

T.C.
ISTANBUL TICARET UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE
MARKETING MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

**Analyzing The Effect of Social Media Marketing Channels on
Moroccan Consumer Behavior For The Buying Decision Process After The
Pandemic**

Ayman Garti

Istanbul, 2022

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Supervised by: Assoc. Prof. Evrim İldem Develi

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Abstract

After two years of the pandemic of covid 19, the growth in social media has provided and created opportunities for consumers by simplifying the buying process to simple clicks and product searching for companies to merge and strengthen their online presence.

Given the importance for marketers to recognize the consumer way of making buying decisions, acknowledging the consumer decision-making process starts with the awareness of identifying needs passing by collecting information in the form to satisfy these needs, evaluating the options available and alternatives to making the final decision of buying and finally explaining the satisfaction or dissatisfaction by considering this purchase decision.

This study aims to understand how social media marketing channels can impact the five stages of the buying decision process after the pandemic.

This paper will analyze the effect of social media marketing on buying decisions. It has been designed to work and focus on the three crucial channels, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok since they have occupied an important role during the pandemic and have extensive growth and a global community. Furthermore, an online questionnaire is administered to investigate how this platform can impact Moroccan customers' purchasing decisions to meet their demands after the pandemic of covid-19.

Özet

Covid 19 pandemisinden iki yıl sonra, sosyal medyadaki büyüme, satın alma sürecini basit tıklamalara ve şirketlerin çevrimiçi varlıklarını birleştirmesi ve güçlendirmesi için ürün aramaya basitleştirerek hem tüketiciler için hem de fırsatlar sağladı ve yarattı.

Pazarlamacıların tüketicilerin satın alma kararlarını verme şeklini tanımlarının önemi göz önüne alındığında, tüketici karar verme sürecini kabul etmek, bu ihtiyaçları karşılamak için formda bilgi toplayarak geçen ihtiyaçları belirleme, mevcut seçenekleri ve alternatifleri değerlendirme farkındalığı ile başlar. nihai satın alma kararı ve son olarak bu satın alma kararını göz önünde bulundurarak memnuniyet veya memnuniyetsizliğin açıklanması.

Bu çalışma, sosyal medya pazarlama kanallarının pandemi sonrası satın alma karar sürecinin beş aşamasını nasıl etkileyebileceğini anlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışma, sosyal medya pazarlamasının satın alma kararları üzerindeki etkisini analiz edecektir. Pandemi sırasında önemli bir rol üstlendikleri ve kapsamlı bir büyüme ve küresel bir topluluğa sahip oldukları için üç önemli kanal olan Facebook, Instagram ve TikTok üzerinde çalışmak ve odaklanmak üzere tasarlanmıştır. Ayrıca, bu platformun Faslı müşterilerin covid-19 pandemisinden sonra taleplerini karşılamak için satın alma kararlarını nasıl etkileyebileceğini araştırmak için çevrimiçi bir anket uygulandı.

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Introduction

After two and a half years of the Covid 19 pandemic that started in China Wuhan and reached every continent globally, the world has passed through many changes. Every human, sector, and business -small or big- has known new adjustments and deviations.

During this period, the growth of social media marketing channels has given companies and consumers many opportunities and changes, from extending the connection between service providers and customers to simplifying the buying process.

Governments around the world have announced the lockdown and quarantine. According to this situation, companies have begun considering increasing forces lying on new ways to sustain their activities, assist their customers, and advertise their functions, which has been witnessed and expressed across various and proper social media marketing channels.

Covid 19 has considerably obstructed companies and has pushed managers and executives to utilize, adjust, and alter their marketing approach to the digital world. This digitization has also had a notable effect on individual social living as the starting of social media platforms.

Social media platforms are becoming indispensable for the grand majority of the earth's people. Statistics informed in the data reportal report published on April 2022 by Kemp, S. (2022) revealed that there are 4.65 billion social media active users today, equivalent to 58.7% of the total global population. Clement, J., and Statista Research Department (2022) have shown that the average social media use globally is around two hours and forty-five minutes in 2022, increasing two minutes compared to the preceding year.

Subsequently, social media platforms with no expectation, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook or TikTok, and the other channels, have played an immense role during the pandemic by sharing not only news but also creating and maintaining contact with friends and families even though they physically disconnected via sharing instant information, live news, photos, and videos (Kushner, J. 2020).

Earlier studies indicated that social media platforms might help businesses build, preserve, and maintain relations with consumers and build strong connections. Thota (2018) stated that companies could use social media to improve public implementation and grow client relationships.

Today Companies' decider and marketing managers have to understand the consumer's way of thinking to decide on choosing a product or service, (Foxall,2014) indicated that modern marketing emphasizes the necessity for business managers to know who their clients are and why they decide to purchase their products instead of competitors.

The buying decision process is one of the keys that help marketers understand the customer's behavior. The process defines the events forwarding the procedure when a consumer buys a product or service, which starts long-sighted before the final buying and remains a concluding fortitude of whether their buying greeted their demands and hopes.

This study will explain and simplify the concept of social media marketing, consumer buying decision, and an understanding of how social media marketing platforms can impact the buying decision process.

The study will analyze the effect of social media marketing on the buying decision process for Moroccan consumers. The paper will emphasize only three channels of social media marketing Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Additionally, the results of an online questionnaire will relate to and investigate how social media platforms can impact the purchasing decision of Moroccan customers given the period after the pandemic.

CHAPTER 1

This chapter aims to interpret, explain and explore the marketing concept and its difference from digital marketing by displaying its forms and types. A definition of social media marketing and the three platforms, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, chosen in this paper will be addressed by presenting the differences between the three channels. An overview of social media usage in Morocco will be presented in this section to help to understand Moroccan consumers' presence on social media.

1.1. Social media marketing

This chapter aims to interpret, explain and explore the marketing concept and its difference from digital marketing by displaying its forms and types. A definition of social media marketing and the three platforms, Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok, chosen in this paper will be addressed by presenting the differences between the three channels. An overview of social media usage in Morocco will be presented in this section to help to understand Moroccan consumers' presence on social media.

1.1.1. Traditional Marketing And Digital Marketing

Numerous sources and authors reveal confusion about marketing because there are multiple definitions and explanations recognized in academic literature.

Cooke, E. et al. (1992) specified that marketing significance depends on the personal perspective. It changes with time and the context of use. American Marketing Association. (2017) defines Marketing as the action, set of organizations, and procedures for producing, communicating, distributing, and exchanging contributions that present value for customers, clients, partners, and society.

Kotler, P et al. (2020) stated several definitions of marketing. The simplest definition is that Marketing connects consumers and manages valuable customer relationships. Another explanation indicates that marketing is "the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit" (Kotler, P et al., 2012).

Under consideration, technology and digitalization have profoundly changed a good part of industries; marketing is one of them (Charlesworth, 2021). Similar to traditional marketing forms, there are many definitions and explanations of digital marketing; digital marketing describes taking advantage of technologies in marketing efforts and practices (Pradhan et al., 2018). Digital marketing is a method of direct marketing that uses interactional technologies: websites, emails, and others to connect consumers with products or services, sellers, or providers (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006).

Based on the definition of AMA, Kannan and Li (2017) stated that digital marketing is a flexible technological process by which companies cooperate with clients and associates to create, communicate, and deliver and maintain value for shareholders.

Specific comparisons claim that traditional marketing does not include real-time interactions with the audience. The cost and time for preparing the campaign are high and have limited reach to consumers. Besides, digital marketing consists of advertising on social media, search engine, and many other forms. Companies can make the interaction in live time during the campaign with the audience, which can be more extensive and not limited by any geographical area. In addition, there is a chance to go viral (Yasmin et al., 2015).

The perception of marketing mix started with Culliton (1948) declaring that marketing managers' responsibility is to mix ingredients. Since this declaration, many authors, professors, and researchers have defined the marketing mix. Borden (1964) considered that the marketing mix involves mixing 12 elements: branding, distribution channels, product planning, pricing, advertising, display, physical handling, promotions, fact-finding, analysis, and personal selling.

The marketing mix consisting of the four P's: product, price, place, and promotion, was deemed by McCarthy, E. J. (1960) as the essential marketing tools of the business and particularly of the marketing manager. Van Waterschoot and Van den Bulte (1992) determined that "a marketing mix classification should explicitly make clear that it tries to schematize all the controllable demand-impinging instruments that are combined into a marketing program used by the firm to achieve a certain level and type of response from its target market."

Graham and Vandana (2015) defined the marketing mix as "the marketing manager has a set of key tools that can be adjusted, improved or changed to match the marketplace's needs, gain competitive advantage and maximize long-term profits."

