

The Influence of Social Media on Consumers' Buying Behavior and Conspicuous Consumption

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine the role of social media in influencing buying decisions and consumption. Social media allows buyers to obtain information that helps them make informed purchasing decisions, but it also has negative effects on shaping consumer behavior. Utilizing Thorstein Veblen's concept of 'conspicuous consumption,' the study explores how social media engages individuals in unnecessary and wasteful consumption, contributing to the formation of their identity. To analyze the empirical data, the study employs the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard (EBM) Model of consumer behavior alongside Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption. Data were collected from 120 respondents in various locations throughout Dhaka city using a purposive sampling technique and a structured questionnaire. The results reveal that Facebook and YouTube play a crucial role in social networks, significantly influencing purchasing decisions by spreading information and images that shape consumer perceptions, choices, and behaviors. Furthermore, persuasive advertising is found to be particularly influential in shaping consumer identity through conspicuous consumption, that further contributes to constructing one's social identity. It is expected that this study will contribute to making consumers aware about the anti-consumption practices to stay away from irrational consumption and to live a sustainable life.

Keywords: Buying behavior, consumer behavior, conspicuous consumption, identity construction, social media

1. Introduction

Consumers' buying behavior is a very complex process, and it is currently highly influenced by social media. Various online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube offer immense opportunities to remain connected with both buyers and sellers through sharing various contents and thoughts (Varghese and Agrawal, 2021). Social media provides two-way communication between buyers and sellers (Bansal et al., 2020). Consumer buying behavior includes consumers' thoughts, attitudes, intentions, and preferences (Bansal et al., 2020).

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Social media allows sellers to analyze the tastes and demands of consumers through the contents shared on these platforms. By doing so, it provides opportunities for sellers to set their marketing strategies and reach a greater number of buyers.

Social media also allows buyers to obtain adequate information that helps them make informed purchasing decisions (Voramontri and Kleib, 2019). Buyers can access detailed descriptions of products posted on social media. This advantage encourages many buyers to make purchasing decisions. Additionally, review comments from other consumers provide insights into the merits and demerits of products (Voramontri and Kleib, 2019). According to the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard (EBM) model of consumer behavior, need recognition, review comments, and evaluation of alternatives on social media influence the purchasing decisions of buyers (Voramontri and Kleib, 2019; Bansal et al., 2020). A quantitative survey investigated how consumers' experiences are altered by the use of social media. Results revealed that social media has a significant influence in the stages of information search and alternative evaluation. The study also found that consumer satisfaction is amplified as consumers move towards the final purchase decision and post-purchase evaluation (Voramontri and Kleib, 2019).

However, social media also has some negative effects on shaping consumer behavior. While social media provides buyers the opportunity to recognize their needs, it can sometimes lead to the recognition of false needs influenced by social media marketing strategies. McCluskey et al. (2016) demonstrated the pervasive nature of media platforms, including television and social media, which facilitate the dissemination of information and images related to food, significantly impacting how consumers perceive, choose, and consume food products. Additionally, social media serves as a platform for displaying wealth (Veblen, 1899), often leading people to engage in unnecessary consumption driven by unhealthy social competition and a show-off culture. Most existing literature focuses on marketing strategies in social media and their impact on consumption, while the psycho-social issues related to consumption are less highlighted. Grounded in the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard (EBM) model (Voramontri and Kleib, 2019; Low, 2023), this paper aims to examine the role of social media in navigating buying decisions and consumption. Additionally, utilizing Thorstein Veblen's concept of 'conspicuous consumption', the study explores how social media engages individuals in irrational and wasteful consumption, contributing to the constitution of one's identity.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Key concepts

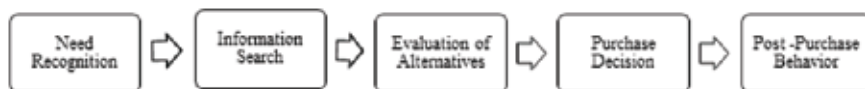
Consumption, consumer behavior, and social media

“Consumption is the process by which goods and services are, at last, put to final use by people” (Goodwin et al., 2008:1). This means that consumption is a long process that starts with the availability of resources and ends up with the distribution of goods and resources among people through production. Thus, consumer behavior is related to the definition of consumption where a consumer looks for resources to meet their needs ranging from basic needs such as hunger and thirst to the need for self-development and realization (Kaur, 2013). Consumption behavior starts with this need recognition and ends up with post-purchase evaluation as discussed in the next section under EBM model. In all these stages, social media influences consumer behavior. Social media is usually defined as a technology that consists of diverse applications, ranging from collaborative projects and blogs to content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Russo et al. (2008) defined social media as, “those that facilitate online communication, networking, and/or collaboration” (Russo et al., 2008: 22). With the help of various apps facilitating faster communication, social media plays crucial role in shaping consumer behavior.

