



Analyzing the Influence of Social Media Content on Online Purchase Decisions: A Case Study from Saudi Arabia Electronic Products Market

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Received: 30 November 2024

Accepted: 02 March 2025

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32479/irmm.18364>

ABSTRACT

This study aims primarily to analyze the quality of the online electronic product Purchase Decision-Making Process from the perspective of provided content type through social media in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This study focused on four variables regarding the purchase decision-making process, which are need recognition, information gathering, alternatives evaluation, and making the purchase decision, to examine the differences for each of them across three main groups of provided content via social media: Visual/audio content, textual content and images content. The proposed research is designed based on a quantitative method utilizing a questionnaire survey with a sample size of 508 online respondents. The results showed that there is a somewhat decline in analyzing the quality of the online electronic product Purchase Decision-Making Process in the Kingdom. This process also differs across content type groups in favor of image content compared to visual/audio content and textual content with regard to the variables of gathering information, evaluating alternatives, and purchasing decisions. The implications can be described and explained in more detail, corresponding to the research questions and objectives of this study.

Keywords: Online Purchase Decision-Making Process, Social Media Content, Online Electronics E-commerce Market Sector, Social Media Platforms

JEL Classifications: M31, M37, M39

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is a network of websites and apps that enables people to communicate with one another. The users can create, use, exchange, and discuss the content available on the World Wide Web (Bhandarkar et al., 2021). The rapid expansion of the technological revolution and the internet, particularly social media, have grown exponentially over the past few decades. Due to the availability of smartphones and the simplicity of accessing such websites through home computers, social networking site use is widespread among people everywhere. Currently, there are various SM platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, Blogs Pinterest, LinkedIn, and

Google +. In the meantime, the community is heavily dependent on these online platforms to locate readily available services such as business, marketing, education, and advertising. Nonetheless, the utilization of social media platforms varies based on the culture of the society, resulting in varying outcomes, whether favorable or detrimental, on individuals' lives (Azazz and Elshaer, 2022).

The second-largest Arab nation is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (O'Neill, 2023). According to estimates, the population reached 32.18 million in 2022, rising at a comparatively high rate of 1.27% (ibid). A 99% internet penetration rate in 2023 (CST report, 2024), which was in line with the rising number of educated Saudi Arabians actively engaged in a variety of professional,

technical, and managerial roles. Social media users at the end of 2020 reached 18.3 million, equivalent to 57% of the population of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the beginning of 2020 (Adam 2020), to jump up (90.9%) at the end of 2023 (CST report, 2024). The penetration rates of leading social media sites in KSA are 83.1% for WhatsApp, 72.7% for Instagram, 71.8% for TikTok, 70.5% for Snapchat, 66.3% for X (Twitter), 60.2% for Telegram, and 58.9% for Facebook (Statista, 2024a). In light of these statistics, Saudi Arabia provides a valid platform to study social media. Moreover, regardless of demographic factors, social media has become available to the majority of the Kingdom's population, interfering in all areas of the details of their daily lives. This spread has, in turn, become the focus of attention of researchers in several fields (psychology, marketing, management, medicine... etc.) to study this phenomenon and its repercussions on certain dimensions related to those research fields to identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and thus how to adjust them in the right direction to achieve the maximum possible benefit. Within this context, Alnufaiy et al. (2023) have investigated in their study the perception and attitude toward social media (SM) use for professionalism and dental practice promotion among periodontal specialists working in Saudi Arabia (KSA). They found that the most common SM platform used by periodontists for daily use and dental practice promotion was Snapchat (56.2%), followed by Instagram and Twitter (54.5% and 49.6%, respectively). There was a significant difference in proportions among Twitter, Snapchat, and TikTok between older and younger periodontists. While the study of Alshankiti et al. (2023) discussed the impact of social media usage, addiction, and exposure on students' academic performance. This study reached the following results: 842 medical students participated in our study. 57.1% were females, 24.8% were in the 5th academic year, and 56.5% had a Grade Point Average (GPA) in the range of 4.5-5. Moreover, 26.1% of the students use social networking sites for 3-4 h, and males are more addicted to social media than females. Within the same framework, Adam in his study (2020) concluded that female university students suffer from excessive use of social media, which negatively affects the quality of sleep and their mood. The results also showed that the average login to social networks is 260 min/day/person. Just as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp dominate the largest number of social media users in the Kingdom, Saudi Arabia is the first Arab and the second globally to use Snapchat (Adam, 2020).

It did not take long for entrepreneurs and brand owners to realize the importance of these platforms as marketing channels capable of reaching the largest target market segments at the lowest possible cost and available fastest time, which changed the direction of marketing in all its dimensions and strategies from the traditional concept to the contemporary electronic concept, which has addressed the behavior of customers according to the purpose for which they use social media. In other words, the entertainment industry has been harnessed through these platforms for purely marketing-commercial purposes, to influence the purchase decision-making process of the target customer in various production sectors. Which is not limited only to the field sector but has become the focus of attention for many researchers around the world in the fields of e-marketing and e-commerce.

