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THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING, PRICE, AND FACILITIES ON STUDENTS' DECISIONS TO RENT BOARDING HOUSES IN MUARA SATU DISTRICT, LHOKSEUMAWE CITY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of social media marketing, price, and facilities on the decision of students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, to rent boarding houses (indekos) in Muara Satu District, Lhokseumawe City. The rapid growth of boarding house businesses around the campus has encouraged owners to promote through social media alongside pricing strategies and facility completeness, making it important to examine which factors truly determine students' housing decisions. A quantitative research design was used with a survey method involving 102 respondents selected through proportional purposive sampling. Primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed directly and via Google Form, tested for validity and reliability, and analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS version 27. Classical assumption tests (normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity) confirmed that the regression model met the feasibility requirements. The results show that price and facilities have a positive and significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses, while social media marketing has no significant effect. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.671 indicates that the three variables jointly explain 67.1% of the variation in purchase decisions, with facilities being the most dominant variable. These findings confirm that students prioritize price suitability and the completeness of actual facilities over social media promotion alone when deciding to rent a boarding house. This study recommends that boarding house owners prioritize fair pricing and improved facility quality while maintaining transparency in social media promotional content.

Keywords: Boarding House; Facilities; Price; Purchase Decision; Social Media Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Boarding houses (indekos) are a rapidly growing industry projected to maintain strong growth potential for the next five years (Rumah.com, 2021), driven by the increasing number of students studying outside their hometowns as well as fresh graduates starting their careers. Data from BPS Surabaya (2024) show that boarding house costs are among the three largest expenditure items for students (22%), while industry revenue rose sharply from an index of 295 in 2023 to 495 in 2025, driven by urbanization and a lifestyle shift among younger generations toward practical rental arrangements. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2023) also reported that around 70% of new students live inside or outside their home region during their studies, with boarding houses being the dominant housing alternative.

When choosing a boarding house, students generally consider rental price, proximity to campus, completeness of facilities, and neighborhood safety and comfort (Amoah et al., 2024). One factor that also influences this decision is social media marketing—a promotional strategy that uses platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp to reach prospective tenants quickly and efficiently (Tuten & Solomon, 2017; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). However, preliminary interviews with 15 students found that while nine felt the boarding house conditions shown on social media matched reality, six complained of a gap between the promotion and actual conditions, such as smaller room sizes or less complete facilities than advertised. Empirical evidence on these three variables remains mixed: Sahin et al. (2017) found social media had a significant effect on purchase decisions, while

Salem and Alanadoly (2022) found the opposite; Rahayu and Hartiningtyas (2022) found price had no significant effect, contradicting Anita (2021), Tampubolon (2018), and Sara and Rizki (2017); and for facilities, Rahayu and Hartiningtyas (2022) found a positive and significant effect, while Anita (2021) and Amilia et al. (2019) found the opposite. These inconsistencies point to a gap that needs to be re-examined, particularly among students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, who rent boarding houses in Muara Satu District, Lhokseumawe City.

A preliminary survey of price and facility variation among boarding houses in Muara Satu District also revealed two main classes: an economy class (IDR 4,500,000–IDR 6,000,000/year) with standard facilities, and a premium class (starting from IDR 7,500,000/year) with more complete facilities, indicating that price and facilities are interrelated considerations for students. Based on this background, this study aims to examine the effect of social media marketing, price, and facilities on the decision of students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, to rent boarding houses in Muara Satu District, Lhokseumawe City, with the following hypotheses: H1: Social media marketing is suspected to have a significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses. H2: Price is suspected to have a significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses. H3: Facilities are suspected to have a significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses.

METHOD

Research Design and Population

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the effect of social media marketing, price, and facilities on students' decisions to rent boarding houses. The research was conducted among active students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, who rent boarding houses in Muara Satu District, Lhokseumawe City. The population consisted of 3,173 active students from five study programs: Management (1,170), Accounting (940), Development Economics (442), Islamic Economics (448), and Entrepreneurship (173).

