



## Factors Affecting the Purchase of Products through Online Applications by Students at Souphanouvong University

Stamy OUNPHOUVONG<sup>\*1</sup>, Somyoth LAYASAENG<sup>2</sup>, Phavone KEODUANGKHAM<sup>3</sup>,  
Khamstone SONESAI<sup>4</sup>, Vannoula PHONGVICHITH<sup>5</sup>, Jenny MANYVANH<sup>6</sup>, Salinda  
SIPASERD<sup>7</sup>, Phouthavong PATHOUMVANH<sup>8</sup>

*Faculty of Economics and Tourism, Major in International Business Management, Souphanouvong University Lao PDR*

**\*Correspondence:** Stamy  
OUNPHOUVONG, Faculty of  
Economics and Tourism, Major in  
International Business Management,  
Tel: 020 54936445, E-mail:  
[stamy@su.edu.la](mailto:stamy@su.edu.la)

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### Abstract

This study examines the demographic characteristics and purchasing behavior of Souphanouvong University students, focusing on their use of online applications for shopping. Data from 190 completed questionnaires reveal that the majority of respondents are female (57.7%) and aged 18-25 (81.5%), with an average monthly income below 1,600,000 kip. Facebook is the most commonly used platform for online shopping, and the most frequently purchased items are clothing and accessories. The study identifies key marketing mix factors influencing purchase decisions, including product diversity, ease of use, public relations on social media, and the availability of various payment methods. Regression analysis shows significant relationships between purchase decisions and factors such as gender, income, product quality, price, distribution channels, technology acceptance, safety, and marketing promotions. These findings highlight the importance of tailored marketing strategies to enhance online shopping experiences for university students.

**Keywords:** Factors, Applications, Online Products, Purchasing Online

### 1. Introduction

With the online business world constantly growing, ordering products through online applications is becoming increasingly popular. Modern technology enables consumers to access the Internet quickly and easily (Smith & Johnson, 2018). In Laos, online business has grown continuously in 2023, reaching a value of approximately 1.5 billion US dollars. This growth is supported by the expansion of Internet and telephone usage. The number of Internet users in the Lao PDR is expected to increase from 5.5 million in 2022 to 6.5 million in 2023, representing a growth rate of 17%, with the majority of users being younger individuals living in urban areas. Additionally, the percentage of telephone access in Laos is also increasing, with around 5 million phone users in 2023, accounting for 7% of the total population. The e-commerce sector is experiencing rapid growth, valued at 1 billion US dollars in 2023, which is 66% of the total

online business value. The factors contributing to the growth of e-commerce include the expansion of Internet and telephone infrastructure, government-supported policies and changing consumer behaviors. The Lao government emphasizes developing the digital economy by implementing various policies to promote investment and growth in online business. These measures include providing low-interest loans to retail entrepreneurs and developing digital infrastructure. The most popular type of online business is e-commerce, featuring products and services such as clothing, cosmetics, food and beverages, electronic devices and consumer goods. The transportation sector in Laos is also growing in line with the expansion of e-commerce, with major providers being private companies like DHL, FedEx and UPS. Airline and hotel booking services are offered by Lao Airlines, Booking.com and Expedia (Phommachanh, 2022). Despite the convenience, buying products through online

applications also presents various obstacles and issues, causing consumers to feel insecure and hesitant about purchasing online. These problems hinder the development and growth of e-commerce brands, as they may erode consumer confidence. The challenges include: 1) the safety and reliability of personal information, 2) the accuracy and completeness of product information, 3) issues with payment and product transportation, 4) the risk of not receiving products or services as expected, 5) loss of confidence in online ordering and 6) a negative impact on the business's reputation (Rose et al., 2011). Today's consumer buying behavior is heavily influenced by digital advancements, with a strong preference for convenience and personalized experiences. Online shopping, mobile apps, and social media play pivotal roles in how consumers discover and purchase products. There's also a growing emphasis on sustainability and ethical considerations, though price sensitivity remains a key factor. Consumers increasingly expect seamless omnichannel experiences, blending online and offline interactions in their purchasing journey (Sioudomphan et al., 2021).

