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The Role of Social Media Trends in Transforming University Students' Consumptive Lifestyles in Tulungagung Regency

Novi Tri Oktavia[1]*, Sarmini[1], Asnimawati[1], Wisnu[1]
Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia[1]
*Correspondence: E-mail: oktavianovitri@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Social media trends provide university students with access to information about products, fashion, and contemporary lifestyles, but students' responses to these trends may vary according to their social relationships, personal preferences, and financial considerations. This study explores how three university students in Tulungagung Regency describe the relationship between social media trends and their consumption-related choices, including their reflections on personal responsibility and moral values. A qualitative descriptive approach was used, with three students from different higher education institutions selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, with observation and documentation included only where supported by the study's reported procedures. Data were analysed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014), supported by NVivo 12 Pro. The findings indicate that participants described social media as a source of information, entertainment, and inspiration related to fashion, products, and popular places. Their accounts also identified peer relationships, perceived social expectations, spontaneous interest in products, and anticipated regret as considerations associated with some purchasing decisions. Future research could involve students from multiple institutions and combine interviews with participant diaries and expenditure records to examine consumption-related choices in greater depth.

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CONTACT: oktavianovitri@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Human lifestyles have continuously changed throughout history in response to social, economic, cultural and technological developments (Al Asy ari & Rahman, 2020; Kakar, 2022). In traditional societies, consumption was primarily associated with fulfilling basic needs, such as obtaining food, clothing and shelter. However, the development of industrialisation, modernisation and globalisation has gradually transformed consumption into a more complex social activity (Ayoub, 2021). People increasingly purchase goods and services not only to meet their practical needs but also to express their identities, demonstrate social status and establish relationships with others (Marsuki et al., 2024). Folwarczny et al. (2024) through the concept of conspicuous consumption, explained that consumption can serve as a means of displaying wealth and social position. This perspective remains relevant in contemporary society, where purchasing decisions are increasingly connected to lifestyle preferences, social recognition and cultural expectations (Surjono, 2025).

The advancement of information and communication technology has accelerated these transformations (Yeasmin, 2024). The emergence of the internet and social media has changed how individuals communicate, obtain information and make consumption-related decisions (Hang, 2024; Hera et al., 2024). In the digital era, platforms such as TikTok, Instagram and other social networking applications provide spaces where users encounter product recommendations, advertisements, influencer content and rapidly changing lifestyle trends (Migkos et al., 2025). Social media has consequently developed beyond its function as a communication tool and become an important environment for consumer culture. Through repeated exposure to promotional content and idealised representations of everyday life, users may develop new preferences, perceive certain products as desirable and reconsider their existing consumption habits.

This development can be understood through Arıkan Saltık et al. (2013) perspective on consumer society, which emphasises that consumption involves not only the practical value of goods but also their symbolic meanings. Products may represent identity, social belonging, prestige and personal aspirations. Similarly, Drummond (2021) argues that self-identity in modern society is continuously constructed and reconsidered through individual choices and lifestyle practices. In the context of social media, these perspectives help explain why individuals may purchase particular products not merely because they need them, but also because those products reflect current trends or support the image they wish to present to others (Balabanis & Chatzopoulou, 2025). Consequently, social media trends may contribute to the transformation of consumption from a needs-oriented activity into a practice increasingly associated with social influence and self-expression (Marlena et al., 2026).

University students are an important group to examine in this context. During university life, students encounter changing social environments, develop personal identities and establish relationships with their peers (Cunningham-Bell

et al., 2026; Thomas et al., 2017). At the same time, many students actively use social media to obtain information, maintain friendships, seek entertainment and follow emerging trends. Their exposure to content featuring fashionable clothing, cosmetics, electronic devices, popular food products and lifestyle experiences may shape their preferences and purchasing considerations (Yohanna, 2020). When students feel pressure to follow trends or maintain a particular image among their peers, they may become more willing to purchase products that are not essential to their daily needs (Kharisma & Panasea, 2024). Nevertheless, social media use does not automatically result in consumptive behaviour (Annisa et al., 2026; Jayanti et al., 2025). Students' responses may also depend on their financial resources, family backgrounds, self-control, digital literacy, personal values and ability to distinguish between needs and wants (Widyarti & Herlina, 2025).

