

## The Influence of Interactive Content and Influencers on The Purchase Decisions of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises in Palopo City

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*Abstract: This research is motivated by the increasing use of digital media as a marketing tool, where interactive content and influencers have become strategies widely used by companies to attract attention and encourage consumers in making purchasing decisions. This study aims to analyze the influence of interactive content and influencers on consumer purchasing decisions. The research method used is a quantitative method with a population of all MSME consumers in Palopo City who have purchased MSME products. The sampling technique used purposive sampling with the determination of the number of samples using the MoE formula so that a sample size of 100 samples was obtained. Data analysis included descriptive and inferential analysis using SmartPLS. The results of the study show that: Interactive content has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions, influencers have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions and simultaneously interactive content and influencers have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. These findings indicate that a digital marketing strategy that combines interactive content and influencers is effective in increasing consumer interest and purchasing decisions.*

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### Introduction

The digital world has evolved rapidly, transforming the way people interact, communicate, and conduct economic transactions. One of the most noticeable phenomena in this digital era is the explosion of information and the emergence of various social media platforms. In a marketing context, this fundamental change is pushing businesses to adapt with more innovative and relevant strategies. One strategy that is increasingly dominant is the use of interactive content. Interactive content is defined as content that requires active audience participation to achieve its objectives, such as quizzes, surveys, calculators, or interactive games.

This phenomenon demonstrates that modern consumers are no longer passive recipients of information but instead desire a more immersive and personalized experience with brands. They want to engage, provide feedback, and even participate in creating a product's narrative. Interactive

content enables brands to not only convey messages but also build stronger relationships with consumers, increase brand engagement, and ultimately, drive purchasing decisions. The success of this strategy can be seen in the increased conversion and customer retention rates reported by many companies that implement interactive content in their marketing campaigns (Keng et al., 2023) .

Another relevant issue for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is their limited marketing budgets but need to compete in an increasingly competitive market. With interactive content, MSMEs can create unique experiences that differentiate them from competitors and capture consumers' attention amidst the flood of information. Along with the growth of interactive content, the phenomenon of "influencers" has emerged as a new force in the digital marketing realm. Influencers are "individuals who have a large, loyal following (audience) on social media platforms and are able to influence the opinions and purchasing decisions of their followers due to their credibility, expertise, or established relationships" (Ye et al., 2021) .

Modern consumers tend to trust recommendations from friends, family, or influencers they admire on social media more than direct brand advertising. The appeal of influencers lies in their ability to create authentic and personalized communication with their audiences, building emotional connections that are difficult to achieve through conventional marketing channels. They act as influencers, providing product reviews, tips, or even lifestyle inspiration. Previous studies have shown that influencer marketing can generate higher engagement rates and a significant return on investment compared to other forms of digital marketing (Hugh et al., 2022) .

For MSMEs, collaborating with influencers offers the opportunity to reach specific target markets in a more personal and compelling way, overcoming the geographic and budgetary constraints they often face. In Palopo City, a developing city with high internet penetration and social media usage, both interactive content and influencers are expected to have a significant impact on consumer behavior, particularly in the context of MSME product purchasing decisions.

The emergence of interactive content and influencers in the digital marketing landscape has created a need for a deeper understanding of how these two factors simultaneously influence consumer purchasing decisions, particularly for MSME products. The primary rationale for this research is a specific knowledge gap regarding the interaction and combined impact of interactive content and influencers on MSMEs at the local level, such as Palopo City.

While numerous studies have explored each factor separately, few have integrated these two elements into a single research framework, particularly with a focus on the MSME sector. MSMEs have unique characteristics, such as limited resources, less established brands, and often more specific target markets than larger companies. Therefore, effective marketing strategies for MSMEs may differ. Furthermore, there is a need to understand the perceptions and responses of local consumers in Palopo City towards these digital marketing strategies, given the cultural and social differences that may influence their effectiveness compared to research contexts in larger cities or developed countries.

