# The Effect of Students' Motivation and Social Media on Students' University Choices: A Case Study of New Students Intake 2022 at DIT

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**Abstract-** **The topic is the effect of students' motivation and social media on students' university choices; a study case of new students intake 2022 at DIT. The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of students' motivation and social media on students' choices. This research was conducted in Dili, Timor-Leste. This research used descriptive quantitative and inferential analysis of PLS 3.0, and the instrument was a survey to DIT new students' intake of 2022. The result indicated that there are positive direct significant of students motivation (ability self-concept students, students task value and students' motives) and social media (as guider and approver on students' university choices. This study recommended to students that students' motivation, encompassing factors such as ability self-concept, task value, goals, and achievement motives, plays a pivotal role in shaping their decisions regarding higher education. Also, to the university is to utilize the social media platform accordingly for the sake of education to attract students' choice to study at the university.**

*Keywords:- Students' Motivation, Social Media, Students' Choices.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Students' university choices refer to students' preferences to choose the university (El Nemar, Vrontis, & Thrassou, 2020) where they could dedicate their time to study, and obtain the objectives which they could graduate and getting jobs. Also, students' choices the university means students are deciding what to study and make their decisions for many prospective university applicants. Furthermore, it inspires students to want to learn new things. It allows students to show what they know, but to take it so much further. Student choice creates an environment where students discover what they want to learn.

Furthermore, the present study contributes to the literature in several ways. Prior studies have focused on either self-motivation or interpersonal motivation of students' choice the perspective university (Steinmayr et al., 2019). By contrast, the current study takes into consideration the simultaneous effect of students' motivation and the utilization of the social media on students' choices the university through the use of the inferential study using Smart PLS 3.0. Furthermore, research in the context of Timor-Leste's university students'

choices is limited, thereby providing minimal information on the factor of students' choices the university. Accordingly, the situation calls for additional research. Therefore, this study aims to; (1) To identify the effect of students' motivation on choices to study at DIT (Dili Institute of Technology), Timor-Leste. (2) To know the effect of social media on students' choices to study at the university particularly DIT.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. The second section presents the literature relating to prior research on the students' motivation, and the role of social media on students' choices of the university, hypothesis development, and the conceptual framework of the study. The next section presents the methodology including data collection, questionnaires development, and data analysis. The last section discusses the results and concludes with some implications of the research findings.

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND, HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT, AND HYPOTHESIZED MODEL

### A. Theoretical Background

➤ *Students' Choices*
Generally, the investigations into the process of trough which potential students determined their choice of the university has increased over the past decade (Soutar & Turner, 2002; Owusu, et al., 2018), where in some countries the marketing need to come earlier attentions, especially in the Europe (Hossler & Gallagher, 1987). In turn, this means exploring the mechanism through which decisions are made, the perceptions that potential students have of the university, and the contribution to the perceptions make to attracting application.

Students' choice of a university is a complex and multifaceted decision-making process influenced by various factors. Soutar and Turner (2002) and numerous other academic studies have delved into this area, shedding light on the key determinants of students' university choices. One of the primary factors is academic reputation. Students often prioritize universities with strong academic programs, faculty expertise, and research opportunities, as they seek to acquire high-quality education and improve their career prospects.

Another crucial factor is location and proximity to home, as students consider the convenience, cost, and lifestyle implications of attending a university in a particular region (Chapman, 1981; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987; Perna, 2020; Wong et al., 2016). Financial considerations, such as tuition fees, scholarships, and the availability of part-time work opportunities, significantly impact students' choices (Owusu et al., 2018; Wong et al., 2016). Social and cultural factors, including campus culture, diversity, and extracurricular activities, also play a role in shaping students' preferences. Additionally, peer and family influences, alongside personal aspirations and career goals, contribute to the decision-making process (Daharnis & Ardi, 2016). In essence, students' university choices are influenced by a combination of academic, financial, social, and personal factors, making it a highly individualized process that requires careful consideration and research. Thus, it could be concluded that students' university choice could be affected by students' motivation and the role of social media as it is explained in the following.

