
DIGITAL INFLUENCE AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AMONG STUDENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA TRENDS ON FASHION SELECTION AND NUTRITIONAL FOOD CHOICES IN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, NSUKKA, ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

Ozioko Nnenna Celestina & Nwaozuru Daniel Ikechukwu

Department of Home Economics and Hospitality Management Education, Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Correspondence: nwaozurud@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined digital influence and consumer behaviour among students on social media trends on fashion selection and nutritional food choices in university of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria. The research addressed how social media trends influence the fashion selection patterns and nutritional food choices, factors contributing to digital influence, and strategies for promoting informed, healthy, and sustainable decision-making among students. Survey research design was adopted for the study. The population was 322 Home Economics and Home Science students from the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State and the total sample was used. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data titled: Digital Influence and Consumer Behaviour Questionnaire (DICBQ) and analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that social media trends strongly influence fashion selection patterns ($\bar{x}_g = 3.24$). The study showed that digital media significantly affects nutritional food choices and family feeding practices ($\bar{x}_g = 3.20$). Furthermore, peer influence, online reviews, and accessibility of information, were found to influence consumer behaviour ($\bar{x}_g = 3.30$). The strategies for improving decision-making, including media literacy, nutrition education, and critical thinking skills ($\bar{x}_g = 3.49$). The study concluded that digital media plays a significant role in shaping students' lifestyle choices, with both positive and negative implications. The study recommends integrating digital literacy into the curriculum and strengthening nutrition education to help students navigate misleading online content while prioritizing quality and health over viral trends.

Keywords: Digital Influence, Consumer Behaviour, Home Economics, Home Science, Social Media Trends, Fashion Selection, Nutritional Choices, Enugu State.

Introduction

Digital influence is created through digital technologies, particularly social media platforms, on individuals' attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours. It encompasses various forms of online interactions, including social media engagement, digital marketing, influencer endorsements, and user-generated content (Olanrewaju, 2024; Appel et al., 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2021; Lou & Yuan, 2019). Digital technologies have fundamentally transformed human interaction, communication, and consumption patterns across the globe where social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube have evolved beyond mere communication tools to become powerful agents of socialization, information dissemination, and consumer influence (Kietzmann et al., 2018; Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). These platforms

provide instant access to fashion trends, dietary information, product reviews, and lifestyle content, thereby influencing how individuals perceive and select goods and services. Digital influence operates through mechanisms such as social comparison, peer pressure, information accessibility, and algorithm-driven content exposure, all of which shape consumer decision-making processes (Casaló et al., 2020). Digital influence refers to the impact of online platforms, content creators, advertisements, and peer interactions on individuals' attitudes, preferences, and behaviours. The rapid advancement of digital technologies and the widespread use of social media platforms have significantly transformed how individuals access information, make decisions, and adopted lifestyle patterns (Valkenburg et al., 2022). These platforms shape perceptions, attitudes, and decision-making processes, particularly among young people and students who are highly engaged in digital environments. Social media platforms serve as virtual runways where new styles are showcased and adopted by users. The accessibility of fashion content has led to increased consumer awareness and participation in fashion trends (McNeill & Venter, 2019). Djafarova & Bowes, (2021), indicates that social media not only influences the perception of fashion products but also drives purchasing behaviour among students, as they seek to align with current trends and social expectations. This trend-driven consumption is often characterized by impulsive buying and a desire for social validation. As a result, in modern societies digital influence has emerged as a critical determinant of consumer behaviour.

Consumer behavior refers to the processes individuals or groups use in selecting, purchasing, using, evaluating, and disposing of goods and services to satisfy their needs and wants and has increasingly been mediated by digital interactions (Kotler et al., 2020). Consumer behavior also involves the study of how individuals make decisions regarding the acquisition and use of goods and services. The integration of digital media into everyday life has altered traditional consumption patterns by providing instant access to product information, peer reviews, influencer endorsements, and trending content. Formal training, students are increasingly influenced by digital content, which either complement or contradict established educational principles (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016; Dwivedi et al., 2021). Social media trends often promote fast fashion, brand consciousness, convenience foods, and visually appealing diets, which not always align with sustainability, health, or cultural appropriateness (Joy et al., 2012; Carah & Shaul, 2016). Consequently, individuals no longer rely solely on personal preferences or cultural norms; instead, they are significantly influenced by online content and virtual communities (Hajli et al., 2017). Nisar & Prabhakar, (2017), indicate that digital

platforms empower consumers with information and exposure, thereby shaping their purchasing decisions and consumption habits in unprecedented ways.

