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THE INFLUENCE OF GEN Z: PRODUCT INNOVATION ON MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE BOTTLED MINERAL WATER (LE MINERAL) INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of Generation Z and product innovation on the marketing strategy of the bottled mineral water industry in Indonesia. Generation Z, born between 1995 and 2010, influences marketing strategies with the characteristics of being creative, innovative, and caring for the environment. They encourage companies to develop innovative and environmentally friendly products to attract and retain consumer interest. An effective marketing strategy needs to adapt Generation Z's preferences for engaging and interactive visual content, as well as leverage social media as the primary platform for interaction with brands.

This study uses a descriptive-analytical approach by collecting data from literature and case studies of the bottled mineral water industry in Indonesia. The findings show that the integration of a deep understanding of Generation Z behavior and the ability to innovate in products is key to the success of marketing strategies. This research contributes to the marketing literature by providing insights into how companies can improve their marketing strategies, focusing on the characteristics and preferences of Generation Z as well as the importance of product innovation in the face of fierce market competition.

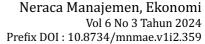
Keywords: Generation Z, Product innovation, Marketing Strategy, Bottled Water

INTRODUCTION

Background

The development of the trade business industry in Indonesia is experiencing very rapid development with the creation of increasingly fierce competition. In Gen Z when it has developments accompanied by a community life system that has been formed with modern concepts and mindsets. Generation Z is the youngest group of humans in the world today, born between 1995 and 2010. This requires producers to be more adept at managing effective marketing strategies in the economic and trade fields.

Increasingly fierce competition and increasingly demanding consumers in choosing products, forcing companies to be more innovative in producing their products (Khamidah, 2005). In addition, the current era of globalization makes the competition very tight, this requires every entrepreneur to use all his abilities to be able to do this. Market demand is increasing and competitive conditions in the commercial packaged beverage sector are increasing. Many companies are competing to innovate and produce packaged drinks that are not only in demand by certain groups but also by society as a whole (Theodora & P, 2021). The emergence of various beverage brands, one of which is a product produced by

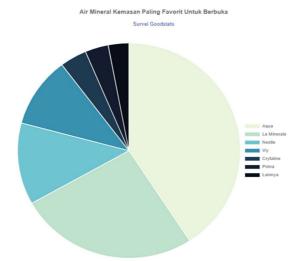




PT Tirta Fresindo Jaya in 2015, a subsidiary of Mayora Indah engaged in the beverage sector, is bottled drinking water with the Le Minerale water brand (Laoli & Hasan, 2020).

Favorite Bottled Mineral Water Source: Goodstats (Princess A. A., 2023)

According to the graph, it can be seen that Aqua brand bottled water products are still the number 1 favorite of the community and always the first choice with a percentage of 40.9%, while the second position is occupied by Le Minerale as the number 2 favorite bottled water product with a percentage of 26.1%, followed by Nestle and Vit brand mineral water with 12.3% and 10.6% respectively and Crystaline and Prima brand mineral water with a percentage of 3.9% and 3.4%. And another 3% prefer to drink bottled water with



other brands (Putri A. A., 2023). With many bottled water products on the market, Mayora Beverage strives to ensure the quality of Le Minerale products. When offering quality assurance, of course, you must consider the quality of the water, benefits, price, packaging, product information, and brand that affect the purchase decision (Aditya, 2016). In addition to the Company must ensure the quality of its products, the Company must also be able to innovate its products because competition in the global market is increasingly advanced and the business world must rely on innovation to stay ahead and compete with competitors. In today's competitive and globalized world, innovation is very important for businesses so that companies can innovate by creating new ideas, new processes, and improving their current business conditions (Wijaya, Qurratu'aini, & Paramastri, 2019).

