

# **Social Media Marketing: Influence on the Consumer Buying Process of Clothing Products in San Jose City**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Social media, a widely used platform for marketing various products, has been the focus of this study due to its ability to target specific audiences. The study aimed to understand how this platform influences consumer buying behavior for clothing products in the local market of San Jose City. This context is particularly relevant to our audience and deeply connected to the local community. The respondents, customers who frequently buy clothes on different online platforms, were randomly selected. Data were collected through a Likert-scale survey questionnaire, a robust and widely accepted research method that ensures the reliability of our findings. The findings suggest that most respondents were 25 years old and considered young adults;

the study also shows that the number of female respondents was more remarkable than males, and being single was their predominant status.

Moreover, the study's findings reveal that Facebook is the most appealing and convenient social media platform the respondents use. For problem recognition, consumers commonly set spending limits for specific expense categories (like entertainment) and monitor how much they spend with those limits. Budgets can only sometimes predict chances for consumption; therefore, people can allot too much or too little money for a specific category. As a result, they either consume too much or too little of such products. Consumers mostly rely on feedback and reviews when purchasing clothing in information searches. Social media marketing was highly correlated to the respondents' buying process. The result also implies that when buying clothing products online, consumers are mainly influenced by social media marketing while evaluating the alternative stage. Furthermore, the study implied that social media marketing influenced clothing consumers' buying process. It revealed a highly significant correlation, which has practical implications for marketing professionals and educators in understanding and leveraging consumer behavior in the local market.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Marketing, Facebook, Platform, Budget, Consumer Buying Process, Convenient, Clothes*

## Introduction

Social media has revolutionized how businesses introduce and market their products, allowing them to keep up with the transformation in this digital age. Researchers have found that many firms fail because they need to adopt new or more efficient marketing strategies; this is where social media takes place as a helpful marketing tool in the apparel industry. Clothes are relevantly sold through social media and are often advertised live or online for many potential customers. According to Wang and Kim (2017), to increase brand exposure among consumers, most businesses turn to internet marketing techniques like blogger endorsements, social media advertising, and user-generated content management. Similarly, Edosomwan et al. (2011) cited that social media and networking are the fastest way to grow a business entity.

The digitalization of business operations through social media has impacted consumer buying behavior. Filipinos spend 10 hours a day on average, seven days a week on social media; this allows businesses to capitalize on this borderline obsession to achieve their full potential and cater to consumers' needs (Chan, 2023). Moreover, fifty-seven percent (57%) of Filipino internet users make weekly purchases of goods or services on various e-commerce platforms, including social media; they rely on these platforms to look for a particular business that offers the best prices and discounts (Howe, 2024). Meanwhile, 65.07 percent of Filipino consumers purchase clothing and other items like footwear online (Balita, 2024). With these increasing trends, examining the impact of social media marketing activities on Filipino consumers is imperative to identify their purchasing habits.

However, despite the growing popularity of e-commerce platforms at the national level, there is still a need to understand how the consumer buying process is affected by various online marketing strategies—such as social media marketing when buying clothing products in the local market context. Hence, this study analyzed the influence of social media marketing on the consumer buying process of clothing products in San Jose City. It determined the factors that affect consumers when buying online. It also identified the stage of the buying process where the customers are influenced mainly by social media marketing. This study also examined the relationship between social media marketing and the consumer buying process when purchasing clothing products.

Furthermore, this research's findings benefit clothing businesses, marketers, and influencers. They help them understand local

market trends and identify specific and effective marketing strategies they can implement as the Philippines continues establishing itself in a growing digital consumer market.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Factors Affecting the Consumer Purchasing Behavior

The study focused on three aspects of **socio-demographic profile** – the respondents' age, sex, and civil status. With that, a study by Aloomaa and Amdam (2021) analyzed the effects of consumer demographic variables on clothes buying behavior in Nigeria, which showed that age and occupation had a significant bi-variate impact on patronage and the process of recognizing clothing needs. Contrastingly, neither gender nor civil status substantially impacted consumer purchasing decisions. These acts are carried out sequentially, from recognizing the needs, searching the information, looking for alternatives, buying, and post-purchasing. In this study, socio-demographic profiles in terms of age, sex, and civil status, as seen to correlate with the consumer buying process for clothing products, are analyzed.