Sample

The sampling technique used was non-probability sampling with proportional purposive sampling. The sample size was determined using the guideline of Hair et al. (2022), namely 5–10 observations per indicator multiplied by the number of indicators used (6 × 17 indicators), resulting in a minimum sample of 102 respondents. The sample was then allocated proportionally across study programs, with the largest share from Management (38 respondents) and the smallest from Entrepreneurship (6 respondents). Respondent criteria included: (1) active students of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, from the 2022–2025 cohorts; (2) renting a boarding house located in Muara Satu District, Lhokseumawe City; and (3) having searched for a boarding house using social media.

Data Collection Procedure

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed both directly and online via Google Form. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), online questionnaires offer wide geographic reach, faster response collection, and cost efficiency. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

Variable Measurement

Purchase decision (Y) was measured through suitability with financial capacity, location affordability, alignment with preferences, and comfort as a place to live (Putri & Rahmawati, 2020). Social media marketing (X1) was measured through entertainment, interaction, trendiness, customization, and electronic word of mouth (Aji et al., 2020). Price (X2) was measured through price affordability, price-benefit suitability, discounts, price-facility suitability, and price competitiveness in the market (Kotler & Armstrong, in Kumrotin & Susanti, 2021). Facilities (X3) were measured through general facilities, room facilities, and additional facilities (Putri & Rahmawati, 2020). A summary of the operational definitions of the variables is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Operational Definition of Variables

Variable	Definition	Indicators
Social Media Marketing (X1)	A marketing strategy that utilizes social media to promote products/services, build communication with consumers, and increase consumer interest.	Entertainment; Interaction; Trendiness; Customization; Electronic Word of Mouth
Price (X2)	The amount of money a consumer must pay to obtain the product or service offered.	Price affordability; Price-benefit suitability; Discounts; Price-facility suitability; Price competitiveness
Facilities (X3)	The means and infrastructure provided to support consumer comfort and needs.	General facilities; Room facilities; Additional facilities
Purchase Decision (Y)	Consumer actions in selecting and purchasing products or services according to their needs and considerations.	Financial capacity suitability; Location affordability; Preference suitability; Housing comfort

Source: Adapted from Putri & Rahmawati (2020) and Aji et al. (2020).

Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS version 27. Prior to the regression test, a validity test was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation (items were considered valid if r-count > r-table = 0.195) and a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha (considered reliable if the value > 0.60) (Ghozali, 2016, 2021). Classical assumption tests were then conducted, including normality (Normal Probability Plot and histogram), heteroscedasticity (ZPRED–SRESID scatterplot), and multicollinearity (tolerance value > 0.10 and VIF < 10) (Ghozali, 2021). The multiple linear regression model used was:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e \quad (1)$$

where Y is the purchase decision, a is the constant, b_1, b_2, b_3 are the regression coefficients, X1 is social media marketing, X2 is price, X3 is facilities, and e is the error term. Hypothesis testing was conducted using a partial test (t-test) at a 5% significance level. A hypothesis was accepted if t-count > t-table and the significance value < 0.05, and rejected otherwise (Ghozali, 2021). With a sample of 102, three independent variables, and a 5% significance level, the t-table value obtained was 1.984. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to measure the extent to which the independent variables explain the variation in the dependent variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

Of the 102 respondents, 81 (79.4%) were female and 21 (20.6%) were male, indicating that boarding house tenants in Muara Satu District are predominantly female students. By cohort, most respondents were from the 2022 cohort (68 respondents, 66.7%), followed by the 2023 and 2024 cohorts (14 respondents each, 13.7%), and the 2025 cohort (6 respondents, 5.9%). By study program, most respondents came from Management (38 respondents, 37.3%), followed by Accounting (30, 29.4%), Islamic Economics and Development Economics (14 each, 13.7%), and Entrepreneurship (6, 5.9%). By location, most boarding houses were in Blang Pulo Village (41 respondents, 40.2%), followed by East Batupat (26, 25.5%), Padang Sakti (23, 22.5%), and West Batupat (12, 11.8%). Most respondents (83, 81.4%) rented non-furnished rooms, while the rest (19, 18.6%) chose furnished rooms.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

