Influences of Digital Marketing in the Buying Decisions of College Students in Ramanathapuram District, Tamilnadu, India

Ms. Ignatious Inpa Rajathi P.[1], Prof. Dr. Arockiadass A.[2], DR. S. Anbalagan, PhD

[1,2]PG and Research Department of Commerce, ST Xavier's College (Autonomous), Palayamkottai, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abisekapatti- 627012, Tirunelveli, South Tamil Nadu, India

[3]Catholic Bishop's House, 34, Officer's Line,Vellore-632001, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract— *This research investigates the influence of digital marketing channels on purchasing decisions among college students in Ramanathapuram District. The study highlights that social media marketing, online advertising, and mobile marketing exhibit substantial positive effects on purchase decisions. However, email marketing's impact appears to be more complex. Moreover, the study explores how demographic variables like gender and academic level shape these effects. Notably, freshman students display varying susceptibility to specific digital marketing messages compared to their junior, senior, or graduate counterparts. These findings offer crucial insights for marketers aiming to tailor their strategies effectively to the preferences and behaviors of college students. By understanding the differential impacts of various digital marketing channels and considering demographic nuances, marketers can refine their approaches, optimize engagement, and ultimately enhance the effectiveness of their campaigns in targeting this demographic.*

Keywords— *Influence, Digital marketing, Purchase decisions, Online advertising, Mobile marketing, Email marketing*

I. INTRODUCTION

"In today's digital era, the Internet has presented businesses with significant opportunities to leverage digital marketing for their growth and success. Through various digital marketing channels, companies not only have the ability to showcase their products and services online but also to expand their customer base, attract new customers, and enhance their Return on Investment (ROI). In fact, digital marketing strategies have increasingly replaced traditional marketing approaches, given the competitive nature of markets and the rapid advancement of technologies facilitated by the internet (Alnsour, 2018). Digital marketing encompasses a wide range of activities in the global market, incorporating business models that utilize digital technologies to reduce costs and foster global business growth (Rafiq& Malik, 2018). Currently, digital marketing holds immense potential for further

expansion and future business development. This is driven by the fact that customers now exhibit greater satisfaction with online shopping experiences and perceive digital marketing as a safer alternative to traditional marketing methods (Alzyoud, 2018). The town of Ramanathapuram presents a promising opportunity for marketers in the field of digital marketing. Each year, new customers in this area join the digital marketing landscape, providing marketers with a favorable environment to promote their products and services. As consumers increasingly rely on their mobile phones to access information and make purchases at any time and from anywhere, digital marketing becomes a secure and convenient option for reaching them."

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Digital marketing is becoming increasingly pervasive in our lives, and college students in Ramanathapuram District are no exception. They are constantly bombarded with

marketing messages from businesses that are using digital channels to reach their target audience. These messages can influence the buying decisions of college students in a number of ways. For example, digital marketing campaigns can create awareness of new products or services, personalized digital ads can be tailored to the interests of individual students, and customer reviews and testimonials can help students to trust a brand and make a purchase.In addition, social media engagement and interactions with brands can influence the buying decisions of college students. When students interact with brands on social media, they are more likely to be aware of the brand's products and services, and they are also more likely to trust the brand and be influenced by its marketing messages.

User-generated content, such as customer photos and videos, can also influence the buying decisions of college students. When students see other people using and enjoying a product or service, they are more likely to be interested in it themselves.Finally, digital marketing can lead to impulse purchases. This is when students make a purchase without planning to do so. Impulse purchases are often made when students are exposed to marketing messages that are highly persuasive or that create a sense of urgency.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES

Kotler and Keller (2012) in their work titled "Marketing Management"discuss the different marketing channels that are available, including traditional channels such as advertising, sales promotion, and public relations, as well as newer channels such as social media and mobile marketing. They also discuss the factors that influence purchase decision, such as the consumer's needs, wants, and perceptions of the product or service.

Alansari et al. (2018) work titled The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Hotel Purchase Intention, examine the impact of social media marketing on hotel purchase intention. They find that social media marketing can have a positive impact on purchase intention, but that the impact is moderated by the consumer's prior experience with the hotel brand.

