

# Bibliometric Analysis on Influencer Marketing: Trends of Influencers' Influence on Generation Z Purchasing Decision

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**Abstract**—The rapid development of social media has encouraged the birth of the study of Influencer Marketing as a central topic, especially related to the trend of influencer influence on Generation Z's Purchasing Decisions. Generation Z is digital-native who is sensitive to authenticity and peer recommendations, creating an influencer influence mechanism become more complex than just traditional ad displays. Meta-analysis shows influencer marketing has a significant positive effect on purchase intent, which is moderated by influencer characteristics and context. Influencers can build trust through affective channels or increase reach and brand awareness through cognitive channels. This study aims to map the development of academic studies of Influencer Marketing and evaluate related publications, as well as integrate global evidence with the local Indonesian context. We used the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method integrated with bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer. Data was collected from 1500 high-quality scientific articles from reputable databases (Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.) published in the last eight years. The analysis generates network mapping, overlays, and density to visualize the structure of knowledge. The results of the network visualization confirm that "influencer marketing" is the largest node and the main study center. Four dominant clusters were found: (1) Effectiveness and Type (influencer type, review); (2) Psychological Relationships (parasocial relationships, credibility); (3) Marketing Results (brand awareness, purchase decision); and (4) Consumer Behavior Context (Indonesia). The latest research trends (overlay) show a shift in focus to applicative issues such as influencer type and effectiveness, as well as increased attention to the local Indonesian context. Density visualization confirms that influencer marketing, influence, and credibility are the core of the study. Overall, these findings conclude that research has shifted from fundamental concepts to more evaluative and contextual discussions.

**Keywords:** Influencer Marketing; Bibliometric Analysis; Generation Z; Purchase Decision; Influencer Credibility

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of social media has changed the marketing landscape encouraging the emergence of influencers as an effective communication and endorsement channel. In the last decade, the practice of using influencers in marketing strategies is no longer limited to big celebrities; There is also the phenomenon of micro-influencers who claim to offer more authentic relationships and higher engagement than macro or celebrity influencers. A recent meta-analysis that synthesized hundreds of studies shows that influencer marketing as a whole has a significant positive effect on consumer engagement and purchase intent, but this effect is moderated by influencer characteristics (e.g., audience size) and platform and product context (Barari et al., 2025).

Generation Z, born in the digital era, occupies a central position as the target market for influencer campaigns. Their digital natives including a preference for visual content, a tendency to seek authenticity, and sensitivity to peer recommendations make the influencer influence mechanism more complex than just traditional ad exposure. Research in the Indonesian context shows how local values, dominant social platforms (e.g. TikTok, Instagram), and social commerce dynamics are influencing how Gen Z processes endorsement messages and shapes purchasing decisions (Huwaida et al., 2024).

There are two main theoretical pathways that are often used to explain the influence mechanisms of influence: the cognitive pathway (information, expert credibility) and the affective/relational pathway (trust, social closeness, identification). The meta-analysis distinguishes that micro-influencers usually excel on the affective path of building trust and perceived intimacy due to more personalized interactions, while macro or celebrity influencers are stronger on the cognitive path and broad reach, which is useful for building brand awareness quickly but does not always result in high conversions per follower. This distinction is relevant when assessing the return on investment of campaigns targeting Gen Z, as this group often judges recommendations based on authenticity and personal relevance (Barari et al., 2025)

In addition to follower size, the meta-analytic literature highlights other important moderation variables: product type (hedonic vs utilitarian), influencer-brand fit (fit), content quality, and platform characteristics. In the Indonesian context, empirical studies indicate that brand image factors and influencer credibility play a mediating role in Gen Z's purchasing decisions; In other words, endorsements that are able to strengthen brand image and communicate relevant value tend to be more effective in driving purchase intent. These local findings confirm that the mechanisms of influence are not universal and require contextual understanding (Migkos & Giannakopoulos, 2025).

The research gap that is still open is in the integration of global meta-analytic evidence with local contextual results such as the study in Indonesia. Some large meta-analyses provide an overview of influencer marketing effectiveness and

influencer size moderation, but few explicitly examine how the cultural dynamics, popular platforms, and shopping behavior of Gen Z Indonesians modify those influence mechanisms. Therefore, studies that combine meta-analysis with local empirical studies provide added value: they allow for the generalization of theories while capturing the contextual nuances that determine the effectiveness of strategies in specific markets.

