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THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR THROUGH E-MARKETING: EMPIRICAL STUDY FOR ALGERIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Social media platforms are widely utilized by individuals of varying demographics and are recognized as a significant source for promotion and digital marketing, influencing consumer purchasing choices. The prevalence of these platforms has further amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research aimed to examine the association and influence of social media on purchasing decisions via digital marketing while considering disparities in gender and age. The study was conducted among a sample of students from the University of Algiers, with 845 electronic questionnaires distributed through various communication channels. The collected data was analyzed employing SPSS version 24 and hierarchical linear regression. The study's findings established a correlation and impact between social media usage and purchasing decisions facilitated by digital marketing. This study will provide valuable insights for the decision-makers in Algerian universities and academic scholars. This topic is seen as a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature, which will be utilized by future recipients.

Keywords: *Social media, E-marketing, Purchasing behaviour, Algiers students, Empirical study.*

INTRODUCTION

Throughout its long history, the world has witnessed many successive developments. The most important of which is widespread technology and media, which have imposed new challenges in the context of virtual reality. This has changed individual lifestyles through the different platforms of social media that have attracted millions of individuals of different genders, cultures, and ages. This affiliation to platforms has generated new types of communication and interaction affecting daily life operations such as shopping, advertising, and various purchasing processes.

The widespread of social networks led to a side sharing of data by all its users. This led to the creation of an environment characterized by an abundance of information, where we find that more than half of social network platform users have access to their accounts several times a day and use it also to evaluate the information they get in their actual daily lives. Moreover, we find a constant increase in people who create information content online (Kent & Taylor, 2016),

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according to Veil *et al.* (2011) findings. Social media plays a central role in sharing knowledge among individuals. Social media sites like Facebook and micro-blogging applications like Twitter provide convenient forums for discussing various user issues and concerns.

Digital marketing involves electronic communications technologies utilized in advertising products or services. It typically refers to online advertising over the internet, which is interconnected physically through numerous computer networks that publish diverse information types and stand as an accessible source (Priansa & Suryawardani, 2020). Social media platforms effectively offer accessibility features that improve users' knowledge of products or service offerings as consumers' preferences change towards digital buying channels.

Social media sites have revolutionized online networks. They are enabling businesses to be interactive with current and prospective customers. Singh and Singh (2018) highlights that young people use social media as a marketing channel for companies. This trend pushes persuasive communication models to adapt to these demographics' needs since they prefer social media channels to other advertising models.

This investigation aims to understand university students' attitudes towards social media platforms when making purchasing decisions across different genders and age groups, given marketers' increasing interest in promoting their products through these online mediums. As digital natives, college students have positively impacted consumer behavior due to their online social proficiency. Our study will provide insights into effective ways of ensuring digital marketing campaigns on social media resonate with university students. It will explore better strategies and pinpoint areas that need improvement while determining the actual contribution of these platforms concerning buying patterns among unique demographic audiences. The outcomes from this research will inform marketers of the status quo regarding effective promotion channels via digital access preferences and customer behavior patterns.

The structure of this study divides it into six explicit sections, each serving its purpose masterfully for an understanding of the nature of our investigation underway. Part one talks about introducing one's self to what comes next- essential background information towards significant literature explored comprehensively featured inside part two-culminating alongside comprehensive research methodology outlined evidently within the third part; fourth exploring hidden discoveries revealed belonging undercurrents pointing beyond paper's pages both discussed robustly within fifth segment preceding concluding sixth section.

Literature Review

In numerous studies, such as Miah *et al.* (2022), we have researched various variables to assess the impact of social media on online shopping behavior. Specifically, Miah *et al.* (2022) analyzed how social media influences apparel purchases in Jaipur City. Their research explored the connection between online shopping behavior in Jaipur and social media through data analysis and reviewing past studies. Their findings indicated that social media platforms provide a space for marketers to connect with consumers personally. These platforms including Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs, and Facebook, have made significant strides in terms of promoting interaction between buyers and sellers. Another study by Zulqurnain *et al.* (2016) evaluated how marketing on social media affects consumer perception of brands and their purchasing decisions. Surveys conducted among university students with 145 participants reported a 97% acceptance rate for



the analysis results. The study confirmed that social media marketing positively influences consumers' purchasing behaviors.

