Article

Impact social-media use on purchasing decision-making: An applied study on students of the college of business at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud University (IMSIU)

Abdul Rahman Mohammed Idris Mohammed

Business Administration Department, Imam Mohammad Ibn Saudi Islamic University (IMSIU), Riyadh 13242, Saudi Arabia;
ammohmmed@imamu.edu.sa

Abstract: This study investigated the impact of social media on purchasing decision-making using data from a questionnaire survey of 257 randomly sampled students from the College of Business at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University. The study items were selected from the study community through a random sample, where several (257) students were surveyed. To achieve its objectives, the study follows the descriptive analytical approach in addressing its topic. The questionnaire was adopted as a tool for collecting data. The questionnaire collected data on the independent variable social media—and the dimensions of the dependent variables representing the stages of purchasing decision-making: Feeling the need for the advertised goods, collecting information about alternatives, evaluating available options, buying decisions, and post-purchase evaluation of the purchase decision. Then, the data were analyzed based on regression analysis using SPSS and AMOS. The important findings are summarized below: Social media use is directly related to feeling the need for and searching for information on advertised goods. Social communication and the evaluation of alternatives to advertised goods, in addition to the existence of a moral effect and a direct correlation between social media use and making the purchasing decision for advertised goods. Providing honest, sufficient, and accurate information via social media to the buyer can help them make the purchasing decision.

Keywords: social media; purchasing decisions; students; college of business

1. Introduction

Various technological developments, especially regarding communications and information exchange, have facilitated the emergence of social networking in recent decades. It has emerged as one of the most advanced and widely popular means of communication between individuals and organizations on the Internet. Moreover, the use of social networking is not only happening in terms of exchanging various types of information but also in terms of electronic marketing activities for their products and services targeted at individuals and organizations. Moreover, according to many studies, a large percentage of people—estimated at 25% of the world's population–spend most of their time on social networking platforms.

This indicates the importance of social networking platforms and their popularity in recent years (Saundens and Eaton, 2018). For instance, Facebook is the largest social networking platform in the world and has 2.4 billion users (Fattal, 2012). Meanwhile, other communication platforms like YouTube and WhatsApp have more than a billion users each. For instance, when 100,000 tweets are sent, 684,478 pieces of content are shared on Facebook, 2 million searches are conducted

on Google, 48 h of video are transferred to YouTube, 3600 photos are shared on Instagram, and 571 websites are created, as at least 4 billion out of the world's estimated population of 7.7 billion people are on the Internet (Ola and Reem 2018). Thus, a third of the world's population uses social media platforms. Globally, people use social media networks for more than 10 billion hours per day, which is equivalent to approximately 1.2 million years of life (Simon, 2021).

With this incredible growth in social media use, social media is no longer just a platform for entertainment or social communication, but its use has become a regular daily activity for individuals in our contemporary world. This has prompted companies to rely on it to increase customers' awareness of these companies' brands (Bilgin, 2020). Hence, social media has become one of the most important contemporary marketing media (Oladip et al., 2020) used for building brand awareness. It has played an effective role in interpreting purchasing intentions and purchasing decision-making mechanisms (Grubor et al., 2017) and helped in sharing purchasing experiences with others (Uzodinma, 2021).

The spread of social media networks has also contributed to the development of ways to communicate with consumers and influence their purchasing decisions. Social networking sites have come to play a role in recognizing the need and searching for product information, evaluating available alternatives, and making and evaluating purchasing decisions. Additionally, they can share information, ideas, personal messages, and life experiences (Jacob et al., 2021). Hence, companies have changed their marketing strategies and developed strategies focused on social media because it helps increase customer engagement, develop a favorable attitude towards the brand, and create brand equity, thus influencing consumer purchasing decisions (Huang and Benyoucef, 2015). The combination of social media and marketing activities has facilitated brands in reaching many audiences, improved their level of awareness, and enhanced the brand's reputation (Al-Haddad et al., 2022).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has some of the highest Internet use in the world, accompanied by the emergence of e-commerce. This substantial development in Internet use has prompted companies and institutions to develop marketing methods through social media, to leverage the associated marketing opportunities.

This study examines the impact of social media on the consumer's purchasing decision and identifies the factors that make social media influential in this decision.

This study focuses on the question of the extent to which social media sites affect the consumer's purchasing decision. This main question includes the following sub-questions:

- Is there a relationship between social media and the consumer's sense of need for the goods advertised to them?
- Is there a relationship between social media and the search for information for the goods advertised to the consumer?
- Is there a relationship between social media and the evaluation of alternatives to the goods advertised to the consumer?
- Is there a relationship between social media and the purchase decision for the goods advertised to the consumer?

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- Understanding and evaluating the impact of marketing via social media on the purchasing decisions of college business students.
- Identifying tools that can be used to facilitate individual participation via social media networks.
- Proposing solutions that remove obstacles to leveraging social media as an important means of marketing.
- Finally, measuring business college students' awareness regarding which factors related to social media sites influence their purchasing decisions.

2. Related literature

Next, we first review some related studies. The first related study is that by Al-Jiyusi (2023), which examined the role of social media in promoting tourist sites in Jordan. The researcher used a descriptive and analytical approach using a questionnaire survey of 301 tourists, who were selected randomly from among Gulf tourists in Jordan. The author found that the role of social media in promoting tourist sites averages 3.78%. Additionally, no statistically significant differences were observed in tourists' estimates of the role of social media. The author suggested that continuously updating data and electronic information is necessary to promote tourist sites in Northern Jordan.