Based on the description above, this study was conducted to find out the extent of the development of the study on *Influencer Marketing* by reviewing various literature using bibliometric analysis. This research was conducted in order to contribute to the development and advancement of science and evaluate publications related to *Influencer Marketing*.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to identify, filter, and synthesize research developments related to the topic studied. The search process is conducted through a number of reputable databases including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, SpringerLink, ScienceDirect, and Emerald Insight using relevant combinative keywords. From the initial identification stage, 1,600 articles were obtained that were potentially related to the research theme. Furthermore, the duplicate removal process resulted in 1,420 unique articles. The articles then go through a screening stage based on titles and abstracts to assess the suitability of the topic, the quality of the publication, and the relevance of the methodology. At this stage, 1,370 articles were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria, such as not being a scientific journal article, not relevant to the theme, or not having empirical data that could be analyzed.

The next stage is the evaluation of the eligibility of 50 full-text articles which are assessed in more depth based on methodology, scientific contributions, and suitability of research variables. Of these, 10 articles were excluded for specific reasons, such as unclear methods, inadequate data, or research focus that did not match the study objectives. In the final stage, as many as 40 articles were declared to meet the criteria to be analyzed in the qualitative synthesis. This number represents the most relevant and quality literature to provide a comprehensive picture of the relationships between the variables studied. This selection procedure follows the international standard of PRISMA 2020 to ensure transparency, consistency, and accuracy in the review process.

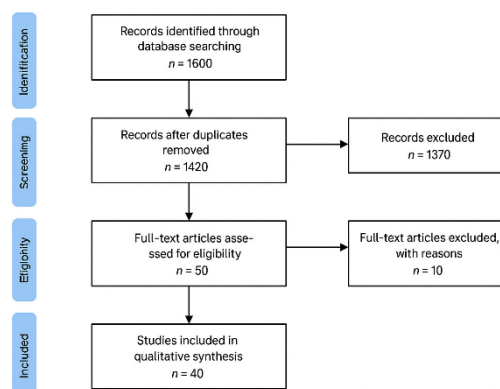


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

Figure 1. Shows a flowchart of the process of identifying, filtering, eligibility, and inclusion articles based on the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Of the initial 1,600 articles, 40 were finally declared to meet the criteria for qualitative synthesis.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Result

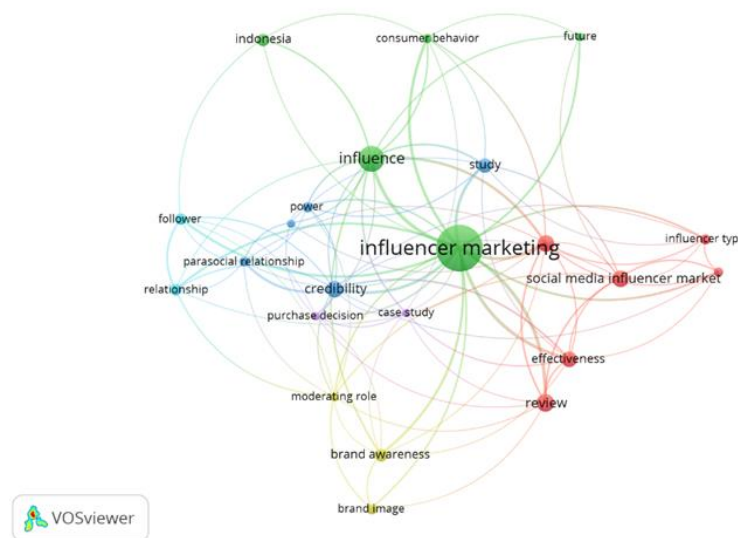
#### 3.1.1 Network visualization

Bibliometric analysis provides a solid foundation for understanding the development of concepts *influencer marketing* in the last eight years. Using VOSviewer, this study visualizes inter-topic relationships, temporal trends, and research density in the field of digital marketing. This approach not only identifies dominant keywords, but also maps the structure of knowledge that develops through academic research in internationally reputable journals (Hakim, 2020)(Aribowo, 2019). In context *influencer marketing*, this method is able to show how concepts such as *credibility*, *parasocial relationship*, *brand awareness* and *influencer type* to be the theoretical foundation often used in the study of modern consumer behavior (Lou S., 2019)(Schouten L.; Verspaget, M., 2020)