Kotler (2012) defines the marketing mix as the set of strategic marketing tools—product, price, place, and promotion—that the firm combines to generate the response it intends in the target market.

The Digital Marketing mix exemplifies the decision-making parameters or manageable instruments offered digitally and online to companies and marketing managers to define the fulfillment of their markets and change demand for products and services (Ivy, 2008).

Furthermore, the digital marketing mix represents the convenient instruments marketers utilize to extend the target market through internet platforms. The digital marketing mix is, in fact, the alteration of the conventional marketing mix into an electronic platform established on the internet technology with the principal purpose of expanding the target market in a suitable way (Matura,2018).

As technology innovations continue to grow, the dynamism of the market is as well. Even though the 4Ps, the foundations of the marketing mix, persist applicable in business activity, enterprise, and digital transformation, has presented new characteristics associated with the approaches customers choose.

The four pillars of the marketing mix will be presented further by giving a definition and the importance of each component in the marketing mix from a digital perspective.

Product

McCarthy 1960, declared that a buyer acquires a product used for the advantages or gratification obtained or anticipated resulting from its use. While Armstrong et al. (2019) define a product as all that can be offered and presented to a market, presenting an interest, attention, acquisition, use, or utilization that could fulfill a desire or need.

The American Marketing Association (2017) defines a product as a collection of traits qualified for trade or usage, usually a mix of tangible and intangible forms. Therefore a product can be a concept, a physical object, a service, a facility, or any mixture of the three. It exists for exchange in the satisfaction of individual and organizational objectives.

In the digital world, a product is anything that can be presented digitally or online to a target to comply with a want or need (Kotler & Keller, 2006). The product is everything available online or digitally to a marketplace, such as goods, services, events, and ideas

The product displayed online can be categorized into three types of products that can be sold (Esen, 2009) :

- **Physical Product:** The products presented to buyers can be physical, like clothes, accessories, and other products shipped to the customer's desired addresses.

- **Services or Intangible Products;** where the product presented can be a service, like booking an online consultancy or paying a bill, or an intangible product that is not physical as insurances, domain names, etc

- **Digitized Products** are any product sold online that does not have a physical form or substance, such as software, music, online games, magazine subscription, reports, etc.

Product on the online marketplace has the same importance as offline channels. While in the digital marketplace, the customer experience is massively different because it requires various elements of the buying experience, such as the physical touch of the product, communicating with an assistant or sales expert, etc. This has swapped the spotlight on the digital user experience, like customer base first choice and product comparison (Rawat 2022).

Price

The price is the recognized proportion that specifies the amount of money, goods, or services needed to obtain a certain quantity (American Marketing Association, 2017). Kotler (2006) declares that price is the total of money for a product or service or the sum of the values consumers trade for the advantages of getting or utilizing the product or service.

The price is how much a consumer is ready to spend in exchanging a good or a service offered by a company (Shaw, 2019). Price is the amount of money charged online in trade for a product or service sold online (Khan, 2014). It is necessary to remain that price is the only source of revenue in the marketing mix composition; all the other elements are costs for the companies (Armstrong et al. 2019).

The product's price determines its performance in the market; a product should be priced according to its perceived value (Villaruel, 2021). Thus, the price strategy is deemed essential in attaining the company's business goals because the price influences the trade volume, the benefit, the brand image, and the market share (Nita, 2015). The expanded competitor pricing visibility triggered a considerable transformation in the pricing strategy of a successful business (Rawat, 2022).

The digital marketplace offers excellent customer benefits by getting the best price through price comparison websites (Baltes, 2016). From companies' perspectives, the Internet allows price modification instantaneously to deal with competitors with the consequential possibility of profit margin reductions (Fjermestad, 2003).

Place

The place is “everything is done and necessary to smooth the exchange process”(Yudelson 1999). In other words, It is a mechanism through which goods and services are moved from the manufacturer to the final consumer. Place refers to the location of the product's sale, also known as distribution. Expresses the act of supplying products to customers. It also defines the amount of marketplace exposure for a specific product (American Marketing Association, 2017).

In digital marketing, the distribution purpose was altered contrasted to traditional marketing. Place means digital distribution channels used to make services accessible and available to consumers in locations convenient to them (Kotler, 2012).

Place in the online marketing mix involves the place where and how companies offer their customers access to their products or service. Consequently, there are many options for firms to sell on various platforms and methods (Engaio, 2022).

Distribution on the digital marketplace has uninvolved some of the mediators that considerably upsurge the price of products. Therefore, other online entities have been shown to facilitate information distribution, such as brokers, web developers implementing shopping carts, and those who provide online payment services (Pistol 2017).

The distribution approach must consider the most appropriate channel for the product or services while approving the rest of the product strategy (Villaruel 2021). Distribution solutions in the digital marketplace vary depending on the company's target audience. Several channels can be used to distribute its product, such as social media platforms, dedicated online stores, and online marketplaces (Nina, 2014).

Promotion

The American Marketing Association (2017) asserted that promotion consists of strategies and methods encouraging short-term purchase, affecting trial and quantity of purchase, and are quantifiable in size, share, and benefit.

McCarthy (1960) contended that the promotion objective is to inform, persuade, or remind consumers of the company's marketing mix. Kotler and Keller (2006) stated that promotion is "the digital means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers, directly or indirectly, about the products and brands they sell.

Blythe (2009) states that promotion is "the marketing communications employed to make the offer recognized to prospective clients and encourage them to explore it additionally." In summary, it is the medium to communicate or engage with the user directly.

The promotion comprises advertising through interpersonal telecommunications media, personal selling involving face-to-face communication amongst merchants and potential clients, sales promotion by stimulating quick sales in the short term, public relations over producing a constructive image for the board audience, direct marketing using client catalogs for transactional and interpersonal (Kotler 2012).

Digital marketing suggests many efficient approaches to deciding and including it in the firm marketing mix strategy. Every business and its products require different methodologies to connect with specific target audiences (Villaruel, 2021).

Promoting a product aims to show consumers the need for it, the problem-solving, and the value perceived in buying it. For this, choosing the appropriate way to reach the target market is necessary among different options possible: social media platforms, search engines, display ads, forums, etc. (Nelson, 2020).

1.1.2. Digital Marketing Forms

Digital Marketing uses various strategies and channels to link up with consumers who devote much of their time online. Therefore, several types of Digital marketing forms and techniques exist, such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Social Media Marketing (SMM), Content Marketing, Email Marketing, Online Advertising, website, Affiliate Marketing, Viral marketing (Panda, M. and Mishra, A., 2021).

In this study, the spotlight will briefly explain some forms and concentrate on the detailed amplification of social media marketing.

1.1.2.1. Search Engine Optimization

Search engine optimization (SEO) suggests bettering the organic traffic and the position ranking of a website on search engines like Bing, Google, and others. Search engine

optimization organically influences a website's prominence and visibility in search engine page results (Lyons, 2022).

Search engine optimization requires using different techniques, such as high-quality content creation, updating and supervising the website's technical status, and keeping the local search presence. Search engine optimization can concern different search types, including video, image, news, academic, and specific search.

1.1.2.2. Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Search engine marketing is technically a digital marketing strategy with the same objective of optimization and increasing the presence on the search engine results pages. Contrary to search engine optimization, search engine marketing is a paid form (Varagouli, 2020).

In other words, search engine marketing is reposing on driving traffic to a website from search engine page results by using paid search or paid per click to rank at the top of the search engines pages results above organic search (Brockbank, 2020).

1.1.2.3. Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing unites technology innovation and personal sales accessible by digital marketing. Affiliate marketing must be considered one of the tools that help companies with restricted budgets enhance brand awareness and profit (Jurišová, 2013).

Affiliate marketing allows enterprises to increase their profits and sales by paying their affiliates to advertise their products or services based on a commission formula where the companies pay by the objective stated in the contract, which can be sales, sales lead, impression, or per action (Brown, 2009).

1.1.2.4. Email Marketing

Patel N. (2019) defines Email marketing as the strategy companies use to send electronic mail and messages to potential customers or clients in mass quantities to increase sales, brand awareness, or informative forms.

This strategy is unique and one of the most incredible approaches used in digital marketing. (Rautanen,2012). Rettie (2002) detailed that email marketing requires three essential and simple components: an email database with active emails that can be collected directly from clients or potential clients that expressed their interest; an email marketing platform or services providers, for example, Mailchimp, which helps design and manages the mails campaign; finally as the predefined goal for the campaign (Link,2020).

