Social Media and Consumerism Culture: A Study on Students of Universitas Dinamika Bangsa

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Abstract

This study is motivated by the increasing use of social media among students at Universitas Dinamika Bangsa, which is suspected to influence their consumerist lifestyle. The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of social media on students' purchasing habits. A quantitative approach with a survey method was employed. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 92 enrolled students. The independent variable in this study is the intensity of social media use, while the dependent variable is the level of student consumerism. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression. The findings indicate that the intensity of social media use has a significant effect on students' consumerism levels. The higher the intensity of social media use, the greater the tendency for students to purchase non- essential goods. These results highlight the need for enhancing students' digital literacy skills to enable them to respond more critically to social media content, particularly promotional materials. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the relationship between social media and consumerism among university students a segment of the young generation that is particularly susceptible to the influence of a consumerist lifestyle.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior; Digital Competence; Impulse Buying; Lifestyle; Social Media Usage

INTRODUCTION

Advancements in information and communication technology (ICT) have revolutionized the way humans interact, making communication faster, easier, and more accessible than ever before (Sari & Subaida, 2019). The internet, particularly through social media platforms, has become a dominant medium for building connections, exchanging information, and fostering social interaction regardless of geographical barriers (Nabil et al., 2024). For modern youth, the use of digital platforms to share moments—through photos, videos, and instant messaging—has become a daily habit (Mustomi & Puspasari, 2020). Initially designed for virtual communication and information sharing, social media has evolved into an influential ecosystem that not only connects people but also facilitates business transactions, marketing activities, and consumer engagement (Kartini et al., 2022).

The evolution of social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook has been driven by features that encourage high user engagement, including interactive content, influencer collaborations, and algorithm-based recommendations (Monica et al., 2022). These platforms offer opportunities for product promotion through visually appealing formats like feed posts, reels, and stories, creating persuasive narratives that can shape consumer perceptions. However, this constant exposure to promotional

content blurs the line between needs and wants, particularly for younger users (Ismawan & Pamungkas, 2022). As a result, social media has transitioned from being merely a communication tool to becoming a catalyst for impulse buying and consumerist lifestyles (Kurniawan, 2017; Abdullah & Suja'i, 2022).

Consumption itself is a fundamental human activity, necessary for fulfilling basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. Yet, in the digital age, consumption is increasingly driven by desires rather than necessities. The ease of online transactions, combined with the targeted nature of social media advertising, has fostered a culture where acquiring non-essential goods is normalized. Such behavior, if left unchecked, may lead to unsustainable spending habits and financial instability (Thamrin & Achiruddin, 2021). This transformation in consumption patterns is particularly evident in younger demographics, where lifestyle aspirations and peer influence play a significant role in purchasing decisions.

University students, as one of the most active user groups of social media, represent a critical demographic in understanding the impact of digital platforms on consumer behavior. Their constant engagement with online content exposes them to a variety of marketing strategies, from influencer endorsements to flash sale campaigns, which can stimulate immediate purchasing impulses (Asrun & Gunawan, 2024). This heightened exposure often correlates with increased consumerism—a tendency to purchase goods or services more frequently based on emotional appeal and social influence rather than practical need. The implications extend beyond individual finances, potentially influencing broader social norms around consumption and materialism.

In addressing this issue, digital literacy emerges as a vital competency. It involves not only the ability to navigate online platforms but also the critical capacity to evaluate and question the intent, credibility, and relevance of digital content. Strengthening digital literacy among young consumers can serve as a preventive strategy, equipping them with the skills needed to resist manipulative marketing tactics and make more informed purchasing decisions. However, despite its importance, the intersection between social media usage intensity, consumerism, and digital literacy in the context of university students in emerging economies remains underexplored.

This study seeks to fill that gap by examining the relationship between social media usage intensity and the level of consumerism among students at Universitas Dinamika Bangsa. By adopting a qualitative perspective, it aims to uncover the underlying behavioral patterns and promotional influences that shape purchasing decisions within this demographic. The research contributes to the growing body of literature on digital consumption behavior, offering context-specific insights relevant to Indonesia's socio-cultural and economic environment. The findings are expected to inform universities, policymakers, and educators in developing targeted interventions that promote responsible social media engagement and encourage sustainable consumption habits in the digital era.