2.2 EBM model of consumer behavior: The role of social media in influencing consumer behavior

The EBM model is known as Engel-Blackwell-Miniard Model which is a modified version of the earlier Engel Kollat Blackwell (EKB) Model. The model, has become widely recognized and utilized in consumer behavior studies (Karimi et al., 2015). According to the model, consumers’ buying decision is a process that includes five basic steps including need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision and post purchase behavior (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1 EBM model influencing buying decision



Source: Based on literature review

Need-recognition is the first stage that initiates the process. This stage is influenced by individual preferences and dispositions. After recognizing a need, the consumer starts to search for information to check the level of their knowledge about the available options to decide (Voramontri and Kleib, 2019; Low, 2023). If internal knowledge is inadequate, an external search becomes necessary ranging from personal sources such as family and friends to commercial sources like advertisements and salespeople, and public media sources such as newspapers, television, magazines, and the internet. Having gathered information, the consumer moves towards evaluation of alternatives that evaluates and assesses the available product choices to make a purchase decision (Verghese and Agrawal, 2021). The purchase-decision involves the final selection of which product to buy, where to buy it, and how to pay for it. After making a purchase, post-purchase decision making process starts where consumers assess the product's performance against their expectations (Voramontri and Kleib, 2019; Low, 2023). Based on this model, the current study attempts to understand how effectively social media influences consumers' behavior being influenced by the external stimuli in purchasing a product.

2.3 Theoretical framework: Thorstein Veblen's conspicuous consumption

In his seminal work "The Theory of the Leisure Class," Veblen (1899) argued that affluent individuals often consume highly conspicuous goods and services to showcase their wealth, thereby justifying their elevated social status. He posited that necessity should define consumption and status, rather than excessive consumption and high prices. According to Veblen, people purchase expensive items not merely for their functionality but to display their wealth. This study explores how this behavior, known as the Veblen effect, arises from the desire to signal affluence. It investigates scenarios where individuals' social status is linked to their perceived wealth among peers, with consumption choices serving as indicators of financial standing. The model considers various methods of signaling wealth, including buying conspicuous goods at high prices, purchasing larger quantities at lower prices, or opting for higher quality items. Thus, Veblen effects are shaped by individual behavior within a social context, rather than being predetermined.

Veblen identified two primary methods of demonstrating wealth: conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption. Conspicuous consumption refers to the traits of the super-rich, who are concerned with how impressively they can consume (Veblen, 1899). This type of consumption not only perpetuates existing social inequalities but also fosters a consumerist culture and materialism within society. It cultivates a mindset where one's worth and social standing are closely tied to the acquisition and display of material possessions, rather than other forms of personal or

social merit (Veblen, 1899). In line with this idea, Veblen (1899) describes conspicuous leisure as the display of non-productive use of time as a means of demonstrating social status. This form of behavior is primarily observed among the affluent classes who have the means to engage in leisure activities that do not contribute to economic productivity but are highly visible and serve as a sign of wealth and social standing. It demonstrates the ability to afford time and money for non-essential activities, thereby reinforcing their social superiority. In this connection, a study highlights that conspicuous leisure, the display of social status through cultural activities, is more visible in Museums and Classical concerts than in Cultural festivals (Bronner and de Hoog, 2021). It suggests that increasing social media facilities during cultural visits can enhance this visibility, as face-to-face communication about such visits is currently more common than social media sharing.

Social media acts as a platform for displaying wealth. Few studies have examined the role of social media in driving conspicuous consumption (Wai and Osman, 2019; Thoumrungroje, 2014; Seipman et al., 2022). These studies revealed both direct and indirect influences of social media intensity on conspicuous consumption, mostly focusing on how media strategies affect such behavior. Seipman et al. (2022) investigated gender differences in perceptions of status- and non-status-related dimensions. However, the impact of the content shared by virtual friends and their tendency to display wealth on an individual's consumption behavior has not been thoroughly explored. This gap is one of the primary objectives of the current study.