> *Students Motivation*

- *Ability Self-Concept Students*

Students' motivation is significantly influenced by their self-concept, a multifaceted construct that encompasses their beliefs, perceptions, and feelings about themselves in the academic context. According to Steinmayr et al. (2019), self-concept plays a pivotal role in shaping students' motivation and achievement outcomes. When students have a positive self-concept in a particular subject or area, they are more likely to be motivated to engage in learning activities and persist in the face of challenges. Conversely, a negative self-concept can hinder motivation and lead to avoidance behaviors or reduced effort. For instance, a student who believes they are good at mathematics is more likely to be motivated to study and excel in math-related tasks, while a student with a low self-concept in the same subject may be demotivated and avoid math-related activities. Therefore, understanding and nurturing students' self-concept is essential for fostering their motivation and promoting academic success.

Herz, Schöne et al. (2002) further emphasize the role of self-concept in motivation by highlighting its dynamic nature. Self-concept is not static; it can change over time as a result of experiences, feedback, and self-evaluation. Positive feedback and successful experiences can enhance self-concept, leading to increased motivation and engagement in learning. Conversely, repeated failures or negative feedback can erode self-concept, resulting in decreased motivation and self-doubt. Educators and parents can support students' motivation by providing constructive feedback, creating opportunities for success, and helping students develop a growth mindset that encourages them to view challenges as opportunities for growth. By understanding the intricate interplay between self-concept and motivation, educators can design interventions that empower students to believe in their abilities and strive for academic excellence.

In the study by Schöne et al. (2002), they measured self-perceptions of students' abilities using four questions for each domain. Students used a 5-point scale, where 1 meant they completely disagreed, and 5 indicated complete agreement, to rate their proficiency in various school-related activities. These activities encompassed their overall school performance, their math skills, and their language skills, with example statements like "I am good at school in general/math," "It is easy for me to learn in school in general/math/language," "I know a lot in school in general/math/language," and "Most assignments in school/math/language are easy for me."

In this particular study, the researchers adapted these items to assess students' self-perceptions in the fields of management, science and engineering toward their university choices, extending the application of these self-concept assessment questions beyond the originally studied domains.

- *Students' Task Value*

Students' motivation is intricately linked to their perceptions of task value and the goals they set for themselves in their academic pursuits. According to the work of Steinmayr and Spinath (2010) and Vanslambrouck et al., (2018) task value encompasses the perceived importance, interest, and utility of a particular academic task. When students perceive a task as valuable, whether because they find it interesting or see its relevance to their future goals, they are more likely to be motivated to engage with it. Conversely, if a task is perceived as lacking value, students may struggle to find the motivation to invest effort and time into completing it. Eccles and Wigfield (1995) and Steinmayr et al., (2019) have extensively researched the role of task value in motivation and emphasize that students' beliefs about the value of tasks can significantly influence their academic choices and achievement outcomes. Therefore, educators can enhance students' motivation by helping them recognize the value in what they are learning and by connecting classroom activities to their personal interests and long-term goals.

Goals also play a critical role in students' motivation. Eccles and Wigfield's (1995) and Shin (2018) research underscore the importance of goal setting and achievement-related beliefs in shaping students' motivation. When students set clear and challenging goals for themselves, they are more likely to be motivated to work toward those goals. These goals can be short-term, such as aiming for a high grade on a specific assignment, or long-term, like pursuing a career in a particular field. Goals provide students with a sense of direction and purpose, and they can fuel motivation by creating a sense of achievement and progress as students work towards them. Educators can support students' motivation by helping them set realistic and attainable goals and by providing them with the necessary resources and guidance to work towards those goals effectively. In doing so, students are more likely to remain engaged, persistent, and motivated in their academic endeavors.

In the study, students' task values were assessed using an established Language scale known as the Subjective Scholastic Value Scale (SESSW), which is an adaptation of items originally employed in studies by Eccles and Wigfield (1995). This scale measures students' perceptions of intrinsic values, utility, and personal importance. Students rated their responses on a 5-point scale, with 1 indicating "totally disagree" and 5 indicating "totally agree." The assessment covered their attitudes toward school in general, math, and language. For intrinsic values, students considered statements such as "I like school/math/language," "I enjoy doing things in school/math/language," and "I find school in general/math/language interesting."