The average mean value for the purchase decision variable was 3.95, with the highest score for location affordability (mean = 4.04) and the lowest for price–financial capacity suitability (mean = 3.82), indicating a high level of respondent agreement. The social media marketing variable obtained an average mean of 3.83, with the highest score for information suitability with user preferences and the influence of reviews/testimonials (mean = 3.91), and the lowest for content attractiveness and trendiness (mean = 3.73). The price variable obtained an average mean of 3.88, with the highest score for the habit of comparing prices across boarding houses (mean = 4.00) and the lowest for price affordability (mean = 3.77). The facilities variable obtained an average mean of 3.88, with the highest score for the completeness of additional facilities (mean = 3.92) and the lowest for general facilities such as parking areas (mean = 3.81). Overall, respondents showed a positive perception of all four research variables.

Instrument Test Results

The validity test results show that all statement items for social media marketing, price, facilities, and purchase decision obtained r-count values ranging from 0.692 to 0.843, all of which exceeded the r-table value of 0.195, so all items were declared valid. The reliability test results in Table 2 show that all variables had Cronbach's Alpha values above the 0.60 threshold, so the research instrument was declared reliable and suitable for use.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Standard	Description
Social Media Marketing (X1)	0.857	0.60	Reliable
Price (X2)	0.835	0.60	Reliable
Facilities (X3)	0.771	0.60	Reliable
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.731	0.60	Reliable

Source: Processed by Researcher, 2026.

Classical Assumption Test Results

The normality test using the Normal Probability Plot (Figure 1) shows that the residual points spread along the diagonal line without significant deviation, reinforced by a histogram forming a bell-shaped pattern. Thus, the residuals in the regression model are normally distributed.

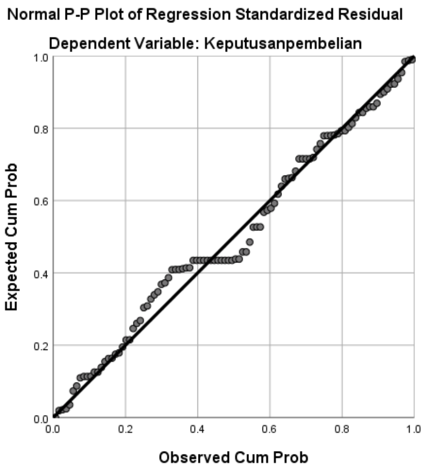

Figure 1: Normal Probability Plot Results

The heteroscedasticity test through the scatterplot shows that the points are randomly scattered above and below zero on the Y-axis without forming a specific pattern, so the regression model is free from heteroscedasticity. The multicollinearity test results in Table 3 show that all independent variables had tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 10, so the regression model is free from multicollinearity.

Table 3. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Description
Social Media Marketing (X1)	0.416	2.402	No multicollinearity
Price (X2)	0.362	2.760	No multicollinearity
Facilities (X3)	0.489	2.045	No multicollinearity

Source: Processed by Researcher, 2026.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Table 4 presents the results of the multiple linear regression analysis along with the partial test (t-test) results at a 5% significance level (t-table = 1.984).

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis and Partial Test (t-test) Results

Variable	B	Beta	t-count	Sig.	Decision
(Constant)	3.811	-	4.425	0.000	-
Social Media Marketing (X1)	0.073	0.111	1.235	0.220	H1 Rejected
Price (X2)	0.285	0.407	4.227	0.000	H2 Accepted
Facilities (X3)	0.436	0.389	4.686	0.000	H3 Accepted

Source: Processed by Researcher, 2026. Dependent variable: Purchase Decision (Y).