Previous research related to influencers has highlighted that digital societies, especially Gen Z and millennials, rely on online public figures as their primary source of information. This strengthens the position of influencers as important actors in contemporary marketing strategies (Djafarova T., 2021). Visual analysis shows that the topic

*influencer marketing* has the most dense connections, indicating its dominance and influence in digital marketing research. This network structure also shows that the influencer phenomenon is not only understood as a promotional tactic, but as a complex system of psychological and social relationships (Sokolova H., 2020)

Network visualization displays the network structure between keywords based on co-occurrence. This map shows the formation of clusters that mark a specific research group. As Waltman describes in the bibliometric literature, clustering reflects topics that are often researched together and creates sub-fields within a discipline (Aribowo, 2019). In the results of the visualization of the influencer marketing network, it can be seen that the keyword "influencer marketing" occupies the largest node with the widest network of connections. This suggests that the term is at the center of academic discussion in the current digital marketing literature (Lou S., 2019).



**Figure 1.** Network visualization

Figure 1. above is the result of visualization of bibliometric networks from research related to Influencer research. This map illustrates the interconnectedness of various keywords in research obtained from the Google Scholar database, Scopus. Each node (circle) represents a keyword that appears frequently in a related study, while the size of the node reflects the frequency with which the word appears. The connecting line between nodes shows the relationship between two terms, where the thicker the line, the stronger the relationship between the concepts. Different colors indicate clusters or clusters of research topics that are closely related to each other. From this visualization, several main clusters in *social commerce research* can be identified. The green cluster focuses on aspects of *e-commerce*, social media, and social networks. Terms such as *social network*, *social media*, and *e-commerce* indicate that research in this field is highly related to how social platforms are used in e-commerce activities. The cluster also includes the concept of social capital and social networking sites, which highlights the role of social relationships in supporting online business interactions

Based on article metadata extracted and processed using *VOSviewer*, found that the keyword "influencer marketing" appeared as the node with the largest size. This confirms the important position of influencer marketing as a key topic in digital marketing research networks (Lou S., 2019). The large node in the middle position indicates that this concept is often used as the main foundation in the discussion of content-based marketing communication strategies and social media (Briefs N.; Abt, M.; Kunze, A., 2019). The number of connections between nodes also shows that influencer marketing research is very multidisciplinary and intersects with the realms of psychology, consumer behavior, brand management, and the effectiveness of digital campaigns (Schouten L.; Verspaget, M., 2020).

Referring to Waltman's understanding that mapping and clustering complement each other in describing the structure of knowledge (Aribowo, 2019), the network visualization shows four dominant clusters that are interconnected. Each cluster shows relatively different but still interrelated areas of discussion in the context of influencer marketing.

This cluster contains keywords such as *influencer type*, *social media influencer market*, *Reviews* and *effectiveness*. This cluster features a research focus on influencer classification (micro, macro, mega) as well as evaluation of campaign effectiveness through reviews and engagement (Schouten L.; Verspaget, M., 2020). The research in this cluster discusses how the type of influencer affects audience perception and the success rate of digital promotions (Djafarova T., 2021). In addition, the reviews (*Reviews*) proved to be an important mediator in increasing consumer confidence and buying interest (Sokolova H., 2020) The green cluster explains the interconnectedness between *influence*, *consumer behavior*, and local contexts such as *Indonesia*. The research in this cluster emphasizes the psychological aspect of influencers' influence on consumer purchasing behavior, especially Gen Z who tend to rely on social media as the main source of information (Djafarova T., 2021). Many recent studies also underscore the relevance of research in Indonesia due to the high adoption of social media and the large population of young users (Ananda H., 2020). Topics "*Future*" indicates a research direction that sees influencers as long-term marketing actors in the global digital ecosystem. The blue cluster depicts the psychological element in the relationship between the influencer and the audience. Concept *parasocial*