According to a study conducted by Petcharat and Leelasantham (2021), it was discovered that a greater number of Americans prefer online shopping as opposed to physical in-store shopping, with 51% of them opting to shop online. Furthermore, 96% of Americans have made an online purchase at least once in their lives, while 80% of them have purchased within the last month. Amazon accounted for 44% of all e-commerce sales in the US from 2017 to 2021, and the year-over-year growth rate is 23%. It's shocking that 46% of American firms don't use their website to promote their goods and services, but they'll use online shopping platforms. Another study conducted in Thailand has ranked 5th in using the Internet for E-commerce with about 80%. Accordingly, it has been reported that mobile e-commerce sales represent 34.5% of total e-commerce sales from 2017 to 2021, and the number is growing (Mali, 2021). Accordingly, Corporations have increasingly realized the significant role of social media, and as a result, have included social media platforms in their marketing plans, owing to advantages such as increased internet speed, simplicity of use, and a rising number of internet users, among others. The development of the internet and the number of people using social media has prompted marketers to partake in social media marketing (Li et al., 2021).

In short, there was a paucity of studies that addressed this phenomenon from its general perspective in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Based on the results of these studies, we can conclude that the phenomenon of social media usage in the Kingdom has been studied in the context of dimensions related to the rate of use, the purpose of use, and the type of preferred platforms. However, the results of studying this phenomenon from the perspective of these dimensions are not generalizable, as they vary depending on the nature of the research community and its demographic composition. Anyway, we did not find any study that focused on the preferred social media content variable in the Kingdom, which led us to address this dimension as an independent variable in our study. This study aims in particular to analyze the quality of the online electronic product Purchase Decision-Making Process from the perspective of content types provided through social media in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which we will explain the reasons for picking this title in the following sections.

2. CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

2.1. The Concept of the Purchase Decision-Making Process from a Theoretical Perspective

The process of purchase decision-making refers to "the patterns of customer behavior that predict, determine, and direct the choice-making process for the purchase of need-satisfying products, concepts, or services" (Helal et al., 2022, p. 2). In general, there was agreement among the researchers who studied the purchasing decision-making process regarding the dimensions of this variable, which they defined in four stages as follows (Voramontri and Klieb, 2019; Helal et al., 2022; Helinsha and Margawati, 2022):

- Need identification (purchase motivation): The first stage of the purchase decision-making process, which begins when the customer recognizes a problem related to unsatisfied needs (Helal et al., 2022, p. 2).

- Information research: The second stage of the purchasing decision-making process, is when customers begin to find out the information based on their needs and desires to satisfy themselves (Voramontri and Klieb, 2019).
- Evaluation of alternatives: In which goods and services are compared to choose the best ones. This decision is entirely subjective since customer preferences vary from individual to individual (Helal et al., 2022).
- Purchasing decision: At this stage, customers will decide what they want to buy. Furthermore, a consumer has either evaluated all the information and reached a logical conclusion, made a choice based on their emotions, surrendered to marketing efforts, or a mix of all. Accordingly, if the customer has a good and positive experience with the product, then in the future it is likely to repeat the purchase without considering it again (Sarkar and Das 2017).

The online purchasing process is defined as “the process by which customers directly purchase products, services, etc. from a vendor through the Internet, without the need of an intermediate provider,” while offline shopping is “the conventional method of visiting stores, retailers, or shops in person” (Helal et al., 2022, P. 3). However, the stages of the purchasing decision-making process do not differ whether that process is online or offline, but what differs is the use of marketing channels that play the role of influencers in controlling that process and then marketing strategies based on those channels. A study carried out by Al-Abdallah et al. (2022) found that social networking sites are the most effective marketing channel that influences the online purchasing process from other channels such as websites or electronic stores (Al-Abdallah et al. 2022).

2.2. Online Electronic Product Market in the KSA

The Electronics e-commerce market sector is considered one of the sectors with a significant economic impact that cannot be ignored at the level of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is predicted to reach US\$ 2.32 billion by 2024 and accounts for 15.70% of the total e-commerce market in Saudi Arabia. It is expected to increase over the next years. The expected compound annual growth rate for the next 5 years (CAGR 2024-2029) will be 11.84%, resulting in a projected market volume of US\$ 4.06 billion by 2029 (Statista, 2024b). With the combination of other reasons such as the high rates of internet penetration in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which reached approximately (99%), the increase in the percentage of social media users hit approximately (90.9%), at the end of 2023 (CST report, 2024), of the total population of the Kingdom, 75% aged between 15 and 39 (Al-Hadban and Almotairi, 2020) as the best-targeted youth age segment, the perceived gradual increase in the percentage of online shopping which jumped to (63.7%) in general during 2023, and (34.6%) for the online consumer electronic products shopping in particular (CST report, 2024). All of these factors combined with the economic and social openness that the Kingdom is witnessing within the strategy of the Kingdom’s Vision 2030, have made the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia an attractive address for applying this research title to the online electronic products market, which has not been addressed before. Accordingly, an important issue arises here to be presented as a research objective as follows:

RO₁: Highlighting the quality of the online electronic product purchase decision-making process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through all stages of this process, up to the stage of making the final purchase decision.

