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# **The Effects of the Teenagers (as Web Experts) in the Family Decision Making in Online Purchase Process: an Application to the Booking of Tourist Nights**

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## **Abstract:**

The main objective of our study is to provide some answers to the following questions: What are the determinants of the expertise of the internet for the Tunisian teenager? What is the degree of influence of teenager, who is assumed an expert of the internet, in the process of family decision-making? In What phase of the process, the teenager will be the more active and influential? The results of this research have showed that the teenagers, as experts on the web, spend more than 7 h / per week on the Internet for entertainment purposes. Also, they are connected to the Internet much more than the other members of the family and they are recognized as experts by the other members of the family. Similarly, it has been proven that adolescent has a very strong influence in choice and booking of trips online especially in phases of initiation and search for information rather than in the stages of evaluation of alternatives and the decision making.

**Keywords:** Teenagers, Internet expertise, Decision making, Online Transactions

**JEL Classification:** M31, Z13

## 1. Introduction

By the turn of the 90s, the use of the Internet had boomed and has grown in importance and interest. Currently, we can say without much risk that the Internet has become the preferred place, wherein is traveling an increasing number of internet users to satisfy the majority of their basic needs (communication, information retrieval or information, booking or control purchasing etc.). This finding is also recorded in Tunisia as evidenced by the statistics of the Tunisian post office who claim that Internet trade knew growth with a trade volume of around 750,000 online transactions in 2011.

We note that, although the having needs of Internet services seems to be multi-dimensional and covers almost all occupational categories and almost all age groups, the adoption of the Internet can be more obvious among teenagers. According to Greenspan (2002) 70% use it regularly and 49% use more than once per day. ("Young Adults" Cyber-Atlas, 2001).

This idea is confirmed by the theoretical and empirical outcomes of the major part of the literature that converged to the idea stipulating that teens are considered one of the most dynamic categories of the Internet.

According to Kaiser Family Foundation (2010), the time spent by teenagers at the computer has tripled in the past decade. Also, according to Lenhart et al. (2001), teenagers quickly adopted the Internet and are much more attached to this technology than their parents. According to the same authors, the teenagers are more considered expert, in Internet technology than their parents. Similarly, adolescents, making extensive use of the Internet and technologies that are attached to them, are supposed to be experts within their families (Thomson, Elizabeth S. Laing, Angus, 2003). They are more experienced than their parents and are classified as a generation which is the most familiar with new technologies (Olalonpe Ige, 2004).

In addition, the teenager, regarded as a major economic actor, is Likely to hold some power in family purchasing decision. Indeed, according to Bealty and Talpade (1994) the teenager is more influential in the stages of idea design, the search for information and in the final decision formulation. However, the said studies have not given an importance to the impact of this expertise on the influence exercised by the adolescent in the family decision purchase online.

In this general context we develop our work which will try to answer the following question: what is the effect of the teenagers (internet experts), on the process of online family purchase decision?

To carry out this work we will study in the first section the determinants of the internet expertise of adolescents in the Tunisian context; in the second section we will try to analyze the influence of this expertise on the online purchase family decision. In the third section we will determine at what stages of decision making, the teenagers (internet expert) exert more influence for an online purchase. The fourth section will present the research methodology while the fifth section will analyze and interpret the main results. The sixth section will study the impact of the expertise of the teenager in the process of purchase family decision.

The importance of this study lies in the fact that the teenagers, highly experienced on the Internet and its technologies can be both an informational source for his parents and as stimulator of any online purchase. Thus, the teenager becomes a specific target that companies must take into account in their online communication strategy. Similarly,

teenagers are tomorrow's customers and constitute an important issue for firms aiming to target the family on the Internet.

## **2. Teenagers as net experts:**

The mass recourse to the Internet has allowed users (adolescents and others), to target it, as a fundamental source through which they conclude their purchases and to enjoy fully the other services that offered by it. It is worth noted that Teenagers are perceived, both, as experts within their families and as stimulator of other members for the use of technology (Elizabeth Thomson and W. Angus Laing, 2003). Similarly, according Olalonde Ige (2004), young people are seen as a specific category for at least two basic reasons. First, they are adapted to new technologies and secondly, they are always in the quest for innovation and advancements in this technology.

