

## Overcoming Obstacles: Strategic Approaches of MSME Entrepreneurs in North Bekasi

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Submitted 26-11-2024

Reviewed 22-01-2025

Revised 23-01-2025

Accepted 06-02-2025

Published 24-06-2025

**Abstract:** This research aims to study the influence of strategic marketing, social media, and price on purchasing decisions mediated by purchasing interest. It also focuses on identifying the performance of MSMEs in Bekasi - West Java, which is an area supporting the business. This research uses a quantitative research design with 381 MSME respondents. The analysis unit is 182 MSME respondents assisted by the North Bekasi subdistrict using the Isaac & Michael approach. This research found that strategic marketing, social media, and price did not directly influence purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, buying interest influences purchasing decisions strategic marketing and social media influence purchasing decisions through purchasing interest. Meanwhile, the influence of price on purchasing decisions through purchasing interest is not proven. This research contributes to focusing on a new research model framework that has never been researched.

**Keywords:** Strategic Marketing; Social Media; Price, Purchase Intention; Buying Decision.

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mempelajari pengaruh pemasaran strategis, media sosial dan harga terhadap keputusan pembelian produk yang dimediasi oleh minat beli dan berfokus pada identifikasi kinerja UKM di Kota Bekasi, Jawa Barat yang merupakan daerah penunjang usaha. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain penelitian kuantitatif dengan populasi 381 responden UKM dan unit analisis 182 responden UKM binaan Kecamatan Bekasi Utara dengan menggunakan pendekatan Isaac & Michael. Hasil penelitian ini menemukan bahwa pemasaran strategis, media sosial dan harga tidak secara langsung mempengaruhi keputusan pembelian. Sementara itu, minat beli mempengaruhi keputusan pembelian. Pemasaran strategis dan media sosial mempengaruhi keputusan pembelian melalui minat beli. Sementara itu, pengaruh harga terhadap keputusan pembelian melalui minat beli tidak terbukti. Kontribusi penelitian ini adalah berfokus pada kerangka kerja model penelitian baru yang belum pernah diteliti sebelumnya.

**Kata Kunci:** Strategic Marketing; Social Media; Price, Purchase Intention; Buying Decision.

## INTRODUCTION

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are now recognised as entities that should be considered at the national level, given their significant potential to become one of Indonesia's main drivers of the economy. The rapid growth of MSMEs has prompted business players to seek strategies to maintain competitive advantages and survive amidst fierce competition (Rianto et al., 2022). According to a report from Kompas.com (2024), the number of MSMEs in Indonesia has reached 65 million units, contributing 61 per cent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). In addition, this sector can absorb around 97 per cent of the total workforce. These significant figures highlight the importance of focusing on the performance of MSMEs, including those in Bekasi City. Based on the economic census conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics of Indonesia (BPS) in 2016,



there were approximately 203,000 units of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in Bekasi City, with 12,186 of them being in the food and beverage processing sector, employing around 410,000 people in that year. This number is expected to continue to rise in line with the national growth of MSMEs in 2024 and is anticipated to become the backbone of the national economy. Therefore, the government, entrepreneurs, and MSME players need to regularly analyse the factors that may influence the performance of these MSMEs (Government of Indonesia, 2021), one of which is the indicator of product sales (Niankara, 2024; Rianto, 2021)

The food and beverage sector is one of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) types with significant growth potential over the past 20 years. This growth is driven by the ease of establishing food and beverage businesses and the continuously increasing population growth in Bekasi City. Additionally, the rapid development of business and economic centres in Bekasi City further supports the growth of MSMEs in this sector. According to data from the Ministry of Industry of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemenperin RI), the food and beverage industry is also a key sector in national economic growth and manufacturing in Indonesia.

The phenomenon of rapidly growing food and beverage MSMEs is not accompanied by good MSME performance. A pre-survey we conducted in North and West Bekasi Districts found that of the 23 coffee shops built in 2022, 6 remained that could survive until 2024. This is happening with snack food. MSMEs such as burgers, pempek, kebabs, pecel, and food likes have experienced a significant decline in turnover over the last 2 years. Apart from that, the results of our survey of members of the MSME community assisted by Bekasi City covering (north, east, south and west) explained that the decline in turnover over the last 2 years resulted in many members having to close their businesses due to a significant decline in sales levels.

Sales of products are greatly influenced by the choices consumers make when deciding to purchase. As noted (Sari, 2020), making a purchase decision occurs when consumers come to know about a product and ultimately choose to buy it. Numerous studies have explored the various factors that affect product purchase decisions (Upadana, M., & Pramudana; Senggetang et al., 2019; Yuliana et al., 2022), particularly in the context of food and beverages. Several studies have shown that marketing strategies influence purchasing decisions (Darado et al., 2023; Prabowo et al., 2021; Radji & Kasim, 2020). A strategy can be defined as a plan designed to achieve the goals of a company (Ma & Gu, 2024).

The strategy also encompasses the science and art of environmental scanning, formulating, implementing, and evaluating, which are then organised into actions to achieve the company's objectives. With a strategy in place, a company can be more selective in making the most effective and efficient decisions (Nourbakhsh et al., 2023). Therefore, strategy is essential as a measuring tool for assessing the success of the company's plans, both in the short and long term. Several studies have also found that marketing strategy impacts purchasing decisions (Darado et al., 2023; Ma & Gu, 2024; Prabowo et al., 2021). In addition, digitalisation has become a trend many people consider when selecting products.

The high use of social media allows MSME business actors to switch to digital promotions. According to a report from Kompas.com (2020), the number of internet users in Indonesia in 2018 reached 171 million people, about 64.800 per cent of the total population of 264 million people in Indonesia. This figure continues to rise yearly and is



predicted to reach 79.500 per cent, or around 221 million users, in 2024 (Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association, 2024).