2.3. The Influence of Social Media Content on the Purchase Decision-Making Process

Visual browsing behavior on social media has become a routine matter for these platforms’ users, which makes the quality of the content provided a critical tactic for e-marketing strategies depending on the type of product. The study by Chen et al. (2022) found a significant correlation between the visual browsing behavior of consumers and their purchase intention, while the study of Cabales et al. (2023) showed that the impact of social media on customers’ purchasing behavior depends on the quality of the provided content. Therefore, we will try to explain this issue from the perspective of selective exposure theory, which indicates that people usually intentionally or unintentionally ignore the opposite of their own opinions when they face mass media information and tend to accept the information that is consistent with their tendency to consolidate their inherent value system and get comfort from it (Xiao et al., 2019, p. 418). Meaning that the type of desired content plays a crucial role in attracting the potential customer. For example, the idea of the short video on which the TikTok platform is based is considered the basic common interest of the audience of this platform. Here, the preference for this type of content by a specific audience would have a significant impact when it is used as a marketing tactic by continuously pushing similar videos to users. Indeed, this study found that the feature of short videos (Reels) as desired content by the audience of these platforms has a strong positive effect on stimulating purchase intention. From the perspective of this theory, the matter does not depend only on the type of content and its quality, but also on the quantity, and indeed this is what has been confirmed by the study of Helinsha and Margawati, (2022) who light on the effect of content quantity in stimulating the purchasing decision, as it found that the greater the amount of content for a particular product on the short stories feature and sharing photos as posts, the higher the demand for this product by followers.

Despite the importance of these studies’ results, they are not generalizable, as they are related primarily to the type of product and then to the culture of the research community. What indicators apply to a specific research community or a specific product-market do not necessarily apply to another community or another product market. Given the importance of the content factor, as we mentioned above, our study is concerned with investigating the following objectives:

RO₂: Highlighting the most preferred content type by social media users in general in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

RO₃: Highlighting the difference in the quality of the online electronic product purchase decision-making process in all its dimensions (need recognition, information gathering, alternatives evaluation, and purchase decision) across the basic provided types of content through social media (visual/audio content, images, textual content) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Despite the positive impact shown by the above studies of the type of content on the online purchase decision-making process, these studies did not take into account the details of these process dimensions, more specifically the online electronic product purchase decision-making process at the level of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, that's why the mechanism of hypotheses' formulating will take a two-side test in the following form:

Null hypothesis (H_0): The online decision-making process of purchasing electronic products in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia doesn't differ across the provided types of content via social media platforms. This hypothesis is divided into the following hypotheses:

- $H(0,1)$: The need recognition dimension doesn't differ across the provided types of content via social media platforms.
- $H(0,2)$: The information gathering dimension doesn't differ across the provided types of content via social media platforms.
- $H(0,3)$: The alternatives evaluation dimension doesn't differ across the provided types of content via social media platforms.
- $H(0,4)$: The Purchase decision dimension doesn't differ across the provided types of content via social media platforms.

Alternative hypothesis (H_1): The online decision-making process of purchasing electronic products in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia varies across the provided types of content via social media platforms. This hypothesis is divided into the following hypotheses:

- $H(1,1)$: The need recognition dimension varies across the provided types of content via social media platforms.
- $H(1,2)$: The information gathering dimension varies across the provided types of content via social media platforms.
- $H(1,3)$: The alternatives evaluation dimension varies across the provided types of content via social media platforms.
- $H(1,4)$: The Purchase decision dimension varies across the provided types of content via social media platforms.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Study

This study aims to analyze the quality of the online electronic product Purchase Decision-Making Process from the perspective of content types provided through social media in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The results will be tested through this paper and according to the objectives proposed above in three stages as follows:

- The first stage, which is related to the independent variable to determine the type of content generally preferred by social media users in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- The second stage, which relates to the dependent variable, focuses on identifying the quality of the online electronic product purchase decision-making process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- The third stage, which relates to hypothesis testing, focuses on identifying the extent to which the quality of the online electronic product's purchase decision-making process differs for each of its stages across the three basic types of provided

content via social media platforms (visual and audio, images, textual) in the KSA.

The SPSS tool will be used to analyze the results for this paper. A set of statistical tests will be adopted in a way that suits the nature of the research objectives in general, starting from frequencies and descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and then determining their significance accurately through the One-Sample T-test, moving on later to test the research hypotheses through the One-Way ANOVA test, of course, after verifying its assumption represented by normal distribution and the homogeneity of variance through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Levene's tests. To achieve more accuracy in testing hypotheses, we must use *post hoc* tests, as the appropriate type of *post hoc* test will be determined based on the homogeneity of variance test, which enriches the research results.

3.2. Method

3.2.1. Research philosophy, approach and design

This research follows the interpretive philosophy, while the descriptive analytical method and the quantitative approach were adopted by relying on two types of basic data:

- Secondary sources of data: Data were collected from the latest scientific references, periodicals, and research to establish a theoretical research background related to the research variables and objectives.
- Primary sources of data: This data was collected by preparing a questionnaire designed to measure the influence of the provided types of content via social media platforms (as an independent variable) on the online electronic product purchase decision-making process (as a dependent variable) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

3.2.2. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire was designed according to three sections, as follows:

Section A: This section is related to demographic variables. Items (1-4).

Section B: This section is related to measuring the variable of provided types of content via social media platforms as an independent variable; the item for this variable was formulated on a multiple-choice scale. Item (5).

Section C: This section is related to measuring the online electronic product purchase decision-making process as a dependent variable. Items 6-24 are as follows:

- The dimension of purchase motivation (Need recognition): Items 6-9.
- The dimension of information gathering: Items 10-14.
- The dimension of alternative evaluation: Items 15-19.
- The dimension of purchase decision-making: Items 20-24.

