

Addis Abeba University

**The Influence of Social Media on Behavioral Decision
Making Among Young Adults in Yeka Sub City.**

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May 2025

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

Addis Abeba University

College of Education and Language Studies

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A Thesis Submitted to Addis Ababa University in Partial Fulfillment for the
Award of the Degree of Master of Social Psychology.

Statement of Declaration

I, the under signed, declare that this thesis titled “THE SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON BEHAVIORAL DECISION MAKING AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN YEKA SUB CITY.” is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University, and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged

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Approval of Thesis

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Abiy Tekle, entitled “THE INFLUENCE of SOCIAL MEDIA ON BEHAVIORAL DECISION MAKING AMONG YOUNG ADULTS IN YEKA SUB CITY.” and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of social psychology complies with the regulations of the College and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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Acknowledgement

First and foremost, all praise and gratitude is to God Almighty, the most beneficent and merciful, for providing me with strength, knowledge, good health and countless other blessings that enabled me to successfully conduct and complete this research study. I would like to express my deepest and most sincere thanks to the management and leadership team at Addis Ababa University department of psychology, for granting me permission and full cooperation to undertake this research. Their support was instrumental in facilitating the data collection process.

I am greatly indebted to all respondents who willingly participated in this study and took the time to share their valuable insights and experiences through the survey questionnaires. This research would not have been possible without their participation and candid feedback. My heartfelt thanks also go to my research supervisor, Dawit (PhD) from Addis Ababa University, for his continuous guidance, encouragement and constructive criticism at every stage of this research work, from conceptualization to analysis and reporting. His expertise and mentorship helped me immensely in strengthening my research skills.

Finally, I am thankful to my beloved parents and family for their unconditional love, prayers, patience and encouragement, which have always been a source of inspiration and motivation for me. I dedicate this work to them

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of social media on behavioral decision-making among young adults in Yeka Sub City, focusing on four key factors: Social Media Usage (SMU), Peer Pressure (PP), Demographic Factors (DF), and Psychological Factors (PSYF). In order to achieve the purpose of the study explanatory quantitative research design was used data were collected through questionnaire adapted from behavioral decision making model. A sample size of 295 respondents was surveyed to gather relevant data. The analysis was conducted using SPSS Version 25, Data analysis was performed using SPSS Version 25, utilizing descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, multiple regression, and ANOVA to explore the relationships among variables. The findings revealed that Social Media Usage (SMU) had a strong and statistically significant positive correlation with Behavioral Decision Making (BDM) ($r = 0.836$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, Peer Pressure (PP) showed a moderate but significant correlation with BDM ($r = 0.536$, $p < 0.01$), while Demographic Factors (DF) and Psychological Factors (PSYF) also demonstrated significant positive relationships ($r = 0.567$ and $r = 0.499$, respectively, $p < 0.01$). The model summary showed that the regression model explained a substantial portion of the variance in decision-making behavior ($R^2 = 0.703$), and the ANOVA result ($F = 171.861$, $p < 0.000$) confirmed that the model was statistically significant. These findings indicate that social media usage is a dominant predictor of behavioral decision-making among young adults, while peer pressure, demographic, and psychological factors also contribute meaningfully. Based on these findings, it is recommended that educational institutions and community organizations develop programs to promote responsible social media usage and address the impacts of peer pressure. Furthermore, tailored interventions should consider demographic diversity and prioritize psychological well-being to empower young adults in making informed decisions. This study contributes to the understanding of how social media influences decision-making behaviors in young adults and offers insights for future interventions aimed at fostering positive outcomes within this demographic.

Keywords: *Social Media Usage, Behavioral Decision Making, Young Adults*

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BDM: Behavioral Decision Making

DF: Demographic Factors

PP: Peer Pressure

PSYF: Psychological Factors

SMU: Social Media Usage

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

R: Correlation Coefficient

R²: Coefficient of Determination

ANOVA: Analysis of Variance

CHAPTER ONE

1. Background

In recent decades, social media has revolutionized communication and social interaction worldwide. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and WhatsApp have become essential tools for millions, transforming the way people connect, share information, and express themselves. As of 2024, over 4.5 billion people actively use social media, with numbers steadily increasing every year (Smith, 2023). This growth reflects the pervasive role social media now plays in daily life, shaping cultural trends, political movements, and even economic activity globally. Social media's influence extends beyond mere communication; it has altered how individuals gather news, perceive social norms, and make decisions. Through features such as likes, shares, and comments, social media provides social validation and feedback that influence users' attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, advanced algorithms personalize content feeds, exposing users to information and opinions that reinforce existing preferences, thereby shaping their worldview and choices (Johnson & Wu, 2023).

1.1 Social Media Usage Among Young Adults

Among all demographic groups, young adults aged 18 to 30 represent the most active and engaged social media users. This age group is commonly called “digital natives” because they have grown up immersed in digital technology and online platforms (Jones & Kim, 2021). Social media is a critical tool for young adults' socialization, education, entertainment, and political engagement. Research indicates that young adults spend an average of 3 to 4 hours per day on social media platforms (Pew Research Center, 2022), highlighting the intensity of their online interactions.

In the Ethiopian context, where over 70% of the population is under the age of 30 (Central Statistical Agency, 2022), social media's penetration among youth is rapidly increasing. Despite infrastructure and economic challenges, mobile internet access has expanded dramatically, allowing young Ethiopians to participate in global digital conversations (Tadesse, 2023). Social media serves not only as a platform for leisure but also as a vital space for learning, social mobilization, and identity exploration.

From a developmental psychology perspective, Erikson's psychosocial theory suggests that young adulthood involves a critical stage of identity formation, where individuals explore and solidify their sense of self and social roles (Erikson, 1968). Social media plays a pivotal role in this process by providing platforms for self-expression and peer feedback. Similarly, Piaget's formal operational stage emphasizes the development of abstract thinking and reasoning, capacities that young adults often employ when navigating social media content and making decisions.

Behavioral Decision Making and the Influence of Social Media

Behavioral decision making encompasses the processes through which individuals evaluate options and select actions. For young adults, decisions related to education, career, health, relationships, and civic engagement are crucial and often shaped by social and environmental influences. Social media, as a new and powerful social environment, significantly impacts these decision-making processes (Lee et al., 2022).

Through exposure to peers, influencers, and targeted content, social media shapes attitudes, perceived norms, and motivations. The Theory of Planned Behavior explains how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence intentions and behaviors (Ajzen, 1991). Social media affects these components by creating virtual social norms and expectations that users internalize, thus guiding their decisions. Moreover, Dual-Process Theory describes how decision making involves both intuitive, automatic processes and deliberate, analytical thinking (Kahneman, 2011).

Social media often triggers fast, emotionally driven decisions through viral content, while also providing opportunities for reflective thinking through discussions and diverse viewpoints.

Contextualizing Yeka Sub City and Ethiopia

Yeka Sub City, located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, is a densely populated urban area with a youthful demographic profile. It represents a microcosm of the challenges and opportunities faced by urban Ethiopian youth in the digital age. The proliferation of smartphones and internet access in Yeka has led to a surge in social media engagement among young adults. However,

Ethiopian society remains rooted in traditional cultural values and social structures that interact with digital influences in complex ways. While social media exposes youth to global cultures and ideas, local norms and economic realities also shape their behavioral choices (Getachew, 2021). Understanding how social media influences young adults in Yeka requires examining these intertwined factors.

Research Gaps and Justification for the Study

Although extensive research exists on social media's effects on youth behavior globally, much of this research is concentrated in Western and developed country contexts (Smith et al., 2022). There is limited empirical data on social media's behavioral impact within African urban settings, particularly in Ethiopia. Existing Ethiopian studies have largely focused on access and usage patterns rather than psychological or behavioral outcomes (Ayele, 2020).

Given Ethiopia's rapid digital transformation and youthful population, it is essential to explore how social media influences young adults' decision-making within local cultural and socioeconomic frameworks. This study fills a critical gap by focusing on Yeka Sub City, providing insights that can inform policy, education, and youth development programs.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In recent years, social media has evolved into a dominant communication tool among young adults globally and locally. Platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and Telegram are no longer mere entertainment channels; they are now powerful influencers of thought, behavior, lifestyle, and even personal values. In Ethiopia, particularly in urban centers like Yeka Sub City of Addis Ababa, a rapidly growing population of young adults aged 18–24 actively engage with these platforms daily.

This demographic represents a critical developmental stage, as it is a period marked by identity formation, social role exploration, and significant cognitive and emotional growth. According to developmental theorists such as Erik Erikson, this stage is characterized by the conflict of identity vs. role confusion, where individuals seek to define themselves and their place in society. Social media can either support this exploration or distort it by presenting idealized images, peer pressures, and misleading content.

Despite the widespread use of social media in this age group, there is a lack of empirical data within the Ethiopian context, especially in Yeka Sub City, about how these platforms influence behavioral decision making. Most studies conducted either focus on global populations or examine the impact of social media in a general sense, often overlooking the specific behavioral consequences among young adults in developing countries. This creates a knowledge gap in understanding how Ethiopian youths are cognitively and emotionally influenced when making choices about their lifestyles, relationships, consumption patterns, or even political attitudes.

Moreover, psychological frameworks such as Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura), the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen), and Dual-Process Theories offer useful perspectives in explaining how media content can shape attitudes, perceived norms, and ultimately behaviors. However, few local studies have attempted to apply these models to analyze how exposure to social media affects behavioral decisions among young Ethiopian users. For instance, how does the repeated exposure to influencers or viral challenges alter risk-taking behavior, body image perception, or social conformity?

Adding to this complexity is the interplay of socio-cultural factors unique to Yeka Sub City, such as traditional norms, family influence, religious values, and economic pressures. These can either buffer or intensify the effects of social media influence, yet they are rarely considered in existing research.