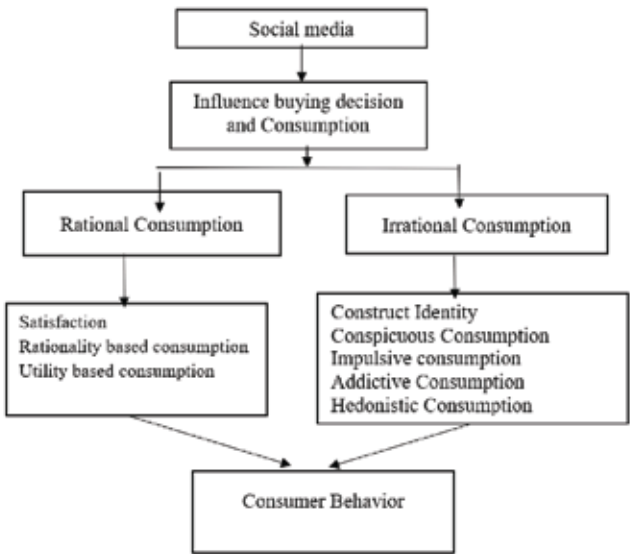
2.4 Conceptual framework of the study

Drawing on the above-mentioned concepts, theories and literature, it is distinctly evident that social media platforms have significantly impacted consumption behaviors by shaping consumer preferences, enabling product discovery, and providing channels for influencer marketing and peer recommendations. Additionally, social media algorithms personalize content based on users' interests and behaviors, further affecting their consumption habits. This influence can also lead to challenges such as overconsumption, spending driven by social comparisons, and the spread of misinformation about products or brands. People use social media to showcase their conspicuous consumption, displaying luxury goods, experiences, and lifestyles to their followers.

The following conceptual framework shows how social media by influencing buying decision of the consumers may lead to both way consumption: rational and irrational consumption. Rational consumption involves making informed and thoughtful choices about what to consume, considering factors such

as needs, preferences, budget constraints, and the impact on oneself, others, and the environment. Rational consumption thereby involves satisfaction, rationality-based consumption, utility-based consumption, and need-based consumption. This approach often includes avoiding excessive or wasteful consumption and seeking ways to maximize utility and well-being. On the other hand, irrational consumption refers to spending money on goods or services that are unnecessary or excessive, often driven by emotions, social pressures, or impulsive behavior rather than rational decision-making. This type of behavior can lead to financial problems, excessive debt, and dissatisfaction. The irrational consumption involves constructing identity, conspicuous consumption, impulsive and addictive consumption, hedonistic consumption, breakdown of ethical context and materialistic formation of life as distinctive consumer behavior (Ismail et al., 2018). Through this framework, the current study attempts to examine the role of social media in influencing consumer behavior.

Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework of the study



Source: Developed by the Researchers

3. Methodology

The methodology encompasses selecting study areas, identifying sample sizes, conducting interviews, developing questionnaires, and employing data collection and analysis techniques. Quantitative research methods are utilized to

generalize results on a particular topic from the sample population, offering a straightforward approach to obtaining reliable and scientific data. The sample size for quantitative research is typically determined using the standardized formula of 'small sample techniques' developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). According to their formula, a required sample size of 384 is necessary for a total population of 10,000 or more. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) based their sample size formula on research conducted by the Research Division of the National Education Association, as outlined below with the formula calculation (see Figure 3.1) and Table format (Techniques, 2015). The following formula is

Figure 3.1 The formula of Sample Size Selection, developed by Krejcie and Morgan, 1970

$$n = \frac{N \cdot Z^2 \cdot P \cdot (1 - P)}{e^2 (N - 1) + Z^2 \cdot P \cdot (1 - P)}$$

n = required sample size.

Z = the table value of chi-square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level (3.841).

N = the population size.

P = the population proportion (assumed to be .50 since this would provide the maximum sample size).

e = the degree of accuracy expressed as a proportion (.05).

(Krejcie and Morgan, 1970)

Diagram illustrating the formula components and a calculation example:

- A box contains the calculation: $1.96 \times 1.96 = 3.8416$.
- An arrow points from this box to the Z^2 term in the formula.

