

## WHAT DRIVES GENERATION Z TO PURCHASE ON SHOPEE: DIGITAL MARKETING PRICING OR ONLINE REVIEWS?

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### Abstract

This study investigates the key determinants influencing Generation Z's purchase intention on Shopee, focusing on three main variables: digital marketing, pricing, and online reviews. The research was conducted among students from the Faculty of Economics and Business at Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES) using a quantitative approach. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The findings reveal that both digital marketing and online reviews have a significant and positive impact on purchase intention. In contrast, pricing shows a significant but negative effect, indicating that Generation Z is highly price-sensitive and more influenced by perceived value and peer reviews. The model explains 68.0% of the variance in purchase intention ( $R^2 = 0.680$ ), suggesting a strong relationship between the examined variables and consumer behavior. These results highlight the importance of authentic digital engagement and customer feedback in driving online purchases among young consumers. E-commerce platforms are advised to prioritize trust-building strategies and maintain price competitiveness to target the Gen Z segment effectively.

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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technology has driven a significant shift in consumer behavior, particularly in shopping activities. One clear indication of this shift is the emergence of various e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, and others. The rise of e-commerce has changed the way consumers discover, compare, and purchase products. Shopee is currently the most popular online marketplace in Indonesia, with millions of active users every day (Qontak.com., 2025). As of 2023, Shopee recorded 167 million visitors, surpassing other online marketplaces (Databoks., 2025).

Shopee's visitor data from 2019 to 2023 shows a positive trend, which is largely attributed to its active use of digital marketing, particularly through social media promotions. This is supported by the findings of ,which state that Shopee frequently engages in digital marketing promotions and that respondents tend to prefer online shopping over offline shopping (Rettobjaan V., Aristayudha, A.A., Astitiani, N. L. & Widyani, 2024). When searching for products, Shopee is often their platform of choice. However, there is a research gap regarding digital marketing. A study by Masyitoh & Notaningtyas (2022) found that the digital marketing variable has a positive and significant effect on purchase intention. In an increasingly competitive digital industry, businesses are racing to utilize digital marketing strategies to attract consumers, especially the younger generation. One key consumer group that has become a central focus is Generation Z, or Gen Z, referring to those born between 1997 and 2012. This generation is known as digital natives, having been familiar with the internet, social media, and digital technology from a young age.

The interest of consumers in visiting Shopee's online marketplace is largely dominated by Generation Z. To understanding this trend, the study build by Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), developed by Icek Ajzen, is a psychological framework that explains how individual behavior is guided by three core components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). These components collectively shape an individual's behavioral intentions, which are the immediate antecedents of behavior. In the context of Generation Z's interest in shopping on Shopee, Theory of Planned Behavior provides a valuable lens to understand their purchasing behavior.

**Attitude Toward the Behavior:** This refers to the degree to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable evaluation of the behavior in question. For Generation Z consumers, positive attitudes toward online shopping on Shopee are influenced by factors such as pricing of product, product quality and electronic word of mouth. **Subjective Norms** are the perceived social pressures to perform or not perform the behavior. Generation Z is notably influenced by social media and peer opinions. Research indicates that social media influencers by their online review play a critical role in shaping Gen Z's purchase intentions. An extended Theory Planned Behavior model incorporating influencer credibility found that subjective norms and influencer credibility significantly

influence attitudes and purchase intentions among Gen Z consumers in Indonesia. Perceived Behavioral Control reflects the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior and is assumed to reflect past experience as well as anticipated impediments. In the case of Shopee, their digital marketing show all features such as user-friendly interfaces, diverse payment options, and reliable delivery services enhance Gen Z's perceived behavioral control, thereby positively influencing their purchase decisions.

Shopee has been identified as the favorite e-commerce platform among Gen Z based on Nielsen research, meeting their preferences for affordable prices, attractive products, and a simple, convenient purchasing process (Faisal et al., 2024). As one of the largest e-commerce platforms in Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Shopee actively implements various forms of digital marketing, such as social media promotions, influencer marketing, and data-driven personalized advertising (Rettobjaan V., Aristayudha, A.A., Astitiani, N. L. & Widyani, 2024). On the other hand, Gen Z consumers are also heavily influenced by price perception and online customer reviews when making purchasing decisions. Digital marketing, pricing, and online reviews appear to be key elements shaping their purchase intentions.

