

# Trends in Digital Marketing Research: *Bibliometric Analysis for 2019 – 2023*

*Trends in Digital Marketing Research*

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Digital Marketing (DM) is an important aspect in an industry, especially in the digital era. This study aims to analyze publication trends related to DM, technological innovation, and environmental aspects in the last five years 2019-2023 using bibliometric analysis. Data taken from the Scopus database was refined into 218 publications. The trend of DM-related publications related to technological innovation and sustainability has increased significantly in the last five years, and the most publications will occur in 2023, reaching 79 documents. The trend of the most published sources is Sustainability with a total of 23 published articles. Network cluster analysis identified six main research focuses: The relationship of DM and marketing strategy, digital transformation, social media, big data, sustainability, and the role of DM in Covid-19. The implication is that DM is still a central issue in the business world, while marketing strategies need to continue to adapt their digital marketing strategies to dynamic changes in the business sphere, paying attention to aspects of technological innovation, consumer behavior and sustainability in order to be able to read maps of market trends and consumer interests to achieve maximum goals.*

**Keywords:** *Digital Marketing; Digital Transformation; social media; Big Data; Sustainable*

## **ABSTRAK**

*Digital Marketing (DM) merupakan aspek penting dalam sebuah industri, terutama di era digital. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tren publikasi yang berkaitan dengan DM, inovasi teknologi, dan aspek lingkungan dalam lima tahun terakhir 2019-2023 dengan menggunakan analisis bibliometrik. Data yang diambil dari database Scopus disaring menjadi 218 publikasi. Tren publikasi terkait PB yang berkaitan dengan inovasi teknologi dan keberlanjutan mengalami peningkatan yang cukup signifikan dalam lima tahun terakhir, dan publikasi terbanyak akan terjadi pada tahun 2023, yaitu mencapai 79 dokumen. Tren sumber yang paling banyak dipublikasikan adalah Sustainability dengan total 23 artikel yang dipublikasikan. Analisis kluster jaringan mengidentifikasi enam fokus penelitian utama: Hubungan DM dan strategi pemasaran, transformasi digital, media sosial, big data, keberlanjutan, dan peran DM dalam Covid-19. Implikasinya, DM masih menjadi isu sentral dalam dunia bisnis, sementara strategi pemasaran perlu terus menyesuaikan strategi pemasaran digitalnya dengan perubahan dinamis di ranah bisnis,*

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## INTRODUCTION

The importance of marketing to the business world involves its integral role in identifying, understanding and responding to market dynamics (Hollebeek, 2019). Marketing has become not only a strategic imperative for measuring and meeting customer needs, but also a scientific discipline that provides the basis for rational business decision making (Nazmul Islam et al., 2021). Through careful market research, companies can explore the latest data regarding consumer preferences, industry trends and competitors, which is then used to develop products or services that can meet market expectations (Sridhar & Fang, 2019).

Companies in carrying out their marketing strategies cannot be free from problems in the field, like Hollensen (2019) mentions, among others, comparative market distance, adaptation to foreign markets, competition from other firms in foreign markets, adapting products and services to new local conditions, difficulties in finding the right distributor in the foreign market, differences in product specifications in foreign markets, and complexity of shipping services to overseas buyers. If these obstacles are not overcome, they will hinder the company from achieving global marketing goals.

In an effort to overcome complex problems in global marketing, digital marketing strategies have emerged as an alternative solution that has the potential to provide a significant positive impact (Chen, 2023). Supported by the results of a global McKinsey survey (2022) highlighting consumer preferences between the Asian, European and North American markets, which include the tendency of preferences for online purchases, brands and consumer value priorities, and are able to create satisfaction (Al-Weshah et al., 2021).

Urgency in digital marketing (DM) cannot be separated from digital marketing strategy (Al-Weshah et al., 2021), and assisted by digital transformation which can create relationship quality for consumers. Such maintenance can be mediated by social media as a relevant means for the realization of digital marketing because it presents a history of organizational performance that tends to result in greater reliability, customer experience and promotion of brand value (da Silva et al., 2023). To read market and consumer maps, Big Data can be used to help marketers make decisions (Sakas, Giannakopoulos, et al., 2022), including decisions that also take into account the environment (Kaur et al., 2022), as digital marketing strategies that pay attention to environmental aspects can create customer satisfaction (Urdea et al., 2021). Also, as happened with Covid-19, environmental and sustainable aspects are the key to success for marketers (Low et al., 2020).