Among students, particularly those in tertiary institutions, the influence of social media is even more pronounced. Social media influencers, celebrities, and online retailers shape students' preferences for clothing styles, fabrics, and purchasing habits (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Fast fashion trends, driven by constant online updates, encourage frequent consumption and undermine traditional values of durability, functionality, and cost-effectiveness emphasized in Home Economics education (McNeill & Moore, 2015). Consequently, students prioritize aesthetics and social approval over quality, affordability, and sustainability in their fashion choices. Olanrewaju et al., (2020), shown that social media advertising significantly affects students' buying behaviour, as exposure to digital content increases awareness, interest, and eventual patronage of products. Casaló et al., (2020), suggests that social media exposure increases students' awareness of fashion products and enhances their likelihood of adopting trending styles. Similarly, social media has been found in shaping eating habits, with a substantial proportion of students acknowledging that online content influences their food preferences and consumption patterns (Turner & Lefevre, 2017).

Social media also significantly affects nutritional food choices. The proliferation of food-related content, including advertisements, recipes, and lifestyle posts, influences dietary behaviours and preferences. Coates et al., (2019), have shown that frequent exposure to social media content is associated with changes in food consumption patterns, including increased intake of certain food categories and shifts in dietary habits. While social media can promote healthy eating through nutrition education and awareness campaigns, it can also encourage unhealthy consumption patterns due to the promotion of fast foods, sugary products, and visually appealing but nutritionally poor meals. Thus, the emergence of social media has revolutionized consumer behaviour by creating a participatory and interactive environment where consumers are both producers and consumers of content. Turner & Lefevre, (2017), have shown that a majority of students report being influenced by social media in their dietary decisions, highlighting the importance of digital platforms in shaping nutritional behaviours. Unlike traditional media, which operates in a one-way communication model, social media allows for real-time interaction, feedback, and engagement. This has led to the rise of digital communities and influencer culture, where individuals with large followings can significantly impact consumer preferences and behaviours.

Home Economics education emphasizes the importance of healthy eating, meal planning, and nutritional awareness. However, the influence of social media can either support

or undermine these educational objectives. While digital platforms can be used to disseminate nutrition education and promote healthy lifestyles, they can also expose students to misleading information and unhealthy dietary trends. This dual role of social media underscores the need for critical media literacy and informed consumption practices among students. Families serve as primary units of consumption and socialization, where values, norms, and behaviours are transmitted. The influence of students' consumption behaviours on family decisions is particularly relevant in areas such as food and clothing. As students adopt trends from social media, they introduce new consumption patterns within their families, thus influencing household decisions and practices.

Hence, Home Economics education encompasses areas such as clothing and textiles as well as food and nutrition, understanding digital influence is particularly important. Home Economics students are not only consumers but also future educators, homemakers, and professionals responsible for promoting healthy living and sustainable consumption practices. Their exposure to social media trends can significantly impact their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours related to fashion selection and nutritional food choices, which in turn affect family wellbeing. In Enugu State, Nigeria, the growing penetration of internet services and mobile technology has intensified the use of social media among students. This has led to increased exposure to global and local digital trends, which influence their consumption behaviours. However, due the widespread use of social media, there is limited empirical research focusing specifically on how digital influence affects Home Economics students' fashion and nutritional choices within the family context. Families play a crucial role in shaping consumption habits, and the behaviours of students can have a ripple effect on household decisions, particularly in areas related to clothing and food. Therefore, this study examined the digital influence on consumer behaviour among Home Economics students in Enugu State, with a focus on social media trends in fashion selection and nutritional food choices within families. By exploring the interplay between digital exposure and consumption practices.

Purpose of Study

The general purpose of this study was to examine digital influence and consumer behaviour among students on social media trends in fashion selection and nutritional food choices in university of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the extent to which social media trends influence the fashion selection patterns of students in Enugu State.