For this study, three categories of individuals who meet the minimum qualification criteria and can comprehend the study's purpose were selected. The target population for the quantitative data includes various types of consumers. The study was conducted in Dhaka city, with data collected from three specific areas: Dhanmondi residential area, New Market area, and the areas surrounding Dhaka University and Jagannath University. The populations of these areas are approximately 47,170, 3,221, and 255, respectively. These areas fall within ward numbers 49 (entire), 52, 56 (partial), and 73 (entire), according to BBS (2013) and District Statistics 2011, Dhaka. While the scientific formula indicated a need for 381 respondents, due to time and budget constraints, only 120 respondents were surveyed, consisting of 69 males and 51 females.

Table 3.1 Sample distribution of selected areas

District	Selected Areas	Survey Design
Dhaka	Dhanmondi Residential area	42 (26 male and 16 female)
	Dhaka University area	40 (10 male and 30 female)
	Jagannath University area	26 (2 male and 11 female)
	New market area	25 (female 12 and male 13)
	Total	120

Source: Field data, 2024

Figure 3.2 Map of Dhaka city



Source: Research Gate

A purposive sampling technique was employed to focus on specific characteristics of the population of interest, ensuring accurate answers to the research questions. Data collection took place from December 22, 2023, to January

20, 2024. The data collected was analyzed using mathematical, statistical, and numerical methods, often represented through tables, graphs, and charts. Various data collection techniques were employed, including questionnaires, polls, and surveys (Babbie, 2010). The survey design was conducted among the targeted population using structured questionnaires with close-ended questions. Consent for data collection was obtained from all respondents, and interviews were scheduled at times and locations convenient for them. For employed respondents, interviews were conducted at their workplaces. The structured questionnaire in this study was organized into three categories: a. socio-demographic information of the respondents; b. understanding the influence of social media on consumer buying decisions in Dhaka city and its consequences; and c. exploring how consumers shape their identity through consumption behavior in selected areas: Dhanmondi Residential Area (26 males and 16 females), Dhaka University Area (10 males and 30 females), Jagannath University Area (2 males and 11 females), and New Market Area (13 males and 12 females).

Initially, descriptive data, such as survey and observational data, were gathered. For quantitative data analysis, the data was first edited and then coded. The data was entered and analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, version 25). Various statistical techniques were employed, including descriptive statistics for frequencies, multiple response sets, paired sample t-tests for comparing data, and cross-tabulation for understanding relationships between variables. Additionally, tables and graphs were used to represent the quantitative data, with Microsoft Excel serving as an additional tool for graphical representation. To ensure credibility in data collection, trust was established with respondents through face-to-face consent, allowing them to respond at their own pace. Field reliability (dependability) and objectivity (confirmability) were achieved by conducting interviews in an understandable language, using appropriate settings, and recording responses with digital systems and notebooks. The authenticity of data collection was further protected by obtaining a permission letter for data collection from the research team.

4. Results and Discussions

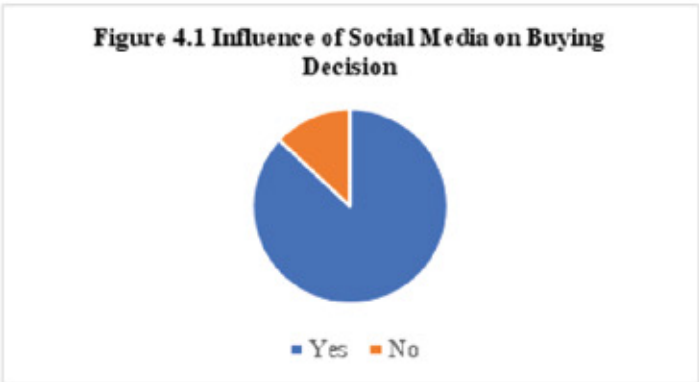
This section represents data under two major themes: 1) how social media influences the buying decision of the consumers and 2) how social media increases consumers' conspicuous consumption.

4.1 The influence of social media in consumption behavior

Figure 4.1 illustrates respondents' perceptions of social media's influence on

consumption behavior. The data reveals that 87 percent of respondents affirm this influence, while 13 percent do not which indicates that they don’t accept the significant impact of social media on buying decision.

Figure 4.1 Opinion about the “Influence of Social Media on Buying Decision”



Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 4.1 examines the relationship between social media influence and consumer behavior, with a focus on monthly consumption frequency as a key indicator. The data shows that only 1.7 percent of individuals make purchases over 13 times a month, while about 53.3 percent of respondents consume less than four times a month, suggesting a varied range of consumption patterns, with the majority falling into the less frequent category.