Technological progress, evolving consumer habits, and the worldwide move to digital platforms have significantly reshaped the landscape of digital marketing. Recent studies highlight how businesses increasingly rely on digital marketing strategies not only to promote their products but also to engage customers, build brand loyalty, and drive sales. Alalwan (2020) emphasizes that the rise of social media marketing and influencer collaborations has significantly reshaped consumer trust and brand perception. Companies leverage platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to create highly personalized and relatable content, fostering stronger emotional connections with their audiences. Through predictive analytics and automated personalization, marketers can deliver highly targeted advertisements and recommendations, enhancing customer experiences and increasing conversion rates. Moreover, This study finding that the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital marketing adoption across industries, leading to an even greater focus on e-commerce, mobile marketing, and omnichannel strategies (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Their study shows that companies that quickly adapted to digital shifts were better able to maintain customer engagement during periods of social distancing and lockdowns. Another significant trend in recent literature is the growing concern over data privacy and consumer trust. According to Martin, K. D., & Murphy (2022), although digital marketing provides opportunities for more precise targeting, consumers are becoming increasingly aware of how their data is collected and used. This demands that marketers adopt ethical practices and transparency to sustain long-term relationships. Lastly, research by Kumar, A., Bezawada, R., Rishika, R., Janakiraman, R., & Kannan (2022) underlines the importance of content authenticity and user-generated content. Consumers, especially among younger generations like Gen Z, value brands that encourage genuine interactions and reflect real consumer voices rather than polished corporate messaging.

Digital marketing has become a crucial factor influencing consumer purchase decisions in the contemporary marketplace. As digital platforms continue to evolve, businesses are increasingly relying on digital marketing strategies such as social media advertising, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, and influencer partnerships to engage potential customers and drive conversions. A growing body of literature supports the idea that digital marketing strategies have a significant impact on **purchase intention (Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019)**. The literature in recent years suggests that digital marketing has a profound effect on consumer purchase intention. The effectiveness of digital marketing strategies, such as social media marketing, personalized advertising, influencer marketing, and online reviews, significantly impacts consumer attitudes and behaviors. As digital marketing continues to evolve, understanding how these strategies interact to influence purchase intention will remain crucial for businesses aiming to maximize their marketing effectiveness.

Pricing is a critical factor in consumer purchase decisions. Consumers often evaluate products not only based on their quality but also their perceived value, which is highly influenced by the price (Schwind, M., & Huber, 2022). Competitive pricing strategies, discounts, and promotions can enhance consumers' purchase intentions by making products appear more affordable and offering greater perceived value (Schwind, M., & Huber, 2022). Online reviews and user generated content (UGC) have become significant influencers in the decision-making process. Positive reviews and content created by consumers can increase trust and credibility, encouraging potential buyers to make a purchase (Wu, Y., & Wang, 2023). Consumers tend to rely on feedback from other users to validate their own choices, and favorable reviews often lead to increased purchase intentions (Ahn & Lee, 2024). The combination of digital marketing, competitive pricing, and positive online reviews creates a powerful influence on purchase intention. Each factor plays a critical role, and their combined effect can exponentially increase the likelihood that a consumer will make a purchase. Digital marketing attracts attention, pricing provides value, and online reviews build trust, all of which drive purchase decisions (Gupta, A., & Pathak, 2024).

This research offers a unique contribution by combining three key variables, digital marketing, pricing, and online customer reviews into one comprehensive analytical model to assess their relative impact on the purchasing behavior of Generation Z on Shopee, the top e-commerce platform in Indonesia. Although prior research has explored these elements separately, only a few studies have conducted a simultaneous empirical investigation focusing specifically on Gen Z, a generation characterized by its deep integration with digital technology and rapid adaptation to technological changes. However, there is still a gap in academic literature regarding which factor most dominantly influences Generation Z's purchasing decisions on the Shopee platform. Some studies suggest that digital marketing significantly impacts purchase intention (Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019), while others emphasize the importance of customer reviews and pricing as the main determinants (Tiago, M. & Veríssimo, 2014).

