

Social Media Influence, Price Sensitivity, and Online Shopping Behavior of Selected Students of the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna

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ABSTRACT

The influence of social media on consumer behavior has significantly shaped online purchasing patterns, particularly among students. This study examined the social media influence, price sensitivity, and online shopping behavior of selected students of the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna. It aimed to determine the level of social media influence, price sensitivity, and online shopping behavior, as well as the relationship among these variables. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, 159 ABM students were selected through stratified sampling from a total population of 270, and data were collected using a validated questionnaire. Findings revealed that students are highly influenced by social media (mean = 3.62), particularly in product discovery, engagement, and content exposure. The level of price sensitivity was also high (mean = 3.59), indicating that students are responsive to price variations, promotions, and value comparisons. Moreover, online shopping behavior showed a very positive level (mean = 3.59). Significant relationships were found among social media influence, price sensitivity, and online shopping behavior, indicating that increased social media exposure enhances price awareness and purchasing decisions. An action plan was proposed to promote responsible online shopping behavior and strengthen digital consumer literacy among students.

Keywords: Social Media Influence, Price Sensitivity, Online Shopping Behavior, Students, Digital Marketing, Consumer Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has significantly reshaped the retail industry, with online shopping becoming an integral part of modern consumer culture. E-commerce platforms provide consumers with greater convenience, wider product selection, and improved accessibility compared to traditional brick-and-mortar stores, thereby transforming purchasing behavior in unprecedented ways (Tiwari, 2023). With the continuous advancement of digital technologies, consumer engagement has shifted toward online environments where purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by digital interactions.

One of the key drivers of this transformation is the rise of social media. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have evolved beyond communication tools into powerful marketing channels that influence consumer behavior through targeted advertisements, influencer endorsements, and peer reviews (Karlovitich, 2023). At the same time, price sensitivity plays a crucial role in shaping purchasing decisions,

as consumers actively compare prices, evaluate promotions, and respond to dynamic pricing strategies in online marketplaces (Gupta, 2024). These factors collectively contribute to the complexity of consumer decision-making in digital environments.

Among students, online shopping behavior has gained increasing attention due to their strong reliance on social media and heightened awareness of price variations. As digital natives, students are more exposed to online marketing strategies and are more likely to engage in comparison shopping and promotional evaluation (Jones, 2024). However, despite existing studies on consumer behavior, there remains limited research examining the combined influence of social media and price sensitivity on online shopping behavior, particularly within the context of the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna (UPHSL).

This study aimed to examine the influence of social media and price sensitivity on the online shopping behavior of selected UPHSL students. Specifically, it sought to determine the level of social media influence, price sensitivity, and online shopping behavior, as well as the significant relationships among these variables. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for educators, marketers, and businesses in developing strategies that promote responsible digital consumer behavior and effective marketing practices.

METHODS

The researcher discusses the methodology in detail, focusing on the research design, participant selection, data collection process, and analysis. This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design, which is a method that both describes characteristics of a phenomenon and examines relationships between variables. The researcher aimed to explore how social media influence affects price sensitivity and online shopping behavior among students of the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna. By using this research design, the researcher was able to gather information about what (the level of social media influence, price sensitivity, and online shopping behavior) and examine how or why these variables are related, without manipulating any variables.

The study focused specifically on ABM students of the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna, as they are active users of social media and are highly engaged in online shopping activities. The respondents consisted of 159 students selected from a total population of 270 using a stratified sampling technique. This method ensured that the sample was representative of the population and that key subgroups were adequately represented, thereby increasing the generalizability and reliability of the findings.

The researcher utilized a self-made questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection, which was divided into three distinct sections aligned with the variables of the study. Part 1 assessed the level of social media influence, Part 2 examined the level of price sensitivity, and Part 3 focused on the online shopping behavior of the respondents. The instrument was designed to capture relevant data on how these variables influence students' purchasing decisions. The validation and reliability of the questionnaire were considered essential to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data collected. The researcher sought expert advice and conducted face validation by presenting the instrument to a panel of experts in research methodology, statistics, and the field of study. Necessary revisions were made based on their recommendations. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which measures internal consistency. The results indicated acceptable reliability, confirming that the questionnaire consistently measured the intended variables.