Researchers tried to collect research data using the Scopus database regarding DM for the last five years which was then analyzed using bibliometrics. Bibliometric analysis is quantitative or qualitative analysis to see trends in studies on certain topics (Anggraeni & Yulia, 2022; Faruk et al., 2021; Ghorbani et al., 2022; Kumar et al., 2020; Shpak et al., 2020; Saheb, 2021). This bibliometric analysis has contributed a lot to the field of business (Amiri et al., 2023; Amjad, 2022; Faruk et al., 2021; Ghorbani et al., 2022; Guillén-Pujadas, 2023; Hsu, 2022; Kim et al., 2021; Labrada, 2022; S. Li, 2023; Magd, 2023; Marín-Palacios, 2022; Marín Palacios & Botey Fullat, 2022; Monica, 2019; Purnomo et al., 2022; Ramdhani, 2023; Zaki, 2023). The aim of this research is to look at research trends related to DM in the last five years using bibliometric analysis methods by paying attention to aspects of technological innovation and sustainability.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Digital Marketing Concepts**

Digital marketing involves a series of principles and concepts that guide practitioners and researchers in designing, implementing, and evaluating marketing strategies in a digital context (Prakasa, 2023). The marketing concept includes brand enhancement, and the composition of after-sales service quality (Gao, 2023). While the concept of digital marketing refers to social methods in which people and companies use information and communication technologies (ICT) to attract new customers, learn more about their current clients, promote brands, strengthen business relationships, and increase sales (Rodrigues et al., 2023) which includes the application of digital platforms, data analysis and online interactions to achieve marketing goals (Talikota, 2019). There are five components of digital marketing including search engine optimization and search engine marketing (SEO and SEM; S), display advertising (D), E-CRM (EC), content marketing (CM), and communication (C) (Dash & Chakraborty, 2021).

Digital marketing responsibilities in the context of technology, digital marketing is responsible for understanding and complying with applicable privacy, security and transparency standards in the collection and use of consumer data (Zhang et al., 2022). Socially, digital marketing responsibility involves building and managing a positive and inclusive brand image, including avoiding harmful or derogatory campaigns, as well as promoting social values that support diversity and justice (Dash & Chakraborty, 2021). From a sustainability perspective, it is digital marketing's responsibility that digital campaigns not only generate economic benefits, but also pay attention to their environmental and social impacts (Khan et al., 2022).

## **METHODS**

The method used in this research is bibliometric analysis. Researchers collected data using the Scopus database. According to (Aji et al., 2023) in the data collection process there are several steps taken, starting from identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The data collection process can be seen in Figure 1 below as follows.