2. Determine the influence of digital media on the nutritional food choices of students and how these choices affect family feeding practices.
3. Identify the factors contributing to digital influence on consumer behaviour in decision-making among students.
4. Identify strategies for promoting informed, healthy, and sustainable decision-making among students.

Literature Review

Digital Influence

Digital influence contains the effects of social media, online advertising, influencer marketing, and algorithm-driven content on decision-making processes. The contemporary digital era, individuals are increasingly exposed to diverse forms of digital content, which significantly affect how they interpret information and make consumption choices. Digital influence operates through mechanisms such as persuasion, social proof, personalization, and engagement, making it a powerful driver of modern consumer behavior (Smith & Anderson, 2018). The rise of digital technologies has transformed traditional communication patterns, enabling real-time interaction and access to global information networks. Consumers no longer rely solely on physical experiences or word-of-mouth; instead, they depend heavily on online reviews, social media endorsements, and digital advertisements. According to Indriani, Haris, & Nurdin, (2023), digital platforms have redefined consumer engagement by providing instant access to product information and peer opinions, thereby enhancing informed decision-making. This transformation has increased the speed and scope of influence, making digital environments central to consumption dynamics. Furthermore, digital influence is facilitated by algorithms that tailor content to users' preferences. These algorithms analyze user behaviour and present personalized recommendations, thereby reinforcing certain consumption patterns. This creates a feedback loop where individuals are continuously exposed to similar content, strengthening their preferences and shaping their choices (Bakshy et al., 2015). Such mechanisms highlight the pervasive and often subtle nature of digital influence in modern society.

Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour involves psychological, social, cultural, and economic factors that influence decision-making. Consumer behaviour is a dynamic field that examines how individuals respond to internal motivations and external stimuli in the marketplace. Consumer behaviour is rooted in understanding how needs and wants are identified and satisfied.

Consumers engage in a decision-making process that includes problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase evaluation. In the digital age, this process has become more complex due to the abundance of information and the influence of online platforms (Kotler et al., 2020). Digital environments have significantly reshaped consumer behaviour by providing access to diverse information sources. Consumers now rely on online reviews, ratings, and social media content to guide their decisions. Shahid, & Qureshi, (2022) noted that digital platforms have enhanced consumer empowerment by enabling access to real-time information and peer feedback. This has shifted the balance of power from producers to consumers. In the context of social media, peer influence plays a significant role, as individuals tend to adopt behaviours observed within their networks (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). Economic factors such as income, price, and availability also affect consumer behaviour. However, in digital contexts, emotional and symbolic factors often outweigh rational considerations. Consumers may purchase products not only for their functional value but also for their social and psychological significance.

Fashion Selection

Fashion selection refers to the process of choosing clothing and accessories based on personal preferences, cultural influences, and social factors. It involves decisions related to style, colour, fabric, and functionality. Fashion selection is influenced by both individual tastes and external factors such as trends and social norms (McNeill & Venter, 2019). Fashion is a form of self-expression and identity, individuals use clothing to communicate their personality, values, and social status. In modern society, fashion selection is increasingly influenced by digital media, where individuals are exposed to diverse styles and trends. Social media platforms have become significant sources of fashion inspiration (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Users can access a wide range of styles and ideas, making it easier to experiment with different looks. Research indicates that social media has transformed the way fashion trends are created and adopted, with influencers playing a key role in shaping consumer preferences.

Nutritional Food Choices

Nutritional food choices refer to the selection of foods based on their nutritional value and health benefits. These choices are influenced by knowledge, preferences, cultural practices, and environmental factors. Nutrition plays a vital role in maintaining health and preventing diseases (Sobal & Bisogni, 2009). Food choices are shaped by both individual and social factors. Family habits, cultural traditions, and peer influence significantly affect dietary

patterns. Research shows that social interactions can influence food choices, with individuals adopting healthier or unhealthier eating habits based on their social environment. In the digital age, nutritional information is widely available on social media and online platforms (Coates et al., 2019). This accessibility has both positive and negative implications. While it can promote healthy eating, it can also spread misinformation and unrealistic dietary practices.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The survey design is considered most appropriate for this study because it enables the researcher to systematically collect data from a relatively large number of respondents in order to describe, analyze, and interpret the existing situation regarding digital influence and consumer behaviour among Home Economics students.