Next, Draz (2023) explored the role of social media in promoting tourism in Saudi Arabia. The author sampled 500 tourists, who returned 480 questionnaires. The results revealed that 25.2 of the respondents preferred recreational tourism, 23.1 preferred religious tourism, 15.8 preferred cultural tourism, 5.6 preferred archaeological tourism, 3.61 preferred sports tourism, and finally, 26.5 preferred all the previously mentioned types. The author recommended creating YouTube channels in different languages to promote tourist destinations in the Kingdom. Next, Al-Khalidi (2021) examined the level of society, in general, and students at the College of Management and Economics, in particular, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The author used the questionnaire method, with the independent variable being social media. Meanwhile, the dependent variable included the stages of the purchasing decision: Feeling the need, collecting information about available alternatives, evaluating alternatives, the actual purchase decision, and finally post-purchase evaluation. The research relied on the SPSS statistical program for statistical analysis and found that social media contributed to providing a huge amount of information, and the speed of communication between individuals and groups despite the distances, in addition to shortening the time.

Next, Adel (2021) explored the impact of using social media on innovative performance. The research relied on a descriptive-analytical approach with a sample of 92 individuals, with data collected from these individuals using a questionnaire. The results showed a statistically significant impact of social media use on innovative performance and creative thinking. The author recommended applying their study model to other sectors to verify the credibility of the results obtained in this study. Next, Yahya and Onis investigated the role of social networking sites in influencing the consumer's purchasing decision via the Internet, and the impact of social networking sites on each stage of the purchasing decision. An electronic

questionnaire was used to collect data from 101 Algerian consumers who interact continuously with the sites. The authors found a statistically significant impact of using social networking sites on most stages of the consumer's purchasing decision at varying rates. Then, Zaher and Arous (2020) focused on real estate users in the city of Lattakia. The authors found that advertising via social media sites positively affects the consumer's purchasing decision. The advertisement characteristics emerged as the most influential dimension of advertising, followed by the advertisement design and content of the advertising message.

Finally, Al-Sarawi (2019) examined the impact of social media on the purchasing decision for residential real estate using a simple random sample of 300 real estate buyers in the city of Zarqa. The author found an impact of social media on the purchasing decision and recommended designing specialized websites for the sale and purchase of residential real estate.

The current study is similar to these studies in its focus on social media and its impact on purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, it differs from previous studies given its focus on the male section of the College of Business at the Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The choice of this study population was driven by the fact that the student segment uses social media the most in the purchasing process and is the most knowledgeable and familiar with website applications.

3. Literature review

3.1. Theoretical framework

Social networking sites

Before discussing the concept of networking sites, we define e-marketing:

E-marketing is a novel Internet-based method that offers different types of deals—first, providing Internet services themselves and explaining how to access this network for businesspersons and customers; second, the electronic delivery of services, i.e. delivering products to the consumer in the form of digital information; and third, using the Internet as a channel for distributing services where goods are purchased over the network (Sara, 2008).

3.2. Definition of e-marketing

Online shopping makes purchasing activities different from the traditional process, affecting all stages of a customer's purchasing process. In particular, the Internet changes customer behavior by providing convenience in searching for information, evaluating different options, and purchasing. This environment can profoundly affect how customers build their decision-making processes to adapt appropriately to the new decision-making environment (Sarah, 2013).

Here, e-marketing refers to the use of electronic media by marketers to promote products or services in the market to attract customers and allow them to interact with a brand through digital media (Mkwizu, 2020). It is also known as a form of communication and interaction between organizations and their customers through digital channels and technologies (Others, 2017).

3.3. The concept of social networking sites

Social media, a set of Internet-based applications, is characterized by its interactive nature, which enables the creation and exchange of user-generated content. This interactivity fosters a sense of connection and engagement among users (Tang, 1442). Social media has also been defined as a set of Internet-based media applications that were created from the ideology of the web (Krypton et al., 2018). It is considered a new-generation marketing tool that encourages increased interest and engagement by consumers using social networks

Meanwhile, social media is defined as an electronic system that allows Internet users to create their pages and link them through an electronic social system with other members who have the same interests and hobbies to educate and inform others about information, products, and various issues (Chauhan et al., 2013). Social media has transformed traditional one-way communication into multi-way communication through a set of websites that allow access to companies' news and information customized for display in virtual reality (Berthon et al., 2018).

Social networking services represent online services that reflect social relations between individuals, organizations, and entities with common interests who seek to achieve specific benefits through communication via their sites and e-mail and achieve immediate interaction between the parties to communication. Social networks such as Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Twitter, the most widely used networks worldwide, have expanded and become widespread. Other social networks also exist, such as the following (Donah et al., 2007):
- LinkedIn and space in North America.
- Nexopia in Spain.
- Bebo in Canada.
- Iwiw in Germany.
- Skyrock and Badoo in Europe; and
- Hi5 and Orkut in South America.

3.4. Uses of social networking

These networks rely on new technologies to link social networking with businesses by displaying products and information on websites where companies work to build an image of products through the information, publish about them, and display images of these products. In general, social networking sites have five uses in businesses and the social environment (Nimetz et al., 2009):
- Creating awareness of the brand and product.
- Managing the reputation of the organization and its products.
- Creating loyalty to the brand, product, or organization.
- Identifying new products and new competitors.
- Identifying available opportunities

Companies carry out many marketing activities through the Internet and social networking sites by visiting their websites and encouraging visitors to their websites and customers to engage in dialogue and discussions and elicit responses on how to improve or change the products or services they provide. Indeed, the reliance of industrial and commercial companies on social networking sites has enabled them to

publish information about their products and has made them widely known to individuals outside the borders of the country in which they operate. Companies have also been able to enter global markets at a very low cost. Moreover, social networks have provided individuals with different means of electronic communication, which has made it easier for organizations to contact them and send them information, for individuals to explore the websites of organizations or companies, learn about them and their products, and buy what they want. Simultaneously, organizations have been able to build databases of information about individuals who enter their websites through the different types of information that users input about themselves on the websites, such as age, gender, and identity.

