



Product Quality and Packaging: Enhancing Purchase Decisions through Purchase Intention as a Mediating Variable (Study on SilverQueen Products for Gen Z in Malang City)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to analyze and test the effect of product quality and product packaging on purchasing decisions with purchase intention as a mediating variable on SilverQueen products for Gen Z in Malang City. This research is a quantitative study with a descriptive approach involving 135 Gen Z respondents from five districts in Malang City. The sample was taken using purposive sampling technique. The research location covers five sub-districts in Malang City, namely Blimbing, Kedungkandang, Klojen, Lowokwaru, and Sukun, with respondents who consume or have consumed SilverQueen products. Measurement of indicators on variables is carried out using a Likert Scale (1-5), which has five levels of answer preference. Data collection was done through an online questionnaire using Google Form, and the results were analyzed with Smart-PLS 4.0 statistical software. The research shows the following results: Product Quality has a negative influence on Purchasing Decisions on SilverQueen Chocolate Products as well as Product Packaging has no significant or negative effect on Purchasing Decisions for SilverQueen Chocolate Products. Product Quality has a positive influence on Purchase Intention on SilverQueen Chocolate Products. Product Packaging has no significant or negative effect on Buying Interest in SilverQueen Chocolate Products. Purchase Intention has a positive influence on Purchasing Decisions on SilverQueen Chocolate Products. The mediating relationship between Product Quality on Purchasing Decisions for SilverQueen Chocolate Products with Purchase Intention has a positive and significant effect. The mediating relationship between Product Packaging on Purchasing Decisions for SilverQueen Chocolate Products with Purchase Intention has a negative and insignificant effect.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, food and beverages are one of several industrial sectors that are worth developing. Nevertheless, the products created by micro, small and medium enterprises are not inferior to the products released by large entrepreneurs. The market competition in Indonesia is very tight,

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they compete with each other to be able to be the most marketable. In this case, the company will make various marketing strategies it carries out, including making a number of decisions regarding product attributes, branding, labeling, packaging and product support services so that potential consumers are interested in the products offered, and are interested in purchasing the company's products (Rosandi & Sudarwanto, 2014). Citing data from Kantar Worldpanel Indonesia, chocolate turns out to be one of the most popular foods for young people. Evidently, young people account for 29.8% of total chocolate sales in Indonesia.

Chocolate is a sweet food made from processed cocoa beans. Today, many chocolate brands are available in the market. Based on data from the International Cocoa Organization (ICCO), Indonesia is included in the list of countries with the most cocoa bean production in the world, ranking sixth. Indonesia's cocoa bean production was recorded at 180 thousand tons in the period 2021 to 2022. According to the Indonesiabaik website, in the last five years, cocoa production in Indonesia has consistently been above 700 thousand tons per year. The islands of Sumatra and Sulawesi are the top cocoa producers, with almost 80% of cocoa beans produced on the two islands.

According to DataBooks, as of July 2022, Indonesia is the sixth largest chocolate consuming country in the world. In 2021, the average per capita chocolate consumption in Indonesia is 7.3 kg. Switzerland came in first with a consumption of 11.6 kg per capita in the same period. Lithuania follows with 11.2 kg per capita, followed by the United States with 9 kg, Australia with 7.6 kg, and Canada with 7.4 kg. Italy is just below Indonesia with a consumption of 6.7 kg per capita, followed by Germany and Mexico with 5.7 kg each, and Japan with 5.5 kg per capita. There are several factors that consumers consider when buying chocolate.