*relationship* emerged strongly as a mechanism for the formation of pseudo-closeness between followers and influencers that significantly influenced trust, credibility, and purchasing decisions (Sokolova H., 2020). Researchers found that credibility *influence*, including expertise, honesty, and appeal, are the main factors that affect the effectiveness of promotions (Briefs N.; Abt, M.; Kunze, A., 2019). Node *Power* and *follower* shows the role of social power and audience size in influencing content persuasiveness. This cluster is related to the relationship of influencer marketing to the final marketing results such as *brand awareness*, *brand image* and *purchase decision*. Research confirms that influencer communication significantly increases brand awareness and image, especially if there is a value match between influencers and brands (Lim A.M.; Cheah, J.H.; Wong, M.W., 2017). In addition, several studies have found that variables such as credibility or parasocial relationships play a role as moderation variables that strengthen the influence of influencers on consumer buying interest (Fadly T., 2022).

### 3.1.2 Overlay Visualization (Research Trend Mapping)

The overlay visualization shows the topic's progress over time. Brighter or yellowish nodes indicate a relatively newer topic and have been heavily researched in the last three to five years (Aribowo, 2019). In influencer marketing visualization, topics such as *influencer type*, *review* and *effectiveness* Emerging as an area with lighter colors, indicating that the latest research trends focus a lot on the comparison of micro vs macro influencers as well as the evaluation of the effectiveness of modern campaigns (Schouten L.; Verspaget, M., 2020).

Instead, topics such as *relationship*, *follower* and *credibility* It emerged as a more established theme and has long been a foundation in digital marketing research. This is in line with the finding that credibility is the most consistent factor in predicting purchase intention in various cross-country studies (Lou S., 2019).

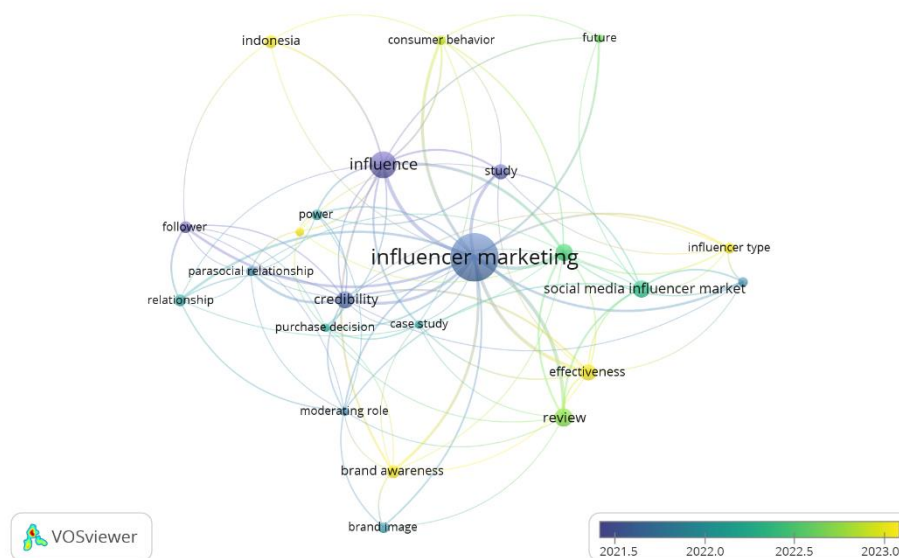


Figure 2. Overlay Visualization

Figure 2 shows *Overlay visualization* provide a temporal perspective on the development of the research topic. Yellowish indicates a newer topic, while bluish reflects an older topic. In the results of the influencer marketing visualization overlay, it can be seen that the topic like *influencer type*, *effectiveness* and *Reviews* brighter colors, showing that research on the comparison of micro vs macro influencers, as well as the evaluation of the effectiveness of digital campaigns is a trend that has developed in the last two years (Schouten L.; Verspaget, M., 2020).

On the other hand, topics such as *relationship*, *credibility* and *follower* showing a bluish color, indicating that these concepts have long been the basis of theory in digital marketing research (Lou S., 2019). This trend shows a shift in research focus from fundamental concepts such as trust to more applicative discussions such as influencer campaign effectiveness. The Indonesian context has also emerged more recently, signaling that more and more research is looking at this phenomenon in the context of local consumer culture and behavior (Fadly T., 2022).

