

## THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER TOWARDS PURCHASE INTENTIONS AT SHOPEE: MODERATING ROLE OF BRAND IMAGE AND MARKETING CONTENT

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### ABSTRACT

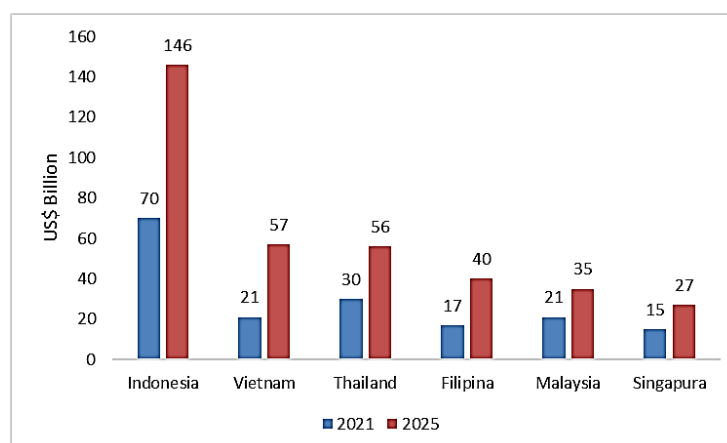
*This research aims to investigate whether the positive impact of brand image and content marketing on the purchase intentions of Shopee users can be observed among university students in Semarang. The study employs a path analysis methodology. Shopee's objective is to expand its consumer base and enhance market share by optimizing its content marketing strategies and reinforcing its brand image. This study provides a significant contribution to advancing the comprehension of gender-related theories and concepts, perceptions of content marketing, brand image, and consumer purchase intention. The research sample includes 90 university students actively using Shopee in Semarang. The findings highlight that gender significantly influences perceptions of content marketing and brand image, yet it does not exert any influence on purchase intentions. Furthermore, the study establishes a robust and positive correlation between perceptions of brand image and purchase intentions on the Shopee platform. However, it is important to note that content marketing does not exert a noteworthy influence on purchase intentions within the Shopee platform.*

**Keywords:** gender, content marketing perception, brand image perception, purchasing intention

### INTRODUCTION

Business competition is getting tougher with the presence of technology, especially digital information technology, which has changed the economic context. The economy enters an era known as the digital economy, an economy based on science and technology. Entering the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, digital technology is one of the principal capital industry players need to develop their business lines. Indonesia is a country that has great potential for the development of the digital economy. Indonesia's Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) is predicted to increase to USD 146 Billion in 2025 from USD 70 Billion in 2021. This figure is quite fantastic and exceeds the GMV of neighboring countries in Southeast Asia (Figure 1). The development of the digital economy is also driven by changes in people's behavior that tend to use digital platforms. Technological changes change not only industrial behavior but also consumer behavior. Consumers are faced with many products offers, distribution channels, payment methods, etc. Business entities must be responsive to various changes triggered by these technological changes. They must encapsulate consumer behavior changes to attract to win the competition, or at least survive in the market. Technological advancements have become one of the primary factors shaping changes in consumer lifestyles. The increasing frequency of consumer interactions in the "digital world" has led to changes in their shopping behavior. Consumers are more inclined to shop online to fulfil their needs, driven by convenience, time efficiency, and the ability to compare prices quickly (Rahmi & Amalia, 2018).

**Figure 1 Southeast Asia Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) 2021 – 2025**



In marketing activities, digital technology has an extraordinary impact. Adjustment of marketing activities to digital technology is called digital marketing. Digital marketing has become increasingly crucial in today's business. It enables communication and transactions to happen anytime, anywhere and reach a broader audience. An essential aspect of digital marketing is content marketing. Content that must be presented is unique, creative, and contain helpful information. By creating compelling content, companies can build a positive relationship with consumers and enhance brand awareness (Risa Ratna, 2019). Content marketing is a marketing activity that involves creating, curating, distributing and amplifying content that is interesting, relevant and useful for specific groups in order to create talk about the content (Philip et al., 2017); it is a marketing approach that involves creating,

curating distribution, and promoting content that is interesting, relevant, and useful for a clearly defined target audience that aims to create conversation about the content (Iwan Setiawan, 2016). Several studies have shown that content marketing has a significant effect on purchase intention (Abdurrahim & Sangen, 2019; Fatimah, 2023); digital content marketing has a significant impact on customer engagement and purchase intentions (Trivedi, 2022; Yaqubi & Karaduman, 2019).