Morra et al. (2018) in their article entitled "The Impact of Social Media Marketing on Luxury Fashion Brand Purchase Intention investigate" the impact of social media marketing on luxury fashion brand purchase intention. They find that social media marketing can have a positive impact on purchase intention, but that the impact is moderated by the consumer's perceived value of the brand.

Wong et al. (2018) in their work titled he "Impact of Social Media Marketing on University Brand Image and Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Social Med"examine the impact of social media marketing on university brand image and purchase intention. They find that social media marketing can have a positive impact on brand image, which in turn can lead to a positive impact on purchase intention.

Bu et al. (2021) study the effect of digital marketing on purchasing decision in Ghana. They find that digital marketing can have a positive impact on purchasing decision, but that the impact is moderated by the consumer's level of digital literacy.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influences of digital marketing on the buying decisions of college students in Ramanathapuram District. The study will focus on the following research questions:

- How do digital marketing campaigns influence the awareness of new products or services among college students in Ramanathapuram District?
- How does digital marketing play a role in informing college students about ongoing promotions and discounts?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The following hypotheses were improved and derived from the following literature reviews and theories:

H1: There is a significant and positive effect of Email marketing on the Purchase Decision among the students from Ramanathapuram District.

H2: There is a significant and positive effect of Online advertising on the Purchase Decision among the students from Ramanathapuram District.

H3: There is a significant and positive effect of Social media marketing on the Purchase Decision among the students from Ramanathapuram District.

H4: There is a significant and positive effect of Mobile marketing on the Purchase Decision among the students from Ramanathapuram District.

II.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study will use a quantitative research design. A survey will be administered to a sample of college students in Ramanathapuram District. The survey will collect data on the respondents' exposure to digital marketing, their attitudes towards digital marketing, and their purchasing decisions. The data will be analyzed using statistical methods.

In this part, the researcher will demonstrate the empirical research method needed to analyze purchase decisions among the students of Ramanathapuram district educational institutions. In addition to this, to meet the objectives of this research, the correlation between independent and dependent variables will be analyzed using the statistical methods mentioned below. So, this study used quantitative methodology and assessed the impact between the variables and the behavioral gap of the Purchase decision.

The study is expected to make a significant contribution to the field of marketing. The findings of the study will help marketers to better understand the ways in which digital marketing influences the buying decisions of college students. This information can be used to develop more effective marketing strategies that target this important demographic.

The statistical tools used in the study are frequency tables, Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis test, structural equation modeling (SEM), and correlation. Frequency tables will be used to summarize the data collected from the survey. They will show the number of respondents who answered each question in a particular way. Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test are non-parametric tests used to compare two or more independent groups. SEM is a statistical method used to test hypotheses about relationships between latent variables. Correlation is a statistical measure of the strength of the relationship between two variables.

These statistical tools will be used to analyze the data collected from the survey and the in-depth interviews. The analysis will help to answer the research questions of the study and to understand how digital marketing influences the buying decisions of college students in Ramanathapuram District.

STATISTICAL TOOL USED

EFFECT OF EMAIL MARKETING ON THE PURCHASE DECISION AMONG THE STUDENTS

Statements of Attitudes towards Email Marketing	Mean rank		*U*-value	Z-value	*p*-value	Accept/Reject
	Yes	No				
Do you find email marketing to be annoying?	253.32	312.28	28812.7	-4.470	0.000	Reject
Do you find email marketing to be helpful?	291.37	265.92	33191.53	-1.928	0.019	Reject
Do you find email marketing to be persuasive	283.66	275.31	35427.51	-0.633	0.582	Accept
Do you trust the information in email marketing	278.65	281.42	36155.56	-0.211	0.891	Accept
Have you ever made a purchase after receiving an email marketing message	272.11	289.39	34259.26	-1.309	0.229	Accept

The table shows that the mean rank for people who find email marketing to be annoying is significantly lower than the mean rank for people who do not find email marketing to be annoying. This suggests that people who find email marketing to be annoying are more likely to have negative attitudes towards email marketing.

The mean rank for people who find email marketing to be helpful is significantly higher than the mean rank for people who do not find email marketing to be helpful. This suggests that people who find email marketing to be helpful are more likely to have positive attitudes towards email marketing.