One factor that may contribute to this phenomenon is the fear of missing out (FOMO), which refers to the concern that others are experiencing rewarding activities or opportunities from which an individual is absent (Gupta & Sharma, 2021). Social media can intensify this concern by continuously displaying popular products, shopping experiences and lifestyle activities (Barreda et al., 2020). Students may feel encouraged to participate in particular trends to avoid feeling excluded or to remain socially connected. Influencer marketing, user-generated content, online reviews and promotional campaigns can further affect how students evaluate products and purchasing opportunities (Mustajab & Mahadewi, 2025; Nathanael & Utami, 2025). However, the relationship between these factors and consumptive lifestyles needs to be examined within the specific circumstances of the students being studied rather than assumed to be identical across all individuals and communities (Alothman et al., 2024; Dolonseda et al., 2024).

In Indonesia, the widespread adoption of digital communication technologies has created new opportunities for businesses to reach young consumers through social media platforms and online shopping services (Mustofa et al., 2024; Widodo et al., 2024). Trends can spread rapidly through short videos, hashtags, product reviews, live-streaming sessions and recommendations from popular content creators (Islam et al., 2025). These developments may influence how young people recognise products, compare alternatives and make purchasing decisions (Lata & Rana, 2025; Catană et al., 2025). At the same time, digital consumption presents challenges, particularly when the desire to follow trends exceeds an individual's financial capacity or practical needs (Wang, 2025). Such circumstances make it important to understand how students interpret social media content and whether their consumption practices reflect considered decisions or responses to social and digital pressures (Amin, 2025).

Tulungagung Regency provides a relevant local context for examining these developments among university students (Ni'am et al., 2025). Students in the area participate in broader digital culture while living within their own social, economic, educational and cultural environments (Arham et al., 2024; Hendry, 2024; Salsabila et al., 2026). Their consumption practices may therefore reflect an interaction between global social media trends and local circumstances, including family expectations, peer relationships, access to products and available financial

resources (Shah & Asghar, 2023). Although social media trends circulate widely across geographical boundaries, their meanings and consequences may differ according to the experiences and circumstances of local communities (Wibowo et al., 2023). Investigating university students in Tulungagung Regency can provide a more context-sensitive understanding of how digital trends are interpreted and incorporated into everyday consumption practices.

Despite growing attention to social media and consumer behaviour, further investigation is needed to understand how university students experience and respond to social media trends in specific local settings (Maulidy et al., 2025a). In particular, it is important to explore which types of trends students follow, how social media content relates to their purchasing considerations, and what factors encourage or discourage consumptive practices. It is also necessary to distinguish between ordinary consumption, which fulfils legitimate needs, and consumptive lifestyles characterised by excessive, impulsive or socially motivated purchasing (Buladi Çubukcu, 2025). Without this distinction, following a trend or purchasing a popular product could be incorrectly interpreted as evidence of excessive consumption. A locally grounded investigation can help clarify these differences and identify the ways in which students negotiate the relationship between digital influence, personal preferences and responsible consumption (Haryono et al., 2025).

Furthermore, this issue is relevant to discussions of education and the development of responsible attitudes towards consumption. Students need not only access to digital information but also the ability to evaluate persuasive content, manage financial resources and make decisions based on their actual needs. Understanding the role of social media trends in students' consumption practices may therefore offer useful insights for educational institutions, families and other stakeholders seeking to strengthen digital literacy, financial awareness and responsible consumer behaviour (Septiani et al., 2025). Rather than viewing social media exclusively as a negative influence, it is important to recognise that these platforms can also provide useful product information, opportunities for entrepreneurship and access to diverse ideas. The central concern is how students engage with these platforms and how their consumption decisions are shaped by the interaction between digital content and personal circumstances (Ruswaji et al., 2024; Macías Urrego et al., 2024)

