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The Influence of Product Quality and Brand Image on Repurchase Intention Through Le Minerale Customer Satisfaction in Makassar City

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the growing competition in Indonesia's bottled drinking water industry, where challenger brands must strengthen consumer repurchase intention through superior product-related and brand-related attributes. In this context, Le Minerale has shown rapid market growth, raising the question of whether product quality and brand image influence repurchase intention, and whether customer satisfaction mediates these relationships among consumers in Makassar City. This research employed a quantitative explanatory approach with a single cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected from 160 Le Minerale consumers in Makassar City using purposive sampling and a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The results show that product quality has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention and customer satisfaction, while brand image also has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention and customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction further has a positive and significant effect on repurchase intention. The mediation analysis indicates that customer satisfaction partially mediates the effect of product quality on repurchase intention as well as the effect of brand image on repurchase intention. The structural model also demonstrates substantial explanatory power for repurchase intention. Academically, this study contributes to the consumer behavior and marketing literature by confirming that repurchase intention in the bottled drinking water industry is formed through both direct and indirect mechanisms, especially in the context of a challenger brand and a young urban consumer market.

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Introduction

Consumer demand for bottled drinking water has increased markedly in many countries as consumers increasingly associate packaged water with convenience, hygiene, and product reliability. At the global level, the bottled water industry expanded by 73% between 2010 and 2020, with sales reaching approximately 350 billion liters and projected to continue growing in the coming years. In Indonesia, this growth is reflected in the structure of the bottled drinking water market (Air Minum Dalam Kemasan or AMDK), which has become highly competitive,

with approximately 7,780 registered products produced by 1,032 companies nationwide (Badan Pengawas Obat dan Makanan (BPOM), 2022; Pacheco-Vega, 2019).

Within this competitive environment, Le Minerale has emerged as a noteworthy challenger brand in a market historically dominated by Aqua. Top Brand Award data show that Aqua remained the leading bottled water brand in 2025 with a Top Brand Index (TBI) of 47.40%, while Le Minerale reached 23.20%, placing it in second position. More importantly, Le Minerale's brand performance shows a consistent upward trajectory, rising from 4.60% in 2021 to 12.50% in 2022, 14.50% in 2023, 18.80% in 2024, and 23.20% in 2025. This pattern suggests that Le Minerale has successfully strengthened its position in the Indonesian bottled water market and developed into a serious competitor within the category (Top Brand Award, 2024).

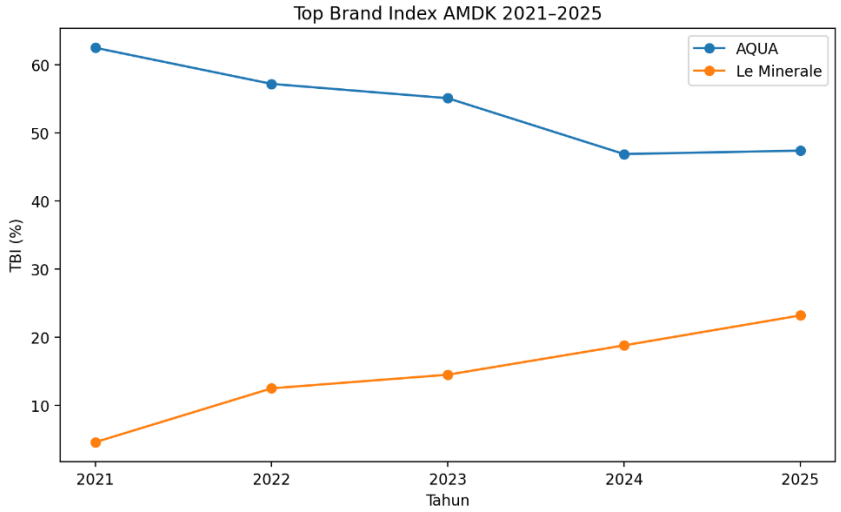

Figure 1. Top Brand Index trends of Aqua and Le Minerale, 2021-2025.