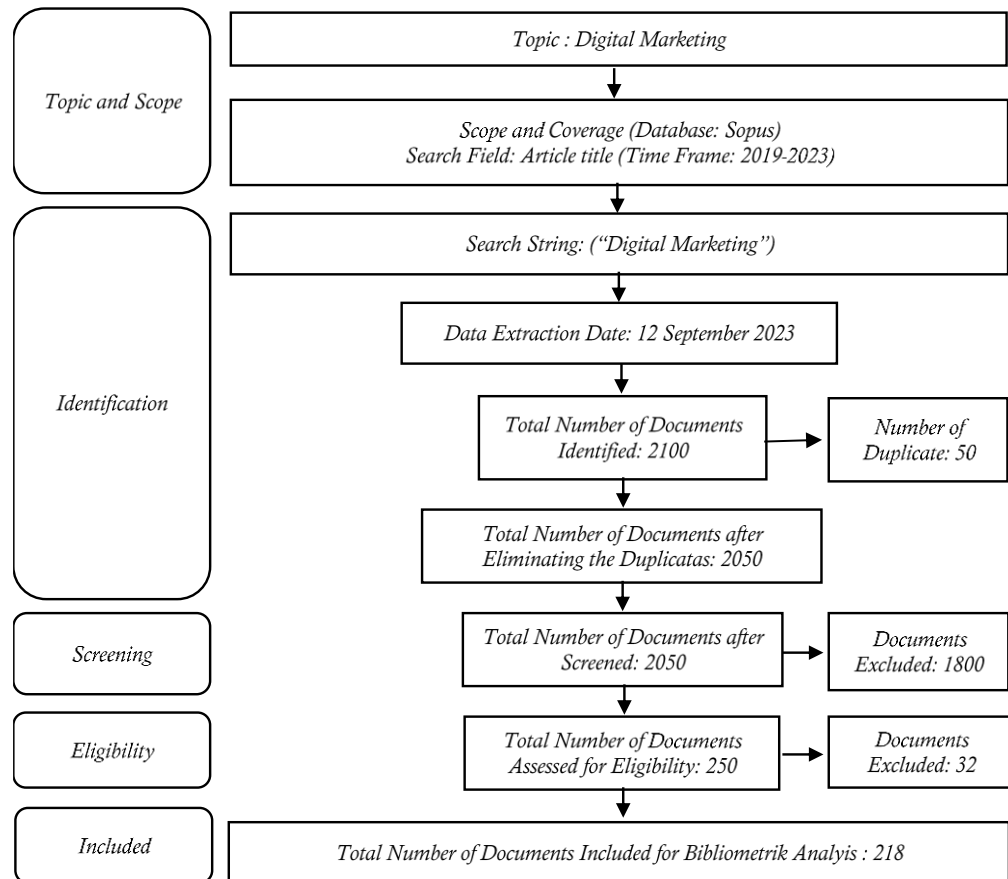


Figure 1. Data Collection Process

The researcher's first step was to identify research related to DM by entering the keyword "Digital Marketing" in the Scopus database. At this stage, 2100 articles were obtained according to the criteria. Next, the second stage is a screening process where only English and publications from the last 5 years are included for the next process. Researchers only include articles published in journals. In this second stage, researchers have screened 1800 articles so that the remaining 250 articles will be continued in the next stage. The third stage, the researcher assessed the suitability of the article, the researcher looked at the article title and abstract, whether it met the criteria required by the researcher, such as containing DM or not. In the final stage, researchers included 218 articles from the previous data collection process. Data collection was carried out on September 1, 2023, after collecting 218 articles, researchers saved them in RIS and CSV form which will be analyzed using the VOSviewer application.

### Data Analysis Method

The current trend in DM-related publications is to carry out descriptive analysis of bibliometric data taken from the Scopus database. A graph showing the number of publications, publication sources and the cumulative number of publications each year was produced using Microsoft Excel 2016. Trends in citations to articles related to DM will be separated by year of publication. Meanwhile, the average publication citations and calculation of Total of Publications and Total Citations are assisted by the Harzing's Publish or Perish software application. Co-occurrence analysis of DM-related keywords was carried out to determine the research focus. The data to be analyzed is taken from the Scopus database so it requires data processing first. The research focus can be determined from the shared keywords visualized by the VOSviewer software.

## RESULTS

### Publication Trends

The trend of publications related to DM research in the last five years is shown in Figure 2. In 2023, there will be 79 articles published, the highest compared to other years. meaning that more than 20 percent of articles have been published in 2023 of the total publications.

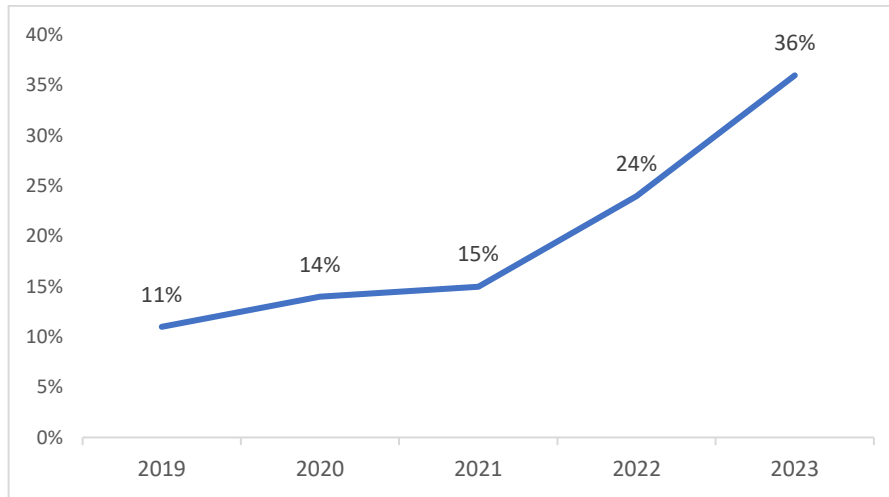


Figure 2. Number of Publications from 2019-2023

This increase can be seen from the research trend line, an increase in the number of articles can be seen from 2019 to 2023. However, the accumulation of the last five years shows a quite significant increase. This shows the great interest of researchers in DM.