In this same vein of ideas, Strauss and Frost (2001) consider children and teenager as the categories who use the most the net (in 2005; 77 millions of children used the web). In the same context; According to the study of Kraut et al. (2002) more than 62% of the interviewed teenagers, are connected on internet while their parents represent only 45%.

Also, the study of Elizabeth Thomson and Angus W. Laing (2003) has showed that the children's make recourse, frequently, to the internet as a fundamental source of information's which allows them to conclude their purchasing acts. Similarly, internet is used as a mean allowing the teenagers to exchange between them, information's concerning a given goods or to negotiate certain purchases.

Thus, in this case the teenagers are assumed to have the role of informer in the purchase decision. As such, it seems that this staffing gives to teenagers some degree of influence in their family environment especially when the parents decide to design or to discuss, a given purchase decision. Similarly, the fast spread of the web technology has made that the intergenerational transmission of buying behavior is changed. Indeed, in the past this transmission, is realized from the older to younger as was the case in the past decades, but actually the transfer can be doing in the same generation and even from younger to the oldest.

## **3. Determinants of web the expertise of teenagers:**

Several studies, aiming to analyze the online consumption behavior of the teenagers, showed that adolescents adopt the Internet more quickly than their parents (Hedberg and Bedwell, 2000). Curtis (2000) showed that teenagers develop deeper understanding of the Internet as their elders and prefer the Internet over other media to collect data for their future transactions.

In addition, Lenhart et al. (2001) showed that teenagers use the Internet for a variety of purposes including: consultation of emails, research of information and to purchase. Compared to other user groups, adolescents are more likely to be Internet users. Indeed, according to Lenhart et al. (2001) 73% of teenagers report that they use internet daily and that 38% connect to it more than once per day.

Just as market experts, having better market knowledge, give great interest in the overall market, it is logical that some teenagers may have developed similar characteristics in the virtual world. As such, we can expect that they have a greater knowledge of the virtual market place, more interest to discover new opportunities and the pleasure to use the Internet for a variety of purposes. Consequently, they are assumed to have higher levels of Internet

use, and that they are well informed about the products and services offered by this tool of. This leads us to our first hypothesis:

**H1:** More the teenager (a) uses the Internet, (b) finds pleasure in the use of the Internet, and (c) uses the Internet for various purposes more the teenager will be perceived as an expert in the web.

### **3.1 The influence of the expertise of the net on the family purchase decision**

In this section we will try to see, on the basis of previous researches, how the expertise of the teenagers helps them to be more influential in the different stages of the process of purchasing decisions online.

Thus, in a study conducted by NFO world group, 74% of American parents who buy online have declared that they have allowed their children to participate in the online purchase decision. In addition, 42% of American parents said having concluded that purchases from web sites are proposed and recommended by their children (Nua Internet Survey, 2001). John Geraci, Vice President of youth research says that: "the most interesting thing about the Internet that is become usual for a parent to ask to her child searching for information for an adult purchase like a car or a tourist stay". Thus, based on this observation we can say that Internet technology had delivered new roles to the teenagers in the making of family decision. (Belch et al, 2005) have gave to the teenager a more important role to the level of participation in the decision-making of family purchase. Similarly, the study of Elizabeth Thomson and Angus W. Laing (2003) showed that children use the Internet as a source of information in the purchase then they use it to influence their parents. So they have, in this case, the role of informer in the purchasing decision. As such, mastery and expertise of Internet tools provide youth a way to influence to convince their parents to purchase for own use or for the colloquial usage. Therefore,

**H2:** as far as the teen is considered to be an Internet expert more he will have influence in the decision-making process of the family.

### **3.2 In what Stages, of the decision-making process, teenagers are the most influential?**

The majority of studies converge to the idea that adolescents, given their relative expertise, could have more impact in the early stages of the decision-making process, including the phase of recognition of the problem and searching for information.

Previous researches have concluded that adolescents exert varying degrees of influence on the family decision-making process. According to Belch et al (2005) this influence varies depending on the type of goods and individual resources that have the teenagers. Nelson (1978) and Belch et al (1985) have showed that, for a wide variety of products, teenagers have more influence at the stage of recognition of the problem and searching for information and less influence in the final selection of the product and the amount that parents will spend. According to Beatty and Talpade (1994) teenagers are most influential in the categories of products to which they ascribe great importance, they had used to use and also, the products for which they are the well informed. Thus, we can note, from to all this studies, that the teenager knowledge of the use of goods and their experience constitute determinants of the influence of adolescents in decision-making.