Therefore, this study seeks to bridge this gap by investigating the influence of social media on behavioral decision making among young adults in Yeka Sub City. It aims to explore not only the extent of this influence but also the psychological and contextual factors that mediate or moderate this relationship. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, parents, and mental health professionals working with urban youth in Ethiopia.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to analyse the Social Media Influence on Behavioral Decision Making among Young Adults in Yeka Sub city.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To assess the effect of Social Media Usage on behavioral decision making among young adults in Yeka Sub city.
- To examine the influence of demographic factors on behavioral decision making among young adults in Yeka Sub city.
- To investigate the influence of peer pressure on behavioral decision making among young adults in Yeka Sub city.
- To analyze the effect of psychological factors on behavioral decision making among Young adults in Yeka Sub cit

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study was delimited to investigate the Social Media Influence on Behavioral Decision Making among Young Adults in Yeka Sub city. The study would focus on three key aspects of scope: geographical, thematic/conceptual and methodological.

1.5.Geographical scope/coverage

The study was delimited geographically to young adults residing in Yeka Sub city, located on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. As an increasingly industrialized area undergoing rapid socioeconomic changes, Yeka provides an optimal setting to explore relationships between technology exposure and behavioral decision making among youth. While insights may inform understanding in similar contexts, findings would specifically address information gaps relevant to decision makers and stakeholders serving Yeka's young population. Examining this bounded geographical area allows for a focused exploration within practical limits.

Conceptual scope/coverage:

Thematically, the study would focus on the influence of social media engagement on behavioral decision making among young adults. It would not attempt to investigate all potential factors impacting choices, but rather delimit its scope to key variables suggested by prior literature to influence decision processes, including; Social Media Usage, demographic factors. peer pressure, psychological factors.

Methodological scope/coverage:

Methodologically, the study would employ an explanatory and descriptive research design to comprehensively address the research objectives. A quantitative cross-sectional online survey utilizing a convenience sample was conducted to collect data

on the four variables and behavioral decision outcomes. Data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis).

1.6 Significance of the Study

The primary goal of this study was to examine the Social Media Influence on Behavioral Decision Making among Young Adults in Yeka Sub city: As a result, the findings of this study may primarily benefit young adults, policy makers, other stakeholders, and the researcher himself.

This study offers theoretical, practical, and local significance. Findings can contribute new knowledge on social media influence in a non-Western setting, addressing gaps in understanding technology's role on behavioral decision making . Insights carry implications for developing targeted policy guidance and regulations regarding responsible youth engagement online. At a local level, results offer practical applications for community stakeholders and service providers working with youth in Yeka Sub city. Leveraging a mixed methods approach, this research aims to comprehensively address information needs and empower those directly supporting young adults with evidence-based strategies and recommendations derived from the local context. Finally, the study would benefit from enhancing and practicing the researcher's ability and creativity in its field.

1.7 Operational Definitions

Social Media

In this study, social media refers to interactive digital platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter (X), and YouTube, which allow users to create content, communicate, and share information. It is operationally defined by frequency (times per day/week), duration (minutes/hours per session), and the type of activities (e.g., scrolling, commenting, posting, messaging) as self-reported in the structured questionnaire.

Behavioral Decision Making

This refers to the cognitive and emotional process of selecting behaviors or responses based on perceived options, values, and situational cues. In this study, it includes decisions related to personal habits, social interactions, and lifestyle influenced by social media content. It is measured by scenario-based items and self-report responses concerning recent decisions influenced by online exposure.

Young Adults

Young adults are defined as individuals aged 18 to 24 living in Yeka Sub City. This stage is characterized by heightened identity exploration, susceptibility to external influences, and the formation of long-term values and behaviors. Inclusion in this group is based on age and residency verified through demographic data.

Social Media Influence

This refers to the persuasive effect of social media content, algorithms, influencers, and online peer groups on users' attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors. Operational indicators include:

- Changes in opinions or choices after viewing online content
- Behavioral imitation of influencers or peers
- Emotional shifts (e.g., anxiety, excitement, envy) linked to content consumption
- Trend-following behavior (e.g., challenges, product choices)

Psychological Factors

These include internal attributes such as:

- Self-esteem: Measured through self-worth and self-acceptance scales Social

comparison: The tendency to compare oneself to others based on online profiles

- Fear of Missing Out (FoMO): The anxiety of being left out of online activities These factors are assessed via standardized psychological subscales included in the questionnaire.

Demographic Characteristics

Demographics include age, gender, educational level, income status, and employment. These are gathered to examine how socio-demographic differences moderate the relationship between social media use and behavioral decision-making.

Peer Pressure

This refers to the influence exerted by one's online peer group that encourages conformity to group norms, especially as represented on social platforms. It is measured through items capturing the perceived need to align with friends' posts, comments, fashion, values, or behaviors showcased online

1.7 Organization of the Paper

This paper was divided into five sections. The first chapter is an introduction that includes the study's background, statement of the problem, objective, research hypothesis, significance, scope, Definition of key terms and organization of the paper. The second chapter was a review of related literature's, which includes theoretical background as well as empirical review from worldwide, national level and conceptual framework of the study. The third chapter would discuss the methodologies used in the study. The fourth chapter would present the study's findings and discussion. The final chapter would provides the study's conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

1. RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter would present a review of existing scholarly literature relevant to understanding social media influence on behavioral decision making among young adults. The review would synthesize current knowledge regarding relationships between

key variables, including social media usage patterns, demographic factors, peer dynamics experienced online, and psychological attributes that may shape decision processes. Gaps in the literature specific to non-Western contexts would also be examined to establish justification for the present study. Together, the related studies would provide a framework for comprehending the complex issue while highlighting the need for additional context-specific research. The following sections would summarize empirical works and theoretical frameworks to offer a comprehensive background for the research.

2.1 Concept of social media and behavioral decision making

Social media refers to internet-based platforms that enable users to generate and share content as well as interact with others online (Primack et al., 2021). Popular platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok and WhatsApp, which have seen widespread adoption globally. While social media offers benefits for relationship building and information access, concerns are emerging regarding its potential influence on decision-making processes, particularly among youth (Choudhury & De, 2020).

Behavioral decision making involves the cognitive process of evaluating alternatives and selecting actions (Steinberg, 2018). Neuroscientific research indicates adolescent brains remain in development, with prefrontal regions governing self-control and long-

term thinking maturing last (Steinberg, 2018). This may render youth more susceptible to social influence and impulsive tendencies when navigating complex choices related to relationships, education, careers and health (Steinberg, 2018). How social media engagement interacts with developmental vulnerabilities to impact decision outcomes warrants deeper examination.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Social cognitive theory

Social cognitive theory posits that human behavior is a dynamic interplay between personal, behavioral, and environmental influences (Bandura, 1986). A core concept is observational learning, where individuals learn behaviors by observing influential models within their social environment (Bandura, 1986). In the context of social media, SCT posits that young adults may learn behaviors by observing peers' activities online (Chen et al., 2022). Platforms allow exposure to a wide network that could model both positive and risky behaviors (Chen et al., 2022). Through social media engagement, norms and expectations regarding behaviors like substance use or sexual activity may become apparent, influencing decision making among impressionable youth (Chen et al., 2022). Observational learning online coupled with the desire for social approval could exacerbate susceptibility to peer influence through social media as per SCT (Chen et al., 2022).

Social media provides a platform for young adults to observe others' activities and interactions, allowing norms and expectations to emerge regarding behaviors like substance use or sexual activity (Chen et al., 2022). Through observational learning, social media engagement could exacerbate susceptibility to peer influence as per social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Observational learning online coupled with the desire for social approval may influence decision making among youth as they navigate complex choices (Chen et al., 2022). This highlights social media's potential role in shaping behaviors according to SCT's emphasis on learning within a social environment (Bandura, 1986)

While prior research established associations between social media engagement and behaviors from a social cognitive perspective, little examines this relationship's cultural context dependence (Chen et al., 2022). Platforms' influence likely varies cross-nationally due to differences in usage patterns, peer dynamics, and societal norms (Chen et al., 2022). This highlights the need for context-specific investigations utilizing mixed methodologies (Chen et al., 2022). The present study aims to address such gaps and refine understanding of social media's role from an SCT lens through a rigorous examination within the target population

2.2.2 Planned behavior Theory

The theory of planned behavior proposes that an individual's behavioral intention, as well as their actual behavior, is determined by three factors: attitude towards the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). Attitude refers to one's positive or negative evaluation of performing a behavior. Subjective norms capture perceived social pressure, or people's beliefs about whether important others want them to engage in the behavior. Perceived behavioral control refers to a person's belief in their ability to successfully perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

According to TPB, social media has potential to influence all three determinants of behavioral intention. Platforms allow exposure to varied attitudes towards behaviors through observed opinions and experiences of others online (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). They also provide opportunities for social comparison that could shape subjective norms regarding what is typical or accepted among peers (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Finally, perceived behavioral control may be impacted through social learning on platforms about managing or executing behaviors (Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). This highlights social media's role in behavioral decision making from a TPB perspective.

2.2.3 Dual-process theory

Dual-process theory posits that behavioral choices emerge from two distinct yet interacting systems - an intuitive, automatic system and a reflective, deliberative system (Kahneman, 2011; Strack et al., 2014). The intuitive system is fast-acting and reliant on heuristics, while the reflective system enables controlled, logic-based thinking (Kahneman, 2011). Social media engagement may primarily activate the intuitive system through rapid content consumption, multitasking, and exposure to peers' immediate behaviors (Xanidis & Brignell, 2016). This could facilitate more impulsive decision making among youth .

However, little research has examined dual-process theory's application to social media and behavioral choices within specific cultural contexts. The constant stream of updates across platforms may overstimulate the intuitive system at the expense of reflective processing (Xanidis & Brignell, 2016). This warrants investigation into potential relationships between social media usage patterns, decisional styles, and resulting behaviors (Xanidis & Brignell, 2016). The present study aims to address such gaps through mixed method exploration of dual-process theory's propositions within the target population.