In terms of data gathering procedure, the researcher followed a systematic approach to ensure the integrity and ethical conduct of the study. Permission was secured from the dean of graduate studies and other

relevant authorities prior to data collection. The questionnaires were distributed through Google Forms, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality of their responses.

After data collection, the responses were organized and entered into a database for analysis, ensuring accuracy and confidentiality. The data analysis employed two statistical tools. First, the weighted mean was used to determine the level of social media influence, price sensitivity, and online shopping behavior. Second, Pearson’s r correlation was used to analyze the relationships among the variables. Pearson’s r measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between variables, allowing the researcher to determine the significance of their relationships.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The discussion of the social media influence, price sensitivity, and online shopping behavior of selected students of the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna is presented in the succeeding tables and textual presentations.

Table 1

Composite Table for the Level of Social Media Influence on the selected students of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Product Discovery	3.76	Fully Influenced	1
Engagement and Community Building	3.75	Fully Influenced	2
Social Proof and Reviews	3.70	Fully Influenced	3
Visual Appeal and Content	3.38	Fully Influenced	5
Accessibility	3.51	Fully Influenced	4
Overall Weighted Mean	3.62	Fully Influenced	

As presented in table 1, an overall weighted mean of 3.62 indicates that the respondents are fully influenced by social media. This implies that social media plays a significant role in shaping students’ consumer behavior, particularly in how they discover products and interact with brands. Among the indicators, product discovery ranked first (3.76), followed by engagement and community building (3.75), social proof and reviews (3.70), accessibility (3.51), and visual appeal and content (3.38) as the least emphasized. These results suggest that students are more influenced by functional and interactive aspects of social media rather than purely aesthetic elements.

These findings are supported by Zhang (2023), who emphasized that social interaction and engagement significantly influence consumer purchase intentions. Similarly, De Veirman et al. (2017) highlighted that social proof enhances consumer trust and confidence, while Qin (2020) noted that active engagement

strengthens emotional attachment to brands. Furthermore, Ismael (2024) confirmed that Filipino youth are highly receptive to social media promotions and accessibility features.

In addition, Lou and Taylor (2022) emphasized that influencer-driven interactions in social media significantly enhance consumer engagement and purchasing behavior. Anjorin et al. (2024) further explained that social media marketing strategies, including targeted content and peer interaction, play a crucial role in shaping consumer decisions. Likewise, Little (2024) found that continuous engagement with brand content strengthens customer loyalty and trust.

These studies reinforce the conclusion that social media is a powerful driver of product discovery, engagement, and purchasing behavior among students.

Table 2
Composite Table for the Level of Price Sensitivity of the selected students of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
Comparison Shopping	3.73	Highly Sensitive	1
Price Elasticity	3.56	Highly Sensitive	3
Brand Loyalty	3.55	Highly Sensitive	4
Promotions	3.51	Highly Sensitive	5
Reviews and Ratings	3.62	Highly Sensitive	2
Overall Weighted Mean	3.59	Highly Sensitive	

As presented in table 2, an overall weighted mean of 3.59 indicates that the respondents are highly sensitive to price. This suggests that students carefully evaluate pricing factors before making purchasing decisions. Among the indicators, comparison shopping ranked first (3.73), followed by reviews and ratings (3.62), price elasticity (3.56), brand loyalty (3.55), and promotions (3.51) as the least emphasized. These results indicate that students prioritize comparing prices and evaluating peer feedback over promotional incentives alone.

These findings are consistent with Zhao (2021), who emphasized the importance of price comparison and transparency in shaping consumer decisions. Similarly, Deloitte (2022) reported that younger consumers value affordability and comparative evaluation before purchasing. Kagan (2025) also highlighted that price sensitivity significantly affects purchasing behavior, particularly in digital environments where consumers have easy access to pricing information.

Moreover, Lee (2023) noted that digital platforms increase consumers' responsiveness to pricing strategies by providing real-time access to price variations and alternatives. Mayya (2021) further explained that mobile shopping environments enhance comparison shopping behavior, enabling consumers to make more cost-efficient decisions. In addition, Kujur (2019) emphasized that online engagement and information accessibility contribute to consumers' ability to evaluate price fairness and value.