This research aims to measure purchase intention by examining the influence of digital marketing, pricing, and online reviewer. These three independent variables are analyzed to determine their respective and collective effects on the purchase intentions of Gen Z consumers towards products available on Shopee. Therefore, this study seeks to empirically investigate these factors in order to answer the main research question: What drives Generation Z to make purchases on Shopee digital marketing, price, or online customer reviews?

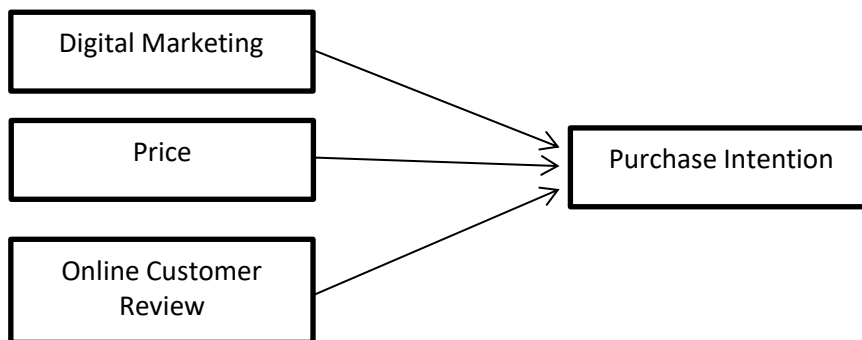
## **METHODS**

This study adopts a quantitative survey approach to gather data from respondents. The population comprises all students belonging to Generation Z (Gen Z) in Faculty of Economic and Business UNNES who have visited or utilized the Shopee platform. The determination of the sample size is guided by the recommendations of Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson (2010), who assert that the minimum sample size should be five to ten times the number of indicators or observed variables utilized in the research instrument. In this study, a total sample of 120 respondents was utilized. This number was determined based on the number of indicators used in the research instrument, which totaled 12 indicators. Following the recommendation of Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson (2010), the sample size was calculated by multiplying the number of indicators by 10, resulting in a minimum requirement of 120 respondents to ensure sufficient statistical power for the analysis. This study investigates the factors influencing Generation Z's purchasing decisions on Shopee. Respondents were students belonging to Generation Z (Gen Z) in Faculty of Economic and Business UNNES who actively shop on Shopee, gathered through an online questionnaire using a Likert scale. Generation Z was chosen as the respondent group in this study because they constitute the largest segment of Shopee users. This makes them the most relevant group to analyze in the context of consumer behavior on the e-commerce platform. At the Marketeers Youth Choice Award 2025, Shopee Indonesia successfully won the award as the leading e-commerce platform of choice among Gen Z. Shopee earned the Gold ranking in the E-Commerce category among Gen Z, outperforming other e-commerce platforms in Indonesia (Miftahudin, 2025). The sampling technique employed in this study is purposive sampling. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher ensured that the sample met the predetermined criteria by including specific requirements for completing the questionnaire. Only respondents who fulfilled these criteria were allowed to proceed, while those who did not meet the requirements were restricted from continuing. Respondents were selected based on specific criteria: (1) students must be the Generation Z (Gen Z) in Faculty of Economic and Business UNNES (aged 17–22) and (2) they must have had experience visiting or conducting transactions on the Shopee platform.

Before conducting the main analysis, validity and reliability tests should be performed to ensure that the measurement instruments are both accurate and consistent. The core method of analysis is multiple linear regression, which allows the researcher to

examine the influence of each independent variable (digital marketing, price, and online review on the dependent variable (purchase intention). Supporting tests such as the t-test and F-test should be used to determine the significance of individual variables and the overall model, while the R-squared value indicates how much of the variation in purchase intention can be explained by the three predictors by SPSS 25 to perform the statistical analysis efficiently.