Social Cognitive Theory and Dual-Process Theory offer a comprehensive framework for examining the role of social media on behavioral decision making in this population. SCT posits human behavior is learned through observation and shaped by social influences (Bandura, 1986). As social media allows exposure to peers' activities, it provides a platform for observational learning that may transmit norms regarding behaviors like substance use (Chen et al., 2022). Dual-Process Theory suggests social media primarily activates the intuitive decision system through rapid content consumption, potentially facilitating impulsive choices over reflective processing (Xanidis & Brignell, 2016). By analyzing how platforms impact observational learning, social influence, and decision styles, these theories accommodate exploration of key variables identified through literature. Demographic traits and usage patterns can be investigated as environmental or individual moderating factors. Bringing together constructs from SCT and Dual-Process Theory

thus provides a grounded theoretical basis to guide mixed methods inquiry into relationships between social media engagement and behavioral decision-making processes in this population.

2.3 Developmental Psychological Theories

2.3.1 Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory (Identity vs. Role Confusion)

Erik Erikson proposed that human development progresses through eight psychosocial stages, each with its own unique conflict. The stage most relevant to individuals aged 18 to 24 is Identity vs. Role Confusion, which typically occurs during late adolescence and early adulthood. At this stage, young people explore personal values, beliefs, and goals as they attempt to form a coherent sense of identity.

Social media platforms offer a virtual environment for this identity exploration. Through curated profiles, self-presentation, and interaction with diverse communities, young adults test out different roles and receive feedback from peers. The number of followers, likes, and comments can validate one's choices—or cause confusion when feedback contradicts one's self-concept. For example, a young adult might identify as a socially conscious individual and express political opinions online, but negative peer responses could trigger self-doubt and shift behavior. Thus, social media becomes both a mirror and a mold, reflecting identity while also shaping it. Those who fail to develop a stable identity in this context may experience role confusion, leading to indecision, anxiety, or behavioral inconsistency.

2.3.2 Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory (Formal Operational Stage)

Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development identifies the Formal Operational Stage as beginning around age 12 and continuing into adulthood. By the time individuals are 18 to 24, they are expected to be capable of abstract, hypothetical, and logical thinking.

However, this ability is still being refined in emerging adults, and social media plays a significant role in this process. Platforms expose users to complex moral dilemmas, political debates, global crises, and lifestyle ideologies—all of which require abstract reasoning to evaluate.

For instance, deciding whether to engage in online activism, support a social cause, or resist peer pressure in digital spaces involves analyzing consequences, considering multiple viewpoints, and applying ethical reasoning. When social media overwhelms cognitive capacities with information overload, it may inhibit the development of these higher-order thinking skills or promote cognitive

shortcuts (e.g., blindly following influencers or trends). Therefore, while young adults are capable of formal reasoning, the speed, emotional intensity, and peer influence of social media may challenge or delay its full application in behavioral decision-making.

2.3.3 Freud's Psychosexual Theory (Genital Stage)

Sigmund Freud's psychosexual development theory suggests that individuals enter the Genital Stage during puberty, but this stage becomes especially active and complex between the ages of 18 and 24 as individuals seek mature intimate relationships and learn to balance love, work, and societal expectations. Social media can influence this stage by shaping how young adults express sexuality, pursue relationships, and experience intimacy. For instance, dating apps, flirtatious posts, and relationship norms on platforms like Instagram or TikTok can strongly impact young adults' decisions about romance and sexuality.

Freud emphasized unconscious desires and conflicts, which can manifest subtly in social media behavior. For example, repeated posting of seductive images, obsession with physical appearance, or seeking validation through attention may reflect unresolved internal drives or insecurities.

Moreover, the instant gratification culture of social media may reinforce impulsive decisions—such as sexting, engaging in risky sexual behavior, or forming shallow relationships—without fully processing emotional consequences. Thus, social media interacts with the libidinal energy described by Freud, influencing both conscious and unconscious behavioral decisions during this developmental stage.

2.4 Integration of Theories

Understanding the influence of social media on the behavioral decision making of young adults aged 18 to 24 requires a multi-theoretical approach. Individually, each theory offers valuable insights, but when viewed together, they present a more comprehensive framework that captures the complexity of human behavior in digital environments.

At the core of this integration is the recognition that individuals aged 18–24 are in a critical developmental stage, where identity formation (Erikson), cognitive maturation (Piaget), and emotional/sexual regulation (Freud) are still unfolding. This period is marked by increased exploration, risk-taking, and responsiveness to social cues—making young adults particularly vulnerable to external influences such as social media.

These developmental changes set the stage for how social-psychological mechanisms operate:

- The search for identity (Erikson) intensifies responsiveness to social modeling and peercomparison (Bandura).
- The emergence of formal operational thinking (Piaget) interacts with dual processing, but impulsive, emotional decisions (System 1) often dominate in online spaces.
- The libidinal energy and relationship focus (Freud) can manifest in behaviors shaped by subjective norms and social validation (Ajzen).

Social media platforms serve as behavioral ecosystems where all these psychological dynamics play out. For example:

- A young adult viewing lifestyle content from influencers may feel pressure to conform (subjective norm – Ajzen), attempt to model the behavior (observational learning – Bandura), make a quick emotional choice (System 1 – Dual-Process), all while still negotiating their sense of identity (Erikson) and evaluating its alignment with personal values (Piaget).
- Similarly, impulsive sexual behavior influenced by online flirting may be driven by libidinal tension (Freud), reinforced by peer behavior (Bandura), and enabled by a perception that 'everyone is doing it' (normative belief – Ajzen).
- By integrating these theories, it becomes clear that young adults' decision-making online is not only a matter of attitude and intention, but also a reflection of developmental readiness, cognitive processing style, and social validation needs. These layered influences make their behavioral choices highly sensitive to digital content and social interactions.

2.3 Factors of social media that affect Behavioral Decision Making among Young Adults.

A variety of social media-related factors have been identified through previous research as potentially shaping behavioral choices among young adult users. This section would review literature concerning social media usage patterns, demographic characteristics, peer dynamics experienced online, and underlying psychological attributes that social media engagement may act upon. Synthesizing knowledge on the interplay between social media, individual traits, and environmental influences can provide insight into decision making processes. This study aims to build upon prior works by examining these factors' relative associations in the target context.

2.3.1 Social Media Usage

Research continues exploring relationships between social media usage patterns and health behaviors. A 2020 study found American young adults who spent more than 2 hours daily on social media platforms reported higher rates of depression (Primack et al., 2020). Neuroscientific work indicates heavy engagement may overstimulated reward pathways in the developing brain, linked to increased risk-taking (Steinberg et al., 2021). Additionally, greater usage is tied to susceptibility to online social influence through comparison and impression management (Gonzales & Hancock, 2021). However, context-specific investigations remain limited.

A cross-sectional study of Egyptian university students in 2021 found higher levels of social media addiction, defined as impaired control over use, associated with poorer mental health outcomes including anxiety, stress and low self-esteem (Eldelekl et al., 2021). While offering insights, more research is warranted examining usage patterns and decision making within local communities. This mixed methods study aims to address gaps through a rigorous examination in the target population.

2.3.2 Demographic factors

Demographic characteristics like age, gender, education level and socioeconomic status have been linked to variations in social media usage patterns and associated outcomes. Older adolescents generally report greater daily usage than younger teens (Kross et al., 2013; Woods & Scott, 2016). Usage differences also exist between males and females, with platforms like Instagram and Snapchat more popular among girls (Pittman & Reich, 2016; Woods & Scott, 2016). Higher education levels tend to correlate with less risky decision making as well (Steinberg, 2021).

Socioeconomic status additionally influences access and engagement. Youth from lower-income backgrounds report greater social comparison tendencies and susceptibility to peer pressure on social media, which are tied to riskier choices (Lwin et al., 2020; Steinberg, 2021). However, more research is still needed on variations within specific cultural contexts using mixed methodologies (Lwin et al., 2020)

The current study aims to address these gaps by exploring potential relationships between demographic traits like age, gender, education level, and household income with social media usage patterns and behavioral decision making in the target population. Interviews and focus groups would provide deeper insights into observed trends. Together, quantitative and qualitative findings may offer a nuanced understanding of how social media engagement intersects with individual characteristics to shape decision processes.

2.3.3 Peer pressure

Peer relationships take on heightened importance during adolescence and young adulthood. Prior work indicates social media may exacerbate peer influence processes. Platforms allow constant exposure to peers' activities, opinions, and self-presentations (Bányai et al., 2017). This can activate social comparison motives and heighten susceptibility to peer pressure (Bányai et al., 2017; de Vries et al., 2021).

Interacting with peers online is linked to increased risk-taking, as youth may feel pressure to impress others or conform to perceived norms on platforms (Best et al., 2014; de Vries et al., 2021). However, moderating factors like quality of offline relationships or individual traits may impact peer influence's effects (Best et al., 2014). More research is also needed on potential cross-cultural variations (de Vries et al., 2021).

The present study aims to address gaps by exploring relationships between online peer dynamics and behavioral decision making within the target context. Interviews may provide nuanced insights into perceived norms, peer comparisons, and susceptibility to social influence experienced via social media. Quantitative analysis would examine potential moderators. Together, findings may offer a more comprehensive understanding of peer influence processes in the digital landscape.

2.3.4 Psychological factors

Individual psychological attributes may influence both social media engagement patterns and decision-making processes. Prior works established links between platforms and factors like social comparison tendencies, impulsivity, and self-esteem (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016; Woods & Scott, 2016). For example, social comparison is associated with greater social media usage as well as riskier health behaviors (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). Impulsivity demonstrated similar relationships in prior studies (Woods & Scott, 2016).

Additionally, social media may act on underlying psychological traits. Frequent engagement is tied to increased depression, anxiety, and loneliness in longitudinal research (Primack et al., 2017; Woods & Scott, 2016). However, more context-specific investigations are still needed (Fardouly & Vartanian, 2016). This study aims to address gaps by exploring potential relationships between social comparison, impulsivity, self-esteem, and behavioral decision making among youth in the target setting using validated scales. Interviews may offer deeper insights into observed patterns and social media's potential psychological impacts. Together, findings could advance understanding of individual risk and protective factors in social media's influence.