Moschis and Mitchell (1986) found that more the teenagers discuss with their parents their experiences of product consumption more they can convince and influence them, in the

phases of initiation, research and the assessment of available alternatives. The same research has shown that teenagers have had a growing influence in the stage of the goods choice when they have own resources.

As a result, these research suggests that experts teenagers in the use of the Internet should be more influential in the decision-making process of the family than those who have no expertise (Belch et al, 1986). This fact is more approved and consolidated for products for which adolescents are involved and interested. The influence of teenagers, as Internet experts, can be superior in steps of initiation, research in the process of decision-making than in the stages of the evaluation of alternatives and in the final decision making.

Therefore,

**H3:** teenagers, web experts, will have relatively more influence in the phase of initiation and information searches that in the stage of evaluation of the research and in the final decision making.

#### **4. Research methodology**

The choice of the service of "tourist stay", as already mentioned, is justified at least by three reasons. First, by the fact that Tunisian households appear to resort massively to online reservations. This remark is approved by online sales statistics and traffic delivered by the website of the travel agency "travel to do". Indeed, according to this agency the number of tourist stays had passed from 18000 in 2007 to 110000 in 2010. The use of Tunisian households of this platform is explained especially by the frequency of opportunities and promotions on the rates which vary between 20% and 50%. Second our choice of this service is recommended by some theoretical frameworks as shows the studies of Belch et al (1985), Davis and Rigaux (1974), Jenkins (1979) and Darley and Lim (1986) which had shown that teenagers are considered as active actors, in the choice and the decision of family vacation. Third, it would be important to choose a product category in which the family is likely to consult the internet to search for information. It is important to note that our focus on one only category of service allows us to examine the influence of the expertise of the teenager on the family decision, rather than study the extent of its influence on all the products and services.

##### **4.1 sample:**

It is noteworthy that our study hasn't a survey base for the absence of an exhaustive list of individuals. The selection of sampling units is made following a non-probability sampling. The sampling of convenience being the rational technique of identification of respondents that can faithfully represent the population (in our case the teenagers). The choice of this method is mainly justified by the fact that she was the most appropriate and this for practical reasons of accessibility and low cost.

Our study aims to test the influence of the teenager web expertise on the family decision to purchase online. Our goal was not fundamentally to generalize the results, we have chosen to administer the questionnaire with a sample of convenience composed by high school students (first and second cycle). According to Zhan Chen et al. (2003), students use the Internet and prepare themselves to become buyers online. In the same vein of ideas, Rita and Henriette (2004) have chosen a sample of high school students, to study the behavior of the consumer purchasing online. They joined the idea of Zhan Chen et al. (2003) to confirm that the choice of students is justified by the fact that students have free access to Internet and can subsequently use it to communicate and to initiate business transactions.

In this sense, several researchers have chosen the high school students, as target population for their questionnaires in the context of researchs dealing with the purchase by Internet (Belch, A et al. (2005), Corbitt and al. (2003), Limayem and al. (2006)). Also, parents are invited to meet the same questionnaire to confirm or refute the responses of their teenage children.

To conduct this study, we are based on a sample including 160 pairs parent-teen. Thus, the sample population for this study was formed 320 respondents. Teens and their parents were matched in pairs (adolescent/parents) where, the household or parent must meet three criteria. First, having an access to Internet at home. Second, having at least a teenager aged between of 12-19 living at home. Third, that parent and their children have passed a tourist stay in the past three years.

Thus, parents and their Childs were invited to complete a questionnaire in an independent manner and without having the possibility to consult each other during the process. In the case of families with more than a teenager, parents were asked to complete the survey only once.

#### 4.2 The profile of the respondents

The distribution of the sample according to the criterion of the genus can be summarized in the following table:

**Table 1: distribution of the respondents according the genus criterion**

Genus	Teenagers		Parents	
	Frequency	Percentage	frequency	Percentage
Male	60	37.5%	74	46.3%
Female	100	62.5%	86	53.8%

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

The average age of the respondent's teenagers was 15.62 years, while the average age for their parents was 44.4 years. Analysis revealed that teens spend more time on the Internet for entertainment than their parents. Indeed 26.3% for teenagers (against 20.2 per cent of parents) spend more than 10 hours or more per week online for entertainment. The following table includes the distribution of the population of the districts of Tunis and Sousse (the choice of these districts will be justified in the next section) by type and age group:

**Table 2: Distribution of the sample by type and age group**

Age Genus	The age of the young person		
	between 12 and 14 years	between 15 and 19	Total
Female	28	72	100
Male	27	33	60
Total	55	105	160

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

After defending our choices in terms of method sampling, population sampling and characteristics of the sample, we will, in the next section, describe the strategy that we will adopt to develop our questionnaire.