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the role of social media trends in transforming university students' consumptive lifestyles in Tulungagung Regency. The study focuses on students' experiences of social media trends, their perceptions of digital and social influences, and the ways in which these trends relate to their consumption preferences and practices. By situating the discussion within the historical transformation of consumption and the contemporary development of digital culture, this research is expected to contribute to a more contextual understanding of student consumer behaviour. The findings may also provide insights into promoting more critical, informed and responsible consumption practices among university students in the digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A consumptive lifestyle refers to a pattern of consumption in which purchasing decisions are shaped not only by practical needs but also by social expectations, emotional gratification, symbolic meanings and the desire to follow prevailing trends. It is important to distinguish consumptive lifestyles from consumption in general, as purchasing goods and services is a normal part of everyday life. The concept becomes particularly relevant when consumption is excessive in relation to actual needs, insufficiently considered, or strongly motivated by social recognition rather than practical usefulness. Veblen (2017) introduced the concept of conspicuous consumption to explain how goods can be acquired and displayed to communicate wealth and social standing. This perspective suggests that consumption may serve a social function beyond satisfying material needs.

Baudrillard (1998) similarly emphasised the symbolic dimensions of consumption, arguing that commodities acquire meanings associated with identity, status and social distinction. These perspectives provide a theoretical basis for understanding why individuals may purchase fashionable products or popular brands to communicate belonging, attractiveness or a desired lifestyle. For the purposes of this study, a consumptive lifestyle is understood as a pattern of purchasing and consumption practices in which trend-following, symbolic value, emotional impulses or social expectations may outweigh practical needs and considered financial decisions. The concept can be explored through the following indicators:

1. Purchasing beyond practical needs: acquiring products that are unnecessary or have limited practical value to the individual.
2. Trend-oriented purchasing: buying products primarily because they are popular or promoted through social media.
3. Impulsive purchasing: making purchases with limited prior planning or consideration of their consequences.
4. Symbolic and status-oriented consumption: purchasing products to express identity, maintain a particular image or gain social recognition.
5. Financial self-regulation: the extent to which purchasing decisions are consistent with available financial resources, budgets and personal priorities.

Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) refers to concern that others may be experiencing rewarding activities or opportunities from which an individual is absent. Przybylski et al. (2013) examined FoMO as a psychological construct associated with the desire to remain connected to the experiences of others. In the context of social media trends, FoMO may arise when students repeatedly encounter popular products, limited-time promotions or posts presenting particular consumption experiences as desirable. Students may feel that purchasing a trending product will help them participate in a social activity, maintain a sense of belonging or avoid being left behind. Moral value education concerns the development of values, judgements and practices that enable

individuals to consider ethical responsibilities when making decisions. In the context of consumption, relevant values may include responsibility, self-discipline, honesty, moderation, respect for others and awareness of the consequences of personal choices.

Lickona (1992) presents character education through three interrelated dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action. Moral knowing concerns understanding moral values and recognising the implications of decisions. Moral feeling concerns the emotional and motivational dimensions of ethical conduct, including empathy, conscience and responsibility. Moral action refers to translating moral understanding and motivation into behaviour.

Applied to digital consumption, these dimensions can be interpreted as follows:

1. Moral knowing: students recognise the distinction between needs and wants, understand the persuasive purposes of promotional content, and consider the consequences of excessive spending.
2. Moral feeling: students demonstrate a sense of responsibility towards their own financial circumstances and consider the implications of their choices for others.
3. Moral action: students practise budgeting, evaluate purchasing decisions carefully, resist inappropriate social pressure and avoid unnecessary expenditure when it conflicts with their priorities.

Moral value education also provides a potential practical implication of the study. If students experience difficulty evaluating promotional content or managing trend-related purchasing, educational approaches could support digital literacy, financial responsibility and reflective decision-making.

METHODS

This study investigated the role of social media trends in shaping university students' consumptive lifestyles in Tulungagung Regency, East Java, Indonesia. The methodology was designed to explore participants' experiences, motivations, purchasing decisions, and perceptions of lifestyle change.

1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive case study design to explore how university students from three higher education institutions in Tulungagung Regency experience and interpret social media trends in relation to their consumptive lifestyles. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the study focused on participants' experiences, perceptions, motivations, and decision-making processes rather than on measuring statistical relationships between variables (Sugiyono, 2019). The study involved Universitas Islam Negeri Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Universitas Bhinneka PGRI Tulungagung, and Universitas Tulungagung. The unit of analysis was the individual student. Each participant's account was examined within the context of their university and academic programme. The study focused on social media use, exposure to viral trends, purchasing motivations, consumption

practices, financial considerations, moral reflection, and attitudes towards domestic products and national identity.