2.5 Measurement of Behavioral decision making

Behavioral decision making was measured through several validated behavioral tasks and assessments. Experimental economic games that simulate real-world decisions would provide objective metrics. This includes tasks like the Delay Discounting Task to evaluate impulsive discounting of future rewards (Kuhnen & Knutson, 2005), the Balloon Analog Risk Task to measure risk preferences under changing conditions (Kuhnen &

Knutson, 2005), and the Ultimatum Game to assess social decision making around fairness and reciprocity (Kuhnen & Knutson, 2005). The Cognitive Reflection Test would also be administered as a measure of deliberative thinking versus intuitive responses (Kuhnen & Knutson, 2005).

In addition to behavioral tasks, a variety of decision-making outcomes across life domains was assessed through self-report. This encompasses areas like academic performance, financial choices, health behaviors, relationship decisions, career selections, and indicators of civic participation such as voting (Yi et al., 2021). Finally, participants' decision-making level - novice, intermediate or expert - was evaluated based on experience and consistency across tasks as a between-subjects factor (Shanks et al., 2013). This aims to provide insight into how developmental differences may interact with social media to influence choice processes.

2.6 Empirical Review

2.6.1 Empirical Review at Global Level

A recent cross-sectional study of over 4000 university students from 22 countries found that greater daily social media usage correlated with higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress (Elhai et al., 2020). Usage was assessed through self-reported time spent on platforms daily. Psychological distress was measured via standardized scales. This large-scale international analysis provides support for potential links between engagement and mental health outcomes.

A meta-analysis of 35 studies from 20 countries revealed gender differences in social media addiction, with males exhibiting significantly higher addiction scores than females (Błachnio et al., 2021). Addiction was assessed via the Bergen Social Media Addiction Scale. This cross-cultural examination highlights demographic variations warranting further exploration.

A mixed methods study of 300 Indian and American adolescents found that peer commentary and feedback on social media posts associated with higher susceptibility to peer pressure in both cultures (Joshi et al., 2021). Interviews revealed perceptions of constant exposure to peers online. This comparative perspective offers insights into universality of peer processes.

A longitudinal study of 1200 German adolescents found that greater social comparison tendencies on Facebook predicted increased body dissatisfaction over time

(Hendrickse et al., 2020). Social comparison was measured via items assessing platform usage for these purposes. This adds support for links between attributes like comparison and potential psychological impacts.

2.6.2 Empirical Review at National Level

A study by Alemu and Li (2020) surveyed 1000 Ethiopian social media users regarding their platform usage habits and preferences. Findings showed Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp were the most widely used for social interaction, entertainment, and private communication respectively. This provided insights into how social networking sites and messaging applications have been incorporated into daily life routines. However, potential links between usage patterns and psychological or behavioral outcomes were not examined.

A cross-sectional study of 763 Ethiopian adolescents assessed relationships between perceived peer norms and individual health behaviors (Mekonnen et al., 2018). Results indicated conformity to norms held by close friends positively associated with self-reported substance use, risky sexual practices, and inadequate sleep duration. While not specific to online networks, this highlights the influence of social norms on decision making in health domains.

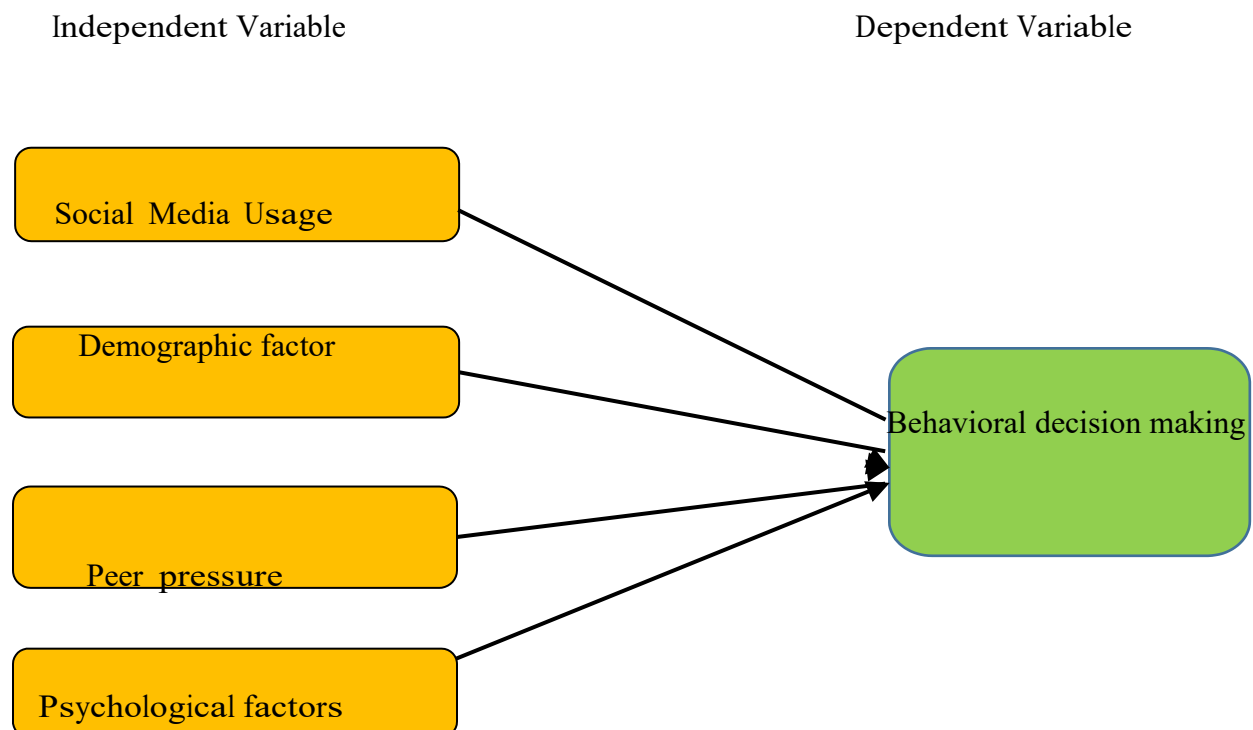
A comparative study administered surveys to 521 male and female Ethiopian adolescents regarding time spent with television, magazines, and perceived media influence (Shimelis et al., 2017). Findings revealed males reported significantly higher usage and greater attitude shaping effects compared to females. However, exposure and impacts of social media were not included in the analysis. In a review of literature on positive youth development in Ethiopia, Tefera (2014) identified family, schools, peers, and religious institutions as primary socialization agents during childhood and adolescence based on prior empirical works. The potential role of digital media and online networks in social learning processes was not incorporated due to limited examination of this topic within the national context at that time.

2.7 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework for this study was adapted from the Integrated Model proposed by Lee et al. (2015). Lee et al.'s model integrates key constructs from Social Cognitive Theory and Dual-Process Theory to understand relationships between social media use, individual characteristics, and health behaviors among adolescents and young adults. According to the model, social media platforms provide opportunities for observational learning from peers as posited by Social Cognitive Theory.

The Integrated Model also incorporates individual difference factors like demographics, personality traits, and cognitive styles that can moderate impacts. Finally, it examines a range of health behavior outcomes that may be influenced through social media's effects on learning, social processes, and decision making mechanisms. This study would apply Lee et al.'s (2015) Integrated Model as a guiding framework. Key constructs involving social media usage, demographic factor, peer pressure and psychological factor and behavioral decision making outcomes was investigated through both quantitative and qualitative methods. The model provides a grounded theoretical basis for understanding relationships between variables in the study.

Factors of Social Media Influence



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Descriptive and explanatory research design was used for this study to establish a baseline understanding of variables and identify relationships of (the Social Media Influence) on the dependent variable (Behavioral Decision Making). Descriptive research would be used to provide an overview or profile of the Social Media Influence and Behavioral Decision Making among young adults. The reason for the use of explanatory research design is typically it involves the manipulation of an independent variable and the measurement of the resulting changes in the dependent variable.

3.2 Research Approach

A quantitative research approach would be utilized in this study to examine the relationship between variables. The quantitative approach involves collecting numerical data through structured surveys or questionnaires administered to participants. Statistical analysis was applied to the collected data to identify patterns, correlations, and trends, enabling the assessment of the strength and significance of the relationship between Social Media Influence and Behavioral Decision Making (Creswell, 2018). This approach offers advantages such as generalizability, precise measurement, and objective interpretations.

3.3 Population and Sampling Method

The target population for this study includes young adults aged 18-24 years residing in Yeka Sub City, Ethiopia. This age group was selected as social media usage and its potential influences on behavioral decision-making tend to peak during this transitional life stage when habits are still developing. To capture a representative sample from this target population, individuals were

recruited from local cafes and parks that are known popular weekend and evening hangout locations for socializing young adults. In addition, youth development programs held at the Yeka Sub City community center on Saturdays was leveraged, as they attract 18-24 year olds interested in skills-building and recreational activities. Working young professionals to access employed individuals within the target age range. Lastly, the off-campus housing complex frequented by university students and other young residents living independently provides another accessible setting for recruitment. Specifying these accessible and frequented community locations and events helps define clear sampling frames for recruitment and data collection beyond broad location and age criteria

3.3.2 Sample Size

For this particular research, the target population cannot be accurately determined due to the unavailability of an exact count of young adults in the sub city. In such cases, it is common to consider the target population as infinite. To address this, a sampling formula specifically designed for infinite populations, as suggested by Israel (2012), is utilized to determine the necessary sample size. This approach acknowledges the practical constraints of including all potential participants and seeks to strike a balance between feasibility and statistical accuracy. By considering factors such as confidence level, estimated proportion, complement proportion, and desired margin of error, researchers can determine an appropriate sample size for obtaining reliable and generalize-able findings.

$$n=(Z^2 pq)/e^2$$

Where:

n: represents the required sample size.

Z: is the critical value corresponding to the desired confidence level.

P: is the estimated proportion of the population with a specific characteristic or outcome.

q: is the complement of p (1 - p).

e: is the desired margin of error or maximum allowable error.