Besides content marketing, brand image is also very essential. Therefore, business ethics must also pay attention to brand image. Brand image is consumer perception or what consumers think or feel about the brand of a particular product which is formed from information that consumers obtain either through direct experience using the product or indirectly through hearing, seeing or learning consumers. Haitao (2022) researched the influence of Brand Image and Product Quality on Purchase Intention. The results show that both have a positive and significant effect. Other research on The Effect of Brand Image, Brand Trust, Economic Benefits, and Brand Attitude Toward Purchase Intention on iPhones also shows that Brand image is a variable that has a positive-significant effect (Maknunah & Rachmat, 2020).

Meanwhile, other studies add to the context of product haleness. This research found that product features and brand image positively affect Purchasing Decisions, with Purchase Interest as Mediating Variables (Septianti et al., 2021). A favourable brand image increases consumers' trust and triggers a purchase intention. Research by (Mangido Asi, Kennycy Jonathan, 2021) shows that brand image significantly influences consumer purchase intention.

Shopee is the leading online shopping platform in Southeast Asia and Taiwan. Launched in 2015, Shopee is a region-tailored platform that provides customers with an easy, safe and fast online shopping experience through substantial payment and logistics support. It is a company that promotes providing its users with an easy, safe, and enjoyable online shopping experience. With effective marketing strategies and a profound understanding of local consumer needs, Shopee has built a substantial market share in Southeast Asia. Through innovation in its business model, Shopee offers interactive and fun user experiences through features like Shopee Guarantee and Shopee Live. Shopee is also actively conducting attractive promotional programs and discounts like "Goyang Shopee 11.11 and 12.12," offering consumers billions of rupiahs in prizes. Such promotions are expected to boost consumer purchase intention toward products offered by Shopee, as stated by Aziky and Masreviastuti (2018).

Shopee has gained incredible popularity as one of Indonesia's most favoured online shopping platforms. Based on data from Similar Web, Shopee is the e-commerce site with the most website visits in Indonesia in the first quarter of 2023. During the January-March period this year, the Shopee website achieved an average of 157.9 million visits per month, far exceeding its competitors. During the same period, the Tokopedia site received an average of 117 million visits, the Lazada site 83.2 million visits, the BliBli site 25.4 million visits, and the Bukalapak site 18.1 million visits per month (Ahdiat, 2023).

Online shopping trends have become increasingly popular in Indonesia. The results of the APJII survey titled "Indonesia Internet Profile 2022" show that students and scholars dominate internet users with a percentage of 99.26%. The robust internet technology has changed students' shopping behavior, who were previously used to shopping directly at nearby markets or malls. With access to online shops through the internet, students can shop without having to go to physical stores or leave their homes. This change is a significant reason why online shopping trends are highly favoured, especially among students in Semarang.

Shopee has successfully differentiated itself from other e-commerce platforms through effective marketing strategies and a proper approach to local consumers. They continue to strive to provide added value to consumers and sellers by focusing on a positive user experience and responsive customer service. It is also essential to consider that societal gender views can influence consumer behavior in seeking and obtaining information, but the impact may vary depending on the prevailing context. All these factors are vital for companies to consider when formulating their marketing strategies to attract consumer purchase intention. In many studies, in many cases, gender influences perception. Stereotyped patterns of gender differences have been found in previous self-concept research. Men tended to rate themselves higher on self-concept measures of aptitude, strength, and immunities, and women tended to rate themselves higher on self-concept measures of likeability and morality. (Shambodo, 2020; Ujang Sumarwan, Megawati Simanjuntak, 2012). Likewise, gender affects brand image (Grohmann, 2009; Pang & Ding, 2021; Sultana, 2017). This study aims to investigate the effect of gender on Purchase Intention through its influence on content marketing perceptions and brand image perceptions as intervention or mediation variables among Shopee platform consumers, particularly students in Semarang.