Based on the APJII survey, internet penetration levels are categorised by generational groups, starting with pre-boomers (born before 1945 or age 79 and older), Baby Boomers (around 60 to 78 years old), Gen X (around 44 to 59 years old), Millennials (around 28 to 43 years old), Gen Z (around 12 to 27 years old), and finally, post-Gen Z (around 12 years old).

The information presented indicates that the millennial generation constitutes a significant portion of internet users in Indonesia, with the majority utilising the internet to access e-commerce platforms and social media. Generally, e-commerce and social media marketing refer to electronic or internet-based buying and selling transactions. Additionally, these platforms can be understood as a process of business transactions that leverage electronic technology to connect and facilitate interactions among companies, consumers, and the community, involving the electronic exchange or sale of goods, services, and information (Zhang et al., 2024).

The following is the growth of internet users in Indonesia from 2018 to 2024:



**Figure 1.** Data on the Increase in Internet Use in Indonesia

Source: <https://apjii.or.id>, 2024

Social media has emerged as a significant factor in influencing people's product decisions (Komariah et al., 2022). Research has demonstrated that social media is crucial in shaping product purchase decisions. It is characterised as a collection of internet-based tools that facilitate public engagement, enabling the creation of business networks and the development of content through collaboration and interaction (Komariah et al., 2022; Nasiketha et al., 2024). This implies that individuals who use social media more intensively for product decision-making are more likely to purchase those products. Conversely, some studies indicate that social media may not affect purchasing decisions due to unappealing content or misaligned targeting (Alviansyach et al., 2024).

The cost of a product remains a crucial element in affecting purchase decisions. Fundamentally, individuals buy items based on their financial capacity. When prices are elevated, consumers tend to weigh the advantages they will receive from the product. Nevertheless, people are typically more inclined to seek lower prices for equivalent benefits. Consequently, price sensitivity is a key factor entrepreneurs should consider to enhance product purchasing decisions.

Price is another significant factor affecting consumer purchasing behaviour, with lower-priced items often more appealing than their higher-priced counterparts (Wowor et al., 2021). It serves as compensation for the goods and services consumed by individuals,

forming the basis for their access to these products (Senggetang et al., 2019). Various studies have indicated that price plays a role in purchasing decisions (Senggetang et al., 2019; Wowor et al., 2021; Yuliana et al., 2022). However, other research has shown that price may not be the primary driver behind purchasing decisions, as consumers may prioritise the benefits and quality of a product over its cost (Hesti Noor Fatimah & Andri Nurtantiono, 2022).

This study examines the role of purchase interest as a mediating factor. Purchase interest is a crucial aspect of consumer behaviour that reflects an individual's inclination towards consuming certain products. Before purchasing, a person's interest in a product significantly influences their decision-making process (Lestari, 2024). Additionally, consumer loyalty and potential fatigue with a product can be evaluated by analysing the purchasing interest that stems from an individual's attitude towards the product.

The mediating function of purchase interest has been explored in earlier research (Alviansyach et al., 2024; Fatimahtu Zahra et al., 2024; Stansyah et al., 2023). It embodies a feeling experienced by consumers that may not always align with their financial circumstances. Furthermore, purchasing interest reflects a latent desire within consumers, generating feelings of wanting to possess the available products and services. Various factors, including the need for a product, the desire to own it, and attributes such as colour, shape, taste, and habitual preferences, can help gauge this interest.

Therefore, entrepreneurs must explore strategies to enhance consumer purchase interest in their offerings, employing attractive marketing strategies (Rianto, 2021), leveraging social media platforms and reducing prices (Annisaa et al., 2022).

Given the observed phenomena and the inconsistencies in prior research findings, this study aims to investigate how marketing strategies, social media usage, and pricing affect purchasing decisions while being mediated by purchase interest. Furthermore, this research will specifically look at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food and beverage sector in Bekasi City.

The novelty of this research is a new building model construct that previous researchers have never studied. This research focuses on several contemporary aspects, namely internal and external aspects of MSMEs regarding strategy, technology (social media - external factors) and price (internal factors). It combines them with the mediation of buying interest in purchasing decisions. Apart from that, this research was conducted on food and beverage MSMEs, which are currently experiencing significant growth and are one of the factors in economic growth in Bekasi City. However, in reality, the performance of these MSMEs is still not optimal because the market share is still low, and competition with Asian food and other fast food means they tend to stagnate and cannot grow. This research was conducted to research and answer these challenges and is helpful for food and beverage MSMEs and the government as policymakers.

## THEORETICAL REVIEW

**Marketing Strategy.** A strategy refers to a company's capacity to handle information derived from internal and external factors, which is then developed into actions to achieve the organisation's objectives. Internal factors encompass strengths and weaknesses, while external factors include opportunities and threats. The process of creating strategies typically involves several stages: (1) Identifying the internal and external environment, (2)





Formulating the strategy, (3) Implementing the strategy, and (4) Monitoring and evaluating the strategy.

The foundational idea of marketing strategy originated from the growth theory of the firm (GTF), established by (Penrose, 1959), which marked the inception of resource-based theory. This theory posits that a company is a collection of productive resources. These resources are categorised into two broad types: human and non-human resources. The resource-based view (RBV) suggests that a company's competitive advantages stem from its internal resources. Firms regard these resources as inputs that enhance their ability to compete and improve overall performance. By effectively managing their internal resources and capabilities, companies can leverage them to succeed in the external market. These capabilities empower organisations to generate value within the customer value chain and facilitate the creation and development of new products or the exploration of new markets.

Specific literature on the resource-based view (RBV) emphasises that resources must meet the "VRIN" criteria to enable a company to gain a competitive advantage and enhance its performance. The VRIN criteria consist of the following components: (1) Valuable (V) is a resource that provides strategic value and is beneficial for the company; (2) Rare (R) is a resource that is not easily accessible to competitors, giving the company a competitive edge; (3) Imperfect imitability (I) is a resource that is sustainable and cannot be easily replicated by competitors; and (4) Non-substitutability (N) is a resource that cannot be replaced by alternative resources (Lubis, 2022).