As e-commerce and mobile technology continue to grow rapidly, buying products through online applications has become a daily habit especially for younger people like university students. For many, online shopping isn't just convenient; it's part of their lifestyle. Understanding what influences students to buy online is crucial for businesses and marketers who want to reach this tech-savvy group. This study focuses on students from the Faculty of Economics and Tourism at Souphanouvong University in Laos, aiming to explore how they make decisions when shopping online and what factors shape those decisions. In general, online purchasing behavior refers to the steps consumers take before deciding to buy something on the internet. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), this process is influenced by personal preferences, emotions, and the surrounding situation. For students, key motivations include convenience, fast service, and access to a wide variety of products (Lim et al., 2016). Peer recommendations, affordable prices and user-friendly mobile apps also play a big role (Suleman et al., 2021). Studying this behavior helps us understand patterns of online shopping that are specific to the local student population in Laos. Demographic factors are also central

in shaping how students shop. Gender, for instance, can influence both the type of product and the reason behind a purchase. Research has shown that female students are more likely to buy fashion and beauty items, while male students lean more towards gadgets and electronics (Hasan, 2010). Age matters too. Younger students, especially those between 18 and 25, are usually more open to using new technologies and shopping methods (Kim & Ammeter, 2014). Meanwhile, a student's monthly income impacts how much they can spend. Those on tighter budgets often look for discounts or lower-priced items (Ariff et al., 2014). When it comes to marketing, the well-known 4Ps model Product, Price, Place (Distribution) and Promotion is still very relevant for understanding online consumer choices: 1) Product: Students are drawn to variety, quality, and items that reflect their personality or status. Many look for trendy or well-known brands (Constantinides, 2004). 2) Price: Discounts, free shipping, and online promotions make a big difference for students. The internet makes it easy to compare prices, which increases price awareness (Grewal et al., 2010). 3) Distribution: Fast delivery and flexible payment options, like cash-on-delivery or mobile wallets, boost student satisfaction. These features are especially important in developing countries (Chong, 2013). 4) Promotion: Social media ads, influencer marketing and special promotions (like holiday sales) grab student's attention and encourage impulse buys (Duffett, 2017). For technology also plays a big part in shopping behavior. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis (1989), highlights two key factors: how easy an app is to use and how useful it is. Students are more likely to shop online using apps that are simple to navigate, visually appealing, and offer features like search filters or fast load times (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Another critical factor is security. One of the biggest concerns among students when shopping online is whether their personal and financial information is safe. They want to know that the platform is trustworthy. Studies have shown that when students feel secure through verified sellers, safe payment systems, and strong customer support, they're more likely to complete their purchases (Belanger et al., 2002). In summary, student behavior around online shopping is shaped by a mix of factors demographics, marketing strategies, technology use, and trust in the platform. By

looking at these elements specifically in the context of students at Souphanouvong University, this study aims to offer useful insights into how students in Laos make online purchases and what encourages or prevents them from doing so.

Students are a consumer group that values convenience and time savings. Online shopping offers students flexibility and time efficiency compared to traditional stores. The variety of products available online provides students with a broader selection, often exceeding local options. Students are price-sensitive and actively seek online offers, discounts and coupons to maximize their limited budgets. Social influences, such as peers, social media and marketing, significantly impact student's purchasing decisions (Kaur et al., 2019). Students often seek shopping experiences that bring happiness, leisure and entertainment. Additionally, their online shopping decision-making process involves price comparisons and customer reviews (Singh & Kaur, 2017). Security and trust are critical concerns, as students evaluate the reliability of websites and the security of online transactions. Delivery speed and costs also influence their purchasing decisions, with students prioritizing detailed product information and high-quality images to assess product quality before purchasing. Previous research indicates that student's online shopping behavior varies based on factors such as age, gender, education level and socioeconomic background. Therefore, addressing the challenges associated with purchasing products through online applications is crucial for the development and growth of the e-commerce market in Luang Prabang province. E-commerce businesses and related entities should prioritize resolving these issues to instill confidence and safety in consumers. This study aims to:

- 1) Investigate the decision-making behavior of students at Souphanouvong University in choosing to purchase products through online applications.

