

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE FORMATION OF STUDENT CONSUMPTIVE BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

The development of social media has changed many things in students' lives, such as how to get information, communicate, and make decisions in shopping activities. Digital content that appears constantly makes students increasingly follow various trends, product advertisements, and lifestyles that are developing in cyberspace. This study aims to see how social media affects the way students shop and identify what things make them more likely to spend money excessively. This study uses a literature study method with a descriptive qualitative approach. The data was obtained from studying various appropriate scientific sources, such as books, articles from domestic and foreign journals, as well as the results of previous research accessed through Google Scholar, SINTA, DOAJ, and Garuda. The analysis is carried out by recognizing, grouping, understanding, and combining various findings regarding the use of social media and student shopping attitudes. This research shows that social media plays an important role in forming excessive shopping habits. This happens due to several factors, such as the frequency of use of digital platforms, the influence of well-known users or content creators, popular trends, and the effect of fear of missed opportunities (FOMO). This condition makes students buy things that are usually driven by personal desires, self-image that they want to achieve, and the desire to be accepted by the social environment. This study found that social media plays an important role in changing the way students buy goods and influencing their views on today's needs and lifestyles.

Submitted : 25-Maret-2026

Received : 31-Maret-2026

Published : 01-April-2026

Keywords: social media, consumptive behavior, students.

INTRODUCTION

Students today live in a digital environment that is highly dependent on the internet and social media. Activities such as communication, information seeking,

entertainment, and online transactions can now be accessed through a smartphone. As a result, social media has become an important part of students' daily lives.

Social media is no longer used solely for communication. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube provide users with various types of content, including news, educational materials, entertainment, and advertisements. Through visual content and continuous exposure, these platforms influence how users perceive products and make purchasing decisions. The rapid growth of the digital economy has encouraged businesses to use social media as a primary marketing tool. Companies increasingly rely on influencers and content creators to promote products because their recommendations often appear more authentic and relatable than traditional advertisements. This strategy is particularly effective among students, who frequently use social media to follow trends and seek product information.

Before purchasing a product, many students search for reviews, recommendations, and user experiences on social media. This habit demonstrates that social media has become an important reference in the consumer decision-making process. Consequently, products that gain popularity online often attract significant attention, even when they are not essential needs. Peer influence also contributes to students' purchasing behavior. Since students interact with others who are exposed to similar online content, they may feel encouraged to buy products that are widely used or recommended within their social groups. In addition, influencers often shape consumer preferences by presenting attractive lifestyles that strengthen followers' interest in promoted products.

Another factor is the algorithmic system used by social media platforms. These algorithms continuously display content that matches users' interests, including advertisements and product recommendations. Repeated exposure to similar content can increase consumers' desire to purchase certain products. The convenience of online shopping further supports this behavior. With only a few clicks, users can purchase products, benefit from discounts, and enjoy fast delivery services. Such convenience often encourages impulsive buying.

These conditions may lead to consumptive behavior, which refers to purchasing goods based on desires rather than actual needs. Students may buy products to follow trends, improve their social image, or gain recognition from others. If not accompanied by proper financial management, excessive spending can negatively affect students' financial well-being. The influence of social media on consumption patterns extends beyond economic factors. It is also connected to social interaction, identity formation, and popular culture. Through social media, users not only receive information but also participate in creating and spreading trends and lifestyles.

Previous studies indicate that higher social media usage is often associated with stronger consumptive tendencies, especially among young people. Although factors such as peer groups, economic conditions, and personal characteristics also play a role, social media remains an important influence that cannot be ignored. Therefore, research on the role of social media in shaping students' consumptive behavior is essential. Understanding this relationship can provide valuable insights into how social media affects students' purchasing decisions and daily behavior in the digital era..