The items for this section of the questionnaire were adapted based on several scales: the need recognition scale from Goldsmith et al. (2000); Pop et al. (2022); Prestwich et al. (2008); information gathering from Kang and Schuett (2013); Pop et al. (2022); alternatives evaluation from Pop et al. (2022); Magno and Cassia (2018); purchase decision from Cox et al. (2009); Pop et al. (2022). Respondents anchor their level of agreement on a 5-point Likert

scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

3.2.3. Reliability and validity (pilot sample)

The content validity of this questionnaire was tested by presenting it to a panel of experts. A pilot sample of 100 random participants who are social media users and interested in purchasing electronic products online in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was used to test its reliability. All Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the dimensions reached values higher than 0.7, so that the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire questionnaire reached 0.946 (Table 1), which is an excellent value for adoption.

3.2.4. Main sample

The minimum size of the sample was determined according to the formula of Cochran (1953) for calculating the sample size of an unknown (unlimited) population. As is the case with our research. The number of samples can be represented by the Cochran formula with a 95% confidence, $z = 1.96$, and the error value in an acceptable sample is $e = 0.05$

Equation (1): Cochran's formula for calculating sample size

$$\frac{p(1-p)Z^2}{e^2} = \frac{0.5(1-0.5)1.96^2}{0.05^2} = \frac{0.5 \times 0.5 \times 3.84}{0.0025} = \frac{0.96}{0.0025} = 384$$

The convenience Sampling Method was selected. The minimum size amounted to 384 participants. However, we exceeded that to bring the research sample to 508 participants who use social media platforms by purchasing electronic products online. The demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 2.

4. FINDINGS (RESULTS)

4.1. Social Media Content Types in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)

To determine the most preferred type of content from the sample members point of view, they were given a choice between three options: visual and audio content, images, and textual content. The results are shown in Table 3.

From the Table 3, we notice that the most preferred content element is visual and audio content (video and audio clips), which ranked first at a rate of 69.09%, followed by textual content at a rate of 23.23%, and finally images at a rate of 7.68%.

4.2. Online Electronic Product Purchase Decision-Making Process in KSA

We intend to investigate the quality of the online electronic purchase decision-making process in KSA, which is the dependent variable in our investigation, by interpreting the significance of the descriptive statistics for this axis in general and each of its dimensions (Table 4).

From the Table 4, we notice that the mean of the P.D.M.P was 3.11, while the values of the process' stages were 3.38, 3.22,

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha test coefficients

Indicators	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha coefficients
Need recognition	4	0.874
Information gathering	5	0.866
Alternatives evaluation	5	0.865
Purchase decision	5	0.878
Total	19	0.946

Table 2: Demographic profiles of respondents (n=508)

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	310	61.0
Female	198	39.0
Age		
Under 18	7	1.4
18-25	73	14.4
26-35	167	32.9
36-45	154	30.3
46-55	88	17.3
Older than 55	19	3.7
Nationality		
Saudi	473	93.1
Resident	35	6.9
Academic achievement		
Less than high school	5	1.0
High school	54	10.6
Diploma	39	7.7
Bachelor	290	57.1
Master	98	19.3
PhD	22	4.3

Table 3: Social media preferred content in KSA

Description	Frequency	Percent	Ranking
Visual and audio content (video and audio clips)	351	69.1	1
Images	39	7.7	3
Textual content (text)	118	23.2	2
Total	508	100.0	-

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of the online electronic purchase decision-making process (P.D.M.P)

Dimensions	Mean	Standard deviation	Ranking
Need recognition	2.5832	0.90995	4
Information gathering	3.2244	0.84799	2
Alternatives evaluation	3.3787	0.79437	1
Purchase decision	3.1614	0.89456	3
Purchase decision-making process (P.D.M.P)	3.1134	0.71112	-

3.16, and 2.58, respectively for each of (alternatives evaluation, information gathering, purchase decision, need recognition) To determine the significance of these numbers, we had to do one simple T-test for this axis in general and each of its dimensions through the following hypotheses:

H_0 : $\bar{X} = 3$ The mean of answers does not differ significantly from the mean score value of the scale at ($P > 0.05$).

H_1 : $\bar{X} \neq 3$ The mean of answers differs significantly from the mean score value of the scale at ($P \leq 0.05$).

4.2.1. Need recognition

From the Table 5, we can see that the T-test for this axis showed a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. This means we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1). Therefore, we declare that the mean value of this axis differs significantly from the mean score value of the scale towards disagreement by the sample members on the ability of social media to stimulate the need recognition factor and thus enhance the electronic products' purchase intention through these platforms in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In order to interpret this result by examining items (7, 8, and 9) in Table 5, it is noteworthy that the means of these items did not exceed the average value of the scale, with a significant significance of $0.000 < 0.05$ towards disagreement with such propositions. Therefore, it can be inferred that there exists a state of weakness in the process of promoting electronic products through social media platforms, whether it be a weakness in promoting the account (item 7), a weakness in promoting through visual advertisements that fail to attract customers in the kingdom (item 8), or even a weakness in the presentation of the content that diminishes the element of attraction and interaction (item 9).

4.2.2. Information gathering

Table 6 shows that the significance level of the T-test for this axis was $0.000 < 0.05$, which leads us to reject the null hypothesis (H_0)

and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1). Accordingly, we declare that the mean value of this axis differs significantly from the mean score value of the scale towards agreement on the ability of social media to provide sufficient information regarding electronic products through their platforms, except item (12), which relates to information of use, safety and maintenance instructions. This item was given a mean rating of < 3 , with a significance level of < 0.05 towards disagreement with this proposition. However, we cannot ignore the importance of item 14, which came with the highest mean value (3.78) towards agreement with this proposition. This is because one of the most important strengths of the online electronic purchase decision-making process via social media platforms is the ability of these platforms to provide a reliable source of information through followers' evaluations and comments.

