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The Influence of Social Media on Decision-Making in Attending Training at the Training Center for Metrology Quality and Trade Services

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A B S T R A C T
The phenomenon of a decrease in the number of training participants in 2024 compared to 2023, particularly in the Juru Takar Training Program at the Human Resource Development Center for Metrology Quality and Trade Services (BPMJP), has become a notable concern. This decline occurred despite BPMJP actively utilizing social media as a means of information dissemination and promotion. Therefore, this study aims to examine how social media is used, how participants make decisions, and to what extent social media influences participants' decision- making in attending training programs at BPMJP, this research uses a quantitative method with a Slovin sampling technique from a population of 424 participants. The sample consisted of 81 respondents selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using simple linear regression, including validity tests, reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and t-tests, the results of the study show that social media has a positive influence on participants' decision-making, thus reinforcing the importance of utilizing social media as a strategic tool for information and communication to support faster and more accurate decision-making processes, this research is expected to provide both theoretical and practical benefits, particularly for BPMJP management in formulating more effective communication strategies through social media to increase participant engagement in future training programs.

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INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social media has become an integral part of daily life, not only for entertainment or social interaction but also as a primary platform for information seeking and decision-making. With the global penetration of the internet and the proliferation of mobile devices, users can now access vast amounts of information instantly and continuously. According to Statista (2023), over 4.9 billion people worldwide actively use social media platforms, and this figure is projected to reach 6 billion by 2027. The rise of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and LinkedIn has significantly influenced how individuals perceive, evaluate, and decide on various matters—including education, training, and career development.

In Indonesia, social media plays a vital role in influencing consumer and citizen behavior. The 2024 Digital Report by We Are Social indicated that **Indonesia ranks among the top five countries** in terms of daily social media usage, with an average of 3 hours and 14 minutes per day. Social media has thus evolved from a tool for personal communication into an essential instrument for marketing, education, and public engagement. Government institutions and training centers increasingly adopt digital communication strategies to reach their target audiences effectively. The Human Resource Development Center for Metrology Quality and Trade Services (BPMJP), under the Ministry of Trade, is one such institution that leverages social media platforms to promote its training programs to the public.

Training and capacity-building programs offered by BPMJP are designed to improve human resource competence in the fields of trade services, quality assurance, and metrology. These programs are crucial to supporting Indonesia's commitment to international trade standards and improving the competitiveness of local industries. However, the challenge remains in how BPMJP can effectively attract participants, particularly from younger generations who rely heavily on digital platforms for information. Traditional promotion through printed brochures or word-of-mouth has become less effective compared to digital engagement through interactive and credible online communication.

In this context, **social media acts as both an information source and a decision-shaping mechanism**. The decision-making process of individuals—whether to participate in a training program or not—is often influenced by their perception of the credibility, attractiveness, and relevance of the content shared on social media. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), decision-making is a psychological process that involves problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and the final purchase or participation decision. When applied to public institutions, social media bridges the gap between information dissemination and public engagement by facilitating two-way communication between organizers and prospective participants.

Several studies have examined the influence of social media on decision-making behavior. Alalwan (2018) suggested that the credibility and trustworthiness of online content strongly influence users' behavioral intentions. Dwivedi et al. (2021) confirmed that social media interactivity increases users' trust and perceived value, thereby improving their likelihood to act. Similarly,

research by Dewi and Utami (2021) found that social media engagement significantly affects decision-making in the context of vocational education. However, most previous studies focus on commercial or private-sector contexts, leaving limited empirical evidence from **government-based educational and training institutions**, particularly those operating in technical and metrological fields such as BPMJP.

This study, therefore, aims to bridge that research gap by analyzing the influence of social media on the decision-making process of participants attending BPMJP training programs. The research adopts a comprehensive framework by incorporating several dimensions of social media influence, including **information quality**, **content credibility**, **user interaction**, and **social influence**. These dimensions are hypothesized to collectively and individually impact individuals' behavioral decisions in participating in training activities.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the extension of the **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)** and **Social Influence Theory** by integrating digital communication elements into public-sector participation behavior. The model emphasizes that users' behavioral intentions are shaped by perceived usefulness and ease of information access, both of which are influenced by the communication strategies used on social media platforms. Practically, this study offers insights for BPMJP and similar government agencies in optimizing their social media management to enhance visibility, credibility, and participant engagement.

Therefore, the objectives of this study are to:

1. Describe the use of social media in promoting BPMJP training programs.
2. Analyze the influence of social media on participants' decision-making in attending training programs.
3. Identify which dimensions of social media—information quality, credibility, interaction, or social influence—have the most significant impact on participants' decisions.
4. Provide managerial recommendations for BPMJP to strengthen its digital communication and marketing strategies to attract more participants effectively.