2. Population and Sample

The study population comprised students enrolled at UIN SATU Tulungagung, UBHI Tulungagung, and UNITA. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, which enables researchers to recruit information-rich cases relevant to the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2015; Patton, 2014). Three students participated in the study, with one participant recruited from each institution. The participants were enrolled in Social Science Education at UIN SATU Tulungagung, Economic Education at UBHI Tulungagung, and Management at UNITA. The inclusion criteria were current enrolment in the relevant academic programme, willingness to discuss consumption practices, and sufficient experience of social media use to reflect on encounters with online trends. The small sample size was considered in relation to the focused research questions and the depth and specificity of the information obtained. Malterud et al. (2016) suggest that qualitative sample adequacy can be considered through the concept of information power, whereby the required sample size depends on the study aim, sample specificity, theoretical framing, dialogue quality, and analytical strategy. In this study, the three participants provided accounts from distinct institutional and academic settings. However, the sample was too small to establish comprehensive thematic coverage or to support generalisations about the wider student populations of the three universities.

3. Data Collection Methods

Data were collected between 10 and 22 October 2026 through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document review. Semi-structured interviews were the primary method, while observations and document review were used to provide relevant contextual information where available. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the intended use of their accounts, their right to decline questions, and the confidentiality arrangements. Informed consent was obtained before participation. Pseudonyms were used in transcripts, analytical records, and reporting.

4. Research Instruments

The interview guide was designed to elicit participants' own accounts rather than to assume that social media necessarily increased consumption. Questions addressed both following and resisting trends. Retrospective prompts were used to explore perceived differences between earlier and current practices, while follow-up questions sought concrete examples and alternative explanations for changes in purchasing decisions. An observation guide and a document-review guide were used to organise contextual records. These instruments included fields for the date, source or setting, descriptive information, relevance to the research questions, and preliminary analytical notes.

5. Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analysed qualitatively using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. NVivo 12 Pro supported the organisation, coding, grouping, and retrieval of interview transcripts, observation notes, and relevant documents. NVivo 12 Pro was used to organise transcripts and field notes, manage coding, and retrieve relevant excerpts. The software was used for data management and retrieval, not as a substitute for the researcher's interpretation.

6. Validity and Reliability

Several measures supported the credibility and consistency of the findings. The interview guide was designed to elicit participants' own accounts rather than to assume that social media necessarily increased consumption, and follow-up questions sought concrete examples and alternative explanations for changes in purchasing decisions. Interviews were the primary data source, while observation and document review provided contextual information where available. Pseudonyms were used throughout transcripts, analytical records, and reporting, and NVivo 12 Pro was used for data management and retrieval rather than as a substitute for the researcher's interpretation. In addition, social comparison theory was applied only as a retrospective interpretive lens, not as a predefined coding category, and the results are reported as participants' self-reported accounts.

7. Study Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, it involved three purposively selected participants, one from each institution, which was too small to establish comprehensive thematic coverage or to support generalisations about the wider student populations of the three universities. Second, data were collected within a single period, so changes over time could not be examined. Third, the analysis relied on participants' retrospective and self-reported accounts, without validated scales, expenditure records, or objective indicators of consumption or academic outcomes. The findings should therefore be read as context-specific illustrations rather than as evidence of causal relationships.

RESULT

This study explored how university students in Tulungagung Regency described the relationship between social media trends and their consumption practices, lifestyle preferences, academic activities, and attitudes towards local culture and nationalism. The findings were derived primarily from interviews with three participants, each representing a different higher education institution: Universitas Islam Negeri Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Universitas Bhinneka PGRI Tulungagung, and Universitas Tulungagung. The interview data were examined to identify recurring patterns as well as differences in the participants' accounts.

Word Cloud Visualisation

To provide an initial overview of the interview data, a word cloud was generated using NVivo 12 Pro. The visualisation presents frequently occurring words in the analysed data and offers a preliminary indication of topics discussed by the participants.