From the strategy formulation perspective, strategies can be categorised into top-level and line-level strategies. Top-level strategies differ from line-level strategies, including those specific to the marketing department. Typically, top-level strategies are developed by senior management, such as executive directors, CEOs, and boards of directors, outlining long-term plans for the organisation. In contrast, line-level strategies are crafted by managers within specific departments, concentrating on technical actions to achieve short-term objectives. For instance, marketing managers devise strategies focusing on technical activities to accomplish goals like enhancing purchasing interest, boosting sales decisions, and fostering customer satisfaction and loyalty (Sumaryono & Rony, 2024).

Marketing strategies are the methods and actions to achieve a company's objectives (Astuti & Ratnawati, 2020). A marketing strategy outlines a work plan to meet the organisation's long-term and short-term goals. Additionally, these strategies encompass the various marketing tools and instruments utilised to capture and dominate the market. They can also be seen as a company's techniques and methods to attain its goals through effective and efficient planning. A marketing strategy serves as a target aligned with the company's objectives, requiring specific actions, guidelines, policies, and efforts to market products in a manner that facilitates acceptance by the market. A solid strategy for business professionals is crucial to enhancing competitive advantage over rivals. A well-formulated strategy enables businesses to adapt more swiftly to market changes than those lacking a marketing strategy. Key elements for formulating effective marketing strategies include identifying the target market for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), understanding product positioning, and determining the marketing mix to reach intended consumers. The marketing mix comprises several related factors: (1) Product, (2) Price, (3) Promotion, (4) Place, (5) People, (6) Process, and (7) Physical Evidence.

Furthermore, marketing strategies can be evaluated using five primary indicators (Ma & Gu, 2024) : (1) Market selection, where business owners define market segmentation and select a target market aligned with business objectives; (2) Product planning, which involves



detailing the characteristics and specifications of offered products; (3) Price determination focused on relevant pricing considerations; (4) Distribution systems which outline the process from production to sales; and (5) Marketing communications which encompass various promotional strategies employed.

**Social Media.** Technology significantly influences company performance enhancement (Lwin et al., 2024). This assertion is reinforced by the widespread use of technology, enabling individuals to work more swiftly, access information rapidly, and execute production processes more effectively and efficiently. Various literature sources indicate that the technology adoption models in use today often reference the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This model is based on three key components: (1) Ease of use, (2) Perceived usefulness, and (3) intention to utilise the new technology.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) offers a framework for comprehending how users accept and utilise technology. It suggests that an individual's choice to adopt new technology is primarily influenced by two key factors:

**Perceived Ease of Use:** This refers to the degree to which a person believes using a particular technology will be free of effort. If users find a technology easy to use, they are more likely to adopt it. This reflects the importance of user-friendly interfaces, adequate training, and support systems that enhance user experience.

**Perceived Usefulness:** This is the degree to which a person believes using a particular technology will enhance their job performance. If a technology improves productivity, saves time, or increases accuracy, users are more likely to integrate it into their work processes.

**Intention to Use:** This behavioural aspect follows the perceptions of ease of use and usefulness. If users find a technology easy to use and valuable, they are more likely to develop a positive intention to use it, which often translates into actual use.

This model is particularly relevant in today's rapidly evolving technological landscape. Organisations seeking to improve performance and efficiency must invest in advanced technologies and encourage their adoption among employees. This requires addressing concerns about ease of use and demonstrating the tangible benefits of introducing the technology.

Further empirical research, such as that conducted by (Zhang et al., 2024), underscores the significance of aligning technological advancements with user acceptance processes to drive successful implementation. By fostering an environment that values feedback, training, and open communication about new technologies, organisations can better position themselves for improved performance outcomes.

In order to effectively implement new technologies, it is essential for companies to: (1) Provide comprehensive training and resources to enhance perceived ease of use. (2) communicate the benefits and efficiencies the new technology brings to the workflow to bolster perceived usefulness. (3) Cultivate a supportive culture that encourages experimentation and acceptance of new technologies, making the transition easier for all employees.

By emphasising these strategic components, organisations can leverage technology not merely as an operational asset but as a driving force for growth and innovation. Social media is a collection of Internet-based tools that facilitate public participation in creating business networks and content through interaction and collaboration (Ortiz-Chávez et al., 2024). This indicates that social media serves as a means for companies to pursue organisational objectives and guide the market toward their desired outcomes, ultimately influencing product purchasing decisions.



Furthermore, social media can be described as internet-based applications providing a platform for user interaction. It has evolved beyond just a communication medium among users to serve as an effective channel for sales activities. The significant potential of social media presents a fresh opportunity for businesses to market their products and services to consumers. Its high visual appeal and ease of access make social media a more effective selling platform compared to traditional method (Nasiketha et al., 2024)

The effectiveness of social media marketing comes from having clear promotional objectives. The rapid growth of social media platforms encourages users to engage directly by sharing opinions, evaluating, reviewing, and promoting products and services to their peers (Jabbar & Chaerudin, 2021). In today's digital age, utilising social media for sales has emerged as one of the most effective methods, especially considering that in marketing 5.0, everyone is connected to the internet. This connectivity means that potential customers are not limited to local communities; they can be from different regions, cities, islands, or countries. Certain factors should be considered to ensure success in social media marketing, including engaging images, captivating videos, vibrant colours, and collaborations with well-known influencers. Additionally, managing the brand's presence on social media is crucial to maintaining sustainable sales through these platforms (Lwin et al., 2024).

Nonetheless, purchasing through social media has negative aspects, such as the potential for discrepancies between the advertised products and the actual items received, issues with sales legitimacy, or even instances of fraud. Therefore, educating consumers, building trust, and ensuring prompt service are essential for success in online sales, especially since competition in the online marketplace tends to be more intense than in traditional retail.