**Age.** A significant factor in influencing behavior is that every age has its state of mind, perception, and characteristics. In the study by Bansal (2015), each step of the consumer buying process within the clothing line varies according to certain ages of such customers. Results show that a child generally chooses a product based on his or her parents' advice due to a lack of physical and economic independence, unlike teenagers and adults, whom different brands mainly influence. According to Lee & Schneider (2022), Gen-Z and older generations have a broader cultural divide because of their different formative years. Tastemakers of such a generation now have unmatched access to viewers because of social media channels.

**Sex.** The significance of sex in the study identified specific preferences of men and women regarding apparel, affecting their purchasing behavior. In a study conducted by Castelo and Cabral (2018), clothing consumers believe that when evaluating the quality features of both menswear and womenswear, women have a higher perception than men. Furthermore, such consumers also consider the originality or value of the product when purchasing. This is beneficial with the researchers' study stating the consumer preferences of each sex of the respondents. According to the findings of the study conducted by Koca and Koç (2016), men and women, consumers do have different perceptions and

preferences regarding fashion and brand awareness in their purchasing behavior; demographic characteristics were important in deciding what to wear, and women were more influenced by fashion while men were more influenced by brand name.

**Civil Status.** A previous study by Singh and Singh (2020) proves that the demographic variable age is influenced by only one behavioral characteristic related to online apparel shopping and is similar to the demographic variable civil status. The present paper depicts that the two demographic variables taken in the study - Age and civil Status have a minimum effect on behavioral characteristics related to the online purchasing of apparel. In this study, the respondents' civil status is essential to understanding how individuals behave while buying clothes and the role of social media marketing as playing a part in this process.

### **Influence of Social Media Marketing**

Social media marketing comprises several online strategies; it also includes other e-commerce platforms like online stores and applications where social interactions between retailers and customers occur. Given that many people are connected, social media first gained popularity. As per the study of Asur (2012), the quantity of online attention social media sites started to garner quickly caught the attention of businesses, who realized the potential of attention that social media may produce. As a result, online traffic started to be valuable. Since then, social media marketing has become a more well-liked approach to online marketing. The behavior and way of life of people from nearly every socio-demographic group worldwide are impacted by the rapid expansion of users and new platforms and the improved internet connection capabilities provided by mobile devices. According to Belch & Belch (2014), the public and private sectors face considerable challenges regarding social media marketing due to how drastically this new medium has changed marketing. This implies that the digital platforms utilized to enable these social interactions might be considered "multi-sided platforms" because they can be highly complicated.

### **The Consumer Buying Process**

According to Craig (2019), the Consumer Buying Process comprises Problem Recognition, Information Search, Evaluation of Alternatives, Purchase Decision, and Post-purchase Behavior, as introduced in 1910 by John Dewey, an American psychologist. Essentially, this process is a cost-benefit analysis. It outlines the journey a customer takes before and after making a purchase. Analyzing this

process can help us establish more viable marketing strategies.

**Problem Recognition.** As stated by Kardes et al. (2011), Problem Recognition is the first step of the consumer buying process that may occur when the consumer desires something new. Once a problem is recognized, consumers begin to seek relevant information. The research suggests that budgeting impacts are more substantial for items quite typical of their category, proving that customers keep track of their spending. Such purchases prevent purchasing other everyday items and lower consumer spending in a category. The research considers satiation and income impacts; therefore, budgeting gives conventional economic consumer theory more predictive ability.