THEORETICAL STUDIES

Extravagant student behavior cannot be seen as just a matter of buying goods or using services in large quantities. This phenomenon is related to changes in the way students communicate, get information, strengthen personal identities, and respond to various influences that arise in the digital world. Social media has made many habits that used to be done in person now turn into activities that are done through mobile phone screens. Information about the latest trends, lifestyles, and products can be found in a few seconds, even several times a day. This condition makes social media have a considerable ability to influence user decisions and behavior.

To understand the relationship between social media and shopping habits, a clear conceptual basis is needed so that the discussion does not stop at superficial observations. Theory helps explain how an action can arise and what are the things that drive the action. Previous research has also shown patterns that appear in different groups of students in different locations. By paying attention to the explanation of the theory and the results of previous research, it can be revealed that the relationship between social media use and consumptive behavior tendencies can be revealed more clearly, and placed in a more complete scientific understanding framework.

A. Theory Used

1. Theory Interactionism Symbolism

The theory of Symbolic Interactionism proposed by George Herbert Mead was later expanded by Herbert Blumer. This theory is based on the idea that human actions are not only influenced by the necessities of life or economic conditions, but also by the meaning given to objects, events, or symbols that appear in social life. This meaning arises because of talking and interacting with others, and it continues to change according to the experience that a person experiences.

When using social media, students every day encounter various symbols that have a certain meaning in social life. Product photos, lifestyle posts, travel content, and an influencer's everyday appearance can shape people's opinions about what is considered attractive, modern, or worth having. Items that are actually just functioning normally can have a higher value because they are related to a certain picture. Through this process, social media helps shape the way students recognize a product and influence their decision to buy the product.

2. Jean Baudrillard's Theory of Consumption

Jean Baudrillard stated that people today no longer buy goods just because of their usefulness. Shopping today is a way for people to show who they are, how they are living, and their position in society. According to Baudrillard, people buy a lot of things not because of the benefits they get, but because of the symbols and images that exist in the product. This thinking fits perfectly with the current social media situation.

Various online websites are full of content that features a perfect-looking lifestyle, fashion trends, beauty care products, as well as items that are often considered a sign of a certain social status. Such exposure can make a person want to buy the product so that it looks like it is developing with the present or accepted by a certain social environment. Among college students, the habit of buying items that are currently popular usually shows that the symbolic factor is more influential than the actual need. Baudrillard's theory helps explain why social media can reinforce a consumption culture that focuses on the image and recognition of the social environment.

3. Social Comparison Theory

1954. This theory states that everyone has the habit of measuring themselves by comparing themselves with others. The comparison is made in order to find out the position, abilities, and results achieved by a person in his social environment. Social media makes it easier for people to compare their lives with others because they can see different types of life without being limited by overly strict rules. Students can see various types of posts, such as new items, places to go on vacation, how to dress, or shopping activities carried out by peers and public figures.

Continuous exposure can make a person feel like they have the same item so as not to feel left behind. This condition often makes a person want to spend more money, especially when buying things just to follow trends or social gaps, not because they really need the item. Social Comparison Theory explains that social media is a place where people compare their lives with others, thus shaping their standard of living based on the things they see.

The three theories complement each other. Symbolic interactionism explains how the meaning of a product is formed because of the way humans interact with each other. Baudrillard's theory of consumption explains why symbols and images are so influential in the process of buying goods. Meanwhile, Social Comparison Theory explains that students often follow trends that are going viral on social media to be considered members of a certain group. These three combinations form a solid basis for understanding the role of social media in shaping students' shopping habits.

METHOD

This research uses a method of finding information from books and other reference sources with an approach that describes the situation in depth and based on words. The method was chosen because the discussion of the role of social media in shaping student consumptive behavior is more appropriately analyzed by studying various relevant scientific sources, compared to collecting data directly. Research data was obtained from various literature sources related to the topic studied, such as electronic academic books, articles from journals, previous research results, conference proceedings, and other scientific publications that discuss social media, consumption

behavior, consumption culture, and student behavior. The data collection process is carried out by searching for information from the literature in a structured manner using various reliable scientific data sources, such as Google Scholar, SINTA, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Garuda, and university journal sites that provide accredited articles. The selection of sources is carried out by paying attention to the accuracy of the topic, the level of good publication, trust in the author, and the timeliness of the information used in the research.