Regarding utility, students reflected on the usefulness of what they learned, with statements like "How useful is what you learn in school/math/language in general?," "School/math/language will be useful in my future," and "The things I learn in school/math/language will be of use in my future life." Personal importance was assessed with statements that focused on the significance of academic achievement, including "Being good at school/math/language is important to me," "To be good at school/math/language means a lot to me," and "Attainment in school/math/language is important to me." However, this study adapted these questions to assess task values, skills, and other subjects in addition to the originally studied areas.

- *Achievement Motives*

Students' motivation is significantly influenced by their achievement motives, which are the intrinsic desires and psychological needs related to the pursuit of success and competence in academic settings. Gjesme and Nygard (1970) and Islam et al., (2018) conducted pioneering research in this area, highlighting the importance of achievement motives such as the need for achievement, the need for affiliation, and the need for power in understanding individuals' motivation to excel academically. The need for achievement, in particular, drives students to strive for success and take on challenging tasks to demonstrate their competence. Students with a strong need for achievement are more likely to set high standards for themselves, persist in the face of obstacles, and engage in learning activities that challenge and enhance their skills. The need for affiliation and the need for power also influence motivation, with some students being motivated by interpersonal relationships and cooperation, while others are driven by the desire to influence and lead.

Building upon this research, Göttert and Kuhl (1980), Fryer & Bovee, (2016) and Steinmayr at el., (2019) expanded the understanding of achievement motives by introducing the concept of self-regulation. They emphasized the role of self-regulatory mechanisms, such as self-monitoring and self-control, in mediating the relationship between achievement motives and academic motivation. Students who can effectively regulate their behavior and emotions are more likely to translate their achievement motives into sustained motivation and successful academic performance. Educators can enhance students' motivation by recognizing and tapping into their individual achievement

motives, whether by providing opportunities for competition and recognition for those with a high need for achievement, fostering collaborative learning environments for students with a strong need for affiliation, or promoting leadership roles for those with a pronounced need for power. Understanding and aligning with students' achievement motives can help educators create a more motivating and engaging learning environment tailored to individual needs and preferences.

In the study, the researchers assessed achievement motives using the Achievement Motives Scale (AMS), which was originally developed by Gjesme and Nygard in 1970 and later adapted by Göttert and Kuhl in 1980. They focused on measuring "hope for success" and "fear of failure" using a shortened version of the scale. For "hope for success," an example item involved the statement: "In school/math/language, difficult problems appeal to me." This item assesses a student's positive motivation and desire to succeed in challenging academic tasks. For "fear of failure," an example item was: "In school/math/language, matters that are slightly difficult disconcert me." This item evaluates a student's apprehension or anxiety about potentially failing or struggling with moderately challenging academic tasks. However, in this study, the researchers introduced some additional statements to further explore students' hope for success and their willingness to perform better in their academic endeavors.

- *The Role of Social Media*

- *Social Media as Guider*

Social media has evolved into a powerful guide for individuals across various aspects of life, from entertainment and communication to education and decision-making. Liu et al. (2019) and Townsend & Wallace, (2016) conducted a study that sheds light on the role of social media as a guiding force in the digital age. Social media platforms offer users access to vast amounts of information, diverse perspectives, and real-time updates on a wide range of topics. As a result, they serve as valuable guides for individuals seeking knowledge, advice, or inspiration. Whether it's finding recommendations for a new book, learning about the latest developments in a specific field, or receiving guidance on various life choices, social media connects users with experts, influencers, and like-minded communities who can provide insights and direction.

Moreover, social media plays a significant role in shaping opinions, behaviors, and trends (Felix et al., 2017; Kozinets, 2019; Ansari & Khan, 2020). It serves as a guide in the sense that it influences individual choices, preferences, and beliefs. Through viral content, peer interactions, and exposure to diverse viewpoints, social media can steer public opinion and contribute to social and cultural shifts. However, this guiding role can be a double-edged sword, as misinformation and echo chambers can also lead individuals down potentially harmful paths. As such, individuals must exercise critical thinking and discernment when relying on social media as a guide, and educators and

policymakers should focus on promoting digital literacy and responsible use of these platforms to help users make informed decisions and navigate the digital landscape effectively.