From a marketing perspective, the rise of Le Minerale may be explained by two interrelated factors, namely product quality and brand image. Product quality is critical because consumers evaluate bottled water not only in terms of safety and functional reliability, but also through sensory and packaging-related attributes. At the same time, brand image shapes how consumers perceive credibility, value, and trustworthiness. Previous studies on Le Minerale support this view. Ramadhani & Widodo (2021) found that perceived quality and brand image contributed to Le Minerale purchase decisions in Bogor Regency, while Aini & Rosyidah (2025) reported that brand image and product quality significantly influenced repurchase interest among Le Minerale consumers in Sidoarjo. More broadly, research has consistently shown that product quality is closely linked to customer satisfaction and loyalty, and that brand image plays an important role in shaping customer satisfaction and brand loyalty outcomes (Naini et al., 2022; Triputra et al., 2023).

However, the effects of product quality and brand image on repurchase intention are not always direct. In consumer behavior and marketing literature, customer satisfaction is widely recognized as a key mediating mechanism that connects consumers' evaluations of a product or brand with their future behavioral intentions. Putri & Yasa (2022) demonstrated that customer satisfaction mediated the effect of brand image on repurchase intention, while Lucky

et al. (2023) found that brand image significantly affected repurchase intention both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction. Similarly, Soeharso (2024) confirmed that customer satisfaction functioned as a significant mediator in explaining repurchase intention. These findings indicate that customer satisfaction is not merely an outcome of consumption, but also an explanatory pathway through which product-related and brand-related perceptions may influence repeat purchase behavior.

Although prior studies have examined product quality, brand image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention, several gaps remain. First, Le Minerale-related studies have tended to focus on purchase decisions or repurchase interest in partial models rather than testing a more integrated mediation framework. Second, limited attention has been given to examining customer satisfaction as an intervening variable between product quality, brand image, and repurchase intention in the specific context of Le Minerale. Third, the geographical context of Makassar deserves greater scholarly attention. As documented in the annual statistical publication of BPS Makassar, the city represents an important urban setting with dynamic demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, making it a relevant site for research on contemporary consumer behavior. These gaps suggest the need for a more contextualized empirical investigation of Le Minerale consumers in Makassar City (Aini & Rosyidah, 2025; BPS kota Makassar, 2025; Ramadhani & Widodo, 2021).

Based on the foregoing discussion, the novelty of this study lies in examining both the direct and indirect effects of product quality and brand image on repurchase intention through customer satisfaction in the context of a challenger brand in Indonesia's bottled drinking water industry. Accordingly, the research question of this study is: Do product quality and brand image influence repurchase intention toward Le Minerale in Makassar City, and does customer satisfaction mediate these relationships? In line with this question, the objective of this study is to analyze the effects of product quality and brand image on repurchase intention, both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction, among Le Minerale consumers in Makassar City.

Method

This study employed a quantitative explanatory survey with a conclusive, single cross-sectional design. The research was conducted in Makassar City, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, and focused on consumers of Le Minerale bottled water. A cross-sectional design was selected because the study aimed to capture respondents' perceptions of product quality, brand image, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention at a single point in time. This design is efficient for examining associations among variables, although causal interpretation should be made cautiously because temporal ordering cannot be fully established in one-wave data collection (Maier et al., 2023). PLS-SEM was chosen because it is suitable for prediction-oriented research, complex mediation models, and data that may not fully satisfy strict normality assumptions (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Hair et al., 2019).

The population comprised Le Minerale consumers residing in Makassar City. The study used purposive sampling, with the following inclusion criteria: respondents had to be domiciled in Makassar, at least 17 years old, and have purchased and consumed Le Minerale. The targeted

sample size was 160 respondents, which is broadly adequate for a moderate-complexity PLS-SEM model and consistent with contemporary sample size guidance that emphasizes statistical power rather than relying solely on overly simplistic rules of thumb (Hair & Alamer, 2022; Kock & Hadaya, 2018). Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms and WhatsApp, while secondary data were obtained from journal articles, books, industry reports, and official publications. The instrument measured four constructs product quality (X1), brand image (X2), customer satisfaction (Z), and repurchase intention (Y) using 16 indicators on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Before the full survey, a pretest involving 30 respondents with characteristics similar to the target population was conducted to ensure clarity, validity, and reliability of the questionnaire items. Because this study examined consumer behavior rather than Islamic legal compliance, no specific sharia-issue analytical procedure was applied.