In this case, generation Z or commonly referred to as Gen Z has a great influence on marketing strategies because Generation Z is known as a creative and innovative generation. This generation is very inclusive and wants to participate in diverse communities by using innovative technologies to expand the benefits they want to provide. In addition, Generation Z is open to different individual thoughts and enjoys interacting with various individuals and groups (Sakitiri, 2021). Based on the 2020 population census, the majority of Indonesia's population is generation Z (27.94%), which is the generation born between 1997 and 2012. The Millennial generation is expected to be the driving force of today's social movements, which are numerous. This means that the existence of Generation Z has an important and influential role in marketing strategies to face this increasingly fierce competition (Rakhmah, 2021). Gen Z is very familiar with social media because Generation Z wants to do a lot of different creative things every day. This creativity is also formed from the activities of Generation Z in communities and social networks and Gen Z was born in



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the smartphone era, growing up with computer technology that is complex, easier, sophisticated, and open to internet access than previous generations (Sakitiri, 2021). Therefore, it will be very easy for Gen Z to use social media as material for designing a masquerade strategy because Gen Z is very friendly with technology and the increasingly sophisticated internet (Faeni, 2023)

Technological developments in this era have created a series of new and latest alldigital survival phenomena in several fields. There is no denying the use of social media to increase brand awareness and online sales. The reason is that the majority of Indonesians, especially generation Z, are now active users of social media. Realizing the importance of brand awareness in influencing consumer intentions and purchase decisions, many companies are competing to achieve the top position in the minds of consumers, so that everyday consumers are bombarded with marketing messages in various media with the goal of branding and popularity (brand awareness) (Aji & Gita, 2020). The higher the level of awareness of a brand in the minds of consumers, the more likely it is that the brand will be considered when making a purchase and the higher the likelihood that the brand will be chosen by consumers. In this case, the Le Minerale company thinks about a marketing strategy to achieve its goals where the strategy must be relevant to Gen Z because Gen Z is one of the largest and influential consumer segments besides that Gen Z is more concerned about environmental issues and choosing environmentally friendly products and Marketing strategies relevant to Gen Z can help the bottled mineral water industry to attract Generation Z consumers and increase sales of Le Minerale products (Ramadina, 2023).

Le Minerale As a relatively new brand, it runs a series of aggressive promotions in various media, both on television and online, to increase brand awareness. The growth of this industry is also the most stable. In 2012, the growth of the bottled water industry reached 5.03%, in 2013 it grew 7.98%, and the following year it increased by 13.79%. In 2015, growth continued to occur although not as large as last year, which was 3.9%. Based on Nielsen's report, Le Minerale managed to achieve volume growth of 252.5% and value of 283.4%. This achievement makes Le Minerale sovereign as the bottled water brand with the highest growth throughout 2016. In fact, until the first quarter of 2017, the growth of the bottled water industry was only 5% (Bachdar, 2017). Le Minerale builds a good brand image to compete to score market share and become the best mineral water in Indonesia. Building a good brand image can be achieved through product innovation and the company's commitment to fulfilling its promises to consumers (Putra & Mustikasari).

Based on the background that has been explained, it is known that the product innovation factor of generation Z can affect marketing strategies in the field of bottled mineral water. Generation Z has different environmental knowledge and lifestyle than the previous generation, cares more about environmental issues, chooses environmentally friendly products, and tends to choose environmentally friendly products, more innovative. Therefore, a marketing strategy tailored to Generation Z can help the bottled mineral water industry attract the attention of Generation Z consumers and increase sales of its products (Wahyunita, 2021).

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS GEN Z

Generation Z has different characteristics from previous generations, including millennials. Generation Z prefers to work together, be flexible, love challenges, and are achievement-oriented. They also like to look for new solutions to solve problems (Handayani, 2019).

Ğeneration Z has a special advantage because Generation Z coexists with the rapid development of the Internet along with the growth of electronic and digital media where Generation Z can access information quickly and easily (Bhakti, 2016). No wonder those



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who are still students already have technical skills. Generation Z has unique characteristics, and the Internet is starting to evolve along with the development of digital media. Each generation of the population, which usually occurs every 15 to 18 years, has different demographic indicators than the previous generation and the next generation. (Pitoewas, Nurhayati, Putri, & Yanzi, 2020) mention several indicators of children who belong to Generation Z:

- 1. Generation Z has a strong desire to achieve success, and they tend to have a positive and optimistic attitude in achieving their goals.
- 2. Generation Z prefers practical and straightforward solutions, and they don't like to spend time studying problems in depth.
- 3. Generation Z values freedom very much and they have a high sense of selfconfidence. They love to express themselves and they want to have control over their lives.
- 4. Generation Z tends to be meticulous and critical in thinking. They have easy access to information, which allows them to see things in more detail.
- 5. Just like everyone else, Generation Z wants to be recognized for their efforts and achievements. They want to feel that they are valued and respected.
- 6. Generation Z was born in the digital era and they are very familiar with technology. They are proficient in using a variety of devices and applications, and they use technology in their daily lives.