3.5. Purchasing decision

3.5.1. The concept of a purchasing decision

Marketers seek to display goods and provide services in places that provide a competitive and material environment suitable for consumers to make purchasing decisions. This decision goes through many stages and is affected by various factors. The most important ones are decisions related to allocating the resources available to themselves between several aspects of spending such that it guarantees the consumer the greatest satisfaction of their needs and achievement of marginal benefits. Next, there are decisions related to purchasing favorite products and turning away from similar goods from other brands, and those related to purchasing from specific stores rather than from others that contain the same goods and services.

Every type of decision made by a consumer proceeds through several stages and is affected by many factors. Therefore, the decision is the result of a mental simulation to reach a fair price, balanced consumer spending, and the full satisfaction of needs (Mansour, 2006).

3.5.2. Main factors affecting purchasing decisions

Consumer purchasing decisions are affected by diverse factors, which can be broadly classified as personal, social, and psychological factors, each of which affects the decision-making process to varying degrees (Pather et al., 2014).

3.5.3. Personal factors

Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, income, occupation, and education level can greatly affect consumer purchasing behavior. Consumer lifestyle and hobbies can also affect purchasing decisions.

3.5.4. Social factors

Consumers who focus on a healthy lifestyle may be more inclined to purchase organic foods and fitness products. Consumers' personality traits (e.g., adventurousness and conservatism) and self-concept (e.g., self-image and identity) can also significantly influence their purchasing choices. Among social factors, family, and the opinions and needs of family members are important social factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions. The roles and structure of the family, such as the presence or absence of children, and the occupations of family members are also important influences. Furthermore, the influence of reference groups, such as friends, colleagues, and social circles, on consumers should not be overlooked.

Consumers tend to be influenced by people they trust and respect, especially when purchasing expensive or high-risk products. The social roles and social status of consumers roles in society (e.g., occupation and social status) can also influence their purchasing behavior. For example, consumers with higher incomes may be more likely to purchase luxury brands to demonstrate their social status.

3.5.5. Psychological factors

Motivation is an intrinsic force that drives consumers to act. Various motives, such as physiological, safety, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs, influence consumer purchasing decisions.

Perception, including product attributes, brand image, and advertising, influence consumers' purchasing decisions. Different perceptual experiences may cause consumers to perceive the same product differently.

The next factor is learning. Consumers learn through experience and information acquisition, a process that influences their future purchasing decisions. Positive experiences and word-of-mouth promotions enhance consumers' brand loyalty, whereas negative experiences may lead them to switch to a competing brand.

Finally, consumers' beliefs and attitudes towards products and brands also significantly influence their purchasing decisions. Beliefs are consumers' perceptions of the characteristics of a product or brand, whereas attitudes are consumers' overall evaluation of a product or brand.

3.6. Stages of the buying process

The purchasing decision-making process goes through five stages (Hoyer et al., 2012) and consumers continue to collect information throughout this process (King et al., 2014). The stages are described below.

3.6.1. Problem recognition stage

Problem recognition happens when the customer feels the need to buy a particular product or service, as they feel the difference between their current mental state and the state they desire (Kotler et al., 2005). Therefore, at this stage, marketing efforts seek to identify the consumer's unsatisfied needs that arouse all desires to move instincts and emotions and create the desire to acquire a particular product. At this stage, the consumer realizes, through their cognitive system, that they have a need or want that must be satisfied. Here, marketers must undertake marketing efforts to predict and know these needs. Then, considering this, the appropriate marketing mix is developed.

3.6.2. Information search

Notably, whenever a need arises to obtain a certain product, the customer will search for more information about the product that will meet this need. The information search stage can be divided into two levels. The first level is increased attention, which simply means that customers become more prepared to receive information about a certain product category. The second level is the search for an activity about the information. The scope of an active search depends on several factors such as the strength of motivation, amount of information initially available, ease of obtaining more information, and customer satisfaction with this search. The

task of marketers is to identify the main sources of information that customers will use to make decisions and then analyze their relative importance. Customer information sources can be divided into four groups (Kolter et al., 1997).

3.6.3. Information evaluation stage

The consumer evaluates this information and sets the necessary criteria considering which purchases will be sorted. Individuals' levels of awareness play an important role in the evaluation process. Awareness is the process by which individuals select, organize, and interpret the input of this information, creating a comprehensive picture of the available alternatives. Considering this, the consumer follows the below steps (Yousef, 2012):

• Arrange the collected information
• Set the selection criteria
• Identify the different alternatives
• Compare the alternatives

3.6.4. Purchase decision

After the customer evaluates the set of products available for selection, they may intend to purchase the product that they like. However, some factors can stand between the intention to purchase and purchase decision. The first factor is the position of others. The intention to purchase can also be affected by unexpected factors specific to the customer himself. These factors may include a change in the customer's financial circumstances, such as the product becoming surplus to their needs, or other circumstances that make another purchase more important (Helen et al., 2008).

3.6.5. Post-purchase evaluation

After the customer purchases the product, they feel satisfied or dissatisfied when using it. This satisfaction depends on the extent of similarity between their expectations of the product and its actual performance level. These feelings affect whether the customer will buy the product again, and talk positively or negatively about the product with others. The purchasing process begins with the realization of the need for the product. Therefore, the post-purchase evaluation depends on matching what the product offers with what is expected in terms of its positives and negatives. The review of the purchase decision is linked to the credibility of the information provided by producers to the consumer (Auh et al., 2005).