## **METHOD**

The primary objective of this research is to empirically test the hypotheses concerning the impact of gender on purchase intention within the Shopee Marketplace, mediated by its influence on perceived brand image and content marketing. To achieve this objective, several hypotheses are formulated as follows:

H1: Gender influences the perception of Shopee's content marketing.

H2: Gender affects perceptions of Shopee's brand image.

H3: Perceived content marketing influences purchase intention on Shopee.

H4: Perceived brand image influences purchase intention on Shopee.

H5: Gender influences purchase intentions on Shopee.

H6: Perceived content marketing and brand image partially mediate the relationship between gender and purchase intention on Shopee.

**Study Population and Data Collection:**

The focal point of this study is to dissect how gender shapes purchasing behavior through the lenses of content marketing and brand image perceptions. The study centers on the purchasing behaviors of university student cohorts. Therefore, the population under scrutiny consists of students who meet the minimum criterion of having downloaded and installed the Shopee application. Data were meticulously collected through an online questionnaire using Google Forms during April 2023, involving a total of 90 respondents.

**Data Analysis:**

Data analysis was executed through a two-pronged approach encompassing descriptive analysis and inferential statistics. Central tendency was assessed using the average mean in numerical descriptive analysis. This illuminated respondents' sentiments towards the variables and indicators scrutinized. Perception-based data were quantified employing a Likert scale spanning 1 to 5, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." The perceptual tendencies were categorized into "Low" and "High" based on specific scale ranges:

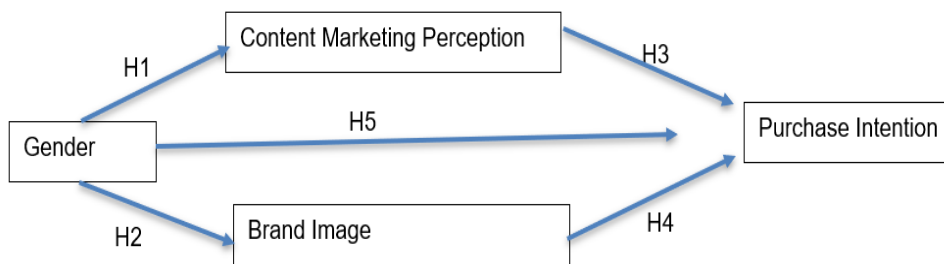
1.00 – 2.99: Categorized as "Low"

3.00 – 5.00: Categorized as "High"

**Inferential Statistical Analysis:**

To discern the intricate nature of the relationships posited in the hypotheses, specifically the interplay between gender, perceived brand image, content marketing, and purchase intention, an inferential statistical analysis was undertaken. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was the chosen method for this analysis. SEM provides a robust framework for delineating the pathways connecting variables, both direct and indirect. By employing SEM, we aimed to establish the standardized regression coefficients, or path analysis coefficients, derived from standardized data based on Z-scores. These coefficients enable us to quantify the magnitude and direction of relationships among the variables under examination. This analysis is assisted by the Smart-PLS3 software (Partial et al.), presented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2 Model Specification**



**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Respondents Profile**

The respondents are students residing in Semarang with a relatively narrow age range. The majority of the respondents (90%) fall within the age range of 20-24 years, while a smaller portion is aged 15-19 years (8.9%) and 25-29 years (1.1%). The participants in this survey consisted of 51.1% female respondents and 48.9% male respondents, indicating a reasonably balanced distribution between the two genders. Concerning their monthly expenditure levels, most respondents (60%) spend less than 1,500,000 monthly, which amounts to 54 individuals. Additionally, 28.9% of respondents spend between 1,500,000 and 3,000,000, totalling 26 individuals. Moreover, 6.7% spend between 3,000,000 and 5,000,000, amounting to 6 individuals, and 4.4% spend over 5,000,000, comprising four individuals. Among the respondents, some are employed, while others are not. The number of employed respondents is 19, accounting for 21.1%, while the unemployed are 71, constituting 78.9%.

