form a favorable image of the brand (Chang & Fan, 2017). Several recent studies have also documented empirical evidence that SMM is a predictor of brand image or customer perception of a brand (Barreda et al., 2020; Bilgin, 2018; Cheung et al., 2019; Kim & Ko, 2012; Mandagi & Aseng, 2021). The more positive the customer's SMM experience, the higher their tendency to form a positive image of a brand. Therefore, this notion and empirical evidence lead to the following hypotheses:

H2: Marketing, local products through social media, have a positive influence on Gen Z customers' perception of brand image.

2.5. Brand Image and Purchase Intention

Brand image has been long considered an important marketing concept. According to Keller and Brexendorf (2019), this association might come from the customers' experiences or information accumulated from multiple sources. Brand image is crucial to brand knowledge when branding a product. In other words, the brand image sums up how customers perceive the brand and the feelings it sparked (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). Thus, a favorable brand might help businesses get a competitive edge in the marketplace.

Marketing literature well documented the relationship between brand image and purchase intention. Brand image is a critical determinant of a customer's intention to purchase a product or service (Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Toding & Mandagi, 2022; Wang & Tsai, 2014). Essentially, a positive or strong brand image conveys the value proposition of a product or service. Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Brand image positively affects intention to purchase, such that the more favourable the brand image of a local product, the more likely the customer is to purchase it.

Since SMM is hypothesized to have a direct effect on brand image and simultaneously has the potential to influence purchase intention, it is reasonable to hypothesize that brand image mediates the influence of SMM on purchase intention. Therefore, the following hypothesis is developed:

H4: Brand image mediates the influences of SMM on purchase intention.

The relationship between the three variables in this study, namely SMM, brand image and purchase intention, and the corresponding hypotheses, is summarized in the conceptual framework as shown in **Figure 1**.
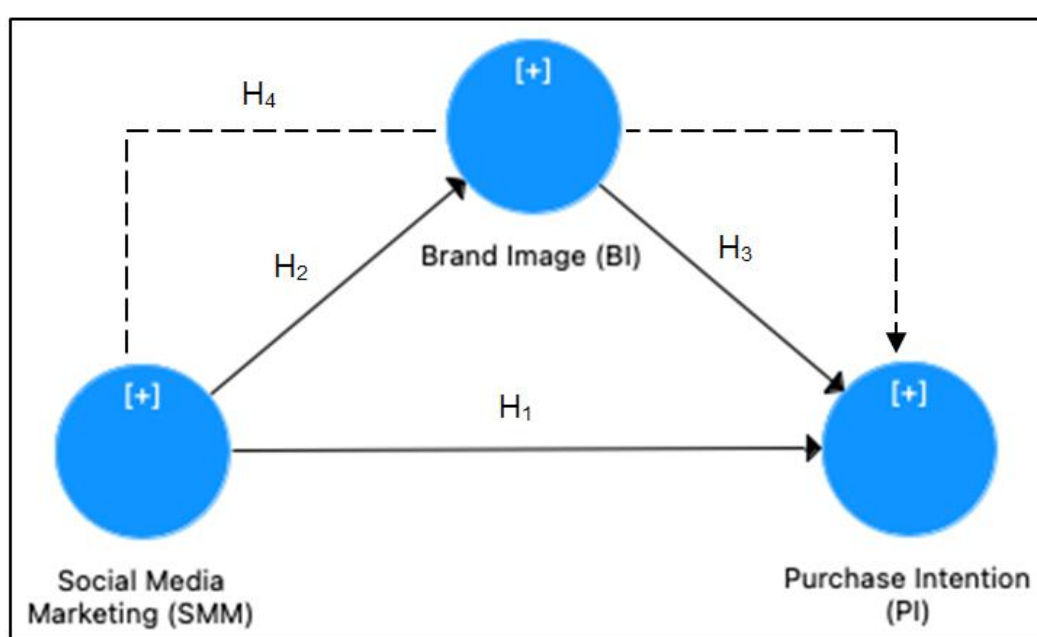

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. Research Methodology
3.1. Research Design

This research design is descriptive to achieve the purpose of this study, which is to determine the perceptions of Gen Z about the influence of social media marketing on the purchase intention of local products. Research with a descriptive design is designed to obtain accurate data about the characteristics of events, people, or situations with structured processes and procedures (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Saunders et al., 2019; Hair et al., 2020; Ghauri et al., 2020). Furthermore, this research used the quantitative survey as the primary data collection technique. Furthermore, data analysis will be processed using the statistical applications SPSS version 26 and SmartPLS version 3. SPSS is used to extract respondents' demographic data and descriptive analysis, while SmartPLS analyses construct validity and reliability and test research hypotheses.