This development is in line with the global literature that shows that influencer marketing research increasingly emphasizes evaluative and comparative aspects, especially between micro-influencers who are considered more relatable and macro-influencers who have a wide reach but are often considered less authentic (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). This shift indicates that the marketing industry is starting to prioritize quality engagement over reach alone.

### 3.1.3 Density Visualization

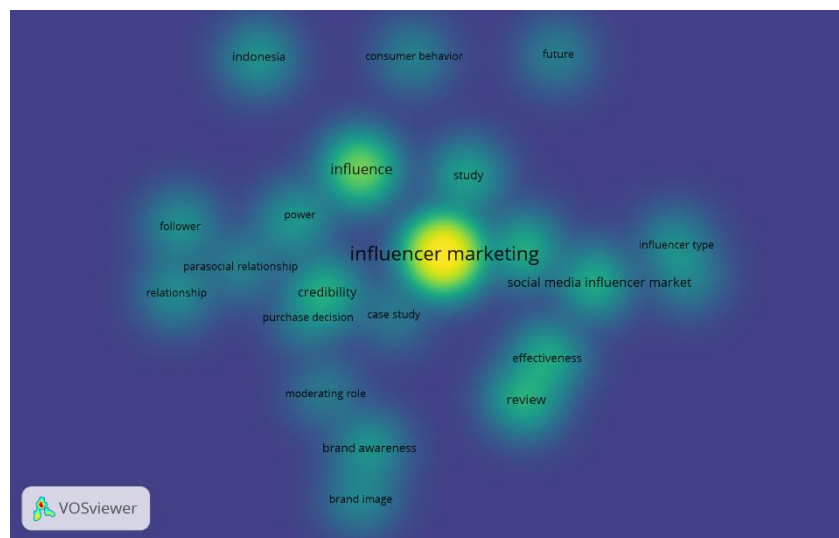
*Density visualization* describe the areas of research that are most densely discussed. The bright yellow node indicates the terms that appear most often in publications (Hardiansyah, 2023). In influencer marketing visualization, keywords *influencer marketing*, *influence* and *credibility* emerged as the highest density center.

This shows that most studies consider these three concepts as the basis for understanding the mechanisms of influencer influence on social media (Breves et al., 2019). Meanwhile, green nodes such as *brand image*, *moderating role*, and *case studies* show that these topics are still underexplored and have great potential for further research, especially in the context of the Indonesian market (Fadly & Suyanto, 2022).

Density visualization displays the density of the research based on the frequency of keyword occurrences. Bright yellow areas indicate the highest concentration of research. In the influencer marketing density map, the “influencer marketing”, “credibility” and “influence” appears to be a center of density. This shows that most studies make these three concepts the main variables in analyzing consumer behavior (Breves et al., 2019).

Topics such as *brand awareness*, *brand image*, and *purchase decisions* appear to be in the green region, indicating that research in this area is quite frequent but not as high as key concepts such as credibility or parasocial relationships (Lim et al., 2017). In addition, small nodes such as *case studies* and *moderating roles* show that there is still room for further research that can explore contextual approaches and the use of moderation variables in understanding the mechanisms of influencer influence.

Research on parasocial relationships also shows high density, in line with the increasing interest of researchers in the psychological aspects of digital interaction. Pseudo-relationships formed through social media have been shown to be strong predictors of purchasing decisions (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). Therefore, it is not surprising that these nodes are close and directly connected to the *credibility* and *purchase decision nodes*.



**Figure 3.** Density Visualization

Figure 3 above is a bibliometric density map from research-related influencers. This visualization shows the level of importance and relevance of various terms in the research based on the frequency of their occurrence. The yellow color represents high-density areas, which means they often appear in various publications, while green and blue areas indicate lower density, with keywords having relevance but appearing with less frequency.

Overall, the three visualizations show that research on influencer marketing has evolved significantly and focuses on psychological mechanisms, campaign effectiveness, and impact on brand metrics. Network visualization shows how social concepts such as *influence* and *credibility* form the basis of theory. The overlay visualization shows a shift in research trends towards contemporary issues such as influencer type and content effectiveness. Meanwhile, density visualization confirms that influencer marketing, credibility, and parasocial relationships are the most dominant core of scientific studies.