Email marketing consistently delivers an incomparable return on investment numbers+, and last statistics show that for every 1\$ invested in email marketing strategies, marketers receive back in return of 36\$ (Moller, 2021).

1.1.2.5. Content Marketing

Content marketing is a marketing approach applied to captivate, engage, and maintain an audience by generating and communicating related videos, articles, videos, and other forms of media (Koiso-Kanttila, 2004; Mailchimp, 2021)).

According to Content Marketing Institute (2021), content marketing produces and delivers pertinent and compelling content to interest, develop, and connect a well-specified and recognized target audience to push profitable customer action.

1.2. Social Media Definition

Since its apparition, social media has played an essential part in daily human life; Social media significantly influences today's customers' lives. Consequently, employing social media is extremely important for enterprises to connect with their customers efficiently.

Corresponding to the popular definition made by Kaplan (2010), "social media is a grouping of Internet-based applications developed on the conceptual and high-tech foundations of Web 2.0 that permit the creation and exchange of user-generated content".

Social media refers to all platforms available on the internet that allows people and users to interact, exchange, discuss and perform interaction that can be in the forms of posting, sharing, or commenting on videos, photos, or different media.

Cohen (2011) sorted more than 80 definitions of social media from different field experts; the common point with these definitions:

- Social media depend on technological information that makes it present online only, in the forms of applications, platforms, and website
- Social media use the peer to peer technology as a communication channel that allows the interaction, exchange, and collaboration with the contents created;
- Social media create a link that forms a virtual community between the different application users forming social media networks.

Channels and types of social media might differ depending on the type and communication consumers use of this application or website (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011). Different types can be distinguished below:

- Social networking sites or applications are where users can communicate thoughts, create content by uploading photos and videos, or create groups and pages based on shared interests, to contribute to active debates, discussions, conversations, and talks. The most known example is Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, The specificity of these websites or applications, is that they are developed all over the user.

- Sharing media networks group all websites and applications that allow users to share videos, photos, live videos, and other forms of media. Twitch, Youtube, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat are the best examples of these types of social media. The specificity of the sharing media networks is that they can target the right audience based on their interest.

- Forums discussions are built for discovering, communicating, and reviewing diverse information, ideas, and news. Quora and Reddit are examples of these platforms built on a question-answer format that helps the community share experiences or questions and get reviews and answers.

- Content curations and bookmarking networks help users, and the community discovers, distribute, debate, and bookmark a selection of the most recent subject and trends in social media. These platforms are developed as graphical and visual search engines. The most known content curations and bookmarking networks are Pinterest and Flipboard.

In review, social media types and channels keep growing every day, and there are other types with other platforms in this paper. However, it is necessary to mention that social media platforms started using the same features to maintain and keep their users from going to other platforms.

1.2.1. Social Media Marketing forms

As detailed above, social media groups' applications, websites, and platforms help facilitate and simplify the interaction between a group of individuals. However, social media can be considered for businesses and companies to increase customer engagement and brand awareness through marketing communication (Martinez et al., 2018). Kotler recognizes social media marketing as a significant influencer on brand perceptions for the consumer (Kotler et al., 2018).

Besides its role of sharing, discussing, and creating thoughts, ideas, and content, social media roles today surpass this to become an essential component and the most used form of digital marketing.

Social media marketing definition is commonly the use of social media online platforms as marketing channels employing different forms, techniques, and types of marketing, such as viral marketing, guerilla marketing, word of mouth, and others (Wojnicki et al., 2010). Corresponding to Patel (2019), social media marketing is a process that relies on content creation designed to a specific framework on social media to drive engagement.

Another definition states that social media marketing necessitates the usage of different social media channels to join and make contact with more potential customers and lead them to the promoted product or service (Simplilearn, 2021).

Social media marketing provides countless advantages considering its ability to communicate worldwide with millions of consumers in seconds, decrease costs, and accurately reach the wanted audience.

In this study, the analysis will concentrate on three of the most important and known social media marketing platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok. However, an overview of these social media forms will be dressed in this paper to understand how they work to help companies and feature researchers recognize new research opportunities.

1.2.2. Facebook

Introduced in February 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook has rapidly grown into one of the most prevalent interpersonal communication tools. One month after its official launch, Facebook expanded from Harvard to Stanford, Columbia, and Yale University. Within one year, in December 2004, Facebook reached nearly 1 million active users (Lee, 2022).

Facebook's primary mission is "to offer humans the ability to communicate and make the world more open and connected" (Kelly,2017). However, connecting people online is not enough; Facebook changed its mission in June 2017 to "give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together" (Zuckerberg,2017).

Today, Facebook is the most popular social media in the world, with more than 2.93 billion active users in 2022 (Statista, 2022). This number helped Facebook develop a vast database that can help businesses promote their product.

Facebook Marketing is a practical model for companies to advertise their services and products. It is considered an oriented consumer platform where organizations and companies have built networks to exchange information of particular interest to Facebook users (Koenig and Palmer, 2009). This channel allows businesses of all dimensions to achieve targets at a reasonable cost (Hansson et al., 2013).

Facebook is considered an attractive platform for companies that can achieve specific business goals parallel to improving brand awareness, selling products and services, building customer relationships, delivering instant customer services, and releasing products.

Facebook offers marketers various distinctive methods to interact with customers and potential clients starting from pages, groups, and events, which are free tools and not different from what other users can access (Abram and Karasavas, 2021).

This means that Facebook allows businesses to connect with their audience with the same instruments that users use to connect with their families and friends, such as sharing photos, videos, statuses, and links.

In addition, like the other social networks, Facebook provides companies with tools to understand and measure their customers' engagement and behavior which helps marketers to assess the efficiency of their social media marketing campaign (Chawla and Chodak, 2021).

Facebook has different metrics to determine a campaign's success and affinity; engagement rate is one of the most crucial measurement systems. It includes like, comments, clicks, and shares numbers which can define the reach degree (Bruich et al., 2012).

Other metrics can be reviewed, such as Facebook ads metrics that include cost per click (CPC), which indicates the cost paid by an advertiser for every single click on their commercials (Saura et al., 2021). Click-Through Rates (CTR), which is the proportion of clicks to impressions on an advertising campaign, and Cost per impression (CPM), which expresses advertising cost given to the number of impressions made (Bendle et al., 2010). However, Facebook continuously updates its algorithm to help companies attract the most effective and defined users.

1.2.3. Instagram

In October 2010, Instagram was introduced to the world by Kevin Systrom; Instagram is a photo and video-sharing social media application. The focal point was showcasing mobile device photographs (Blystone, 2020).

Instagram is a social media application that focuses on the photo and video sharing. By the end of 2021, Instagram attained 2 billion active users worldwide, three years after reaching the first billion active users in 2018. The users dominating the use of Instagram are between 25 and 34, followed by 18 to 24-year-olds (Clement, 2020).

A typical feature of Instagram is constraining photos to a square shape and allowing the application of filters. Instagram is also a platform dedicated to brands helping them share their story, product, and review.

Instagram is considered a place to get inspiration and a creative outlet for content, with its design making it easy to use by filling up the screen with videos, stories, and photos. Instagram is considered a social network site. As its number of members grew, it attracted the attention of business organizations and marketers by launching marketing campaigns on the platform and reaching more and more people (De Veirman et al., 2017).

Instagram is an effective marketing channel that brands be supposed to use to its richest extent. As it remains, the Instagram algorithm has made many changes since Facebook owns it. In 2018 Instagram assured organizations and brands that the systems would continue to guarantee a balanced performing area and that the followers would see their content, even as the total of users continues to grow (Constine, 2018).

During the pandemic and to maintain its market share with TikTok, which has known a rapid growth in users during this period, Instagram has announced a new feature similar to the Tiktok concept, which is a new way to produce and find short, engaging videos on Instagram (Instagram, 2020).

Same as the other social media platforms, Instagram also has its metrics to track for brands starting from :

- **Reach:** This demonstrates the number of unique accounts that viewed a post. This metric helps to know brand awareness by tracking how much the post or story provides in terms of brand awareness.

- The engagement rate is a crucial indicator of how an account's audience responds to shared content. The engagement rate increase if the followers are engaging by liking, sharing, saving, or commenting on the content. It is calculated by dividing the followers' total number of likes and comments by the number of followers. A percentage between 1.5% and 3% is considered good engagement; above this is considered a high engagement rate (Demeku, 2021).

- Instagram story engagement is complex to track since stories disappear after 24 hours. However, it is possible to track some metrics to have an idea about the success of the story by tracking the unique views, which is the number of people that saw the story; the completion rate explains the number of followers that watched all the stories posted in a day, it is calculated by dividing the number of views in the last story by the number of views on the first story (Bora,2018).