This research is particularly relevant for the development of MSMEs in Palopo City in the digital economy era. First, MSMEs are the backbone of the regional economy, yet they often face challenges competing with products from larger companies, particularly in marketing. By understanding the potential of interactive content and influencers, MSMEs can identify more effective and efficient digital marketing strategies, enabling them to reach a wider market and increase their sales volume. Second, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift in consumer behavior toward online shopping, making a digital presence imperative for MSMEs.

Understanding the mechanisms that drive online purchasing decisions is crucial. Third, although Palopo is a growing city, research on digital marketing trends and their impact on MSMEs is still limited. The results of this study can provide valuable empirical insights for the Palopo City Cooperatives and MSMEs Office, MSMEs, and academics to design more targeted policies, training

programs, and marketing strategies. Thus, this research not only contributes to the academic literature but also makes a significant practical contribution to local economic progress through MSME empowerment.

Venciute et al. (2023) revealed that elements in interactive content, such as points or rewards, can increase consumer engagement and significantly influence purchase intentions. These findings suggest that the fun and reward aspects inherent in interactive content play a crucial role in attracting attention and driving purchase motivation. In the context of MSMEs, the ability of interactive content to create unique and memorable experiences without requiring a large budget is highly relevant.

Research on influencers has also grown rapidly with the development of social media. Hou et al., (2023) in their study, highlighted that influencer credibility and expertise are crucial in influencing purchasing decisions. They found that *social presence* and para-social interaction (a one-way relationship consumers perceive with influencers) are important mediators between influencer quality and purchase intention. This study emphasized that consumers tend to imitate the behavior or advice of individuals they perceive as having authority or emotional closeness.

### *Interactive Content*

Interactive content is a form of digital material presentation that allows users to play an active role in the learning process through hands-on activities such as answering quizzes, conducting simulations, selecting learning paths, or interacting with multimedia elements. According to Siddik et al. (2024), interactive content is a crucial component of e-learning, providing space for individuals to actively participate and experiment in understanding learning concepts. The primary goal of interactive content is to transform the learning process from passive to active, thereby increasing individual engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes.

Interactive content is defined as digital media that provides a computer-based interface that specifically responds to user actions (e.g., clicks, *swipes*, data input). Its purpose is to create participation, increase interest, and provide enjoyment (Korfiatis et al., 2012). In a marketing context, Interactive Content serves as a tool to collect prospect data and engage customers through quizzes, calculators, or surveys that offer value exchange to consumers.

Theoretically, the basis for developing interactive content refers to *the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning* proposed by Candido & Cattaneo (2025). This theory states that learning becomes more effective when individuals engage in active processing of information through visual and auditory channels simultaneously. Interactive content that follows the principles of *segmentation*, *modality*, and *contiguity* can reduce cognitive load and increase learning focus. Research by (Rahmi et al., 2024) strengthens this statement with the finding that interactive multimedia-based content design on the H5P platform has been shown to increase student engagement and learning outcomes in blended learning.

The effectiveness of interactive content can be seen from its ability to present information in an engaging, clear, and accessible manner. Interactivity allows users to obtain immediate feedback on their actions, thus strengthening their understanding of the content without relying on intermediaries. According to (Siregar & Sembiring, 2022), *the feedback loop* element in interactive content plays a crucial role in creating participatory and immersive digital experiences. Therefore, the success of content lies not only in its appearance but also in its ability to provide responsiveness and control to users.

H 1 : Allegedly content creative influential positive and significant to decision purchase Influencer

Influencer is individuals who have ability For form opinions , attitudes , and behavior audience through his activities on social media . According to (Song et al., 2023) , influencers play a role role strategic as connector between brands and consumers with utilise their personal trust and credibility get up in a way sustainable . In context this , influencers do not only just tool promotion , but also actors social role in formation digital identity and style life consumptive society . According to study previously (Jasman, 2025) state that existence something influence social media influencers *fear of missing out*.

Influencers can be categorized based on their audience size, content type, and level of professionalism. According to Conde (2023), there are three main categories of influencers: *micro* , *macro* , and *mega-influencers* . *Micro-influencers* with between 1,000 and 100,000 followers tend to have closer interactions with their audience and higher *engagement rates*, while *mega-influencers* with millions of followers have greater reach but are often perceived as less authentic. This distinction is important because communication strategies and the effectiveness of brand campaigns often depend on the type of influencer chosen and how well their personality matches the target market.