Product Innovation

A company that succeeds in creating a competitive advantage is a company that is able to create innovation and creativity through an effective and planned innovation process. Innovation is a new combination of factors of production created by entrepreneurs and the idea of innovation is a critical driving force in economic growth (Drucker & 2018).

Innovation is the process of creating new ideas and putting them into practice. That means that creative ideas are used in practice every day, ideally those practices contribute to improving customer service or organizational productivity (Ekawati & Soleha, 2017). The company has the goal of innovating products is to risk the survival of the company because existing products are vulnerable to changes in existing needs, among others, consumer tastes and needs, technology, and increasing competitors from within and outside the country.

In the midst of this very fierce competition, the goods offered to consumers must be diverse and with all the advantages they have. Product innovation must also look at consumer tastes and needs through market research. According to Trott, product innovation is a new product or improvement of an existing product either in the market or produced by the company itself compared to before, improvements to replace old products, and a decrease in production costs, Trott formulates innovation into: Innovation = theoretical concept + discovery + commercial (a goal to earn a profit) (Wahyudi, 2019).

Marketing Strategy

A Marketing strategy certification is a plan designed to achieve a company's marketing goals. This strategy covers various aspects of marketing, including competition, product, price, venue, and promotion. Marketing strategy can be understood as a way that companies use to compete in the market and reach their target market (Zevi, 2018).

So, marketing strategy is a company's planning process in marketing and introducing products or services offered to consumers to achieve a goal with all the risks that will be faced. Marketing strategy has three components, namely segmentation, targeting and positioning (Faeni et al., 2023).

a. Segmentation



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The market has many types of customers, products and needs. Marketers must be able to determine which segments can offer the best opportunities. Consumers are grouped and served in a variety of ways based on geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral factors. The process of dividing the market into different groups of buyers who have different needs, characteristics, or behaviors, which may require separate products or marketing programs is called market segmentation.

b. Targetting

After segmentation, the company then selects the segment to be targeted or also called targeting and by implementing this targeting means an effort to place the company's resources effectively, therefore, this targeting is called a fitting strategy or accuracy.

c. Positioning

After mapping and placement, the company must ensure its existence is remembered by customers in the target market. Therefore, this strategy is called the being strategy or existence strategy.

d. Marketing MixAfter formulating all of its marketing strategies, companies are ready to start planning the details of the marketing mix, one of the main concepts in modern marketing. The definition of a marketing mix is a collection of tactical marketing tools that a company combines to produce the response it wants, which consists of a set of variables that can be controlled and used by the company to influence consumer responses in its target market. These variables or activities need to be combined and coordinated by the company in order to carry out marketing programs effectively. According to Basu Swastha, the definition of marketing mix is a combination of 4 variables on activities that are the core of the company's marketing system, namely products, price structures, promotional activities and distribution systems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Influence of Gen Z on Marketing Strategies

Industry Marketing strategy is an effort to attract consumer interest in a product or service through digital media, currently the most targeted market is Generation Z (Ciputra, n.d.). In the business world, marketing strategies have become a very big change, one of which is social media because social media is very close to people's daily lives, especially Generation Z, which makes the era of digitalization inevitable (Febrianti & Saputri, 2022). Generation Z is the generation with the largest number by population and accounts for about 32% of the world's population (Khairunnisa & Heriyadi, 2023). Gen Z also argues that the influence of social media has a greater influence than other marketing channels (Wetzler, 2021). Generation Z's ability to adapt to technological advances makes it easier for this generation to communicate with these brands to find out what marketing strategies are relevant to the product (Utamanyu & Darmastuti2, 2022).

Generation Z has a significant influence on marketing strategies, this happens because Generation Z has different consumer behaviors, unique preferences, and different expectations compared to previous generations. Because more than half (58%) of Gen Z are willing to pay a higher price for a product that suits their personal personality. Therefore, personalization is essential to drive sales and increase retention (Prameswari, 2018). Generation Z is famous for being close to gadgets or smartphones. So that they can use mobile-friendly promotional media as a marketing strategy to get customers. Generation Z also prefers interesting and interactive visual content, so interesting visual content is the right marketing strategy. Therefore, the right marketing strategy must be adjusted in order



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to attract their interest in the brand (Ardina, Marketing Revolution 5.0: Strategies to Serve Generation Z and Alfa, 2023).