- 2) Examine the factors influencing student's choices to buy products through online applications at Souphanouvong University.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### **2.1 Sampling**

The population for this research comprised 190 undergraduate students enrolled at Souphanouvong

University, with a specific focus on students from the Faculty of Economics and Tourism. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique wherein the researcher intentionally selects participants based on predetermined criteria aligned with the research objectives. This method relies on the researcher's knowledge, experience, and judgment in identifying individuals who are most relevant to the study. Such an approach is also referred to as judgment sampling (Bell et al., 2022).

### **2.2 Methods**

This research employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection. The collected data were analyzed using statistical software and appropriate statistical techniques, including frequency, percentage (%), mean ( $\bar{X}$ ) and standard deviation (S.D.) to describe the general characteristics and purchasing behaviors of the respondents. Furthermore, inferential statistical methods such as the F-test, T-test, and Multiple Regression Analysis were applied to examine the factors influencing students' decisions to purchase products through online applications, specifically among students in the Faculty of Economics and Tourism at Souphanouvong University.

The conceptual framework posits that independent variables influence the dependent variable. The independent variables include demographic factors such as 1) gender, 2) age and 3) average monthly income. Additionally, marketing mix factors are considered: 1) product, 2) price, 3) distribution channel and 4) marketing. Technology acceptance factors include (1) technology acceptance and (2) safety and reliability. The dependent variable is the purchase of products through the online application by Souphanouvong University students.

### **2.3 Data collection**

Part 1: Demographic questions of the respondents, including gender, age and average monthly income.

Part 2: Information about the behavior of using the Internet to buy products through online social media, including the frequency of using the Internet to buy products through online social media, the devices used to access the Internet to buy products through online social media and the online channel chosen to buy products through online social media. The nature of the questionnaire is a closed-ended checklist method.

Part 3: Brand Awareness and Brand Loyalty.

Part 4: The marketing mix factor (6Ps) consists of various factors: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, Personalization and Privacy.

Part 5: The Quality of Web Service, including factors such as Efficiency, System Availability, Fulfillment, Responsiveness, Compensation and Contact.

## 2.4 Analysis Data

Data verification (Editing) involves checking the completeness of the questionnaires by separating the incomplete ones. The correct questionnaires are then coded according to the predetermined codes and processed using a statistical program. This research uses descriptive statistics (Descriptive Statistics Analysis), including frequency distribution (Frequency), percentage statistics (Percentage), mean and standard deviation. Inferential Statistics Analysis, consisting of T-Test, One-Way ANOVA, is used to explain the differences in each individual factor that influences the decision to purchase products through online social media channels among students of Souphanouvong University. Statistical inference with regression analysis (Multiple Regression) is conducted to identify various factors that influence the decision to purchase products through online social media channels among students of Souphanouvong University, Faculty of economics and tourism.

## 2.5 Hypotheses

### ❖ *Hypotheses related to demographic factors*

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): Different genders affect the decision to purchase products through online applications among students of Souphanouvong University.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): Different ages affect the decision to purchase products through online applications among students of Souphanouvong University.
- Hypothesis 3 (H3): Different income levels affect the decision to purchase products through online applications among students of Souphanouvong University.

### ❖ *Hypotheses related to marketing mix factors:*

- Hypothesis 4 (H4): Product factors affect the decision to purchase products through online applications among students of Souphanouvong University.

