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## The Influence of Social Media Usage on the Spending Habits of Students: A Quantitative Analysis

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of social media usage on the spending habits of students at a tertiary academic institution in Cabanglasan, Bukidnon. With social media platforms becoming increasingly embedded in daily life, particularly among the youth, this research explored how students' attitudes and subjective norms derived from social media interactions affect their financial behavior. Anchored on the Theory of Reasoned Action, the study employed a descriptive quantitative research design using a structured survey administered to Business Administration students. Results revealed that students exhibit a very positive attitude toward social media and experience strong social media pressure, both of which contribute to moderately impulsive spending habits. Notably, regression analysis indicated a significant relationship between social media usage—especially subjective norms—and spending behavior, with social media usage explaining 64.67% of the variance in students' spending habits. The findings emphasized the need for digital and financial literacy programs to mitigate impulsive spending behaviors driven by social media influence. This study offered valuable insights for students, educators, institutions, and business stakeholders aiming to understand and manage the financial impact of digital engagement among the youth.

### INTRODUCTION

In the global context, social media was initially created to connect individuals worldwide, enabling us to build and maintain relationships in ways previously unimaginable. It serves as a powerful tool for engaging in two-way communication, enabling users not only to listen to others but also to respond and interact with them. Popular social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, have undergone significant evolution and are now widely recognized as effective marketing tools in today's digital landscape (Tufts University, 2024).

With over 5.17 billion people worldwide using social media platforms, it is evident that these tools have permeated nearly every aspect of daily life. Notably, approximately 63.7 percent of these users are aged eighteen and older, as cited by Backlinko (2024). In the Philippines, social media plays a particularly prominent role, influencing cultural norms and consumer behavior. According to Howe (2024), the average Filipino aged between 16 and 64 years old spends an astonishing 8 hours and 55 minutes daily on social media. This excessive usage suggests that many Filipinos regard social media as a primary source of entertainment and a means to generate income. Their familiarity with technology has shaped their interactions and consumption patterns. According to Sarah Brady (2024), a striking twenty percent of Gen Z'ers reported that they do not save money, a trend that is not solely attributable to their limited income but also reflects their spending habits. Many of them prioritize spending on shopping and travel, heavily influenced by the constant

stream of lifestyle content available on platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram. These platforms feature numerous videos showcasing trending fashion, luxurious travel destinations, and high-end beauty products, all of which appear to be highly coveted by their peers. Consequently, Gen Z'ers openly acknowledge that they often overspend to keep up with these trends, with forty percent stating they prefer spending on experiences over necessities. This phenomenon raises questions about the sustainability of such consumption patterns, particularly in the face of economic uncertainty and rising living costs. Before making a purchase, especially a large one, consumers often research online. Verma (2019) highlight consumers preference for direct feedback, a need increasingly met through social media, making it a crucial tool for customer service and support.

This research aims to explore the intersection of social media and spending habits, with a specific focus on the student population at one of the academic institutions in the Municipality of Cabanglasan. The study has three primary objectives. First, it aims to identify the correlation between the increasing use of social media and higher spending among students. Understanding how and why students are spending more time on social media can offer valuable insights into their consumer behavior and psychology. Second, it aims to determine the effects of social media on the spending habits of the students, particularly examining whether exposure to certain types of content influences their purchasing decisions.