Lastly, Kumar *et al.* (2020) examined how Malaysian restaurants use social media to affect consumer buying behavior in the food and beverage industry. The research consisted of a literature review followed by data analysis that aimed to assess the effects of social media on target audiences' buying behaviors in Malaysia's food industry. Overall, these studies highlight associations between different contexts, such as shopping for apparel products in Jaipur City or making purchasing decisions through advertisements on various platforms like LinkedIn or blogs.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section will outline the methodology adopted in this study and construct the model. We will also present the hypotheses that can help address the research problem.

Study Methodology

The study relied on quantitative methodology in analyzing data and an inductive approach to generalize the results related to the study sample on the r: consumers, consumers who make purchases through e-marketing via social media platforms. The sample size used was 845 individual students from the University of Algiers.

Study Variables

In this research, we utilized the following variables:

- ***Social Media (Independent Variable)***: Social media encompasses programs that facilitate the gathering, communication, participation, and, in some instances, collaboration or entertainment for individuals and communities. These programs are typically accessed through web browsers or mobile applications (apps) (Von Muhlen & Ohno-Machado, 2012). In our literature review, we encountered instances where social media (SM) was equated with other terms, such as social networking sites (Hellemans *et al.*, 2020). It is also defined as media generated by consumers and content created by users, including Web 2.0 (Santos, 2022). SM represents a collection of internet-based applications built on the foundation of the Web 2.0 system, enabling global internet users to interact, communicate, and share ideas, content, experiences, perspectives, information, and relationships (Salim *et al.*, 2022).
- ***Electronic Marketing (Mediating Variable)***: It should be noted that social media marketing (SMM) is defined as a « social and managerial process through which individuals and groups obtain what they need and want » (Shahzad *et al.*, 2020).
- ***Purchase Decision (Dependent Variable)***: The process of making a purchase involves various fundamental buying activities, including searching for information, applying analytical techniques, focusing on future considerations, and relying on control mechanisms. Additionally, adopting a particular purchasing approach is influenced by four vital situational factors: the significance of the purchase, the complexity of the task, the level of uncertainty involved, and the number of choices available. These factors and the buyer's perceptions play a significant role in shaping the purchase decision (Lăzăroiu *et al.*, 2020).



The study model and its hypotheses are as follows in Figure 1:

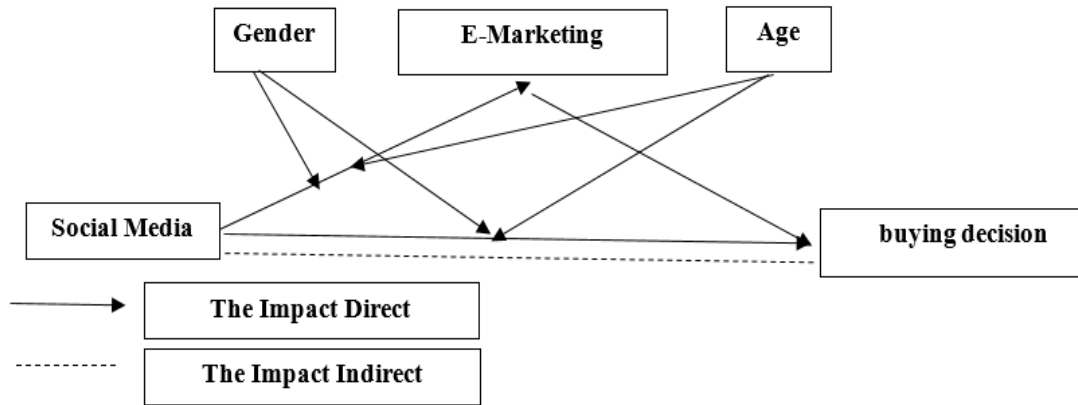


Figure 1. The Model Specification of Study.

Source: By researchers

Sample and Population of the Study: The research population consists of all students at Algeria University, including its three branches, totaling an estimated 9,750 students. For the study sample, the researcher employed various electronic means of communication to distribute the questionnaire and received 845 valid responses suitable for analysis. This sample represents approximately 10% to 20% of the population, which is considered highly appropriate for this type of study, according to Casteel and Bridier, (2021). Moreover, the base rule confirmed the sample size's adequacy (Thompson, 2012). It is important to note that the study population is homogeneous, comprising undergraduate or diploma students.