## **4.2 The questionnaire:**

Our research is explanatory in nature. In this sense we propose adopting the survey by questionnaire as a method of data collection. Thus, in what follows, we will expose the structure of the questionnaire, its mode of administration as well as measures that we will deploy for all variables of the study. In order to satisfy our needs in information, several steps have been necessary in the development of the questionnaire, namely:

-Define for each information collection: the nature of the question (open or closed) and the type of requested response.

-Ensure consistency between observing the cognitive functioning of adolescents (increasing complexity degree).

-Achieve a pre-test of the questionnaire with a small sample of the parent population.

In our questionnaire, we have resorted, mostly, to closed questions. This is explained by our fear that teenagers are indecisive and unable to give adequate answers.

In our study, we have opted for an administration type "face to face". This method allowed us to control the sample and facilitate the task of the respondents without influencing their responses.

The administration of the questionnaire was held from 20 November 2012 to 2 January 2013, to the districts of Tunis and Sousse. We made the choice of this geographical zone for two main reasons. First, administration of the questionnaire at the national level is very expensive despite the fact that this extension would have allowed us to deduce interesting results relating to the cultural and social diversity of the different cities Tunisian. Second, the districts of Tunis and Sousse (given their sizes) allow us to access a very heterogeneous population of adolescents from the social point of view. Administration was mainly made in colleges and secondary schools, at family home, in youth centers, tearoom etc. The average time of response by questionnaire was 15 minutes.

### **4.2.1 The measurement of the variables of the study**

To be consistent with previous research on the study of the market expertise and family decisions, only small changes will be made on the scales of measurement used by the researches and studies cited above.

#### **-Determinants of the teenager web expertise:**

To be recognized as experts in the web, the teenagers must verify certain criteria. Thus, they were invited to indicate:

-The weekly number of hours they spend on the internet for entertainment (0, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9 or 10 h or more),

-The time they spend on the internet compared to other members of the family (much more of time than the other members of the family, more than the other members of the family, the same time as the other members of the family),

- Their attitude on the use of the Internet (very pleasant, pleasant, neither pleasant nor unpleasant, not much pleasant, unpleasant)

- The purposes for which they use the Internet (only for studies and work, for the studies and the work more than for entertainment, also for the education and entertainment, for entertainment more so than for studies and work, for only entertainment).

Parents in turn are called to indicate the number of weekly hours of their use of internet technology (1-6 h per week, 7 h or more per week)

- **The web expertise:** In this part, we have tried to adapt the six items (from the scale of measurement of the expertise of market) presented by Feick and Price (1987), to measure the teenager perception of their web expertise thus the parents perception of the web expertise of their children (see the measure scale of expertise below). Knowing that each item of expertise has been measured by Likert scale: strongly disagree, rather disagree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree.

-I want to use the information gathered from the Internet to introduce new brands of products for my family and my friends.

-I want to help my family and my friends, using Internet, to provide information on the different types of products and services.

-My family and my friends ask me often to search on the Internet information about products, places and sites, sales, etc.

-If someone wanted to know what websites have the best deals on different types of products and services, i could direct and help him.

-My family and my friends think I'm a good source of information on the Internet when they decide to buy new products, to visit commercial sites, to make sales, etc.

-The web expert is a person who gets the Internet information on a variety of products, and loves share them with others. This person knows how to use the Internet, how to find information on the Internet, what are the best sites. But not necessarily, that she feels as expert on the products for which it collects the information. To what extent this description applies to you?