Lastly, the study intends to evaluate whether a significant influence exists between social media usage and the

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spending habits of these students, thereby contributing to a broader understanding of how digital engagement shapes financial behaviors in a rapidly evolving landscape.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theory of Impulsive Buying

The study is anchored to the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), a theory developed by Fishbein, M., and Ajzen, I., in the 1960s and 1970s. This theory is a psychological model that predicts and explains an individual's decisions to engage in a specific behavior based on their attitudes and beliefs about that behavior. This theory will enable this study to evaluate students' overall behavior, including their beliefs about potential outcomes and the value they place on these outcomes. This component captures the social media influences on a person's behavior, including the perceived expectations and opinions of significant others, such as family, friends, or peers. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) suggests that a person's intention to perform a behavior is the best predictor of whether they will actually do it. For students, social media can serve various gratifications, such as entertainment, social interaction, or information seeking. The influence of social media on consumer behavior has become a significant area of study as digital platforms increasingly integrate into daily life. This research aims to explore how social media affects the spending habits of students in one of the tertiary academic institutions in the province of Bukidnon. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, as well as other online shopping applications, offer a myriad of content that can shape perceptions and behavior related to spending. These platforms provide exposure to marketing campaigns, peer influences, and trends that can impact purchasing decisions and financial management. The conceptual framework for this study is based on the idea that social media acts as a mediating force between external marketing stimuli and individual spending behavior.

Understanding these motivations can provide valuable insights into how social media usage influences their spending habits, particularly in areas such as fashion, technology, or lifestyle products. Moreover, the study of Zhou and Liu (2022) highlighted that subjective norm, including normative views within the social environment, influence the tendency to conform to expectations related to specific behavior. In other words, as Joo *et al.* (2020) asserted, an individual's behavioral intentions are easily influenced by the opinions of third parties, such as friends, family, and other significant individuals. Thus, Aydin and Aydin (2022) noted that subjective norms highlight the influence of the social environment on individual behavior.

The framework proposes that exposure to social media content, including advertisements, can alter students' perceptions of value, necessity, and brand preference. Additionally, social media may influence students through peer behavior and social comparison, potentially leading to changes in their spending habits.

Furthermore, according to Kaplan & Haenlein (2020) and Mangold & Faulds (2021), social media significantly affects consumer behavior by providing platforms for advertising and product reviews. Moreover, according to De Veirman *et al.* (2020) and Freberg *et al.* (2022), social media can alter spending by increasing brand awareness and shifting perceptions of value through influencer marketing. Nevertheless, according to Festinger (1954) and Vogel *et al.* (2024), social comparison theory shows that social media exposes students to peer lifestyles and spending behavior, influencing their own spending decisions. Furthermore, a study by Ha and Stoel (2021) highlights that social media influences not only the awareness of a product but also purchase intentions and behaviors. This relationship suggests that social media can play a significant role in influencing students' spending habits. Lastly, demographic factors such as age, gender, and socioeconomic status significantly influence how students engage with social media and their subsequent spending habits (Dittmar, 2020).

### Social Media Usage

Social media refers to a wide range of online platforms that people use to connect with others who share similar interests. These platforms allow users to exchange various types of media, such as images, blog posts, videos, direct group messages, podcasts, newsletters, music, and links to external websites (Gale, 2024). Initially, social media served as a way to engage with one another over shared passions; however, its role has since expanded significantly. Today, it has evolved into a powerful marketing tool that businesses leverage to reach potential customers and grow their brands. When used effectively, social media marketing can lead to remarkable business success. Given the vast number of users these platforms attract, companies must integrate social media into their marketing strategies, particularly in recent years, as many companies rely heavily on it to boost their visibility and engagement (Trivedi & Malik, 2021).

### Attitude

Attitude is defined by Collins's dictionary (2025) as the way you think and feel about something, especially when this is reflected in the way you behave. In psychology, an attitude refers to a set of emotions, beliefs, and behavior toward a particular object, person, thing, or event (Cherry, 2024). Roberts and Dunsmore (2022) found that students spend an average of 3-4 hours a day on social media. According to Palallos (2024), exposure to social media can form attitudes that lead to impulsive spending and poor budgeting among students. In addition, the study by Mishra & Maity (2021) concludes that the media, including social media, significantly shape adolescents' attitudes toward consumption, often promoting materialistic values and impulsive purchasing habits. A study by Perez *et al.* (2023) highlighted the role of peer influence on shaping students' attitudes towards social media usage. The study showed that the students

who were part of social networks where social media was viewed positively were more likely to adopt a similar view, resulting in higher usage and deeper engagement.