Study Hypotheses: The model has led to updates in our hypotheses, which we outline below:

- **Hypothesis 1:** Our survey takers hold affirmative opinions about the study's given variables.
- **Hypothesis 2:**
 - **Null Hypothesis (H0):** Among the students analyzed during this research project. Social media did not show a statistically significant impact on purchase decisions prompted by e-marketing channels at or beyond a confidence level equal to 0.05.
 - **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):** Social media significantly influenced purchase decisions carried out through electronic advertising among students sampled for this research project about levels of confidence presented near or at 0.05 significance levels.
- **Hypothesis 3:**
 - **Null Hypothesis (H0):** Amongst students researched, gender is not an attribute leading to recognizable differences relating to study-based parameters as measured using another similarly relevant statistical parameter within a confidence interval equivalent to or exceeding .05.
 - **Alternative Hypothesis (H1):** Across our sample population, there exists discernible variance between how members answer questions based on gender-specific distinctions

against tested measures that have rivaling statistical counterparts with a matched degree of confidence values expressed near or equaling a .05 threshold.

- *Hypothesis 4:*

- *Null Hypothesis (H0):* Variables studied across age lines among student participants prove indistinguishable from one another as studied when gauged with comparable and substantive degrees of certainty levels reachable around values maintained above equivalence with a .05 confidence interval.
- *Alternative Hypothesis (H1):* Significantly meaningful disparities exist based on variables under review across segmented age ranges between students comprising our study group when interpreted against confidence levels established at or above a .05 interval class.

We adopted the quantitative approach in our data analysis, interpretation of correlational relationships, and examination of the impact between various study variables (Lorenz-Spreen *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, we employed induction to analyze and generalize the results to the study population.

We relied on a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool to collect data from the study sample. This questionnaire was distributed to students of Algerian universities through various communication channels, resulting in the collection of (845) responses.

The questionnaire consisted of 23 items divided into three parts:

1. Personal Information - This section aimed to gather personal information from the students, including gender, age, educational qualification, and the communication method used.
2. Independent Variable - This part focused on the Social Media Variable and comprised Eight questions.
3. Medial Variable - This section addressed the mediating variable, electronic marketing, and encompassed (6) questions.
4. Dependent Variable - This part investigated the dependent variable, purchase decision, and included (9) questions.
5. Likert scale was utilized in the questionnaire to assess participants' responses.



Validity of the Questionnaire and Statistical Analysis Method

The questionnaire underwent a thorough review by specialized professors to ensure its validity. Certain items were modified, added, or rephrased during this process, and new items were included as necessary. After these revisions, the questionnaire reached its final form.

The alpha coefficient and split-half reliability measures were employed to assess the reliability of the research instrument. The values of these measures were obtained and are presented in

Table 1.

Table 1. Statistics of Item-Total

	Scale Mean	Scale Variance	Correlation	Alpha Cronbach
Q	94,4125	383,0068	0,56425	0,951
W	94,215	383,1422	0,584333	0,951167
B	94,95804	372,2326	0,673222	0,950333
Social media	94,4044	382,369	0,887	0,949

E-Marketing	94,215	382,705	0,791	0,95
buying decision	94,958	371,535	0,9	0,948
ALL	94,5716	378,036	1	0,948

Sources: Output SPSS

The obtained results from the Table indicate that each item in the questionnaire exhibits a reliability coefficient higher than 0.90. Since this value surpasses the acceptable threshold for reliability (0.70), it is considered suitable for scientific research purposes. Additionally, the overall scale achieved a reliability coefficient of 0.95, indicating high stability in the questionnaire.

Using the Central Limit Theorem, a sample can conform to a normal distribution in terms of the test for normal distribution if the sample size is large enough (Knief & Forstmeier, 2021).

SPSS (24) was used as the statistical program to perform the required statistical analyses. The subsequent statistical instruments were employed:

We computed the mean and standard deviation, and the correlation coefficient was employed for the objectives of identification and interpretation. The *f* and *t* values were calculated to support or contradict the theories. The model utilized was the hierarchical linear regression model (Lai *et al.*, 2022). We examined significant differences between the research variables.