The study was carried out at University of Nigeria, Nsukka, located in Nsukka within Enugu State in the South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Nsukka is a prominent academic town known for its vibrant student population and strong educational infrastructure, particularly in programmes such as Home Economics and related disciplines. The university environment is characterized by a high concentration of young adults who are actively engaged in academic, social, and digital activities, making it an ideal setting for examining patterns of consumer behaviour. The presence of diverse students from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds further enriches the study context, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of how digital exposure shapes lifestyle choices. This high level of digital engagement, combined with the academic orientation of students toward fashion and nutrition, makes the University of Nigeria, Nsukka a suitable and relevant area for investigating the influence of social media on consumer behaviour.

The total population of the study was 322. The population comprised of all Home Economics Education and Home Science students across all levels (100–400 level) in the University of Nigeria Nsukka, Enugu State who are actively engaged in courses related to Clothing and Textiles as well as Food and Nutrition during the 2024/2025 academic session. These students are considered appropriate for the study because they are directly involved in areas related to fashion selection and nutritional practices, and are also active users of social media platforms

The total population was used for the study; therefore, no sample was used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Digital Influence and Consumer Behaviour Questionnaire (DICBQ). The questionnaire was designed using a 4-

point scale as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4, Agree (A) – 3, Disagree (D) – 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) – 1. The instrument was divided into four sections: Section A examine the extent to which social media trends influence the fashion selection patterns of students in Enugu State with 11 items, Section B determine the influence of digital media on the nutritional food choices of students and how these choices affect family feeding practices with 11 items, Section C identify the factors contributing to digital influence on consumer behaviour in decision-making among students with 13 items, and Section D identify strategies for promoting informed, healthy, and sustainable decision-making among students with 15 items.

The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by two experts from the Department of Home Economics and Hospitality Management Education, Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education, and one from Home Science, Faculty of Agriculture, all at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The experts examined the questionnaire for clarity, relevance, appropriateness of language, and alignment with the objectives of the study. Their suggestions and corrections were incorporated into the final version of the instrument to ensure its validity and suitability for data collection.

A total of 322 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents by the researcher with the assistance of 5 trained research assistants. The questionnaires were distributed personally hand-to-hand and on-the-spot collection method was adopted to retrieve the completed questionnaires immediately after administration. This approach ensured a high retrieval rate and minimized data loss, thereby enhancing the accuracy and completeness of the data collected.

The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Any item with a mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as Agreed, while any item with a mean score below 2.50 was regarded as Disagreed. The mean was used to determine the average response of respondents on each item, while the standard deviation was used to measure the degree of variability or dispersion of responses from the mean.

Results

Table 1 shows that all items have mean scores range from 3.05-3.45. This implies that social media trends strongly influence fashion selection patterns among Home Economics students. The overall mean of $\bar{x} = 3.24$ confirms a high level of influence, while the standard deviation values indicate moderate variability in responses.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on social media trends influence the fashion selection patterns of students in Enugu State

NB	Social Media Platforms commonly used among Households	$\bar{x}$	SD	Re.
1	Social media trends influence choice of clothing styles.	3.32	.71	A
2	Fashion ideas are often obtained from social media platforms.	3.45	.66	A
3	Trending outfits on social media affect clothing preferences.	3.28	.74	A
4	Influencers' fashion posts shape clothing decisions.	3.21	.78	A
5	Social media promotes interest in modern fashion styles.	3.36	.69	A
6	Online fashion advertisements influence clothing choices.	3.18	.75	A
7	Peer fashion posts on social media affect dressing patterns.	3.09	.80	A
8	Social media trends encourage frequent change of wardrobe.	3.05	.83	A
9	Fashion videos online guide clothing selection.	3.27	.72	A
10	Exposure to social media increases interest in branded clothes.	3.14	.77	A
11	Social media trends influence choice of colours and designs	3.30	.70	A
Overall		3.24	.74	A

Key: $\bar{x}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; n = Number of Respondents; A = Agree; D = Disagree.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on digital media on the nutritional food choices of students and how these choices affect family feeding practices

