

Social Media Platforms and Clothing Consumption of Undergraduate Students in University of Uyo

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of Social Media Platforms and Clothing Consumption of Undergraduate Students in University of Uyo. Four purposes, four research questions were raised to guide the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The area of the study was University of Uyo. The population consisted of 378 respondents. Stratified and Accidental sampling techniques were used to select 116 respondents. A structured questionnaire titled "Social Media Platforms and Clothing Consumption of Undergraduate Students in University of Uyo Questionnaire" (SMPCCUSUUQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was 0.87 which proved that the instrument was reliable for use in the study. Data obtained from the study was analyzed using inferential statistics - frequency, percentage, mean, rank, decision and standard deviations. Findings revealed that undergraduate students select hairstyles from Pinterest with ($\bar{x}$ = 2.70). Undergraduate students learn clothing upcycling skills from Instagram with ($\bar{x}$ = 3.04). The results showed that undergraduate students select their hairstyles from TikTok with ($\bar{x}$ = 3.04). Further findings revealed that checking price tags before buying clothing items ($\bar{x}$ = 3.31) was the highest clothing consumption practices of undergraduate students in the study area. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that, social media platforms such like Instagram, Pinterest, Tiktok etc influence undergraduate students' clothing consumption in the study area. The researcher recommends amongst others that undergraduate students in the study area should be encouraged to develop critical thinking skills regarding their clothing consumption, particularly in learning clothing upcycling skills from social media platforms.

Keyword: Clothing, Consumption, Media, Platforms, Social

Introduction

The social media has become an integral part of the lives of university students. The ubiquity of mobile devices, coupled with the rise of platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Pinterest, has revolutionized how young people communicate, socialize, and express themselves. Social media platforms serve as digital spaces where individuals create and consume content, forming virtual communities that often transcend geographical boundaries. According to Statista (2023), approximately 4.48 billion people use social media globally, with a significant portion of this population falling between the ages of 18 and 29, a demographic that includes university students. These platforms have become not only sources

of entertainment but also tools for self-expression, social interaction, and information dissemination. The pervasive presence of social media has transformed the way individuals perceive, consume, and express themselves through fashion, making it a central aspect of modern consumer behavior (Smith & Lee, 2021). This shift is not merely a reflection of technological advancement but a profound transformation in how individuals, especially younger demographics, engage with consumer culture.

Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and Pinterest have emerged as powerful tools for the dissemination of fashion trends, often bypassing traditional gatekeepers of cultural and economic context. These platforms enable users to share, curate, and consume fashion content in real-time, creating a dynamic and ever-evolving landscape of visual culture. As a result, undergraduate students are exposed to a constant stream of fashion-related content that shapes their aesthetic preferences, purchasing decisions, and self-perception. This phenomenon is particularly significant because it reflects a broader trend in which digital technology is not only a medium for communication but also a driver of consumer behavior, especially among younger, tech-savvy populations (Chen & Wang, 2020).

Clothing consumption refers to the process by which individuals acquire, use, and dispose of clothing items. Clothing consumption is more than a functional activity; it is a key component of self-expression and social identity. For undergraduate students, clothing serves as a means of communicating personal values, affiliations, and social status. In academic settings, students often use clothing as a way to signal their identity within peer groups, align with social norms, or express individuality. This behavior is influenced by various factors, including cultural norms, economic conditions, and increasingly, social media interactions. The rise of social media has significantly altered how consumers engage with fashion, as platforms like Pinterest, Instagram, and TikTok facilitate exposure to new styles and brands, making it easier for users to discover and purchase clothing (Keller, 2020). One notable trend in clothing consumption is the shift towards "fast fashion," characterized by rapid production cycles and low-cost garments. This model encourages consumers to buy more frequently, often leading to impulsive purchasing decisions driven by the desire to keep up with the latest trends (Cloonan, McKinney, & Mullen, 2021). The psychological impact of social media, where users frequently showcase their outfits and lifestyles, further exacerbates this trend, fostering a culture of constant consumption and comparison. The visibility of curated, often idealized images of fashion on these platforms can create pressure for individuals to conform to certain aesthetic standards, leading to increased consumerism and a heightened focus on self-presentation. As a result, social media not only shapes the way individuals perceive and engage with clothing but also influences the broader economic and cultural dynamics of fashion consumption.