According to (Zhang et al., 2024), there are three key indicators for measuring social media effectiveness: (1) Entertainment, which plays a crucial role in fostering positive emotions, enhancing user engagement, and encouraging ongoing usage; (2) Interaction, which refers to the degree to which users share information; and (3) Trendiness, which encapsulates how well social media platforms can provide up-to-date information regarding products and services.

**Price** serves as a reward for consuming goods and services. It is the foundation for individuals to access products and services (Senggetang et al., 2019). Price represents the exchange value, which can be quantified in terms of currency or other items, in return for specific benefits derived from a product or service over a defined period. Price can be understood as the agreement between the seller and the buyer to exchange their rights (Yuniarto et al., 2024).

Prices are significantly influenced by the production costs incurred by a company, along with the desired profit margin. Nonetheless, a pricing strategy is shaped by various factors, including segmentation, positioning, and targeting. Segmentation involves categorising markets or customers into groups based on shared or similar characteristics (Sudarman & Lailla, 2023). Segmentation aims to enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies for the offered products and services. Additionally, understanding the target consumers, marketing instruments, and production factors through segmentation leads to clearer distribution strategies. This clarity supports the chosen pricing strategy, whether a low-price or a premium pricing strategy. Generally, consumers prefer purchasing products with similar quality at lower prices rather than opting for higher-cost alternatives. However, considerations related to benefits and quality can justify discrepancies in the prices presented (Katuk et al., 2020).





When setting consumer prices, producers must consider several factors (Yuniarto et al., 2024). These factors include:

**Economic Factors:** During economic downturns, consumers may exhibit increased price sensitivity, prompting producers to consider efficiency in their operations and strive to offer lower prices.

**Income Levels:** Producers must consider consumers' income levels when targeting product marketing efforts.

**Brand Loyalty:** Loyalty plays a crucial role in the pricing process. Consumers who demonstrate strong brand loyalty are generally less affected by price changes. In contrast, those with low loyalty, particularly new customers, may be more likely to switch to competing products in response to price adjustments.

**Market Competition:** The marketplace serves as a key venue for producers to present and promote their products. In highly competitive markets, pricing becomes more critical than markets with less competition, necessitating effective pricing strategies for producers to succeed.

**Product Value:** A product's perceived benefits are essential in consumers' purchasing decisions. Buyers expect the money they spend to reflect the quality and advantages they receive from the product, which requires producers to consider the product's value and the benefits it provides to consumers.

Price can thus be understood as a mutual agreement between the seller and buyer regarding their rights. In evaluating price, four indicators are highlighted:

**Price Affordability** refers to consumers' purchasing power to acquire desired goods. **Price Suitability** reflects the alignment between the quality of the product and its price. **Price Competitiveness** measures how the price of a product compares to similar goods available in the market. **Price Conformity with Expected Benefits** indicates whether the price aligns with the anticipated benefits of the product.

**Purchase Intention.** Buying interest refers to a consumer's inclination to purchase a product, which their financial situation can influence. It represents an underlying desire among consumers to possess the products and services available (Nursal et al., 2023). This interest typically emerges after a process of evaluation, during which an individual assesses various factors related to the product based on their brand preferences or purchase intentions (Andriana & Ngatno, 2020).

Purchase interest plays a crucial role in consumers' decision-making process. As a result, companies aim to develop optimal strategies to enhance consumer interest in their products. Market research remains an effective way of gauging consumer interest in the company's offerings. However, other factors also affect buying interest, including sales strategies, promotional methods, and competitive pricing (Stansyah et al., 2023).

According to (Oktriyanto, 2021), several indicators of buying interest include **Transactional Interest**, The likelihood of a person purchasing a specific item or product. **Referential Interest**: A person's inclination to refer to a product or item. **Preferential Interest**: A person's primary preference for a desired product. **Exploratory Interest**: The tendency of a person to seek information about products they find appealing and wish to learn more about.

**Buying Decision.** Purchasing decisions primarily involve selecting a product based on its anticipated benefits and quality (Yuliana et al., 2022). Furthermore, such decisions occur only after other alternatives have been considered and ruled out, leading the consumer to focus on a single product or service type.





In the process of making a purchase, consumers typically go through several stages before arriving at a final decision (Viola et al., 2023). These stages include: Problem Recognition: The initial step is when consumers realise they need a product.

Information Search: At this stage, consumers seek information from internal sources such as their memory and knowledge and external sources, including social media and the internet.

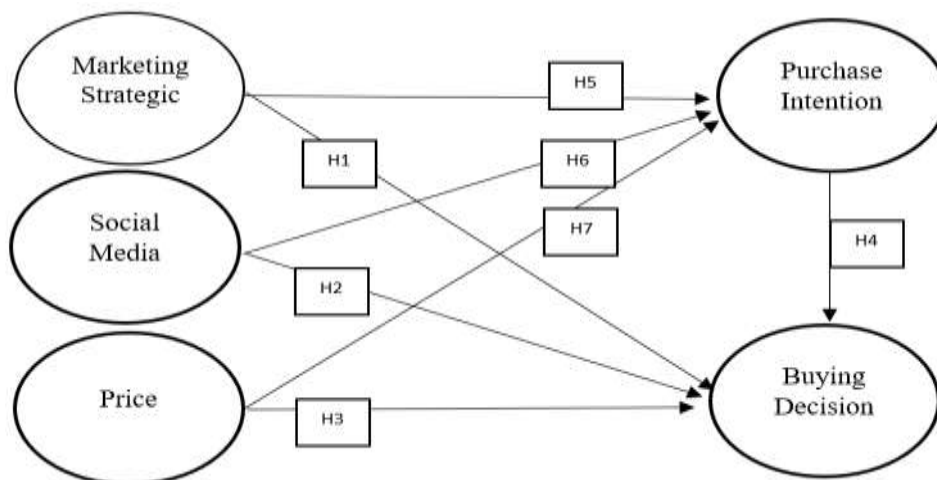
Evaluation of Alternatives: Consumers assess various options to determine which best meets their needs.