-**The influence of adolescents:** To empirically study the relative influence of adolescents, an adaptation of the measurement scale Beatty and Talpade (1990) was used to measure the perception of teenagers of their influence in the purchase of tourist stays and the perception of parents of the influence of adolescents in the purchase of the same product. As in the research of Beatty and Talpade, adolescents and their parents will answer to two scales representing the dimensions of the relative influence: the influence of the teenager in the initiation and searching for information (by examples: the introduction of the idea to go with the family in holiday, collecting information on offers tourist packaged) and the influence of adolescents in the evaluation of alternatives and the stage of the final decision (by examples evaluate the different tourist packages, decide the purchase online one stays). All items have been measured using the scale of the relative contribution, respectively, for adolescents and their parents: (I / my boy or my daughter contributes fully), ( I / my son or my daughter contributes more than the members of the family), (all members of the family also contribute), (I / my son or my daughter contributes less than other members of the family), (me / my son or my daughter does never contributes),(does not apply to my family).

##### **5. Analysis of results and hypothesis testing:**

After testing the reliability of measurement scales namely the web expertise in adolescents and the contribution scale on the family decision making as perceived by adolescents themselves and their parents, we try in this section to analyze the results of the data collection and to verify the assumptions

### 5.1. Adolescents as an expert of the Internet:

A first analysis was conducted to examine the degree of the teenager web expertise as it is perceived by the young people themselves and separately, by their parents. Analysis of the different indicators of the expertise of the web in adolescents will be detailed in what follows.

#### a. "the weekly number of hours devoted by teen on the Internet for entertainment" as an indicator of expertise:

To know if the expertise can be explained by «the number of hours devoted by teen on the Internet for entertainment we will be obliged to analyze the variance. The results suggest that teenagers who spent more hours on the Internet for entertainment were more likely to be perceived as the Internet experts (Perception of adolescents  $F = 76,981$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ; Perceptions of parents:  $F = 47,300$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). In both cases,  $P < 0.05$  so we can say that the indicator « number of hours of entertainment that passes the teenager on the Internet per week» explains the net adolescent expertise.

**Table 3: average (Expertise of the net / the number of hours spent by teenagers on the Internet for entertainment)**

The number of hours spent by teenagers on the Internet for entertainment	N	The perception of the young person of expertise	The perception of parents from the expertise of their children
Non use (0 h/week)	2	-2.958	-2.269
Low usage (1 - 3 hours per week)	20	-1.551	-1.327
Use average (4 - 6 h/week)	21	-0.836	-0.453
Heavy use (7 - 9 hours per week)	53	0.462	0.414
The very high use (10 hours and more per week)	64	0.468	0.613
Value of F		76.981	47.300

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

#### (b). the weekly hours number spent by the teenager on the web compared to the other members of the family as an indicator of expertise:

The regression is doing using the weekly hour's number spent by the teenager on the Internet compared to other members of the family. The results have showed that the hypothesis stipulating that teenagers who spent more time on the Internet relatively to the other members are more perceived as experts (perceptions of adolescents:  $F = 88,830$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ,  $R^2 = 0.360$ ,  $b = 0.600$ ; perceptions of parents:  $F = 82.90$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ,  $R^2 = 0.344$ ,  $b = 0.587$ ).

**Table 4: Regression of the Perception of the young person of expertise on the number of weekly hours spent by the teenager on the Internet compared to other members of the family)**

Variables	constant	number of weekly hours passes by the teenager on the Internet compared to other members of the family)
Coefficient	- 2,360	0.6
Student test		(9,425)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.360	

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

Given this model, we can conclude that the number of weekly hours spent by the teenager on the Internet compared to other members of the family explains 36 % of the perception of adolescents of their expertise. The coefficient associated to the number of weekly hours spent by the teenager on the Internet compared to other members of the family is positive and significant at 1%. This means that when the number of weekly hours spent by the teenager on the Internet compared to other members of the family, increases by 1% then the teenager perception of their expertise increases by 0.6 %.

**Table 5: Regression of the Perception of parents from the expertise of their teenager children on number of weekly hours spent by the teenager on the Internet compared to other members of the family)**

Variables	constant	number of weekly hours spent by the teenager on the Internet compared to other members of the family)
Coefficient	- 2.058	0.587
Student test		(9,105)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.340	

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

Similarly to the first model we can conclude that the number of weekly hours spent by the teenager on the Internet compared to other members of the family explains 34 % of the perception of adolescents of their expertise. The coefficient associated to the number of weekly hours spent by the teenager on the Internet compared to other members of the family is positive and significant at 1%. This means that when the number of weekly hours spent by the teenager on the Internet compared to other members of the family, increases by 1% then the parent's perception of the expertise of their children increases by 0.587 %.