The study by Efendioğlu (2022) concludes that users often aspire to acquire products and services showcased by others, leading to increased spending driven by the desire to project a similar image. Moreover, social pressures and unrealistic portrayals on platforms like social media shape spending behaviors (LeBaron-Black, 2023). According to Kircaburun *et al.* (2020), students frequently use social media to stay informed and engaged. Another study by Tang *et al.* (2023) explores the relationship between students' attitudes toward social media addiction. They found that students who review social media as an essential tool for social media interaction and communication are at a higher risk of developing dependency on these platforms. These students may struggle to regulate their usage, despite recognizing the potential negative impacts, because of their strong emotional attachment to the platforms.

### Subjective norm

According to Rodriguez *et al.* (2024), subjective norms, shaped by social media, significantly influence the spending habits of senior high school students in Manila, fostering impulsive buying behaviors. The study of Davis and Liu (2023) found that social media helps students make friends and stay connected. Even though students spend a lot of time on social media, it can be a good way to meet new people and share ideas. Similarly, Xie and Madni (2023) emphasize that in China, subjective norms also play a key role in guiding young consumers' green consumption choices through social media. According to Cho and DeCook's (2015) theory, millennials' spending habits are heavily influenced by subjective norms, with peer pressure and impulsivity being critical factors. However, Mishra and Maity (2021) point out that teenagers' buying behavior is shaped by the combined influence of friends, family, and media, where social conformity is a strong driving force.

Nevertheless, Gao *et al.* (2023) argue that social media amplifies these subjective norms, creating a sense of urgency and encouraging impulse buying behaviors through peer interactions, influence, and online communities. Social media influence and attitude toward social media play a critical role in shaping student social media behavior, particularly in terms of peer and family influence. A study by Perez *et al.* (2023) highlighted the role of peer influence on shaping students' attitudes towards social media usage. The study showed that the students who were part of social networks where social media was viewed positively were more likely to adopt a similar view, resulting in higher usage and deeper engagement. The study argued that peer influence can be a significant driver of social media adoption, especially among younger students.

### Spending habit

Spending habit refers to the behavior and pattern an

individual exhibits when using their money. These habits can lead to a high level of consumerism, which may have negative impacts on financial management (Mashortin & Khidijah, 2019). A positive spending habit is paying bills on time each month, which helps maintain a good credit score and avoid late fees. In contrast, a negative habit might be frequently buying takeout meals whenever a craving strikes, leading to unnecessary expenses that can add up over time. Students prioritize spending on necessities like food, rent, and school supplies, but sometimes overspend on non-essential items such as entertainment and fast food. It also highlights those students who practice proper budgeting experience less financial stress and greater well-being. As cited by Raval (2023), discovering that pocket money plays a significant role in shaping students' spending habits. Students mainly spend their money on food, transportation, and school-related materials. However, a portion of their budget is also allocated to unnecessary expenses, such as online shopping and dining out.

### The Influence of social media on Students' Spending Habits

Social media platforms enable consumers to engage in social comparison, fostering a desire to keep up with the latest trends and purchase trendy items (Wang & Yang, 2020). This report highlights the pervasive influence of social media on students' spending, with almost half, 43 percent, citing seamless in-platform shopping experience of Instagram and Facebook as a major trigger for their spending (Unibank, 2020). People who rely on social media for decision-making find the process easier and more enjoyable compared to those who use other information sources. Moreover, spending habits can evolve based on life circumstances, such as changes in income, employment status, or personal goals. For instance, a person may become more frugal after experiencing financial hardship or may develop a greater appreciation for saving after setting a specific goal, like buying a home or funding a vacation. Additionally, economic factors, such as inflation or market trends, can also influence spending behavior.