METHOD

This study aims to examine the influence of social media usage on the consumption behavior of students at Universitas Dinamika Bangsa Jambi. A quantitative research approach with a correlational design was employed. The sampling technique applied was purposive sampling, involving 92 respondents, all of whom were active students at the university.

The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire comprising statements related to:

1. Independent variable (X): Intensity of social media usage.
2. Dependent variable (Y): Degree of consumerism among students.

Data were analyzed using SPSS with simple linear regression analysis. Prior to the primary analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure model validity, including:

1. Normality test using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, histogram, and normal P–P plot.
2. Multicollinearity test: Tolerance value and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).
3. Heteroskedasticity test: Scatter plot analysis.

The regression model applied in this study is formulated as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta X + \varepsilon$$

Where:

Y	=	Degree of consumerism among students
α	=	Constant term (value of Y when X = 0)
β	=	Regression coefficient (magnitude of change in Y for each unit change in X)
X	=	Intensity of social media usage
ε	=	Error term (unobserved factors affecting Y)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Model Description

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effect of social media on student consumerism. The regression model was developed using social media as the independent variable (X) and student consumerism as the dependent variable (Y), applying the Enter method in SPSS.

The model summary indicated:

a. Correlation coefficient (R) = 0.515, suggesting a moderate positive relationship between the variables.
b. Coefficient of determination (R Square) = 0.265, meaning that social media accounts for 26.5% of the variation in student consumerism, while the remaining 73.5% is explained by other factors not included in the model.
c.

The details are presented in Figure 1.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.515ª	.265	.257	6.80461

a. Predictors: (Constant), Media Sosial

Figure 1. Model Summary Showing the Relationship Between Social Media and Student Consumerism

2. Model Significance Test (ANOVA)

The ANOVA results showed:
a. F statistic = 35.521
b. Significance value (p) = 0.001 < 0.05

These findings indicate that the regression model is statistically significant and can be used to predict student consumerism.

The details are presented in Figure 2.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1505.826	1	1505.826	32.521	<.001^b
	Residual	4167.250	90	46.303		
	Total	5673.076	91			

a. Dependent Variable: Konsumerisme Mahasiswa
b. Predictors: (Constant), Media Sosial

Figure 2. ANOVA Results for the Effect of Social Media on Student Consumerism

Regression Equation and Interpretation The regression equation obtained is:
$Y = -4.373 + 0.874\,X$

Interpretation:

a. Constant (a) = -4.373
Indicates the estimated value of student consumerism when the social media score is zero.
b. Regression coefficient (b) = 0.874
Suggests that a 1% increase in social media usage leads to an increase of 0.874 points in student consumerism. The positive coefficient indicates a direct relationship between the two variables.

The results are presented in Figure 3.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-4.373	4.990		-.876	.383
	Media Sosial	.874	.153	.515	5.703	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Konsumerisme Mahasiswa

Figure 3. Coefficients Table for the Effect of Social Media on Student Consumerism

Hypothesis Testing (t-test)
The partial test results showed:

a. t calculated = 5.703
b. t table (α = 0.05, df = 90) = 1.990
c. Significance value (p) = 0.001 < 0.05

Thus, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted, indicating that social media has a positive and significant effect on student consumerism.

Classical Assumption Tests

To ensure the validity of the regression model, several classical assumption tests were performed:

a. Normality Test
   - The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test yielded a significance value of 0.185 > 0.05, indicating normally distributed data.
   - The histogram showed a bell-shaped, symmetrical distribution.
   - The Normal P–P Plot demonstrated data points closely following the diagonal line.
   -

The results are shown in Figures 4, 5, and 6.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

		Unstandardized Residual
N		92
Normal Parameters[a,b]	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	6.76712314
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.080
	Positive	.060
	Negative	-.080
Test Statistic		.080
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)[c]		.185
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)[d]	Sig.	.147
	99% Confidence Interval Lower Bound	.138
	Upper Bound	.156

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
d. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 2000000.