- *Social Media as Approver*

Social media platforms have emerged as powerful sources of social validation and approval in the digital age, and Liu et al. (2019) and Sahni & Sharma, (2020) have explored this phenomenon extensively. The role of social media as an approver is rooted in the social dynamics of these platforms. Users often seek validation, recognition, and approval from their online networks in the form of likes, comments, shares, and followers. These interactions provide a sense of social belonging and esteem, as individuals gauge their self-worth and the worth of their content based on the feedback received from their online communities.

The pursuit of social approval on social media can have both positive and negative consequences. On one hand, it can boost self-esteem and motivate individuals to create and share content that resonates with their audience, fostering creativity and self-expression (Stapleton & Chatwin, 2017; Abbas et al., 2021 and Liu et al., 2020). On the other hand, the constant quest for validation can lead to unhealthy behaviors, such as seeking external affirmation at the expense of one's self-worth or mental well-being. Additionally, the pressure to conform to social media norms and the fear of negative feedback can create a culture of performative behavior, where individuals curate their online personas to align with what is deemed socially acceptable. Understanding the role of social media as an approver is essential in recognizing its impact on individuals' self-esteem and behaviors, and it underscores the importance of promoting a healthy and balanced approach to online interactions that values authenticity and genuine connections over external validation.

### B. Hypothesized Model

Figure 1 showed the hypothesized model for the present study. The model depicts the five hypothesized relationships among the independent variables of social media as guide, social media as approver, ability self-concepts' students, students' task value, and achievements' motives on students' choices the DIT as the dependent variable. This hypothesized model draws upon research on students' motivation and choices by Steinmayr et al., (2019), Liu et al., (2019) and Schöne et al., (2002).
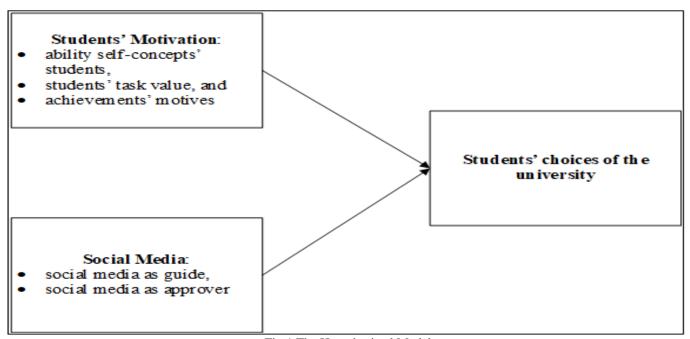


Fig 1 The Hypothesized Model

## III. RESEARCH METHOD AND DATA COLLECTION

### A. Research Site, Population and Sample

The secondary data of students' motivation, the role of social media, and students' choice were collected from several literature reviews and articles relevant to online journals. The secondary data has also been completed with the primary data. The information includes the respondents on students' motivation, the role of social media, and students' choices. The participants of this study are new students of DIT intake 2022.

The population of this research is the new students intake of DIT 2022, as the total sample is 263. Using Slovain formula with 95% standard error and accidentall sampling method were used to have the participants.

### B. Data Collection Techniques

This research employed a questionnaire as the primary survey tool, and the questions in the questionnaire were derived from previous research conducted by various authors. The questionnaire encompassed indicators related to students' motivation, the influence of social media, and factors influencing students' university choices. Specifically, this study adopted the dimensions related to:

> *Students' Motivation:*

The questions related to students' motivation were adapted from the work of Schöne et al. (2002).

> *Social Media:*

Questions pertaining to the role of social media in students' decision-making were based on the research by Liu et al. (2019).

> *Students' University Choices:*

The questions exploring factors influencing students' choices of universities were drawn from the study conducted by Steinmayr et al. (2019).

All questions in the questionnaire were structured on a five-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to express their agreement or disagreement with each statement. The scale ranged from (1) "strongly disagree," (2) "disagree," (3) "neutral," (4) "agree," to (5) "strongly agree."