**Information Search.** The next stage is Information Search, where there are two types of information sources: internal and external information search, according to Kardes et al. (2011). The internal search involves the consumers' memory about the products, and the external search includes word of mouth, store visit trials, and online social networking and social media. Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) stated that nowadays, the online environment is effectively involved in the purchase decision process, and the Internet has become an essential tool for information search. The different types of decisions influence the level and direction of the search.

Moreover, Sema (2013) argued that people frequently take their friends' recommendations at face value. If they share information, their peers might follow suit or use it to shape their judgments. As such, using social media environments to connect with customers is simple.

**Evaluation of Alternatives.** This is the stage wherein consumers compare and evaluate several alternatives regarding product features, desires, and needs. Consumers' choices are commonly based on simple decisions such as "buy the cheapest products"; however, some decisions are complex and must undergo different processes and stages. In this stage, consumers consider which alternative would be the best to fulfill their needs. Once consumers have found and evaluated their relevant alternatives, they should choose among them. In the study conducted by Sarkar and Sabyasachi (2017) in India, even though internet sales in India have increased quickly and are expected to expand, most Indian shoppers still favor the so-called "real" shopping experience provided by brick-and-mortar stores.

**Purchase Decision.** In terms of Purchase Decision, Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010) stated that consumers choose certain products because the product appeals to them. The gathered information from different sources can influence the choice; therefore, the Internet is an effective tool. According to Lee and Chen-Yu (2018), the sensations

induced by a price reduction led to a favorable evaluation of product quality when price discount acted as a mediator (i.e., a favorable indirect link). The model offers a better understanding of the impact of price discounts on customers' perceptions of apparel products by considering the role of the price discount effect. This implies that the price discount effect was a critical mediating factor in the relationship between price discounts and consumers' views.

**Post-Purchase Behavior.** As per Kardes et al. (2011), the last stage in the buying process is the post-purchase behavior, where the decision quality becomes an essential stage regarding how well the choice works out. Consumers start to compare their perceptions of the product with their expectations. According to Chen et al. (2022), there is a significant correlation between the visual browsing behavior of consumers and their purchase intention. The current study provides a deep understanding of the underlying mechanism of how online reviews influence shopping behavior, which is essential for the theory of online consumer behavior. These findings suggest that practitioners must pay particular attention to negative comments and resolve them promptly by customizing product/service information, considering consumer characteristics.

## **Social Media Marketing about the Consumer Buying Process of Clothing Products**

Sudha and Sheena (2017) argued that because of social media, customers can conduct an in-depth analysis of companies that portray their own experiences and opinions to other users, creating a specific type of viral marketing effect where the message can be spread to thousands of users with a few clicks of the mouse. Moreover, they claimed that if a business promoted its goods in such a direct manner, consumers may ignore the message—which is expected in today's world of online advertising. When it comes to offering to consumers, affordability, appealing marketing, and fashion blogs are significant advantages to online retail shops. Social media marketing is linked to influencing factors such as convenience, available products, time and cost efficiency, refund, perceived ease of use, and others within the clothing line upon deciding to purchase products, considering how and on which platform it was advertised or marketed. According to Dagohey et al. (2021), consumer shopping habits, attitudes, and post-purchase behaviors are frequently monitored and satisfy their whims, demands, wants, requirements, necessities, and way of life. Saunders and Eaton's (2018) study revealed that “a large percentage of people spend 25% of their time on social networking platforms, demonstrating how relevant

and popular they have become in recent years”. Hence, this demonstrates that social media has been proven to be an effective marketing strategy that helps consumers acquire their products and services, promoting customer loyalty and opening the world to them.