Figure 4. Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test Results for Normality of Residuals
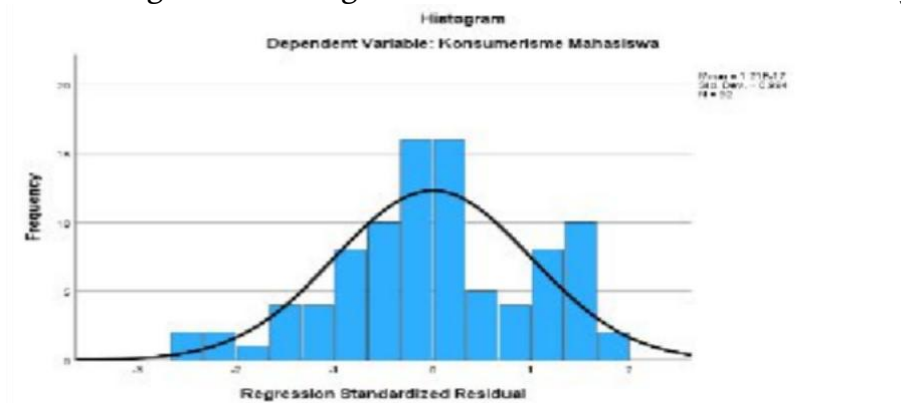

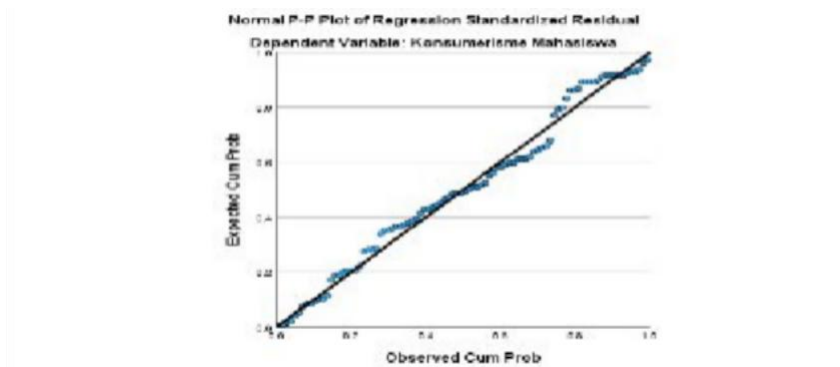Figure 5. Histogram of Regression Standardized Residuals

Figure 6. Normal P–P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals

Multicollinearity Test
- Tolerance value = 1.000 > 0.1
- Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) = 1.000 < 10
- These results confirm the absence of multicollinearity.

The results are presented in Figure 7.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	-4.373	4.990		-.876	.383		
	Media Sosial	.874	.153	.515	5.703	<.001	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Konsumerisme Mahasiswa

Figure 7. Multicollinearity Test Results Based on Tolerance and VIF Values

Heteroscedasticity Test

The scatterplot displayed a random distribution of data points above and below the horizontal axis without a specific pattern, indicating no heteroscedasticity. The result is illustrated in Figure 8.
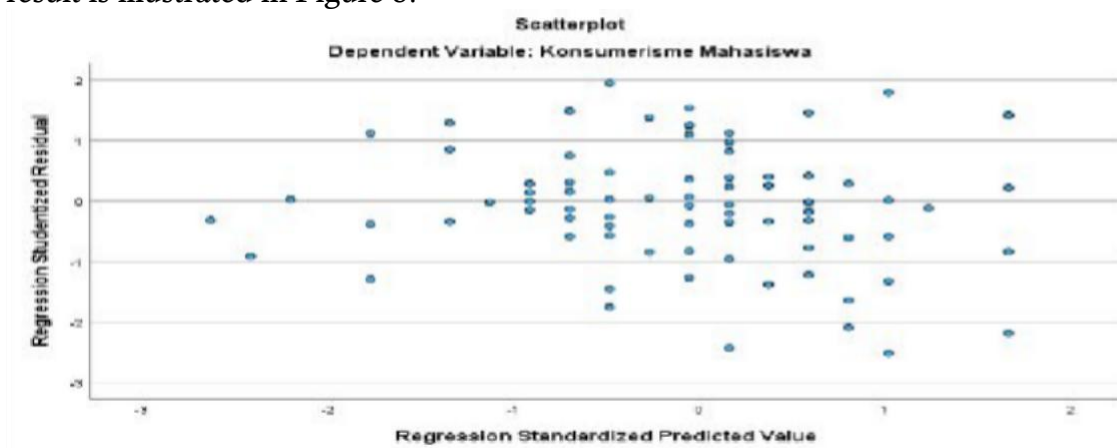