To explore this relationship, a research framework is developed to map out the key variables and their interactions, providing a foundation for the study's hypotheses and analysis as can be seen in Figure 1.



**Figure 1.** Research Framework

To empirically investigate the influence of digital marketing on Generation Z's purchase intention on Shopee, it is essential to identify and define the research variables clearly. Each variable used in this study is derived from relevant theories and previous studies, ensuring both theoretical and practical relevance. Table 1 presents the operational definitions of the variables, and indicators that will be used to measure them.

**Table 1.** Variables and Indicators

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicators
<b>Digital Marketing</b>	Digital marketing efforts aimed at attracting consumers' interest through personalized, visual, and interactive methods.	1. The ads I see on Shopee grab my attention. 2. Social media promotions influence my decision to make a purchase. 3. Influencer content makes me interested in purchasing specific products on Shopee.

<b>Pricing</b>	The perceived value and affordability of the product prices offered on Shopee, in comparison to other platforms.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The product prices on Shopee are affordable.</li><li>2. Promotions or discounts influence my decision to purchase.</li><li>3. I compare prices on Shopee with other marketplaces before making a purchase.</li></ol>
<b>Online Reviews</b>	Reviews and feedback from other consumers who have purchased the product, serving as references for decision-making.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I read product reviews before deciding to purchase.</li><li>2. Positive reviews increase my trust in the product.</li><li>3. A high rating with many stars makes me more confident in buying the product.</li></ol>
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	The readiness and willingness of consumers to make purchases through the Shopee platform.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I plan to buy products on Shopee in the near future.</li><li>2. I am satisfied and intend to make future purchases on Shopee.</li><li>3. I prefer Shopee over other e-commerce platforms when shopping online.</li></ol>

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## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this research, the respondent profile is described based on the data collected, and analyzed to address the research objectives, particularly regarding gender, age range, and shopping frequency on Shopee.

**Table 2.** Respondent Profile

No	Profile Category	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	<b>Gender</b>	Male	46	38.3%
		Female	74	61.7%
2	<b>Age Range</b>	17–19 years	65	54.2%
		20–22 years	55	45.8%
3	<b>Shopping Frequency on Shopee</b>	More than once a week	38	31.7%
		Once a week	45	37.5%
		1–2 times per month	27	22.5%
		Rarely (<1/month)	10	8.3%

Source: SPSS 25 output (2025)

To conduct the validity and reliability tests on the 12 statement items representing the variables of digital marketing, pricing, online review and purchase intention, the process involves calculating the correlation for each statement item. Following this, the validity coefficient, reliability, and r-table values are determined using SPSS version 25.

**Table 3.** Validity and Reliability Test

Variable	Indicator	Pearson Correlation (r-value)	Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)	Interpretation
<b>Digital Marketing</b>	Promotional Ads	0.864	0,849	Valid & Reliable
	Social Media Marketing	0.940		Valid & Reliable
	Influencer Endorsement	0.924		Valid & Reliable
<b>Pricing</b>	Price Affordability	0.909		Valid & Reliable
	Discounts & Flash Sales	0.756		Valid & Reliable
	Price Comparison	0.897		Valid & Reliable
<b>Online Reviews</b>	Customer Reviews	0.965	0,849	Valid & Reliable
	Positive review	0.959		Valid & Reliable

<b>Purchase intention</b>	Product System	Rating	0.966	Valid & Reliable
	Plan to buy		0.81	Valid & Reliable
	satisfied and intend to make future purchase		0.925	Valid & Reliable
	prefer Shopee than other's platform		9.25	Valid & Reliable

Source: SPSS 25 output (2025)

Based on the calculations of each statement item using SPSS version 25, it was found that all statement items had Pearson correlation values greater than 0.3, indicating that the statements are considered valid (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). This suggests that the items have a significant relationship with the construct being measured and can be categorized as valid indicators. Based on the SPSS output analysis, a value of 0.849 was obtained, which is greater than or equal to 0.600. Therefore, the instrument used in this research is considered reliable. A statement instrument is considered reliable if its reliability coefficient has a minimum value of 0.6 (Sugiyono., 2019).