H1 There is no influence of social media usage on the spending habits of the students.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used quantitative method. It also employed descriptive and regression analysis provide thorough and accurate interpretations of findings. This study was conducted at the University in one of the Municipalities of Bukidnon. The respondents were the students in one of the academic institutions in the Municipality. Furthermore, participants are using social media application to purchase online. The researchers used convenience sampling method in which every respondent has an equal chance to participate based on their ease of access. The study highlights the importance of sample size determination in research design as detailed by Ashish *et al.* (2022) who review the application of Cochran's formula

to insure statistically valid results. of non-probability sampling, the researchers selected participants based on their judgment and specific criteria, aiming to recruit in this case, after the survey through online there were already 100 students in business administration program had responded to the survey questionnaire completely and this was enough to suffice the needed number of

respondents of this research. This research instrument explores how social media affects the students' spending habits. The key variables in this study were measured by a research-made questionnaire answerable within 3-5 minutes using a Likert scale, it is consisting of 4 points representing a different level of satisfaction.

**Table 1:** Mean distribution of social media usage in terms of attitude

INDICATORS	MEAN	SD	RESULT INTERPRETATION
Q1: I check my social media accounts multiple times throughout the day.	3.43	0.06	Very Positive Attitude
Q2: I felt I need to use social media frequently to stay updated.	3.45	0.06	Very Positive Attitude
Q3: I feel that social media advertisement and influencers shape my perception of products.	3.22	0.06	Positive Attitude
Q4: Social Media promotions makes me feel more positive about buying certain products.	3.16	0.06	Positive Attitude
Q5: I believe products promoted on social media are worth purchasing.	3.10	0.06	Positive Attitude
Total	3.27	0.06	Very Positive Attitude

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The respondents' assessment of social media usage in terms of attitude. As seen in the table, the highest mean among Attitude is Question 2: I felt I need to use social media frequently to stay updated, and corresponds to its mean of 3.45 and SD of 0.06, and means that the students are frequently needs to use social media to be stay updated to daily activities and trends. In total the average mean is 3.27 with the average SD of 0.06. It is evident that students check their social media accounts many times a day. Social Media Usage in terms of attitude had a significant influence on the students' social media usage, with a mean of 3.27, corresponding to a Very Positive Attitude. According to Kircaburun *et al.* (2020), students frequently use social media to stay informed and engaged. Roberts and Dunsmore (2022) found that students spend an average of 3-4 hours a day on social media. Social

media influence and attitude Toward social media, social influence, particularly peer and family attitude, also play a critical role in shaping student social media behavior. The lowest mean among Attitude is Question 5: I believe products promoted on social media are worth purchasing, and with its mean 3.10 and SD of 0.06, it corresponds to Positive Attitude, which means that the students are into spending regardless of whether it is a necessity or a want. A study by Perez *et al.* (2023) highlighted the role of peer influence on shaping students' attitudes towards social media usage. The study showed that the students who were part of social networks where social media was viewed positively were more likely to adopt a similar view, resulting in higher usage and deeper engagement. This argues that peer influence can be a significant driver of social media adoption, especially among students.

**Table 2:** Mean distribution of social media usage in terms of subjective norms.

INDICATORS	MEAN	SD	RESULT INTERPRETATION		
Q1: My peers often discuss products or services they have seen on social media.	3.15	0.06	Strong social media pressure		
Q2: I feel pressured to buy trending products on social media because my friends/ peers use them.	2.92	0.08	Strong social media pressure		
Q3: I value the opinions of my peers when deciding to purchase something promoted on social media.	3.13	0.06	Strong social media pressure		
Q4: social media influences my spending habits because I want to fit in with my social circle.	2.89	0.07	Strong social media pressure		
Q5: I feel highly engaged with most content I see on social media.	3.05	0.07	Strong social media pressure		
Total	3.03	0.07	3.27	0.06	Very Positive Attitude