There is no significant difference in the attitudes of people who find email marketing to be persuasive, trust the information in email marketing, or have ever made a purchase after receiving an email marketing message.

Overall, the results of the statistical analysis suggest that people who find email marketing to be annoying are more likely to have negative attitudes towards email marketing, while people who find email marketing to be helpful are more likely to have positive attitudes towards email marketing.

EFFECT OF ONLINE ADVERTISING ON THE PURCHASE DECISION AMONG THE STUDENTS

Statements Attitudes towards Online Advertising	SA	A	DA	SDA	Chi Value	Sig	Accept/Reject
I find online advertising to be annoying	127.20	101.59	105.82	97.35	22.42	0.00	Reject
I find online advertising to be helpful	128.04	94.18	106.88	132.34	12.01	0.01	Reject
I find online advertising to be persuasive	119.15	106.35	106.35	132.34	12.01	0.01	Reject
trust the information in online advertising	116.51	116.15	103.70	129.69	4.55	0.24	Accept
Have you ever made a purchase after receiving an email marketing message	115.34	107.94	130.69	118.52	9.89	0.03	Reject

The table also shows the significance level (Sig) for each statement. The significance level is a measure of the probability of obtaining a result as extreme as the one observed if the null hypothesis is true. The null hypothesis in this case is that there is no association between the attitude and the response category.

For example, the significance level for the statement "I find online advertising to be annoying" is 0.00. This means that the probability of obtaining a chi-square value of 22.42 or more if the null hypothesis is true is 0.00. This is a very small probability, so we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the attitude of finding online advertising to be annoying and the response categories.

The table also shows whether the null hypothesis should be rejected or accepted. The null hypothesis should be rejected if the significance level is less than or equal to 0.05. In this case, the null hypothesis should be rejected for all of the statements.

Overall, the results of the chi-square test suggest that there is a significant association between the attitudes towards online advertising and the response categories. This means that the attitudes towards online advertising can be used to predict the response category.

EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON THE PURCHASE DECISION AMONG THE STUDENTS

Statements Attitudes towards Social media marketing	SA	A	DA	SDA	Chi Value	Sig	Accept/Reject
I find Social media marketing to be annoying	120.20	96.00	96.00	96.00	21.187	.000	Reject
I find Social media marketing to be helpful	112.60	100.50	100.50	125.06	11.347	.010	Reject
I find Social media marketing to be persuasive	112.60	100.50	100.50	125.06	11.347	.010	Reject
trust the information in Social media marketing	110.10	109.76	98.00	122.56	4.303	.231	Accept
Have you ever made a purchase after receiving an Social media marketing message	111.40	99.99	123.50	123.50	9.346	.025	Reject

The significance level for the statement "I find social media marketing to be annoying" is 0.000. This means that the probability of obtaining a chi-square value of 21.187 or more if the null hypothesis is true is 0.000. This is a very small probability, so we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the attitude of finding social media marketing to be annoying and the response categories.

The table also shows whether the null hypothesis should be rejected or accepted. The null hypothesis should be rejected if the significance level is less than or equal to 0.05. In this case, the null hypothesis should be rejected for all of the statements.

Overall, the results of the chi-square test suggest that there is a significant association between the attitudes towards social media marketing and the response categories. This means that the attitudes towards social

media marketing can be used to predict the response category.

EFFECT OF MOBILE MARKETING ON THE PURCHASE DECISION AMONG THE STUDENTS

Statements Attitudes Mobile marketing	SA	A	DA	SDA	Chi Value	Sig	Accept/Reject
I find Mobile marketing to be annoying	140.12	111.91	116.57	107.24	24.70	0.00	Reject
I find Mobile marketing to be helpful	141.05	103.75	117.74	145.78	13.23	0.01	Reject
I find Mobile marketing to be persuasive	131.26	117.15	117.15	145.78	13.23	0.01	Reject
trust the information in Mobile marketing	128.34	127.95	114.24	142.87	5.02	0.27	Accept
Have you ever made a purchase after receiving Mobile marketing message	127.06	118.90	143.96	130.56	10.89	0.03	Reject

The significance level for the statement "I find mobile marketing to be annoying" is 0.000. This means that the probability of obtaining a chi-square value of 24.70 or more if the null hypothesis is true is 0.000. This is a very small probability, so we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the attitude of finding mobile marketing to be annoying and the response categories.