Furthermore, the influence of influencers on consumer purchase intentions and behavior has been proven through various empirical studies. Alfiannor (2024) stated that there is a significant positive relationship between trust in influencers and consumer purchase intentions. Factors such as content relevance, message authenticity, and the congruence between consumer self-image and influencer image play an important role in strengthening these intentions. Another study by Zhou et al. (2024) also showed that audience emotional engagement acts as a mediator in the relationship between influencer credibility and purchase intentions for the promoted product.

In addition to an influencer's personal characteristics, the social media platform used also influences the effectiveness of the communication. (Conde, 2023) emphasized that each platform has unique advantages: Instagram is effective in building brand aesthetics and lifestyles, TikTok excels in conveying concise and creative messages, while YouTube is better suited for in-depth educational content. Selecting a platform that aligns with the product's characteristics and target audience is a strategic factor in determining the success of an influencer marketing campaign.

However, despite the enormous potential it offers, the use of influencer marketing raises several ethical and regulatory issues. (Eka Napitupulu, 2025) states that transparency in disclosing paid collaborations is a problem, often unknown to audiences. This lack of clarity can mislead people and undermine public trust. Regulations in some jurisdictions now require influencers to tag paid content with tags such as #ad or #sponsored to maintain ethical digital communication and protect customers from disguised advertising.

H 2 : It is suspected that influencers have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.

### *Buying decision*

A purchase decision is the final stage of the consumer behavior process in which an individual chooses to purchase or reject a product or service after going through a series of cognitive and emotional processes. According to modern marketing literature, this decision is not simply the act of buying, but the result of an evaluation of needs, alternatives, perceived value, and associated risks. Research by Aqsa et al. (2022) emphasizes that this definition applies to both offline and online purchases, with similar determining variables but differing in their weight of influence depending on the sales channel context. (Pratama & Jasman,

2022) in his research state behavior finance is attitude somebody in taking decision planned finances . In series commerce location Now all nation must like expert buyer so that capable repair management his finances through understanding monetary based on the angle view management healthy finances .

According to Kotler, (2017) , purchasing decisions in the digital era are greatly influenced by perceptions of trust, content appeal, and the relevance of information conveyed through social media.

H 3 : It is suspected that interactive content and influencers have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.

## Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with explanatory research that utilizes numerical data to analyze the relationships between the variables studied. The study was conducted in Palopo City as one of the centers of MSMEs in South Sulawesi, with data collection time from December 2025 to January 2026. The study population was all MSME consumers in Palopo City who had made purchases or been exposed to promotions through social media, especially interactive content and the use of influencers. Because the population size was not known for certain, the sampling technique used non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling method, resulting in 100 respondents based on certain criteria. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and the distribution of structured questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale, and supported by secondary data through literature studies and documentation. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the help of the SmartPLS application, which includes descriptive and inferential analysis to test direct and indirect relationships between research variables.

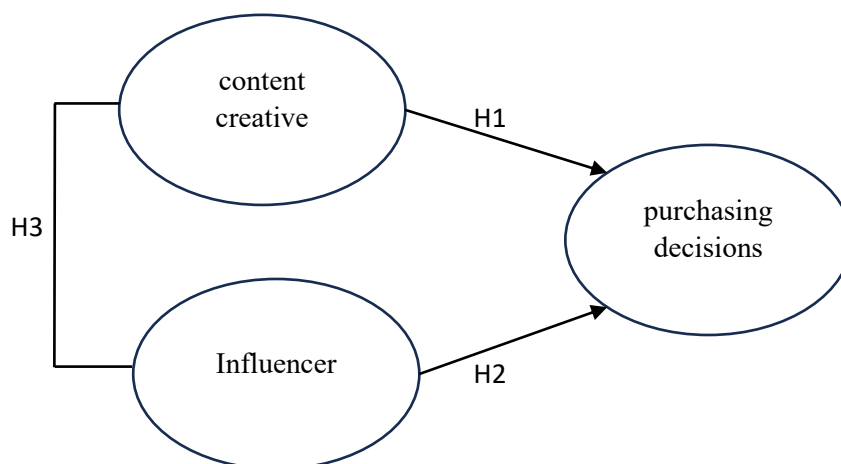


Figure 1. Research Model

## Results and Discussion

### *Convergent Validity Test*

The first step in data analysis using Smart PLS is to test the validity and reliability of the research model. This validity test is conducted to measure the appropriateness of each indicator to describe the variables used in the instrument. Validity testing uses two methods: Outer Loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. Based on the data

processing results, the outer loading values are obtained, as shown in the figure and table below:

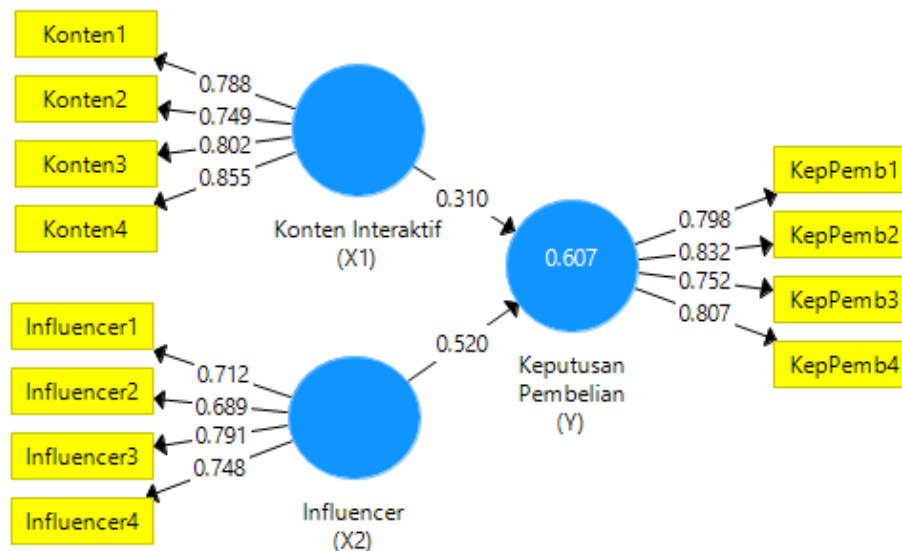


Figure 2. Outer Loading Analysis

In detail, the results of the outer loading analysis are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Outer Loadings

|                                                           | Influencer_(X2) | Purchase Decision_(Y) | Interactive Content_(X1) | Expl  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Influencer1                                               | 0.712           |                       |                          | Valid |
| Influencer2                                               | 0.689           |                       |                          | Valid |
| Influencer3                                               | 0.791           |                       |                          | Valid |
| Influencer4                                               | 0.748           |                       |                          | Valid |
| Decree of the Governor of the Republic of Indonesia No. 1 |                 | 0.798                 |                          | Valid |
| Decree of the 2nd Government                              |                 | 0.832                 |                          | Valid |
| Decree of the 3rd Government                              |                 | 0.752                 |                          | Valid |
| Decree of the Government of Indonesia No. 4               |                 | 0.807                 |                          | Valid |
| Content1                                                  |                 |                       | 0.788                    | Valid |
| Content2                                                  |                 |                       | 0.749                    | Valid |
| Content3                                                  |                 |                       | 0.802                    | Valid |
| Content4                                                  |                 |                       | 0.855                    | Valid |

Source: Primary Data is Processed (2025)

In the image and table above, we can see the loading factor values for each variable. The required loading factor value is  $> 0.6$ . The validity test conducted showed that all outer loading values were in accordance with the requirements, where all values for each variable indicator were above 0.6, thus declaring the model valid.

Next, the outer loading test uses the AVE value. A variable can be said to be valid when it is able to explain the type of indicator with an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of

0.5 or more. The required and expected AVE value is  $> 0.5$ . The results of the AVE value validity test can be seen in the table below:

Table 2. Construct Validity AVE

|                          | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) | Expl  |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Influencer_(X2)          | 0.542                            | Valid |
| Purchase Decision_(Y)    | 0.636                            | Valid |
| Interactive Content_(X1) | 0.639                            | Valid |

Source: Primary Data is Processed (2025)

Based on the table above, we can see that the AVE value of all variables is above the requirement, namely  $> 0.5$ , so this model can be declared valid from the outer loading test and AVE value.