1.2.4. Tiktok

Tik Tok is a music creative short video social network application launched in September 2016. TikTok is a popular short video platform introduced in China and is fast growing, with over a billion users worldwide (Zhong, 2018).

Tiktok is positioned to create and share music-based videos. The videos are concise, with a duration ranging from 15 to 60 seconds, and should be, to achieve success, funny and engaging (Domingues et al., 2020).

TikTok has become a social media application that permits users to create, promote, and react to short-form music video content (Geysler, 2019). TikTok users have been utilizing the app for creating videos of themselves dancing, acting, training, cooking, and exercising.

TikTok is centering on short video involvement. Users and firms are responsible for content creation in the app by using templates, filters, visual effects, and built-in music to create short-lived videos (Johnson, 2020).

The platform supports many short video-specific features such as "Duet" by allowing other users to create a duet video with another user and "React" by enabling the comment with another video to foster new collective and immersive user experiences (Zea and Heekyoung, 2019).

Content on TikTok is displayed in two main formats; the home page allows navigation with two tabs; the first one is the "Following" feed reveals the content of users the user is following, and the "For You page" feed, which displays content the user is expected to appreciate, is chosen through an artificial intelligence algorithm (Haenlein et al., 2020).

Despite all of its globality and its presence around the world, TikTok present and focus the user on local content by providing unique suggestions to users for local topics, which results in more creation of local videos

The application demonstrated immense popularity before the pandemic. Earlier in 2020, TikTok grew its fame over diverse ages and regions and became more considered by brands and advertisers (Newton, 2020). According to the official company statement, in 2021, TikTok reached 1 billion users and downloaded from the Google Play and App store more than 1 billion times (TikTok, 2021).

TikTok had recognized phenomenal progress amid the COVID-19 pandemic when people were confined at home and searching for entertainment. The application has known a rise in download on google play and the app store worldwide. According to Music Business Worldwide, during the week of March 16, 2020, the TikTok application was downloaded 2 million times, with an 18% increase compared to the previous week. Another 27% increase was shown in the first 23 days of March compared to February, with 6.2 million downloads (Crowley, 2020).

With a strong identity, all features in the app's user interface were designed to facilitate the learning and use of the app in making short videos and entertainment. Furthermore, the engaged community using the app before the pandemic has helped newcomers familiarize themselves with the application. TikTok has become more popular and gained the attention of the z generation (Johnson, 2020).

The entertaining, humorous, and spontaneous environment and nature of TikTok videos represent a resource of relaxation, entertainment, and a time killer at the same period as self-quarantining and social distancing through the pandemic (Su et al.,2020).

For companies, TikTok marketing is becoming more and more targeted and varied. The marketing ecosystem supports brands to reach their target users quickly and precisely (Miller,2020).

Consequently, TikTok established an ecosystem supporting opportunities for brands on integrated marketing, lifecycle marketing, and performance marketing on both B2-B and B2C fronts. In addition, TikTok is collaborating with some platforms to enable directing traffic to e-Commerce websites to drive conversion (Boxin Mou,2020).

CHAPTER 2

The Buying Decision process

This chapter will highlight the definition of consumer behavior by giving a definition that will help understand the concept of consumer behavior—also explain the Engel Kollat Blackwell Model and the buying decision process. Finally, a description of the relationship between the buying decision process and social media marketing will be addressed.

2.1. Definition of Consumer behavior

Consumer behavior investigates people, parties, or companies, the procedures they utilize to choose, ensure, and decide on products, services, experiences, or ideas to comply with desires, and the effects these activities have on the consumer and society (Madhavan, and Chandrasekar,2015).

Understanding consumer behavior facilitates the marketer to recognize how consumers feel, think and select options like products, and brand names and how the buyers are affected by their natural environment, source groups, family, and marketers (Anderson and Golden, 1984).

Consumer behavior can be defined as a set of mental, emotional, and physical actions in which people decide, acquire, use and retire goods and services to meet their needs and desires (Wilkie,1995).

Consumer behavioral models refer to the decision-making or choice process of consumers. This paper focuses on Engel Kollat Blackwell's Model and the buying decision process.

2.2. Engel Kollat Blackwell Model.

Understanding consumer behavior, especially how they behave to make the buying decision, is necessary for every intelligent company. Marketers must ask basic customer compartment queries such as who, what, when, where, how, and why.

The Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell model emphasize the decision-making process during a purchase to discover how and why consumers act. The EKB model explains the process leading from the problem or needs recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior.

EKB model groups several parts, from discovering the need and collecting information, internal and external decision variables, and decision processes that head to purchasing decision-making (Huang and Hsueh, 2010). The primary scrutinizing of the model include:

- **Information input:** which discusses the marketing information of firms and relevant information received by the customers from interpersonal interaction; it is also divided into marketing and non-marketing sources;
- **Information processing:** is allocated into five phases: exposure, attention, understanding, agreement, and retention; that is to say, the information is exposed to and received by the customers, who may acquire a long-lasting memory through processing, explanation, acceptance, and retention;
- **Decision process:** the customers' decision process is a "troubleshooting" process, including the perception of problems, searching for information, assessment of alternatives, and purchase;
- **The result of purchase:** either satisfaction or dissatisfaction following purchase behavior may also affect the consumers' purchase decisions;
- **Decision process variable:** the influential factors in the customers' decision process are divided between internal and external factors (Engel et al., 2001).

Therefore, the EKB model understands that consumer consumption behavior is a permanent process through which distinct personal thoughts and assessments take structure under the external stimulus, and several variables are interconnected. This process will influence the decision process. The purchase decision involves many environmental considerations, including cultural standards, social group, motivation, education, approach, character, value system, and way of living.

2.3. Consumer buying decision process

With the introduction of the buying process model in 1910 by John Dewey (Bruner and Pomazal,1988), Several studies have developed the model and its five-stage that the consumer typically passes through.

The Five stage model of the consumer buying decision process presented in Figure1 (Spivakovsky,2016) illustrates the usual order of this process that starts by discovering and recognizing a problem or need to attain the post-purchase behavior. Although, it is necessary to mention that these five steps of the consumer buying process are not always respected in the same order; the consumer may jump or switch some steps depending on the nature of the product or needs wanted. However, the model presents a reasonable frame of reference (Kotler and Keller,2012).

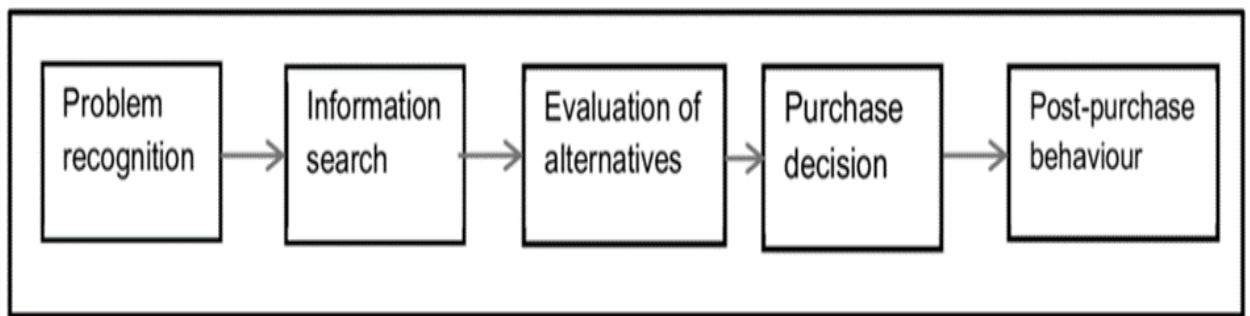


Figure 1 Five-Stages models of the consumer buying decision process (Spivakovsky,2016).

2.3.1. Problem recognition

The buying process begins when a consumer discovers a need to satisfy or a problem to resolve. Problem recognition is founded on the interaction between the requested state and the actual state.

Identifying needs can appear due to habits, necessity, or alternative development changes. Maslow hypothesized that humans have five types of needs and are stimulated hierarchically (Kaur,2013).

According to (Gratton,1980), Maslow's needs hierarchies can be categorized into five classes demonstrated on a pyramid that describes psychological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Jashari and Rrustemi (2017) have alleged that social media photos, videos, and comments can motivate identifying new special needs.

2.3.2. Information Search

Once the needs are distinguished, consumers gather information about the wanted need or product. This process may differ from one consumer to another based on product and desires. Consumers can focus on internal information described as prior knowledge acquired from previous experience. Alternatively, they can use external information sources based on the importance and value of the product and the needs wanted to be satisfied (Oliver et al., 2011). It is understood that there are two levels of action the exploration of information. Consumers become more open to getting information concerning a product first. Later, consumers begin an active information search: looking for learning material, calling families, friends, and colleagues, searching the internet, and visiting physical stores to hear about the product (Armstrong et al., 2020).