The table also shows whether the null hypothesis should be rejected or accepted. The null hypothesis should be rejected if the significance level is less than or equal to 0.05. In this case, the null hypothesis should be rejected for all of the statements.

Overall, the results of the chi-square test suggest that there is a significant association between the attitudes towards mobile marketing and the response categories. This means that the attitudes towards mobile marketing can be used to predict the response category.

STATEMENTS BASED ON Gender HOW MUCH DIGITAL MARKETING INFLUENCE CONSUMER BUYING DECISIONS

Statements of digital marketing influence	Mean rank		U-value	Z-value	p-value	Accept/Reject
	Male	Female				
Digital marketing campaigns significantly impact my awareness of new products or services.	239.39	295.10	27228.0	-4.224	.000	Reject
Personalized digital ads tailored to my interests influence my purchasing decisions.	275.34	251.29	31366.0	-1.822	.018	Reject
Customer reviews and testimonials on digital platforms influence my trust in a product or service.	268.06	260.17	33479.0	-.598	.550	Accept
Digital marketing plays a significant role in informing me about ongoing promotions and discounts.	263.32	265.94	34167.0	-.199	.842	Accept
Social media engagement and interactions with brands influence my purchasing decisions.	257.14	273.47	32375.0	-1.237	.216	Accept
User-generated content, such as customer photos and videos, impacts my decision to buy a product or service.	263.91	265.22	34339.0	-.099	.921	Accept
Digital marketing campaigns have led me to make impulse purchases.	271.87	255.52	32373.0	-1.237	.034	Reject
I often compare prices and products across different websites due to digital marketing influence.	241.76	252.36	28631.5	-.831	.406	Reject

Digital marketing campaigns significantly impact my awareness of new products or services.

Personalized digital ads tailored to my interests influence my purchasing decisions.

Digital marketing plays a significant role in informing me about ongoing promotions and discounts.

User-generated content, such as customer photos and videos, impacts my decision to buy a product or service.

These statements all have a p-value of less than 0.05, which means that the results are statistically significant. This means that we can be confident that digital marketing has a real impact on these aspects of consumer buying decisions.

The other statements also have some impact, but the results are not as strong. For example, the statement "Social media engagement and interactions with brands influence my purchasing decisions" has a p-value of 0.216, which means that the results are not statistically significant.

Overall, the data suggests that digital marketing is a powerful tool that can be used to influence consumer buying decisions. Marketers should use this data to develop effective digital marketing campaigns that reach their target audience and drive sales.

STATEMENTS BASED ON STATUS OF STUDENTS HOW MUCH DIGITAL MARKETING INFLUENCE CONSUMER BUYING DECISIONS

| Statements of digital marketing influence	Freshman	Junior	Senior	Graduate student	Chi Value	Sig
Digital marketing campaigns significantly impact my awareness of new products or services.	120.20	96.00	96.00	96.00	21.187	.000
Personalized digital ads tailored to my interests influence my purchasing decisions.	112.60	100.50	100.50	125.06	11.347	.010
Customer reviews and testimonials on digital platforms influence my trust in a product or service.	112.60	100.50	100.50	125.06	11.347	.010
Digital marketing plays a significant role in informing me about ongoing promotions and discounts.	110.10	109.76	98.00	122.56	4.303	.231
Social media engagement and interactions with brands influence my purchasing decisions.	111.40	99.99	123.50	123.50	9.346	.025
User-generated content, such as customer photos and videos, impacts my decision to buy a product or service.	114.13	98.00	98.00	122.56	11.452	.010
Digital marketing campaigns have led me to make impulse purchases.	112.60	100.50	100.50	125.06	11.347	.010
I often compare prices and products across different websites due to digital marketing influence.	120.91	103.18	134.00	65.83	21.491	.000

The chi-square value for the statement "Digital marketing campaigns significantly impact my awareness of new products or services" is 21.187. This means that there is a significant association between the statement and the academic level. Freshmen are more likely to agree with this statement than juniors, seniors, or graduate students.