4.2.3. Alternatives evaluation

From Table 7, we notice that the value of the T-test for this axis came at a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$, which makes us reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_1). Accordingly, we declare that the mean value of this axis differs significantly from the mean score value of the scale towards agreement on the effectiveness of social media in guiding the customer to make the right purchasing decision, opening the way for comparisons between the proposed alternatives to choose

Table 5: Descriptive statistics and t-test results for the items of need recognition

Items	Mean	t	df	Significant
(6) My attention is caught by advertisements that electronics stores do on social media	2.97	-0.610-	507	0.542
(7) I like to follow all electronics store accounts on social media.	2.53	-9.809-	507	0.000
(8) I watch visual advertisements of electronic stores to market their products on social media until the end without getting bored.	2.35	-13.441-	507	0.000
(9) I actively interact with brand posts on social media related to electronic products	2.48	-10.411-	507	0.000
Need recognition	2.5832	-10.325-	507	0.000

Table 6: Descriptive statistics and t-test results for the items of information gathering

Items	Mean	t	df	Significant
(10) Social media platforms provide all information related to price details, offers, and discounts regarding electronic products of different brands.	3.06	1.280	507	0.201
(11) Social media platforms provide all detailed information about the features and specifications of electronic products of many brands.	3.02	0.442	507	0.659
(12) Social media accounts of electronic product brands provide all information related to instructions on how to use, safety, quality, and maintenance of their electronic products.	2.83	-3.419-	507	0.001
(13) Social media platforms of electronic product brands provide all the information I need to order products and access their sales points	3.42	9.226	507	0.000
(14) I rely on followers' ratings and comments on social media to judge the quality of the electronic product I intend to purchase.	3.78	16.710	507	0.000
Information gathering	3.224	5.965	507	0.000

Table 7: Descriptive statistics and t-test results for the items of alternative evaluation

Items	Mean	t	df	Significant
(15) Social media provides me with different opportunities to make an electronic product purchase decision that suits my budget	3.69	15.233	507	0.000
(16) The use of influencers by electronic product brands to promote their products on social media affects my purchasing decision.	2.82	-3.346-	507	0.001
(17) The number of followers of electronic product brands on social media platforms affects my purchasing decision.	3.06	1.051	507	0.294
(18) I feel more confident in the electronic products of brands with verified pages on social media.	3.73	14.835	507	0.000
(19) Social media provides me with different opportunities to make an electronic product purchase decision that matches the level of quality I usually need.	3.59	13.541	507	0.000
Alternatives evaluation	3.3787	10.746	507	0.000

the most appropriate from their point of view, which may be according to their budget (item 15), or according to a specific degree of quality requested (item 19). The results also showed that the sample members were more confident in choosing electronic products through verified brand accounts for this type of products (item 18), as the average of this proposition reached (3.73) at a calculated $P < 0.05$, which indicates their agreement with this proposition. From another angle, the phenomenon of using influencers did not seem to play any role in persuading or facilitating comparison processes (item 16).

As we noted, it had the lowest mean (2.82) at a calculated $P < 0.05$, towards disagreement with this proposition.

4.2.4. Purchase decision

From Table 8, we notice that the value of the T-test for this axis came at a significance level of $0.077 > 0.05$, which makes us accept the null hypothesis (H_0) and reject the alternative hypothesis (H_1). Accordingly, we declare that the mean value of this axis doesn't differ significantly from the mean score value of the scale toward neutrality of the sample members' opinion regarding the ability of social media to activate the final purchase decision for this type of product. The results indicated that the sample members find that purchasing electronic products through these platforms saves time and effort, with a mean value of (3.52) and a T-test significance value of 0.000 (item 22). Also, the purchasing process through these platforms is considered enjoyable for them with a mean value of (3.28) and a T-test significance value of 0.000 (item 24), but it seemed that it was not safe enough to make a final purchase decision with a mean value of (2.98) and T-test significance value of 0.742 (item 23), and therefore these platforms were not the first choice for purchasing electronic products in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (item 20).

4.3. Testing Research Hypotheses

In this section, we will investigate the extent to which the quality of the online electronic product's purchase decision-making

process (dependent variable) varies across the provided types of content via social media platforms (independent variable) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which represents the research hypotheses. The mechanism of measuring this difference is based on an independent variable with quantitative (continuous) data across several groups (3 or more) for each dependent variable with categorical (nominal) data. Therefore, the independent One-Way ANOVA test is the most appropriate to test the research hypotheses as it explores differences in mean scores from a single (parametric) dependent variable (usually) across three or more distinct groups of a categorical independent variable (Mayers, 2013, p.172). Like any parametric test, One-Way ANOVA is subject to certain assumptions to be valid, as follows:

- Assumption 1: Normality (Normal distribution): we must test the normality of the data distribution, which means that the range of data in which the scores at either end of the distribution are at the same distance from the mean. This procedure is verified in several ways, the most famous of which is the Kolmogorov-Smirnova method: This method looks at the statistical significance, which must inevitably be >0.05 , which means that the distribution of the data is normal.
- Assumption 2: Homogeneity of variance: We must check that we have 'homogeneity of between-group variance' across the groups. This examines the extent to which scores vary on either side of the mean. SPSS produces a Levene's test for independent one-way ANOVA. The test investigates whether the variances vary significantly between the groups. We don't want that, so we need the outcome to be non-significant when calculating $P > 0.05$ (ibid, p. 181).