2.3.3. Evaluation of Alternatives

After completing the needed research and collecting pieces of information from different sources, the customers start the phase of evaluating the alternative. It is essential to mention that no specific procedure is managed by all consumers or one consumer in all buying situations. Therefore, there are various methods, and most existing models find that the consumer generally creates decisions on a determined and reasonable basis (Kotler and Opresnik, 2020). Typically, consumers assess the options based on some aspects and characteristics of the product. Purchasers will read and verify numerous reviews, assessing benefits, comparing prices, and the best or simplest place to obtain the product. Through this stage, the consumers need to choose whom they would buy and when to buy, which can be influenced by price, store ambiance, terms of sale, or previous experience.

2.3.4. Purchase decision

In this phase and after considering the information gathered and evaluating alternatives for the product desired. Consumers could decide on purchasing the product to satisfy their needs and solve the problem. Inman et al. (2002) declared that consumers might often drop the decision for different reasons. The reasons may differ and can be related to price, value, and consumer needs changes. Such unexpected transactions result from tempting deals or are merely attributable to the buyer's features.

Two conditions can disrupt the final purchase decision: Discouraging criticism from friends or other customers who purchased the same product. Second, sudden changes in

business plans, financial crises, and unanticipated price increases might lead the consumer to drop buying the desired product (Kotler and Keller, 2012).

Hoyer and Macinnis (2008) have noticed that even if the purchaser may have been thorough across all the steps, the buying decision often depends on the stock and store management availability.

2.3.5. Post-Purchase Decision

The final stage in the consumer decision buying process is the post-purchase behavior, when the customer formulates an evaluation of the experience by measuring his satisfaction, whether he is satisfied or dissatisfied.

The satisfaction or dissatisfaction will always be significant in the future and will influence the decision of other customers concerning that product or brand when sharing their attitudes about the purchase and the experience survived.

Satisfying the consumer is a fundamental point for every business, which will help create a loyal customer and reflect this loyalty in their future purchasing and recommendations (Spreng et al., 1996).

The satisfied customer will play an essential and decisive factor in future purchases or references. Ofir and Simonson (2005) underlined the consequence of this stage for the consumer's succeeding operation and how companies do not consider it. Furthermore, the impact of the reference groups might play a considerable role during this phase of the post-purchase evaluation, not only involving the consumer.

2.4. Social media marketing platform, Covid 19, and buying decision process

According to Jashari and Rrustemi (2017), videos, comments, and photos on social media platforms can stimulate the recognition of new needs. Thota (2018) affirms that companies can use social media to initiate consumer product needs by emphasizing product positives and brand awareness. For example, businesses can use different platforms, from Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, to post short videos and reviews to generate and increase the need for their product or services. Wertz (2019) suggests that businesses can appeal to influencers to increase recognition for a specific product or demand by posting a favorable product review.

In the subsequent phase of the buying process, consumers search for information to find the option to satisfy the need recognized in the first stage. Consumers take into consideration numerous variables, attributes, and opportunities. Tam and Jeong-Nam (2019) stated that the improvement of technology and culture had led to a rise in using social media to gather and acquire information. The pandemic also increased the use of social media platforms to get the information needed, given that lockdown and curfew led to a reduction in physical contact with stores and people (Mason et al., 2020).

In the third stage of the buying process, and before making the final purchase decision, consumers start evaluating product options centered on some traits and attributes of the product. Marketers can use social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, to interact with customers to push and influence consumer decisions. Communication can be realized by posting articles, stories, or short videos presenting positive information to help consumers satisfy their needs and concerns.

With the spread of COVID-19, the ability to interact directly with their corresponding has decreased. Therefore, technological advances have allowed companies to increase the capability of communicating and demonstrating product information. Consumers can count on social media to be more informed and judge the advantages and risks of a given product. Hence, it appears possible that consumers might expand their use of social media to reduce the alleged threat of a particular purchase decision.

In the fourth step of the buying decision process, the consumer can buy the product or satisfy the needs. Social media is influential in building and creating awareness for a product or service (Ranaweera, 2015). stated that consumers evaluated their alternatives based on previous experiences of family members, friends, and expert and opinion advisers.

Besides this, the pandemic has played a significant role in social media by allowing consumers to communicate with a larger community and discover their experiences with the products or services without physical contact. Notably, social media has played a significant role in purchase decision behaviors.

The final stage in the consumer decision-buying process is post-purchase behavior. In this step, the consumer creates an experience evaluation by stating his satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok, and other social media platforms have allowed consumers to describe and post their purchases.

Dholakia (2017) has indicated that behavior can increase consumers' happiness and share private consumption to become public consumption. Social media allows consumers to communicate their consumption behaviors with other platform users, and it does not differ from traditional word of mouth. Barasch and Berger (2014) affirmed that consumers have more power and control of purchasing experiences and post purchasing behavior on social media since it offers allochronic communications.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will highlight this study's purpose, importance, objective, and research question. The author of this study will present in a paper the research model and the results from the survey conducted to analyze the effect of social media marketing on the Moroccan consumer buying decision process.

3.1.Purpose of study

This paper aims to analyze the effects and impact of social media marketing channels; by researching Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok and their influence on the Moroccan consumer buying decision process post covid.

3.2. Importance of study

The importance of this paper is distinct in giving businesses a transparent picture of the role of social media marketing channels, specifically Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok, defined by this study on the Moroccan consumer purchase decisions process after the pandemic

3.3. Research question

The research questions will help define the areas to explore and demonstrate how social media marketing was influenced after the pandemic and how this virus has affected Moroccan consumer behavior and buying decisions.

Since this study has an explanatory nature, it addresses the questions:

How do consumers, after the pandemic, behave and make the buying process in Morocco consider social media marketing?

How did social media marketing channels affect the buying decision process of Moroccan consumers after the pandemic?

3.4. Hypotheses development

The following hypotheses were developed and derived from the literature and theoretical review:

H0: Social Media Marketing channels have no positive impact on the Consumer buying Decision process post covid

H01: Facebook positively impacts the Consumer buying Decision process post covid.

H02: Tiktok positively impacts the Consumer buying Decision process post covid.

H03: Instagram positively impacts the Consumer buying Decision process post covid.

3.5. Research model

The research model created by the author describes the relationship between the different variables of this research. The independent variable is presented by Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok as social media marketing channels, although the dependent variable is presented by the buying process, which has five steps related to this paper's hypothesis.

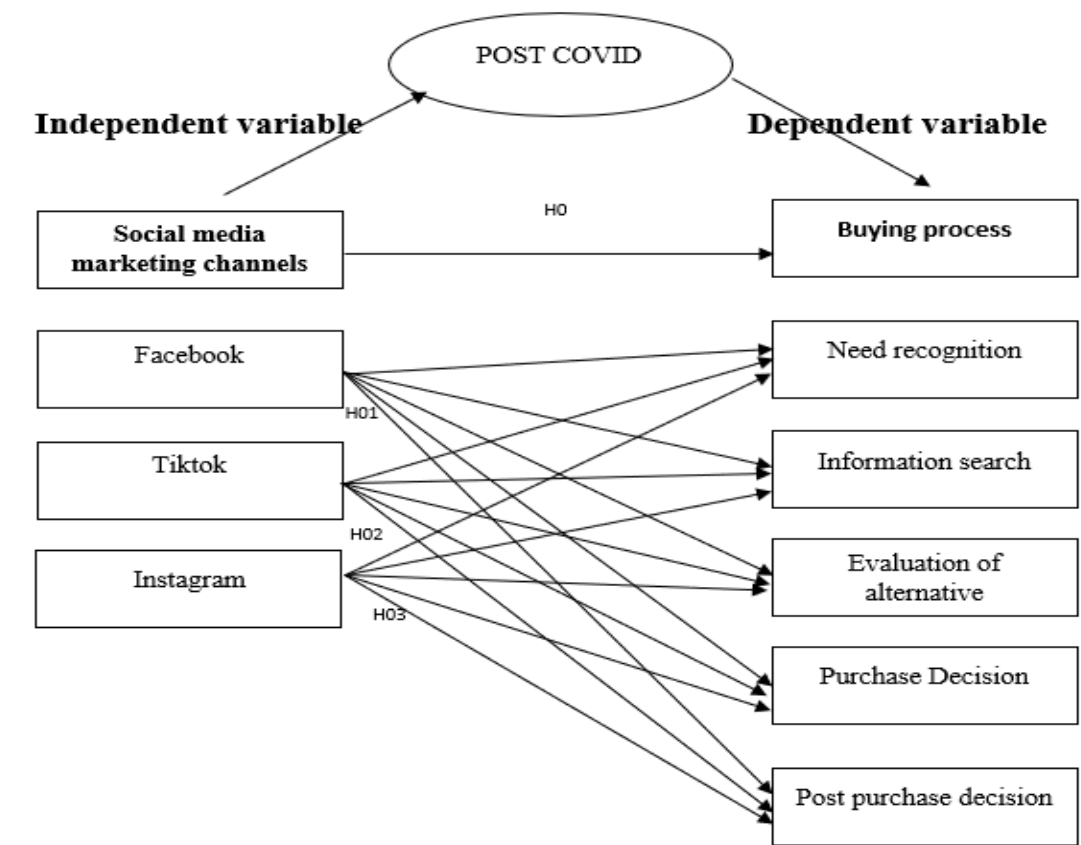


Figure 2 Research model presented by the author

3.6. Sample and Data collection process

This study collects secondary data through a literature review concerning digital media marketing, marketing tools, consumer behavior, and the decision process.