### Publication Source Trends

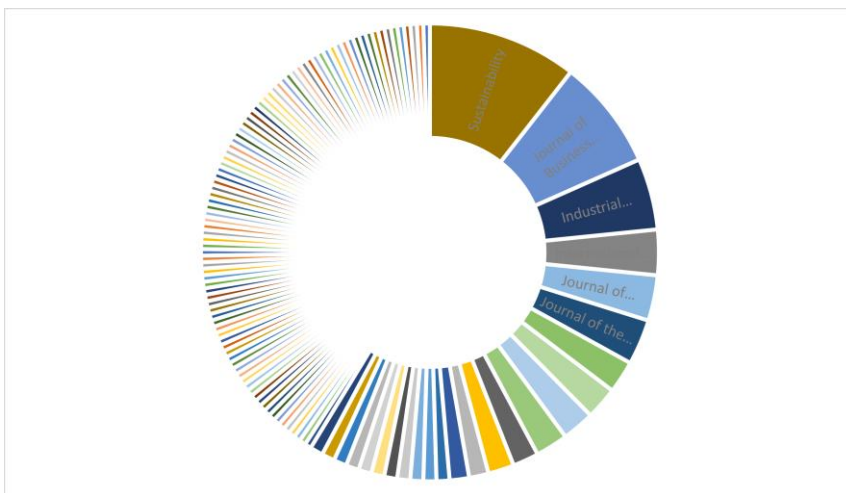


Figure 3. Number of Publications from 2019 to 2023

Figure 3 shows that the number of publication sources has varied greatly over the last five years. The number found by researchers was 122 publication sources with the largest publication source being Sustainability at 23 published articles. This was followed by the Journal of Business Research with 17 articles, and Industrial Marketing Management with 11 written articles which can be seen in Figure 4. The data shows the high interest of researchers in DM. And what's interesting is that the publication sources that publish the most articles related to digital marketing are Sustainability, Journal of Business Research, and Industrial Marketing Management. This shows that the relationship between business, marketing and sustainability is very close.



Figure 4. Most Publications from 2019 to 2023

### Quote Trends

Citation trends in the last five years, namely 2019 to 2023, are related to DM. Researchers calculate TP and TC as in the table below.

Table 1. Citations Analysis of Publications

Year	Total of Publication (TP)	Total Citation (TC)
2019	25	723
2020	30	951
2021	32	4553
2022	52	7387
2023	79	6767

In table 1, over the last five years there has been a significant increase in the number of publications related to DM. In 2019, there were 25 publications with a total of 723 citations. The number of publications increased in 2020 to 30 publications with total citations reaching 951, in 2021 it reached 32 publications with 4553 citations, in 2022 it reached 52 and in 2023 it reached 79 publications. However, in 2022, even though the number of publications is less than in 2023, the number of citations in that year is greater, namely in 2022 with 7387 citations and in 2023 reaching 6767 citations.



Figure 6. Co-occurrence of Keywords (Occurrence Threshold ≥ 654)

Researchers set the number of publications at 218 containing the keyword DM. From these results, researchers set a minimum threshold for publications containing the same keywords. From these results, 654 keywords were narrowed down to 400 keywords. The network visualization results in Figure 3 show that there are 6 clusters with 312 items regarding DM, namely, (1) Cluster 1 (Orange) is the largest cluster of the five other clusters which are the sub-themes of the current research. (2) Cluster 2 (blue) namely digital transformation. (3) Cluster (pink), namely social media. (3) Cluster 3 (Yellow), namely marketing and strategy. (4) Cluster 4 (purple) namely big data. (5) Cluster 5 (green), namely Sustainable. (6) Cluster 6 (red) namely Covid-19. The six clusters are considered to have close relationships with each other.

**DISCUSSION**

In this section, the main findings that emerge in the cluster network analysis relate to the study “Digital Marketing in the Last Five Years”. These findings are divided into five main clusters, which will be discussed in more depth.

**Cluster 1 – Digital Marketing (DM) and Marketing Strategy**

In the contemporary marketing paradigm, there is a close intrinsic relationship between DM and marketing strategy. DM, as a subset of marketing strategy, signals a fundamental shift in businesses' approach to developing and maintaining relationships with consumers. The emergence of digital platforms such as social media, search engines, and websites allows organizations to optimize their visibility, increase consumer engagement, and collect valuable consumer data. Today's successful marketing strategies include DM integration to leverage the full potential of existing digital channels. The application of digital technology in marketing strategy gives organizations the ability to detail customers, understand consumer behavior in more depth, and tailor marketing messages according to individual preferences. Therefore, in an ever evolving and digitalized business environment, effective marketing strategies must embrace the digital paradigm, integrating digital tools and tactics to increase consumer engagement, expand market reach, and optimize the overall effectiveness of marketing campaigns.