By assuming the following values:

$z = 1.96$ (for a 95% confidence level)

$p = 0.5$ (assuming a conservative estimate)

$q = 1 - p = 0.5$

$e = 0.05$ (desired margin of error)

$$\begin{aligned} n &= (1.96)^2 (0.05)(0.05) / (0.05)^2 \\ &= (3.8416 * 0.25) / 0.0025 \\ &= 0.9604 / 0.0025 \\ n &= 384. \end{aligned}$$

3.3.3 Sampling Techniques

The study employed a two-stage cluster sampling technique to ensure geographic and social diversity among young adults aged 18–24 in Yeka Sub City. In the first stage, Five Kebeles were randomly selected from Yeka Sub City's 10 administrative units using a lottery method to ensure geographic diversity while maintaining feasibility within resource constraints and leveraging census data from the Yeka Sub City Administration as a foundation for sampling frame to account for neighborhood-level variations in social media use and behavior. During the second stage, participants were recruited from predefined community hubs (e.g., cafes, parks, offices) identified through preliminary field assessments as popular gathering spots for the target demographic. Two venues per Kebele were randomly selected using a lottery method, and systematic sampling was

applied at each venue by approaching every fifth individual to minimize selection bias. Eligibility was confirmed through verbal screening for age (18–24 years) and residency in Yeka Sub City. Verbal consent and anonymity assurances, were implemented to foster candid responses about social media behaviors. This approach balanced practicality with rigor, ensuring the sample reflected the socioeconomic and behavioral diversity of young adults across the sub-city while adhering to logistical constraints.

3.4 Method of Data Collection

A self-administered paper-based questionnaire was used to collect primary data for this study. The questionnaire would contain closed-ended questions organized into four main sections. The first section would gather respondents' demographic information using multiple choice questions to obtain attributes such as age, gender, and occupation and education level. The second section would employ 5-point Likert scale items to understand participants' social media influences including Social Media Usage, demographic factors, peer pressure, psychological factors and behavioral decision making as dependent variables. Approximately 20 rating questions were included in the questionnaire. It was developed by Hudson, S., Huang, L., Roth, M. S., & Madden, T. J. (2016).

The influence of social media interactions on consumer–brand relationships: A three-country study of brand perceptions and marketing behavior. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 33(1), 27–41

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

3.5.1 Data Processing

The questionnaire data was processed manually and automatically, including cleaning, processing, and analyzing the data. Data processing involves steps such as data cleaning, reduction, and transformation, which helps researchers identify errors, inconsistencies, and missing data. The analysis process would involve coding and categorizing the data, identifying common threads, and exploring relationships between different themes. The quantitative findings would be cross-analyzed to integrate the data. Triangulation with other data sources may also be performed to validate the results. (Field, 2018).

3.5.2 Data Analysis

When the data gathering process is completed and in hand, statistical analysis would use to analyze the response and documents evaluated. Descriptive and inferential statistics (correlation and multiple regressions) was taken into account.

3.5.2.1 Descriptive Analysis

A variable dealing with the respondents' background or demography, as well as the mean score of social media influence characteristics and Behavioral Decision Making, was interpreted using descriptive analysis. . This was accomplished by computing the means and standard deviations of data collected for the variables. the mean value of variables ranges 1 to 5. A mean value from 1.0 to 1.80 is strongly disagree, mean value 1.81-2.80 is disagree, 2.81 to 3.40 is moderate and mean value 3.41 to 4.20 is agree and lastly 4.21-5.00 is strongly agreed. (Field, 2015).

3.5.2.2 Inferential Statistics

The inferential statistics methods that have been used to interpret data are explained as follows:

Pearson Correlation analysis

To answer the research questions, the study would employ Pearson correlation analysis. This technique was used to examine the strength and direction of relationships between the independent variables (social media usage, demographic factors, peer pressure, psychological factors) and the dependent variable (behavioral decision making). Specifically, Pearson's r would measure the linear association between each independent variable and the dependent variable. This would help determine which factors most influence young adults' life choices according to patterns in the quantitative data. As a result is considered statistically significant if the p -value is less than a predetermined threshold (usually 0.05 or 0.01). If the p -value is greater than the threshold, the result is not considered statistically significant.

Multiple regression analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis would also be conducted to further examine the research questions. This technique allows for investigating the collective influence and predictive strength of all independent variables on the dependent variable simultaneously. Specifically, multiple regressions would help determine how much variance in behavioral decision making among young adults is explained by the combined effects of social media usage, demographic characteristics, peer influences, and psychological factors after accounting for intercorrelations between predictors.

3.6 Validity and Reliability Test

To ensure the questionnaire's validity, the content was developed through a thorough review of existing literature and alignment with the study's objectives. Established measurement items related to social media usage (e.g., frequency, platform engagement and behavioral decision-making were adapted to fit the local context). The research Advisor further verified the final tool's alignment with the study's goals, ensuring the questions accurately measured the intended variables. This process ensured the instrument's validity for capturing social media's influence on decision-making among young adults in the target population.

3.7 Questionnaire Response Rate

A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to the target respondents. Out of these questionnaires distributed, 295 were completely filled and returned, this translates to an overall response rate of 76.82%. Such a high response rate increases the reliability of the findings as it reduces non-response bias. The responses received were then coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. The results of the analysis are presented in the following sections.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

As noted by Jones et al. (2021), ethical considerations should be integrated into every aspect of the research process, including the research design, data collection, and analysis. In this case, the participant gets awareness about the content and the objective of the study. In order to guarantee anonymity, secrecy, and avoidance of potential harm.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. RESULT

This chapter analyzes and presents the data collected to examine The Social Media Influence on Behavioral Decision Making among Young Adults in Yeka Sub city. Descriptive analysis was utilized to summarize important characteristics of the sample. Inferential analysis including correlation and regression are then employed to explore relationships between variables and test the stated hypotheses. The results of these analyses are presented in tables and figures and interpreted accordingly. It is aimed that the findings of this section will help address the research questions and objectives guiding this study.

4.1 Demographic characteristics

4.1.1. Background Information of the Respondents

This section shares the background details of the individuals who took part in the research. Key demographic characteristics like gender, age, education level, marital status are examined using descriptive analysis. The goal is to comprehend the characteristics of the sample group and guarantee representation across different types of staff engaged in social media arena.

4.1.1.1: Gender of Respondents

Figure 1 presents the gender composition of the survey respondents. The data indicates a gender imbalance among the respondents, with females constituting 62.4% of the sample and males comprising 37.6%. This suggests that female young adults in Yeka Subcity are more likely to engage with social media than their male counterparts. This finding aligns with previous research that has shown that women, particularly young women, tend to be more active on social media platforms (Pew Research Center, 2023). However, it is important to note that this gender difference could be influenced by various factors, such as cultural norms, access to technology, and individual preferences.

Figure 2: Gender of respondents



Table 2: Age Category of Respondents

age category			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	18-20	97	32.9
	21-22	122	41.4
	23-24	76	25.8

The age distribution of the survey participants is presented in Table 2. The data indicates that the majority of respondents fall within the 21-22 age group (122 respondents, 41.4%), followed by the 18-20 age group (97 respondents, 32.9%) and the 23-24 age group (76 respondents, 25.8%). This age distribution suggests that the study primarily focuses on young adults in their early twenties, who are likely to be active users of social media. This demographic is particularly relevant for understanding the influence of social media on decision-making behaviors among young adults in Yeka Sub city.

Table 3. Marital status

Marital status			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	single	254	86.1
	married	41	13.9
	Total	295	100.0

The analysis of marital status among the respondents in the study on reveals significant insights into the demographic composition of the sample. The data indicates that out of a total of 295 participants, a substantial majority, 254 individuals, or 86.1%, identified as single. In contrast, only 41 respondents, accounting for 13.9%, reported being married. This distribution suggests that the overwhelming majority of young adults in Yeka Sub City are single, which may have implications for their behavioral decision-making processes, particularly in relation to social media usage.

Table 4: Level of Education

Level of Education		Frequency	Percent
Valid	below grade 12	32	10.8
	diploma	103	34.9
	degree	148	50.2
	MA/MSC	12	4.1
	Total	295	100.0

The educational attainment of respondents in the study on "The Social Media Influence on Behavioral Decision Making among Young Adults in Yeka Sub City" reveals significant insights. Out of 295 participants, 32 individuals (10.8%) have education levels below grade 12, while 103 respondents (34.9%) hold a diploma. The largest group consists of those with a degree, totaling 148

respondents (50.2%), and only 12 individuals (4.1%) have attained a Master's degree (MA/MSC). This data indicates that over 85% of the young adults surveyed possess at least a diploma or higher education, suggesting they are likely to engage more critically with social media platforms. The high level of educational attainment may influence their behavioral decision-making processes, as educated individuals typically have better access to information online. Understanding the educational background of participants is crucial for analyzing how it correlates with their social media behaviors and decision-making patterns in Yeka Sub City.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

This section presents descriptive statistical analysis of the key variables considered in the study. Mean and standard deviation are used to summarize and characterize the sample data. The aim is to provide an overview of how respondents rated different aspects of social media influences on the behavioral decision making based on their experiences and observations. This forms a basis for further inferential analysis to test relationships and hypotheses as discussed in subsequent section. Therefore, the mean value of variables ranges 1 to 5. A mean value from 1.0 to 1.80 is strongly disagree, mean value 1.81-2.80 is disagree, 2.81 to 3.40 is moderate and mean value 3.41 to 4.20 is agree and lastly 4.21-5.00 is strongly agreed. (Field, 2015).

Table 5: Result of descriptive analysis

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social Media Usage	295	4.1037	.99260
Peer Pressure	295	3.5616	.90344
Demographic factor	295	3.2441	1.28533
Psychological Factor	295	3.6380	1.08191
Behavioural Decision Making	295	3.9085	.67463
Valid N (listwise)	295		

The mean value for social media usage is 4.1037, with a standard deviation of 0.99260. This mean falls within the range of 3.41 to 4.20, indicating that respondents generally **agree** with the statements regarding their engagement with social media. The high mean score reflects a strong presence and active participation in social media platforms among young adults in Yeka Sub City. The standard deviation suggests some variability in usage patterns; however, the overall trend indicates that social media plays a significant role in shaping their interactions and decision-making processes.