4.3.1. One-way ANOVA test assumptions results

Looking at Table 9: We notice that the significance values of Kolmogorov-Smirnova for all dimensions are higher than 0.05, so we can say that the data is normally distributed and the first assumption has been met, and we can notice that the significance values of Levene's test for all axes are higher than 0.05, so we can

Table 8: Descriptive statistics and t-test results for the items of purchase decision

Items	Mean	t	df	Significant
(20) Social media platforms are my first choice for shopping and purchasing electronic devices.	2.97	-0.637-	507	0.524
(21) I find the information provided by social media about the electronic products that interest me is sufficient to make a purchasing decision with complete confidence and without hesitation.	3.05	1.128	507	0.260
(22) Shopping for electronic products through social media saves time and effort, which is what makes me prefer to buy them through these platforms	3.52	10.788	507	0.000
(23) Shopping for electronic products through social media is safe, which is what makes me prefer to buy them through these platforms.	2.98	-0.329-	507	0.742
(24) Shopping for electronic products through social media is enjoyable, which is what makes me prefer to buy them through these platforms.	3.28	5.659	507	0.000
Purchase decision	3.1614	2.067	507	0.077

Table 9: Test of normality and homogeneity

Dimensions	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Levene's test			
	Statistic	Df	Significant	Statistic	Df1	Df2	Significant
Need recognition	0.037	508	0.098	0.719	4	503	0.579
Info gathering	0.040	508	0.058	0.500	4	503	0.735
Alternatives evaluation	0.040	508	0.076	1.132	4	503	0.341
Purchase decision	0.032	508	0.200*	0.074	4	503	0.990
P.D.M.P	0.024	508	0.200*	0.992	4	503	0.411

say that we have ‘homogeneity of between-group variance’ across the groups and the second assumption has been met.

After verifying the assumptions of the One-Way ANOVA test we can perform it as follows:

4.3.2. One-way ANOVA test results

Through the Table 10, we can interpret the results for each of these dimensions as follows:

- The first hypothesis (Need recognition): $F(2, 505) = 0.836$, $P > 0.05$, which makes us accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative one regarding this dimension and declare that the factor of customer need recognition related to online electronic products purchasing process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia doesn't differ across the provided types of content via social media platforms.
- The second hypothesis (Information gathering): $F(2, 505) = 4.591$, $P < 0.05$, which makes us reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative one regarding this dimension and declare that the factor of information gathering related to online electronic products purchasing process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia differs across the provided types of content via social media platforms. Based on this result, we must specifically identify the sources of the differences between groups, that's what led us to perform the Tukey test of *post hoc* tests as follows:

Through the Table 11, we notice that the significance of the differences lies in the difference between the groups of visual/ audio content and image content in favor of images, in addition

to the groups of image content and textual content in favor of images as well. Accordingly, we concluded that the factor of information gathering related to the online electronic product purchasing process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia differs across the provided types of content via social media platforms in favor of image content.

- Third hypothesis (Alternatives evaluation): $F(2, 505) = 3.213$, $P < 0.05$, which makes us reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative one regarding this dimension and declare that the factor of alternatives evaluation related to online electronic products purchasing process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia differs across the provided types of content via social media platforms. Based on this result, we must specifically identify the sources of the differences between groups, that's what led us to perform the Tukey test of *post hoc* tests as follows:

Through the Table 12, we notice that the significance of the differences lies in the difference between the groups of visual/ audio content and image content in favor of images. Accordingly, we concluded that the factor of alternatives evaluation related to the online electronic products purchasing process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia differs across the provided types of content via social media platforms in favor of image content.

- Fourth hypothesis (Purchase-decision): $F(2, 505) = 5.212$, $P < 0.05$, which makes us reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative one regarding this dimension and declare that the factor of online electronic products purchase decision in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia differs across the provided types of content via social media platforms. Based on this result,

Table 10: One-way ANOVA test results

Dimensions	Description	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significant
Need recognition	Between groups	1.386	2	0.693	0.836	0.434
	Within groups	418.413	505	0.829		
	Total	419.799	507			
Info gathering	Between groups	6.510	2	3.255	4.591	0.011
	Within groups	358.067	505	0.709		
	Total	364.577	507			
Alternatives evaluation	Between groups	4.020	2	2.010	3.213	0.041
	Within groups	315.910	505	0.626		
	Total	319.930	507			
Purchase decision	Between groups	8.205	2	4.102	5.212	0.006
	Within groups	397.519	505	0.787		0.006
	Total	405.724	507			

Table 11: Tukey HSD (multiple comparisons) *information gathering

Multiple comparisons				
Dependent variable: Info. gathering				
Tukey HSD				
(I) Content-Type	(J) Content-Type	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.
Images	Visual and audio content (video and audio clips)	0.42963*	0.14213	0.007
	Textual content (Text)	0.40522*	0.15553	0.026

Table 12: Tukey HSD (multiple comparisons) *alternatives evaluation

Multiple comparisons				
Dependent variable: Alternatives evaluation				
Tukey HSD				
(I) Content-Type	(J) Content-Type	Mean difference (I-J)	Standard error	Sig.
Images	Visual and audio content (video and audio clips)	0.33504*	0.13350	0.033

Table 13: Tukey HSD (Multiple comparisons) *purchase decision

Multiple comparisons				
Dependent variable: Purchase decision				
Tukey HSD				
(I) Content type	(J) Content-type	Mean difference (I-J)	Standard error	Sig.
Images	Visual and audio content (video and audio clips)	0.47407*	0.14975	0.005

we must specifically identify the sources of the differences between groups, that's what led us to perform the Tukey test of *post hoc* tests as follows:

Through the Table 13, we notice that the significance of the differences lies in the difference between the groups of visual/audio content and image content in favor of images. Accordingly, we concluded that the factor of online electronic product purchase decisions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia differs across the provided types of content via social media platforms in favor of image content.