The data utilized in this study demonstrate no indication of multicollinearity among the independent variables within the regression model, exhibit no signs of heteroscedasticity or autocorrelation, and conform to a normal distribution.

**Table 4.** Multiple Regression Analysis Result

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t-value	p-value	R <sup>2</sup>
Constant	2.005		4.185	0.000	
Digital Marketing	0.432	0.081	5.318	0.000	
Pricing	-0.176	0.075	-2.339	0.021	
Online Reviews	0.308	0.076	4.035	0.000	
R <sup>2</sup>					0.680
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>					0.463

Source: SPSS 25 output (2025)

## DISCUSSION

### Digital Marketing Positively Influences Generation Z's Purchase Intention on Shopee

Digital marketing has been found to have a statistically significant and positive effect on purchase decisions, as indicated by the regression coefficient. It can be concluded that digital marketing plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchase decision-making behavior. Priporas, C. V., Stylos, N., & Fotiadis (2017) found that Generation Z has high expectations of digital interactions, making them more likely to engage with brands that offer smart and engaging retail experiences. Duffett (2017) emphasized the significant influence of social media marketing on young consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan (2021) also discussed the importance of advanced digital marketing strategies such as artificial intelligence and personalized content in influencing modern consumer behavior, particularly among Gen Z. Furthermore, a study by Rahmawati, R., & Ardiansyah, (2021) revealed that Shopee's marketing strategies, including flash sales, free shipping, and influencer endorsements, significantly influence the purchase intentions of Gen Z consumers in Indonesia.

### **Pricing Strategies Have a Positive Impact Generation Z's Purchase Intention on Shopee**

Pricing has a statistically significant but negative effect on purchase decisions, as reflected by the regression coefficient. This negative relationship suggests that lower pricing may be associated with lower perceived product quality or a lack of consumer trust toward products that are priced too cheaply. Such a finding is particularly noteworthy, as it implies that consumers may not always respond favorably to price reductions. Therefore, pricing strategies should be implemented with caution, ensuring that the value and quality perceptions of the product are maintained to avoid unintended negative effects on purchase decisions.

The negative impact of pricing on purchase decisions, as observed in this study, aligns with existing research indicating that lower prices can sometimes diminish perceived product quality and consumer trust. For instance, a study by Albari, A., & Safitri (2018) emphasizes that consumers' perceptions of price significantly influence their purchasing decisions, suggesting that price reductions may not always lead to increased purchase intentions if they compromise perceived value. Additionally, research by Sadiq, M., Bhatti, W. A., & Tariq (2020) highlights that while lower prices can boost sales volume, they may also lead consumers to question the quality of the product, especially if the price is significantly below market expectations. This phenomenon underscores the importance of pricing strategies that balance affordability with quality perceptions to maintain consumer trust and encourage purchase decisions. Therefore, the findings contribute to the broader understanding that pricing strategies should be carefully considered, as aggressive price reductions might inadvertently signal lower quality to consumers, potentially deterring purchases rather than encouraging them.

### **Positive Online Reviews impact Generation Z's Purchase Intention on Shopee**

Online reviews exhibit a statistically significant and positive influence on purchase decisions, as indicated by the regression coefficient. This result suggests that favorable online reviews play an important role in shaping consumer behavior by fostering trust and providing reassurance, thereby enabling individuals to make more confident purchasing choices. The strength of this relationship underscores the importance of managing and maintaining a positive online reputation as part of an effective marketing strategy.