The data that has been collected is then analyzed through several stages, namely identifying, classifying, understanding, and combining the information. Each source used was analyzed to find concepts, theories, research results, and arguments related to the impact of social media on student spending behavior. Research results from various sources are then compared and linked in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. This method helps researchers in making discussions based on various academic viewpoints, so that they can produce a deeper and more organized analysis. The main source of literature in this study was obtained through Google Scholar.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research has shown that social media has become an important part of students' lives. Digital platforms are now not only used to communicate or seek entertainment, but also become the main source of information regarding emerging products, services, trends, and lifestyles. The ease of accessing various types of content allows students to receive a large amount of information every day. This situation provides an opportunity for preferences, interests, and decisions to emerge when shopping that are influenced by the digital environment.

Some of the studies used as the basis for this study show a very strong relationship between social media use and the tendency to engage in consumptive acts among college students. The spread of advertising content, recommendations from social media users, product reviews, and trends that are going viral on social media can affect the way students see a good or service. Products that were once unimportant may be considered important after being often mentioned in various digital media. This situation shows that the way people use money today is not only due to personal needs, but also because of the ever-changing influence of information on social media.

Getting used to shopping too much requires a complex process and involves several interrelated factors. Actively using social media gives students a greater chance to keep up with the fast-growing consumption trends. Some of the factors that often appear in various studies are the impact of public figures, the desire to be in a certain social environment, the need to be recognized by others, and efforts to form a positive self-image. Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, the next discussion will discuss several important things that explain how social media affects the way students shop.

1. Social Media Use Among Students and Changes in Consumption

Social media has now become an inseparable part of students' lives. Many people do various activities such as looking for information, talking to others, keeping up with the latest trends, and looking for product recommendations through digital media. These changes also affect the way students make decisions when shopping activities. In the past, people got information about products from family, friends, or traditional media, but now students are more likely to look for product references through Instagram, TikTok, X, YouTube, or shopping features on social media. Access to information that is unlimited in time makes students constantly face various types of promotions and marketing content that are created to attract users' attention.

Research conducted by Wulandari and Indrawati shows that the use of social media is related to the increasing habit of excessive shopping among students. Content that is presented repeatedly makes a product more recognizable, easier to remember, and finally considered something to have. In such situations, the decision to buy often occurs before the student has really thought carefully about the benefits and level of need of the item to be purchased. This phenomenon shows that social media is starting to shift part of the way people decide to spend their money from decisions based on rational thoughts to decisions influenced by the compelling images and information that continue to emerge in the digital world.

Changes in the way of shopping can also be seen from the increasing number of students who buy goods due to the trend that is going viral. Social media algorithms work by displaying content that matches the user's preferences, so that a person can continue to receive product recommendations that are similar to each other. This situation creates a digital atmosphere that makes people more interested in trying products that are being talked about. Research conducted on students at the State University of Medan shows that the use of social media affects students' consumptive behavior positively and significantly.

The change is not only about shopping more often, but also about the way students understand the meaning of consumption itself. Purchased products are often considered a way to keep up with the latest trends, adapt to the social environment, or create a certain image on social media. The presence of the comment feature, the number of likes, and various forms of responses from other users also reinforce this desire. Research conducted on various student groups in Indonesia shows that social media has evolved into a place that influences the way young generations view what is interesting, valuable, and worth having.

2. The Role of Influencers and Content Creators in Driving Purchase Decisions Students

Social media has now become an integral part of students' lives. Many people use digital media to search for information, talk to others, stay up to date with the latest trends, and look for product recommendations. These changes also affect the way students decide when shopping. In the past, people got information about products from family, friends, or traditional media, but now students prefer to search for product references through Instagram, TikTok, X, YouTube, or shopping features on social media. Access to information that is unlimited in time makes students constantly face different types of promotions and advertisements created to attract the attention of users.