These studies confirm that students are strategic and value-driven consumers in online marketplaces.

Table 3
The Online Shopping Behavior of the Selected Students of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna

Indicators	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. I prefer online shopping because it is more convenient than in-store shopping.	3.33	Very Positive	9
2. I am more likely to shop online when I have a positive previous experience with an e-commerce platform.	3.46	Very Positive	7
3. I often make impulse purchases when shopping online.	3.86	Very Positive	2
4. The availability of multiple payment options encourages me to shop online.	3.51	Very Positive	6
5. I prioritize secure and trustworthy websites when making online purchases.	3.62	Very Positive	5
6. I tend to purchase from e-commerce stores that offer a hassle-free return and refund policy.	3.85	Very Positive	3
7. I spend more time browsing online stores when I see appealing promotions.	3.90	Very Positive	1
8. I enjoy shopping online due to the wide variety of products available.	3.73	Very Positive	4
9. I am more likely to buy products from online stores that have responsive customer service.	3.25	Very Positive	10
10. My online shopping habits are influenced by the ease of navigating an e-commerce platform.	3.36	Very Positive	8
Average Weighted Mean	3.59	Very Positive	

As presented in table 3, it can be drawn from the data that the indicators concerning the students' level of online shopping behavior revealed a descriptive equivalent of very positive with an overall weighted mean of 3.59. This means that students tend to spend more time browsing online stores when they see appealing promotions, often make impulse purchases when shopping online, and prefer e-commerce platforms that offer a hassle-free return and refund policy.

Indicator 7, "Respondents spend more time browsing online stores when they see appealing promotions," obtained the highest weighted mean of 3.90 and was therefore ranked 1. This was followed by Indicator 3, "Respondents often make impulse purchases when shopping online," which had a weighted mean of 3.86 and was ranked 2. Indicator 6, "Respondents tend to purchase from e-commerce stores that offer a hassle-free return and refund policy," received a weighted mean of 3.85 and was ranked 3. At rank 4 was

Indicator 8, “Respondents enjoy shopping online due to the wide variety of products available,” with a weighted mean of 3.73. This was followed by Indicator 5, “Respondents prioritize secure and trustworthy websites when making online purchases,” which obtained a weighted mean of 3.62 and was ranked 5. Indicator 4, “The availability of multiple payment options encourages respondents to shop online,” was ranked 6 with a weighted mean of 3.51. Indicator 2, “Respondents are more likely to shop online when I have a positive previous experience with an e-commerce platform,” came next at rank 7 with a weighted mean of 3.46. Indicator 10, “My online shopping habits are influenced by the ease of navigating an e-commerce platform,” obtained a weighted mean of 3.36 and was ranked 8. Indicator 1, “Respondents prefer online shopping because it is more convenient than in-store shopping,” followed at rank 9 with a weighted mean of 3.33. Lastly, Indicator 9, “Respondents are more likely to buy products from online stores that have responsive customer service,” ranked 10 with the lowest weighted mean of 3.25.

The findings of this study are supported by the work of Nyrhinen (2024), who stated that promotional offers and appealing visuals on online platforms significantly influence consumer behavior, leading to increased browsing time and impulse purchases. Similarly, Kumar (2024) found that ease of return and refund policies play a critical role in shaping online consumer trust and loyalty, confirming the students’ preference for hassle-free e-commerce experiences. In addition, Rosario (2021) emphasized that the variety of available products and secure online platforms are essential factors that enhance the overall online shopping experience.

Furthermore, Yan (2024) explained that personalized recommendations and user-friendly platforms significantly influence online purchasing behavior by improving convenience and satisfaction. Liang (2024) also highlighted that influencer marketing and digital content exposure increase consumers’ intention to purchase online. Additionally, Fernandes (2017) emphasized that trust, convenience, and perceived value are key determinants of online shopping behavior.

These findings align with the current study, which shows a strong inclination toward convenience, trust, personalization, and promotional appeal as motivators of students' online shopping behavior.