The Table also highlights the social media platforms that most influence consumption behavior. Instagram is utilized by 12.5 percent of respondents, while Facebook exhibits a significantly higher usage, with 107 instances, representing 89.2 percent of the total. This suggests that Facebook is the most utilized platform among the three, followed by YouTube, which accounts for 20.83 percent of total usage with 25 instances. Interestingly, the combined percentages for Instagram and YouTube exceed 100 percent when considered alongside Facebook's usage. This likely indicates that some users engage with multiple platforms, reflecting the proportion of users who use each platform rather than the percentage of total usage time. Many other studies also acknowledged the influence of Facebook on consumer behavior (Rajanpaksha and Thilina, 2019; Richard and Guppy, 2014; Rana, 2016).

Table 4.1 The influence of social media and consumer behavior

Frequency of Consumption	Consumption in a month	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	less than 4 times	64	53.3
	5-8 times	44	36.7
	9-12 times	10	8.3
	13 times and above	2	1.7
	Total	120	100.0
Apps that influence (It's A Multiple Response Table)	Medium	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Instagram	15	12.5
	Facebook	107	89.2
	YouTube	25	20.83
Factors that influence consumption	Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Through friends and followers	43	35.8
	Through hashtags and trending topics	9	7.5
	Through the recommendation from the platform	37	30.8
	Through search function	11	9.2
	Through scrolling different apps	19	15.8
	Doesn't influence me at all	1	.8
	Total	120	100.

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The Table 4.1 reveals that a significant portion of respondents—35.8 percent—are influenced by their friends and followers on social media, underscoring the crucial role social connections play in shaping purchasing decisions. The opinions and activities of friends and followers can create trends or highlight products that others might be inclined to purchase. Interestingly, only one respondent (0.8 percent) claimed not to be influenced by social media, indicating that nearly everyone in the sample is, to some degree, affected by what they see on social platforms. The passage further explains that the influence of social media on consumption is part of a complex network. This network includes: close connections as the impact of friends and followers who directly influence purchasing decisions and popular trends as widely accepted trends that can sway consumer decisions. Data shows that diverse applications of social networking sites such as virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds affect consumer behavior (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Precisely, consumers actively seek information or products which allows unplanned interactions with products or ideas on social media that can unexpectedly influence buying decisions. Social media, thereby, allows buyers to obtain adequate information that helps them make informed purchasing decisions (Voramontri and Kleib, 2019). In essence, these elements combine to create a digital environment where consumer behavior is continuously shaped by a variety of social media interactions, making it a powerful platform for driving consumption.

Table 4.2 The role of social media influencing buying decision

Factors influencing buying decision	Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Convenience of ordering	15	12.5
	Security	3	2.5
	Time saving	41	34.2
	Uniqueness of advertising	12	10.0
	Source of information	18	15.0
	Feedback	13	10.8
	By seeing others consumption	18	15.0
Payment Methods influencing buying decision (It's A Multiple Response Table)	Payment Methods	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Cash on delivery	70	58.4
	bkash payment	25	20.8
	Rocket payment	12	10.0
	Home delivery	30	25.0
Convenience of Ordering (It's A Multiple Response Table)	Convenience of ordering	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Allows to check products and accept	12	12.0
	Allows to return product if wrong	7	5.8
	Comparing same products in a number of pages	9	7.5
	For getting the chance to get products from home	10	8.3
	Comments of buyers	28	23.3
	Review of customers in page	83	69.7
	Brand promoters' experiences and statements	6	6.7
	Social influencers help	3	2.5
	Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 4.2 provides an analysis of how social media influences consumer buying decisions. It shows that the most significant influence comes from the time-saving benefits of social media, with 34.2 percent of respondents identifying this as a key factor in their purchasing choices. This indicates that consumers value efficiency when making decisions online. On the other hand, security concerns are the least influential factor, with only 2.5 percent of respondents considering them important. This suggests that while security is a concern, it is not a primary driver in the purchasing decisions of most consumers. That means thoughts, attitudes, intentions, and preferences with different degrees influence consumer's buying behavior (Bansal et al., 2020).