3.7. The impact of social media on the purchasing decision-making process

Technological developments have led to the launch of new social media platforms that have attracted numerous users. The purchasing process through social media sites has multiple and multi-step paths and channels that reflect the motives for a specific purchasing process. Therefore, social media has now become a part of the stages of awareness, thinking, and purchasing within the framework of the customer's quest to obtain the product and service. Consumers use social media because of its great benefits and as it easily brings consumers closer to a huge source

of information on the Internet, which helps them make purchasing decisions (Rafiq et al., 2018).

Many studies have shown that people agree that their purchasing power will increase if they receive positive feedback about products, in addition to the source of information. Through social media, consumers learn more about brands. Moreover, they can share their favorite products and brand experiences using social media. Social media allows consumers to complete the purchasing process because of its convenience and time-saving characteristics, forming a bridge between consumers. Brands play the role of tools that help increase customer awareness of the brand (Oludare et al., 2017). Many companies specialize in marketing through social media sites to advertise and promote products and services. Consumers make their purchases through these sites. Moreover, these companies manage their advertising campaigns electronically due to the diversity of user segments of these sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram. Consequently, reaching a specific segment of people and targeting them with an advertisement that matches their interests is easy (Ben Yahya and Onis, 2020)

3.8. Conceptual model

In **Figure 1**, The independent variable is social media, and the dependent variable is making a purchase decision, which is (feeling the need, gathering information about alternatives, evaluating available alternatives, purchasing decision, post-purchase evaluation).

To answer the aforementioned research question, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H1: Social media use has no statistically significant effect (at the significance level of 0.05) on feeling the need for the advertised goods.
- H2: Social media use has no statistically significant effect (at the significance level of 0.05) on searching for information for the advertised goods.
- H3: Social media use has no statistically significant effect (at the significant level of 0.05) on evaluating alternatives to the advertised goods.
- H4: Social media use has no statistically significant effect (at the significance level of 0.05) on making the purchasing decision for the advertised goods.
- H5: Social media use has no statistically significant effect (at the significance level of 0.05) on evaluating the purchasing decision for the advertised goods.

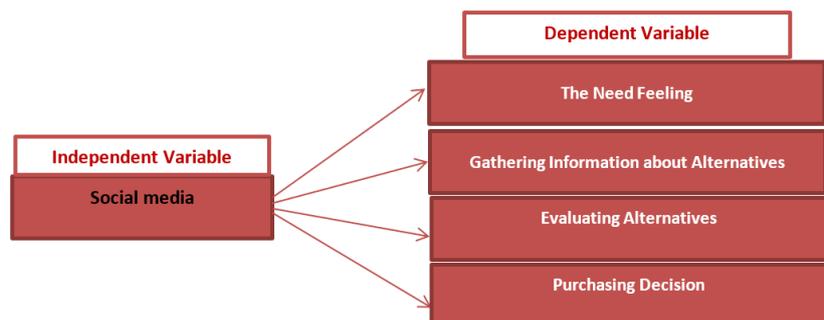The model is developed for research given below:

Figure 1. Model of the study.

4. Methodology

This research was conducted using the quantitative method, which allows for objective measurement and analysis of the relationships of the main study variables and is aligned with a positive cognitive model to address its research inquiries. The study adopts a distinct objective position, focusing on formulating and testing hypotheses using questionnaires. The study focused on the students at the College of Business, with a male section only, a focus that is not biased towards males. However, due to the nature of study at the university, there is a separate section for male students from the female students' section. Based on the study problem and its objectives, the targeted study community consists of students at the College of Business at Imam Muhammad bin Saud University. The research items were selected from the study community through a random sample, a process that allowed for the opportunity to choose each item randomly from the study community based on the homogeneity of the characteristics of the study community. A few (257 students) were surveyed.

This study rigorously investigates the effect of the independent variable, social media, on the purchase decision as a dependent variable. The study's methodology is comprehensive, examining the relationship between these variables. The first part of the questionnaire meticulously identifies the demographic information of business school students, which includes gender, age, social networking sites used, and experience in using social networking sites. In contrast, the second part delves into measuring the independent variable, social media, in addition to the elements related to the dependent variable, the purchase decision, which is the feeling of need, gathering information about alternatives, evaluating information, making a purchase decision, and evaluating the purchase decision.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the respondents' answers, providing a robust and systematic approach to data analysis.

5. Results and discussion

This section includes the field study procedures and the descriptive statistical results.

5.1. Study Tool

This study collected primary data from a questionnaire survey. This was prepared and developed based on the use of the standards set by specialists in studies related to the subject of study based on the following steps:
- Formulating questions according to the scientific foundations specified by social research methods.
- Considering the consistency of the questions with the title, topics, and objectives of the research.
- Formulating questions according to the cultural and scientific level of the respondents.
- Presenting the questionnaire to a group of arbitrators.

Accordingly, the questionnaire was designed in its final form after modifications and comments by specialized arbitrators and consisted of two sections.

The first section included questions on participant demographics, whereas the second section included basic study phrases and comprised two axes. The first axis included phrases that measured the independent variable: Social media use. Meanwhile, the second axis measured the dimensions of the dependent variable (stages of making a purchase decision): 1) feeling the need for the advertised good; 2) collecting information about alternatives; 3) evaluating alternatives; 4 making a purchase decision; and 5) evaluating the purchase decision. The responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale.

5.2. Study sample

The sample population was students belonging to the male section of the College of Business at the Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University. From them, 257 students were randomly sampled and successfully surveyed. **Table 1** reports the participant characteristics.

Table 1. Participant characteristics.