Purchase Decision: This phase involves selecting a product based on the evaluated alternatives, focusing on benefits, quality, and personal preference.

Post-Purchase Behavior: The final stage assesses whether the purchased product meets consumer expectations. Satisfaction can lead to repeat purchases, while dissatisfaction may lower the likelihood of repurchasing.

According to Lensun et al. (2023), four indicators can be used to measure purchasing decisions: stability of the purchase decision after gathering product information, preference for buying based on a favoured brand, purchases made because a product aligns with personal wants and needs; and decisions influenced by recommendations from others.

**Framework.** The thinking framework is the first step in forming variables collected from phenomena and inconsistencies in previous findings, and the aim is to simplify the researcher's way of thinking (Rianto, 2021). The following is the rationale for this research:



**Figure 2. Research Model**

Source: Created by author's, 2024

**Hypothesis.** Several studies have found that marketing strategy influences purchasing decisions (Darado et al., 2023; Ma & Gu, 2024), where strategy is the company's way of achieving short-term and long-term goals. The short-term goal for the company is to help consumers purchase the products and services offered so that the better the company's marketing strategy, the greater the chance of increasing the decision to purchase a product. Based on theoretical arguments and previous facts, a hypothesis can be concluded:

**H1:** Marketing strategy influences purchasing decisions.

In addition, other research finds that social media influences purchasing decisions (Alviansyach et al., 2024; Komariah et al., 2022). According to several researchers, social media is the primary way consumers learn about the products and services offered by business people. Therefore, companies must be able to increase the role of social media in improving business performance, which is achieved by increasing product purchases. Therefore, the higher the role of social media, the higher the opportunity for consumers to buy a product.

Based on theoretical arguments and previous facts, a hypothesis can be concluded:

**H2:** Social media influences purchasing decisions.

Another thing is the influence of price on purchasing decisions. The findings of this research confirm that price is still a reason for someone to consider consuming an item, and apart from that, someone must also have interest as one of the steps. The initial decision to consume an item is made after eliminating other alternative products and services (Rahayu & Yuniarta, 2022; Stansyah et al., 2023). So, the more relevant the price offered, the greater the consumer's opportunity to buy the goods offered.

Based on theoretical arguments and previous facts, a hypothesis can be concluded:

**H3:** Price influences purchasing decisions.

Apart from that, the role of purchasing interest in driving the decision to purchase is vital. Several studies show that the higher a person's interest in a product, the greater the chance of deciding to buy that product (Oktriyanto, 2021; Stansyah et al., 2023; Alviansyach et al., 2024).

Based on theoretical arguments and previous facts, a hypothesis can be concluded:

**H4:** Purchase interest influences the purchase decision.

Apart from that, several studies also found the mediating role of buying interest in purchasing decisions (Alviansyach et al., 2024; Fatimahtu Zahra et al., 2024), where buying interest provides a higher urge to consume an item compared to someone who has no previous buying interest (spontaneous purchase). Previous research found a mediating role in purchasing interest in the influence of marketing strategy on purchasing decisions. For this reason, the marketing strategy must provide a clear and orderly picture of what the company does and use every opportunity or opportunity in several target markets. So, the better the marketing strategy, supported by the buying interest created, will increase the magnitude of a person's purchasing decision for a product (Febrian & Vina Hapsari, 2019). Based on theoretical arguments and previous facts, a hypothesis can be concluded:

**H5:** Marketing strategy influences purchasing decisions mediated by purchasing interest.

Purchase interest is a series of feelings about the tendency to consume something, starting from findings on social media (Prabowo et al., 2021; Alviansyach et al., 2024). The more information they receive from social media, the more children will increase their desire to buy the product. Other research finds that the influence of social media on purchasing



decisions is mediated by purchasing interest (Alviansyach et al., 2024; Fatimahtu Zahra et al., 2024).

Based on theoretical arguments and previous facts, a hypothesis can be concluded:

**H6:** Social media influences purchasing decisions mediated by purchasing interest.

Another factor influencing purchasing decisions is the cheap price of the product (Rianto et al., 2022). Price is a fundamental consideration for many consumers when deciding to purchase. A price relevant to the role of high purchasing interest will further strengthen a person's desire to own a product. Research (Periyadi et al., 2020) found that price influences purchasing decisions through interest.

Based on theory and previous findings, the following hypothesis can be concluded:

**H7:** Price influences purchasing decisions mediated by purchasing interest.

## METHODS

This research uses a quantitative design for decision-making in answering hypotheses using a questionnaire, which is translated into numbers from the respondents' perceptions and then processed into a conclusion. The population in this study was 318 MSMEs under the guidance of the North Bekasi sub-district; the number of samples was 182 respondents.

The indicators in this research were adopted from previous research where the marketing strategy was adopted from research (Ma & Gu, 2024; Periyadi et al., 2020) with five items: market selection, product planning, pricing, distribution system and marketing communication. Meanwhile, social media was adopted from research (Zhang et al., 2024) with three items: entertainment, interaction, and trendiness. Apart from that, prices were adopted from research with four items, namely affordable prices, price suitability and competitive prices, as well as purchasing decisions by (Lensun et al., 2023) with four items, namely the stability of buying, deciding to buy, because of the brand, buying because it is suitable and buying because recommendation. Purchase interest is adopted (Oktriyanto, 2021) with four items: transactional, referral, preferential, and exportative.

This research will use a 1-5 Likert scale adopted from research (Handayani & Rianto, 2021). Apart from that, this research will process and test data using the SmartPLS 4.0 statistical tool, where testing is carried out using two stages, namely outer model and inner model testing.

## RESULTS

Research results are an important part of the research process. They are the results of implementing theories and methods, which will then answer the research hypothesis and the research problem, which is the primary focus of this research. The results of this research will explain the characteristics of respondents, test research data, and discuss recommendations for solving research problems.