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. General Discussion

After reviewing the results described above, in this section, we will discuss the research objectives and answer the research questions as follows.

RO₁: Aims to highlight the quality of the online electronic product purchase decision-making process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, through all stages of the process, up to the stage of making the final purchase decision.

The mean of the online electronic products purchase decision-making process in KSA came at a rate of (3.11) at the T-test significance > 0.05 towards neutrality by the sample members. Accordingly, we can state that the quality of this process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was not at the required level. It appears evident that the shortcomings of this process had a detrimental impact on its quality, which can be summarized as follows:

- Weak promotion of brand accounts for electronic products via social media platforms, these platforms have become one of the most important and indispensable contemporary marketing channels, as many studies have shown, such as (Durmaz and Alagöz, 2019; Maulid et al., 2021; Irfan et al., 2022; Akram et al., 2022; Singh and Pandoi, 2023; Saktiawan et al., 2023; Poswal and Tanwar, 2024)
- Poor quality of visual and audio advertisements, which reduces the customer's need recognition signals, especially after the heavy reliance on the online purchasing process via social media after the Covid-19 pandemic (Ahmad et al. 2021)
- Poor quality of provided content in general, In this regard,

the study of Varghese and Agrawal (2021) indicated that the impact of social media on customers' purchasing behavior depends on the quality of the provided content.

- Neglecting the information part related to instructions for use, safety, and maintenance. According to (Aryani et al., 2021) before going to the physical store, about 81% of consumers go to online research for purchasing. The remaining 20% of the customers take an average of 79 days to collect information before making major purchases, especially concerning information related to instructions for use, safety, and maintenance. The widespread opportunity to collect information online has been created as a result of which customers are more dependent on online for information search. As a result, customers are more dependent on online for information search.
- There was no optimal use of social media influencers (SMIs) phenomenon. Many studies have highlighted this phenomenon as a fundamental tactic that has already proved its effectiveness, especially concerning the factors of evaluating alternatives and making a purchasing decision as a result of followers' trust in these influencers (Lal and Sharma, 2021; Kuo and Tien, 2021; Dinç, 2023)
- These accounts lose the ability to gain the customer's trust by making them feel safe when it comes to purchasing these products online. In this context, the study of (Chew and Kim, 2021) found that 53% of the variance in consumer online purchasing behavior can be explained by security and safety. Several studies have focused on the importance of the security and safety factor and their impact on making the final purchase decision in issues related to payment methods including the privacy of financial information (Khan et al., 2017), The convenience of online shopping comes with security threats such as identity theft and fraud (Kim, 2012).

What requires more in-depth studies is to determine the causes of these problems about purchasing these products online in the Kingdom. However, on the other hand, the results clarified some points that can be relied upon by the owners of electronic product brands to enhance the quality of the online purchase process as follows:

- Relying on the previous customers' experiences reflected in their ratings and positive comments, which represent the electronic word enhancing the success of the e-marketing

process through social media platforms, as many studies have shown, such as (Khan, 2019; Al-Masoud, 2020; Alatawy, 2022; Singh et al., 2023).

- Always ensure that accounts are verified. According to (Ahmad et al., 2021) consumers see brands with verified accounts as a tool to mitigate the risks associated with the purchase process. As a result of the higher degree of brand trust associated with it, our surveyors stated that it is reasonable to assume that participants assess products in terms of verified accounts brand at this point, as it directly influences their overall satisfaction with their purchases.
- Always ensure that all options and alternatives are presented and evaluated according to budget and quality levels. According to (Kavita, 2017) the buying pattern of millennials is more inclined to see online because, at the same time with the click of a mouse i.e., through the technology used by hand, they can visit different websites and compare the price, color, quality, etc. of different products from different places very quickly and make their best option.

RO₂: “Highlighting the most preferred content type by social media users in general in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia”

The results showed that the most preferred content type is the visual and audio content (video and audio clips) in KSA, which ranked first at a rate of 69.09%, followed by textual content at a rate of 23.23%, and finally images at a rate of 7.68%. This result is somewhat consistent with the study of Xiao et al. (2019), which highlighted the quality of short video content as the most preferred content by the audience on some platforms. But the question remains here: Despite the preference for the type of audio-visual content in the Kingdom, did it also have the greatest impact on the online electronic products purchase decision-making process in the KSA? This is what the third goal reveals to us, as we will see.

RO₃: “Highlighting the difference in the quality of the online electronic product purchase decision-making process in all its dimensions (need recognition, information gathering, alternatives evaluation, and purchase decision) across the basic provided types of content through social media (visual/audio content, images, textual content) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.”