The Influence of Product Innovation on Marketing Strategy

Innovation is the internal adaptive mechanism of a dynamic environmental company. Therefore, the company must be able to produce new reviews, new ideas, provide innovative services and improve service performance to satisfy customers (Sumual, Alvianus K;, 2013). In short, innovation is defined as "changes made in an organization that include creativity in creating new products, services, ideas, or processes, both existing in the organization and developing from outside the organization. Companies that succeed in creating a competitive advantage are those that are able to produce innovation and creativity through a planned and effective innovation process (Karinda, Mananeke, & Roring, 2018).

Marketing strategy is a mindset that will be used to achieve the marketing goals of a company. This may include the target market-specific strategy, positioning, and marketing mix of the size of the marketing spend. The increasingly fierce market competition forces companies to implement the right marketing strategies in the face of competitors. The marketing strategy that the company wants is how to increase the number of products sold according to the target (Saribu & Maranatha, 2020). It is important for companies to have a strong marketing strategy, this is expected to maintain the company's business position in competition. The impact that occurs if the company does not have a strong marketing strategy is a continuous decline in sales volume which results in bankruptcy or bankruptcy.

Product innovation affects marketing strategies because in marketing products to achieve targets according to the goals of a company, it is necessary to have a marketing strategy that is right on target (Putri & Arif, 2023). In the process, a product must continue to innovate so that it is in line with the direction of the marketing media that will be used by a company. Product innovation can maximize competitive advantage and minimize competitive limitations. Therefore, product innovation is important for sustainable business continuity and creativity in marketing products is also important for business actors (Ningrum, Fitra, & Sanjaya, 2020).

The Influence of Gen Z and Product Innovation on Marketing Strategy

Gen Z has a significant impact on bottled water marketing strategies. Gen Z pays more attention to factors such as sustainability, eco-friendly packaging, and social value (Ramadina, 2023). Innovations such as eco-friendly packaging, an emphasis on production sustainability, and an emphasis on authentic and positively impactful product stories can be more appealing to Gen Z. Companies must adapt to these values and preferences in their efforts to market bottled water to this generation (Faeni, 2024)

Generation Z and innovation have a huge influence on marketing strategies. Generation Z spends more time on social media and trusts social media influencers more than ads (Imambachri & Dewi, 2022). Gen Z also wants a new and interactive customer experience at every touchpoint and expects brands to be just as engaging with their mobile devices and games. In addition, innovation and technology can help marketers serve Generation Z (Ardina, Marketing Revolution 5.0: Strategies to Serve Generation Z and Alpha, 2023). When building a marketing strategy, companies must consider the influence of Generation Z and technological innovation. By leveraging technology and innovation, businesses can bring interactive experiences to customers, meeting the needs of generation Z. In addition, businesses can also use marketing activities through influencers and create marketing content according to the latest trends to reach generation Z (Ningsih, Hulaikah, & Anah, 2022).



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Gen Z is more vulnerable to marketing through social media platforms, influencer marketing, and campaigns that support social and environmental awareness. Marketing strategies that rely on technology, such as AR (Augmented Reality) or VR (Virtual Reality), can also be more effective in attracting the attention of Gen Z.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS Conclusion

Gen Z is a generation that cares about the environment and has a high awareness of the importance of sustainability. This shift in consumer characteristics can pose challenges for marketers. Marketers need to adjust their marketing strategies to stay relevant to Gen Z. One way that can be done is to develop more sustainable products and services. In addition, marketers also need to understand the needs and desires of Gen Z, as well as develop product innovations that meet their expectations. By understanding the needs and wants of Gen Z, marketers can develop effective marketing strategies to reach and capture the attention of this generation.

Suggestion

- 1. Using social media: Gen Z spends a lot of time on social media. Marketers can use social media to reach Gen Z and build relationships with them.
- 2. Collaborate with influencers: Influencers have a great influence on Gen Z. Marketers can collaborate with influencers to promote their products or services.
- 3. Using gamification: Gen Z loves gaming. Marketers can use gamification to create more engaging and interactive marketing experiences.

By implementing the right marketing strategy, marketers can reach Gen Z and develop strong relationships with them.

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