Rachmiani, R., Oktadinna, N., & Fauzan (2024) examines the impact of online reviews and product ratings on consumers' purchase decisions on e-commerce platforms, supporting the hypothesis that positive reviews increase consumer trust and influence purchasing behavior. The study highlights the critical role of reviews in reducing perceived risks and enhancing consumer confidence. Recent research consistently supports the hypothesis that online reviews significantly influence consumer purchase decisions. For instance, a study by Rachmiani, R., Oktadinna, N., & Fauzan (2024) demonstrated that positive online reviews and product ratings directly impact consumer behavior, increasing trust and reducing perceived risk, which in turn encourages purchasing. Similarly, Eftimov (2023) highlighted that consumers rely on online reviews to make more informed decisions, emphasizing the importance of reviews in shaping buying behavior. Further supporting this, Chen, T., Samaranayake, P., Cen, X., Qi, M., & Lan (2022) used eye-tracking technology to show that consumer attention to online reviews plays a pivotal role in guiding purchase decisions. Additionally, Putatunda, S., Bhowmik, A., Thiruvankadam, G., & Ghosh (2023) confirmed that sentiment expressed in reviews affects purchase intent, with positive reviews encouraging higher engagement. Despite cultural variations in the interpretation of online reviews, they remain a crucial factor in consumer decision-making. Online reviews are a powerful tool that shape purchasing behavior by building trust, reducing uncertainty, and providing reassurance to consumers.

### **The Combined Effect of Digital Marketing, Pricing, and Online Reviews Has a Strong Positive Impact Generation Z's Purchase Intention on Shopee**

The regression model demonstrates a relatively strong explanatory capacity and indicating that 68% of the variance in purchase decisions can be accounted for by the combined influence of digital marketing, pricing, and online reviews. However, when adjusted for the number of predictors in the model, the Adjusted  $R^2$  value suggesting that the true explanatory power is approximately 46.3%. This discrepancy may point to potential issues such as overfitting or multicollinearity, which warrant further examination. Among the independent variables, digital marketing and online reviews exert a statistically significant and positive influence on Generation Z's purchasing decisions on the Shopee platform. In contrast, pricing, while also statistically significant, shows a negative effect, indicating that lower prices do not necessarily translate into higher purchase intentions within this demographic—possibly due to associations with lower perceived quality or distrust. Overall, the model presents a satisfactory level of explanatory power, yet it also implies that additional factor such as brand trust,

convenience, and application usability—may further contribute to the purchasing behavior of Generation Z consumers

Recent studies have explored the factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions in online shopping environments, aligning with the findings from the regression model presented in this research. Similarly, Park, C., & Lee (2021) demonstrated that online reviews have a substantial impact on purchase decisions by establishing credibility and trustworthiness, reinforcing the positive influence of online reviews found in the current model. This phenomenon, often associated with the price quality heuristic, could explain the unexpected negative effect of pricing observed for Generation Z in this study. Furthermore, the inclusion of additional variables such as brand trust, perceived convenience, and app usability could provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in e-commerce platforms. These studies collectively underline the complexity of purchase decision-making in digital environments, highlighting the need for further investigation into other potential factors that influence consumer behavior.

## CONCLUSION

Among the independent variables, both digital marketing and online reviews exert a statistically significant and positive influence on Generation Z's purchasing decisions. Similarly, online reviews were found to have a positive impact on consumer behavior, supporting previous findings that reviews help build trust and provide reassurance to consumers. In contrast, pricing, although statistically significant, showed a negative influence on purchasing decisions. In this study, the primary focus was on three independent variables: digital marketing, pricing, and online reviews. However, other potentially influential factors such as brand trust, convenience, and app usability were not included in the analysis. The exclusion of these elements may limit the comprehensiveness of the findings, as they could also play significant roles in shaping consumer purchase intentions. Overall, while the model presents a satisfactory level of explanatory power, it also indicates that other factors, such as brand trust, convenience, and app usability, could further contribute to Generation Z's purchase decisions.

This research set out to examine which factors among digital marketing, pricing, and online reviews most significantly affect purchase intention in Generation Z students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), particularly in the context of shopping on Shopee. The study exclusively involved students from the Faculty of Economics and Business at UNNES, which may not fully represent the broader Generation Z demographic in Semarang or other regions. The Future studies should include participants from various faculties, universities, and geographic regions to enhance the generalizability of the results.

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