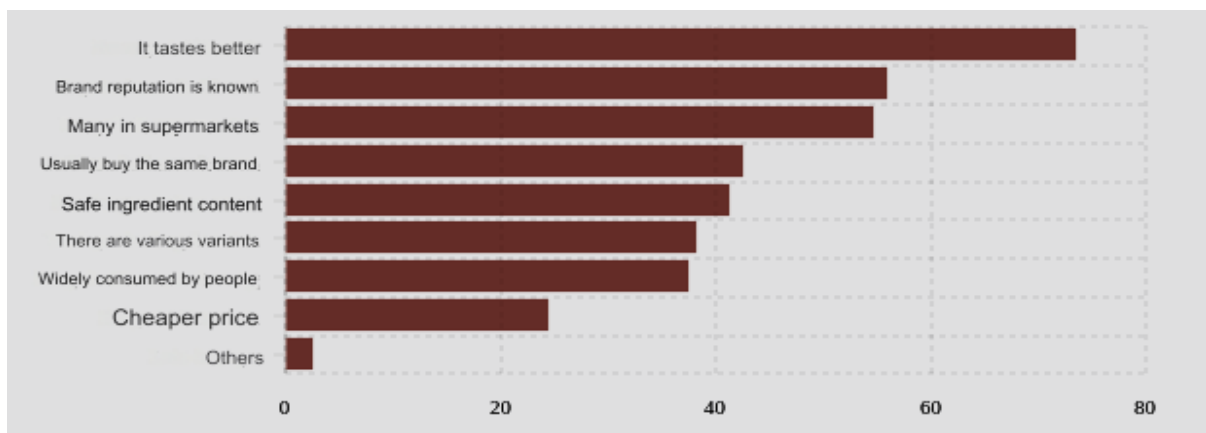


Figure 1. Some Factors Considered in Choosing a Chocolate Brand.

Source: Nabila Muhammad 2023

According to Kotler & Armstrong, (2008), purchasing decisions involve choosing a preferred brand, which is influenced by several factors such as purchasing decisions and desires. In addition, purchasing decisions are the process by which consumers buy or transact a product or service (Baroroh & Sutanto, 2021). Many respondents also chose a particular brand of chocolate because of its good reputation 55.9 percent and its easy availability in supermarkets or mini markets 54.7 percent. Other reasons such as being used to consuming the same brand, safe ingredients, or availability of various sizes and variants of chocolate were chosen by fewer respondents.

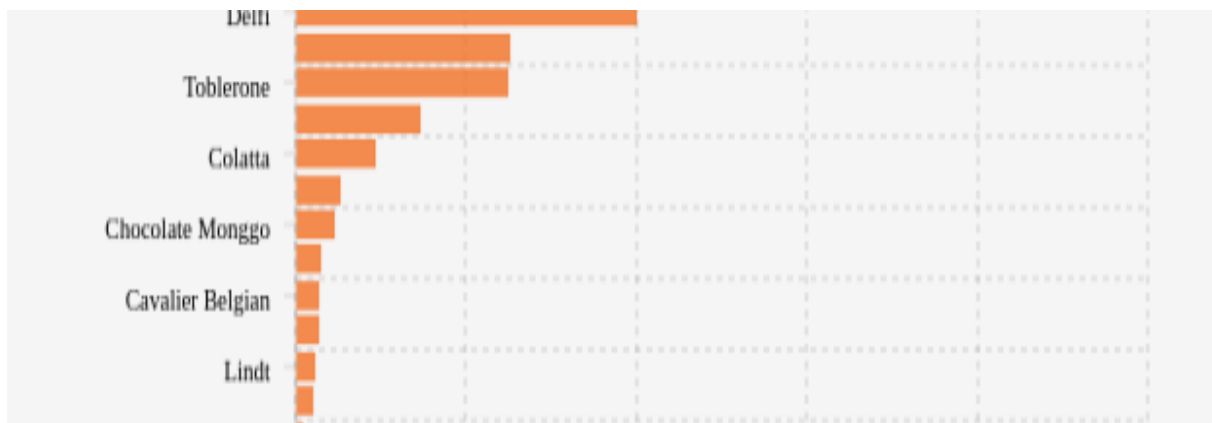


Figure 2. Chocolate Brands Commonly Consumed in Indonesia

Source : Nabila Muhammad , 2022

According to a report titled "Top Brand Index 2021" in the Top Brand Gen Z category, SilverQueen is the favorite chocolate bar brand among teenagers in Indonesia. The Top Brand index (TBI) score for the chocolate product reached 56.2% (Tifani, 2022). Given that SilverQueen is the most popular chocolate brand in Indonesia, especially Generation Z, it is interesting to examine the factors that become consumer decisions in choosing Silverqueen Chocolate.