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3.2. Population and Sample

Population describes a generalization area containing objects or subjects with qualities and characteristics following the provisions made by researchers to study and draw conclusions (Sugiyono, 2010). The population in this study is generation Z, namely people with an age range of 16-26 years in Manado City and its surroundings.

Since the population size was too large, including all population members in the study was unattainable. Hence, the sample was selected to represent the population by implementing purposive sampling or sampling with certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2010). Several screening questions were applied to ensure respondents met the criteria, such as age and the type of social media used to search for information about local products. Following the data analysis used in this study (i.e., SEM), the sample size was determined following the N5 formula, where the number of indicators is multiplied by 5 (Hair et al., 2014). Based on the provisions of this formula, the minimum sample size for this study is 140, which is 28 (the number of indicators in this study) multiplied by 5. The number of respondent data collected in this study was 184, exceeding the minimum sample size required for SEM.

3.3. Data and Instrumentation

This study uses a quantitative survey with a questionnaire instrument to collect primary data. The questionnaire in this study consists of 28 statements, indicators of all research variables. The SMM (Social Media Marketing) variable indicator consists of seven statements adopted from (Kim & Ko, 2012; Seo & Park, 2018; Mandagi & Aseng, 2021; Poluan et al., 2022; Wulus et al., 2022). The purchase intention variable indicator consists of 11 statements adopted from (Kim et al., 2008; Dabbous & Barakat, 2020). Brand image is measured by five statements adopted from previous studies (Song et al., 2019; McKercher et al., 2006). Meanwhile, the customer satisfaction variable consists of five statements adopted (Fornell, 1992; Shpetim, 2012; Kotler & Keller, 2012; Orel & Kara, 2013). Respondents were asked to respond to each statement using a Likert scale of 7 points: (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The data collected in this study is primary data using a questionnaire prepared in a Google Form and sent to participants through social media by sharing the link to the questionnaire form. The data collection process was carried out from mid-September to November 2022. Participants were asked to answer screening questions and respond to 28 statement items. Questionnaires that have been filled out online will be automatically recorded. Then the screening questions will be rechecked to ensure that the respondents answer the questions according to the criteria. Questionnaires filled out online by respondents are tabulated automatically by the system, then exported in Microsoft Excel files and processed using SPSS and SmartPLS.

3.5. Data Analysis

The data analysis process begins with the descriptive analysis stage using the descriptive statistics menu on SPSS. This process aims to determine whether the data filled in by respondents has been inputted correctly and according to the scale used. This stage is also deemed necessary to capture the suitability of the sample size and present the demographic profile of respondents, such as age, city of residence, occupation of respondents, and type of frequently used social media. The next stage of data analysis is structural equation modelling

(SEM). SEM is a system of linear equations where several constructs are combined. SEM's advantage over traditional multivariate techniques lies in the ability to estimate the relationship between several constructs (latent variables) in the measurement model and test complex relationships between several constructs simultaneously (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). Data analysis based on SEM procedures is broken down into several stages. First convergent validity testing. Convergent validity is fulfilled if the factor loading value of all variable indicators is above 0.7 (Hair et al., 2014). Second, the discriminant validity test was carried out with the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and cross-loading. Based on the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, discriminant validity is satisfied when the square root of the AVE (average variance extracted) is higher than the correlation between different variables. Furthermore, based on the cross-loading criterion, discriminant validity is achieved when the correlation between the variable and its indicator is higher than the correlation between the variable and the indicators of other variables.