- Hypothesis 5 (H5): Price factors affect the decision to purchase products through online applications among students of Souphanouvong University.
- Hypothesis 6 (H6): Distribution package factors affect the decision to purchase products through online applications among students of Souphanouvong University.
- Hypothesis 7 (H7): Marketing delivery factors affect the decision to purchase products through online applications among students of Souphanouvong University.
- Hypothesis 8 (H8): Technology acceptance factors affect the decision to purchase products through online applications among students of Souphanouvong University.
- Hypothesis 9 (H9): Safety and reliability factors affect the decision to purchase products through online applications among students of Souphanouvong University.

## 3. Results

### 3.1 Demographic Data and Purchasing Behavior through Online Applications of Souphanouvong University Students

The collection of data in this research involved receiving completed questionnaires from 190 samples. This study investigates the demographic characteristics and purchasing behavior of the students at Souphanouvong University. The results of the study are as follows: The demographic characteristics of the sample group are 57.7% female and 41.8% male, with the majority being in the age group of 18-25 years, accounting for 81.5%. The average monthly income level of the sample group is below 1,600,000 kip, with an average of 43.4%. Regarding the behavior of purchasing products through online applications, the study found that: The most commonly used online product sales application by the sample group is Facebook, followed by Instagram, Taobao, Shopee, TikTok, Lazada, Pinduoduo and Tiki. The average frequency of purchasing products through online applications (number of times per month) among the respondents is most commonly 6 times, with the lowest being 1-2 times per month. The most popular types of products and services purchased through online application shops are clothing or accessories, followed by

shoes and bags, watches and jewelry, electronic products and books, respectively.

### 3.2 Information about the Marketing Mix Factors that Influence the Purchase Decision through an Online Application

The data obtained from all 190 completed questionnaires can be summarized by the average value and standard deviation of the opinion levels for the factors that affect the purchase of products through the online application by Souphanouvong University students. The factors are as follows: 1) Productivity Factor: The average opinion level indicates that the products purchased through the application are diverse (average value 4.2593; most agree), followed by the opinion that the products are known and famous (mean value 3.9418; strongly agree). 2) Price Factor: The sample group generally agrees that they can buy products at a lower price than at other stores or storefronts (mean value 3.8201; strongly agree), followed by the opinion that there is good value for money when purchasing through applications (mean value 3.7831; strongly agree). 3) Distribution Channel Factor: The sample group values applications that offer a variety of payment methods (mean value 3.9206; strongly agree), followed by the popularity of applications with a large number of service users (mean value 4.0265; most agree). 4) Marketing Communication Factors: The sample group strongly agrees with public relations and advertising that make the application widely known on social media (average value 3.9524; strongly agree), followed by regular sales promotions such as discounts during festivals (average value 3.9312; strongly agree). 5) Technology Acceptance Factor: The sample group mostly agrees that the application is easy to use (mean value 4.1534; most agree), followed by the attractiveness of the application design (mean value 3.9841; much agree). 6) Security and Reliability Factor: The sample group strongly agrees that the application has a verifiable identity (mean value 3.9153; strongly agree), followed by a secure payment system (mean value 3.8783; strongly agree). 7) Personal Service Usage Factor: The sample group strongly agrees that the application provides easy and quick ways to contact customers individually, such as online chat, email, or message systems (average value 3.9259; strongly agree), followed by appropriate customer advice (average value 3.8677; strongly agree). When considering all 32

sub-factors, it was found that the independent factors with the highest average value of the first five opinions, in descending order, are: 1) Product Factor: The products purchased through the application are diverse (average value 4.2593; most agree). 2) Technology Acceptance Factor: The application is easy to use (average value 4.1534; most agree). 3) Marketing Communication Factor: Public relations and the application are widely known on social media (mean value 3.9524; strongly agree). 4) Personal Service Usage Factor: The application provides convenient, fast ways to contact customers individually, such as online chat, email, or message systems (mean value 3.9259; strongly agree). 5) Distribution Channel Factor: The application provides a variety of payment methods (mean value 3.9206; strongly agree). From the results of the study on the factors that affect the choice of buying products through the online application of Souphanouvong University students, it was found that the results of the regression analysis (Multiple Regression) show a statistically significant relationship between the dependent variable and several independent variables, with a significance value of 95% and above. This means that these variables are all related to each other and move in a positive direction. The coefficients indicate the estimated effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. A positive coefficient suggests that a one-unit increase in the independent variable is associated with an increase in the dependent variable.