### 3.2. Discussion

Bibliometric results show that influencer marketing has been the dominant topic in digital marketing research for the past five years. This dominance is in line with the shift in consumer behavior that now relies more on social recommendations than traditional marketing strategies. Global research confirms that influencers have the ability to shape perceptions, beliefs, and purchasing decisions through credibility, expertise, and identity compatibility with the audience (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Schouten et al., 2020). In the context of Generation Z, this mechanism has become increasingly important considering that this group is growing as digital natives who are used to receiving information from online public figures. The bibliometric findings in this study confirm that keywords such as credibility, parasocial relationship, and purchase decision are the most frequently used theoretical foundations in the literature.

Network visualization shows that four main clusters are clearly formed, namely: (1) effectiveness and type of influencers, (2) psychological relationships such as parasocial relationships, (3) marketing outcomes such as brand awareness and purchase decisions, and (4) the context of Indonesian consumer behavior. This cluster is in line with the international literature that states that affective and cognitive interactions between influencers and audiences determine

the success rate of marketing campaigns (Breves et al., 2019; Sokolova & Kathy, 2020). This emphasizes that influencers are not just promotional channels, but persuasive actors who work through complex psychosocial processes.

The results of the overlay visualization show that the latest research (2022–2025) is moving towards more applicable issues, such as comparing the effectiveness of micro vs macro influencers and content quality assessment (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Barari et al., 2025). This trend illustrates a shift in focus from fundamental concepts such as credibility, to a more evaluative study of what makes an influencer campaign truly effective. International studies also show that micro-influencers tend to be more effective in shaping engagement and purchase intent because they are considered more authentic and close to the audience (Kay et al., 2020; Yuan & Lou, 2020).

Density visualization shows that the terms influencer marketing, credibility, and influence are the highest density centers. This density suggests that most empirical studies prioritize psychological variables such as trust, credibility, and social proximity in explaining consumer purchasing behavior (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2023; Marbach et al., 2020). Research incorporating parasocial interaction theory also confirms that consumers build pseudo-relationships with influencers, which ultimately influences product preferences and purchasing decisions (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020; Lee & Kim, 2022).

In Indonesia, cultural factors, dominant platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, as well as the values of social closeness play a role in modifying the way Gen Z responds to influencers. Recent research has found that local context influences Gen Z's perception of the authenticity and relevance of content (Huwaida et al., 2024; Fadly & Suyanto, 2022). This explains why the "Indonesia" node emerged as a new research area on overlay visualization signaling the increasing attention of scientists to the social behavior and preferences of Indonesia's digital consumers.

Overall, this discussion shows that influencer marketing has a significant influence on Generation Z's purchasing decisions, especially through credibility, parasocial relationships, and identity suitability. However, the study also revealed important research gaps: limited integration between global meta-analysis and Indonesian contextual data, lack of longitudinal studies, and lack of research that examined moderation variables such as product type, content type, or audience activity level. These findings open up great opportunities for future research to develop more comprehensive and applicable theoretical models, especially on digital marketing strategies that focus on Gen Z in Indonesia.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the comprehensive bibliometric analysis that has been conducted, this study clearly succeeded in mapping the knowledge structure, thematic trends, and evolution of the study of Influencer Marketing (Influencer Marketing) in the last eight years, as well as answering the research objective in evaluating the dynamics of influencer influence on Generation Z Purchasing Decisions. The main research clusters are Effectiveness and Influencer Types, Psychological Relationships (credibility and parasocial relationships), Marketing Outcomes (brand awareness and purchase decisions), and Contextual Consumer Behavior which specifically covers the Indonesian context. The shift in temporal trends indicates that research is now moving away from a fundamental focus on credibility and emotional connections to more applicative and evaluative topics, such as influencer type and campaign effectiveness, which are particularly relevant for measuring the impact of marketing strategies in a dynamic Generation Z market. However, this study has limitations because it only analyzes metadata data (abstracts and keywords) without in-depth testing the methodology or empirical data of each article, so the findings only represent a map of global and local research trends, not experimental results. Therefore, further research is recommended to focus on quantitative or qualitative studies in the Indonesian context, empirically examine the causal relationship between psychological clusters (trust and credibility) and Generation Z Purchasing Decisions, as well as examine the role of moderation variables such as the type of dominant platform or local cultural factors to provide more precise strategic recommendations for marketing practitioners in the digital era.

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