Research conducted by Wulandari and Indrawati shows that the use of social media is closely related to the increase in excessive shopping habits carried out by students. Content that is often displayed makes a product more known to people, easier to remember, and ultimately considered a must-have item. In such situations, the decision to buy is often taken before students have really thought carefully about the benefits and level of need of the item to be purchased. This phenomenon shows that social media is starting to change the way people choose to spend their money, from decisions based on rational thoughts to decisions influenced by the attractive images and information that constantly appear in the digital world.

Changes in the way of shopping can also be seen from the increasing number of students who buy goods just because of certain trends that are popular. Social media algorithms work by displaying content that matches what users like, so that a person continues to receive product recommendations that have similarities to those previously liked. This situation creates an atmosphere in cyberspace that makes people prefer to try products that are being talked about a lot. Research conducted on students at the State University of Medan shows that the use of social media has a positive and considerable impact on students' consumptive behavior.

The change is not only about shopping more often, but also about the way students understand the meaning of consumption itself. Purchased products are often considered a way to keep up with the latest trends, adapt to the social environment, or create a certain image on social media. The presence of the comment feature, the number of likes, and various forms of responses from other users also reinforce this desire. Research conducted on various student groups in Indonesia shows that social media has evolved into a place that influences the way the younger generation views what is attractive, valuable, and worth having

The development of social media has given birth to new groups that have a great influence on people's consumption behavior, namely influencers and content creators. Their presence is not just as a content creator, but as a figure who is able to shape the opinions, preferences, and purchasing decisions of their followers. Among students, recommendations submitted by influencers are often seen as closer and more trustworthy than conventional advertising. The relationship built through regular interactions makes followers feel like they know the influencer personally, even though the relationship actually takes place virtually. This kind of proximity creates a high level of acceptance of product information conveyed through uploads, reviews, and live broadcasts on social media.

The influence of influencers on purchasing decisions is closely related to the credibility aspect. Students tend to pay more attention to influencers who are considered to have knowledge, experience, and expertise in a certain field. In beauty product marketing, for example, reviews provided by beauty creators are often used as a reference before making a purchase. Research on students as consumers of skincare products shows that the expertise, level of trust, and attractiveness of influencers have a real influence on purchasing decisions. The higher the level of trust that the audience gives to influencers, the more likely a product recommendation is to be accepted as a consideration in the consumption process.¹

Content created by influencers also plays a role in shaping perceptions about the quality and image of a product. Previously lesser-known products can gain widespread attention after being used or recommended by a figure who has a large following. This phenomenon is widely found on platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, when a product goes viral after appearing in a review video or user experience content. At some stage, the purchase decision is no longer driven by an urgent need, but rather by the curiosity that arises after seeing the product repeatedly in various uploads. A number of studies on college students show that influencer marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions because it can increase product appeal while strengthening brand image in the eyes of young consumers.

The role of content creators is getting stronger because they are able to package promotions in a more subtle and attractive form. Marketing messages are often conveyed through everyday stories, personal experiences, challenges, or entertainment content that make the audience feel like they are seeing an advertisement. This kind of communication is easier to accept because it feels close to the lives of social media users. Research on digital content creativity in

¹ Maharani, P., & Hendrastomo, G. (2022). The phenomenon of beauty vloggers on consumptive behavior among female students in Yogyakarta. *Dimensions: Journal of Sociological Studies*, 11(2), 1-15.

college students found that the quality of content presentation has a close relationship with interest and purchase decisions. Students tend to be interested in products that are introduced through content that is considered authentic, relevant, and appropriate to the experience they are facing. These conditions show that influencers' influence comes not only from the number of followers they have, but also from their ability to build trust and create ongoing engagement with the audience.²