Among them, the results of the analysis on demographic factors found that: 1) Different gender (H1) affects the decision to buy products through online applications among Souphanouvong University students, with statistical significance (P-value = 0.048). 2) Different ages (H2) do not affect the decision to buy products through online applications among Souphanouvong University students, with statistical significance (P-value = 0.095). 3) Different incomes (H3) affect the decision to purchase products through online applications among Souphanouvong University students, with a statistical significance value of 0.054.

The distribution package factor (H6) affects the decision to buy products through online applications, with a statistically significant value (P-value = 0.002). Selling products online through applications is a popular buying

and selling channel, as applications have been developed to facilitate quick and efficient transactions.

Next, the product factor (H4) has a statistically significant value ( $P\text{-value} = 0.004$ ). The product factor influences the customer's purchase decision on online platforms due to quality, value proposition, appearance and presentation. Customers evaluate features, media messages, brand reputation and product information to make informed choices, emphasizing and offering attractive products in online shopping.

The price factor (H5) has a statistical significance value ( $P\text{-value} = 0.005$ ). The price factor significantly influences the customer's purchase decision in the online market. With the ease of comparing prices and access to discounts, customers are highly sensitive to price differences and consider price versus value and brand awareness.

The technology acceptance factor (H8) has a statistically significant value ( $P\text{-value} = 0.019$ ), due to perceived benefits, ease of use, trustworthiness/security, social influence, user experience and innovation/differentiation. Addressing these factors can lead to increased sales and customer satisfaction.

The safety and reliability factor (H9) has a statistically significant value ( $P\text{-value} = 0.020$ ). Safety and reliability are important factors that influence customer decisions. Customers prioritize secure transactions, prevention of fraud and deception, data privacy and a reliable service experience.

Finally, the marketing factor (H7) affects the decision to purchase products through the online application among Souphanouvong University students, with a statistical significance value ( $P\text{-value} = 0.035$ ). Marketing promotions such as discounts and special offers, customer engagement promotion, brand differentiation in the competitive market and word-of-mouth marketing play important roles in influencing customer behavior and online market sales.

#### **4. Discussion**

The present study aimed to investigate the demographic characteristics and purchasing behavior of Souphanouvong University students, with a focus on the factors influencing their decision to purchase products through online applications. The findings provide valuable insights into the online purchasing behavior of this

demographic and highlight several key factors that significantly affect their purchasing decisions. The demographic analysis revealed that the majority of respondents were female (57.7%) and within the age group of 18-25 years (81.5%). This demographic predominance aligns with existing literature, which suggests that younger adults and females are more likely to engage in online shopping due to their greater familiarity with digital technologies and social media platforms (Cao et al., 2021). The study also found that income levels play a significant role, with a substantial portion of students earning below 1,600,000 kip monthly. This low-income level may drive students to seek more affordable purchasing options, often found online (Gao et al., 2022). Related to purchasing behavior, Facebook emerged as the most commonly used platform for online shopping, followed by Instagram, Taobao, TikTok, Lazada, Pinduoduo and Tiki. This trend underscores the influence of social media in shaping consumer behavior, consistent with the findings of Suki and Suki (2017), who highlighted the role of social media platforms in facilitating e-commerce through user-friendly interfaces and targeted advertising. Regarding the factors influencing purchase decisions, the regression analysis revealed that several factors significantly influence the purchasing decisions of students: 1) Product Diversity and Quality: The highest-rated factor was the diversity of products available on online applications, with a significant impact on purchase decisions ( $P\text{-value} = 0.004$ ). This aligns with prior research by Kim and Ammeter (2018), which emphasized the importance of product variety in attracting online shoppers. 2) Price Sensitivity: Price was another critical factor, with students agreeing that online applications offer lower prices compared to physical stores ( $P\text{-value} = 0.005$ ). This finding is supported by Chiu et al. (2014), who noted that price competitiveness is a major driver of online shopping behavior. 3) Technology Acceptance: Ease of use and the attractiveness of the application design were significant factors ( $P\text{-value} = 0.019$ ), echoing the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989), which suggests that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are key determinants of technology adoption. 4) Safety and Reliability: Security features and reliability of the application were crucial ( $P\text{-value} = 0.020$ ),