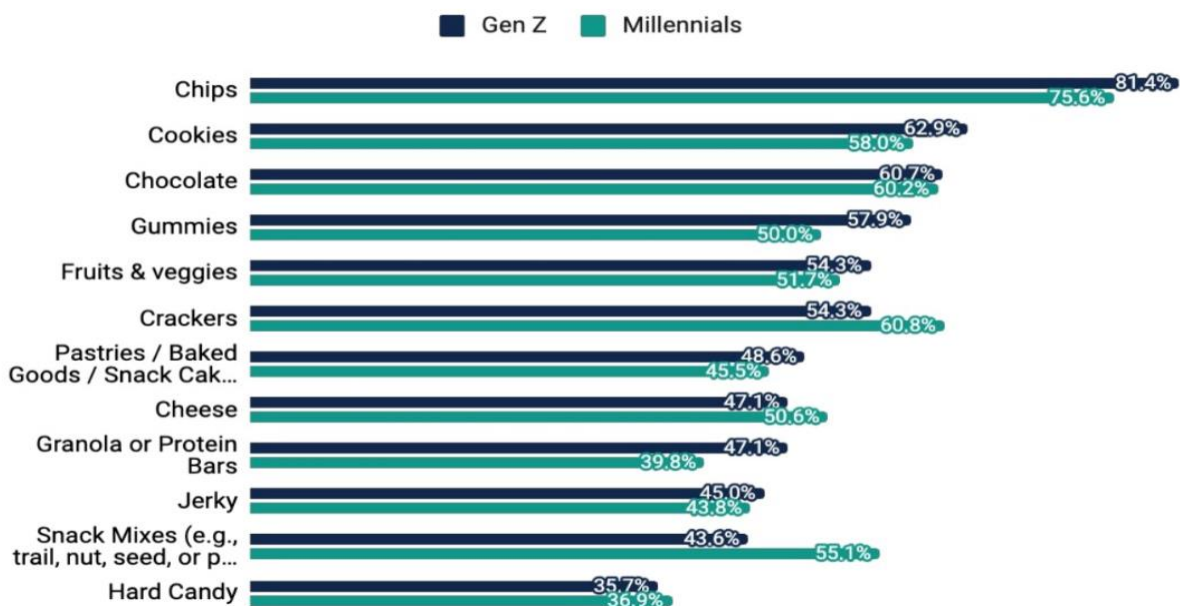


Figure 3 Gen Z and millennials' most popular snacks

Source : Rachel Gignac 2023

Reported by cspdailynews, Gen Z tends to have a sweet tooth and chocolate is Gen Z's most favorite food after chips. Despite a decline of 8.9% in 2020, SilverQueen is ranked as the first favorite chocolate brand in Indonesia with a top brand index (TBI) of 52.8% in 2021. The sales percentage of Silverqueen chocolate still far exceeds other competing chocolate brands in Indonesia. SilverQueen has consistently maintained its position as the most favorite chocolate bar brand in Indonesia.

In addition to good product quality, another marketing strategy that has brought SilverQueen to be recognized as the most desirable chocolate is attractive packaging.

SilverQueen products cleverly realize that packaging has an important influence in creating an unforgettable first impression in the eyes of consumers. Therefore, SilverQueen invests in packaging designs that are exclusive, elegant and intriguing. Each SilverQueen chocolate package is designed with great attention to detail and aesthetics. The packaging often uses soft colors, classic touches and metallic shades that create a luxurious and classy impression. A clean and minimalist design style is also chosen to bring an aura of elegance and maintain a sense of sophistication. Not only eye-catching, SilverQueen's packaging also comes with a distinctive logo, which is instantly identifiable and recognizable by consumers. In addition, the impact of packaging on purchasing decisions is much faster and almost immediate as buyers usually react to product packaging at the point of purchase. As such, packaging is often designed to have a more immediate visual impact directly on the buyer. What's more, customers typically do not spend much time or energy evaluating familiar low-cost products and tend to rely on the visual properties of the packaging, and the product itself, when making their purchasing decisions (Kotler et al., 2022).