The third stage in SEM is the reliability test which is carried out by analyzing Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR) and AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values. Variables are declared reliable if they have CA and CR values> 0.7 and AVE> 0.50. After all validity and reliability indicators are met, structural model testing is carried out. Structural model testing or hypothesis testing by looking at the significance of the path coefficient using the Bootstrapping feature in SmartPLS statistical software. The relationship between variables in the model is classified as a significant relationship when the path coefficient is statistically significant (Hair et al., 2014).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Respondents Demographic Data

Based on **Table 1**, which represents the demographics of 184 respondents, the majority of Gen Z respondents are 21-26 years old, with 120 people (65.2%), and for Gen Z respondents aged 16-20 years, there are 64 people (34.8%). Gender distribution shows that the majority of respondents are women, with 127 respondents (69%), while for men, there are 57 respondents (31%). Professional status data shows that there are 80 respondents (43%) who are students, 3 respondents (2%) are housewives, and 17 respondents (9%) do not have a job. The remaining 84 people (46%) are already working.

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Profile

Variable	Level		Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	57	31
	Female	127	69
Age	16-20	64	34.8
	21-26	120	65.2
Occupation	Students	80	43
	Employee	50	27
	Entrepreneur	20	11
	Unemployed	17	9
	Other	15	9

Variable	Level		Percentage (%)
Frequently Used Social Media	Facebook	71	39
	Instagram	137	74
	TikTok	102	55
	Twitter	12	7

Gen Z respondents in this study who used Instagram as a medium to find information about local products were 137 respondents (74%). The second place is Tiktok (55%), followed by Facebook (39%). Respondents who still use Twitter are relatively few (7%). It can be concluded that the majority of Gen Z respondents use Instagram. Respondents who do not utilize Instagram are only 26% of all respondents. Some respondents did not use Tiktok, and 71% of some respondents did not use Facebook. From the results of this study, there were 71 respondents (39%) who used Facebook. Out of 71 respondents, 23 (32%) consisted of respondents with an age range of 16-20 years and 48 (68%) with an age range of 21-26 years. These results align with the statements of Duffy et al. (2018) and Vitelar (2019), which stated that there is a reduction in Facebook users, especially in Gen Z with younger ages. It can be concluded that Instagram and TikTok are the most popular social media among Gen Z, especially in their use to get information about local products.

It should be noted that based on the respondent demographic data table, all respondents are using social media to find information about local products. This result supports previous studies that state that this generational cohort is the most active social media user. Hence, it is also the most easily exposed to digital advertising (e.g., Vitelar, 2019).

4.2. Descriptive Statistic

Table 2 summarizes the descriptive data of the research variables in the form of the mean value, standard deviation and variance. The data shows that the mean value of the SMM variable of 5.66 exceeds the standard deviation value of 0.88, indicating that this study is homogeneous and without a large gap in the SMM variable. Other variables, namely purchase intention, brand image, and customer satisfaction, also have mean values exceeding the standard deviation value, leading to the same conclusion.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Variance
SMM	184	5.66	0.88	0.77
Purchase Intention	184	5.27	1.00	1.01
Brand Image	184	5.15	0.99	0.98

4.3. Measurement Model

Measurement model testing was carried out before conducting hypothesis or structural model testing. Measurement model testing is also carried out to test the validity and reliability of each variable, namely SMM, purchase intention, brand image and customer satisfaction. Measurement model analysis is carried out using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method with the help of SmartPLS.