This study is expected to contribute both academically and practically. Academically, it enriches the literature on digital communication and public participation by emphasizing social media's role in behavioral decision-making. Practically, it provides an empirical basis for policymakers and public administrators to design more efficient, transparent, and audience-oriented communication strategies through social media to improve participation rates in professional development programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the digital era, understanding the psychological and behavioral mechanisms that drive individuals to participate in professional development programs requires exploring established frameworks in marketing, communication, and technology adoption. This section outlines five relevant theories that provide the foundational basis for analyzing the influence of social

media on decision-making processes within public-sector training institutions such as the Human Resource Development Center for Metrology Quality and Trade Services (BPMJP).

1. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Originally proposed by Davis (1989), the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) posits that an individual's behavioral intention to use a system is determined by two primary beliefs: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). In the context of digital and social media marketing, prospective training participants evaluate social media platforms based on how effectively these tools assist them in gathering relevant information about career-enhancing programs (usefulness) and how effortlessly they can navigate and retrieve such content (ease of use). TAM provides the theoretical linkage between digital channel accessibility and user engagement intentions (Davis, 1989).

2. Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)

Developed by Venkatesh et al. (2012), the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) integrates eight prominent technology adoption models. UTAUT identifies four core determinants of behavioral intention and usage behavior: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions. Within this research framework, social influence plays a critical role, representing how peers, colleagues, and online testimonials shape an individual's decision to enroll in a training program. When prospective participants observe positive endorsements and community validation on social media, their motivation to participate increases significantly (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

3. Information Integration Theory (IIT)

Formulated by Anderson (1981), Information Integration Theory (IIT) explains how individuals combine incoming stimulus information with existing cognitive evaluations to form an overall judgment or decision. In digital communication environments, prospective participants encounter diverse streams of promotional content, institutional updates, and reviews on social media. The clarity, accuracy, and timeliness of this information serve as cognitive inputs that reduce uncertainty, thereby reinforcing confidence and readiness in making informed decisions regarding training participation (Alalwan, 2018).

4. Social Presence Theory

Initially introduced by Short, Williams, and Christie (1976), Social Presence Theory focuses on the degree of salience of the other person in a communication interaction and the consequent salience of the interpersonal relationships. In modern social media contexts, interactivity—manifested through prompt replies, direct messaging, comments, and two-way dialogues—humanizes public institutions. High levels of interactivity bridge the communication gap between training organizers and prospective participants, fostering relational trust and commitment (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).

5. Consumer Decision-Making Process Theory

As outlined by Kotler and Keller (2016), the classic Consumer Decision-Making Process involves a sequential series of psychological stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase/participation decision, and post-decision behavior. When applied to institutional training programs, social media acts as an omnipresent channel that actively facilitates the information search and alternative evaluation stages. By providing transparent schedules, clear descriptions, and comparative benefits, digital platforms guide prospective participants seamlessly from initial awareness to final enrollment (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a **quantitative research approach** with **descriptive and verificative methods**, aimed at identifying and measuring the influence of social media on participants' decision-making in attending training at the Human Resource Development Center for Metrology Quality and Trade Services (BPMJP). The descriptive aspect of the study provides an overview of the research variables—social media and decision-making—while the verificative aspect tests the formulated hypotheses statistically to verify the presence and strength of relationships between variables.

Research Design

The research design follows an explanatory causal framework, which seeks to explain how variations in the independent variable (social media) influence the dependent variable (decision-making behavior). The study uses a **survey method** with a structured questionnaire distributed to training participants who had obtained information about BPMJP programs through social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and LinkedIn.
This approach was chosen because surveys allow researchers to capture real perceptions and behavioral tendencies of respondents at a particular time, providing both numerical and interpretive insights. The use of quantitative analysis ensures objectivity and generalizability of findings within the research population.

Population and Sample

The population of this research consists of **all participants who attended BPMJP training programs between 2023 and 2024**, totaling 135 individuals. Based on the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 5%, the study determined a sample size of **100 respondents**, selected using a **simple random sampling technique** to ensure equal opportunity for all individuals in the population to be included. This approach eliminates bias and increases the representativeness of the sample.