In several literatures, researchers found related digital marketing strategies, including Search Engine Optimization (SEO) (Singh et al., 2023), Content Marketing (Wibowo et

al., 2021), Social Media Marketing (Wibowo et al., 2021), Email Marketing (Adwan et al., 2023), Pay-Per-Click (PPC) (Sakas, Giannakopoulos, et al., 2022), Affiliate Marketing (Sakas et al., 2023), Influencer Marketing (Coll & Micó, 2019), Mobile Marketing (Arshad & Naseer, 2019), Video Marketing (Cheng et al., 2022), and Chatbot Marketing (Yasar & Korkusuz Polat, 2022). Overall, this strategy has had a significant impact. This is supported by research result Wynn (2022) that proven IT strategy development methodologies still apply in the digital era and can play an important role in supporting the success of digital transformation initiatives.

### **Cluster 2 – Digital Marketing (DM) and Digital Transformation**

In the context of modern business, the relationship between DM and digital transformation is essential to face ever-evolving market dynamics. Digital transformation includes comprehensive changes in organizational structure, business processes and company culture by utilizing digital technology to increase efficiency and competitiveness. DM, as an integral part of the latest marketing strategy, is the main driver in realizing digital transformation goals. Through the use of digital platforms and data analytics, organizations can optimize marketing campaigns, understand consumer behavior more deeply, and improve customer interactions. In addition, DM facilitates increased brand visibility in the online realm, which is crucial in an era where consumers are increasingly connected digitally. Successful digital transformation requires synergistic integration between technology, processes, and social media art digital marketing strategies.

Some of the literature obtained regarding the role of digital transformation in DM includes corporate risk raking (Bilovodska et al., 2022), relationship quality (Gao, 2023), business sustainability (Mitova et al., 2021), customer involvement (Bilovodska et al., 2022), purchase intention (Liu & Zhang, 2019b), cross-culture (Cerquetti & Romagnoli, 2023), and advertising (Bazaras et al., 2022). Therefore, research in this context not only observes how organizations adopt and implement digital marketing strategies, but also looks at how this integration influences overall business transformation in the digital era.

### **Cluster 3 – Digital Marketing (DM) and Social Media**

In contemporary digital marketing discourse, the relationship between DM and social media has become the subject of substantial and critical research. Social media, as a digital-based interactive platform that facilitates the exchange of information and interaction between individuals, has become the core of digital marketing strategy. DM relies on social media as an effective channel for building brand presence, interacting with audiences, and delivering marketing messages in a more personal and powerful way. Successful digital marketing strategies leverage the power of visual narrative and text in social media environments, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, to create immersive brand experiences and stimulate consumer interaction. In addition, data analytics related to social media allows marketing practitioners to understand consumer responses, measure campaign effectiveness, and quickly adapt marketing strategies according to developing trends.

The very significant relevance of social media to DM is that marketers can carry out their marketing in society 5.0 where this era is dominated by Generation Z (Gen-Z) which bases almost all of their activities on social media (Kung, 2023), So it is very possible that social media can mediate to reach comorbidity (Mehmet et al., 2020), business to business relationship (Bazaras et al., 2022), community strategy (Chen, 2023), customer experience (costumer decision-making) (Gao, 2023), customer behavior (Kung, 2023), brand management (Matosas-López, 2021), brand awareness (Gkarane et al., 2019), and commercial activities (Nazmul Islam et al., 2021), so that it can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of marketing strategies in achieving business goals.



#### **Cluster 4 – Digital Marketing (DM) and Big Data**

The ever-evolving digital era, the correlation between DM and big data marks a fundamental shift in the marketing paradigm. The exponential growth of digital data has made a significant contribution to the evolution of marketing practices, and the integration of big data in digital marketing strategies has become a crucial element in achieving competitive success. Big data, as a collection of information that is complex and involves large volumes, provides the basis for in-depth analysis of consumer behavior and market trends.