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	257	100
	Female	0	0
	Total	257	100
Age	Less than 20	50	19.5
	21 to 23	158	61.5
	More than 23	49	19.1
Social networking sites used	Facebook	0	0
	Instagram	39	15.2
	WhatsApp	62	24.1
	X	61	23.7
	Snapchat	95	37
Experience in using social networking sit	High	150	58.4
	Intermediate	102	39.7
	Low	05	1.9

All participants were students, and the largest percentage (61.5%) were between the ages of 21–23 years. Notably, 37% use Snapchat, in addition to the fact that most of them have high experience in using social networking sites (58.4%).

Choosing males as a research subject does not mean that there is a bias towards males. However, the college is divided into two parts, one for male students and one for female students. The study was conducted on the male students' part.

5.3. Testing the validity and reliability of the study tool

A fundamental characteristic that any data collection tool must possess is reliability, which indicates the degree to which the scale is free of errors, especially random errors. Measuring the scale's degree of stability and reliability is necessary to obtain accurate results. To ensure the study tool's validity, validity and reliability tests were conducted.

5.4. Validity of the study tool

The validity of the measurement tool refers to its ability to measure what it is designed for. According to the theory of correct measurement, complete validity means that the tool is free of random or regular measurement errors. This study measured the validity of the tool for each of the following.

Testing the validity of the scale content

The validity of the scale content represents its ability to confront the obstacles to measuring the statements of the study axes. To verify the validity of the scale, the study relied on apparent validity. The draft of the measurement tool was presented to specialists in the field of marketing and statistics to learn their opinions about measuring the relationship between the study variables before distributing it to the selected sample to verify the stability of the measurement. The arbitrators were asked to express their opinions on the study tool and validity of the phrases, their comprehensiveness, the diversity of their content, and the evaluation of the level of linguistic formulation, or any comments they deemed appropriate for modification, change, or deletion. After the questionnaire was retrieved from all experts, their responses were analyzed, their comments were considered, and the required modifications were made.

5.5. Internal consistency validity

Structural validity is a measure of the validity of the tool that measures the extent to which the goals that the tool wants to achieve are achieved and shows the extent to which each dimension of the study is related to the total score of the tool paragraphs. Specifically, stability is tested by estimating the correlation coefficients for all the study axes with the total sum. **Table 2** reports the correlation coefficients of the study axes with the total score.

Table 2. Correlation coefficient of the study axes with the total score.

	Correlation coefficient	Morale level
Social media	0.76	0.000
Feeling the need	0.69	0.021
Gathering information about alternatives	0.83	0.000
Making the purchasing decision	0.70	0.005
Evaluating the purchasing decision	0.79	0.001

All study axes have a positive and statistically significant correlation (0.05) with the total sum of the axes to which they belong. Thus, all tool dimensions were considered to measure what they were designed to measure.

5.5.1. Questionnaire stability

Stability means that the scale gives the same results with a probability equal to the coefficient value if it is reapplied to the same sample. Therefore, a stable scale means that the same results or consistent results are obtained every time the measurement is re-applied. The higher the degree of stability of the tool, the greater confidence in it. There are several ways to verify the stability of the scale, we used

Cronbach's alpha. **Table 3** indicates that Cronbac's alpha values for all study variables were greater than 60%, as the value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all statements reached 0.81. These values indicate a high degree of internal stability, which enables us to rely on these answers to achieve the study objectives and analyze the results.

Table 3. Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

	Number of phrases	**Cronbach's alpha**
Social media	7	0.83
Feeling the need	5	0.79
Gathering information about alternatives	5	0.80
Making a purchasing decision	5	0.87
Evaluating the purchasing decision	5	5
Total	27	0.81

5.5.2. Statistical analysis methods

This study used SPSS and AMOS with the following statistical tools.

5.5.3. Conducting a reliability test for the questionnaire statements

We used both an apparent validity test and validity and reliability tests.

5.5.4. Descriptive statistical methods

This describes the characteristics of the study sample items through their arithmetic meaning and standard deviation.

5.5.5. Structural equation modeling

The structural equation modeling (SEM) methodology aims to determine the extent of suitability and conformity of the theoretical models of the relationships between variables and elements to test research hypotheses using path analysis based on a set of indicators called goodness of fit indicators. The most important of these indicators that are used here are:

- Chi-square ratio for degrees of freedom (must be less than 5).
- Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) (must be greater than 0.90).
- Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (must be greater than 0.90).
- Root Mean Square Error of Approach (RMSEA) (must be less than 0.05).

5.6. Descriptive statistics

5.6.1. Presentation and analysis of data for the axis: Social media

Table 4 shows that the arithmetic mean of all statements exceeds the hypothetical means on the estimated five-point Likert scale (3), indicating a very high response level. Low dispersion in the responses is observed from the values of the standard deviation, which reflects convergence in the views of the study sample members on all statements. This result indicates that the participants agreed that they substantially used social media. The statement "I learn about the latest products through the use of social media" came first in terms of relative importance, while the statement "I trust the information I get through social media" came last.

Table 4. Social media.

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Rank
I check out new product features through social media.	4.33	0.75	3
I rely on social media to make my purchasing choices for many products.	4.13	0.90	5
Social media makes it easier to choose the products I want to buy	4.56	0.86	2
Find out about the latest products using social media.	4.60	0.64	1
I trust the information I get through social media.	3.12	1.00	7
I request the necessary assistance when needed through the means of communication regarding the products I wish to obtain.	3.98	0.94	6
Social media provides data on past consumer trends and opinions about a product	4.27	0.77	4
Total	4.14	0.50	

5.6.2. Stages of making a purchase decision

The following presents a descriptive statistical analysis of the statements that measure the axis of the stages of making a purchase decision in the society under study.