The data further highlights that payment methods also play a role in consumer behavior, with 58.4 percent of respondents preferring the cash-on-delivery option, which offers a sense of security and convenience. In contrast, only 10 percent are influenced by the Rocket payment method, indicating that it is less popular or trusted among the respondents. Like the current study, Yucha et al. (2020) shows that digital payments are developing very quickly but cash payments still dominate. However, Yucha et al. (2020) assumed that cash payment is popular due to the unavailability of complete facilities and infrastructure to support digital payment systems other than in cities. This assumption contrasts with the current study as this study has been conducted in a capital city where cash on delivery system is still popular. Thus, results may vary from context to context due to socio-cultural differences. As women are mostly the buyers, they are still culturally lagging behind in many respects. Installation of apps for digital payment is not welcomed by many of the women in Dhaka city.

Additionally, the table points out the importance of customer reviews on social media pages, with 69.7 percent of respondents indicating that reviews significantly impact their buying decisions. This underscores the value of social proof in the digital marketplace. Conversely, social media influencers have a minimal effect on customer satisfaction, with only 2.5 percent of respondents acknowledging their influence, suggesting that influencers may not be as effective in driving consumer satisfaction as other factors. In this regard, Efendioğlu (2019) argues that personal image representation and sharing satisfaction positively impact these intentions.

4.2 Strategies employed by social media in promoting consumers’ conspicuous consumption

Table 4.3 Advertisement strategy in social media and consumer behavior

Advertisement Strategy influencing consumer behavior. (It's A Multiple Response Table)	Advertisement strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Detailed description is written	72	60.0
	Showing the product in detail	52	43.3
	Employing trusted social influencer	12	10.0
	Employing super models and heroines for convincing buyers	34	28.3
	Using metaphoric words	11	9.2
	Compelling advertisement	23	19.2
	Convincing advertisement	43	35.8
	Showing the pictures of super models putting the same dress	15	12.5
	Price discount	27	22.5

The role of celebrity endorsement in consumption behavior	Sales promotion	3	2.5
	Nature of celebrity endorsement	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	The number of celebrity posts has positive impact	44	36.7
	Celebrity posts indicates authenticity of the products	31	25.8
	Celebrity posts produces positive attitudes towards products	33	27.5
	They motivate me to purchase a product	12	10
Total		120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 4.3 explores the role of social media advertising on consumer behavior. The data indicates that detailed descriptions in advertisements are the most commonly cited factor in advertisement strategies, accounting for 60 percent of responses. Additionally, 43.3 percent of respondents emphasize the importance of visual representation and detailed imagery in persuading consumers. McCluskey et al. (2016) demonstrates that the pervasive nature of media platforms, including television and social media, facilitates the dissemination of information and images, which significantly influences consumers' perceptions, choices, and behaviors. In this context, 43.3 percent of respondents emphasize the importance of visual representation and detailed imagery in persuading consumption. Another significant factor, noted by 28.3 percent of respondents, is the influence of trusted social influencers, rather than supermodels or celebrities, in guiding purchase decisions. Meanwhile, only 2.5 percent of respondents are influenced by sales promotions. The data suggests that advertisers should prioritize visual content and collaboration with trusted influencers to create impactful campaigns that resonate with consumers. Influencing consumer behavior is complex, involving various strategies. For instance, 22.5 percent of respondents are influenced by price discounts, highlighting how lower prices can attract consumers and encourage purchases.

Table 4.3 also examines the role of celebrity endorsements in consumption behavior. Approximately 36.7 percent of respondents believe that sharing celebrity posts positively influences their online shopping behavior, indicating that celebrity endorsements can build trust and interest in products. Many studies acknowledged the role of celebrity endorsement on social media in influencing consumers’ buying behavior (Gupata et al., 2020; Gauns et al., 2018). However, a smaller portion, 10 percent, specifically mentions that celebrity endorsements motivate them to make a purchase, underscoring the role of celebrities in driving consumer decisions.

Table 4.4 The influence of social media in promoting conspicuous consumption

Purpose of Shopping	Purpose	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Hedonic purpose	19	15.8
	Basic necessity	84	70.0
	During emergency	17	14.2
Influence of media discourse influencing consumption	Nature of consumption	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Addictive consumption	34	28.3
	Impulsive consumption	45	37.5
	Emotional consumption	21	17.5
	Unnecessary consumption	20	16.7
Generating fake desire	Ways of producing fake desire	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Promoting comparison among users	25	20.8
(It's A Multiple Response Table)	By creating trends	46	38.3
	Creating an illusion of necessities	41	34.2
	Social expectation	8	6.7
Consumption and identity construction	Types of identity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
	Lavishness	13	10.8
	Simplicity	36	30.0
	Reflects fashion sense	39	32.5
	Express of creative mind	13	10.8
	Social class	19	15.8
	Total	120	100.0