Table 4

Relationship between the Student’s Level of Social Media Influence and Level of Price Sensitivity

	Pearson R	P-Value	Interpretation
Social Media Influence and Price Sensitivity	0.973 Positive Correlation	Strong <0.001	Significant
0.05 Level of Significance			

As presented in table 4, significant relationship between the students’ level of social media influence and level of price sensitivity obtained a Pearson r value of 0.973, which is indicative of a strong positive correlation. The p-value of <0.001, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05, indicates a significant relationship between the students’ level of social media influence and price sensitivity. This means that the higher the level of social media influence, the higher the level of price sensitivity of the selected students of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna.

This result is supported by Guoqiang (2024), who emphasized that online word-of-mouth and social media exposure significantly influence consumer price perceptions. Similarly, Machi (2022) found that digital

marketing strategies and influencer content increases consumer awareness and responsiveness to pricing, thereby strengthening price sensitivity in online environments.

Table 5
Relationship between the Student’s Level of Social Media Influence and Online Shopping Behavior

	Pearson R	P-Value	Interpretation
Social Media Influence and Online Shopping Behavior	0.970 Positive Strong Correlation	<0.001	Significant
0.05 Level of Significance			

As presented in table 5, significant relationship between the students’ level of social media influence and online shopping behavior obtained a Pearson r value of 0.970, which is indicative of a positive strong correlation. The p-value of <0.001, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05, indicates a significant relationship between the students’ level of social media influence and price sensitivity. This means that the higher the level of social media influence, the more it influences the online shopping behavior to the selected students of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna.

This result aligns with the findings of Kutz et al. (2024), who emphasized that social media platforms play a vital role in shaping online consumer behavior, especially among younger demographics. Similarly, Tshabukole (2022) supported the idea that social media marketing and influencer content significantly impact consumers’ purchasing decisions by enhancing visibility, trust, and emotional connection with products.

Table 6
Relationship between the Student’s Level of Price Sensitivity and Online Shopping Behavior

	Pearson R	P-Value	Interpretation
Price Sensitivity and Online Shopping Behavior	0.888 Positive Strong Correlation	<0.001	Significant
0.05 Level of Significance			

As presented in table 6, significant relationship between the students’ level of price sensitivity and online shopping behavior obtained a Pearson r value of 0.888 is indicative of a positive strong correlation. The p-value of <0.001, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05, indicates a significant relationship between the students’ level of social media influence and price sensitivity. This means that the higher the level of price sensitivity, the more it influences the online shopping behavior to the selected students of University of Perpetual Help System Laguna.

This finding is supported by Liu (2022), who found that price-sensitive consumers are more likely to seek online platforms that offer better deals and discounts. Additionally, Zhao (2021) emphasized that the ability to compare prices and access real-time promotions enhances consumer engagement in e-commerce, especially among young digital natives.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concluded that students are highly influenced by social media and exhibit strong price sensitivity, both of which significantly shape their online shopping behavior. Social media serves as a powerful platform for product discovery, engagement, and consumer interaction, while price sensitivity encourages students to make rational and value-driven purchasing decisions through comparison and evaluation. Moreover, the strong relationships among the variables indicate that social media exposure and pricing awareness work together in influencing consumer behavior in digital environments. Overall, students' online shopping behavior is driven by a combination of digital engagement and economic considerations, highlighting the importance of responsible and informed consumption in the modern e-commerce landscape.

The study recommends that students practice responsible online shopping by critically evaluating social media content, promotions, and product reviews to minimize impulsive buying and improve financial awareness. Educational institutions may integrate digital consumer literacy programs to enhance students' understanding of social media influence, price evaluation, and informed decision-making. Online sellers and digital marketers are encouraged to adopt transparent pricing strategies, provide accurate product information, and create ethical and engaging content that builds consumer trust. E-commerce platforms may improve user experience by ensuring secure, accessible, and user-friendly systems, including efficient customer service, flexible payment options, and reliable return policies. Finally, future researchers are encouraged to explore additional variables such as digital trust, psychological factors, and brand perception, and may utilize qualitative approaches to gain deeper insights into students' online shopping behavior.

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