#### Model Reliability Test

This stage aims to measure the consistency of each indicator in explaining its variable construct. To determine how consistent each indicator is in explaining its variable construct, the analysis results can be seen in the composite reliability column or Cronbach's alpha, which is set at a value of  $\geq 0.7$ . The results of the data processing to see this value can be seen in the table below:

Table 3. Construct Reliability

|                          | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | Expl     |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------|
| Influencer_(X2)          | 0.718            | 0.825                 | Reliable |
| Purchase Decision_(Y)    | 0.809            | 0.875                 | Reliable |
| Interactive Content_(X1) | 0.811            | 0.876                 | Reliable |

Source: Primary Data is Processed (2025)

Based on the table above, it is known that all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values and Composite Reliability values that meet the requirements, thus declaring the analyzed SEM model reliable. After the model is declared valid, the relationship between the research variables is tested.

#### Bootstrapping Testing

Bootstrapping testing to determine the path coefficients or significance of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y) to test the research hypothesis. An independent variable can be said to have a significant effect on the dependent variable if the significance value of the T statistic  $> t$  table (in this study based on  $t$  table = 1.983) and P value  $< 0.05$ , the influence value is shown in the figure and table below:

Table 4. Direct Effect (T-Test)

|                                                   | T Statistics<br>( O/STDEV ) | P Values | Explanation          |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|----------------------|
| Influencer_(X2) -> Purchase Decision_(Y)          | 5,107                       | 0,000    | Positive Significant |
| Interactive Content_(X1) -> Purchase Decision_(Y) | 3,024                       | 0.003    | Positive Significant |

Source: Primary Data is Processed (2025)

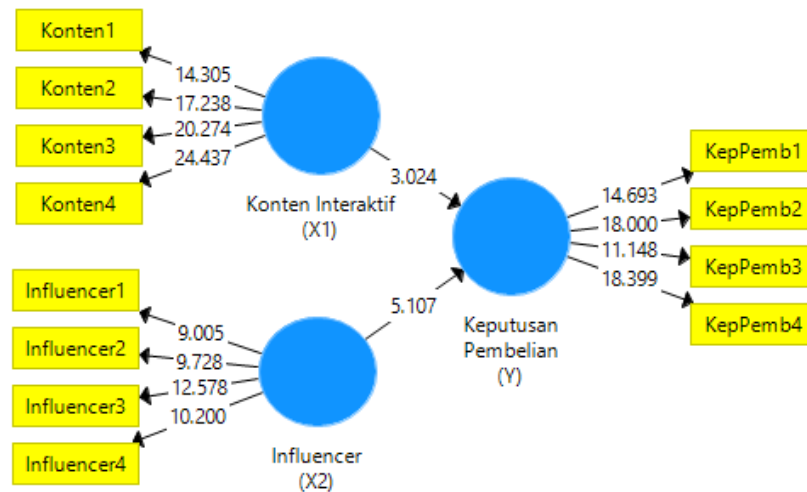


Figure 3. Bootstrapping Analysis

To see the influence of independent variables on dependent variables simultaneously (together), the following are the results of the R- Square test for this study:

Table 5. Simultaneous Effect (R-Square)

|                       | R Square | R Square Adjusted |
|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Purchase Decision_(Y) | 0.607    | 0.599             |

Source: Primary Data is Processed (2025)

For the R Square value, the measurement categorization with the value construction (<0.19 as weak), (0.19 to 0.33 as moderate) and (>0.33 as strong). Based on the table above, the ability of exogenous variables simultaneously to explain endogenous variables is assumed to be at the level of having a strong influence, this can be seen from the results of the smart PLS analysis for R Square which shows a figure of  $0.607 > 0.33$  as the assessment standardization.