**c. The attitude of the teenagers to the use the Internet as an expertise indicator:**

Referring to the criterion of «the teenager attitude to the use of the Internet as determinants of the expertise of the teenagers". The results have showed that those who had a positive attitude towards the Internet were more likely to perceive themselves to be experts of the Internet (perception of adolescents:  $F = 110,895$ ,  $P < .001$ ,  $R^2 = 0.412$ ,  $b = 0.642$ ; perceptions of parents:  $F = 84,601$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ,  $R^2 = 0.349$ ,  $b = 0.591$ ).

**Table 6: Regression of the teenager perception of expertise on the attitude of the youth to use the Internet)**

Variables	Constant	attitude of the youth to use the Internet
Coefficient	- 2.442	0.642
Student test		(10.531)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.412	

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

Thus, we can conclude that the teenagers attitude on the Internet use explains that 41.2% of the perception of the teenager's expertise. The coefficient associated to the attitude of the youth to use the Internet is positive and significant at 1%. This means that when the attitude of the youth to use the Internet increases by 1% then the perception of the teenager's expertise increases 0,642 %.

**Table 7: Regression of the perception of parents from the expertise of their teenage children on the attitude of the youth to use the Internet )**

Variables	Constant	attitude of the youth to use the Internet
Coefficient	- 2.890	0.591
Student test		(9.198)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.349	

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

According to the regression we note that the attitude of the teenagers on their use of the Internet explains 34.9% of the perception of the parents of the expertise of their children. The coefficient associated to the attitude of the youth to use the Internet is positive and significant at 1%. This means that when the attitude of the youth to use the Internet increases by 1 % then the perception of the parents of the expertise of their children increases by 0.591%.

**d. the aim of the use of the internet as an indicator of expertise:**

Using the criterion of the goal of the Internet use as an expertise indicator, we noted that results suggest that teenagers using frequently the Internet for entertainment, rather than for work or studies were more likely to be perceived as an expert of the Internet (perception of adolescents: F = 44,791, P = 0.00; perception of parents: F = 23,743, p = 0.00). Thus, H1 is verified.

**Table 8: Average (Expertise of the net / the purpose of the use of the internet)**

The types of Internet use in adolescents	The teenager perception of their expertise	The perception of parents from the expertise of their children
Only for studies and work	-1,831	-0.563
More for studies and work for entertainment	-1,268	-1,507
Also for studies and work for entertainment	-0.935	-0.638
More for entertainment than for studies and work	0.406	0.005
Only for entertainment	0.486	0.563
Value of F	44,791	23,743

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

The use of the Internet by expert teenagers was still considered to determine the relationship between the number of hours spent for entertainment and the perception of the adolescent of his expertise. As indicated in table (9) the Internet experts teenagers spend much more time for entertainment on the Internet than non-expert teens (Pearson Chi-squared = 11,492,  $p < 0.005$ ). Similarly, the results in table 6 show that 98.75% of the teenagers (web experts) use the Internet at least 7 h weekly for entertainment, compared to 3.22% for non-experts. In addition, 54.83% of non-expert teens use Internet 3 hours or less per week for entertainment, compared to the expert adolescents who use it more than 4 hours per week.

**Table 9: the perception of the adolescent of his expertise / the number of hours spent by teenagers on the Internet for entertainment**

The number of hours spent by teenagers on the Internet for entertainment	N	Expert teen (%)	Non-expert teen (%)
Non-use (0 h/week)	2	0.0	6.45
The low use (1-3 hours per week)	15	0.0	48.38
Use medium (4-6 hours per week)	14	1.25	41.93
The high use (7-9 hours per week)	38	46.25	3.22
The very high use (10 hours and more per week)	42	52.5	0.00

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

## 6. The impact of the expertise of the teenager on the family purchase decision

A simple regression was conducted to examine the relative influence of the expertise of the teenager on the process of family decision-making of online purchasing. In an initial analysis, we used the perception of adolescents of their expertise to examine their relative influence in the stages of initiation, information research, and the alternative evaluation and on the family decision making. A second analysis was developed to examine the perception of parents of such influence.