Based on the data above, SilverQueen is a favorite chocolate among Indonesians. Its popularity is supported by several factors, such as delicious taste, soft texture, affordable price, ease of obtaining the product, and the variety of flavors available. Product quality is an important element that functions as a development or differentiator of a product, provides added value and benefits, and is a consideration in making purchasing decisions (Ritonga et al., 2018). However, Indonesia's cocoa production this year is expected to decline due to weather factors, El Nino, and production limitations. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that Indonesia produced 641,700 tons of cocoa beans in 2023, down 1.36 percent compared to the previous year. The volume, which accounts for 10 percent of the world's total cocoa production, is now a bone of contention for other countries that cannot import enough cocoa from Africa. The scarcity of goods also means that farmers' production of any quality will be absorbed by processing industries that are already struggling to find what they need. However, they do not know when the high prices will bring them profits. If the climate worsens again this year, cocoa prices could spike again. However, if Africa is able to harvest cocoa again and production in Indonesia can be increased, cocoa prices could fall again.

According to Rachmawati et al., (2019) purchasing decisions are an action or consumer behavior in determining whether or not to buy a product or service. Based on research by Handayani & Purnama, (2023) conducted research on quality on consumer decisions in buying products and the results presented the conclusion that product quality influences consumer decisions in purchasing a product. In addition, research conducted by Zhou et al., (2023) revealed that product packaging has several factors that influence purchasing decisions. Likewise, research conducted by Uddin et al., (2022) which shows that product packaging has a positive influence on purchasing decisions.

Every product must have more value and advantages than competing products in terms of quality, design, shape, size, packaging, service, warranty, and taste in order to attract customers to try and buy these products (Farida & Lamsah, 2019). According to Fadila Ahmad et al., (2022) if the quality of a product is good, it can create a desire or buying interest from consumers, and vice versa, if the quality of the product is not good, it cannot create a sense of buying interest from consumers. Consumers usually evaluate quality by comparing perceived and expected quality levels (Suttikun & Meeprom, 2021). Purchase interest is the actions and attitudes taken by consumers in the decision-making process and purchase planning for a brand. According to (Salimun & Sugiyanto, 2019). Therefore, a good marketing strategy must consider things such as Product Quality and Product Packaging so that consumers are more interested and make better purchasing decisions.

2. METHOD

This research is a quantitative study with a descriptive approach involving 135 Gen Z respondents from five sub-districts in Malang City. The sample was taken using purposive sampling technique. According to Sugiyono & Lestari, (2021) purposive sampling is a sample selection technique based on certain considerations that are in accordance with the interests and objectives of the study. The research location covers five sub-districts in Malang City, namely Blimbing, Kedungkandang, Klojen, Lowokwaru, and Sukun, with respondents who consume or have consumed SilverQueen products. Measurement of indicators on variables is carried out using a Likert Scale (1-5), which has five levels of answer preference. Data collection was conducted through an online questionnaire using Google Form, and the results were analyzed with Smart-PLS 4.0 statistical software.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

3.1.1. Outer Model

The data results in this study were analyzed using SmartPLS software version 4.0, which is an implementation of the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method. The answers collected from respondents were organized into data tables for further processing. The data was analyzed to identify the model and test the significance of the relationship between variables in the study. The use of SmartPLS ensures the validity and reliability of the data used in this study.

3.1.2. Convergent Validity Analysis Test

Convergent Validity Analysis Test Outer loading > 0.7 , communality 0.5, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) > 0.5 , are the rule of thumb criteria for convergent validity according to (Abdillah & Hartono, 2015).