**Table 1: Respondents Profile**

|                                      | Demographic variables | %     |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|
| Gender                               | Female                | 51.1% |
|                                      | Male                  | 48.9% |
| Have a side job                      | Yes                   | 21.1% |
|                                      | Not                   | 78.9% |
| Age                                  | 15-19 years           | 8.9%  |
|                                      | 20-24 years           | 90.0% |
|                                      | 25-29 years           | 1.1%  |
| Monthly expenses                     | <1.500.000            | 60.0% |
|                                      | 1.500.000-3.000.000   | 28.9% |
|                                      | 3.000.000-5.000.000   | 6.7%  |
|                                      | >5.000.000.000        | 4.4%  |
| Usually, watch the Content Shoppe on | Instagram             | 72.2% |

|  |            |       |
|--|------------|-------|
|  | Facebook   | 10.0% |
|  | YouTube    | 50.0% |
|  | TikTok     | 55.6% |
|  | Website    | 1.1%  |
|  | Twitter    | 1.1%  |
|  | Television | 1.1%  |

Source: Primary data processed

#### Description of Content Marketing Perceptions, Brand Image, and Purchase Intentions

Shopee's content marketing and brand image are perceived, and purchase intention tends to be high. This assessment implies that content marketing and brand image are perceived well. Each is reflected in an average value of 3.11, 3.18, and 3.04 on a scale of 1 - 5. These conditions are presented in detail in Table 2.

This study's perception of marketing content uses 12 indicators derived from Relevance, Accuracy, Value, Easy to Understand, Easy to Find, and Consistent (Patricia et al., 2015). Of the several indicators perceived, there are three indicators whose ratings tend to be low. The three indicators are that Shopee Content can help solve my problem, Shopee Content contains accurate information related to products, and Shopee Content can be trusted. Meanwhile, nine other indicators are perceived as sound. The nine indicators contain needed information, explain the current condition of a product, provide benefits, messages are easy to understand, writing can be read, are easy to find, available on social media, updated regularly, and uploaded consistently. The three best-perceived indicators are that Shopee content is available on several social media such as Instagram, Facebook and YouTube; Shopee content is easy to find; and Letters or writing on Shopee content can be read clearly.

Regarding the indicators that make up the brand image, this study refers to the formation of brand image (Aaker & Biel, 2013), namely image maker (Corporate Image), Product/consumer image (product Image, and User image. Based on these indicators, this study derives six indicators: ease of being remembered or recognized, good reputation, interesting messages or sentences, ability to meet needs (especially daily needs), and attractive logo. In the brand image variable, as a whole and according to the indicators, all are perceived to be good, especially the Shoppee brand name, which is easy to remember or recognize

Good perceptions regarding content marketing and brand image do not automatically make consumers have high purchase intentions. This phenomenon can be related to consumers who only want to visit online or offline stores to browse without any purpose. This type of consumer is only concerned with their experience walking around the store while looking around without having to shop, often called window shopping. However, this experience still allows the consumer to ultimately make a purchase if the item looks attractive, accompanied by a promo and a reasonable price. Therefore, it is crucial to hold attractive promos that are different every time so that they generate purchase intentions and, in the end, actually buy. This study found consistency between perceptions of marketing content, brand image and purchase intention. Intention to buy at Shopee tends to be high, with an average score of 3.04. Regarding purchase intentions at Shopee, consumers, in this case, students, are highly interested in buying Shopee products, recommending Shopee to others, sharing information about Shopee, and asking for information about Shopee products to people who have already shopped and know Shopee.

**Table 2: Description of Content Marketing Perceptions, Brand Image, and Purchase Intentions**

| Indicators                   | Score | Category        |
|------------------------------|-------|-----------------|
| Content Marketing Perception | 3,11  | tend to be high |
| Brand Image Perception       | 3,18  | tend to be high |
| Purchase Intention           | 3.04  | tend to be high |