Secondly, primary research is an approach used by researchers to assemble data directly instead of depending on data collected from earlier studies (Hartford,2019). Primary research is specially conducted to address specific research involving in-strength analysis (Hoox and Boeije 2005).

For the data collection, this study has used the primary data collection method, given that research is conducted for this theme for the first time in Morocco and there is no previous data to analyze in this specific geographical zone, and also to make the data collected fits the aims of the research. Data is collected based on the absolute need to analyze the effect of social media marketing channels on Moroccan consumer behavior.

In this study, explanatory research was utilized to attain the thesis objective; the author chose this method because it is focused on analyzing the effect of social media marketing on consumer behavior in their buying process decision in Morocco after the pandemic.

The explanatory research approach helps the scope of a reason and consequence relationship among two elements. By performing explanatory research, researchers can recognize the reason, or assumption, following a happening and forecast potential occurrences (Indeed Editorial Team 2021).

Furthermore, explanatory research includes various advantages such as:

- Addressing the inconsistency in the research process by explaining a phenomenon
- Recognizing the influences of particular alterations to practices, norms, or procedures
- Delivering more occasions and opportunities to study different and new related subjects
- Assisting in understanding a problem better

In the study, the convenience sampling method has used given that the convenience sampling type of nonprobability sampling where members of the target population meet specific practical measures, such as easy approachability, geographical immediacy, availability at a given time, or the disposition to contribute is involved for the determination of the study (Etikan et al. 2016).

A structured questionnaire was used in this paper where contributors answered prompts by choosing from preset answers, e.g., Likert scales and multiple choice responses (Harris and Brown,2010).

The questions placed in this survey have been reformulated based *on three scientific articles by Omar and Atteya (2020), Mason et al.(2021), and Narcum et al. (2020)* that address the same subject differently using different parameters but with the same objective of analyzing the effect of digital marketing and social media on the buying process of the consumer.

The questionnaire was administered online using Google Forms; given that it is dedicated to Moroccan consumers, it was conducted in French and English.

The participants were asked to express their level of agreement using the Likert scale, which determines the respondents' degree of accordance with the statement asked. In this form 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree or disagree), 4 (agree), 5 (strongly agree).

This research study adopts the qualitative comparison of respondents and quantitative analysis methods. The data was collected, cleaned, and analyzed electronically using SPSS version 23. The questionnaire was distributed to 250, and 209 responses were reached from different Gender, ages, and social classes. It is necessary to mention that the time interval and deadline have limited the research author to collect more responses from a large population.

3.7. Overview of Moroccan social media users

According to the latest statistics from Data Portal, which collaborates with Kepios, We are Sociale and Hootsuite. At the start of 2022, the Moroccan population increased by 1.2% compared to 2021, reaching 37.56 million in January 2022 (DataReportal, 2022).

Kepios analysis reveals that internet users in Morocco expanded by 1.2 percent % between 2021 and 2022 to reach 31.59 million internet users in Morocco in January 2022. For perception, these user numbers show that 5.96 million of the population in Morocco did not use the internet at the start of 2022, indicating that 15.9 percent of the population stayed offline at the beginning of the year (Kemp,2022).

By examining the Figure1, which represents an overview of social media use in morocco by February 2022, it is understood that the total of social media users in Morocco at the head start of 2022 was 63.4 percent of the total population; in other words, 23.80 million social media users in Morocco in January 2022 which represent 75.3% of all internet users in

Morocco. 59.8% of social media platform users in Morocco are predominantly male, versus 40.2% female. The average daily time spent using social media is two hours and 29 minutes (DataReportal,2022). However, it is essential to note that social media users may not represent unique individuals.

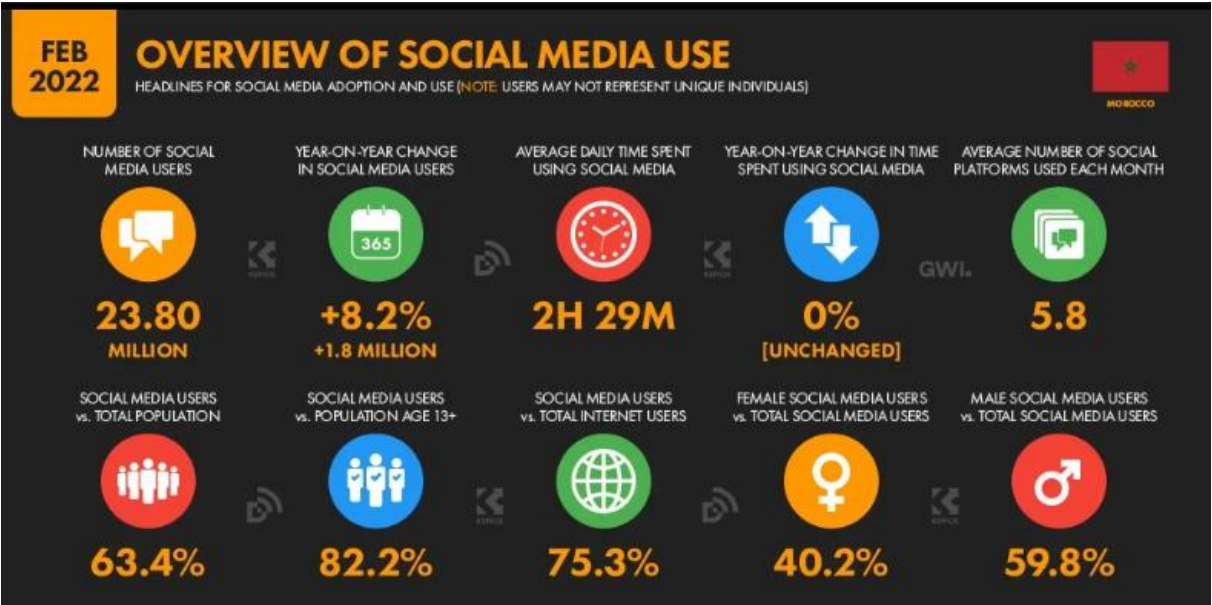


Figure 3 Overview Of Social Media use In Morocco (DataReportal 2020)

Numbers published by Meta's advertising resources indicate that Facebook had 18.95 million users in Morocco in early 2022. As of January 2022, 62.2 % of Facebook users are male, and 37.8% are female (DataReportal,2022).

Concerning Instagram, reports reveal 9.30 million users in Morocco in the first month of 2022. A majority of male users, represented by 54.1 while 45.9 % of Instagram's ad audience in Morocco, were female (DataReportal, 2022).

ByteDance's advertising reports indicate that TikTok had 5.97 million users in Morocco by the beginning of 2022. Like the other platforms, most users of Tiktok in Morocco are Male, with 52.7 percent, although 47.3 percent are female (DataReportal, 2022).

3.8.Data analysis and findings

This section presents the analysis results conducted in the research study to empirically investigate the effect and impact of social media marketing channels on the Moroccan consumer buying decision process post covid using a structured questionnaire instrument.

The questions placed in this survey have been reformulated based on three scientific articles by Omar and Atteya (2020), Mason et al.(2021), and Narcum et al. (2020) that address the same subject differently using different parameters but with the same objective of analyzing the effect of digital marketing and social media on the buying process of the consumer.