NB	Social Media Platforms commonly used among Households	$\bar{x}$	SD	Re.
1	Digital media influences choice of daily meals.	3.18	.76	A
2	Food trends online affect eating habits.	3.25	.73	A
3	Social media recipes guide meal preparation.	3.41	.68	A
4	Online food advertisements influence food selection.	3.22	.74	A
5	Nutrition information online affects food choices.	3.36	.69	A
6	Digital media promotes interest in fast foods.	3.10	.82	A
7	Social media encourages trying new diets.	3.28	.71	A
8	Online food content affects family feeding patterns.	3.15	.78	A
9	Digital platforms influence food budgeting decisions.	3.05	.84	A
10	Social media affects preference for processed foods.	3.02	.86	A
11	Digital media influences healthy eating practices	3.20	.75	A
Overall		3.20	.76	A

Key: $\bar{x}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; n = Number of Respondents; A = Agree; D = Disagree.

Table 2 indicate general agreement that digital media influences nutritional food choices and family feeding practices with the mean ranging from 3.02-3.41. The overall mean of $\bar{x}$ = 3.20 suggests a strong influence, while the SD values show moderate dispersion. This implies that students rely on digital media for food-related decisions, which affects household feeding patterns.

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on factors contributing to digital influence on consumer behaviour in decision-making among students

NB	Social Media Platforms commonly used among Households	$\bar{x}$	SD	Re.
1	Peer influence affects decisions on social media.	3.31	.72	A
2	Online reviews influence purchase decisions.	3.38	.69	A
3	Influencers' opinions affect product choices.	3.27	.73	A
4	Availability of information online shapes decisions.	3.42	.66	A
5	Attractive advertisements influence buying behaviour.	3.29	.71	A
6	Price information online affects product selection.	3.35	.68	A
7	Brand popularity on social media affects choices.	3.22	.75	A

8	Ease of access to online content influences decisions.	3.40	.67	A
9	Personal interest affects response to digital content.	3.18	.78	A
10	Cultural values influence online consumption behaviour.	3.12	.81	A
11	Income level affects digital purchase decisions.	3.25	.74	A
12	Trust in online information affects choices.	3.30	.70	A
13	Frequency of social media use influences decisions	3.37	.68	A
Overall		3.30	.71	A

Key: $\bar{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; n = Number of Respondents; A = Agree; D = Disagree.

Table 3 show that multiple factors influence digital consumer behavior with the mean ranging from 3.12-3.42. Indicating that peer influence, online reviews, accessibility, and trust significantly shape decision-making. The overall mean of $\bar{x} = 3.30$ indicates a strong influence on digital consumer behavior

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation Ratings on strategies for promoting informed, healthy, and sustainable decision-making among students

NB	Social Media Platforms commonly used among Households	$\bar{x}$	SD	Re.
1	Verification of online information improves decision-making.	3.52	.61	A
2	Nutrition education promotes healthy food choices.	3.60	.58	A
3	Awareness of fashion sustainability supports better choices.	3.44	.65	A
4	Limiting exposure to misleading content improves decisions.	3.39	.70	A
5	Critical thinking skills enhance online decision-making.	3.55	.60	A
6	Guidance from experts supports informed choices.	3.48	.63	A
7	Comparing alternatives improves product selection.	3.41	.68	A
8	Budget planning supports responsible consumption.	3.50	.62	A
9	Media literacy helps evaluate digital information.	3.53	.59	A
10	Avoidance of impulse buying improves decisions.	3.46	.66	A
11	Knowledge of food labels promotes healthy eating.	3.57	.57	A
12	Family influence supports better food decisions.	3.38	.71	A
13	Awareness of health risks improves food choices.	3.59	.56	A
14	Preference for quality over trends supports sustainability.	3.43	.67	A
15	Educational campaigns improve consumer awareness.	3.51	.60	A
Overall		3.49	.63	A

Key: $\bar{X}$ = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation; n = Number of Respondents; A = Agree; D = Disagree.