*C. Data Analysis*

The analysis in this study employed both descriptive quantitative and inferential methods to examine various aspects of the research. Here's a breakdown of the analysis methods and criteria used:

> *Descriptive Analysis:*

Descriptive analysis was used to present an overview of the data. It utilized percentage frequency distributions (%) and mean values to describe trends and perceptions of respondents concerning the dimensions or variables related to students' motivation, the role of social media, and students' choices. The descriptive analysis aimed to provide a general summary of the data, but it did not test specific relationships among the variables. Also, the software used for the descriptive data analysis was SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

> *Inferential Quantitative Analysis:*

Inferential quantitative analysis was performed to test relationships between indicators and variables (outer model measurement) and relationships among variables (inner model measurement). The software used for this analysis was Smart-PLS 3.0. Smart-PLS 3.0 was chosen due to its ability to handle multivariate, reflective, and formative indicators, and it is suitable for datasets with a minimum sample size of 30 (Hair et al., 2014).

> *Outer Model Analysis:*

The outer model analysis aimed to test the validity and reliability of the relationship between variables and their indicators.

Two types of validity tests were conducted: convergent validity and discriminant validity.

> *Convergent Validity:*

Convergent validity was assessed using two parameters: outer loading (OL) and average variance extracted (AVE). Validity was established when the OL value was greater than 0.7, and the AVE value was greater than 0.5. These criteria are commonly used to determine if the indicators effectively measure the underlying constructs (Hair et al., 2014; Saldanha et al., 2021).

> *Discriminant Validity:*

Discriminant validity was tested using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (FLC) and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. For FLC, an item's square root value must be higher than the square root values of other items. HTMT values were considered valid if they were less than 0.90. These tests helped ensure that different constructs were indeed distinct from each other (Hair et al., 2014; Henseler et al., 2015).

> *Path Coefficient Analysis:*

To examine the relationships among variables, path coefficients were assessed. Significant relationships were indicated by T-values above 1.96 and P-values below 0.05. These statistical tests helped determine the strength and significance of the relationships among variables (Hair et al., 2017; Saldanha et al., 2021).

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

*A. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

The demographic information the sample of this study are male (54%) and female (46%), and age ranges were 17-20 (71%) and 21-24 (29%). Also, the most students' preferences the faculty are Business management (42%), School of tourism and hospitality (29%), School of Engineering and Science (24%) and school of petroleum study (5%). Lastly the where did students get information mostly from, there are family (39%), friends (28%), Social Media (19%), extracurricular (11%) and others (3%). These demographic details provide insight into the composition of the new university student body who attended the school orientation, including information about their gender, age groups, faculty preferences, and the primary sources they relied on for gathering information.

*B. Reliability and Validity Test*

> *Convergent Validity*

Convergent validity used two parameters such as outer loading (OL) and average variance extracted (AVE). Figure 1 shows that OL values of all items were well-above 0.7, and AVE values were higher than the threshold values of 0.5 (Table III). Thus, all items are considered valid to test the inner model.
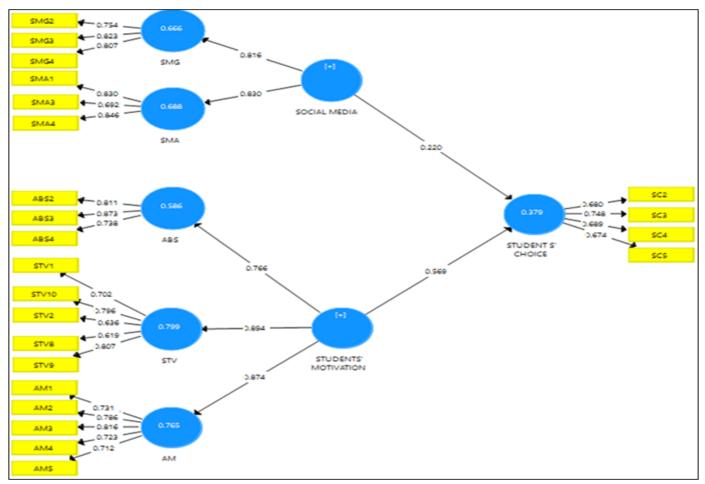
Fig 2 Outer Loading for Convergent Validity Test

Table III shows the square root of the AVE values according to Hair et al. (2014). All items were valid based the Fornell-Larcker Criterion.