This research study adopts the qualitative comparison of respondents and quantitative analysis methods. The returned question was collected, cleaned, and analyzed electronically using SPSS version 23, and findings were presented using descriptive and inferential statistics

3.8.1. Validity and Reliability Analysis Results

| Scale | Number of items | Cronbach's alpha |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Likert scale | 15 | .907 |
| Total | 15 | >.700 |

Table 1 Validity and Reliability Cronbach's alpha results

Reliability is "whether an instrument can be interpreted consistently across different situations" (Field, 2013). Reliability is the determination of the research instrument consistently providing the same results.

Cronbach's alpha produced internal consistencies that exceeded the minimum value of .70 required for acceptable reliability (Cronbach & Shapiro, 1982).

The Cronbach Alpha based on standardized items of the questionnaire survey revealed a magnitude of 0.907, demonstrating that the reliability condition is satisfactory for the Research study.

3.8.2. Descriptive and univariate variables

When examining Table 2, it is understood that most participants in this questionnaire are between 20-29, represented by 59.8%. For the Gender respondents, 55% of participants are male, and 45 % are female. A large population of the participants, represented by 42.6%, are undergraduates, 36.8% are master's Graduates, and 7.2%% are at the Ph.D. graduate education level. 27.3% of respondents have an income between 5001 and 7000 MAD, and 47.8 % use social media 3 to 5 hours daily.

Table 2 Distribution of Participants by Demographic Characteristics

| Demographic parameters | | Frequency | Percentage % |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Gender | <i>Female</i> | 82 | 45 % |
| | <i>Male</i> | 110 | 55 % |
| Age Range | <i>20-29</i> | 125 | 59.8 % |
| | <i>30-39</i> | 70 | 33.5 % |
| | <i>40-49</i> | 13 | 6.2 % |
| | <i>50-59</i> | - | - |
| | <i>60+</i> | 1 | .5 % |
| Education level | <i>Undergraduate</i> | 89 | 42.6 % |
| | <i>Master's Graduate</i> | 77 | 36.8 % |
| | <i>Ph.D. Graduate</i> | 15 | 7.2 % |
| | <i>Other</i> | 28 | 13.4 % |
| Income Range | <i>1-3000</i> | 21 | 10.0 % |
| | <i>3001-5000</i> | 37 | 17.7 % |
| | <i>5001-7000</i> | 57 | 27.3 % |
| | <i>7001-9000</i> | 54 | 25.8 % |
| | <i>9001-12000</i> | 24 | 11.5 % |
| | <i>12001+</i> | 16 | 7.7 % |
| Social media Usage Per Day | <i>Up to 1 hour</i> | 8 | 3.8 % |
| | <i>1-3 hours</i> | 71 | 34.0 % |
| | <i>3-5 hours</i> | 100 | 47.8 % |
| | <i>>5 hours</i> | 30 | 14.4 % |
| | | | |

3.8.3. Correlation analysis

Correlation analysis in research is a statistical method used to measure the depth of the linear relationship between two variables and calculate their association. Correlation analysis evaluates the degree of variation in one variable due to the change in the other (Reinard,2006).

Correlation analysis can expose significant interactions between distinct metrics or clusters of metrics. Data about those relationships can provide new insights and reveal interdependencies, even if the metrics come from different parts of the business (Anodot 2021).

The correlation coefficient in this study is used to investigate and measure the relationship between consumers' buying processes and how it is impacted by social media marketing channels chosen in this paper: Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok.

Table 3 shows the relationship between the Facebook channel and consumers' buying processes. The results show coefficients between 1 and 3, which indicate a weak relationship. Therefore, we can conclude that Facebook negatively impacts the Moroccan buying decision process compared to other social media channels.

Table 3 Multiple Correlation Matrix of the Facebook group

| | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Facebook group | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .241** | .256** | .241** | .265** | .258** | .173* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .012 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Buying decision | Pearson Correlation | .241** | 1 | .519** | .418** | .406** | .530** | .462** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Need recognition | Pearson Correlation | .256** | .519** | 1 | .630** | .628** | .626** | .565** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Information search | Pearson Correlation | .241** | .418** | .630** | 1 | .597** | .649** | .520** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Evaluation of alternatives | Pearson Correlation | .265** | .406** | .628** | .597** | 1 | .576** | .574** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Purchase decision | Pearson Correlation | .258** | .530** | .626** | .649** | .576** | 1 | .587** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Post-purchase decision | Pearson Correlation | .173* | .462** | .565** | .520** | .574** | .587** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .012 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |

Table 4 below shows the impact of the Instagram group on the consumer buying decision process post covid with coefficients between 1-3, which indicate a weak positive influence on the consumer buying decision process.

Table 4 Multiple Correlation Matrix of the Instagram group

| | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Instagram group | Pearson | 1 | .307** | .164* | .196** | .158* | .229** | .221** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .017 | .004 | .022 | .001 | .001 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Buying decision | Pearson | .307** | 1 | .572** | .519** | .604** | .608** | .654** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Need recognition | Pearson | .164* | .572** | 1 | .678** | .768** | .664** | .643** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .017 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Information search | Pearson | .196** | .519** | .678** | 1 | .696** | .725** | .573** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .004 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Evaluation of alternatives | Pearson | .158* | .604** | .768** | .696** | 1 | .672** | .680** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .022 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Purchase decision | Pearson | .229** | .608** | .664** | .725** | .672** | 1 | .602** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Post-purchase decision | Pearson | .221** | .654** | .643** | .573** | .680** | .602** | 1 |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .001 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |

Table 5 below shows the influence of Tiktok on the consumer buying decision process post covid, with a coefficient between 5-6 indicating a moderately positive impact of the Tiktok marketing channel on the Moroccan buying decision process.

Table 5 Multiple Correlation Matrix of the Tiktok group

| | | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
|----------------------------|-----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Tiktok group | Pearson | 1 | .508** | .587** | .567** | .553** | .590** | .547** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Buying decision | Pearson | .508** | 1 | .817** | .779** | .814** | .794** | .836** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Need recognition | Pearson | .587** | .817** | 1 | .794** | .833** | .800** | .823** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Information search | Pearson | .567** | .779** | .794** | 1 | .787** | .828** | .783** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Evaluation of alternatives | Pearson | .553** | .814** | .833** | .787** | 1 | .839** | .831** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Purchase decision | Pearson | .590** | .794** | .800** | .828** | .839** | 1 | .793** |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | | .000 |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |
| Post-purchase decision | Pearson | .547** | .836** | .823** | .783** | .831** | .793** | 1 |
| | Correlation | | | | | | | |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | .000 | |
| | N | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 | 212 |

3.8.4. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a set of statistical techniques used to estimate the relationships between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. It can be employed to measure the association's strength and depth among variables and develop the future relationship between them (Corporate Finance Institute 2015).

Regression analysis is used to expect the value of the dependent variable for individuals for whom some information concerning the explanatory variables is available or to estimate the effect of some explanatory variable on the dependent variable (Montgomery et al., 2021).

In this paper, regression analysis was used to analyze the effect of the independent variable: social media marketing channels (Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok), on the consumer buying decision process, deemed as the dependent variable in the research model. The aim of using this method is to define and identify if the social media marketing channels have an impact on the buying decision process of Moroccan consumers after the pandemic.

Table 6 Regression Analysis

| Predictor | Need recognition | Information search | Evaluation of alternatives | Purchase decision | Post-purchase decision |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Facebook group | 0.000*** (0.256) | 0.000*** (0.241) | 0.000*** (0.265) | 0.000*** (0.258) | 0.000*** (0.173) |
| Instagram group | 0.017* (0.164) | 0.004** (0.196) | 0.022* (0.158) | 0.001** (0.229) | 0.001** (0.221) |
| Tiktok group | 0.000*** (0.587) | 0.000*** (0.567) | 0.000*** (0.553) | 0.000*** (0.590) | 0.000*** (0.547) |

Table 6 describes the results of a series of linear regression estimations in which the statistical significance of the study problem is highlighted. In row (1), the independent variable is the Facebook group, with each Column as the dependent variable. The independent variable in a row (2) is the Instagram group, with its respective dependent variable columns. Row (3) has the independent variable as the Tiktok group investigating its impact on the

respective explanatory variable columns. Standard errors in parentheses ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$.

The first row describes an Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, a statistical method of analysis that estimates the relationship between one or more independent variables and a dependent variable. In this case, the OLS in which the need for recognition is regressed on the Facebook group in Column (1), a significant value ($P < .0001$) indicates a positive impact of Facebook on consumers' need for recognition. Column (2) shows a positive impact ($P < .0001$) of Facebook on Information search, and Column (3) indicates the as positive impact of Facebook on consumers' evaluation of alternatives ($P < .0001$), a significant positive impact of Facebook on consumers' purchase and post-purchase decision in Column (4) and (5) respectively. With all the processes of buying decisions using Facebook, there is enough evidence to agree that Facebook positively impacts consumers' buying decision processes.