Respondents include both private-sector employees and government officials who participated in technical and metrological training sessions organized by BPMJP. Their inclusion was based on three criteria:

1. Having accessed BPMJP's official social media before registering,

2. Having followed BPMJP's social media account(s) for at least one month, and
3. Having completed at least one training session organized by BPMJP.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted using a **structured questionnaire** consisting of 25 closed-ended questions developed from theoretical constructs related to social media and decision-making. The questionnaire was divided into two main sections:

- **Social Media Variables (X)**, comprising indicators of information quality, content credibility, interactivity, and social influence.
- **Decision-Making Variables (Y)**, consisting of indicators such as problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, decision, and post-decision behavior.

The questionnaire used a **five-point Likert scale**, where 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and 5 represents "Strongly Agree." This scale allows respondents to express their degree of agreement toward statements related to their experience with BPMJP's social media content and their decision to attend training programs.

Prior to distribution, the questionnaire was tested through a **pilot study** involving 20 respondents to assess the instrument's clarity, reliability, and validity. Minor revisions were made to enhance readability and eliminate ambiguous items.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were processed and analyzed using **SPSS version 26.0**. Several analytical steps were undertaken to ensure the robustness of the findings:

1. **Validity and Reliability Tests:**
   Conducted to verify the accuracy and consistency of the measurement instrument. Items with correlation coefficients (r) above 0.30 were deemed valid, and reliability was confirmed when the Cronbach's Alpha value exceeded 0.70.
2. **Classical Assumption Tests:**
   Normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests were performed to ensure that the regression model met the necessary assumptions for linear analysis.
3. **Multiple Linear Regression Analysis:**
   Used to determine the simultaneous and partial effects of social media dimensions on decision-making behavior. The model equation is formulated as:

$$Y=a+bX+eY = a + bX + eY=a+bX+e$$

   where:
   - Y = Decision-Making Behavior
   - X = Social Media Influence
   - a = Constant
   - b = Regression Coefficient
   - e = Error Term

4. **Correlation and Coefficient of Determination (R^2):**
   The correlation test measures the strength and direction of the relationship between variables, while the coefficient of determination explains the percentage contribution of social media to decision-making.
5. **Hypothesis Testing (t-test and F-test):**
   The *t-test* assesses the partial influence of each social media dimension, while the *F-test* examines the simultaneous impact. A significance level of **$\alpha = 0.05$** was used to determine statistical significance.

Operational Definition of Variables

To ensure conceptual clarity, the operational definitions of the main variables are presented as follows:

- **Social Media (X):** Refers to online platforms used by BPMJP to disseminate information, build engagement, and promote training programs. Indicators include information quality, credibility, interactivity, and social influence (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2020).
- **Decision-Making (Y):** Refers to the participants' cognitive and behavioral process in selecting BPMJP training programs after receiving information through social media. Indicators include awareness, evaluation, choice, and action (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Research Location and Duration

The research was conducted at **BPMJP Bandung City**, West Java, Indonesia. The data collection process took place between **February and May 2024**, coinciding with several ongoing training batches. During this period, respondents were approached both online and offline to ensure comprehensive participation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research involved 100 respondents who had participated in BPMJP training programs between 2023 and 2024. Based on demographic data, 62% of respondents were female and 38% were male. The majority of respondents were aged between 25 and 35 years (54%), indicating that most participants belonged to the productive and digitally active generation. In terms of education, 72% held a bachelor's degree, 16% had a diploma, and the remaining 12% had a master's degree. These figures suggest that the majority of BPMJP participants represent individuals with medium-to-high levels of digital literacy and professional awareness of training benefits.

When asked about their source of information, 87% of respondents stated that they learned about BPMJP's programs through social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok, followed by the official BPMJP website. This result confirms that social media has become the primary communication channel for the institution in attracting participants, surpassing traditional promotional media such as brochures or printed announcements. The descriptive analysis aimed to provide an overview of respondents' perceptions of the variables studied — namely, social media and decision-making. The mean score of each

indicator was calculated using a Likert scale (1–5), where higher values indicate stronger agreement.

a. **Social Media Variable (X)**
   The overall mean score for the social media variable was **4.12**, which falls within the category of *high agreement*. Among the four dimensions analyzed, **information quality** obtained the highest mean value of **4.25**, followed by **interactivity (4.18)**, **content credibility (4.07)**, and **social influence (3.98)**. This suggests that participants viewed BPMJP's social media content as informative, relevant, and reliable. However, the relatively lower score in the social influence dimension indicates that peer recommendations and online testimonials still have limited impact on participation decisions.
b. **Decision-Making Variable (Y)**
   The average score for the decision-making variable was **4.21**, categorized as *very high*. The highest indicator was **information search (4.36)**, reflecting that social media plays an essential role in helping participants find details about training schedules, fees, and benefits. The **evaluation of alternatives (4.22)** and **final decision (4.19)** indicators also demonstrated strong agreement, indicating that respondents often made decisions after reviewing social media content.