## Discussion

### Influence content interactive on purchasing decisions

This positive and significant impact is also due to interactive content created with visual features, interactions, ease of product exploration, or engaging information that can provide a better experience for consumers, increasing their trust, interest, and motivation to purchase. Interactive content allows consumers to better understand the product, build trust, and reduce pre-purchase doubts, thus improving purchasing decisions.

The findings of this study align with those of Azisah et al. (2025), who found that of the four social media marketing features, interactivity and informativeness had a positive effect on purchasing decisions. Furthermore, this study showed that the influence of interactivity on purchasing decisions was partially mediated by brand trust, suggesting that interactive content not only attracts attention but also builds trust, which further strengthens purchasing decisions.

Other research shows that content marketing on social media positively and significantly influences purchasing decisions. This supports the interpretation that strategically shared content through social media, including interactive, informative, and

relevant content, can influence purchasing decisions. This research also shows that service quality, *combined* with content marketing, can influence purchasing decisions, indicating that content must be combined with quality service to strengthen consumer purchasing decisions (Kim, 2021) . Several findings from similar research indicate that interactive content in digital marketing can improve purchasing decisions. These results also indicate that the combination of digital marketing can significantly contribute to purchasing decisions.

#### *The influence of influencers on purchasing decisions*

This positive and significant influence can be explained because influencers are often viewed as credible sources of information, close to their audience, and capable of shaping positive perceptions of a brand or product. Recommendations from influencers can increase consumer trust in a product and provide "social proof," thus increasing consumer confidence and encouraging purchase. Furthermore, influencers can help convey product information in an engaging and relevant manner, making the product feel better and more worthy of purchase.

The positive and significant influence of influencers can occur because the audience views the influencer as credible and trustworthy, thus driving purchasing decisions. These results align with research by Lou & Yuan (2019) , which suggests that communication effectiveness is strongly influenced by source credibility, which is determined by three main aspects: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness. Influencers who are considered experts in their field (e.g., beauty influencers, tech reviewers, or fashion influencers) provide a sense of security to consumers. When consumers believe that influencers understand the product, their recommendations are more readily accepted and influence purchasing decisions.

Aqsa et al., (2025) explain that people tend to imitate the actions of others, especially public figures or figures they admire, when they are unsure about making a decision. Influencers serve as references, demonstrating that a product is worth using. When influencers demonstrate real-life experiences (reviews, recommendations, unboxings), consumers feel more confident in purchasing. Because consumers view influencers as social references, their recommendations directly strengthen their confidence in making a purchase.

#### *The Simultaneous Influence of Interactive Content and Influencers on Purchasing Decisions*

Data analysis shows an R-square value of 0.607, which is higher than the standard assessment of 0.33. This means that the interactive content and influencer variables simultaneously have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions, thus the third hypothesis is accepted. The R-square value of 0.607 indicates that 60.7% of the variation in purchasing decisions can be explained by the combination of interactive content and influencers, while the remainder is influenced by other factors outside the research model.

This positive and significant influence can be explained by the combination of engaging interactive content and the role of influencers as trusted recommenders, which can strengthen consumer perceptions of a product. Interactive content allows consumers to explore the product in greater depth, while influencers provide social validation, trust, and emotional support that increase purchase intention. When these two variables work together, the persuasion process is strengthened. Consumers not only receive information but also feel a stronger sense of closeness and involvement, thus increasing purchase decisions.

These results align with several studies that found that content marketing, influencer marketing, and social media variables partially and simultaneously have a significant positive effect on purchasing decisions among TikTok users (Barta et al., 2023). Other studies also found that content marketing and influencer marketing each have a positive and significant partial effect on purchasing decisions and simultaneously influence purchasing decisions (Kay et al., 2023).

## Conclusion

Interactive content has a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions. The better the quality of the interactive content presented, the higher the consumer interest and decision to purchase. Interactive content can provide a more immersive experience, reduce doubts, and help consumers understand the product more clearly. Influencers have a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions. The role of influencers as recommenders and sources of social proof makes consumers feel more trustworthy, thus encouraging them to make a purchase. Simultaneously, interactive content and influencers have a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions. The integration of interactive content and influencer strategies can strengthen the persuasion process and encourage consumers to buy, thus making the digital marketing strategy used more effective.

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