Digital marketing, as a form of marketing that responds to digital consumer dynamics, utilizes big data to produce in-depth insights regarding consumer preferences, behavior and purchasing patterns (Sayyad et al., 2020). The collection and analysis of data from a variety of sources, including social media platforms, online interactions, and browsing behavior, allows marketing practitioners to recognize patterns that underlie and guide consumer decisions (Liu & Zhang, 2019a). Thus, DM supported by big data can provide more focused and personalized messages to the target audience. As academics discuss the contribution of big data to DM which includes strategic digital marketing (Kong, 2022), decentralized payment networks and advertising (Sakas, Giannakopoulos, et al., 2022), blockchain (Kaur et al., 2022), customer retention (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020), fast fashion brand (Velasco-Molpeceres et al., 2023), brand name (Wan, 2023), crowd branding (Sakas, Kamperos, et al., 2022), logistics (Barykin et al., 2022), and sustainability (Peng & Li, 2023).

#### **Cluster 5 – Digital Marketing (DM) and Sustainable**

The link between Digital Marketing and sustainability reflects a strategic evolution in marketing approaches that consider environmental impact and social responsibility. In the midst of a business paradigm shift towards sustainability, DM is becoming a major force in communicating sustainability values and mobilizing consumers to participate in more environmentally friendly behavior (Saura et al., 2020). The use of digital technology in marketing strategies provides opportunities to convey sustainability messages in innovative and measurable ways (Bruce et al., 2023).

In this context, DM facilitates information and education campaigns aimed at increasing consumer awareness of sustainable practices. Social media platforms, blogs and email campaigns can be used as tools to disseminate information about products and business practices that pay attention to environmental impact and social sustainability. Additionally, DM can also demonstrate transparency in supply chains and production processes, enabling consumers to make more sustainable decisions (Mu et al., 2022). So the sustainable concept in DM leads to a green transition (Korucuk et al., 2022) which contributes to increased consumer awareness (J. Li, 2023), transparency and accountability (Wilking et al., 2023), sustainable campaign (Saura et al., 2020), and brand equity (Dumitriu et al., 2019).

#### **Cluster 6 – Digital Marketing (DM) and Covid-19**

The selected publications related to DM in the last five years (2019-2023) are still very closely related to the Covid-19 Pandemic era, so researchers analyzed the relationship and impact. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Digital Marketing strategies has become the main focus in academic studies, representing a major change in the global marketing paradigm. Since the start of the pandemic, social distancing and changes in consumer behavior have forced companies to significantly adapt their marketing tactics. In the midst of physical restrictions, the role of digital marketing has proven critical in maintaining connectivity with consumers. Companies are adopting new strategies to leverage their online presence, such as increased social media campaigns, content adjustments to reflect the pandemic context, and increased use of e-commerce platforms. Digital marketing data analysis is also becoming increasingly important to understand changing consumer trends and adjust marketing strategies amidst economic uncertainty. However, challenges such as sensitivity to the pandemic context and increased competition for consumer attention

also need to be considered in the context of further research. This research not only illustrates the practical adaptation of businesses to the pandemic, but also stimulates theoretical questions regarding the evolution of digital marketing and business transformation in the next global emergency.

Several articles say that Covid-19 has changed the landscape of the world of marketing and social media behavior, including customer behavior, focusing on online basics (Dubbelink et al., 2021), including social media marketing (Dimitrios et al., 2023) by adopting e-commerce (Gao et al., 2023), influence purchasing decisions (J. Li, 2023), and form effective customer engagement (Wan, 2023). So that the optimal formation of DM occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic and became a further illustration regarding digital marketing strategies in the next era of digitalization.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, research in the field of Digital Marketing (DM) over the last five years has experienced significant progress, with the highest number of publications occurring in 2023. Meanwhile, the most dominant publication source for publishing articles related to DM is Sustainability. The relationship between DM and marketing strategy, digital transformation, social media, Big Data, sustainability, and response to the Covid-19 pandemic reflects a profound evolution in the global marketing paradigm. Digital marketing is not only an important element in modern marketing strategies, but also a key driver in transformational change and business adaptation. The integration of Big Data in DM provides substantial analytical advantages, enabling more accurate and responsive decision making. Meanwhile, social media has become a vital channel in connecting brands with consumers, creating opportunities for direct interaction and more personalized marketing campaigns. In the context of sustainability, DM paves the way for conveying sustainability messages and business transparency, while in the face of Covid-19, it becomes a vital tool in maintaining connectivity and adapting marketing strategies in a global emergency situation. Overall, this interconnectedness not only creates new opportunities for business, but also raises new challenges that require in-depth understanding and continuous adaptation in an increasingly complex and dynamic marketing era. Further research in this context is not only relevant for business practitioners but is also the subject of academic discussions that enrich the theoretical and applicative understanding of marketing in the digital business environment.

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