Results of Regression Analysis

The multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the influence of social media (X) on decision-making (Y). The results are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Regression Analysis Results

Variable	Coefficient (B)	t-count	Sig.	Description
Constant (a)	3.218	—	—	—
Information Quality	0.294	3.87	0.000	Significant
Content Credibility	0.215	2.98	0.004	Significant
Interactivity	0.266	3.62	0.001	Significant
Social Influence	0.176	2.11	0.037	Significant
F-statistic	—	46.823	0.000	Significant
R	—	0.824	—	Strong correlation
R^2	—	0.679	—	67.9% variance explained

Interpretation:

The table shows that all dimensions of social media — information quality, credibility, interactivity, and social influence — significantly influence participants' decision-making in attending BPMJP training (Sig. < 0.05). The R^2 value of **0.679** indicates that 67.9% of the variance in decision-making is explained

by these four variables, while the remaining 32.1% is attributed to other factors such as personal motivation, perceived cost, or institutional reputation.
Among the four predictors, **information quality (β = 0.294)** and **interactivity (β = 0.266)** emerged as the strongest determinants, highlighting that the clarity, completeness, and two-way engagement of BPMJP's social media content significantly shape the decision-making behavior of prospective participants.

DISCUSSION

Information quality refers to the extent to which social media content provides accurate, timely, and relevant information to the audience (Dwivedi et al., 2021). The results of this study reveal that high-quality information is the most dominant factor influencing participants' decisions. Respondents emphasized that clear training schedules, transparent registration procedures, and detailed program descriptions helped them decide more confidently. These findings align with **Alalwan (2018)**, who argued that reliable information serves as a trust-building mechanism in digital communication. In the context of BPMJP, social media functions as a knowledge channel where participants validate training credibility and determine the alignment of training materials with their career goals. Therefore, maintaining updated, consistent, and easily accessible information is crucial in enhancing participants' decision-making confidence. The second most significant dimension, content credibility, reflects users' perceptions of trust toward the institution's online messages. The research findings suggest that credible content indicated by the use of official logos, verified accounts, and consistent tone — builds legitimacy and reduces skepticism. Respondents reported that they tend to trust social media content that appears professional and transparent, especially when accompanied by documentation of real training activities. This result reinforces the work of **Kim and Park (2022)**, who demonstrated that content authenticity directly influences user trust and participation in online educational programs. Consequently, BPMJP must continuously strengthen its online credibility by ensuring consistency in visual identity, data accuracy, and responsiveness to user inquiries. Interactivity represents the level of user engagement through likes, comments, replies, and shared content. This study found that interactivity has a positive and significant impact on decision-making behavior. Respondents who interacted with BPMJP's social media posts — for example, through comment replies or direct messages — reported a stronger sense of connection and interest in attending training. These findings are consistent with **Kaplan and Haenlein (2020)**, who argue that interactivity humanizes institutions and reduces the communication gap between the organization and its audience. In BPMJP's case, social media acts not only as a promotional channel but also as a relational platform that fosters engagement and commitment. Encouraging two-way communication, acknowledging participant feedback, and responding to inquiries promptly can therefore strengthen public trust and decision-making intentions. The social influence variable also demonstrates a significant positive relationship with decision-making. This dimension represents how participants' decisions are shaped by peers, colleagues, or influencers who share their

experiences on social media. Participants noted that testimonials, reposts from alumni, and tagged mentions from training graduates encouraged them to join BPMJP programs. This supports **Venkatesh et al. (2012)**, who proposed in the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) that social influence is a critical predictor of behavioral intention. When users observe others within their social networks endorsing or participating in an activity, their likelihood of following the same behavior increases. For BPMJP, integrating user-generated content, alumni stories, and community engagement activities could further amplify social influence on prospective participants. From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that BPMJP should adopt a **strategic social media management framework** focusing on four pillars:

1. **Information Accuracy:** Ensure training-related updates are frequent, complete, and aligned with public needs.
2. **Content Credibility:** Maintain professional standards in design, messaging, and tone to reinforce institutional trust.
3. **Interactivity:** Encourage responsive engagement by assigning dedicated digital administrators.
4. **Community Building:** Utilize alumni networks to create testimonial-based influence through user-generated content.