Table 5 shows that the arithmetic mean of all statements exceeds the hypothetical mean of the study according to the estimated five-point Likert scale, indicating a high response level. The table also shows low dispersion in the responses of the study sample to all statements through the values of the standard deviation, which reflects convergence in the views of the study sample members on all statements. This result indicates that the sample members agreed on the feeling of need for the advertised goods. The statement "I can be interested in watching products advertised through social media" came first in terms of relative importance, while "Social media networks provide me with correct and non-misleading information about products" came last.

Table 5. The feeling of the need.

	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	Rank
I feel the need to buy some products advertised on social media	3.36	1.15	4
Social media provides me with accurate and non-misleading information about products	3.1	1.11	5
I can be interested in products advertised on social media	3.88	0.85	1
New products advertised on social media contribute to new needs	3.72	0.87	2
Products advertised on social media are in line with the constant change in my desires	3.52	1.06	3
Total	3.50	1.03	

5.6.3. Collecting information about alternatives

Table 6 shows that the arithmetic mean of all statements exceeds the hypothetical means of the study, indicating a high response level. The table also shows low dispersion in the responses of the study sample to all statements through the values of the standard deviation, which reflects convergence in the views of the study sample members on all statements. This result indicates that the sample members agreed to collect information on the alternatives. The statement "social media diagnoses the methods and areas of product use" came in first place in terms of relative importance, while "social media provides all data and information related to the products I am searching for" came in last.

Table 6. Collecting information about alternatives.

	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranks
Social media identifies information about alternative products	3.93	0.83	2
Social media provides all the data and information related to the products I am looking for	3.88	1.00	5
Social media helps in providing information and data about the real prices of the products	3.92	1.00	3
Social media provides information about the features and benefits of the products I am looking for	3.91	0.92	4
Social media diagnoses the ways and areas of use of the products	3.94	0.195	1
Total	3.91	0.195	

5.6.4. Evaluation of alternatives

Table 7 shows that the arithmetic mean of all statements was greater than the hypothetical mean, indicating a high response level. The table also shows low dispersion in the responses of the study sample to all statements through the values of the standard deviation, which reflects convergence in the views of the study sample members on all statements. This result indicates that the participants agreed to evaluate the alternatives. The statement "Social media has a great contribution to providing sufficient information to identify the most prominent alternatives available for products" came first in terms of relative importance, while "I feel that the price of alternative products advertised through social media is consistent with my purchasing power".

Table 7. Evaluation of alternatives.

	Arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	Ranks
Information available on social media helps the user identify the best alternatives to buy.	3.99	0.84	2
Social media provides sufficient information to identify the most prominent alternatives available for products.	3.98	0.78	3
Social media has a great contribution in providing sufficient information to identify the most prominent alternatives available for products.	4.00	0.91	1
I feel that the price of alternative products advertised on social media is in line with my purchasing power.	3.66	1.05	4
Total	3.91	0.166	

Table 8 shows that the arithmetic mean of all statements exceeded the hypothetical means, indicating a high response level. The table also shows low dispersion in the responses of the study sample to all statements through the values of the standard deviation, which reflects convergence in the views of the study sample members on all statements. This result indicates the sample members' agreement about making the purchasing decisions. The statement "The brand plays a major role for the user when purchasing products advertised through social media" came first in terms of relative importance, while "I tend to pay the cash value related to the product without hesitation" came in last.

Table 8. Purchasing decision-making.

	Athematic Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranks
I prefer to use social media to meet my needs.	3.94	1.02	3
Buying products advertised on social media helps satisfy my needs.	3.56	1.07	4
Brand plays a big role for the user when buying products advertised on social media.	4.18	0.97	1
Companies on social media sites are committed to the prices offered and the delivery time as advertised.	3.72	0.95	2
I will pay the cash value of the product without hesitation.	3.23	1.26	5
Total	3.67	0.345	

Table 9 shows that the arithmetic mean of all statements also exceeds the hypothetical means of the study, indicating a high response level. The table also shows low dispersion in the responses through the values of the standard deviation, which reflects convergence in the views of the study sample members on all statements. This result indicates the sample members' agreement about evaluating their purchasing decisions. The statement "Social media sites provide information about the most prominent alternatives available for products" came in first place in terms of relative importance, while "The characteristics of the products advertised through social media match the actual reality of the product after trying it" came in last.

Table 9. Evaluation of the purchasing decision.

	Athematic Mean	Standard Deviation	Ranks
The characteristics of the products advertised on social media match the actual reality of the product after trying it.	3.63	0.94	5
These companies have a long history of producing products across multiple industries.	3.76	0.97	4
Social media sites provide information about the most prominent alternatives available for products.	3.91	0.92	1
Social media gives me ample opportunity to express my feedback on products.	3.89	0.99	2
I express my satisfaction with the product through social media.	3.80	1.10	3
Total	0.110	3.79	

5.7. Discussion of study Hypothesis

5.7.1. Social media use and the feeling of the need for the advertised goods

Table 10 lists the regression analysis results on the relationship between social media use and feeling of need for the advertised goods.

A direct correlation exists between the use of social media and feeling the need for the advertised goods, as indicated by the value of the correlation coefficient (R) reaching (0.50) and that of the regression coefficient (B) reaching 0.679. Therefore, a change of 1% in the use of social media creates a change of 0.8% in feeling the need for advertised goods. The coefficient of determination (R2) indicates that using social media affects feeling the need for advertised goods by 24%, while the other variables are affected by 76%. The *t*-test indicates a significant relationship between using social media and feeling the need for advertised goods, as the value of t for the

regression coefficient reached 8.827 at a significant level of significance (0.003), less than the significance level (0.05). The estimation results suggest that all the matching indicators were represented in the ideal range for each indicator, as the value of the chi-square ratio for the degrees of freedom reached 3.23, which is a value less than 5, and the value of the GFI reached 0.90 and that of the CFI reached 0.93—all of which are greater than 0.90, and the value of the RMSEA index (0.064) is less than the standard range (0.08), indicating a good model fit the data under test. Based on the above analysis results, the first hypothesis (No significant effect occurs at the significance level of 0.05 for using social media on feeling the need for advertised goods) is rejected.