Table 1 Fornell-Larcker Criterion for Discriminant Validity

| | ABS | AM | SMA_ | SMG | SOCIAL MEDIA | STUDENTS' CHOICE | STUDENTS' MOTIVATION | STV |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ABS | 0.809 | | | | | | | |
| AM | 0.461 | 0.755 | | | | | | |
| SMA_ | -0.116 | -0.051 | 0.792 | | | | | |
| SMG | 0.107 | 0.082 | 0.356 | 0.795 | | | | |
| SOCIAL MEDIA | -0.006 | 0.021 | 0.830 | 0.816 | | | | |
| STUDENT S' CHOICE | 0.392 | 0.543 | 0.210 | 0.167 | 0.236 | 0.699 | | |
| STUDENTS' MOTIVATION | 0.766 | 0.874 | -0.074 | 0.119 | 0.027 | 0.575 | | |
| STV | 0.564 | 0.704 | -0.056 | 0.119 | 0.035 | 0.480 | 0.894 | 0.716 |

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was utilized to assess the validity of all items, and the maximum value of HTMT of all items is 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015). Table II indicated that the maximum value of all items is below than 0.90; therefore, all items are acceptable and valid based on the HTMT test.

Table 2. Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) for Discriminant Validity

| | ABS | AM | SMA_ | SMG | STUDENT S' CHOICE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ABS | | | | | |
| AM | 0.591 | | | | |
| SMA_ | 0.190 | 0.169 | | | |
| SMG | 0.162 | 0.143 | 0.484 | | |
| STUDENT S' CHOICE | 0.524 | 0.721 | 0.375 | 0.270 | |
| STV | 0.740 | 0.894 | 0.187 | 0.217 | 0.645 |

➢ *Reliability*

Table III indicated that constructs or all variables' Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability > 0.7. For examples, the CA value of latent variable of AM is 0,810 >0,7 and the CR value is 0,868 > 0,7. Also, other values of all items refer to the value that is higher than >0,7. Therefore, all items' values have good internal consistency.

Table 3 CA, CR and AVE Loadings Value

|  | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|---|---|---|---|
| ABS | 0.736 | 0.850 | 0.655 |
| AM | 0.810 | 0.868 | 0.570 |
| SMA_ | 0.702 | 0.834 | 0.628 |
| SMG | 0.710 | 0.837 | 0.632 |
| STUDENT S' CHOICE | 0.700 | 0.792 | 0.501 |
| STV | 0.759 | 0.839 | 0.513 |

*C. Hypotheses Test*

The hypotheses were tested using the Path coefficient by seen in T and P values. The relationships between variables are significant when the T-value is greater than 1.96 and the P-value is lower than the maximum threshold value of 0.05 (Hair et al., 2014). The first hypothesis is to identify the influence of students' motivation on students' choices the university. Table IV indicated that the T value (9.835) which is higher than minimum allowable value of 1.96, while the P-value (0.000), lower than the maximum allowable value 0.05. This means that students' motivation has positive and significant impact on students' university choices. Therefore, the H1 is accepted. The second hypothesis is to identify the influence of social media on students' choices the university at DIT. The T value (4.156) which is well above the threshold value of 1.96 and the P-value (0.000). Thus, the result indicated that social media also has significant influence on students' choices the university at DIT. Therefore, the H2 is also supported.

Table 4 Results of Hypothesis Test

| Relationships | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics (\|O/STDEV\|) | P Values |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOCIAL MEDIA -> STUDENT S' CHOICE | 0.220 | 0.222 | 0.053 | 4.156 | 0.000 |
| STUDENTS' MOTIVATION -> STUDENT S' CHOICE | 0.569 | 0.579 | 0.058 | 9.835 | 0.000 |

*D. Discussions*

The findings of this study underscore the significant relationships between students' motivation, encompassing elements such as ability self-concept, task value, goals, and achievement motives, and their university choices. This finding is consistent with the previous study of Steinmayr et al. (2019), Schöne et al. (2002), Steinmayr and Spinath (2010), Vanslambrouck et al., (2018), Eccles and Wigfield (1995), Gjesme and Nygard (1970), Islam et al., (2018), Göttert and Kuhl (1980), and Fryer & Bovee, (2016). Understanding these connections holds paramount importance for higher education institutions, policymakers, and educators alike. When students possess a positive self-concept and perceive value in their academic pursuits, they are more likely to be motivated to excel academically and make informed university choices that align with their aspirations and capabilities. Moreover, the role of achievement motives in guiding students' decision-making processes cannot be overstated, as it influences their pursuit of academic success and personal growth. Recognizing and nurturing these motivational factors can enable educational stakeholders to provide tailored support and guidance, facilitating students' transition to higher education institutions that resonate with their academic interests, career goals, and overall sense of self-efficacy. This, in turn, contributes to enhanced student engagement, satisfaction, and success within the chosen university environment.