Table 2 illustrates that students' use of social media is influenced by their subjective norm. With the highest result in Question 1: My peers often discuss products or services they have seen on social media, with a mean of 3.15 and SD of 0.06, which corresponds to Strong Social Media Pressure. This means that students are more likely to see or hear their peers and classmates talking about the products and services they saw on these social media platforms. As Mishra and Maity (2021) point out, teenagers' buying behavior is shaped by the combined influence of friends, family, and media, where social conformity is a strong driving force. The lowest under subjective norms is Question 4: social media influences

my spending habits because I want to fit in with my social circles, with a mean of 2.89 and SD of 0.07. The average result of the mean is 3.03, and SD 0.07, which denotes that the social influence of social media on the students is substantial. According to Cho and DeCook's (2015) theory, millennials' spending habits are heavily influenced by subjective norms, with peer pressure and impulsivity being critical factors. The study of Davis and Liu (2023) found that social media helps students make friends and stay connected. Although students spend a considerable amount of time on social media, it can be a valuable way to meet new people and share ideas.

**Table 3:** Mean distribution of spending habit.

INDICATORS	MEAN	SD	RESULT INTERPRETATION	
Q1: I purchase product base on trend rather than necessity.	2.79	0.09	Moderately Impulsive	
Q2: I tend to make unplanned purchases when I am browsing social media.	2.98	0.07	Moderately Impulsive	
Q3: I typically purchase items multiple times during the month.	2.77	0.08	Moderately Impulsive	
Q4: I make purchases based on emotional reactions such excitement and stress.	2.78	0.08	Moderately Impulsive	
Q5: I purchase items when I see promotions or discounts on social media.	2.97	0.08	Moderately Impulsive	
Total	2.86	3. 27	0.06	Very Positive Attitude

Table 3 presents the students' spending habits in purchasing items, with a total mean of 2.86, indicating that students spend moderately. It highlights the pervasive influence of social media on students' spending, with almost half, 43 percent, citing seamless in-platform shopping experience of Instagram and Facebook as a significant trigger for their spending (Unibank, 2020). In which the highest is Question 2: I tend to make unplanned purchases when I am browsing social media, with a mean of 2.98 and SD of 0.07, which corresponds to Moderately Impulsive. According to Limocon *et al.* (2024), college students living in dormitories often struggle with effectively budgeting their money. Students prioritize spending on necessities like food, rent, and school supplies, but sometimes overspend on non-essential items such as entertainment and fast food.

In the lowest is Question 3: I typically purchase items multiple times during the month, with a mean of 2.77 and SD of 0.08, which corresponds to Moderately Impulsive. It shows that students enjoy spending their money on things that bring them pleasure, even if they are not essential. According to Lalmuanpuia (2021), significant spending of these students is on their lifestyle and entertainment. The average is 2.28, and the SD is 0.08. As cited by Raval (2023), discovering that pocket money plays a significant role in shaping students' spending habits. Students mainly spend their money on food, transportation, and school-related materials. However, a portion of their budget is also used for unnecessary purchases like online shopping. It also highlights that

student who practice proper budgeting experience less financial stress and greater well-being.

### CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social media plays a crucial role in shaping students' spending habits, with subjective norms (peer pressure) having a more significant influence than individual attitudes. Students frequently engage with social media promotions, advertisements, and influencer content, which impacts their purchasing decisions. The study's findings reveal that students exhibit moderately impulsive spending habits, often influenced by discounts, trends, and social validation. The data further suggests that the constant exposure to lifestyle portrayals on social media reinforces impulsive financial behavior.

Additionally, the research confirms that social media significantly influences spending behavior, reinforcing the importance of digital marketing strategies in shaping consumer decisions among students. The findings underscore the importance of financial literacy initiatives in combating impulsive spending and equipping students with improved financial management skills. As social media continues to evolve, it is essential to raise awareness about its effects on financial behavior and encourage responsible spending habits among students.

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