Figure 8. Scatterplot of Regression Standardized Residuals

The results indicate that social media usage has a positive and significant effect on student consumerism. The regression model meets all classical assumption criteria and is therefore valid for predictive purposes. Increased social media usage is associated with higher levels of student consumerism.

The findings of this study indicate that social media usage has a positive and significant influence on students' level of consumerism. This is evidenced by a regression coefficient of b = 0.874 with $p < 0.05$, along with a moderate correlation (R=0.515). These results are consistent with previous studies suggesting that increased exposure to social media platforms tends to heighten consumptive behaviors among young adults. This increase is primarily driven by extensive exposure to digital advertising, social comparisons with peers, and lifestyle aspirations portrayed through online content (Hanaya et al., 2025).

The coefficient of determination (R^2=0.265) reveals that social media usage accounts for 26.5% of the variation in student consumerism, while the remaining 73.5% is explained by other factors such as personal values, family background, peer influence, and socioeconomic status (Ula et al., 2025). This suggests that, although social media is a significant driving factor, its influence interacts with other variables within a broader social and cultural context.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings can be explained through Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954), which posits that individuals tend to evaluate themselves by comparing their lives with those of others. Social media amplifies this process by presenting curated and idealized portrayals of lifestyles and possessions, thus fostering a desire to acquire material goods. In addition, the Uses and Gratifications Theory proposed by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) suggests that students actively use social media for entertainment, information-seeking, and social interaction. However, during this process, they are also indirectly exposed to commercial messages that can influence consumption behavior.

The regression model employed in this study met all classical assumption tests, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests, thereby confirming the statistical robustness of the model. This strengthens the validity of the conclusion that social media usage is a primary predictor of students' consumptive behavior.
These findings have several practical implications. First, there is a need for educational interventions that promote digital literacy and critical consumption awareness among students, enabling them to evaluate marketing messages wisely and control impulsive consumption tendencies. Second, these results can serve as a basis for policymakers and universities to design educational programs that instill financial responsibility in the era of pervasive digital advertising.

The results are also consistent with the studies of Chen et al. (2022) and Tran (2022), which found a positive correlation between social media usage, impulsive buying behavior, and materialistic orientation. Similar to those findings, this study demonstrates that the interactive and pervasive nature of social media enhances the appeal and visibility of consumer products, thereby significantly influencing students' purchasing behavior.

Nevertheless, the R^2 value also suggests the existence of other influential factors that were not examined in this study. Future research is therefore recommended to incorporate variables such as self-control, peer pressure, and income level to develop a more comprehensive model. Furthermore, qualitative approaches could be employed to explore more deeply the psychological mechanisms linking social media engagement to students' consumerist attitudes.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that social media usage has a positive and significant effect on the level of consumerism among students at Universitas Dinamika Bangsa Jambi. The analysis shows that social media usage accounts for a substantial portion of the variation in consumerist behavior, while the remainder is influenced by other factors such as personal values, family background, peer influence, and socioeconomic status. The findings indicate that social media exposure can intensify consumerist tendencies, particularly through digital advertising, social comparison, and lifestyle aspirations shaped by online content.

Theoretically, the results align with perspectives suggesting that social media fosters self-evaluation through comparison with others and functions as a medium for entertainment, information, and commercial persuasion. The regression model passed all classical assumption tests, indicating robust statistical validity.

Based on these findings, the study proposes the following recommendations:
1. Enhance students' digital literacy to foster critical and discerning consumption on social media.
2. Integrate financial literacy education into university curricula to reduce impulsive buying behavior.
3. Expand future research to include samples from multiple universities to improve generalizability.
4. Incorporate additional variables such as self-control, peer influence, and financial literacy in future models.
5. Employ mixed methods approaches to explore the underlying psychological mechanisms linking social media use and consumerist behavior

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