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Table 2. Statistics of Descriptive

	Observations	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Q		1,125	5	2,8762	0,9633
W		1	5	4,06565	1,020498
B		1	5	3,3226	1,303608
Social media	845	1,88	5	3,8762	0,71687
E-Marketing		1,17	5	4,0657	0,78962
buying decision		1	5	3,4659	0,9325
ALL		1,35	5	4,021	0,6986
Observations			845		

Sources: The Output of SPSS

Table 2 displays the means and standard deviations for each variable, which can be interpreted as follows:

If we apply the range calculation rule, which is represented by (upper and lower limit) / level, where $5 - 1 / 3 = 1.33$, we can classify the variables as follows:

Weak: between 1 and 1.33

Average: between 1.34 and 3.46

Strong: between 3.47 and 5

Regarding the variable "Social media," the mean score was 3.88, indicating a high level of importance as perceived by the researchers. The standard deviation was less than 2, indicating

a limited dispersion in the sample responses (Todisco *et al.*, 2021). These findings align with the works of (Jacobs *et al.*, 2016). However, they differ from the study conducted by Van Aelst *et al.* (2021), which suggested that television holds greater importance than social media for news consumption in the studied countries.

Concerning the variable "E-Marketing," the mean score at the firm level was 4.0657, with a standard deviation of less than 1. This supports the findings of Trainor *et al.* (2011), who described electronic marketing as a combination of technology, business, human, and resource factors that positively impact company performance. Additionally, the survey results from 522 Belgian companies emphasized the significance of market orientation and technology in electronic marketing, leading to enhanced customer retention and satisfaction, as indicated by Zaoui *et al.* (2021).

For the variable "Buying decision," the mean score was 3.4659, reflecting a moderate level of influence, while the standard deviation was more significant than one but less than 2. These findings are consistent with the study conducted by McGrath *et al.* (2020), which involved a controlled simulation with 122 university students and demonstrated that trust in a website significantly influences online purchasing decisions based on website features. This finding is also supported by Sharma and Klein (2020).

With a variation of less than one, the aggregate mean score for all replies was 3.7090, which is within the firm level. This suggests that the first hypothesis. According to which respondents had favorable views towards the research variables is correct; the following parts will detail these findings.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Our focus in this section is to test the hypotheses stated in our research while providing insight into observed results. Our Second Hypothesis illustrates a meaningful impact between social media usage and purchase decision-making through digital marketing amongst students in our sample - contrary to what was hypothesized under the Null Hypothesis.

Understanding how these effects play into dependent variables requires us to analyze Lai *et al.* (2022) equation models specifically designed for that purpose.

A – Initial Model:

$$Y_i = a_i + b_1 * X_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

B – Reduced Model:

$$Y_i = a_i + b_1 * X_i + b_2 * Z_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (2)$$

C – Final Model:

$$Y_i = -1.18E - 14 + 0.889 * X_i + 0.123 * Z_i + 2.556 * X_i * Z_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (3)$$

Our hypothesis was tested by analyzing the determination coefficient and F and T values calculations for all three applicable models. These models feature variables such as X

(independent), Y(dependent), and Z(mediating) along with XZ (interaction between independent variable and mediator).

$$A - \text{Initial Model: } Y_i = a_i + b_1 * X_i + \varepsilon_i$$

Table 3. ANOVA^a Test

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	222,566	1	222,566	702,213	0,000 ^b
	Residual	229,471	724	0,317	--	--
	Total	452,037	725	--	--	--
2	Regression	367,556	2	183,778	351,981	0,000 ^b
	Residual	377,496	723	0,522	~	~
	Total	745,052	725	~	~	~
3	Regression	669,338	1	669,338	6400,41	0,000 ^b
	Residual	75,714	724	0,105	~	~
	Total	745,052	725	~	~	~

a. DV: E-Marketing

b. Constant: Social media

Sources: Output SPSS

Table 4. The Summary Models

Model	R	R Sq	R Sq Adj	Std. Err
1	0,815 ^a	0,673	0,673	0,6345
2	0,818 ^a	0,584	0,591	0,8337
3	0,948 ^a	0,898	0,898	0,32338