Table 4 indicates strong agreement on strategies for improving decision-making with the mean score ranging from $\bar{x} = 3.38$ -3.60. The overall mean of $\bar{x} = 3.49$ shows that respondents recognize the importance of education, media literacy, and critical thinking. The low SD .63 indicate consistency in responses

Discussion of the Findings

The findings from Table 1 revealed that social media trends significantly influence the fashion selection patterns of students in Enugu State. The results showed that students obtain fashion ideas from social media platforms, are influenced by trending outfits, and are guided by fashion videos and influencer content. This finding indicates that social media has become a dominant source of fashion information and inspiration among students. This finding aligns

with Bhardwaj et al. (2024), studies which report that social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok significantly shape fashion consumption patterns among young people. They also found that influencer marketing and visual content strongly affect clothing preferences and purchasing behaviour among youth. Similarly, Vladimirova, Henninger, and Alosaimi (2023) observed that social media accelerates the diffusion of fashion trends and increases consumer responsiveness to new styles. Joy, (2025); Ilyas, (2023), confirmed that students rely heavily on social media for fashion inspiration, often prioritizing trends over traditional or cultural attire. The implication is that digital exposure is redefining fashion identity among students. Furthermore, the findings showed that peer influence and exposure to branded clothing through social media contribute to frequent wardrobe changes. This supports the theory of social comparison Powdthavee, (2024), which suggests that individuals adjust their behaviour based on perceived norms within their social networks.

The findings from Table 2 indicated that digital media significantly influences nutritional food choices and family feeding practices. Students agreed that digital media affects daily meal choices, guides meal preparation through online recipes, and influences food preferences. This finding is consistent with World Health Organization (2023), which shows that digital media plays a critical role in influencing food choices and dietary habits. Also, exposure to online food marketing significantly affects young people's dietary preferences, often promoting unhealthy food choices. Similarly, Gligorić et al. (2021) reported that social networks influence eating behaviours through peer interactions and shared content. Nikolaou, et al (2020) shown that increased access to digital media has led to a shift from traditional diets to more processed and fast foods among young people. The findings also revealed that digital media influences family feeding practices, indicating that students transfer their online food experiences to household settings. This is particularly important in a study conducted by Camilleri, (2023), stating that in Home Economics, there is need where students are expected to apply nutritional knowledge in family contexts. However, the influence of fast food trends and processed food preferences raises concerns about potential negative health outcomes. Friedman, et al (2022), reports that social media often promotes convenience foods, which may not meet nutritional standards.

The findings from Table 3 showed that multiple factors contribute to digital influence on consumer behaviour. Key factors identified include peer influence, online reviews, influencer opinions, availability of information, and ease of access to digital content. These findings are supported by Pachauri, (2001) contemporary consumer behaviour theories which emphasize the role of information and social influence in decision-making. Jibril and Padic

(2024), found that digital platforms empower consumers by providing access to real-time information, which enhances decision-making. Similarly, Kotler and Keller (2022) noted that social, psychological, and technological factors interact to shape consumer behaviour in digital environments. The influence of online reviews and trust in digital information highlights the importance of credibility in online content. You, and Joshi, (2020), shown that consumers are more likely to rely on peer reviews and user-generated content than traditional advertising. The role of income level and cultural values also indicates that digital behaviour is influenced by both economic and socio-cultural factors.

The findings from Table 4 revealed strong agreement on strategies for promoting informed, healthy, and sustainable decision-making. Respondents emphasized the importance of verification of information, nutrition education, critical thinking, media literacy, and awareness of health risks. This finding aligns with Anurogo, et al (2023), on global efforts to promote digital literacy and health education as tools for improving consumer behaviour. UNESCO (2023) emphasizes the importance of media and information literacy in enabling individuals to critically evaluate digital content. Similarly, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2022) highlights the role of nutrition education in promoting healthy eating habits. The findings also suggest that strategies such as avoiding impulse buying, comparing alternatives, and prioritizing quality over trends can enhance sustainable consumption. This is consistent with Gunawan, et al (2025) research on sustainable consumer behaviour, which emphasizes the need for awareness and education in promoting responsible consumption.

Conclusion

The study concludes that digital influence plays a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour among students in Enugu State. Social media trends strongly influence fashion selection, while digital media significantly affects nutritional food choices and family feeding practices. Various factors, including peer influence, online reviews, and accessibility of information, contribute to digital consumer behaviour. However, the study also highlights that informed decision-making can be enhanced through education, media literacy, and critical evaluation of digital content. Overall, digital platforms serve as both opportunities and challenges in shaping consumption patterns among students.