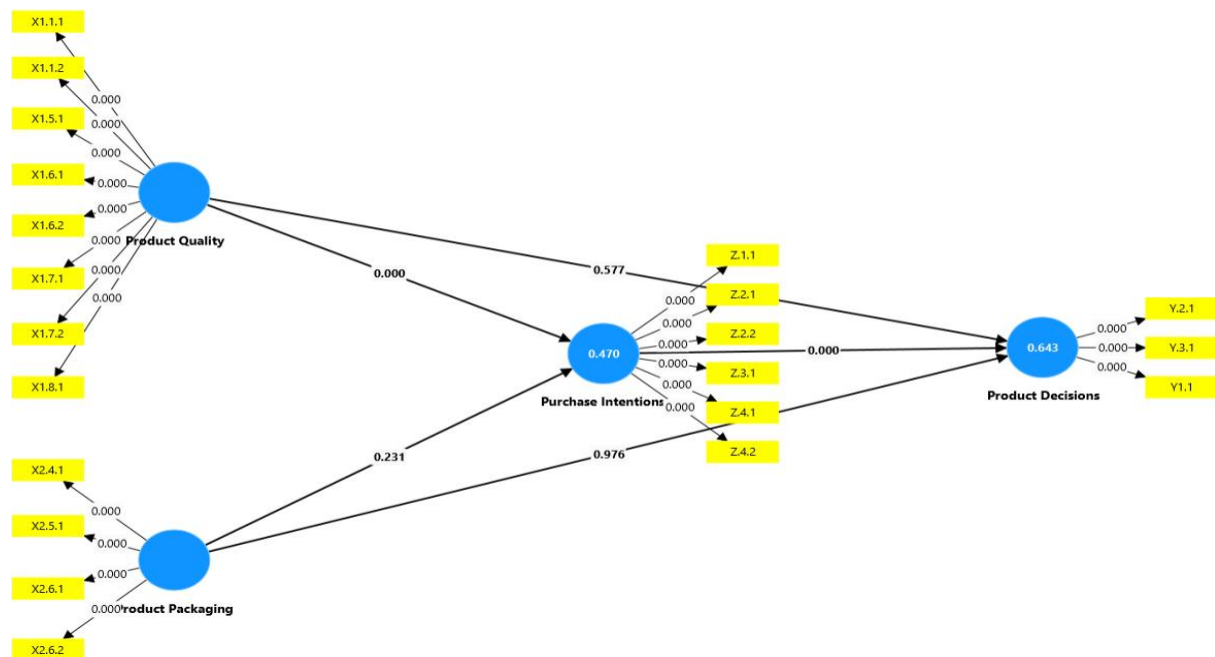


Figure 4. PLS Inner Model Path Diagram

After going through the outer model analysis stage, the results of convergent validity are shown in Figure 3. This convergent validity value reflects the factors on latent variables with their indicators. Indicators are considered to meet the valid criteria if the loading factor value is > 0.7 . However, in explanatory research, a loading factor value of $> 0.5 - 0.6$ is still acceptable Ghozali & Latan, (2015) The figure shows the loading factor or outer loading value of each indicator on the research variables. Based on the displayed values, it can be seen that the outer loading value for the variables of Product Quality, Product Packaging, Purchasing Decisions, and Purchase Intention is above 0.6. Therefore, it can be concluded that all indicators observed in this study meet the criteria for convergent validity and are declared valid.

3.1.3 Reliability Test

Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha are the two main methods used to test construct reliability. Researchers use these two methods to evaluate the reliability of a construct. A construct is considered reliable if its Composite Reliability value is more than 0.6 and its Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.7. However, for explanatory research, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.6 is considered sufficient (Abdillah & Hartono, 2015). The Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values for each research variable are as follows Table 1.

Table 1. Reliability

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	rho_a	rho_c	AVE	Explanation
Product Packaging	0.811	0.829	0.874	0.635	Reliable
Purchase Decisions	0.787	0.805	0.875	0.700	Reliable
Product Quality	0.895	0.896	0.916	0.576	Reliable
Purchase Intentions	0.898	0.900	0.922	0.663	Reliable

3.1.4 Structural Model (Inner Model)

Table 2. R-square

Variable	R-square	R-square adjusted
Purchasing Decisions	0.643	0.636
Purchase Intention	0.470	0.462

Based on the data shown in Table 2, the R-Square value for the purchasing decision variable is 0.643 or 64.3%. This shows that Product Quality and Product Packaging have a contribution of 64.3% to purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, the R-Square value for the purchase intention variable is 0.470 or 47%. This means that Product Quality and Product Packaging through purchase intention contribute 47%.