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The first stage of measurement model testing results shows that of the 28 indicators used in this study, there is one indicator (PI3) whose factor loading value is below 07. After the indicator was removed from the model, the second stage of measurement model testing was carried out, the results of which are shown in **Figure 2** and **Table 3**. These results show that all indicators have a factor loading value above 0.7. Thus, all indicators of the measured variables have met the convergent validity standards.
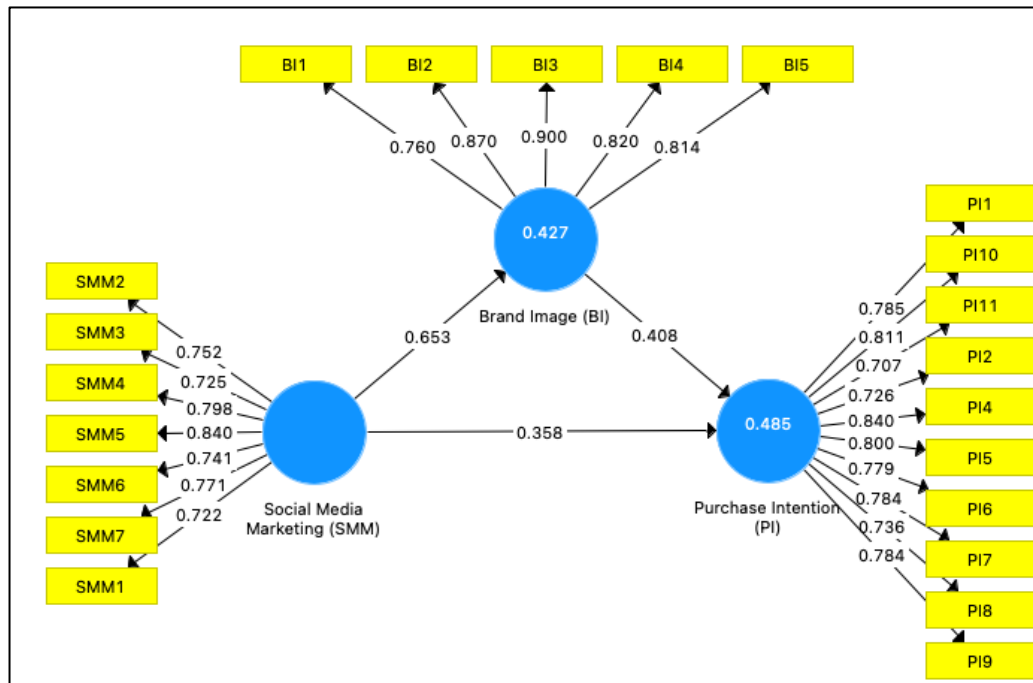
Figure 2. Measurement Model Test Results with PLS Algorithm

Table 3. Factor loading of variable indicator

Variable	Indicator	Factor Loading
SMM	SMM1	0.72
	SMM2	0.75
	SMM3	0.73
	SMM4	0.80
	SMM5	0.84
	SMM6	0.74
	SMM7	0.77
Brand Image	BI1	0.76
	BI2	0.87
	BI3	0.90
	BI4	0.82
	BI5	0.81
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.79
	PI2	0.73

Variable	Indicator	Factor Loading
	PI4	0.84
	PI5	0.80
	PI6	0.78
	PI7	0.78
	PI8	0.74
	PI9	0.78
	PI10	0.81
	PI11	0.71

The second stage in the measurement model testing is the discriminant validity test by looking at the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and cross-loading. In the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, the validity test is carried out by comparing the square root value of the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) in each correlation between variables in the model. Discriminant validity of the variable is fulfilled if the square root value of the AVE exceeds the correlation between other variables (Hair et al., 2020). Validity testing using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and cross-loading is shown in **Table 4** and **Table 5**.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	BI	PI	SMM
Brand Image (BI)	0.834		
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.641	0.776	
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	0.653	0.625	0.834

Table 5. Cross-Loading Test Results

	Brand Image	Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
BI1	0.755	0.478	0.515
BI2	0.872	0.529	0.559
BI3	0.902	0.591	0.594
BI4	0.820	0.519	0.511
BI5	0.816	0.548	0.540
PI1	0.503	0.778	0.517
PI10	0.600	0.809	0.549
PI11	0.579	0.703	0.463
PI2	0.424	0.721	0.394
PI4	0.462	0.837	0.461
PI5	0.506	0.796	0.451
PI6	0.496	0.772	0.460
PI7	0.453	0.793	0.492

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	Brand Image	Purchase Intention	Social Media Marketing
PI8	0.432	0.747	0.494
PI9	0.482	0.795	0.533
SMM2	0.497	0.373	0.754
SMM3	0.464	0.415	0.723
SMM4	0.571	0.525	0.796
SMM5	0.587	0.501	0.840
SMM6	0.472	0.502	0.736
SMM7	0.468	0.537	0.774
SMM1	0.420	0.480	0.724

Based on the cross-loading test results in **Table 4**, the square root of the AVE for each variable. All variables fulfil the criteria because the square root of the AVE where these variables are greater than the correlation with other variables. Thus, based on the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, the indicator variables in this study have good discriminant validity. Meanwhile, the cross-loading test results in **Table 5** show that this research indicator also has good discriminant validity. This result can be seen from the correlation value between the indicators of the parent variable, which is higher than the correlation value between the variable and the indicators of other variables.

