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The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Shopping Habits among Teenagers

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Abstrak: *The development of social media has changed shopping habits, especially among teenagers who are the digital native generation. This study aims to examine the influence of social media on teenagers' consumption behavior, focusing on the role of influencers, the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) phenomenon, and the contradiction between environmental awareness and the tendency to follow fast fashion trends. Social media, particularly platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, have become a major factor influencing teenagers' shopping decisions, where they feel compelled to follow trends promoted by influencers or celebrities. FOMO is a key driver that makes teens feel compelled to buy the latest products to avoid feeling isolated. However, although many teenagers are aware of the importance of sustainability, they remain trapped in the habit of fast fashion that offers cheap products with rapidly changing designs. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, involving in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), participatory observation, and document study. The results show that social media not only shapes teenagers' shopping habits, but also reinforces social norms that link consumption with social status. This research provides insights into the dynamics of teenagers' consumption in the digital era, especially related to the contradiction between the desire to be more eco-conscious and the urge to follow consumptive trends*

Keywords : *Consumer Shopping Habits; Social Media Impact; Teenagers*



INTRODUCTION

The development of technology and the internet has brought major changes in various aspects of life, including in shopping habits. One of the most striking changes is the influence of social media, which has now become an integral part of everyday life, especially for teenagers (Aisyah, 2023). As a generation that grew up amidst digital advancements, teenagers exhibit different consumption patterns than previous generations, where their shopping preferences and decisions are heavily influenced by content on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube. The influence of social media is further strengthened by the social phenomena it creates, such as trends brought about by influencers or celebrities and advertisements that are tailored to user profiles through algorithms. Phenomena such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) or the fear of being left behind from trends, encourages teenagers to keep up to date with the latest styles or items that are popular in their environment (Carolina & Mahestu, 2020). In addition, social media also introduces shopping as a social activity that can increase status among peers, so consumptive behavior becomes more prominent in this generation.

Behind the strong urge to shop, social media also presents a contradictory phenomenon in teenagers' consumption behavior. On one hand, teenagers are starting to show awareness of environmental issues and choose to support products that are environmentally friendly or have minimal impact on nature. However, on the other hand, the rapidly growing fast fashion culture and constantly changing trends encourage them to keep buying affordable goods that have a

negative impact on the environment (Hakim & Rusadi, 2022). This creates a dualism in teenagers' shopping patterns, where the desire to be eco-conscious is often confronted with the urge to follow trends and consumptive lifestyles that are often promoted through social media.

Most research on the influence of social media on consumption behavior focuses on adult consumers or addresses general aspects of digital influence on society. Youth-focused studies usually highlight the impact of social media on their psychology or self-image, while research on the direct impact of social media on teenagers' shopping habits is limited. More specifically, there is still a gap in understanding how social media creates a contradiction between teenagers' tendency to be more environmentally friendly and impulsive behavior to follow fast fashion trends. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining more deeply the influence of social media on teenagers' shopping habits. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive insight into the consumption dynamics of teenagers in the digital era, especially how social media influences consumption behavior that is contradictory between the urge to be an environmentally conscious consumer and the tendency to shop impulsively to follow trends.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the impact of social media on teenagers' shopping habits. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a deep understanding of complex and contextual social phenomena, as well as to understand the subjective perspectives of teenagers in making shopping decisions



influenced by social media. This type of research is descriptive qualitative, aiming to describe in detail how social media shapes teenagers' shopping habits, including the role of influencers, the FOMO phenomenon, as well as broader social influences on their consumption behavior.

To collect data, this study used several techniques, namely in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), participatory observation, and document studies. In-depth interviews were conducted with a number of teenagers who actively use social media to explore how they respond to the influence of social media in their shopping decisions. FGDs will reveal the social dynamics within groups of teenagers, as well as how peers and other social influences affect shopping habits. Participatory observation will be conducted to monitor teens' behavior on social media, such as interactions with shopping-related content, advertisements, and influencer posts. In addition, a document study will be conducted by analyzing content frequently viewed by teens on social media, such as advertisements, products promoted by influencers, and trend-based or sustainability content.

The subjects of this study are teenagers aged 15 to 20 who actively use social media and engage in online consumption behavior. The selection of subjects is done purposively with certain criteria, such as frequent exposure to advertisements or products promoted by influencers. The collected data will be analyzed using thematic analysis, which begins with data coding to identify key themes relating to the influence of social media on shopping habits. Next, the themes will be grouped and analyzed to see the relationship between influencer influence, FOMO, social norms, and sustainability awareness in teenagers' shopping decisions.