Row (2) is another OLS that shows the impact of the Instagram channel on the five-stage of buying decision processes. Column (1) indicates a positive impact of Instagram on consumers' need recognition ($P < .05$). Column (2) proves that Instagram has a positive impact on consumers' information search ($P < .05$), and Column (3) shows a positive impact of Instagram on consumers' evaluation of alternatives ($P < .05$), and columns (4) and (5) establish a positive impact of Instagram on consumers' purchase and post-purchase decisions. The estimation results show a positive impact of the Instagram marketing channel on consumers' buying decisions.

Finally, another OLS method used to investigate the impact of Tiktok on consumers' buying decision processes is statistically significant, with row (3), Column (1) showing a positive influence of Tiktok on consumers' need recognition ($P < .001$), Column (2) with a positive impact of Tiktok on consumers' information search, ($P < .001$), Column (3) shows that there is a positive impact of Tiktok on evaluation of alternatives, ($P < .001$), also there is a positive impact of Tiktok on consumers' purchase and post-purchase decisions in columns (4) and (5).

Based on the regression analysis results in Table 6, the three social media channels investigated in this study, Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok, impact Moroccan consumer buying decisions

3.9. Discussion

This research examines social media marketing channels presented by Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. It investigates the effect of these channels on the consumer buying decision process in Morocco after the pandemic.

Based on the results above, retrieved from the questionnaire to verify the hypotheses stated by the author concerning the effect of Facebook, Tiktok, and Instagram on Moroccan consumer behavior in the buying process, the findings indicate that Facebook has a positive impact on consumer decisions in the five stages.

The results show that Tiktok, as a social media marketing channel, positively impacts the consumer buying decision through all the stages of the consumer buying decision process. Also, Instagram significantly impacts consumer decisions in the evaluation stage; then, information research needs recognition, purchase decision, and post-purchase.

However, the findings of this research support the hypothesis tested, which stated that social media marketing channels represented by Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok positively impact the Moroccan consumer buying decision process after the pandemic of covid 19, starting from the need for recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, buying decision, to post-purchase decision.

3.10. Limitations and Recommendations.

Limitations in this study can be highlighted by the insufficient time needed to analyze and distribute the questionnaire to a large population in Morocco. The sample size presented a restriction for this paper compared to the Moroccan population that has access to the internet and uses social media platforms. In other words, the Data sample was relatively small, showing the study's limited generalizability.

In future studies, it is suggested that the sample size should be increased as it would cover more people in society and help create a better and more accurate set of results. Therefore, the suggestion for further research may be made to analyze the effect of social media marketing channels in other countries, regions, or globally to compare the results and consider the specific factors related to the geographical part tested and research on different channels for the reason that they may differ from Morocco's.

As cultures and values change from country to country, consumers' buying behavior may also fluctuate. A study involving many countries recommended being directed on this subject for further precise global results.

The second suggestion is to measure the impact of different social media marketing channels on the buying process for a specific sector or brand, local or international, which can be valuable for brand strategies.

However, Marketing managers have to focus their strategies concerning the buying decision process in the first and last steps, which concerns the need recognition by initiating consumer product needs by highlighting product positivities and brand awareness, and sharing customer reviews via short videos offers allochronic communications.

Conclusion

Social media marketing channels are a prominent source for influencing consumers buying decisions as they allow them to interact by sharing reviews, experiences, and usage tips of a service or product.

Social media presents a valuable tool to develop a business's brand through expanded brand awareness and fondness. This study examined Moroccan consumers, given that it is an emergent and growing market. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers and companies have tended to increase their online presence by enhancing consumer behavior activities and companies.

The rising influence of social media to impact consumer behaviors is evident. Consequently, social media as a marketing tool is becoming increasingly important, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Companies must include effective use of social media as recommended in their marketing strategies. The results highlight social media's impact on Moroccan consumers' decision-making behaviors.

The research provides an appropriate and expressive explanation of the impact of the three channels of social media marketing platforms chosen by the author of this research on the buying decision process of Moroccan consumers after the pandemic. This study offered several theoretical implications, mainly based on the collected data and in-depth analysis.

The importance of this paper is distinct in giving businesses a transparent picture of the role of social media marketing channels, specifically Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok, defined by this study on the Moroccan consumer purchase decisions process after the pandemic

Social media is a crucial source for affecting consumers buying decisions as allowing users to share their buying reviews, service experiences, and product use ideas. As such, the findings demonstrate social media's impact on the Moroccan consumers buying decision process.

Therefore, the practical application of social media marketing should be a part of any business's marketing strategy. For example, social media visuals, content, promotional

activities, and opinion leader influence should be implemented to positively affect consumers' buying behaviors.

The outcomes of this study highlight the positive impact and importance of social media marketing channels on the buying decision process of Moroccan consumers after the pandemic of COVID-19.

The findings illustrate the impact of Facebook, Instagram, and Tiktok on consumer buying decision processes through all five stages from need recognition information search, evaluation of alternatives, buying decision, to post-purchase decision.

The results in this study underline a vital point negligent by many companies: the diversification of social media marketing channels, which are all critical for businesses to expand their leads and preserve their customers.

The current study focused on Moroccan consumers; given that it is an emerging north African market, the pandemic has pushed businesses and consumers to go from offline to online. Also, this study's results aim to help companies understand where and when to place their marketing messages to achieve their leads.

Therefore, marketers and marketing managers need to use social media marketing channels in their marketing strategy by implementing content creation for the most relevant platforms depending on their results and activities to positively stimulate the consumers to choose their brand in their buying decision process.

Finally, It is necessary to remind that it is recommended for companies to include effective use of social media in their marketing strategies by increasing their presence on the different social media platforms and not depending on just one or two-channel, given that social media marketing is not a novel feature and it is continuously shifting and growing.

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Appendix 1

As part of a master's thesis project, this study is conducted by Ayman Garti under the supervision of Dr. Öğr. Üyesi EVRİM İLDEM DEVELİ at Istanbul Commerce University, Turkey. This questionnaire consists of two parts, the first part about the demographic question and the second part relating the social media marketing channels (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok) to your buying process decision after the pandemic. By answering this questionnaire, you will help me realize my thesis project.

We will NOT know your name or details when you respond to this survey. Your responses will be kept entirely confidential and anonymous. The results from the study will be used for a master's thesis.

Please, You are asked to place a cross (x)in the appropriate response blank to indicate whether these statements are factual for you.

The Likert scale is used in this questionnaire to measure respondents' level of agreement with the statement. This study uses a 1-5 Likert scale, which is: 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree or disagree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree).

| Questionnaire to analyze the effect of social media marketing on Moroccan consumer behavior for buying process post-pandemic | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Facebook has an essential role in changing my attitude toward the buying decisions | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I show interest in deals with an offer and discounts shown on Facebook | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I use Facebook to identify needed products | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I use Facebook to gather information to compare products | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I prefer using Facebook to evaluate product purchase risk | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |

| | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| I favor using Facebook to make a purchase decision | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I Favor using Facebook to share my post-purchase satisfaction or dissatisfaction | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| Instagram has an essential role in changing my attitude toward the buying decisions | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I show interest in deals with an offer and discounts shown on Instagram | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I use Instagram to identify needed products | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I use Instagram to gather information to compare products | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I prefer using Instagram to evaluate product purchase risk | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I favor using Instagram to make a purchase decision | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I Favor using Instagram to share my post-purchase satisfaction or dissatisfaction | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| TikTok has an essential role in changing my attitude toward the buying decisions | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I show interest in deals with an offer and discounts shown on Tiktok | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I use TikTok to identify needed products | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I use TikTok to gather information to compare products | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I prefer using TikTok to evaluate product purchase risk | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I favor using TikTok to make a purchase decision | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |
| I Favor using TikTok to share my post-purchase satisfaction or dissatisfaction | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) |

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

What is your age?

- 20 – 29
- 30 – 39
- 40 – 49
- 50 – 59
- 60+

What is your Gender?

- Female
- Male

Educational level

- Undergraduate
- Master's Graduate
- Ph.D. Graduate

What is your income range?

- 3000 – 5000
- 5001 – 7000
- 7001 – 9000
- 9001 – 12000
- 12001 +

Daily Social media use

- Up to 1 hour
- Between 1 to 3 hours
- Between 3 to 5 hours
- More than 5 hours

Which social media do you use the most? you can choose up to 3

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Tiktok
- Pinterest