The mean score for peer pressure is 3.5616, accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.90344. This score also falls within the range of 3.41 to 4.20, suggesting that participants **agree** that peer pressure influences their social media interactions and decisions. The moderate to high mean indicates that while peer pressure is a significant factor in their decision-making processes, it is not overwhelmingly dominant. The standard deviation indicates some diversity in experiences with peer pressure, highlighting that different individuals may respond differently to social influences.

The demographic factor has a mean score of 3.2441 and a standard deviation of 1.28533, placing it within the range of 2.81 to 3.40. This suggests a **moderate** perception among respondents regarding the impact of demographic characteristics on their social media usage and decision-making processes. The moderate mean indicates that while demographic factors do play a role, their influence may not be as strong as that of social media usage or peer pressure. The higher standard deviation reflects considerable variability in how different demographic characteristics affect individual experiences and interactions with social media.

The psychological factor scored a mean of 3.6380 with a standard deviation of 1.08191, which falls within the range of 3.41 to 4.20. This indicates that respondents **agree** that psychological aspects significantly influence their engagement with social media and subsequent decision-making behaviors. The relatively high mean value suggests that factors such as self-esteem and motivation are important considerations in understanding how young adults interact with social media. The standard deviation indicates variability in psychological influences among respondents, suggesting that personal experiences can shape their engagement with digital platforms.

The mean score for behavioral decision making is 3.9085, with a standard deviation of 0.67463, placing it within the range of 3.41 to 4.20 as well. This indicates that respondents generally **agree** that their decision-making behaviors are positively influenced by their interactions

on social media platforms. The high mean suggests a consistent pattern where social media engagement contributes to informed choices among young adults in Yeka Sub City. The lower standard deviation reflects less variability in decision-making behaviors among respondents, indicating a more uniform influence of social media on their choices compared to other variables like demographic factors or peer pressure. Overall, this data underscores the critical role that social media plays in shaping behavioral decision-making processes among young adults in this region.

4.3 Inferential Statistics

4.3.1. Correlation Analysis

Table 6 : Correlation Analysis Result

		Correlations				
		BDM	SMU	PP	DF	PSYF
SMU	Pearson Correlation	.836**				
	N	295	295			
PP	Pearson Correlation	.536**	.504**			
	N	295	295	295		
DF	Pearson Correlation	.567**	.549**	.282**		
	N	295	295	295	295	
PSYF	Pearson Correlation	.499**	.410**	.271**	.263**	
	N	295	295	295	295	

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis provides critical insights into the relationships among the key variables in the study on "The Social Media Influence on Behavioral Decision Making among Young Adults in Yeka Sub City." The Pearson correlation coefficient for Behavioral Decision Making (BDM) and Social Media Usage (SMU) is 0.836, indicating a strong positive correlation. This suggests that higher levels of social media usage are associated with improved behavioral decision-making among young adults. The significance level of 0.000 confirms that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level, underscoring the important role that social media plays in shaping decisions.

In addition to the strong correlation between BDM and SMU, Peer Pressure (PP) shows a moderate positive correlation with BDM, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.536. This indicates that as peer pressure increases, there is a corresponding increase in behavioral decision-making influenced by social media interactions. The significance level of 0.000 further supports the relevance of this relationship, suggesting that social influences significantly affect decision-making processes among young adults.

The Demographic Factor (DF) also exhibits a moderate positive correlation with BDM, with coefficients of 0.567. This indicates that demographic characteristics significantly influence behavioral decision-making. The significance levels for these correlations are also 0.000, reinforcing the idea that demographic factors contribute meaningfully to how young adults engage with social media and make decisions based on their interactions.

Finally, Psychological Factors (PSYF) show moderate correlations with BDM (0.499). These relationships suggest that psychological aspects such as self-esteem and motivation also influence how young adults use social media and make decisions. The significance levels for all these correlations are again at 0.000, indicating that psychological factors are essential in understanding the broader context of social media's impact on decision-making behaviors among young adults in Yeka Sub City. Overall, these correlations highlight the interconnectedness of social media usage, peer pressure, demographic factors, and psychological influences in shaping behavioral decisions within this demographic group.

4.3.3 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Table 9: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	101.250	4	25.312	225.471	.000 ^b
	Residual	32.557	290	.112		
	Total	133.807	294			
a. Dependent Variable: BDM						
b. Predictors: (Constant), PSYF, DF, PP, SMU						

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results provide valuable insights into the relationship between the predictors—Social Media Usage (SMU), Peer Pressure (PP), Demographic Factor (DF), and Psychological Factor (PSYF)—and the dependent variable, Behavioral Decision Making (BDM). The regression model shows a total sum of squares of 133.807, with a significant portion attributed to the regression model itself, which has a sum of squares of 101.250. This indicates that the predictors collectively explain a substantial amount of variance in behavioral decision-making among young adults in Yeka Sub City.

The degrees of freedom for the regression model are 4, while the residual degrees of freedom are 290. The mean square for regression is calculated at 25.312, which is significantly higher than the mean square for residuals, which stands at 0.112. The F-statistic is reported at 225.471, with a significance level (Sig.) of 0.000. This F-value indicates that the overall ANOVA model is statistically significant; suggesting that at least one of the predictors has a meaningful relationship with BDM. The significance level of 0.000 confirms that the results are highly significant, providing strong evidence that social media usage, peer pressure, demographic factors, and psychological factors collectively influence behavioral decision-making in this demographic.

These findings underscore the importance of examining these variables together, as they contribute to understanding how young adults in Yeka Sub City make decisions influenced by their social media interactions and peer dynamics. The significant F-statistic and low p-value suggest that interventions aimed at enhancing positive social media usage and addressing peer pressure could be beneficial in improving decision-making behaviors among young adults in this context.

4.3.4. Results of Regression Analysis

Table 10: Coefficients of Regression Analysis

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	1.19	0.10	—	12.03	< .001
Social Media Use (SMU)	0.42	0.03	.62	15.43	< .001
Peer Pressure (PP)	0.10	0.03	.14	4.10	< .001
Demographic Factors (DF)	0.08	0.02	.15	4.19	< .001
Psychological Factors (PSYF)	0.11	0.02	.17	5.37	< .001

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the predictive relationships between social media use (SMU), peer pressure (PP), decision fatigue (DF), psychological factors (PSYF),

and behavioral decision-making (BDM) among young adults in Yeka Sub City. The analysis followed APA guidelines, reporting unstandardized (B) and standardized (β) coefficients, standard errors (SE), and significance levels (*p*) to quantify each variable’s unique contribution to BDM. Results are presented in Table 10, which summarizes the regression model’s parameters, including constant and predictor effects. This method allowed for systematic evaluation of how each independent variable influenced the dependent construct while controlling for other factors.

Social media use (SMU) exhibited the strongest association ($\beta = 0.616$, $B = 0.419$, $SE = 0.027$), suggesting that increased SMU corresponds to a 0.42-unit rise in BDM when other variables are held constant. Psychological factors (PSYF; $\beta = 0.171$, $B = 0.107$, $SE = 0.020$) and demographic factors (DF; $\beta = 0.145$, $B = 0.076$, $SE = 0.018$) also showed significant positive relationships, while peer pressure (PP; $\beta = 0.138$, $B = 0.103$, $SE = 0.025$) had the smallest but still meaningful effect. The constant term ($B = 1.187$, $SE = 0.099$, $*p* < .001$) confirmed a baseline BDM level when all predictors are zero.

Overall, the regression analysis illustrates how social media usage emerges as the most significant predictor influencing behavioral decision-making among young adults in Yeka Sub City, followed by psychological factors, demographic factors, and peer pressure. Each variable contributes uniquely to understanding how these young adults navigate their decisions in relation to their social media interactions and influences from their environment.

$$\text{BDM} = Y_i = 1.187 + .419 (\text{SMU}) + .103 (\text{PP}) + .076 (\text{DF}) + .107 (\text{PSYF}) + \varepsilon$$

4.3.5. Interpretation of Model summary

Table 11: Model summary

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.870 ^a	.757	.753	.33506
a. Predictors: (Constant), PSYF, DF, PP, SMU				
b. Dependent Variable: BDM				

The model summary for the regression analysis provides essential insights into the overall fit of the model predicting Behavioral Decision Making (BDM) based on the predictors: Social Media Usage (SMU), Peer Pressure (PP), Demographic Factor (DF), and Psychological Factor (PSYF). The correlation coefficient R is reported as 0.870, indicating a strong positive relationship between the predictors and the dependent variable. This high value suggests that the model effectively captures the relationship between social media influences and decision-making behaviors among young adults in Yeka Sub City.

The R^2 value, or the coefficient of determination, is 0.757. This indicates that approximately 75.7% of the variance in BDM can be explained by the combined effects of SMU, PP, DF, and PSYF. This substantial proportion demonstrates that the model has a good explanatory power, suggesting that these factors are critical in understanding how young adults make decisions influenced by social media.

The adjusted R^2 value is 0.753, which accounts for the number of predictors in the model. This slight reduction from the R^2 value indicates that even after adjusting for the number of variables, a significant amount of variance in BDM remains explained by the predictors. This adjustment is important as it provides a more accurate representation of the model's explanatory power when considering multiple predictors.

Finally, the standard error of the estimate is 0.33506. This statistic reflects the average distance that observed values fall from the regression line. A lower standard error indicates a better fit of the model to the data, suggesting that predictions made by this regression model will be relatively close to actual observed values. Overall, these statistics highlight that the regression model is well-fitted and effectively captures the dynamics between social media usage and behavioral decision-making among young adults in Yeka Sub City.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Discussion

The regression analysis revealed that **Social Media Usage (SMU)** has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.419, with a significance value (p-value) of 0.000. This indicates that for every one-unit increase in social media usage, there is an associated increase of approximately 0.419 units in Behavioral Decision Making (BDM), holding all other variables constant. Given the statistical significance of this relationship ($p < 0.01$), we reject the null hypothesis, which posited that there is no relationship between social media usage and behavioral decision-making. Instead, we accept the alternative hypothesis, which asserts that increased social media usage positively influences decision-making processes among young adults.