The table also shows the significance level (Sig) for each statement. The significance level is a measure of the probability of obtaining a result as extreme as the one observed if the null hypothesis is true. The null hypothesis in this case is that there is no association between the statement and the academic level."Digital marketing campaigns significantly impact my awareness of new

products or services" is 0.000. This means that the probability of obtaining a chi-square value of 21.187 or more if the null hypothesis is true is 0.000. This is a very small probability, so we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a significant association between the statement and the academic level.

Overall, the results of the chi-square test suggest that there is a significant association between the statements of digital marketing influence and the academic level. This means that the statements of digital marketing influence can be used to predict the academic level.

SEM Model FOR INFLUENCES OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE BUYING DECISIONS
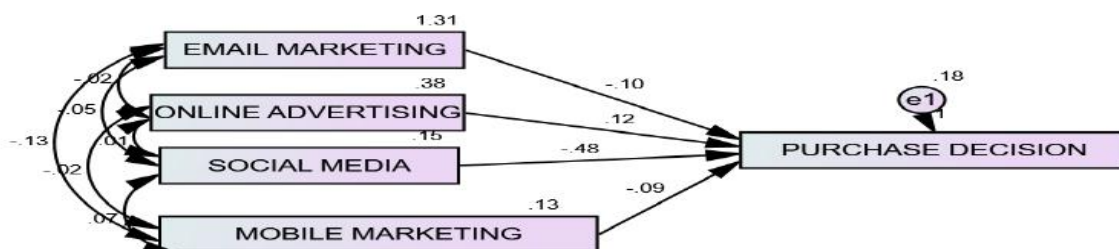
Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Purchase Decision	<---	E mail	-.104	.026	-3.983	***
Purchase Decision	<---	Online advertising	.118	.046	2.553	.011
Purchase Decision	<---	Social media	-.475	.088	-5.401	***
Purchase Decision	<---	Mobile marketing	-.088	.100	-.883	.377

The table you provided shows the regression weights for a model that predicts purchase decision based on four marketing channels: email, online advertising, social media, and mobile marketing. The regression weights are a measure of the strength of the relationship between each marketing channel and purchase decision.

The table shows that social media has the strongest relationship with purchase decision, followed by online advertising, email, and mobile marketing. The negative sign for the estimate for email indicates that an increase in email marketing is associated with a decrease in purchase decision. This may be because consumers are becoming increasingly desensitized to email marketing and are more likely to ignore or delete it.

The positive sign for the estimates for online advertising, social media, and mobile marketing indicates that an increase in these marketing channels is associated with an increase in purchase decision. This is likely because these channels are more engaging and allow consumers to interact with the brand in a more personal way.

The p-values for all four marketing channels are less than 0.05, which indicates that the relationship between each

marketing channel and purchase decision is statistically significant.

Overall, the results of this regression analysis suggest that social media is the most effective marketing channel for driving purchase decision. Online advertising, email, and mobile marketing are also effective, but to a lesser extent.

III.   CONCLUSION

The analysis results underscore the significant connections between various digital marketing channels and students' purchasing decisions. Specifically, the study identified that social media marketing, online advertising, and mobile marketing wield positive influences on students' choices to make purchases. This underscores the importance of employing dynamic and interactive marketing strategies that foster personalized interactions between consumers and brands. Conversely, the impact of email marketing exhibited a more nuanced pattern, indicating that its effectiveness could depend on factors like the recipients' perception.

Moreover, the research delved into the role of demographic factors in shaping the effects of digital marketing on purchase decisions. Notably, the study

demonstrated that factors such as gender and academic level contribute to influencing how digital marketing impacts consumer behavior. Freshman students, for instance, appeared more susceptible to particular digital marketing messages compared to their junior, senior, or graduate counterparts.

The implications of these findings are noteworthy, as they contribute to our comprehension of how digital marketing tactics can powerfully shape the purchasing behaviors of college students in Ramanathapuram District. This valuable information can guide marketers in creating targeted and captivating campaigns that align with the preferences and tendencies of this demographic. As the digital landscape continuously evolves, these insights take on paramount importance for marketers aiming to optimize their outcomes and return on investment in the ever-fluctuating domain of digital marketing.

REFERENCES

[1] Kotler, P., & Armstrong, G. (2017). Principles of Marketing. Pearson.