## **METHODS AND PROCEDURES**

A descriptive research design in conjunction with a quantitative research method was employed in the study. A total of 50 respondents were selected from five barangays in San Jose City using purposive sampling. Ten (10) respondents from each barangay categorized as frequent purchasers of clothes in e-commerce apps were then provided with a survey questionnaire. The data were analyzed and interpreted using a descriptive analysis. Frequency distribution and percentage were used to describe the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. A weighted mean was used to interpret the respondents' answers for social media marketing and the consumer buying process of clothing products. Lastly, Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the relationship between online shopping platforms and clothing consumption of the respondents, as the study aimed to analyze social media marketing's influence on the buying process of clothing consumers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the study's findings in the respondents' socio-demographic profile.

**Table 1. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS	FREQUENCY (n=50)	PERCENTAGE
Age		
Below 18	4	8.00
19-29	31	62.00
30-39	10	2.00
40-49	2	4.00
50-59	3	6.00
MEAN = 25 (SD = 2.13)		
Sex		
Female	28	56.00
Male	22	44.00
Civil Status		
Single	38	76.00
Married	12	24.00

Based on the table above, the average age of the selected respondents was 25 years old (SD=2.13), considered young adults. Regarding sex, this shows that the number of female respondents (56%) is greater than that of male ones (44%). Concerning civil status, most of the respondents were single (76%).

### Social Media Marketing

Table 2 shows the social media marketing of clothing consumers. This shows that clothing consumers use social media marketing as a means of their buying process.

**Table 2. Social Media Marketing**

STATEMENTS	MEAN	DESCRIPTION
1. Live selling is an effective social media marketing strategy for clothing products.	3.18	Agree
2. Buying clothes in Shopee is more convenient for me.	2.96	Agree
3. I prefer the Lazada shop when it comes to buying clothes.	2.46	Disagree
4. TikTok shops are a good option for buying clothes.	2.48	Agree



5.	I buy clothes online primarily based on my budget.	3.24	Strongly Agree
	<b>Pooled Mean</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Information Search</b>			
1.	I buy clothes online because of the price.	3.12	Agree
2.	Online buying of clothes helps me determine its quality better.	2.6	Agree
3.	Customers' feedback/reviews affect my buying of clothing products.	3.32	Strongly Agree
4.	The brand of online marketed clothes is a significant factor affecting my buying decision.	3.08	Agree
5.	Trendy clothes, as marketed on social media, affect my decision to buy the products.	2.82	Agree
	<b>Pooled Mean</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Evaluation Of Alternatives</b>			
1.	For me, clothes posted online or on social media are convenient for buying products.	3.12	Agree
2.	Physical stores are better than online shops for buying clothes.	3.44	Strongly Agree
3.	I preferred live selling to typical posting/advertising when choosing clothing products	3.22	Strongly Agree
4.	I consider the brand name of clothes when choosing the products advertised online.	3.14	Agree
5.	I refer to ratings and reviews when buying clothes online.	3.32	Strongly Agree
	<b>Pooled Mean</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Purchase Decision</b>			
1.	The availability of clothes as marketed on social media is a convenient way of purchasing.	3.14	Agree
2.	As posted online, A variety of clothes to choose from influences its customers to buy their products.	3.22	Strongly Agree
3.	Customer service of online clothing shops can be a reason to buy clothing products.	2.86	Agree
4.	Persuasive selling of clothes being marketed on social media is an effective strategy.	3.04	Agree
5.	Sales/discounts are a factor affecting the	3.28	Strongly Agree

clothing products customers decide to purchase.

	<b>Pooled Mean</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Post-Purchase Behavior</b>			
1. Customer support of online shops, like refunds, is a factor in buying clothes.	2.94		Agree
2. Feedback from the customers affects me when buying clothes online.	3.36		Strongly Agree
3. Clothes marketed on social media meet your satisfaction as a consumer.	2.96		Agree
4. Customer loyalty occurs as I receive and wear the clothes I purchase online or on social media.	3.18		Agree
5. The quality of clothes marketed online gives me the value I expect after purchase.	3.04		Agree
<b>Pooled Mean</b>	<b>3.09</b>		<b>Agree</b>
<b>Over-All Mean</b>	<b>3.07</b>		<b>Agree</b>