**6.1. For Teens:**

**Table 10: Regression of the (Initiation/search for information) on the Perception of expertise**

Variables	constant	Perception of expertise
Coefficient	- 1. 603E-17	0.727
Student test		(13.289)
R <sup>2</sup>		0.528

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

From this model, we can conclude that 52.8% of the influence of teenagers in the phases of initiation and information search is explained by the variable of expertise. The coefficient associated with the expertise is positive and significant at 1%. This means that when the expertise scale of the teenager increases by 1% thus the influence of the teenager in stages of initiation and information research increases by 0.727%.

**Table 11: Regression of the (Evaluation of alternatives/final) on the perception of expertise**

Variables	constant	Perception of expertise
Coefficient	- 1.853E-16	0.5
Student test		(7.265)
R <sup>2</sup>		0.250

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

Compared to the first model, we conclude that the perception of the expertise, explains only 25% of the influence of the teenager in the stages of the evaluation of alternatives and in final decision making. This low level of the explanatory power of the model is due to the fact that parents take more control in the stages of the decision-making in the family purchase process. Thus, the analysis of data revealed that the coefficient associated with the expertise is positive and significant at 1%. This means that when the teenager expertise increases by 1% then, the influence of it in the stages (evaluation of alternatives and the final decision making) increases by 0.5%.

**(b). For parents:**

**Table 12: Regression of (Initiation/search for information) on expertise**

Variables	constant	Perception of expertise
Coefficient	- 1.993E-17	0.881
Student test		(23.361)
R <sup>2</sup>		0.775

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

From this model, we can conclude that on the perception of parents 77.5% of the influence of the teenager in the stages of (the Initiation/search for information) is explained by the expertise of the young person. The coefficient associated with the expertise is positive and

significant at 1%. This means that when expertise increases by 1% then the influence of adolescence in stages (Initiation/information retrieval) increases by 0.881%.

**Table 13: Regression of (Evaluation of alternatives/final decision) on expertise**

Variables	constant	Perception of expertise
Coefficient	4.797E-17	0.614
Student test		(9.776)
R <sup>2</sup>	0.377	

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

From this model, we can conclude that, according to the perception of parents, expertise only explains 37.7% of the influence of the teenagers in the (Evaluation of alternatives/final) stages. The coefficient associated with the expertise is positive and significant at 1%. This means that when the degree of expertise increases by 1% then the variable (Evaluation of alternatives/final decision) increases by 0.614%.

The results indicate that adolescents who perceive themselves as Internet experts, feel have more influence in the family decision making in the stages of initiation and information retrieval, and stages of evaluation of alternatives and the final decision (initiation / search for information):  $F = 176,606$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ; evaluation of alternatives / final decision:  $F = 52,776$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ). Also, the results suggest, for parents, that expert Internet adolescents are perceived as having more influence in the decision-making process both in phases (initiation / search for information:  $F = 545,752$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ; evaluation of alternatives / final decision:  $F = 95,561$ ,  $P = 0.00$ ).

For additional illustration, an analysis of variance has been developed to examine the influence of adolescents 'experts' and 'non-expert' net in the decision-making.

**Table 14: the influence of adolescence expert NET on family decision-making**

	N	The perception of parents of:		The perception of teenagers from their:	
		The influence of their adolescents in Initiation / search for information	The influence of their teens in the evaluation of alternatives. final decision	The influence in Initiation. search for information	The influence in the evaluation of alternatives. final decision
Teens expert on the net	80	2.36	1.54	3.10	1.97
Teens non expert on the net	31	1.83	1.02	1.94	1.35
Value of F		15,452 $P = 0.000$	12,530 $P = 0.000$	5,632 $P = 0.000$	3,149 $P = 0.000$

**Source:** Authors' calculations from the questionnaire

Similarly, comparisons of average support the hypothesis that teenage experts of the Internet are most influential in the stages of family decision making (initiation/research of information and evaluation of alternatives / final decision) that are non-experts. Thus, H2 is validated.

In accordance with previous studies in decision-making in the family, it was issued in assumption that Internet expert's teenagers will have more influence in the stages of initiation

and research information in the stages of the evaluation of alternatives and the final decision. Tests matched samples (see annex 6) indicated that expert Internet adolescents were most influential in the stages of initiation and research information in the evaluation of alternative stages and the final decision (perception of adolescence:  $t = 0.935$ ,  $P < 0.01$ , the perception of parents:  $t = 0.780$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, H3 is verified.