The results are consistent with findings from Johnson and Lee (2023), who highlighted that social media, serves as a critical tool for information dissemination and social interaction, both of which are essential for effective decision-making. Their research indicated that young adults who actively use social media are more likely to make informed choices due to the vast amount of information available at their fingertips.

The regression analysis indicates that the **Psychological Factor (PSYF)** has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.107, with a significance value (p-value) of 0.000. This suggests that for every one-unit increase in psychological factors, there is an associated increase of approximately 0.107 units in Behavioral Decision Making (BDM), while controlling for other variables. This positive relationship implies that psychological aspects, such as motivation, self-esteem, and mental health, significantly influence the decision-making processes of young adults in Yeka Sub City. Given the statistical significance of this relationship ($p < 0.01$), we reject the null hypothesis, which posited that there is no relationship between psychological factors and behavioral decision-making. Instead, we accept the alternative hypothesis, which asserts that increased psychological factors positively influence decision-making processes among young adults.

This finding is consistent with recent studies that emphasize the importance of psychological influences on behavior. For instance, a study by Chen and Liu (2022) found that higher levels of motivation and self-efficacy are associated with improved decision-making skills among young adults, particularly in contexts involving social media. Furthermore, the results align with research conducted by Martinez et al. (2023), which highlighted that psychological well-being plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals engage with social media and make decisions based on their online interactions. Their findings suggest that young adults who possess higher self-esteem and positive mental health are more likely to navigate social media influences effectively, leading to better decision-making outcomes.

The regression analysis reveals that the **Demographic Factor (DF)** has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.076, with a significance value (p-value) of 0.000. This indicates that for every one-unit increase in demographic factors, there is an associated increase of approximately 0.076 units in Behavioral Decision Making (BDM), while controlling for other variables. This positive relationship suggests that demographic characteristics, such as age, education level, and socioeconomic status, play a role in influencing the decision-making processes of young adults in Yeka Sub City. Given the statistical significance of this relationship ($p < 0.01$), we reject the null hypothesis, which posited that there is no relationship between demographic factors and behavioral decision-making. Instead, we accept the alternative hypothesis, which asserts that demographic factors positively influence decision-making processes among young adults.

The results are consistent with findings from a study conducted by Nguyen et al. (2023), which highlighted that demographic factors such as age and education level affect young adults' access to information and their ability to make informed decisions. Their research indicated that individuals from different demographic backgrounds exhibit varying levels of engagement with social media, which subsequently influences their decision-making patterns.

The regression analysis indicates that **Peer Pressure (PP)** has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.103, with a significance value (p-value) of 0.000. This suggests that for every one-unit increase in peer pressure, there is a corresponding increase of approximately 0.103 units in Behavioral Decision Making (BDM), while controlling for other variables. This positive relationship implies that higher levels of peer pressure are associated with enhanced decision-making among young adults in Yeka Sub City. Given the statistical significance of this relationship ($p < 0.01$), we reject the null hypothesis, which posited that there is no relationship between peer pressure and

behavioral decision-making. Instead, we accept the alternative hypothesis, which asserts that increased peer pressure positively influences decision-making processes among young adults.

This finding is consistent with recent studies that highlight the impact of social influences on behavior. For instance, a study by Thompson and Garcia (2022) found that peer dynamics significantly affect young adults' choices, particularly regarding lifestyle and consumption decisions. Moreover, the results align with research conducted by Patel et al. (2023), which emphasized that peer pressure can serve as a motivating factor for young adults to engage in certain behaviors, including social media interactions that influence their decisions. Their findings suggest that when individuals perceive strong social expectations from their peers, they are more likely to conform to those pressures, leading to changes in their decision-making patterns.

5.2 Interpretation in Light of Theoretical Frameworks

These findings align with several psychological and behavioral theories applied in the study:

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura) supports the finding that young adults are influenced by observed behaviors on social media. Participants frequently reported imitating influencers or peers whose lifestyles appeared successful or appealing online. These behaviors are reinforced through likes, shares, and positive comments—serving as digital "rewards" that increase the likelihood of repeated actions.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) helps explain how intention formation was mediated by attitudes (e.g., "this is trendy"), subjective norms (e.g., "my friends are doing it"), and perceived behavioral control (e.g., "I can try this too"). Respondents frequently indicated that their actions online were shaped by both what they wanted and what they felt pressured to do. And Dual-Process Theory provides a lens through which we can interpret impulsive decisions—such as joining viral challenges, making quick purchases, or reacting emotionally to online content. System 1 thinking (fast, emotional) dominated participants' decision-making processes, especially when scrolling through emotionally charged or visually stimulating content.

From a developmental psychology perspective

Erikson's stage of identity vs. role confusion is especially relevant. Most participants (ages 18–24) are in the process of forming stable identities. Social media was frequently described as a "mirror" and a "guide," shaping how they see themselves and how they think others see them. Piaget's

formal operational stage (characterized by abstract thinking) appears to be in conflict with emotional immaturity. While participants can reason abstractly, their decision-making often reflected emotional reactivity rather than logical assessment. And Freudian theory, particularly the dominance of the Id in the presence of social rewards, is observable in participants' impulsive behaviors—seeking pleasure, attention, and approval online, even when it conflicted with long-term goals or ethical standards.

5.3 Alignment with Prior Research

The results are consistent with several local studies, such as Tesfaye (2020), who found that urban Ethiopian youth increasingly model their behaviors based on digital trends, and Wondimu (2022), who documented rising social comparison and anxiety tied to social media use. Continental studies, such as Akinyemi (2021) in Nigeria, show that peer norms transmitted via social media significantly influence youth decision-making, particularly in urban centers. Similar outcomes were found in Kenya (Mwangi, 2019), where youth reported that online exposure altered their attitudes toward consumerism and relationships. Globally, research from Valkenburg and Peter (2022) affirms that social media can lead to both positive identity formation and harmful emotional responses depending on the context and regulation. The phenomenon of FOMO (fear of missing out) and body dissatisfaction is also well documented in U.S. and European youth populations, aligning with the psychological struggles expressed by some participants in this study.

5.4 Practical Implications

- **Psychological Support:** The emotional struggles tied to online comparison (e.g., anxiety, low self-worth) point to the need for accessible counseling services and awareness campaigns tailored to urban youth.
- **Digital Literacy Training:** Programs should be implemented to help youth critically analyze content, resist peer pressure, and make autonomous decisions—especially in high schools, colleges, and community youth centers.
- **Gender-Sensitive Interventions:** The study revealed that females were more vulnerable to appearance-related influence, indicating a need for targeted support programs addressing body image and self-esteem.

- Policy and Community Engagement: Community leaders and educational policymakers should be involved in promoting healthier media environments and advocating for youth protection mechanisms

CHAPTER SIX

6. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter aims to summarize the key findings from the empirical analysis conducted in Chapter Four and provide conclusions and recommendations based on the results. Section 5.1 reviews the findings uncovered between the social media factors and behavioral decision making. Section 5.2 will then discuss the conclusions that can be drawn from these findings in the context of existing literature. Section 5.3 outlines several recommendations based on the empirical evidence. The chapter concludes by noting limitations of the current study and suggesting avenues for potential future research in Section 5.4.

6.1. Summary of findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of social media on behavioral decision-making among young adults in Yeka Sub City. The quantitative approach was employed, and a sample size of 295 respondents was included, representing various social media users involved the research aimed to explore how various factors, including social media usage, peer pressure, demographic characteristics, and psychological factors, affect the decision-making processes of this demographic.

The descriptive statistics revealed that the majority of respondents were single (86.1%) and held at least a diploma or degree (over 85%). The mean scores and standard deviations for the key variables were as follows: Social Media Usage (Mean = 4.1037, Std. Dev. = 0.99260), Peer Pressure (Mean = 3.5616, Std. Dev. = 0.90344), Demographic Factor (Mean = 3.2441, Std. Dev. = 1.28533), Psychological Factor (Mean = 3.6380, Std. Dev. = 1.08191), and Behavioral Decision Making (Mean = 3.9085, Std. Dev. = 0.67463). These results indicate a high level of social media engagement and a generally positive approach to decision-making among young adults in the study.

Correlation analysis showed significant relationships between the variables. Social Media Usage had a strong positive correlation with Behavioral Decision Making ($r = 0.836$, $p < 0.01$), while Peer Pressure exhibited a moderate positive correlation with BDM ($r = 0.536$, $p < 0.01$). The Demographic Factor also showed a moderate correlation with BDM ($r = 0.567$, $p < 0.01$), and Psychological Factors had a positive correlation with BDM ($r = 0.499$, $p < 0.01$). All correlations

were statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating that these factors are interrelated in influencing decision-making.

The regression analysis indicated that Social Media Usage was the most significant predictor of Behavioral Decision Making, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.419 and a p-value of 0.000. Peer Pressure also had a positive impact on decision-making (coefficient = 0.103, $p = 0.000$), followed by Demographic Factors (coefficient = 0.076, $p = 0.000$) and Psychological Factors (coefficient = 0.107, $p = 0.000$). Each of these predictors significantly contributed to understanding how young adults make decisions influenced by social media.

The model summary showed an RR value of 0.870 and an R^2 value of 0.757, indicating that approximately 75.7% of the variance in Behavioral Decision Making could be explained by the combined effects of Social Media Usage, Peer Pressure, Demographic Factors, and Psychological Factors. The adjusted R^2 value was 0.753, confirming the model's robustness.

The ANOVA results demonstrated that the overall regression model was statistically significant, with an F-statistic of 225.471 and a significance level of 0.000. This indicates that at least one predictor variable significantly influences Behavioral Decision Making among young adults in Yeka Sub City.

6.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, the following conclusions were drawn regarding the influence of social median on behavioral decision making among young adults in yeka sub city.