Figure 1. *Word Cloud of the Interview Data*
Source: Primary interview data, processed by the researcher using NVivo 12 Pro.

As shown in Figure 1, prominent words include *social media*, *trends*, *buy*, *lifestyle*, *students*, and *consumption*. These words reflect the central focus of the interviews: participants' accounts of social media use and its perceived relationship with consumption preferences and lifestyle choices. Instagram and TikTok were mentioned as sources of entertainment, information, and exposure to popular content, including fashion, clothing styles, products, and cafés. Participants described encountering content that attracted their interest and, in some cases, influenced their desire to purchase particular items or visit popular places.

Other prominent words, including *desire*, *interest*, *influence*, *financial*, and *considerations*, point to the different factors participants associated with consumption decisions. Their accounts suggest that purchasing was not always based solely on practical needs. Interest in a product's appearance, exposure to trends, peer influence, and the desire to participate in social activities could also shape their decisions. Nevertheless, participants differed in how they responded to these influences, with some describing efforts to consider affordability and personal preferences while others reported feeling pressure to keep up with friends.

The interview analysis produced nine descriptive themes: social media use; tendency to follow trends; influence of the friendship environment; interest in products and places; impulse-buying tendencies; financial management; perceived effects on academic activities; views on lifestyle changes; and local culture and nationalism. These themes are summarised in Table 1 and discussed in the following sections.

Table 1. *Summary of Interview Findings by Theme*

Theme	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Social media use	Uses Instagram and TikTok for entertainment and to view dance trends,	Uses social media to learn about contemporary lifestyles,	Describes the social environment as an important influence on

Theme	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
	outfit checks, fashion content, and cafés.	current trends, and domestic and foreign cultures.	interests in products and lifestyle choices.
Tendency to follow trends	Does not follow every trend and selects trends according to personal tastes and interests.	Reports being influenced by clothing and accessory trends followed by friends and feeling less confident when not keeping up.	Reports feeling pressure to purchase items to avoid falling behind friends and to gain acceptance within the peer group.
Influence of the friendship environment	Visits cafés with friends to relax, take photographs, and create content.	Associates interest in clothing and accessories with friends' habits and the desire to maintain an attractive appearance.	Describes peer influence as substantial, including pressure to purchase items that are not essential to gain social acceptance.
Interest in products and places	Finds clothing, trousers, accessories, and cafés through TikTok and Instagram, while considering visual appeal and value for money.	Is attracted to products presented attractively on social media and sometimes shops for entertainment despite having no clear need for the items.	Reports purchasing items influenced by friends and visiting cafés approximately once a month for recreation.
Impulse-buying tendencies	Sometimes purchases items because of their appearance but attempts to assess whether they are worth the cost.	Reports spontaneous purchasing driven by product appeal and concern about regretting a missed purchase.	Describes buying unnecessary items when friends own them, linking purchasing decisions to social acceptance.
Financial management	Lists needs and prioritises university-related expenses before using remaining funds for personal wants.	Describes greater financial security as allowing more freedom to purchase goods and undertake recreational activities, including non-essential ones.	Associates financial stability with a sense of security and comfort in undertaking academic activities.
Perceived effects on academic activities	Reports that socialising can sometimes delay assignments and reduce study time.	Describes trend-related interests and updating possessions as potential distractions that may postpone academic work.	Feels that obtaining a desired item can improve confidence and motivation to study, while financial stability supports concentration.
Views on lifestyle changes	Perceives contemporary students as more connected to social media and more readily exposed to trends than previous generations.	Believes social media facilitates access to contemporary lifestyles and foreign cultures but may encourage following trends without sufficient consideration.	Emphasises the importance of maintaining personal principles rather than following trends solely for appearance or social acceptance.
Local culture and nationalism	Emphasises the importance of having personal principles and distinguishing beneficial from harmful influences.	Defines nationalism in terms of love for the homeland, respect for local culture and differences, obedience to	Emphasises the preservation of Tulungagung's local culture and traditions and continued pride in

Theme	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
		rules, and pride in being Indonesian. Reports encountering content about batik and regional specialities.	local products despite exposure to global trends.