a. Constant: Social media

Sources: Output SPSS

Table 5. The Summary of Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandard Coefths		Standard Coefs		t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Err	Beta				Tolerance	VIF
1	Constant	1,07	0,115	~	9,305	0	~	~	
	Social media	0,773	0,029	0,702	26,499	0	1	1	
2	Constant	-0,569	0,202	0.0001	-3,17	0.002	0	0	
	Social media	0,791	0,112	0,597	17,212	0.002	0,475	1,97	
	E-Marketing	0,161	0,048	0,125	3,376	0,001	0,508	1,97	
3	Constant	-1,18E-14	0	~	.	.	~	~	
	Social media	0,889	0	0,629	16,465	.	1	1	
	E-Marketing	0,667	0	0,519	80,003	.	1	1	
	ALL	2,556	0	1,89	174.332	.	1	1	

a. Dependent Variable: E-Marketing

Sources: Output SPSS

The correlation coefficient achieved a solid negative value of 0.70, indicating a robust relationship. Moreover, the adjusted R-squared value (R-2) reached 0.49, indicating that social media accounts for 50% of the variability observed in electronic marketing. Additionally, the F-value of 702,213, with a significance level of 0.000, suggests the acceptance of the initial model. There is no multicollinearity among the variable components, as indicated by the VIF value of 1.000. The regression coefficient for social media about electronic marketing is 0.773. With a T-value of 26,499, significant at 0.000 (less than 0.01) (**Tables 3-5**). the expressed model in the equation:

$$Y_i = 1.07 + 0.773 * X_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (4)$$

It is deemed valid. This result signifies that social media has a significant impact on electronic marketing. These findings are consistent with the research of Priansa and Suryawardani (2020) and Suryani and Margery (2020), highlighting the significant influence of social media advertising, electronic marketing, and product quality on consumer decisions.

B- Reduced Model: $Y_i = a_i + b_1 * X_i + b_2 * Z_i + \varepsilon_i$

The correlation coefficient between social media, electronic marketing, and purchase decisions reached a solid negative value of 0.818, suggesting a robust relationship. Furthermore, the adjusted R-squared value (R-2) of 0.584 indicates that combined social media and electronic marketing explain 49.3% of the variability observed in the purchase decision (**Table 4**). Interestingly, when both variables are considered together, the explanatory power has no significant improvement compared to the initial model. This implies that introducing electronic marketing as a second variable does not enhance the relationship with the purchase decision. Additionally, the F-value of 351,981, with a significance level of 0.000, supports the acceptance of the reduced model (**Table 3**). These findings are consistent with the conclusions of Suryani and Margery (2020) and Iblasi *et al.* (2016).

The regression coefficient for social media about the purchase decision increased to 0.861 when the electronic marketing variable was introduced. This suggests that including electronic marketing as a mediating variable has strengthened the relationship between social media and the purchase decision, aligning with the concept of mediation proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986). The T-values of 17,212 and 3,376, respectively, with significance levels of 0.000 and 0.001 (both less than 0.05), indicate the model's validity (**Table 5**). Therefore, the relationship can be expressed as follows:

$$Y_i = -0.668 + 0.861 * X_i + 0.161 * Z_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (5)$$

C- The final model: $Y_i = a_i + b_1 * X_i + b_2 * Z_i + b_3 * X_i * Z_i + \varepsilon_i$

The correlation coefficient between social media, electronic marketing, and purchasing decisions reached a solid positive value of 0.95, indicating a robust relationship. There were 19 strong and positive correlation relationships without multicollinearity, as confirmed by the VIF value of 1.000. This suggests that there is no interference from linear multicollinearity among the components of the variables (Yıldız, 2021) (**Table 4**).



The association between social media and electronic marketing has improved the relationship with purchase decisions, as seen by the more excellent correlation when compared to both the original and decreased models. Ninety percent of the variance in purchase decisions may be explained by the interaction between social media and electronic marketing, according to the modified R-square value of 0.9. This suggests that when social media and direct marketing interact as a mediating variable, the interpretative coefficient significantly improves, positively affecting purchase choices (**Table 3**).