Implications of the Findings

The following are the implications of the findings

1. The findings imply that social media has become a primary source of fashion and lifestyle information among students, influencing their identity and consumption patterns.
2. The influence of digital media on food choices suggests potential health risks if unhealthy trends are adopted without proper knowledge.
3. The role of peer influence and online reviews indicates that students are highly susceptible to social and digital pressures in decision-making.
4. The recognition of strategies such as media literacy and nutrition education implies that educational interventions can effectively improve consumer behaviour.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made

1. Educational institutions should integrate digital literacy and media education into curricula to enhance critical evaluation of online content.
2. Nutrition education programmes should be strengthened to guide students in making healthy and balanced food choices.
3. Awareness campaigns should be organized to promote sustainable fashion practices and discourage excessive consumption driven by social media trends.
4. Government and regulatory bodies should monitor digital advertisements to reduce the spread of misleading information, especially in food and fashion sectors.
5. Students should be encouraged to verify online information, compare alternatives, and prioritize quality and health over trends in their consumption decisions.

References

- Anurogo, D., Syarif, A., La Ramba, H., Putri, N. D., Putri, U. M. P., Salsabila, A., ... & Ilmi, A. A. J. (2023). Digital Literacy 5.0 to enhance multicultural education. *Multicultural Islamic Education Review*, 95-104.
- Appel, G., Grewal, L., Hadi, R., & Stephen, A. T. (2020). The future of social media in marketing. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing science*, 48(1), 79-95. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-019-00695-1>
- Bakshy, E., Messing, S., & Adamic, L. A. (2015). Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, 348(6239), 1130-1132. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aaa1160>
- Bhardwaj, S., Kumar, N., Gupta, R., Baber, H., & Venkatesh, A. (2024). Social media influencers and consumer behaviour. *Journal of Creative Communications*.
- Camilleri, A. (2023). *The role of the Home Economics practical component in teaching and learning* (Master's thesis, University of Malta).
- Carah, N., & Shaul, M. (2016). Brands and Instagram: Point, tap, swipe, glance. *Mobile Media & Communication*, 4(1), 69-84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2015.1061573>

- Casaló, L. V., Flavián, C., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2020). Influencers on Instagram: Antecedents and consequences of opinion leadership. *Journal of business research*, 117, 510-519. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.07.055>
- Coates, A. E., Hardman, C. A., Halford, J. C., Christiansen, P., & Boyland, E. J. (2019). Social media influencer marketing and children's food intake: a randomized trial. *Pediatrics*, 143(4). <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16203894>
- Djafarova, E., & Bowes, T. (2021). 'Instagram made Me buy it': Generation Z impulse purchases in fashion industry. *Journal of retailing and consumer services*, 59, 102345. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2020.102345>
- Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Rana, N. P., & Raman, R. (2023). Social media adoption, usage and impact in business-to-business (B2B) context: A state-of-the-art literature review. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 25(3), 971-993. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iinfomgt.2021.102350>
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2022). *Nutrition education and consumer awareness*.
- Friedman, V. J., Wright, C. J., Molenaar, A., McCaffrey, T., Brennan, L., & Lim, M. S. (2022). The use of social media as a persuasive platform to facilitate nutrition and health behavior change in young adults: web-based conversation study. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 24(5), e28063.
- Gligorić, K., White, R. W., Kiciman, E., Horvitz, E., Chiolo, A., & West, R. (2021). Formation of social ties influences food choice: A campus-wide longitudinal study. *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction*, 5(CSCW1), 1-25.
- Guess, A., Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. (2019). Less than you think: Prevalence and predictors of fake news dissemination on Facebook. *Science advances*, 5(1), eaau4586. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aay3539>
- Gunawan, A. I., Hurriyati, R., Wibowo, L. A., & Monoarfa, H. (2025). Consumers in responsible consumption: what leads to sustainable behavior?. *Urbanization, Sustainability and Society*, 2(1), 257-281.
- Hajli, N., Sims, J., Zadeh, A. H., & Richard, M. O. (2017). A social commerce investigation of the role of trust in a social networking site on purchase intentions. *Journal of business research*, 71, 133-141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2016.11.013>
- Ilyas, M. (2023). Media Influence on Fashion and Identity: A Study of Female University Students. *Apex Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(2), 34-43.
- Jibril, A. B., & Padic, A. (2024). Digital influence on purchasing behaviour. *Cogent Business & Management*.
- Joy, A., Sherry Jr, J. F., Venkatesh, A., Wang, J., & Chan, R. (2012). Fast fashion, sustainability, and the ethical appeal of luxury brands. *Fashion theory*, 16(3), 273-295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540512456927>
- Joy, J. (2025). The Impact of Social Media Dressing Standards on Self-Identity and Physical Comfort.
- Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., & Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business horizons*, 54(3), 241-251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005>
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. (2022). *Marketing Management* (16th ed.). Pearson.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2015). *Framework for Marketing Management*, A. BoD—Books on Demand.
- Kross, E., Verduyn, P., Sheppes, G., Costello, C. K., Jonides, J., & Ybarra, O. (2021). Social media and well-being: Pitfalls, progress, and next steps. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 25(1), 55-66. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-01028-7>