Data analysis was carried out in two stages using SmartPLS 4. First, descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics and the general pattern of responses. Second, PLS-SEM was employed to test the hypothesized direct and indirect relationships among variables. The measurement model was assessed through convergent validity and discriminant validity, using outer loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), Fornell-Larcker, cross-loadings, and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT); HTMT values below 0.90 are commonly used to indicate adequate discriminant validity in conceptually similar constructs (Henseler et al., 2015). Internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. The structural model was then examined using R^2, Q^2, and bootstrapped path coefficients to test direct and indirect effects. Mediation was assessed through the significance of the indirect paths and complemented with variance accounted for (VAF) as a descriptive indicator of mediation strength. Recent PLS-SEM literature also emphasizes the importance of reporting model evaluation and robustness checks carefully so that results remain methodologically credible (Hair et al., 2019; Ringle et al., 2023; Vaithilingam et al., 2024) (Hair et al., 2019; Ringle et al., 2023; Vaithilingam et al., 2024).

Results and Discussion

Results

A total of 160 valid questionnaires were included in the final analysis. The sample was dominated by female respondents (75.6%), respondents aged 17-22 years (83.8%), those with a senior high school background (70.0%), and students (91.9%). In behavioral terms, most respondents purchased Le Minerale two to three times per week (48.7%), mainly in the 600 mL bottle format (73.1%), and most frequently from minimarkets (75.6%). These characteristics indicate that the study largely reflects the perceptions of young, highly mobile urban consumers in Makassar.

The pretest results confirmed that the instrument was adequate for the main survey. All items were declared valid, with item-total correlations exceeding the critical value of 0.361, and all constructs were reliable, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.903 to 0.967. In the full-sample PLS-SEM analysis, the measurement model also performed well: all outer loadings exceeded 0.70 (0.778-0.912), AVE values ranged from 0.650 to 0.757, Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.929 to 0.956, and composite reliability ranged from 0.930 to 0.957. Discriminant validity was supported by cross-

loadings, the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and HTMT values between 0.640 and 0.775. In addition, the model fit indices were satisfactory, with SRMR = 0.046 and NFI = 0.829, indicating that the model was acceptable for structural interpretation under widely used PLS-SEM reporting standards. (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 1. Summary of hypothesis testing

Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
Product Quality → Repurchase Intention	0.331	4.166	0.000	Supported
Product Quality → Customer Satisfaction	0.377	4.094	0.000	Supported
Brand Image → Repurchase Intention	0.299	3.389	0.001	Supported
Brand Image → Customer Satisfaction	0.374	3.882	0.000	Supported
Customer Satisfaction → Repurchase Intention	0.343	3.897	0.000	Supported
Product Quality → Customer Satisfaction → Repurchase Intention	0.129	2.628	0.009	Supported
Brand Image → Customer Satisfaction → Repurchase Intention	0.129	2.810	0.005	Supported

The structural model showed that repurchase intention was explained at 70.1% ($R^2 = 0.701$), while customer satisfaction was explained at 45.5% ($R^2 = 0.455$). Predictive relevance was also confirmed, as the Q^2 values for repurchase intention and customer satisfaction were 0.609 and 0.426, respectively. Overall, these results indicate that the proposed model had substantial explanatory power for repurchase intention and moderate explanatory power for customer satisfaction, while maintaining acceptable predictive relevance (J. F. Hair et al., 2019).

The mediation analysis further showed that customer satisfaction played a partial mediating role in both indirect relationships. The VAF value for the path from product quality to repurchase intention through customer satisfaction was 0.280, while the VAF value for the path from brand image to repurchase intention through customer satisfaction was 0.301. Since both values fall between 0.20 and 0.80, the mediation pattern is best interpreted as partial mediation, meaning that product quality and brand image influenced repurchase intention both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction.

Discussion

The first major finding is that product quality had a positive and significant effect on both customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. This indicates that, in the context of bottled drinking water, repeat buying is strongly shaped by functional and directly experienced product attributes such as taste consistency, freshness, safety, and packaging reliability. In low-involvement but frequently consumed products, consumers tend to rely heavily on repeated consumption experience; therefore, stable product performance becomes a critical foundation for both satisfaction and repeat purchase behavior. This finding is consistent with prior evidence showing that product quality strengthens satisfaction and subsequent loyalty-related outcomes, including repurchase intention. It also aligns with recent bottled-water evidence showing that product quality significantly improves both satisfaction and repurchase intention (Devi & Darma, 2024; Saputra et al., 2025; Sari, 2020).