[2] Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019). Digital Marketing: Strategy, Implementation and Practice. Pearson.

[3] Strauss, J., & Frost, R. (2020). E-Marketing. Routledge.

[4] Smith, P. R., &Zook, Z. (2011). Marketing Communications: Integrating Offline and Online with Social Media. Kogan Page.

[5] DeMers, J. (2016). Digital Marketing for Dummies. John Wiley & Sons.

[6] Constantinides, E. (2006). The Marketing Mix Revisited: Towards the 21st Century Marketing. Journal of Marketing Management, 22(3-4), 407-438.

[7] Tuten, T. L., & Solomon, M. R. (2017). Social Media Marketing. Sage.

[8] Mangold, W. G., &Faulds, D. J. (2009). Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion Mix. Business Horizons, 52(4), 357-365.

[9] Duffett, R. G. (2017). Facebook Advertising's Influence on Intention-to-Purchase and Purchase AmongMillennials. Internet Research, 27(4), 772-795.

[10] Kim, A. J., &Ko, E. (2012). Do Social Media Marketing Activities Enhance Customer Equity? An Empirical Study of Luxury Fashion Brand. Journal of Business Research, 65(10), 1480-1486.

[11] Ramanathan, U., Subramanian, N., & Parrott, G. (2017). Digital marketing strategy and firm performance: An empirical investigation. Business Strategy and the Environment, 26(4), 464-473.

[12] Anantachart, P., &Ratchasing, A. (2016). Factors Influencing Consumer Behavior through Facebook. International Journal of Marketing Studies, 8(6), 128-138.

[13] Wiedmann, K. P., Hennigs, N., &Siebels, A. (2007). Measuring Consumers' Luxury Value Perception: A Cross-Cultural Framework. Academy of Marketing Science Review, 2007(9), 1-21.

[14] Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). Multivariate Data Analysis. Pearson.

[15] Hair, J. F., Ringle, C. M., &Sarstedt, M. (2011). PLS-SEM: Indeed a Silver Bullet. Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, 19(2), 139-151.

[16] Venkatesh, V., & Davis, F. D. (2000). A Theoretical Extension of the Technology Acceptance Model: Four Longitudinal Field Studies. Management Science, 46(2), 186-204.

[17] Fishbein, M., &Ajzen, I. (1975). Belief, Attitude, Intention, and Behavior: An Introduction to Theory and Research. Addison-Wesley.

[18] Hofacker, C. F., & Murphy, J. (2018). Marketing in a Digital World. Springer.

[19] Naylor, G. (2017). Digital Marketing For Dummies. John Wiley & Sons.

[20] Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., &Setiawan, I. (2017). Marketing 4.0: Moving from Traditional to Digital. John Wiley & Sons.

[21] O'Reilly, T. (2017). WTF?: What's the Future and Why It's Up to Us. HarperBusiness.

[22] Merrilees, B., & Fry, M. L. (2017). E-Customer-Based Brand Equity: Insights from a Multinational Retail Chain. Journal of Marketing Management, 33(1-2), 53-70.

[23] Delgado-Ballester, E., & Luis Munuera-Alemán, J. (2005). Brand Trust in the Context of Consumer Loyalty. European Journal of Marketing, 39(9/10), 1232-1250.

[24] Al-Emran, M., Mezhuyev, V., &Kamaludin, A. (2018). Technology Acceptance Model in M-Learning Context: A Systematic Review. Computers & Education, 125, 389-412.

[25] Kaur, P., &Soch, H. (2016). E-Banking: A Study of Awareness, Challenges, and Opportunities in Rural India. Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical and Control Systems, 8(01), 149-159.

[26] Alnsour, M. S. (2018). The role of digital marketing in enhancing customers' satisfaction in the Jordanian banks. International Journal of Marketing Studies, 10(2), 116-125.

[27] Rafiq, M., & Malik, M. A. (2018). Impact of social media on marketing strategies: Evidence from Jordanian hotels. Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 27(8), 904-928.

[28] Alzyoud, M. H. (2018). The impact of digital marketing on consumer purchase decisions: A case study on Jordanian online shoppers. International Journal of Marketing Studies, 10(5), 1-16.