The results of this study showed that there were statistically significant differences in the dimensions of gathering information, evaluating alternatives, and making a purchasing decision between groups of content types due to image content compared to visual and audio content. This was confirmed by the respondents' answers to Question No. 8. (Table 5) that visual advertisements for this type of product are considered somewhat boring for customers and therefore they cannot watch them until the end. This is on the one hand, and on the other hand, regarding Question No. (9). We note that there is a weakness in interaction with content related to electronic products on social media platforms for the Kingdom's followers, which indicates the weakness of the provided content in general, which reduces the customer's need recognition signals as we explained before (Ahmad et al., 2021). This explains why the need recognition factor is not affected by the types of provided content according to our study.

From an interpretive point of view, we can say that this is what highlights the impact of images as a type of content, which may be an alternative to what is desired, on the three dimensions of information gathering, alternatives evaluation, and then deciding to purchase electronic products online in the Kingdom, compared to visual and audio content although it is given priority by social media followers in the Kingdom (Table 9). Looking at the respondents' answers to Question No. 14 (Table 6), we can justify this result by saying that the respondents are more dependent in collecting information on customer ratings and comments. This proposition received the highest mean average for the information gathering axis, which justifies the role of image content in attracting attention and engaging in comments about those images, sometimes unintentionally. This proposal received the highest average for the information gathering axis, which justifies the role of image content in attracting attention and engaging in comments about those images, unintentionally, as sometimes happens.

By reviewing items (15, 19, Table 7), we notice an increase in the averages of these two propositions towards the agreement, concerning these platforms providing the opportunity to compare alternatives to electronic products according to budget and quality, which can be attributed to the ability of this type of content (images) to create a state of positive interaction among followers through comments and ratings of customers' previous experiences, which represents the essential role of electronic word of mouth in influencing the online purchase decision-making process, as many studies have shown (Khan, 2019; Al-Masoud, 2020; Alatawy, 2022; Singh et al., 2023).

However, although the results showed that the factor of the final purchase decision-making for electronic products differs across groups of content types in favor of image content, this dimension did not exceed the degree of neutrality (Table 7) for this type of product, especially concerning the safety of purchasing electronic products online item through these platforms (item No. 23, Table 8), which came at a rate indicating disapproval of this proposal, in addition to the insufficient information provided to complete the purchase process (item No. 21, Table 8), which came at a rate indicating neutrality by the sample members. What describes the inability of this content, despite its impact, to provide sufficient information, especially information related to instructions for use, safety, and maintenance (item No. 12, Table 6). All of these factors combined reduced the customer's feeling of the safety of purchasing these products through social media platforms that were not the first choice for purchasing this type of product in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Item No. 20, Table 8).

5.2. Implications and Recommendations

The implications can be described and explained in more detail corresponding to the research questions and objectives of this study. It is known that this type of research produces results that are not generalizable, as it is specific to the research community and the type of commercial activity. Accordingly, the online electronic products market sector is the biggest beneficiary of this research's results through their ability to highlight the most important strengths and weaknesses of the online electronic

product purchase decision-making process in detail for each of its stages. On the one hand, and the other hand, the results of this research will serve as purely applied guidance on how to enhance the quality of the online electronic product purchase decision-making process in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through indicators of the type of content provided through social media as marketing communication channels. Based on the above results, we can provide the following recommendations:

- Work more seriously on effective promotion strategies for electronic product accounts on social media platforms throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- Reconsidering the tactics of using influencers to promote this type of product via social media.
- Ensure that electronic product brand accounts are verified via social media.
- Continuously ensuring that positive customers' previous experiences, comments, and ratings are highlighted and documented through the short stories feature of these platforms.
- Currently relying on the content of the images to promote this type of product across social media platforms within the Kingdom, pending reconsideration of the visual and audio content as it is the most preferred in general, especially in the following points:
 - Taking into account the element of attraction and suspense.
 - The quality and adequacy of the provided information.
 - Gaining customers' trust regarding all details related to the safety and security of the purchasing process through these accounts.

5.3. Limitations

One of the difficulties that the researcher faced during this study was the difficulty of collecting data (the research sample), especially since we are dealing with the general public that does not belong to a specific research community with a specific institution or organization, as there is no official notification to facilitate the task, what took more time and effort.

The most prominent challenge of this research is the unusual scarcity of studies within the context of this title in the field of the online electronic products market worldwide, to be completely non-existent at the level of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which made comparing this study with similar ones that might support or refute its results very limited.

6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This paper investigated the quality of the online electronic products purchase decision-making process within the context of the type of provided content through social media platforms in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. According to the analysis of our study results under the current circumstances, the preference was in favor of the image content, which was able to fulfill the condition of attraction stipulated by the theory of social exposure that was studied by (Xiao et al., 2019) as an alternative of desirable content. This is a positive point that can be relied upon as an alternative strategy until the type of visual and audio content for this type of product

is reconsidered, as it is the most preferred content by the sample members. However, according to this theory, it is recommended to rely on the frequency and quantity of presentation in different forms, according to what was shown by the results of Helinsha and Margawati (2022) study. So, for more detailed coverage it would be useful for future research to look into the following issues:

- The process of promoting brand accounts for electronic products via social media in Saudi Arabia.
- How to optimally use visual and audio content to promote this type of product through social media in Saudi Arabia.
- How to best use the phenomenon of social media influencers (SMIs) to promote this type of product in Saudi Arabia.

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