Based on Table 4, the multiple linear regression equation obtained is: $Y = 3.811 + 0.073X_1 + 0.285X_2 + 0.436X_3$. The constant value of 3.811 indicates the magnitude of the purchase decision when all three independent variables are zero. H1 is rejected: social media marketing has no significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses ($\beta = 0.073$, $t = 1.235$, $p = 0.220$), although the direction of the effect is positive. H2 is accepted: price has a positive and significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses ($\beta = 0.285$, $t = 4.227$, $p = 0.000$). H3 is accepted: facilities have a positive and significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses ($\beta = 0.436$, $t = 4.686$, $p = 0.000$), with the largest regression coefficient compared to the other variables, making facilities the most dominant variable influencing students' decisions.

Coefficient of Determination

Table 5. R and R Square Test Results

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.819	0.671	0.660	1.22921

Source: Processed by Researcher, 2026. Predictors: (Constant), Facilities, Social Media Marketing, Price.

The R value of 0.819 indicates a very strong relationship between social media marketing, price, and facilities with purchase decisions. The R Square value of 0.671 indicates that 67.1% of the variation in purchase decisions can be explained by the three independent variables, while the remaining 32.9% is influenced by other factors outside the model, such as location, service quality, security, and environmental comfort.

Effect of Social Media Marketing on Students' Decisions (H1)

Social media marketing was found to have no significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses (H1 rejected), consistent with Salem and Alanadoly (2022) but contradicting Sahin et al. (2017). Although social media promotion makes it easier for students to obtain information about location, price, and facilities, this information has not yet become a primary factor in decision-making. Students tend to consider price suitability and the completeness of actual facilities rather than mere social media promotion, as reflected in preliminary interviews revealing a gap between promotional content and actual conditions in some boarding houses. This shows that consumer decisions are influenced not only by promotion but also by economic considerations and tangible benefits obtained.

Effect of Price on Students' Decisions (H2)

Price was found to have a positive and significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses (H2 accepted), consistent with Anita (2021), Tampubolon (2018), and Sara and Rizki (2017), but contradicting Rahayu and Hartiningtyas (2022). As consumers with limited budgets, students tend to choose affordable boarding houses that match the quality and facilities obtained. This finding supports marketing theory stating that price is the value consumers must pay to obtain benefits from a product or service, so the better the price matches the benefits received, the greater the likelihood of a purchase decision.

Effect of Facilities on Students' Decisions (H3)

Facilities were found to have a positive and significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses (H3 accepted) and were the most dominant variable, consistent with Rahayu and Hartiningtyas (2022) but contradicting Anita (2021) and Amilia et al. (2019). Students pay close attention to facility completeness such as room condition, bathroom, internet access, parking area, and security, as facilities provide direct comfort during the study and living process. This finding aligns with service marketing theory that positions facilities as an important element in providing added value and encouraging consumer satisfaction, making facilities a primary consideration over price or social media promotion in the context of this study.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effect of social media marketing, price, and facilities on the decision of students at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Malikussaleh, to rent boarding houses in Muara Satu District, Lhokseumawe City, using multiple linear regression on 102 respondents. The results show that: (1) social media marketing has no significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses (H1 rejected); (2) price has a positive and significant effect on students' decisions to rent boarding houses (H2 accepted); and (3) facilities have a positive and significant effect, and are the most dominant variable, on students' decisions to rent boarding houses (H3 accepted). The three variables jointly explain 67.1% of the variation in purchase decisions ($R^2 = 0.671$), while the remaining 32.9% is explained by other factors outside the model.

These findings contribute to the consumer behavior literature in the student housing sector by showing that boarding house rental decisions are driven more by economic and functional considerations (price and facilities) than by social media promotion. Practically, boarding house owners are advised to prioritize pricing that matches students' economic capacity and to improve facility quality such as room cleanliness, internet access, and security, while maintaining honesty and transparency in social media promotional content to avoid creating a gap in expectations. This study has limitations in that the sample was drawn only from one faculty in one district, so the generalization of the results should be made with caution. Future research is recommended to add other variables such as location, service quality, security, and environmental comfort, expand the scope of respondents and research areas, and consider respondents from more recent cohorts to capture more current student behavior in using social media.

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