**Respondent Characteristics.** This research has surveyed 182 food and beverage MSMEs located in the city of North Bekasi. Based on 182 respondents, the characteristics of respondents can be described as follows:



**Table 1.** Respondent Characteristics

Item	Amount	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	63	35 per cent
Female	119	65 per cent
<b>Old</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
less than 20 Years	8	4 per cent
20 to 30 Years	42	23 per cent
31 to 40 Years	55	30 per cent
41 to 50 Years	62	34 per cent
more than 50 Years	15	8 per cent
<b>Long time in business</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
less than 5 Years	38	21 per cent
6 to 10 Years	95	52 per cent
more than 10 Years	49	27 per cent

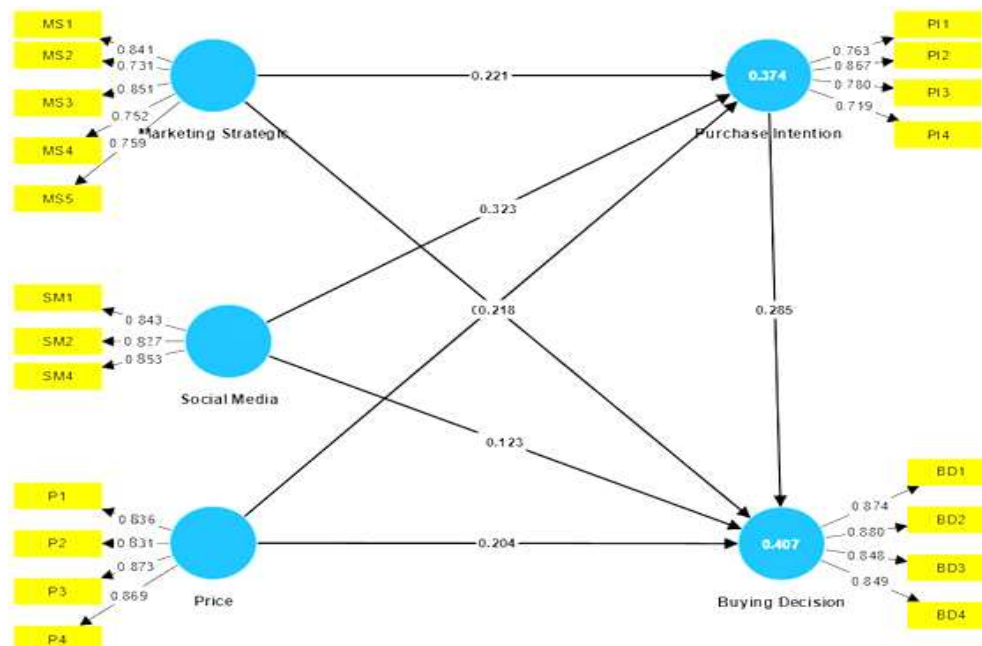
Source: Data, 2024

**Table 1** shows data from 182 respondents we surveyed. Food and beverage MSMEs in North Bekasi consisted of 63 men, or 35 per cent, and 119 women, or 65 per cent of the total MSMEs we studied. These findings reinforce that the role of women in improving the performance of MSMEs currently needs to be considered. In the age item, we reported that of the eight business owners aged under 20 years or 40 per cent, 42 business owners were aged 20 to 30 years or 23 per cent, while 30 per cent of business owners were aged 31 to 40 years, 55 per cent. The majority of business owners in the food and beverage business are aged 41 to 50 years, with a total of 62 people with a percentage of 34 per cent, and 15 people aged over 50 years, with a total of 8 per cent of all the respondents we studied in this research.

The business length criteria in this research found that 38 people, or 21 per cent, had their businesses running for less than 5 years. Meanwhile, the most significant number of business owners are those with a business period of 6 to 10 years, with 95 people and a percentage of 52 per cent, while businesses that have been running for more than 10 years number 49 people and a percentage of 27 per cent.

The initial stage in this research is to test the validity of the outer model. According to (Widyastuti et al., 2023), the validity value that meets the requirements is if the outer loading is more than 0.700. The following are the outer loading results of the SmartPLS 4.0 validity test.





**Figure 3.** Validity test

Source: Output process, 2024

The findings indicate that all statement items related to the variables of strategic marketing, social media, price, purchase interest, and purchase decision have values exceeding 0.700. This suggests that the data collected in this study satisfies the criteria for research validity.

In addition, the outer model assesses reliability. According to (Woelandari et al., 2022), a reliability value is acceptable if Cronbach's alpha exceeds 0.700 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeds 0.500. The results of the reliability test for this research are shown in **Table 2**.

The table indicates that Cronbach's alpha values for each variable are as follows: buying decision at 0.886, marketing strategy at 0.849, price at 0.758, purchase intention at 0.790, and social media at 0.753. These results demonstrate that all Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.700, indicating that the data in this study is reliable.

Additionally, each variable's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are as follows: buying decision at 0.745, marketing strategy at 0.621, price at 0.580, purchase intention at 0.615, and social media at 0.670. Since all AVE values exceed 0.500, we can conclude that the data exhibits good reliability, allowing the research to proceed to the next stage.