The second major finding is that brand image also had a positive and significant effect on both customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. This suggests that Le Minerale's brand functions not only as an identifier but also as a psychological cue that reduces uncertainty and reinforces positive product expectations. For a product category such as bottled water, where competing offerings are relatively similar in basic function, a favorable brand image can simplify consumer choice and strengthen the preference to repurchase the same brand. This interpretation is in line with recent literature showing that brand image contributes meaningfully to customer satisfaction, loyalty, and repeat purchase behavior (Ellitan et al., 2023; Lucky et al., 2023b; Putri & Yasa, 2022b; Tahir et al., 2024).

The third major finding is that customer satisfaction significantly increased repurchase intention. This result supports the logic of expectation-confirmation and disconfirmation, in which repeat purchase behavior emerges when product performance meets or exceeds consumer expectations. In this study, consumers who felt satisfied with Le Minerale were more willing to purchase it again, indicating that post-consumption evaluation remains central to repeat-buying decisions. Given that most respondents were young, frequent, and routine buyers, satisfaction likely accumulated through repeated positive consumption experiences rather than through a single isolated purchase. This pattern is consistent with both conceptual and empirical studies that position customer satisfaction as a direct antecedent of repurchase intention (Devi & Darma, 2024; Lucky et al., 2023b; Ramasamy et al., 2024) .

The final and most important finding concerns the mediating role of customer satisfaction. Both indirect effects were significant, and the VAF values indicated partial rather than full mediation. This means that repurchase intention among Le Minerale consumers in Makassar is formed through two simultaneous routes: an experiential route, in which product quality and brand image enhance satisfaction and then stimulate repurchase intention, and a direct route, in which product quality and brand image influence repurchase intention even without full dependence on satisfaction. This is the main contribution of the study. In other words, among young urban consumers of a challenger bottled-water brand, repeat purchase intention is not driven solely by post-consumption satisfaction, but also by immediate evaluations of tangible quality and brand-based trust cues. This result extends earlier mediation studies by showing that, in this context, customer satisfaction is important but does not fully absorb the effect of product quality and brand image

Conclusion

This study concludes that product quality and brand image are both important determinants of repurchase intention for Le Minerale consumers in Makassar City, both directly and indirectly through customer satisfaction. The findings indicate that customer satisfaction plays a partial mediating role, meaning that repeat purchase intention is shaped not only by consumers' post-consumption satisfaction, but also by their immediate evaluation of product quality and their positive perception of the brand. In practical terms, this shows that consumers are more likely to repurchase Le Minerale when they perceive the product as reliable, safe, refreshing, and consistently supported by a strong and trustworthy brand image.

From a scientific perspective, this study contributes to the consumer behavior and marketing literature by offering empirical evidence that, in the bottled drinking water industry,

repurchase intention is formed through a dual mechanism: a direct path from product quality and brand image, and an indirect path through customer satisfaction. This finding strengthens the view that customer satisfaction remains a key explanatory mechanism in post-purchase behavior, while also showing that for low-involvement yet frequently consumed products, product-related and brand-related perceptions may continue to exert a direct influence on consumer decisions. The study also contributes contextual evidence from Makassar City, which remains underrepresented in prior studies on bottled drinking water consumption and repeat purchase behavior.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the research used a cross-sectional design, so the relationships identified should be interpreted as associative rather than fully causal. Second, the respondents were heavily concentrated among young consumers and students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to older consumer groups or broader market segments. Third, the study focused only on one bottled water brand, so the model may not fully capture competitive dynamics across other brands in the AMDK market. Fourth, the data were collected through self-reported questionnaires, which may be influenced by response bias and subjective perception.

These limitations suggest several directions for future research. Further studies are recommended to use larger and more diverse samples, including broader occupational and age categories, in order to improve generalizability. Future researchers may also apply longitudinal designs to examine whether satisfaction and repurchase intention remain stable over time. In addition, comparative studies between Le Minerale and competing brands such as Aqua, Cleo, or Club would provide a more complete understanding of consumer choice in the bottled water industry. Future models may also include other relevant variables, such as price perception, distribution convenience, health consciousness, trust, and brand loyalty, to develop a more comprehensive explanation of repurchase behavior.

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Author Contributions Statement

RN contributed to conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, and preparation of the original draft. AN contributed to supervision, methodology, and critical review of the manuscript. IH contributed to investigation, validation, and data interpretation. SH contributed to supervision, review, and refinement of the manuscript. IR contributed to data curation, editing, and final manuscript preparation. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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