consistent with the findings of Gefen et al. (2003) that trust and perceived security significantly impact online purchasing intentions. 5) Marketing and Communication: Effective marketing strategies, including social media promotions and sales discounts, were found to be influential (P-value = 0.035). This is in line with the research by Huang and Benyoucef (2013), which highlights the impact of social media marketing on consumer engagement and purchase decisions. 6) Distribution Channels: The availability of diverse payment methods and the popularity of the application also played significant roles (P-value = 0.002). This supports the findings of Rezaei et al. (2016), who identified the convenience of payment options as a critical factor in online shopping. Lastly, related to gender and income differences, the study found gender differences (P-value = 0.048) and income levels (P-value = 0.054) to be significant predictors of online purchasing behavior, while age was not a significant factor (P-value = 0.095). These findings are partially consistent with previous research, which suggests that while gender and income influence online shopping behaviors, age may not always be a determining factor (Perea y Monsuñé et al., 2004).

In summary, the aspects that students at Souphanouvong University appreciated most about online purchasing were the diversity of products available (mean score = 4.2593) and the ease of use of the applications (mean score = 4.1534). Additionally, widely used platforms such as Facebook and TikTok were favored due to their familiarity, accessibility, and the convenience they offer in terms of various payment methods and efficient customer service. These features contributed to a smooth and satisfactory online shopping experience. Moreover, promotional offers and discounts, particularly during festival periods, were highly valued by students. Conversely, while the study did not explicitly identify major sources of dissatisfaction, some lower-rated aspects suggest potential areas of concern. For instance, some students may have been wary of applications that lacked reliable branding or did not provide clear seller verification, raising concerns regarding security and trustworthiness. In addition, uncertainty in price comparison and the inability to assess product quality prior to delivery were noted as possible drawbacks that may impact purchase confidence. To enhance the online

purchasing experience, several improvements are recommended. Strengthening security and reliability measures, such as implementing verified seller accounts, clear product return policies, and secure payment gateways, would help build trust among users. Furthermore, providing comprehensive product descriptions and authentic customer reviews would support more informed decision-making. Lastly, the addition of real-time customer support services, such as live chat or AI-based assistance, could further improve user satisfaction and address issues promptly during the purchasing process.

## 5. Conclusion

This study sheds light on the online purchasing behaviors of Souphanouvong University students, revealing that most respondents are young females aged 18-25, with incomes below 1,600,000 kip per month. These students favor platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Taobao due to their user-friendly interfaces, wide reach, and targeted marketing. The majority of students make online purchases about six times per month, mainly buying clothing, accessories, shoes, and electronic gadgets. This behavior highlights young consumers' preference for convenience, variety, and competitive pricing in online shopping.

Several factors were identified as significant determinants of online purchasing decisions among the students. Product diversity and quality emerged as the most influential factors, suggesting that a wide range of options and high-quality products are crucial in attracting online shoppers. Price sensitivity was another critical factor, with students showing a preference for lower prices and good value for money, reinforcing the importance of competitive pricing strategies in e-commerce. Technology acceptance, characterized by ease of use and attractive application design, also significantly influenced purchasing decisions. This finding underscores the necessity for online platforms to prioritize user experience and interface design to enhance customer engagement and satisfaction. Security and reliability, encompassing secure payment systems and verifiable identities, were pivotal in building trust and encouraging transactions. Effective marketing strategies, such as social media promotions and sales discounts, were found to significantly impact purchasing behavior, highlighting the

role of targeted and engaging marketing campaigns in driving online sales.