**Table 2.** Reliability table

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_o)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Buying Decision	0.886	0.890	0.921	0.745
Marketing Strategic	0.849	0.862	0.891	0.621
Price	0.758	0.842	0.844	0.580
Purchase Intention	0.790	0.801	0.864	0.615



Social Media	0.753	0.799	0.720	0.670
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Source: Output process, 2024

The subsequent phase of this research involves testing the inner model to evaluate the research hypotheses. According to (Rianto et al., 2022; Suryawan, 2024), a hypothesis is considered acceptable if the p-value is less than 0.050. The results of the inner model test are as follows:

**Table 3.** Direct table

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviasi (STDEV)	T Statistics (IO/STDEV)	P Value
Marketing Strategic → Buying Decision	0.175	0.188	0.116	1.511	0.131
Marketing Strategic → Purchase Intention	0.239	0.243	0.085	2.817	0.005
Social Media → Buying Decision	0.144	0.147	0.111	1.305	0.192
Social Media → Purchase Intention	0.322	0.326	0.099	3.260	0.001
Price → Buying Decision	0.154	0.157	0.123	0.153	0.210
Price → Purchase Intention	0.193	0.194	0.101	1.899	0.058
Purchase Intention → Buying Decision	0.315	0.312	0.103	3.045	0.002

Source: Output process, 2024

**Table 3** shows the findings presented; it can be concluded that strategic marketing does not significantly influence purchasing decisions, as indicated by a p-value of 0.131, which is more than 0.050. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is rejected. Similarly, the analysis regarding the impact of social media on purchasing decisions shows a p-value of 0.192, which is more than 0.050, leading to the rejection of hypothesis 2. Moreover, the results concerning the effect of social media on purchasing decisions yielded a p-value of 0.210, which is more than 0.050, resulting in the rejection of hypothesis 3. In contrast, the findings related to the influence of purchase interest on purchasing decisions present a different outcome, with a p-value of 0.002, less than 0.050. This indicates that hypothesis 4 is accepted.

**Table 4** shows the results of the indirect influence test of the inner model. The results indicate that marketing strategy affects purchasing decisions through purchase interest, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.033, less than 0.050. Therefore, hypothesis 5 is accepted. Likewise, social media significantly influences purchasing decisions via purchase interest, with a p-value of 0.031, allowing hypothesis 6 to be accepted as well.

**Table 4.** Indirect table

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviasi (STDEV)	T Statistics (IO/STDEV)	P Value
Marketing Strategic → Purchase Intention → Buying Decision	0.075	0.075	0.035	2.131	0.033
Social Media → Purchase Intention → Buying Decision	0.101	0.102	0.047	2.155	0.031



Price → Purchase Intention → Buying Decision	0.061	0.063	0.043	1.418	0.156
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Source: Output process, 2024

Conversely, the influence of price on purchasing decisions through purchase interest presents a different result, with a p-value of 0.156, which exceeds 0.050; thus, hypothesis 7 is rejected.

The following summarises the conclusions regarding the role of purchase interest in this research:

**Table 5.** Hypothesis table

Effect	Variable	P-value	Conclusions
Direct	Marketing Strategic → Buying Decision	0.131	Rejected
Indirect	Marketing Strategic → Purchase Intention → Buying Decision	0.033	Full Mediating
Direct	Social Media → Buying Decision	0.192	Rejected
Indirect	Social Media → Purchase Intention → Buying Decision	0.031	Full Mediating
Direct	Price → Buying Decision	0.210	Rejected
Indirect	Price → Purchase Intention → Buying Decision	0.156	No Mediating

Source: Output process, 2024

**Table 5** shows the research findings; it can be concluded that purchase interest fully mediates the relationship between marketing strategy and purchasing decisions. A similar outcome is observed regarding the mediating role of purchase interest in the effect of social media on purchasing decisions. Conversely, the results indicate that price does not influence purchasing decisions through purchase interest, demonstrating no mediating role in this context.

## DISCUSSION

These findings further strengthen previous findings where strategic marketing does not influence purchasing decisions. This research aligns with research conducted by (Febrian & Vina Hapsari, 2019; Jabbar & Chaerudin, 2021; Sudarman & Lailla, 2023; Daud et al., 2024). This can happen because the strategic marketing created cannot be adequately implemented. Apart from that, other supporting factors such as human resources and technology sometimes cannot follow the marketing strategy created as well as possible. Several studies explain that strategic marketing does not influence purchasing decisions because the strategies managers create do not match market needs. Apart from that, rapid market changes also require top management to be able to respond to these changes quickly. Other facts in the field state that strategic incompatibility between top management strategy and line-level management will also worsen the company's strategy. Based on our findings in the field, most MSMEs do not have a good strategy to compete in selling food and beverage products. Experience from parents or business partners is still the primary source of information in running a business. This makes food and beverage MSME businesses perform poorly and cannot grow. This result also aligns with the market selection question, which has the most significant outer loading influence value, where business actors do not identify based on customer orientation but only create products that are then sold and hope that someone will buy the product. Using a product-centric strategy is no longer relevant because it will impact the inefficiency of the strategy being implemented.



Other findings found that social media does not directly influence purchasing decisions. Facts show that not all business actors use clear marketing strategies. Business actors only hope for events organised by the sub-district or regional government of Bekasi city. This research is in line with research conducted by (Nasiketha et al., 2024), which found that there is no influence of social media on purchasing decisions because the social media used sometimes does not have engaging content, the choice of social media channels is wrong and the segmentation and targeting of social media is wrong. This can have an impact on low purchasing decisions for products that are influenced by social media. Facts show that the MSMEs assisted in North Bekasi District have not fully used social media. Our interviews showed that most businesses are run by mothers whose marketing is done by word of mouth or via short messages (WhatsApp). Facts in the field show that few MSMEs use Instagram or Facebook as social marketing media. This aligns with the indicators we asked about regarding trends with the highest significant level of out-loading, where the perpetrators cannot follow current trends on social media. The rapid rate of change in information and the ability to use social media are challenges for MSMEs. Livestreaming, stories and reels and content consistency are important factors in successful social media-based technology strategies.