Reliability tests for variables are conducted by analyzing Cronbach's alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR) and AVE. The reliability test results can be seen in **Table 6**. The results of the variable reliability test in this study indicate that the CA and CR values of all variables are above 0.7, and the AVE value on all variables is above 0.5 value, thus proving that all variables have good reliability (Hair et al., 2020).

Table 6. Results of the Reliability Test

	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
Brand Image	0.890	0.896	0.919	0.696
Purchase Intention	0.926	0.929	0.938	0.602
Social Media Marketing	0.881	0.886	0.908	0.585

4.4. Structural Model (Inner Model)

After all variable indicators have been confirmed for validity and reliability, structural model testing is performed to test the hypotheses developed in this study. Hypothesis testing is analyzed from the significance of the path coefficient using the Bootstrapping menu in SmartPLS. **Figure 3** and **Table 7** show the results of structural model testing.
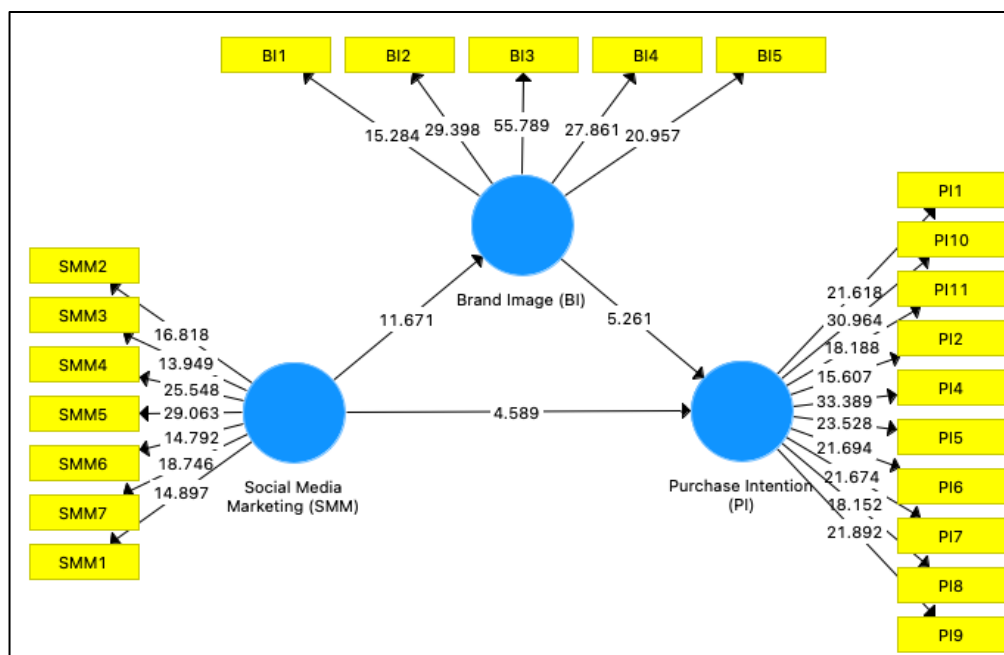
Figure 3. Structural Model Testing Results with PLS Bootstrapping

Table 7. Result of the Structural Model Testing

Relationship between Variable	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Remarks
BI -> PI	0.412	0.078	5.26	0.000	Significant
SMM -> BI	0.657	0.056	11.67	0.000	Significant
SMM-> PI	0.362	0.078	4.58	0.000	Significant

The results summarized in **Figure 3** and **Table 7** support this study's first hypothesis (H1), which predicts that local marketing products through social media to Gen Z positively and significantly influence their intention to purchase the products. This can be seen from the path relation of SMM to purchase intention, which is significant (ß=11.45, p-value <0.01). Hence, local products that use marketing through social media on Gen Z can shape the purchase intention of Gen Z.