Table 10. The relationship between social media use and feeling of the need for the advertised goods.

Analysis indicators	Regression coefficient (*B*)	(*T*) test	Morale level
The relationship between social media use and the feeling of need for advertised goods.	0.679	8.827	0.001
Correlation coefficient (*R*)	0.50		
Coefficient of determination (*R*2)	0.24		
Chi-square ratio of degrees of freedom	3.23		
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.90		
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.93		
Root mean square error of approximation index (RMSEA)	0.067		

5.7.2. No significant effect at the significance level of 0.05 for using social media in searching for information about advertised goods

To prove the validity of the hypothesis, a regression analysis model was used to determine the causal relationship between the independent variable represented by (using social media) and the dependent variable represented by (searching for information on advertised goods). Using estimation methods through the statistical analysis program (AMOS), the following results were reached (**Table 11**).

Table 11. Results for the relationship between social media use and searching for information on advertised goods.

Analysis indicators	Regression coefficient (*B*)	Test (*T*)	Morale level
The relationship between social media use and information search for advertised goods.	0.64	8.122	0.003
Correlation coefficient (*R*)	0.45		
Coefficient of determination (*R*2)	0.21		
Chi-square ratio of degrees of freedom	0.038		
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.92		
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.90		
Root square error index	0.072		

Table 11 indicates a direct correlation between using social media and the search for information on the goods advertised—evident from the value of the correlation coefficient (R) reaching 0.45 and that of the regression coefficient (B) reaching 0.64, which indicates that using social media directly impacts the search for information for advertised goods. Therefore, a change of 1% in using social media causes a change of 0.6% in the search for information for advertised goods. The

coefficient of determination (R2) indicates that the variable is affected by 21%, while the other variables are affected by 79%. The *t*-test indicates a significant relationship between using social media and the search for information for advertised goods, as the value of t for the regression coefficient reached 8.122 at a significant level of significance (0.003)—less than the significance level (0.05). The estimation results suggest that all the matching indicators were represented in the ideal range for each indicator, as the value of the chi-square ratio for degrees of freedom reached 0.038—value less than (5)—and that of the GFI reached 0.92 and that of the CFI reached 0.90—all of which are greater than (0.90); the value of the RMSEA index (0.072) is less than the standard range (0.08), indicating a good model fit with the data under test. Based on the above analysis results, the second hypothesis (No significant effect occurs at the significance level of 0.05 for the effect of using social media on searching for information for advertised goods) is rejected.

5.7.3. Significant effect at the significance level of 0.05 for using social media on evaluating alternatives to advertised goods

To prove the hypothesis' validity, a regression analysis model was used to determine the causal relationship between the independent variable (the use of social media) and dependent variable (the evaluation of alternatives to advertised goods). **Table 12** presents the results.

Table 12. Results of estimating the relationship between using social media and evaluating alternatives to advertised goods.

Analysis Indicators	Regression coefficient (*B*)	Test (*T*)	Morale level
The relationship between social media use on the evaluation of alternatives to advertised goods	0.687	9.499	0.000
Correlation coefficient (*R*)	052		
Coefficient of determination (*R*2)	26		
Chi-square ratio of degrees of freedom	2.975		
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.91		
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.94		
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.065		

Table 12 indicates a direct relationship between using social media and evaluating alternatives to the goods advertised—evidenced by the value of the correlation coefficient (*R*) reaching 0.52 and the regression coefficient (*B*) reaching 0.687, indicating that using social media directly impacts the evaluation of alternatives to advertised goods. Therefore, a change of 1% in using social media causes a change of 0.7% in the evaluation of alternatives to advertised goods. The coefficient of determination (R2) indicates that the variable is affected by 26%, while the other variables are affected by 74%. The test-test indicates a significant relationship between using social media and evaluating alternatives to advertised goods, as the value of t for the regression coefficient reached (9.499) at a significant level of significance (0.000)—less than the significance level (0.05). The estimation results suggest that all the matching indicators were represented in the ideal range for each indicator, as the value of the chi-square ratio for degrees of freedom reached

2.975—a value less than 5; the value of GFI reached (0.91), and the CFI reached 0.94—all of which are greater than 0.90. The RMSEA (0.065) is less than the standard range (0.08), indicating that the model exhibits a good fit to the data under test. Based on the above analysis results, the third hypothesis (No statistically significant effect occurs at the significance level of 0.05 for using social media on evaluating alternatives to advertised goods) is rejected.

5.7.4. No statistically significant effect at the significance level of 0.05 for using social media on the purchase decision of advertised goods

Table 13 indicates a direct correlation between using social media and making the purchasing decision for the goods advertised, evidenced by the value of the correlation coefficient (R) reaching (0.48) and that of the regression coefficient (B) reaching (0.70), which indicates that using social media directly impacts the decision to purchase the advertised goods. Therefore, a change of 1% in using social media causes a change of 0.7% in the decision to purchase the advertised goods. The coefficient of determination ($R2$) indicates that the variable is affected by 23%, while the other variables are affected by 77%. The *t*-test indicates the existence of a significant relationship between using social media and the decision to purchase the advertised goods, as the value of t for the regression coefficient reached 8.767 at a significant level of significance (0.001)—less than the significance level (0.05). The estimation results suggest that all the matching indicators were represented in the ideal range for each indicator, as the value of the chi-square ratio for the degrees of freedom reached 4.054, which is less than (5), and the value of the GFI reached 0.90 and that of the CFI reached 0.93—all of which are greater than 0.90; the value of the RMSEA index (0.0578) is less than the standard range (0.08), indicating that the model exhibits a good fit to the data. Based on the above analysis results, the fourth hypothesis (No significant effect occurs at the significance level of 0.05 for using social media on making the purchasing decision for advertised goods) is rejected.