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

The analysis of Table 4.4 reveals how social media impacts consumer behavior and identity. It shows that a notable but relatively small fraction of respondents, 15.8 percent, purchase items primarily for pleasure, enjoyment, or leisure, reflecting a hedonic approach to consumption. In contrast, the majority – 70 percent – see their purchases as necessary for daily living, indicating that practical needs dominate over discretionary spending. This agrees with the idea that values and needs drive motivation and interaction with the products and brands (Mitchell, 1981). Another 14.2 percent make purchases driven by emergency situations, emphasizing the importance of immediate needs in consumer behavior. That means need-recognition and post-purchase decision can make the process of consumption which may assess the product's performance against their expectations (Voramontri and Kleib, 2019).

The data further examines the influence of media discourse on consumption patterns. It reveals that a significant proportion of respondents,

approximately 37.5 percent, are prone to spontaneous purchases, suggesting that media exposure can lead to impulsive buying behavior. Veblen (1899) describes conspicuous leisure as the display of non-productive use of time as a means of demonstrating social status. In this connection, 16.7 percent engage in nonessential spending, indicating that media discourse can also drive purchases that may lack practicality while conspicuous leading to consumption in leisure time. The data highlights diverse online shopping behaviors, including habitual, emotional, and impulsive tendencies, influenced by media.

When it comes to media's role in shaping consumption, convincing advertisements emerge as the most influential factor for 35.8 percent of respondents, while compelling advertisements, although mentioned less frequently, still play a role for 19.2 percent of respondents. This distinction shows that persuasive advertising is a significant factor in influencing purchasing decisions, more so than merely interesting or engaging ads. Therefore, increased social media use leads to a higher tendency toward materialism and conspicuous consumption (Ismail et al., 2018).

In terms of identity construction, the Table shows that 32.5 percent of respondents view their fashion choices as a key element of their identity, underscoring how important clothing is for self-expression. On the other hand, about 10.8 percent associate their identity with indulgence, suggesting a preference for luxury and creative expression through high-end goods. This indicates that while fashion is a central aspect of identity for many, a smaller segment finds self-expression through the display of affluence. Similarly, Dantas and Abreu (2020) found that conspicuous consumption contributes to constructing one's sense, self-concept, and self-image. This also contributes to demonstrating the lifestyle of consumers.

5. Conclusion

This paper aims to examine the role of social media in shaping buying decisions and consumption patterns. Additionally, the study utilizes Thorstein Veblen's concept of 'conspicuous consumption' to explore how social media influences individuals to engage in unnecessary and wasteful consumption, contributing to the construction of their identity. Results confirms EMB model of consumer behavior and established the fact that social media plays a crucial role in regulating consumers' buying decision. In the current study, Facebook stands out as the most utilized social media platform, dominating usage among the platforms examined. Following Facebook, YouTube is the next most commonly used platform. The influence of social media on consumer behavior is evident, particularly through the impact of social connections and the convenience it offers.

Many respondents are influenced by their friends and followers on social media, highlighting the crucial role of social networks in shaping purchasing decisions. Additionally, the convenience and time-saving benefits of social media are key factors that consumers value when making decisions online.

Social media also plays a central role in spreading information and images, significantly shaping consumers' perceptions, choices, and behaviors. Reviews have a strong impact on purchasing decisions, underscoring the importance of social proof in the digital marketplace. Detailed descriptions in advertisements are the most commonly referenced strategy, with visual representation and imagery also playing a critical role in persuading consumers. Additionally, celebrity endorsements further influence online shopping behavior, as sharing posts from celebrities can build trust and generate interest in products. Media exposure can lead to impulsive buying, with convincing advertisements being particularly effective in shaping consumer behavior and leading towards conspicuous consumption. This irrational consumption contributes to constructing one's identity and demonstrating one's life styles as well as social status.

However, this study is limited in multiple respects. Due to a relatively small number of respondents, the study failed to isolate the respondents who were motivated to follow anti-consumption practices via acts of rejection, reduction and reuse to live a more sustainable lifestyle. Overall, the growing use of social media appears to contribute to a greater inclination toward materialism and conspicuous consumption, as consumers are influenced by their values, needs, and the persuasive power of social media in their interactions with products and brands.

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