Source: Primary interview data from three participants, processed by the researcher.

Table 1 illustrates both shared experiences and differences among the participants. All three described social media or their social environment as relevant to their interests and lifestyle choices. However, their responses to these influences were not uniform. Participant 1 described a more selective approach to trends, Participant 2 reported greater susceptibility to product appeal and peer practices, and Participant 3 emphasised the pressure to keep pace with friends and gain social acceptance. The findings are elaborated below.

When reflecting on lifestyle changes over time, participants described contemporary students as having greater access to social media and a wider range of lifestyle content. Participant 1 perceived students today as more connected to social media and more readily exposed to trends than previous generations. This was a retrospective comparison based on the participant's observations, rather than a direct comparison of measured behaviour across generations. Participant 2 similarly observed that social media made contemporary lifestyles and foreign cultures easier to access, while also expressing concern that students might follow trends without sufficiently considering their suitability. The participant stated:

> "*Social media makes it easier for students to get to know modern lifestyles and foreign cultures. But, sometimes it also makes us follow trends without thinking about whether it is suitable or not*."

This statement illustrates the participant's recognition that access to lifestyle content can create both opportunities for learning and pressure to adopt trends without adequate reflection. The concern was not simply that trends existed, but that individuals might follow them without considering their personal circumstances or needs. Participant 1 also emphasised the importance of exercising personal judgement:

> "*In my opinion, students must have an attitude, be able to distinguish between good and bad, and not easily follow trends just to be considered cool*."

The statement highlights the perceived importance of independent decision-making when responding to social influences. Participant 3 expressed a related view by emphasising the need to maintain personal principles rather than following trends solely to improve appearance or gain acceptance from others.

The interviews also addressed how participants understood local culture and nationalism alongside their exposure to contemporary and international lifestyles. Participant 2 defined nationalism in terms of love for the homeland,

respect for local culture and differences, obedience to rules, and pride in being Indonesian. The participant explained:

> "*Nationalism for students is a sense of love for the homeland, for example respecting one's own culture, respecting differences, obeying the rules, and being proud to be Indonesian*."

This account presents nationalism as a set of attitudes and practices that extend beyond national pride to include respect for culture, tolerance, and responsible conduct. Participant 2 also reported encountering social media content about batik and regional specialities, suggesting that digital platforms could provide exposure to cultural content alongside popular lifestyle trends. Participant 3 emphasised the importance of preserving Tulungagung's local culture and traditions and maintaining pride in local products despite the influence of global trends. Participant 1, meanwhile, stressed the need to distinguish beneficial from harmful influences and to maintain personal principles when encountering different forms of social pressure.

DISCUSSION

The findings suggest that social media was an important source of exposure to products, fashion trends, and recreational activities among the three participants. However, the relationship between exposure and consumption was not uniform. Participant 1 described selecting trends according to personal preferences, whereas Participants 2 and 3 reported stronger influences from their friendship groups. This variation suggests that social media exposure should be understood as part of a broader decision-making process involving personal preferences, peer relationships, and individual circumstances, rather than as a direct or sufficient explanation for consumption behaviour.

This interpretation is consistent with Maulidy et al. (2025b), whose study discusses the relationship between social media promotion, influencer marketing, virtual communities, fear of missing out (FoMO), and students' consumption tendencies. However, the present study differs in scope and design. Whereas the cited study examines broader relationships between social and psychological factors and consumption behaviour, the present qualitative case study explores how three students describe their own experiences. The findings therefore provide contextual insight into the ways participants interpret trends and make consumption decisions, but they do not independently establish the relationships or effects examined in previous research.

The differences between the participants can also be interpreted through social comparison theory. Suls & Wheeler (2012) proposed that individuals evaluate aspects of themselves in relation to other people. Applied cautiously to the present findings, this perspective helps explain why the ownership of similar products or the appearance of friends could become relevant to some participants' purchasing decisions. Participants 2 and 3 described experiences in which peer practices and the desire for social acceptance influenced their interest in clothing, accessories,

or other goods. Participant 1, by contrast, reported a more selective approach to trends. These differences suggest that the significance of a trend may depend partly on the social meaning attached to participating in it.