Table 13. Results for the relationship between social media use and the decision to purchase advertised goods.

Analysis Indicators	Regression coefficient (B)	Test (*T*)	Morale Leve
The relationship between social media use and the decision to purchase advertised goods.	0.70	8.767	0.001
Correlation coefficient (R)	0.48		
Coefficient of determination (R2)	0.23		
Chi-square ratio of degrees of freedom	4.054		
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.90		
Comparative Conformity Index (CFI)	0.93		
Root Mean Square Error of Approach (RMSEA)	0.0578		

5.7.5. No significant effect at the significance level of 0.05 for using social media on evaluating the purchasing decision for advertised goods.

To prove the hypothesis' validity, a regression analysis model was used to determine the causal relationship between the independent variable (the use of social media) and dependent variable (the evaluation of the purchasing decision of advertised goods). The estimation results are presented in **Table 14**.

Table 14. Results of estimating the relationship between using social media and evaluating the purchasing decision for advertised goods.

Analysis Indicators	Regression coefficient (B)	Test (T)	Morale Level
The relationship between social media use and the evaluation of the purchasing decision of the advertised goods.	0.586	7.714	0.001
Correlation coefficient (R)	0.44		
Coefficient of determination ($R2$)	0.20		
Chi-square ratio of degrees of freedom	3.809		
Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.94		
Comparative Conformity Index (CFI)	0.91		
Root Mean Square Error of Approach (RMSEA)	0.072		

Table 14 indicates a strong direct correlation between using social media and evaluating the purchasing decision for the goods advertised, as evidenced by the value of the correlation coefficient (R) reaching (0.44) and that of the regression coefficient (B) reaching 0.586, indicating that using social media directly impacts the evaluation of the purchasing decision for the advertised goods. Therefore, a change of 1% in the use of social media causes a change of 0.6% in the evaluation of the purchasing decision for the advertised goods. The coefficient of determination (R2) indicates that the variable is affected by 20%, while the other variables are affected by 80%. The test-test indicates a significant relationship between using social media and evaluating the purchasing decision for the advertised goods, as the value of t for the regression coefficient reached 7.714 at a significant level of significance (0.003)—less than the significance level of 0.05. The estimation results suggest that all the matching indicators were represented in the ideal range for each indicator, as the value of the chi-square ratio for the degrees of freedom reached 3.809—less than 5; the value of the GFI reached 0.94 and that of the CFI reached 0.91—all of which are greater than (0.90); the value of the RMSEA index (0.072) is less than the standard range (0.08), indicating that the model has a good fit to the data under test. Based on the above analysis results, the fifth hypothesis (No significant effect at the significance level of 0.05 for using social media on evaluating the purchasing decision for advertised goods) is rejected.

6. Discussion

Clearly, social media plays a significant role in influencing purchasing decisions and occupies a substantial position in the lives of business school students, according to the study sample of individuals. The results also showed the extent to which respondents are aware of the importance of social media networks, given that they are also satisfied with the advantages of marketing via social media networks and agree on its effectiveness. The study results also showed that consumers' decision-making process for products advertised on social media is post-purchase. The respondents also admitted that social media made purchasing more effortless. These results are consistent with those of previous studies (Hamid et al., 2020; Bassam et al., 2020).

The current updates on social media indicate that more people shop through these websites. Introducing a brand on popular platforms, such as Instagram and Snapchat, and placing product tags on these platforms makes it easier to shop merely by enabling consumers to see them.

7. Conclusion

This study provides an overview of social media's multifaceted impact on purchasing decisions through the five stages of the purchasing process. It also explores important issues and future research directions in related areas by providing an overview of the definitions, applications, and uses of social media. This research is particularly relevant to professionals in marketing and consumer behavior as it enables us to gain an in-depth look at and understanding of how social media can be an essential factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Social media significantly influences consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions through information dissemination, social authentication, and instant interaction at various stages of the purchase process. In the need stage, social media drives consumers to purchase and make decisions by stimulating the demand for and awareness of problems in information search. When evaluating alternatives, social media provides consumers with a rich and secure information source to help them make more rational and informed choices. In the post-purchase stage, social media enhances consumer brand loyalty and communication through user reviews and engagement, reassuring marketers of their strategies.

However, social media marketing faces several challenges, including information overload, content quality, and data privacy. By leveraging new technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, future research can help revolutionize our understanding and practice of social media marketing.

Overall, this study contributes to the understanding of how social media influences purchasing decisions, which is a key aspect of consumer behavior in the digital age.

8. Recommendations

Based on the results, several recommendations are proposed for marketers and their companies. First, companies should work to provide multiple options for customers of different types and categories of products and services through social media, thereby enhancing consumers' confidence in the websites.

Allowing customers to express their opinions and suggestions regarding the products displayed through social media with sufficient freedom. Notably, companies should spread the culture of online shopping and convince consumers of the idea of dealing with websites while ensuring safe, fast, and high-quality services. Furthermore, others' evaluations of the company's products on its pages on social media sites should be facilitated. This can attract the attention of its visitors, facilitate the evaluation of products/services, and enhance the company's image, thus increasing the likelihood of purchase. Finally, with the emergence of social networking sites, promotional methods alone are no longer sufficient to influence consumer behavior or obtain the required responses. Therefore, companies should

turn to social networking sites to get closer to consumers, interact with them, and benefit from their feedback.

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