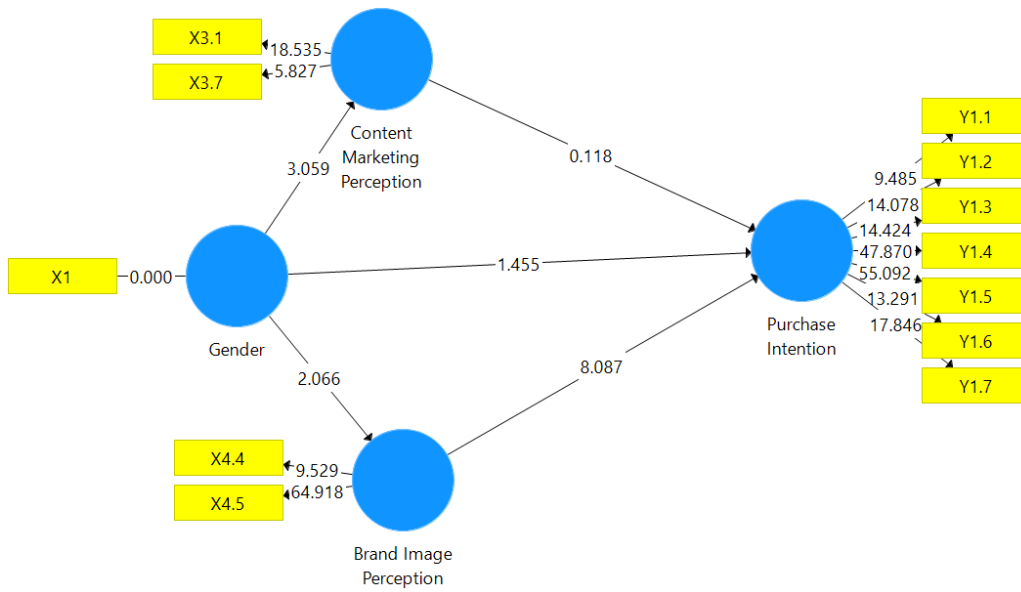
Source: Primary data processed

#### Path Analysis Estimation

This research aims to analyze the influence of gender on the purchase intention of the Shopee platform, with brand image perception and content marketing perception as mediating variables. Overall, this study involves four variables, consisting of 1 exogenous variable and three endogenous variables. Figure 3.1 is a path diagram that represents an overview of the research on how gender affects the purchase intention of the Shopee platform, with brand image perception and content marketing perception as mediating variables.

The path diagram illustrates the endogenous variables, including gender, purchase intention perception, and brand image perception. In detail, it shows that gender impacts purchase intention, gender also affects content marketing perception, and gender influences brand image perception. Furthermore, content marketing perception influences purchase intention, and brand image perception also affects purchase intention. Therefore, it can be concluded that Content Marketing Perception and Brand Image Perception act as mediating or intervening variables in this study.

Figure 3 Path Diagram



Source: Primary data processed

Path Model Testing

Path analysis requires a convergent validity test to measure the indicators' reliability. Indicator reliability is reflected in outer loading indicators > 0.70. Meanwhile, to measure construct reliability, the Cronbach Alpha test was used. The construct of a variable is declared reliable if it has Cronbach Alpha > 0.70. To ensure that the latent variable of a construct is different from other constructs, a discriminant validity test is performed, which is reflected in the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. The latency variable construct differs from the other constructs if the AVE score is > 0.5. The higher the AVE value means that the construct is more unique. Referring to the numbers presented in Table 3, the model developed in this study is reliable. Model reliability is also supported by a composite reliability score of >0.07.

Table 3: Validity and Reliability Test

|                    | Cronbach's Alpha | rho_A | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|--------------------|------------------|-------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Brand Image        | 0.711            | 0.929 | 0.863                 | 0.760                            |
| Content Marketing  | 0.719            | 0.717 | 0.848                 | 0.737                            |
| Gender             | 1.000            | 1.000 | 1.000                 | 1.000                            |
| Purchase Intention | 0.920            | 0.942 | 0.936                 | 0.678                            |

Source: Primary data processed

Hypothesis Testing

The path analysis developed in this study includes several hypotheses: purchase intention influenced by gender, content marketing perception, and brand image perception. Additionally, there are hypotheses regarding the influence of gender on content marketing perception and brand image perception. The table above indicates that brand image perception has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention. Furthermore, content marketing perception and gender are hypothesized to have a non-significant influence on purchase intention. For these hypotheses, three hypotheses are supported statistically and two are not supported statistically.