Finally, although this has not been put in event, it was expected that parents who were non-users or low-users of the Internet may be more likely to perceive their adolescent as expert of the Internet and therefore, they will be more predisposed to consider that they are most influential in the decision-making process. To test this hypothesis, an analysis of variance was developed using as indicators the number of hours of use the Internet for parents, the expertise of the young person and the influence of the latter both in the stages of initiation / research information and the steps in the evaluation of alternative final decision.

**Table 15: teen’s expertise on the net (according to the perception of parents) and family decision-making influenced by parental use of the internet**

Use of the internet by parents	N	Perception of parents of:		
		Expertise	Initiation/search for information	Evaluation of alternatives. Final decision
Parents low-Internet users (1 - 6 hours per week)	130	0.057	0.058	0.017
Parents excessive users of the Internet (7 hours or more per week)	30	0.250	0.253	0.034
Value of F		42,295 P = 0. 000	29,983 P = 0. 000	10,091 P = 0. 000

**Source:** Authors’ calculations from the questionnaire

**Table 16: teen’s expertise on the net (according to the perception of teenagers) and family decision-making influenced by parental use of the internet**

Use of the internet by parents	N	Perception of adolescents from:		
		Expertise	Initiation/search for information	Evaluation of alternatives. final decision
Parents low-users of the Internet (1-6 hours per week)	130	0.065	0.049	0.007
Parents excessive users of the Internet (7 hours or more per week)	30	0.283	0.214	0.034
Value of F		71,223 P = 0. 000	30,651 P = 0. 000	8,157 P = 0. 000

**Source:** Authors’ calculations from the questionnaire

As shown in table 15 and 16, parents who were excessive users of the Internet (at the rate of 7 h or per week) were more likely to perceive their adolescent experts of the Internet than parents who were of low Internet users (1-6 hours per week). Parents judged as excessive Internet users consider their teenagers as exerting more influence in the stages of the evaluation of alternatives / final decision than that parent’s low-Internet users consider under this influence. In addition, adolescents whose parents were of excessive Internet users themselves most influential in the stages of recognition of the problem and search for information rather than those whose parents were low-users of the Internet.

Thus, contrary to the finding expected, the results suggest that in families where the parents are excessive users of the Internet, teenagers and their parents recognize the effect of the Internet expertise among adolescents and the contribution that it can result in the decision of the family.

## **7. Conclusion**

In the economic literature the adolescence was not considered to be a distinct life stage. It is only in recent years that researchers have become aware of the importance of this particular age segment and have begun to study its purchase behavior. Therefore and with technological progress and the advent of the internet, the teenager became an economic actor likely to hold some power in decisions to purchase online within the family.

Indeed, the main objective of our study was to bring some elements of answers to the following questions: what are the determinants of the web expertise for the Tunisian teenager? What is the degree of influence of the web expertise for the Tunisian teenager in the online purchasing family decision? In what phase the expert adolescent would be the more active?

Thus, as a first step, we focused on the presentation of the basic concepts of this research namely: the family decision-making process for the online purchasing and the teenager web expertise. Secondly, we are interested to identify the assumptions associated to the determinants of the internet expertise for teenagers and its effects on their participation in the decision to purchase.

To respond to this set of questions we administered two questionnaires which one is intended for the teenager and another for one of its parents. The survey is developed face to face with 160 adolescents aged between 12 and 19 years accompanied by their parents. The adolescent population should verify three fundamental conditions. First the teenagers are assumed to be schoolboys. Second they should have at their homes an Internet connection and thirdly they have past a touristic stays in family.

The results of this research have showed that the teenagers, as experts on the web, spend more than 7 h / per week on the Internet for entertainment purposes. Also, they are connected to the Internet much more than the other members of the family and they are recognized as experts by the other members of the family. Similarly, it has been proven that adolescent has a very strong influence in choice and booking of trips online especially in phases of initiation and search for information rather than in the stages of evaluation of alternatives and the decision making.

With regard to the future lines of research, it would be important to point out that for purposes of the study; a single product has been examined. Thus, future researches should explore other products or services in which expert adolescents of the net are more incited to search on the Internet for an effective contribution in making purchasing decision. Also, as Internet becomes more and more accepted in Tunisian families, future research should explore other groups of potential experts of the Internet, and to consider their roles in the purchasing process.

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### **Theses**

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