Apart from that, the influence of price on purchasing decisions has also not been proven. This research aligns with research conducted by (Periyadi et al., 2020; Yuliana et al., 2022). According to researchers, when consumers decide to buy a product, sometimes considerations of quality and benefits will be more important than prices that are too cheap. Apart from that, the fact that in the field, the selling prices of MSME goods are low will give rise to a low perspective of the quality of the goods. Therefore, North Bekasi city SMEs prioritise product quality over low prices. Consumers certainly consider the price and the quality of the products offered. Food is a business that is not easy to run because producers have to consider cleanliness, halalness, composition of ingredients and safety when consumed. The same thing is also supported by the lifestyle of people who understand the importance of cleanliness and healthy food, which will affect their health and life. Therefore, food and drink consumers will, of course, choose food and drink that is healthy and hygienic compared to food that is cheap but will damage their health. This result aligns with the indicators we asked about regarding price suitability, where unhygienic food tends to be sold cheaper with simple packaging. In contrast, more expensive food tends to be packaged with more closed and hygienic packaging. Food and beverage MSME players should be able to consider this to attract consumer interest in purchasing food and beverage products.

Other results found that interest influences purchasing decisions. This research is in line with research conducted by (Novianti & Saputra, 2023) When someone has a clear interest in a product, the tendency to own that product will be stronger. This research also further strengthens previous findings where the higher the interest, the higher the purchasing decision. This result is in line with the indicator that we asked about referral interest in the context of product purchase interest, which refers to a person's interest or desire to buy a product recommended or referred to by someone else. This occurs when someone receives information or recommendations about a particular product from trusted friends, family, or influencers, encouraging them to purchase it.

Other findings found the mediating role of purchasing interest on the influence of marketing strategy on purchasing decisions. This research is in line with research conducted by (Periyadi et al., 2020) and is not in line with (Febrian & Vina Hapsari, 2019). According to (Periyadi et al., 2020), marketing strategies are created to achieve the company's short-





term goals, namely the ability to influence consumers to buy the goods or services offered. When the right strategy is used with a tendency for high customer interest, it will increase customer confidence in buying the desired product. The facts on the ground that several products are prepared with a good marketing strategy will encourage the message to be delivered to customers effectively.

Therefore, when someone is interested in the product and follows the right marketing strategy, a decision will be made to buy the product and service. Food MSMEs in the city of North Bekasi are trying to increase consumer buying interest by participating in promotional events held by the government or companies. This event aims to introduce food and beverage businesses in Bekasi City. Therefore, business people must consider increasing consumer purchasing interest with the right strategy. The results of marketing strategy indicators on market selection and purchase intention on referral interest show a real relationship where market selection is still low because it is still focused on centric products with referral interest, making purchasing decisions still low. After all, the products offered do not match consumer needs. Business actors should consider products based on identifying customer needs so that they are in line with strategy and have an impact on high product sales.

The same thing was also found in the influence of social media on purchasing decisions through purchase interest. This research aligns with research conducted by Utami 2024 Alviansyach et al., 2024), where social media will direct someone to get to know the products and services offered. So, high interest in purchasing products will lead buyers to view social media impressions and purchase. Field practice shows that several MSMEs who use Instagram, Facebook or Google My Business services will find it easier to make sales because when potential customers want a product, they will search through social media. The high role of social media in the current digitalisation era should lead to higher MSME performance, which is characterised by better product accessibility.

Therefore, MSMEs need to be able to increase purchasing interest supported by appropriate social media to market products so that they are right on target. Engaging content, contemporary colours and images will increase consumer buying interest and impact purchasing decisions for the product. In line with the results of the questions asked of consumers, the promotional style of business actors does not fit into the trends of the millennial and x generations, who dominate the current population that uses social media actively. Low social media linkage will impact decreasing interest and purchasing decisions about products. Significant technological developments require business actors to "shift" to adopt technology that is not only social media but also online delivery facilities.

Other findings differ from previous ones in that price does not affect purchasing decisions through purchasing interest. This aligns with the research (Periyadi et al., 2020; Jaya & Heryjanto, 2023). Price is not the main reason for customers to make purchasing decisions. Price considerations become a complementary factor when someone finds a product that matches their perception, namely the quality and benefits received from the product. Apart from that, many MSME customers in Bekasi City understand that quality products have a higher price than low-quality products. Therefore, many customers prefer the product's benefits over price considerations, which are not significantly different. Field findings show that the prices offered by MSME traders are almost the same as the products offered by medium and large companies in shopping centres. This makes consumers prefer to buy the same goods in shopping centres compared to MSME products, whose quality is not guaranteed. Other findings found that the prices given by MSME traders did not match



the quality of the goods provided. For example, the products offered by MSME traders contain too much sugar and less milk, so some consumers think these drinks will increase sugar levels and negatively impact health.

Other consumers also conveyed the same thing that the large amount of sugar in drinks will have an impact on sore throats and headaches. This further strengthens the possibility that someone will buy a product not only based on the low price but also on the quality of the product that meets expectations. This result aligns with the price suitability indicator, where price suitability, benefits, and quality are the main factors when purchasing a product. Therefore, business actors need to consider product-relevant pricing strategies by reducing the product price or increasing the quality or features of the product so that the price offered is relevant and in line with market prices. Business actors can also consider the prices of competing and substitute products to mitigate the risk of customers switching to competitors and other similar products.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, strategic marketing, social media, and price do not directly impact purchasing decisions. However, purchasing interest does significantly influence these decisions. Additionally, strategic marketing and social media affect purchasing decisions indirectly through purchasing interest, while price does not affect purchasing decisions via purchasing interest.

These findings can be input for MSME players to increase buyer interest by increasing promotions, advertising and strategies that support the dissemination of information to grow interest, which then impacts product purchasing decisions. An important recommendation in this research is that companies must be able to increase consumers' interest in buying food and beverage products. This increase is expected to influence marketing and social media strategies in their role. Business people can increase interest in buying products by carrying out promotions, improving branding, packaging and other factors to increase consumer buying interest.

This research has several method limitations, as it only focuses on quantitative methods. Further research is expected to examine the internal strategies of MSMEs, such as knowledge management and market orientation, to see the extent of the role of resources owned by MSMEs and consider adding qualitative methods for more comprehensive research.

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