Second, the result uncovers a positive and significant influence of SMM on the brand image (ß=11.435, p-value <0.01), which confirms H2 indicating that social media marketing of local products to Gen Z can significantly shape Gen Z's perception of local product brand image.

Third, concerning H3, the result shows that brand image positively and significantly influences intention to purchase (ß=11.43, p-value<0.001). This result indicates that when Gen Z has a good perception of a local product brand, they tend to make a purchase decision.

Fourth and last, further analysis is conducted to determine the possible mediating role of brand image on the effect of SMM on purchase intention. The results, as shown in **Table 7**, confirm H4 that the brand image variable partially mediates the effect of SMM on purchase intention. The conclusion about this partial mediation role is drawn from the significant value detected in the direct effect of SMM on purchase intention (ß=11.67, p-value<0.001) and the indirect effect of SMM on purchase intention that flows through brand image purchase (ß=4.40,

p-value<0.001). This indicates that a good brand image of local products built through social media marketing activities will lead to Gen Z customers' intention to purchase.

Table 8. Results of Mediation Effect Testing

Relationship between Variable	STDEV	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Remarks
SMM -> BI	0.056	11.67	0.000	Significant
SMM -> BI-> PI	0.061	4.40	0.000	Significant

At the final stage, the goodness of fit model was checked by analyzing the criteria that must be met, including the SRMR value being lower than 0.8 and NFI being lower than 0.9. These criteria are met, proving that the model used is appropriate or fits the data.

Table 9. Test the Goodness of the Fit Model

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.069	0.090
d_ULS	1.782	3.077
d_G	1.032	1.083
Chi-Square	1004.88	1014.64
NFI	0.761	0.759

5. Conclusion

Although This research provides valuable insights for local product developers, particularly regarding the importance of social media marketing in shaping Gen Z's purchase intention, the results of the data analysis uncovered four significant findings. First, SMM for local products positively and significantly influences Gen Z's purchase intention. Thus, marketing through social media has the potential to strengthen Gen Z's purchase intention towards local products; where when there is a positive and effective utilization of social media for local marketing products, it will lead to the formation of purchase intention from Gen Z. Conversely, the lack of utilization of social media in marketing local products will weaken the purchase intention of Gen Z.

Second, SMM is found to be a significant determinant of the brand image of local products. In this sense, marketing through social media helps local product developers to guide the formation of Gen Z perceptions of local product brands. This study also provides additional empirical evidence on the link between brand image and intention to purchase. This finding indicates that a positive brand image of local products leads to Gen Z's intention to purchase.

Lastly, the result of this study confirms the mediating role of brand image in the relationship between SMM and purchase intention. Local product marketers must therefore utilize social media in marketing products to Gen Z to achieve product sales targets. The most effective social media to market local products to Gen Z are Instagram and TikTok, the most popular social media among them. They are most widely used in exploring information about local products.

Local product business practitioners and marketers also need to pay attention and plan

carefully how product values can be communicated creatively through marketing content displayed on social media to provide useful information because marketing through social media has a positive and significant influence on the brand image of local products. If the content displayed is interesting and follows the expectations of Gen Z, it will create a positive local product brand image. Conversely, if the content displayed is not interesting and does not match the expectations of Gen Z, a negative brand image will be created. The utilization of social media marketing can also continue to maintain attachment or engagement with customers even long after the purchase is made so that it can form customer satisfaction. This is another important reason for local product developers to market products using social media to maintain good customer perceptions and customer loyalty relationships.

Gen Z's purchasing decisions for local products can potentially improve the Indonesian economy. More research needs to be done to study Gen Z's perceptions of local product marketing strategies so that local product developers can gain insight into the right marketing strategies for Gen Z. Future research can further investigate what important factors are contained in social media content that can increase the purchase intention and favourability of Gen Z, especially for the exploration of local products in Indonesia which are still rare.

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The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

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