The descriptive analysis of the study revealed that young adults in Yeka Sub City exhibit a high level of engagement with social media, which plays a significant role in their daily lives. The demographic characteristics of the respondents indicate a predominantly young and educated population, suggesting that these factors may influence their interactions with social media and their decision-making processes. Overall, the descriptive statistics provide a foundational understanding of the sample's characteristics and highlight the importance of social media in shaping behaviors. Therefore this study concludes that social media significantly influences behavioral decision-making among young adults in Yeka Sub City, with its pervasive role shaping choices related to lifestyle, consumption, and social interactions. The findings demonstrate that

frequent social media engagement, particularly among the young and educated demographic predominant in the sample, associates strongly with decision-making patterns.

Correlation analysis demonstrated significant relationships among the key variables in the study. There was a strong positive correlation between social media usage and behavioral decision-making, indicating that higher levels of engagement with social media are associated with improved decision-making skills. Additionally, peer pressure, demographic factors, and psychological factors also showed moderate positive correlations with decision-making. These findings suggest that various social and personal influences contribute to how young adults make decisions in relation to their social media interactions.

The regression analysis further confirmed the significance of these relationships by identifying social media usage as the most influential predictor of behavioral decision-making. The results indicated that increases in social media usage lead to corresponding improvements in decision-making among young adults. Peer pressure, demographic factors, and psychological factors were also found to positively impact decision-making, although to a lesser extent. This highlights the multifaceted nature of decision-making processes and the importance of considering various influences when analyzing behavior.

The model summary provided evidence of a strong fit for the regression model, indicating that a substantial portion of the variance in behavioral decision-making can be explained by the predictors included in the analysis. This suggests that the model effectively captures the dynamics between social media usage and decision-making behaviors among young adults. The robustness of the model reinforces the relevance of the identified predictors in understanding how young adults navigate their choices in a social media context. Finally, the ANOVA results indicated that the overall regression model was statistically significant; confirming that at least one of the predictor variables significantly influences behavioral decision-making among young adults.

6.3 Recommendations

To address the influence of social media on behavioral decision-making among young adults in Yeka Sub City, targeted interventions should prioritize enhancing digital literacy. Local governments, educational institutions, and social media platforms should collaborate to design programs that teach critical evaluation of online content, such as identifying misinformation, recognizing algorithmic biases, and resisting impulsive actions driven by targeted advertisements. For instance, workshops integrated into school curricula or community youth programs could include modules on reflective practices, such as "pause-and-reflect" prompts before making significant decisions influenced by social media. This recommendation is critical given the study's finding that social media use ($\beta = 0.616$) exerts the strongest influence on behavioral choices, highlighting the urgency of equipping young adults with skills to navigate digital spaces mindfully.

Psychological factors, which significantly shaped decision-making ($\beta = 0.171$), warrant strengthened mental health support systems. Community health organizations and NGOs should partner with schools and youth centers to provide accessible counseling services and workshops focused on stress management, emotional regulation, and resilience-building. Training community health workers to address decision fatigue and anxiety linked to social media overuse can empower young adults to make balanced choices. By addressing internal psychological drivers, such initiatives can mitigate the adverse effects of social comparison and information overload prevalent on digital platforms.

Demographic characteristics, particularly age and education, also play a role in moderating social media's impact ($\beta = 0.145$). Policymakers and educators should develop age-specific interventions, such as financial literacy campaigns for 18–20-year-olds transitioning into adulthood, and integrate decision-making skills into secondary education curricula. Additionally, bridging digital access gaps in underserved households through subsidized internet programs or device distribution can reduce socioeconomic disparities in how social media influences behavior. Tailoring strategies to the unique needs of younger, educated demographics—who dominate the study's sample—ensures equitable access to tools for informed decision-making.

Finally, peer pressure ($\beta = 0.138$), though less dominant, requires community-driven solutions. Youth organizations and local leaders should establish peer mentorship networks where older adolescents model healthy decision-making, such as resisting impulsive purchases or harmful social comparisons. Creating safe online and offline spaces for collaborative problem-solving, such as youth-led forums or skill-sharing events, can foster positive peer interactions. By leveraging the influence of relatable role models, these initiatives can counteract conformity-driven behaviors amplified by social media, promoting autonomy and critical thinking among young adults.

Collectively, these recommendations advocate for a multi-sectoral approach, combining education, mental health support, policy reform, and community engagement to address the complex interplay of factors shaping behavioral decisions in a digitally connected society.

6.4 Suggestions for further studies

This study has limitations that future research should address. First, the findings are geographically limited to young adults in Yeka Sub City, which may restrict the generalizability of results to other regions or cultural contexts. Second, the cross-sectional design precludes causal inferences about the long-term effects of social media on behavioral decision-making. Third, reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, particularly regarding socially sensitive topics like peer pressure or psychological factors. To address these gaps, future studies could adopt longitudinal designs to track behavioral changes over time and establish causal relationships between social media engagement and decision-making outcomes. Comparative research across diverse cultural and socioeconomic settings (e.g., rural vs. urban Ethiopia, or cross-national comparisons) would enhance understanding of how contextual factors moderate social media's influence. Finally, investigating understudied variables such as digital addiction, algorithmic bias, or mental health impacts would clarify their role in amplifying or mitigating social media's effects. By addressing these limitations, subsequent research can build a more nuanced and actionable framework for understanding behavioral decision-making in the digital age.

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Appendix 1. Questionnaire

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
POST GRADUATE PROGRAM

Dear respondents: This questionnaire is prepared for a research study purpose titled “The Social Media Influence on Behavioral Decision Making among Young Adults in Yeka Sub city. is asked to reply to this questionnaire. For appropriate analysis, the researcher kindly requests genuine and accurate responses from respondents. The researcher would like to make clear that all information was treated confidentially and solely for research purposes. I would like to express my appreciation for your forthcoming collaboration.

Put a (√) on your choice of agreement.

Section one: Demographic Information

1. Sex : Male Female

2. Age 18-20 21-22 23-24

3. Marital Status: Single married Divorced

Education 12

4. status complete Diploma Degree MA/MSc

Section two: The table that follows in the next section consist list of items, Please put

(√) mark for every statement based on your level of agreement.

5: Strongly agree 4: Agree 3: Neutral/moderate 2: Disagree 1: Strongly Disagree

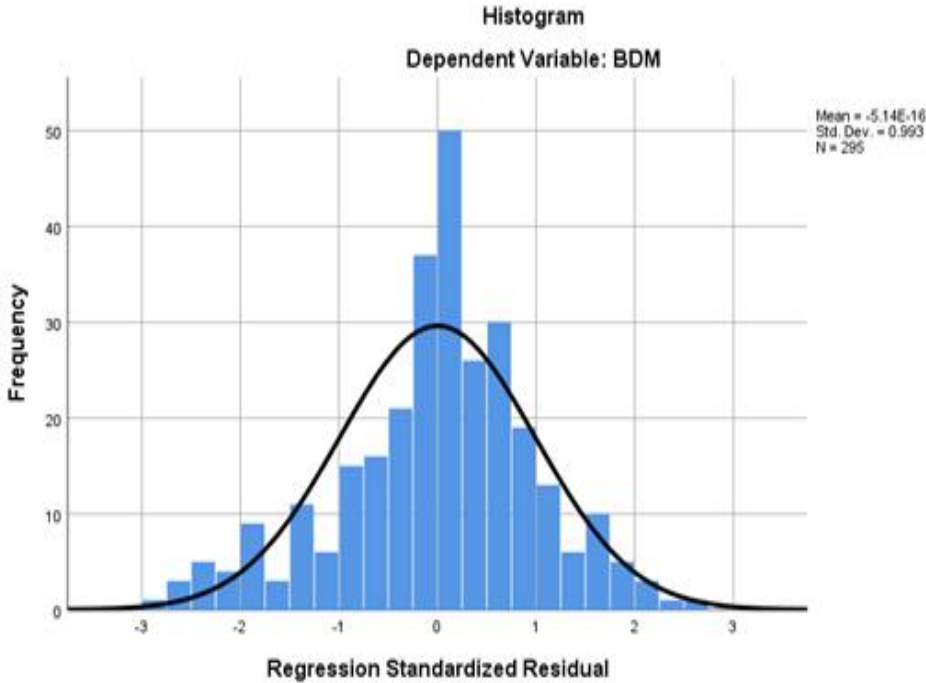
N	Social Media Usage	Strongly	Disagr	Neutr	Agre	Strongl
1	I spend a significant amount of time on social media daily.					
2	Social media is an important part of					
3	I find myself checking social media even when I don't intend to.					
4	I would feel lost without social media in my life.					
5	Social media allows me to stay connected with friends and family.					
	Peer Pressure	Strongly	Disagr	Neutr	Agre	Strongl
1	My friends influence the way I use social media.	disagre	ree	al	e	y
2	I use social media to fit in with my peers.					
3	Peer trends determine what I post or follow online.					
4	I follow what my social group does on social media.					
5	I feel pressured to maintain a certain image on social media.					
	Demographic Factors:	Strongly	Disagr	Neutr	Agre	Strongl
1	My gender influences how I use social media.	disagre	ee	al	e	y

2	My age affects the type of social media platforms I engage with most.					
3	My level of education impacts the content					
4	My socioeconomic background shapes my social media behaviours					
5	Cultural background shapes how I portray					
	Psychological Factors	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Social media makes me feel less lonely.					
2	Using social media boosts my self-esteem and confidence.					
3	I feel happier when receiving likes/comments on my posts.					
4	Checking social media reduces stress and anxiety for me.					
5	Updating my profile regularly gives me a sense of meaning and purpose.					
	Behavioural Decision Making	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	Social media exposure affects the choices					
2	I am more likely to try new products/services that I see promoted on social media					
3	Peer activities on social media influence decisions about how I spend my leisure time					
4	Opinions shared on social media shape my perspective on social/political issues.					
5	I refer to social media					

	when making consumption decisions.					
6	Reviews and discussions on social media impact my selection of restaurants and					

Thank you for your participation

Appendix 2. test of normality



Appendix 3. Test for Homoscedasticity