- Lamberton, C., & Stephen, A. T. (2016). A thematic exploration of digital, social media, and mobile marketing: Research evolution from 2000 to 2015 and an agenda for future inquiry. *Journal of marketing*, 80(6), 146-172. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.15.0410>
- Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019). Influencer marketing: How message value and credibility affect consumer trust of branded content on social media. *Journal of interactive advertising*, 19(1), 58-73. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15252019.2018.1533501>
- McNeill, L., & Venter, B. (2019). Identity, self-concept and young women's engagement with collaborative, sustainable fashion consumption models. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 43(4), 368-378. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JFMM-01-2018-0002>
- Nikolaou, C. K., Robinson, T. N., Sim, K. A., & Lean, M. E. (2020). Turning the tables on obesity: young people, IT and social movements. *Nature Reviews Endocrinology*, 16(2), 117-122.
- Nisar, T. M., & Prabhakar, G. (2017). What factors determine e-satisfaction and consumer spending in e-commerce retailing?. *Journal of retailing and consumer services*, 39, 135-144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2017.07.010>
- Olanrewaju, A. S. (2024). *Factors Affecting Social Media Use by Entrepreneurs and the Impact of this Use on the Opportunity Recognition Process* (Doctoral dissertation, RMIT University).
- Olanrewaju, A. S. T., Whiteside, N., Hossain, M. A., & Mercieca, P. (2018, October). The influence of social media on entrepreneur motivation and marketing strategies in a developing country. In *Conference on e-Business, e-Services and e-Society* (pp. 355-364). Cham: Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e03620>
- Pachauri, M. (2001). Consumer behaviour: a literature review. *The Marketing Review*, 2(3), 319-355.
- Powdthavee, N. (2024). Social comparison theory. In *Encyclopedia of quality of life and well-being research* (pp. 6518-6519). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Smith, A., & Anderson, M. (2018). Social media use in 2018. *Pew research center*, 1, 1-4.
- Sobal, J., & Bisogni, C. A. (2009). Constructing food choice decisions. *Annals of behavioral medicine*, 38(suppl_1), s37-s46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12160-009-9124-5>
- Turner, P. G., & Lefevre, C. E. (2017). Instagram use is linked to increased symptoms of orthorexia nervosa. *Eating and Weight Disorders-Studies on Anorexia, Bulimia and Obesity*, 22(2), 277-284. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eatbeh.2017.08.001>
- UNESCO. (2023). *Media and information literacy in the digital age*.
- Valkenburg, P. M., Beyens, I., Meier, A., & Vanden Abeele, M. M. (2022). Advancing our understanding of the associations between social media use and well-being. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 47, 101357. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2021.08.007>
- Vladimirova, K., Henninger, C. E., & Alosaimi, S. I. (2023). Social media and fashion consumption. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*.
- Vraga, E. K., & Bode, L. (2020). Defining misinformation and understanding its bounded nature: Using expertise and evidence for describing misinformation. *Political Communication*, 37(1), 136-144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.2020.1723755>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2023). *Digital marketing of food and its impact on health*.
- You, Y., & Joshi, A. M. (2020). The impact of user-generated content and traditional media on customer acquisition and retention. *Journal of Advertising*, 49(3), 213-233.