Table 4: Path Coefficient

| Variables                                          | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics ( O/STDEV ) | P Values |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| Brand Image Perception -> Purchase Intention       | 0.593               | 0.596           | 0.073                      | 8.087                    | 0.000    |
| Content Marketing Perception -> Purchase Intention | -0.012              | -0.009          | 0.105                      | 0.118                    | 0.906    |

|                                        |       |       |       |       |       |
|----------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Gender -> Brand Image Perception       | 0.212 | 0.201 | 0.102 | 2.066 | 0.039 |
| Gender -> Content Marketing Perception | 0.254 | 0.261 | 0.083 | 3.059 | 0.002 |
| Gender -> Purchase Intention           | 0.129 | 0.127 | 0.089 | 1.455 | 0.146 |

Source: Primary data processed

As a result, it can be stated that gender impacts the perception of brand image and content marketing. Men and women may hold different expectations regarding environmental factors, perceptions, and consumer preferences. Brand image perception influences consumer purchase intention, encompassing attributes such as Shopee's easy recognition and memorability, positive reputation, compelling and engaging advertisements or content, uniqueness compared to similar competitors, perceived ability to fulfil consumer daily needs, and an appealing logo. On the other hand, purchase intention is not affected by gender and the perception of content marketing, which includes aspects of relevance, accuracy, value, comprehensibility, and consistency. The findings in this study are supported by research by Ramadhan (2021), the dimensions of digital content marketing have a significant favorable influence on brand trust.

**Table 5: Indirect Effects**

|                                                                | Specific Indirect Effects |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Gender -> Brand Image Perception -> Purchasing Intention       | 0.125                     |
| Gender -> Marketing Content Perception -> Purchasing Intention | 0.003                     |

Source: Primary data processed

This study confirms that Perceived Brand Image influences purchase intention at Shopee, Gender affects perceptions of Shopee's image, and gender influences their perception of Shopee's content marketing. There are two unsupported hypotheses: Perceived content marketing influences purchase intention at Shopee and Gender Affects Purchase Intentions at Shopee. Regarding the hypothesis that Perceived content marketing and brand image mediate the effect of gender on purchase intention at Shopee, this research only confirms the perception of content marketing as a mediating variable. Perceptions of marketing content are a partial mediating variable, reflected in the significance of the effect of gender on content marketing perceptions and the influence of content marketing perceptions on purchase intentions at Shopee.

**Table 6: Coefficient of Determination (R Square)**

|                              | R Square | R Square Adjusted |
|------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Brand Image Perception       | 0.045    | 0.034             |
| Marketing Content Perception | 0.064    | 0.054             |
| Purchasing Intention         | 0.394    | 0.373             |

Source: Primary data processed

The determination analysis is used to measure the ability of the developed model to explain variations in the dependent variables, which in this case are brand image perception, content marketing perception, and purchase intention. The coefficient of determination and the results of the determination test reflected in the adjusted R-square show that brand image perception contributes 3.4%, content marketing perception contributes 5.4%, and purchase intention contributes 37.33% to the model.

**Table 7: Discriminant Validity**

|                              | Brand Image | Marketing Content | Gender | Purchasing Intention |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|--------|----------------------|
| Brand Image Perception       | 0.872       |                   |        |                      |
| Marketing Content Perception | 0.212       | 0.859             |        |                      |
| Gender                       | 0.388       | 0.250             | 1.0000 |                      |
| Purchasing Intention         | 0.615       | 0.249             | 0.251  | 0.824                |

Source: Primary data processed

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study confirms that Perceived Brand Image influences purchase intention at Shopee, Gender affects perceptions of Shopee's image, and gender influences their perception of Shopee's content marketing. There are two unsupported hypotheses: Perceived content marketing influences purchase intention at Shopee and Gender Affects Purchase Intentions at Shopee. Regarding the hypothesis that Perceived content marketing and brand image mediate the effect of gender on purchase intention at Shopee, this research only confirms the perception of content marketing as a mediating variable. Perceptions of marketing content are a partial mediating variable, reflected in the significance of the effect of gender on content marketing perceptions and the influence of content marketing perceptions on purchase intentions at Shopee using popular influencers among college students.

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