Social comparison was not, however, an original coding category established in the study's stated analytical framework. It is therefore used here as a retrospective interpretive lens, rather than as a directly measured psychological mechanism or a theme independently demonstrated by the data. The interviews do not establish the intensity of participants' social comparison, nor do they show that comparison invariably resulted in purchasing. Instead, the findings indicate that peer relationships were one consideration that some participants associated with their consumption decisions.

The contribution of this finding lies in illustrating how digital exposure and face-to-face social relationships may intersect in students' accounts of consumption. Social media introduced participants to products and popular activities, while friendship groups could reinforce the perceived desirability of particular goods or experiences. Nevertheless, personal preferences and financial considerations remained relevant. This interpretation avoids treating students as passive recipients of online trends and recognises variation in how they respond to digital and social influences.

Distinguishing Consumption, Impulse Buying, and a Consumptive Lifestyle

Participant 1 described interest in products encountered on social media but also reported considering value for money and prioritising university-related needs. This account does not support an unqualified classification of the participant as highly consumptive. Participant 2 described spontaneous purchasing associated with product appeal and concern about regretting a missed purchase. This is consistent with a possible impulse-buying tendency, although the interview evidence does not establish its frequency, financial consequences, or severity. Participant 3 linked some non-essential purchases to friends' possessions and the desire for social acceptance. This provides evidence of socially motivated consumption in the situations described, but it is insufficient to establish a persistent or compulsive purchasing pattern.

The distinction is important because impulse buying generally refers to purchasing that occurs with limited prior planning and is prompted by an immediate desire, whereas a consumptive lifestyle implies a broader pattern of consumption across time and circumstances. Compulsive buying is a further and more specific construct that should not be inferred from isolated examples of spontaneous purchasing. The present study did not use a validated scale or predefined behavioural threshold to classify participants according to these constructs. The findings can be compared cautiously with Kumar & Kumar (2024), who examine relationships between compulsive social media use, social comparison, FoMO, self-esteem, and impulsive or compulsive purchasing tendencies among young adults. Their work provides a relevant conceptual context for considering how social and psychological experiences may relate to

consumption. However, the present interviews cannot test the relationships between these constructs or establish that any one factor causes impulsive purchasing.

A similar distinction is necessary when interpreting Participant 2's concern about regretting a decision not to purchase a product. Although this concern may resemble an anticipated-regret response, it should not automatically be labelled FoMO. Przybylski et al. (2013) conceptualise FoMO in terms of apprehension that others may be having rewarding experiences from which an individual is absent, accompanied by a desire to remain connected with what others are doing. The available account of concern about missing a purchase does not, by itself, establish this broader construct. FoMO would be a more defensible interpretation only if the interview transcript explicitly linked the participant's concern to missing socially rewarding experiences or being excluded from others' activities. The findings support a differentiated interpretation of consumption behaviour. Product appeal, social acceptance, spontaneous desire, and personal financial considerations appeared in the participants' accounts, but their relevance varied.

Financial Considerations and Consumption Self-Regulation

Financial considerations were relevant to how participants described their consumption choices. Participant 1 reported prioritising university-related needs and making a list of expenditure before using remaining funds for personal wants. This account suggests an effort to organise spending and distinguish essential expenditure from discretionary purchases. Participant 2 associated a financially secure situation with greater freedom to spend on goods and recreation. Participant 3 described financial stability as contributing to a sense of security during academic activities. These accounts show that participants perceived their financial circumstances as relevant to their decisions, although the nature and extent of their financial resources were not established by the interview material presented here.

Participant 1's reported budgeting practice is particularly relevant to financial self-regulation because it involves identifying priorities before spending. However, one participant's account cannot establish the effectiveness of budgeting as an intervention or show that the practice consistently prevents unplanned purchases. Similarly, greater financial flexibility does not necessarily indicate excessive consumption. Its implications depend on how expenditure relates to available resources, essential needs, and personal priorities. This interpretation is consistent with the broader importance of financial literacy and spending management in understanding young adults' financial decisions.