Moreover, the adoption of the final model is supported by the F-value of 6400.410 at the significance level of 0.000. The results of the research by Priansa and Suryawardani (2020) and Al-Azzam and Al-Mizeed (2021), which highlighted the influence of digital marketing on purchasing decisions, are consistent with our findings (**Table 5**).

The interaction between electronic marketing and social media on purchase decisions has a regression coefficient of 2.5560-. According to Preacher *et al.* (2006) and Aiken and West (1991), regarding interactions involving the mediating variable, the interaction regression on purchasing decisions validates the electronic marketing mediation model between social media and purchasing decisions. The model's validity is confirmed by the significance level of 0.000, which may be stated as follows:

$$Y_i = -1.18E - 14 + 0.889 * X_i + 0.123 * Z_i + 2.556 * X_i * Z_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (6)$$

Where:

Based on the information, social media plays a significant role in influencing purchasing decisions through electronic marketing.

Hypothesis 3 states:

H0: Among the pupils in the sample. Gender-related differences in the research variables are not statistically significant, with a 0.05 confidence level.

H1: At a confidence level of 0.05, there is a statistically significant influence of the research variables related to gender among the sample students.

Table 6. Statistics of Group

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Err. Mean
Social media	F	530	4,8482	0,56257	0,03256
	M	313	4,1001	0,78585	0,04567
E-Marketing	F	532	4,1081	0,83076	0,03602
	M	313	3,9493	0,65172	0,04679
buying decision	F	532	3,3954	1,02782	0,04456
	M	313	3,1231	0,94831	0,06808

Sources: Output SPSS

We find no statistically significant differences in the sample responses regarding gender-based electronic marketing and purchase decisions from the two tables above (**Table 6**); this suggests that gender does not affect university students' levels of electronic marketing and purchase decisions. Regarding communication techniques, prior research supports the findings of

(Kanwal *et al.*, 2022), who discovered no connection between gender and the online buying process. Thus, at a confidence level of 0.05, there are no statistically significant differences between social media and responsible behavior among the students in the research sample that may be linked to the gender variable.

H4:

- **H0:** At a confidence level of 0.05, there are no statistically significant variations in the study variables among the students in the research sample that can be ascribed to the age variable.
- **H1:** At a confidence level of 0.05, there is a statistically significant impact among the study variables among the research sample students attributable to the age variable.

The sample responses regarding communication methods according to statistical significance. However, there are statistically significant differences concerning electronic marketing and purchase decisions, which is highly logical considering the impact of maturity on electronic marketing and behavior, as indicated by the study (Kanwal *et al.*, 2022). In addition, the study found a significant difference between age and online trading characteristics.

CONCLUSION

How do social media channels affect our purchasing habits? Researchers set out to explore that in an empirical study examining e-marketing targeting the University of Algiers students. By analyzing how social media influences buying behavior and identifying successful business tactics that shape it, they hoped to offer valuable insights into consumer trends and preferences among this population group. The study's data was gathered through a quantitative survey of students, and the findings promise to offer businesses important takeaways as they navigate this market.

We may draw the following conclusions from the research's findings:

- The research factors are seen favorably by the study sample respondents. Demonstrate, social media usage and its degree of practice have become perceptible realities in a number of processes and operations carried out by persons functioning as high-impact media sources.
- Analytical reading reveals that using social media platforms affects purchase decisions, and an increased focus on social media content enhances electronic marketing; this was also highlighted in the study. the study discovered that E-commerce platforms are influenced by electronic and social media marketing in shaping shopping decisions. The study used a sample size of 125 and applied path analysis as an analytical technique. The results showed that social media marketing influences consumer decisions by 45.35%, affecting consumer decisions in the purchasing process by 35.73%. Additionally, social media marketing influences purchase decisions by 81.08%.
- The findings showed no statistically significant variations linked to gender in terms of utilizing social media or making purchases through electronic marketing, suggesting that gender has no impact on the answers provided by male and female students.
- The presence of disparities in the sample answers attributable to the age variable is a noteworthy finding, and this can be connected to the idea that their age influences students'



cognitive maturity—the degree to which they are aware of social media platforms while making judgments about purchases.

- The research shed light on a contemporary phenomenon: using social media platforms to make purchase decisions through electronic marketing; this can positively impact improving media messages across various social media platforms.

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