To ensure the validity of the research results, the researcher will triangulate the data by comparing the findings obtained from interviews, FGDs, observations, and document studies. In addition, research reliability will be maintained by conducting repeated data collection and ensuring the diversity of contexts and sources of information used. With this approach, it is hoped that the research can provide deeper insights into how social media affects teenagers' shopping habits, as well as the social factors that shape their consumption decisions in the digital world..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Influencers and Celebrities on Teen Shopping Behavior

Influencers and celebrities on social media play a big role in shaping teens' shopping habits. Research results show that many teens feel compelled to buy products promoted by their favorite public figures. This is mainly influenced by the perception that following the influencer's lifestyle will improve their self-image in the eyes of their friends (Akbar & Faristiana, 2023). Products used or worn by influencers are often perceived as symbols of status or prestige. When adolescents feel connected to the public figure they idolize, they assume that buying the product will make them more socially accepted. This increased sense of confidence encourages teens to spend more money to follow the trends they see on social media. In addition, these spending decisions are often driven by the desire to emulate the lavish lifestyles that celebrities often flaunt. In this case, social media is not only a source of information, but also a place for teens to seek social validation (Mahmud, 2024).



The influence of celebrities and influencers on teenagers' shopping habits is also related to marketing mechanisms that many people often do not realize. Influencers not only promote products, but also create narratives around ideal lifestyles (Muttamimah & Irwansyah, 2023). These narratives are more emotional, focusing on teenagers' aspirations and dreams, making them feel that buying the promoted products is part of that achievement. Even products that they don't actually need may become an option simply because of the strong influence of these influencers. Social media provides a platform where teens can interact directly with celebrities and influencers, creating a sense of immediacy that makes them more impressionable (Putri, 2023). The influencers also often provide personal testimonials on the use of the product, which further strengthens teens' trust in the product. Therefore, social media has created a mutually supportive ecosystem between influencers and their followers in driving consumption.

Shopping habits influenced by influencers are often impulsive and spontaneous. Teens, in most cases, buy products not based on need, but because they want to follow the trend or because they feel connected to the influencer. This phenomenon shows how strong social influence is in their consumption decisions. It is not uncommon for teens to buy items after seeing advertisements or product recommendations that appear on their social media feeds, without rationally considering whether the item is really necessary. In addition, many teens feel that they cannot be left behind by their friends or others who follow the same trends. In other words, social media becomes a means to achieve a certain social status through

consumption, which ultimately creates a more impulsive shopping culture and less consideration of the functional aspects of the product (Soemarsono et.al., 2024).

The role of influencers and celebrities in shaping teenagers' shopping behavior is also related to how these products are positioned in digital culture. Not only do influencers serve as a link between products and consumers, but they are also often identity-forming agents for their followers (Wicaksono et.al., 2023). By promoting certain products, they provide an image of who is "worthy" of consuming the item. In many ways, teens feel that buying goods promoted by influencers is a way to show who they are and where they stand in the social hierarchy among their peers. This phenomenon adds to the complexity of teenagers' consumption behavior, which is driven more by emotional and social needs than practical or functional needs. As a result, these shopping habits often become more than just a purchasing activity, but also a means to establish or maintain their self-identity.

2. The Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Phenomenon in Shopping Habits

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is one of the psychological phenomena that greatly affects teenagers' shopping habits. FOMO arises when teens see friends or others on social media having items or experiences that are considered popular or trending. This fear of feeling left behind encourages them to buy the product immediately, so as not to feel left behind or isolated. Social media is a place where information about new trends can spread quickly, making teens feel pressured to jump on the bandwagon. In addition, FOMO can also affect their decision to buy goods



spontaneously without careful consideration (Pratiwi et.al., 2022). They feel that not buying trending products will make them feel less modern or less popular among their friends.

FOMO plays a major role in creating consumption patterns that are more emotional than rational. Many teenagers buy things because they feel they have to have them to stay relevant in their social group. They may not actually need the item, but they feel that not having the trending product will make them perceived as “out of touch” or not up-to-date. This feeling of insecurity is often exacerbated by the pressure of social media, where everyone is showing off their latest purchases, be it clothes, gadgets or beauty products. FOMO makes shopping more than just fulfilling personal needs, but also a strategy to maintain social image on social media. In this case, social media reinforces the feeling that following trends is part of teenagers' self-identity (Sachiyati et.al., 2023).

In addition, FOMO is also related to adolescents' perception of time and opportunity. They feel that if they do not buy trending items immediately, they will lose the opportunity to appear with their friends with the same product. This leads to consumption decisions that tend to be quick and without long-term consideration. FOMO creates a sense of urgency in teens to make a purchase immediately, even if they don't have enough budget or if the product is not actually needed. This feeling creates a highly dynamic consumption environment, where a currently popular item may lose its value in a short time due to rapidly changing trends (Ghinarahima & Idulfilastri, 2024).