*Legend: 3.25– 4.00 Strongly Agree*

*1.75 – 2.49 Disagree*

*2.50 – 3.24 Agree*

*1.00 – 1.74 Strongly Disagree*

*Disagree*

For problem recognition, with a mean of 3.24, consumers commonly set spending limits for specific expense categories (like entertainment) and monitor how much they spend with those limits. Budgets can only sometimes predict chances for consumption; therefore, people can allot too much or too little money for a specific category. As a result, they either consume too much or too little of such products. In information search, consumers mostly rely on feedback and reviews when making purchases of clothing (3.32). In evaluating alternatives, the physical store is still preferred by customers when shopping for clothing products (3.44), whereas, on purchase decisions, sales or discounts are typically a factor influencing the shoppers' decisions to buy clothing, with a mean of 3.22. Lastly, online clothing purchases are primarily affected by consumer feedback on post-purchase behavior (3.36). Moreover, with a mean of 3.44, the findings imply that among all the other stages of the consumer buying process, the evaluation of alternatives is strongly influenced by social media. Hence, respondents agreed (3.07) that social media marketing is vital in influencing consumers to buy clothing products.

## Social Media Marketing about the Consumer Buying Process of Clothing Products

Table 4 presents the relationship between social media marketing and the buying process of consumers.

**Table 4. Social Media Marketing about the Consumer Buying Process of Clothing Products**

Social Media Marketing	
Buying Process	0.803**

*Legend: (\*\*) Highly significant relationship (\*) Significant relationship*

The table above shows that social media marketing was highly correlated to the respondents' buying process (0.803). This implies the significant impact of social media marketing on the buying process, suggesting that businesses should prioritize their social media strategies to enhance consumer engagement and drive sales. Due to technology, e-commerce has been rising rapidly. Online shopping and traditional markets constantly battle for consumers.

## CONCLUSIONS

In line with the results of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. A person's marital/civil status significantly impacts their buying process when purchasing clothes, which single young adults with higher education dominate.
2. clothing consumers mostly prefer Facebook pages out of the ten social media marketing strategies mentioned in the study.
3. Evaluation of Alternatives—Social media marketing mainly influenced the third stage of the consumer buying process, as it was revealed that physical stores are preferred over other alternatives/choices when buying clothes.
4. Social media marketing and the consumer buying process regarding clothing were strongly correlated.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In analyzing how social media marketing influences consumers' purchasing decisions and discussing clothing-related products, it is essential to consider potential relationships between age, sex, and civil status. Furthermore, clothing businesses and customers should properly utilize such marketing channels or strategies. The following recommendations are specified:

1. Socio-demographic profiles regarding age, sex, and civil status should be considered for analysis, as one of such profiles may dominate the buying process of clothes.
2. Regarding determining purchasing decisions, social media marketing engaging with that platform is advised since it appears more dependable and efficient for customers regarding clothing products, particularly Facebook pages or sites.
  - a. Utilizing Facebook page boosters is advised to increase engagement and reach intended consumers.
  - b. These businesses may also decide to have a presence in Shopee; they may primarily leverage Shopee's "flash sale" to increase sales.
3. According to the study, social media marketing can influence customers at different stages of the consumer buying process for clothing products, but it is most effective in evaluating alternatives.
  - a. Clothing businesses should consider having physical stores rather than online ones.
  - b. Live selling is also a good option for the business, instead of relying on typical postings or advertising.
4. Social media marketing is relevant when buying clothes; people buy clothes based on their wants and needs. The feedback they receive can also affect their willingness to purchase a product.
  - a. Clothing businesses should read this study or explore related research further. This will help them make better decisions in the future.
  - b. The same goes for clothing consumers. Additionally, they should consider the five steps of the consumer buying process to understand their purchasing behavior of clothing products better.

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