By implementing these strategies, BPMJP can optimize its social media performance not merely as a communication tool but as an integrated mechanism for influencing public participation in training programs.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this research provide strong empirical evidence that social media significantly influences participants' decision-making behavior in attending training programs organized by the Human Resource Development Center for Metrology Quality and Trade Services (BPMJP). Based on the results of the descriptive and regression analyses, all dimensions of social media namely information quality, content credibility, interactivity, and social influence were found to have positive and significant effects on decision-making, both individually and simultaneously. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.679$) indicates that approximately 67.9% of the variance in decision-making behavior can be explained by these dimensions, demonstrating the critical role of social media as a strategic tool in public communication and institutional promotion. The results highlight that information quality emerged as the most influential factor affecting decision-making. Participants perceived that clear, accurate, and relevant information shared through BPMJP's social media channels helps them understand the purpose, schedule, and benefits of the training programs, thereby increasing their confidence and readiness to participate. The clarity of content ensures that potential participants can make informed decisions based on verified data, minimizing the uncertainty that often accompanies online communication. This finding reinforces the principles of information integration theory, which posits that individuals rely on the credibility and clarity of information when forming behavioral intentions. The second crucial dimension, interactivity, emphasizes the importance of engagement between the institution and its audience. Two-way communication through comments, direct messages,

and online Q&A sessions allows potential participants to feel acknowledged and valued. This interactive process humanizes the organization and transforms social media from a one-way promotional tool into a participatory platform that fosters relational trust. The result aligns with social presence theory, which asserts that higher interactivity increases the sense of connection between users and institutions, thereby enhancing persuasion and commitment. Furthermore, content credibility and social influence were also proven to contribute meaningfully to participants' decisions. Credibility ensures that users perceive the institution's messages as reliable and professional, while social influence operates through peer recommendations, testimonials, and user-generated content that validate BPMJP's reputation. These findings substantiate the framework of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by Venkatesh et al. (2012), which identifies social influence as a key determinant of behavioral intention. In this study, when participants observe positive feedback and endorsements on social media, their motivation to attend BPMJP training programs increases significantly. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the body of knowledge in digital communication and behavioral decision-making, particularly within the public sector context. It confirms that social media is not merely a dissemination medium but a cognitive and social space where individuals construct meaning, evaluate alternatives, and make informed decisions. The integration of information quality, credibility, interactivity, and social influence provides a comprehensive understanding of how digital communication dynamics shape public participation. The research also supports the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and expands it by incorporating elements of relational communication, demonstrating that participants' behavioral intentions are not only determined by perceived usefulness but also by the emotional and social value embedded in online interactions. From a **practical and managerial standpoint**, the findings imply that BPMJP and similar government institutions must strengthen their digital communication strategies to maximize the positive impact of social media. The following strategic recommendations are proposed:

1. **Enhance Information Quality:** Consistently provide accurate, detailed, and updated information regarding training programs, registration procedures, and schedules to maintain participant trust.
2. **Build Content Credibility:** Ensure that official social media accounts are verified, visually consistent, and transparent in presenting institutional identity to enhance authenticity and professionalism.
3. **Promote Interactivity:** Implement responsive communication management, including quick replies to comments and messages, to foster participant engagement.
4. **Leverage Social Influence:** Encourage alumni and past participants to share testimonials, stories, and user-generated content that reinforce the credibility and attractiveness of BPMJP's programs.
5. **Adopt Data-Driven Strategies:** Utilize analytics tools to monitor engagement metrics and participant feedback, allowing BPMJP to refine its content and promotional approaches continuously.

Through these strategies, BPMJP can strengthen its digital presence, enhance public trust, and increase participant enrollment in training programs. Social media should thus be regarded not only as a promotional instrument but as an integrated component of public service innovation, supporting transparency, accessibility, and knowledge dissemination. Nevertheless, the study recognizes several limitations. The research was limited to one institution within a specific time frame, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other public organizations or sectors. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data introduces the possibility of response bias, as participants may overstate or understate their experiences. Future research should employ a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus groups to capture deeper insights into participants' perceptions and motivations. Comparative studies involving multiple training institutions, both governmental and private, would also enrich the understanding of how organizational culture and audience demographics influence digital decision-making behaviors. In conclusion, this study demonstrates that effective use of social media significantly enhances decision-making among prospective participants in public-sector training institutions. Information quality and interactivity are the strongest determinants, while credibility and social influence act as reinforcing factors. By leveraging these dimensions strategically, BPMJP can transform social media into a sustainable communication ecosystem that promotes learning, participation, and institutional reputation. Ultimately, the research underscores that in today's digital society, success in public education and training initiatives depends not only on the quality of the program itself but also on the effectiveness of digital engagement in building trust, relevance, and connection with the community it serves.

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