FOMO in teenagers' shopping habits also shows how social media shapes the

social norms that exist within this age group. When most of their friends or people they follow on social media buy a certain product, teens feel a strong urge to follow their lead. This shows how shopping decisions are not only influenced by personal desires, but also by the need to be accepted in social groups. Social media reinforces this phenomenon by providing a space for teens to showcase the items they own and get attention from their friends. As a result, FOMO becomes a major driving factor in teens' shopping decisions, which are often influenced more by social pressure than actual need.

3. The Role of Social Media in Normalizing Shopping as a Social Activity

Social media has changed the way teens view shopping, making it more than just an activity to fulfill needs. In many cases, shopping has become a social activity done with friends or as part of their digital identity. Teens not only buy products for personal use, but also to share the experience with their followers on social media. Activities such as unboxing products, posting photos of new items, or providing reviews are ways for teens to showcase their tastes and lifestyles. This suggests that social media provides a platform for teens to build their self-image through consumption (Sepnia & Nurhakim, 2024).

Shopping as a social activity also creates a sense of competition between friends or between social media users (Intan et.la., 2019). Adolescents feel the need to have the same items as their friends or even follow popular trends in order to be accepted in their social groups. Products posted on social media often become a



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symbol of status or prestige, indicating that one can afford to buy certain items or follow trends. Thus, shopping is no longer just to fulfill physical needs, but also to show social existence in cyberspace (Sulistianti & Sugiarta, 2022). Purchased goods become more than just consumption goods, but also a tool to shape the desired social identity.

Furthermore, social media also facilitates communication and interaction around the latest trends and products. Teens often share information about products they buy or see on social media, whether in the form of reviews, recommendations, or simply photo posts. This not only serves to inform their friends about the item, but also to gain recognition and feedback from them. The social interactions that occur on social media related to shopping show how consumerism is part of larger social relationships. Teenagers feel that by showing the items they own, they can also strengthen social bonds with others.

The social norms formed on social media further reinforce the importance of shopping as a means to demonstrate social status. Shopping becomes a way to assert social identity, where teens expect that the items they consume reflect who they are and which social group they choose to join. This feeling is exacerbated by the positive feedback received through likes or comments from friends on social media, further strengthening the link between consumption and social recognition. In this context, shopping is not only an act of consumption, but also an integral part of the wider social dynamics in the digital world.

4. The Contradiction Between Eco-Conscious Buying and Fast Fashion

While there is a growing awareness among teens about the importance of sustainability and the environmental impact of overconsumption, there is a clear contradiction in their spending habits. Many teens today prefer to buy eco-friendly products or brands that promote sustainability as part of their values. They consider that choosing sustainable products is one way to support the environmental conservation movement. However, on the other hand, they also remain trapped in fast fashion shopping habits, which offer cheap products with fast-changing designs. This phenomenon shows the tension between environmental awareness and the desire to keep up with evolving fashion trends.

Teenagers' attachment to fast fashion is strong, mainly due to its affordability and easy access through online platforms. Many teenagers feel that fast fashion gives them the opportunity to own clothes that match the latest trends without spending a lot of money. However, many of them are also aware of the adverse effects fast fashion has on the environment, such as the pollution generated by mass production and the disposal of quickly worn-out items. This contradiction reflects that although teenagers are conscious of sustainability, they remain trapped in a consumption cycle that encourages them to keep buying new items that wear out quickly.

In addition, the urge to buy new products that is often driven by social media further exacerbates this situation. Teenagers feel that they need to buy new things all the time in order to keep up with trends and stay up-to-date on social media (Kurniawan, 2017). At the same time, they



feel insufficiently satisfied with what they have and tend to buy more items just to fulfill their curiosity or fear of being left behind. This causes them to ignore the negative environmental and social impacts of their habits. This consumerism is driven by the urge to fulfill social expectations rather than considering the long-term consequences of their purchases.

The contradiction between sustainability consciousness and fast fashion shopping habits shows how social media can exacerbate ethical dilemmas in teenage consumption. On the one hand, they want to be part of the sustainability movement and support environmentally responsible brands. However, on the other hand, they feel compelled to follow fast-changing trends and buy products from industries that are less concerned with environmental impact. This creates an imbalance in their spending habits, where the drive to fulfill social needs dominates over awareness of sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS

The influence of social media on teenagers' shopping habits is significant, with factors such as influencers, FOMO, and the normalization of shopping as a social activity driving consumptive behavior among them. Despite increasing sustainability awareness, the contradiction between environmental consciousness and the tendency to follow fast fashion trends suggests a tension in teenagers' shopping habits. Social media not only acts as a means to follow trends, but also as a platform that reinforces social norms and status through consumption. Therefore, teenagers' shopping habits today are more influenced by social and emotional drives rather than rational needs, creating impulsive and image-focused consumption patterns.

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