In conclusion, the research underscores the importance of a multifaceted approach in understanding and catering to the online purchasing behaviors of university students. Online retailers should focus on offering diverse, high-quality products at competitive prices, enhancing user experience through intuitive application design, ensuring robust security measures and implementing effective, targeted marketing strategies. By addressing these key factors, e-commerce platforms can better meet the needs and preferences of young, tech-savvy consumers, thereby driving customer satisfaction and loyalty. Future research could further explore the interplay of cultural and social factors in shaping online purchasing behaviors to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer dynamics across different contexts.

## 6. Conflict of Interest

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial organization regarding the material discussed in the manuscript.

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Table 1. The result of demographic data and purchasing behavior through online applications of Souphanouvong University students, Faculty of economics and tourism.

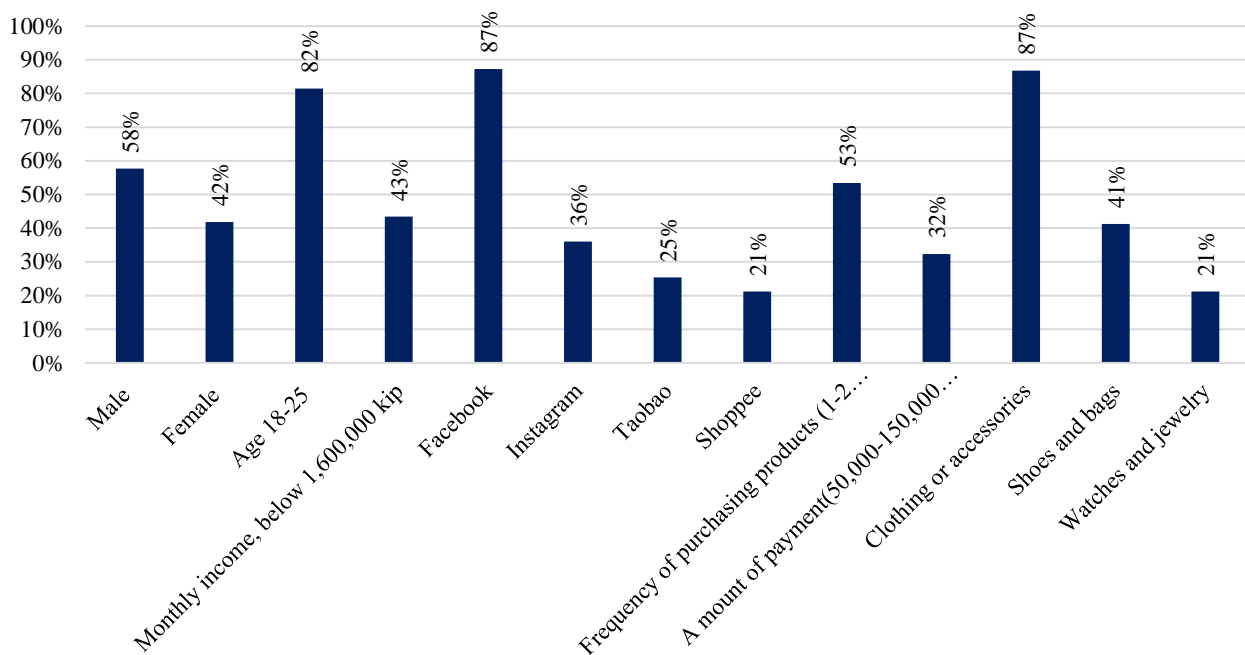


Table 2. The result of Multiple Regression for examine the factors influencing student's choices to buy products through online applications at Souphanouvong University.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.968	0.194	4.981	0
	Product	-0.014	0.009	-0.186	0.004
	Price	0.017	0.009	0.228	0.005
	Place	-0.012	0.007	-0.148	0.002
	promotion	0.017	0.009	0.217	0.035
	Accep_tech	-0.003	0.011	-0.032	0.019
	Safe_Trust	-0.012	0.016	-0.083	0.02