3.1.5 Hypothesis Test Results of direct and indirect effects

Hypothesis testing seeks to provide an explanation of the relationship between the variables studied. The t-test is a statistical method for testing hypotheses by comparing the t-statistic and t-table results. A variable is said to have a good or significant effect if the t-statistic is greater than the t-table. In addition, the p value below 0.05 indicates that the variable has a significant or acceptable effect. The following is an explanation of hypothesis testing:

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing of Direct and Indirect Effects

Independent Variable	Mediating Variable	Dependent Variable	T statistics	P values	Explanation
Product Quality		Purchasing Decisions	0.558	0.577	not accepted
Product Packaging		Purchasing Decisions	0.030	0.976	not accepted
Product Quality		Purchase Intention	3.569	0.000	accepted
Product Packaging		Purchase Intention	1.198	0.231	not accepted
	Purchase Intention	Purchasing Decisions	9.622	0.000	accepted
Product Quality	Purchase Intention	Purchasing Decisions	3.459	0.001	accepted
Product Packaging	Purchase Intention	Purchasing Decisions	1.156	0.248	not accepted

Above illustrates the relationship between variables as a whole overall, the table explains that each relationship has a significant and insignificant relationship and provides detailed explanation of the influence between variables. The relationship between product quality and purchasing decisions when viewed from the t-statistic value of 0.558, which is smaller than the t-table of 1.96, indicates that this relationship is not significant. With a p-value of 0.577 which is greater than 0.05, the hypothesis stating “the effect of Product Quality on purchasing decisions” is rejected. The relationship between Product Packaging and purchasing decisions is seen from the t-statistic value of 0.030, which is smaller than the t-table of 1.96, indicating that this relationship is not significant. With a p-value of 0.976 which is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the Product Packaging variable has no significant effect on Purchasing Decisions.

The relationship between Product Quality and Purchase Intention is seen from the t-statistic value of 3.569, which is greater than the t-table of 1.96, indicating that this relationship is significant. With a p-value of 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05, the hypothesis stating “the effect of Product Quality on Purchase Intention” is accepted. The relationship between Product Packaging and Purchase Intention is seen from the t-statistic value of 1.198, which is smaller than the t-table of 1.96, indicating that this relationship is not significant. With a p-value of 0.231 which is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the Product Packaging variable has no significant effect on Purchase Intention. The relationship between Purchase Intention and purchasing decisions is seen from the t-statistic value of 9.622, which is greater than the t-table of 1.96, indicating that this relationship is significant. With a p-value of 0.000 which is smaller than 0.05, the hypothesis stating “the effect of Purchase Intention on purchasing decisions” is accepted.

Product Quality indirectly has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions mediated by Purchase Intention in consumers of SilverQueen chocolate products in Malang City, so this hypothesis (H6) is accepted. The results of the analysis show that Product Quality has a positive and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions through Purchase Intention, with a T-statistic value of 3.459, which is greater than the t-table of 1.96. The p-value of 0.001, which is smaller than 0.05, confirms that the mediating relationship between Product Quality and Purchasing Decisions with Purchase Intention is significant. Product Packaging has no significant effect on Purchasing Decisions mediated by Purchase Intention in consumers of SilverQueen chocolate products in Malang City, so this hypothesis (H7) is rejected. The results of the analysis show that Product Packaging has a negative and insignificant effect on Purchasing Decisions through Purchase Intention, with a T-statistic value of 1.156, which is

smaller than the t-table of 1.96. The p-value of 0.248, which is greater than 0.05, indicates that the mediation relationship between Product Packaging and Purchasing Decisions with Purchase Intention is not significant.

3.2 Discussion

The table shows thThis study aims to examine the quality of products and product packaging on purchasing decisions through buying interest in SilverQueen products on Gen Z. This research formulates 7 hypotheses and analyzed using the structural equation model method using Smart-PLS 4. The results of the analysis show that the 7 hypotheses in this study are supported.

The first hypothesis in this study is that product quality has a negative and insignificant effect on purchasing decisions in SilverQueen Chocolate. The results of the analysis show that product quality may not always be the main determinant in purchasing decisions, especially if the product offered is in a category that is well known and considered standard by consumers. Other factors such as price, promotion, or brand can have a greater influence in influencing purchasing decisions, especially in highly competitive markets or when consumers have other product alternatives of similar quality. These results contradict previous research by Putri Rahmawati & Prawoto, (2023), which found that product quality has a positive influence on purchasing decisions. This difference can be caused by contextual factors such as differences in respondent demographics, the type of product studied, or data collection methods.