3. Trend Culture and FOMO (*Fear of Missing Out*) as a Driver of Consumptive Behavior

The development of social media has made the trend spread faster among students. Products, how to dress, where to eat, and various lifestyles can go viral in a short time after appearing in uploads that are seen by many people. This situation makes the appearance of a fear of being left behind, which is a feeling of anxiety when a person feels left behind from information, experiences, or trends that others are living. In the student environment, FOMO often appears in ways such as wanting to buy something that is currently popular, following a rising trend, or trying a product that is widely discussed on social media. The decision to spend money is often not based on a really necessary need, but rather a temptation to stay involved in the various things that are trending around one's social environment. Several studies have shown that FOMO is closely related to an increase in student spending behavior, especially when social media use is done continuously.

The need to follow the trend is getting bigger because social media often displays various forms of social comparison that occur every day. Students can see peers, influencers, or public figures who show their experiences using the product through images, videos, and review writing. Continuous exposure makes people feel that owning certain items is part of a normal lifestyle and

² Candika, Y. I., Riadi, F. S., Putri, E. L. H., & Ark, N. T. (2025). Trends in paylater use among college students: The role of consumptive behavior and social pressure. *Journal of Management and Digital Business*, 5(2), 685-702.

worth following. Research on students at various universities in Indonesia shows that people who feel stronger due to fear of being left behind (FOMO) are more susceptible to being tempted to buy in a hurry, ignore more important needs, and even be willing to spend money that has been budgeted just to follow the latest trends. This phenomenon shows that the culture of trends and fear of missing out (FOMO) has become one of the things that strengthens the consumptive shopping habits of students in today's digital life.

4. The Impact of Student Consumptive Behavior in the Social Media Era

Changes in the way students spend money have a big impact on the way they manage their finances. Shopping through digital platforms makes the buying process faster and easier than it used to be. Various products can be found by simply swiping the phone screen a few times, and the ads keep popping up on social media timelines. This situation usually encourages students to make unplanned expenses. Some research shows that the more often a person sees advertisements and product recommendations on social media, the higher the likelihood that someone starts to feel like buying items that are not really necessary.

Excessive spending behavior also affects the way students choose more important things in their daily lives. Some students begin to consider the ownership of certain items as important because they are accepted by others and how they view themselves. Trending products are usually considered to be able to make a person more confident when used in the middle of a circle of friends or other people. This situation causes buying decisions to be influenced more by trending trends than by consideration of benefits that can be felt over a long period of time. Research studying college students' consumptive behavior has found that constant exposure to social media can change the way a person views what is needed and what is wanted, making the boundaries between the two increasingly blurred.

Another influence can be seen from the emergence of patterns in the way people judge others who are increasingly paying attention to the appearance and symbols used in consumption. Students now live in a digital world where

everything they do can be shared with the public, such as the things they own, the places they visit, and the way they live. This condition makes a person want to show a certain appearance in order to attract attention or get recognition from the people around him. Studies on how young people spend or spend money show that social media increases the likelihood that they do so. If the habit of spending money based on confessions from others continues, it can have an impact on students' ability to make spending decisions more wisely and according to their real needs.

KESIMPULAN

Social media has now become one of the important factors influencing the way students shop and use their money. The increase in the level of use of digital platforms makes it easier for students to be exposed to information related to products, trends, promotions, and various forms of lifestyle circulating in the virtual space. This influence is even greater because of the presence of influencers and content creators who can build trust and influence the shopping choices of their followers. The phenomenon of FOMO makes people more motivated to follow trends that are going viral, so buying decisions are usually influenced by the desire to stay in line with the social environment.

The results show that excessive spending habits among college students are not only caused by the necessities of life, but also because they want to find their identity, be recognized by others, and stay engaged in the social environment digitally. This condition affects the way students manage money, determine the most important needs, and understand how they spend money in their daily lives. Therefore, the use of social media must be balanced with the ability to think critically and be aware of decisions when shopping, so that students can use technology more wisely and not get caught up in excessive shopping behavior.

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