Reported Academic Distractions and Lifestyle Management

The interviews also revealed different perceptions of how social activities and consumption-related interests intersected with academic responsibilities. Participant 1 reported that spending time socialising could sometimes delay assignments, while Participant 2 described postponing academic work when

interested in keeping up with trends or updating possessions. Participant 3, by contrast, associated obtaining desired goods with greater personal comfort and confidence and described financial stability as helpful to concentration. These accounts indicate variation in the participants' perceived experiences rather than a consistent academic effect of social media use. The distinction between these accounts and the effects of social media itself is important. Participant 1 attributed delays to socialising, while Participant 2 linked procrastination to interests in trends and possessions. Neither account establishes that social media directly caused academic difficulties.

Participant 3's account also demonstrates that the perceived relationship between consumption and academic experience was not exclusively negative. Moreover, the study did not examine academic performance indicators, assignment records, study time, or grade point averages. The findings therefore concern self-reported experiences, not objectively measured academic outcomes. The accounts can be considered alongside research on academic procrastination and time management, including Steel (2007) review of procrastination research. Such literature provides a framework for examining the postponement of tasks, but the current study does not establish the psychological mechanisms responsible for the participants' reported experiences. It would therefore be inappropriate to conclude that trend-following caused procrastination or reduced academic achievement.

Local Culture and Nationalism

The interviews also included participants' views on local culture and national identity. Participant 2 described nationalism through love for the homeland, respect for local culture and differences, compliance with rules, and pride in being Indonesian. The participant also reported encountering social media content about batik and regional specialities. Participant 3 expressed support for preserving Tulungagung's traditions and maintaining pride in local products. Participant 1 emphasised the importance of distinguishing beneficial from harmful influences and avoiding trends adopted solely for social approval.

The relationship between these findings and nationalism should also be defined carefully. Participant 2's account primarily reflects civic and cultural understandings of nationalism, including respect for fellow citizens, adherence to rules, and appreciation of national culture. These views are relevant to students' expressed values, but they do not by themselves measure nationalist attitudes or demonstrate the effects of moral value education. Similarly, a positive statement about local products may be influenced by social expectations surrounding a question about national identity. This possibility should be acknowledged when interpreting the interview responses.

These results are in line with a study by Pratama & Permatasari (2026) Regarding the nationalism of the young generation in the midst of globalization and digital culture. The study shows that globalization does not always eliminate nationalism, but can change the way the younger generation expresses it, including

through the promotion of Indonesian culture and the use of local products. On the other hand, the influence of foreign cultures can still be a challenge for the preservation of local culture. The similarity with this study lies in the view that digital developments can present opportunities as well as challenges for cultural identity. The difference is that this study obtained this picture through the views of three informants, so it cannot explain how widespread this attitude is owned by students in general. The implication is that social media can be used as a means of introducing local culture through content about traditions, typical foods, batik, and regional products. Students can also be encouraged to be critical of the trends they encounter, not by rejecting all outside cultures, but by still respecting and recognizing their own culture. Thus, the ability to filter information and maintain cultural identity is an important part of using social media responsibly.

CONCLUSION

This study explored how three university students in Tulungagung Regency described social media trends in relation to their consumption-related choices and everyday lifestyles. The findings suggest that social media provided participants with exposure to fashion, products, cafés, and contemporary lifestyles, while their accounts also highlighted the role of peer relationships, personal preferences, perceived social expectations, and financial considerations in purchasing decisions. Participants also described different approaches to managing their finances and balancing social activities with academic responsibilities, indicating variation in their experiences rather than a uniform pattern. Regarding moral values education, participants' accounts emphasised the importance of maintaining personal principles, distinguishing between needs and wants, exercising self-control, and respecting local culture while engaging with wider social trends.

These accounts suggest that moral values, particularly responsibility and cultural awareness, provide a relevant perspective for interpreting students' reflections on consumption and lifestyle choices. Its findings are limited by the small purposive sample, the single-period data collection, and reliance on participants' retrospective and self-reported accounts. Future research could use a mixed-methods design with a larger purposive sample across multiple institutions, combining interviews with participant diaries, expenditure records, and systematic observations. Such an approach could examine more closely how students describe and enact consumption-related choices in different social and educational contexts.

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