The second hypothesis in this study is that product packaging has a negative and insignificant effect on purchasing decisions in SilverQueen Chocolate. The results of the analysis show that this finding is different from the research of Uddin et al., (2022), which shows that product packaging has a positive effect on purchasing decisions. According to Zhou et al., (2023), revealed that product packaging has several factors that influence purchasing decisions. has several factors that influence purchasing decisions. However, there are similarities with research conducted by Melia & AC, (2023), that product packaging has no effect on purchasing decisions.

The third hypothesis in this study is that product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention in SilverQueen Chocolate. The results of the analysis show that good product quality tends to increase consumer confidence in the brand or product. Consumers who perceive high quality in a particular product will be more likely to be attracted and have a high purchase interest, because they feel that the product meets or exceeds their expectations. This strengthens the argument that product quality is a key factor in attracting purchase intention. These results are in line with Haitao, (2022), who found that product quality has an influence on consumer purchase intention, as well as Andrian et al., (2024), who support these findings.

The fourth hypothesis in this study is that product packaging has a negative and insignificant effect on purchase intention in SilverQueen Chocolate. The results of the analysis show that there is a difference with the research of Mateen Khan et al., (2018), which found that product packaging has an influence on purchase intention. This may indicate that in certain contexts, packaging is not considered a major factor influencing purchase intention.

The fifth hypothesis in this study is that buying interest has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for SilverQueen Chocolate. These results are in line with the research of Kurnianto et al., (2019), which found that there is a significant and positive influence between buying interest on purchasing decisions. The results of the analysis show that purchase intention is an important indicator of consumer behavior because it reflects their intention to make a purchase. Consumers who show high purchase interest have usually gone through a mature evaluation process, so they are more likely to proceed with a purchase

decision. This shows that purchase intention is not just an intention, but also a strong predictor of actual purchase behavior.

The sixth hypothesis in this study is that product quality has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions through buying interest in SilverQueen chocolate. These results are in line with the research of Syaharni & Kesumahati, (2023), which concluded that brand image, product quality, and promotion have a significant and positive influence on purchasing decisions through buying interest. Purchase interest serves as a bridge that connects consumers' perceptions of product quality with their purchasing decisions. Consumers who have a high purchase intention due to good product quality are more likely to realize this intention in the form of a purchase decision. This confirms the importance of strategies that enhance perceptions of product quality to influence purchase intention and, ultimately, purchase decisions.

The seventh hypothesis in this study is that product packaging has a negative and insignificant effect on purchasing decisions through buying interest in SilverQueen Chocolate. This result contradicts the research of (willy & siti Nurjanah, 2019), which shows that packaging has an effect on purchasing decisions through buying interest. this indicates that packaging is not always a factor that influences purchasing decisions, especially if buying interest is not strong enough. When packaging does not have a significant impact on purchase intention, it is most likely because the packaging does not provide enough added value for consumers to influence their purchasing decisions. This suggests that packaging must be more than just aesthetics; it must be able to add value or strong emotional appeal in order to significantly influence purchase decisions through purchase intent.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine the effect of product quality and product packaging on purchasing decisions, both directly and through mediating variables, namely purchase intention, on SilverQueen chocolate products for Gen Z in Malang City. Based on the data analysis conducted, several main conclusions can be drawn as follows: 1) Product quality does not have a significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions directly. 2) Product packaging also does not show a significant influence on purchasing decisions. 3) Product quality is shown to have a significant influence on consumer buying interest . 4) Product packaging does not have a significant influence on buying interest 5). Buying interest is shown to have a significant and positive influence on purchasing decisions. 6) Product quality has a significant influence on purchasing decisions when mediated by buying interest. and 7) Product packaging does not have a significant influence on purchasing decisions, either directly or through buying interest.

Therefore, the researcher provides suggestions, namely, 1) companies can focus more on product quality improvement strategies to increase consumer buying interest and purchasing decisions, while re-evaluation of packaging strategies may be needed to find more effective ways to increase product attractiveness through this aspect. 2) companies should re-evaluate existing packaging designs. It may be necessary to conduct further research to understand the packaging elements that really attract the attention of consumers who attract Gen Z, such as the color, shape, information presented, or material used. 3) Companies can also hold creative promotions, provide excellent customer service, and create a positive experience when buying products can increase buying interest and encourage purchasing decisions, especially for Gen Z as the largest consumer.

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