Furthermore, the results of this study illuminate the significant relationships between social media, both as a guide and an approver, and students' university choices. In the digital age, social media platforms have evolved into powerful influencers of decision-making processes, including those related to higher education. This finding is aligned with the previous studies of Liu et al. (2019), Townsend & Wallace, (2016), Felix et al., (2017), Kozinets, (2019), Ansari & Khan, (2020), Sahni & Sharma, (2020), Stapleton & Chatwin, (2017), Abbas et al., (2021) and Liu et al., (2020). As a guide, social media provides students with access to an extensive repository of information, peer experiences, and expert insights about universities and their offerings, thereby aiding prospective students in making well-informed choices that align with their academic and personal aspirations. Simultaneously, social media's role as an approver, through mechanisms like likes, comments, and peer approval, can sway students' perceptions and preferences, shaping their opinions about certain universities and their desirability. Recognizing these dual roles of social media is paramount for educational institutions and policymakers, as it highlights the need to leverage these platforms for informative and authentic engagement while also promoting critical digital literacy skills to help students navigate the potential biases and pitfalls inherent in online social approval systems.

# V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In the context of the case study conducted in Timor-Leste, several noteworthy conclusions emerge regarding the significant relationships between students' motivation and social media on their university choices. Firstly, it is evident that students' motivation, encompassing factors such as ability self-concept, task value, goals, and achievement motives, plays a pivotal role in shaping their decisions regarding higher education. Students who possess a positive self-concept and perceive value in their academic pursuits exhibit a stronger drive to seek out information on universities, engage in the application process, and ultimately make informed choices that align with their individual motivations and aspirations. These findings underscore the importance of nurturing students' motivation from an early stage of their educational journey to ensure that they are empowered to pursue higher education opportunities that resonate with their interests and ambitions.

Secondly, the influence of social media on students' university choices in Timor-Leste cannot be underestimated. Our study reveals that social media serves as both a guide and an approver in this decision-making process. Students in Timor-Leste, like their global counterparts, rely on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp) to access information, reviews, and peer experiences related to universities. Moreover, the approval-seeking behavior on social media, characterized by likes, comments, and peer validation, significantly impacts students' perceptions of certain universities and their desirability. As such, educational institutions and policymakers in Timor-Leste should recognize the dual role of social media and leverage it as a valuable tool for disseminating accurate and informative content while also educating students about the potential biases and misinformation that may be present. These conclusions provide valuable insights into how Timorese students navigate their university choices in an era of increasing digital connectivity and emphasize the need for strategic guidance and support to ensure that these choices are well-informed and aligned with individual motivations and goals.

## LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

While our study sheds light on the relationships between students' motivation and social media's influence on university choices in Timor-Leste, several limitations warrant consideration. Firstly, the case study's scope was restricted to a specific geographical context, Timor-Leste, which may limit the generalizability of our findings to other regions with different socio-cultural and economic dynamics. Therefore, future research should aim to replicate this study across diverse contexts to enhance the broader understanding of how motivation and social media intersect in shaping university choices.

Secondly, our study primarily employed quantitative research methods and self-reporting measures, which may introduce subjectivity and potential bias into the data. To mitigate this, future studies should incorporate qualitative methodologies and objective indicators to provide a more comprehensive and balanced perspective on the relationships explored. Additionally, the rapidly evolving nature of social media platforms and technology may lead to shifts in how students use these platforms in their university decision-making process. Therefore, longitudinal research tracking changes in social media usage and its impact on university choices over time is recommended to capture evolving trends accurately.

In light of these limitations, future research should also investigate the specific strategies that educational institutions, policymakers, and educators in Timor-Leste can implement to harness the potential of social media as an informative tool while mitigating its potential drawbacks as an approver. Moreover, exploring the role of cultural and regional factors in shaping students' motivation and social media use for university choices would provide a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play. Lastly, interventions and programs aimed at enhancing students' digital literacy and critical thinking skills in Timor-Leste could be designed and evaluated to empower them to make more informed and independent university choices in an increasingly digital landscape.

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## APPENDIXES

❖ *Questionnaire:*

**"The Role of Social Media and Students' Motivation on Students' Choices: A Case Study of New Students Intake 2022 at DIT"**

A. *Demographic information:*
   Please provide √ to the questions below:

**1.** Gender**:**    □ Male   □ Female

**2.** Age: _____

3. Your senior high school's name: _____

**4.** What is your faculty preference studying at DIT: _____   Department: _____

**5**. How did you get the information about DIT?

□ Family  □ Friends  □ Social Media  □ External activities
□ others please specify _____

*B.  Please make the sign of √ to the statements below which based on your preferences (range 1 to 5 five-point scale as follows :)*

| Strongly disagree (SD) 1 | Disagree (DA) 2 | Neutral (N) 3 | Agree (AG) 4 | Strongly agree (SA) 5 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Media Sosial:** | | | | SD | DA | N | AG | SA |

| | SD | DA | N | AG | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Media Sosial:** | | | | | |
| **(social media as guide)** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| "I often access social media about DIT." | | | | | |
| "Social media is like a pathway for me to choose DIT." | | | | | |
| "I receive information about DIT on social media which is better." | | | | | |
| "I spend a lot of my time on social media to get photos or information about the DIT central campus." | | | | | |
| | SD 1 | DA 2 | N 3 | AG 4 | SA 5 |
| **(social media as approver)** | | | | | |
| "When I see it on social media, many students are entering DIT, so I also want to go to school at DIT." | | | | | |
| "I always ask my friends and family about DIT, so that I can go to study at DIT." | | | | | |
| "I see DIT's promotions on famous social media." | | | | | |
| "I always see a lot of 'likes' and many comments about DIT, and that's why I really want to attend school at DIT." | | | | | |
| Students' motivation: | | | | | |
| Ability Self-Concept Students': | SD 1 | DA 2 | N 3 | AG 4 | SA 5 |
| "I have a clear understanding of the subjects in school." | | | | | |
| "I set my objectives to ensure I can achieve success in the future." | | | | | |
| "I am preparing myself even better." | | | | | |
| "Science and knowledge become a valuable treasure that we can carry everywhere.". | | | | | |
| Students' task values: | SD 1 | DA 2 | N 3 | AG 4 | SA 5 |
| "I want to learn things that I can use in the future." | | | | | |
| "I can believe in myself." | | | | | |
| "I believe that success can be achieved through studying, hard work, and prayer." | | | | | |
| "I can get a perfect education at this institution." | | | | | |
| "I like studying at this university." | | | | | |
| "I really enjoy learning and studying at this university." | | | | | |
| "I have received information about this university that has piqued my interest." | | | | | |
| Utility: "There are many great benefits to what I will learn at this university." | SD 1 | DA 2 | N 3 | AG 4 | SA 5 |
| Personal importance: "Becoming a successful student is important to me." | | | | | |
| "Getting good results in my studies is extremely important to me." | | | | | |
| Achievement Motives: | SD 1 | DA 2 | N 3 | AG 4 | SA 5 |
| "I look forward to gaining the study experience at this institution." | | | | | |
| "I want to enhance my knowledge and expertise at this institution." | | | | | |
| "I want to improve (make changes) in my life." | | | | | |
| "I want to have realistic and meaningful goals that are achievable." | | | | | |
| Hope for success: "I hope to receive good recognition for my studies." | | | | | |
| **(Students' university choices)** | SD 1 | DA 2 | N 3 | AG 4 | SA 5 |
| "I always post pictures of the things that interest me the most about DIT on social media or the internet, that's why I chose DIT." | | | | | |
| DIT had become my university lists that I will study in since I was in the high school | | | | | |
| I want to learn new things at DIT | | | | | |
| I surely know that the DIT image in society is good, and that's why I am choosing to study at DIT | | | | | |
| I choose DIT because the environment of DIT is really good for me to study | | | | | |