The rapid dissemination of fashion trends through social media has also led to a phenomenon known as "fashion fast fashion," where students are encouraged to follow the latest trends quickly and frequently. This has created a culture of constant consumption, where students may feel pressure to keep up with the latest styles, often at the expense of

sustainability or long-term financial planning. The influence of social media on clothing consumption is further compounded by the role of influencers and brand collaborations, which can create a sense of urgency and FOMO (fear of missing out) among students. As a result, students may be more likely to make impulsive purchases based on the recommendations or endorsements of social media personalities than on their own personal preferences or needs (Chen & Wang, 2020).

Moreover, the role of social media in shaping self-identity cannot be overstated. For undergraduate students, who are in a period of intense self-discovery and social integration, clothing is a powerful tool for expressing one's identity. The visual content shared on social media often reflects not only aesthetic preferences but also cultural, social, and even political messages. As students engage with this content, they are not only influenced by the visual aesthetics but also by the underlying messages and values that are communicated through fashion. This makes the relationship between social media and clothing consumption a complex and multifaceted one, involving both individual and collective identity formation (Kim & Lee, 2019).

In addition to influencing trends and self-identity, social media also plays a significant role in shaping the purchasing behaviors of undergraduate students. The ease of access to online shopping, combined with the influence of social media recommendations, has made it easier for students to make impulsive or trend-driven purchases. This has led to a shift in consumer behavior, where students are more likely to prioritize social validation and peer approval over practical considerations. The influence of social media on clothing consumption is further amplified by the use of targeted advertising, which can create a sense of urgency and exclusivity around certain products or styles. As a result, students may be more susceptible to marketing strategies that leverage the power of social media to influence their purchasing decisions (Smith & Lee, 2021).

This study investigate the influence of social media platforms on clothing consumption practices of undergraduate students, examining how these platforms shape trends, influence clothing preferences, and contribute to the formation of self-identity. By analyzing the influences, there is easy access to online shopping, combined with the influence of social media recommendations, making it easier for students to make impulsive or trend-driven purchases.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine social media platforms and clothing consumption of undergraduate students in University of Uyo.

Specifically, this study sought to determine the:

1. clothing consumption practices of undergraduate students in University of Uyo.
2. influence of Pinterest on clothing consumption of undergraduate students in University of Uyo.
3. influence of Instagram on clothing consumption of undergraduate students in University of Uyo.

4. influence of TikTok on clothing consumption of undergraduate students in University of Uyo.

Research Questions

The study sought to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the clothing consumption practices of undergraduate students in University of Uyo?
2. What is the influence of Pinterest on clothing consumption of undergraduate students in University of Uyo?
3. What is the influence of Instagram on clothing consumption of undergraduate students in University of Uyo?
4. What is the influence of TikTok on clothing consumption of undergraduate students in University of Uyo?

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Survey research design is defined as “the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions”. This type of research allows for a variety of methods to recruit participants, collect data, and utilize various methods of instrumentation (Kothari, 2019). This design was adopted because it was suitable for collecting data from a large population since it sought respondents views on social media platforms and clothing consumption of undergraduate students in University of Uyo.

The study was conducted in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. It was established in 1991 by the Federal Government of Nigeria. Originally known as the University of Cross River State, it was renamed in 1999 to reflect its location and broader scope. The school is a non-profit public higher education institution located in the small city of Uyo, Akwa Ibom. Officially recognized by the National Universities Commission of Nigeria, University of Uyo (UNIUYO) is a large-sized of approximately 15,000 to 19,999 students (uniRank enrollment range) coeducational Nigerian higher education institution. University of Uyo (UNIUYO) offers courses and programs leading to officially recognized higher education degrees such as bachelor's degrees, Master's degree, Doctor of Philosophy etc. in several areas of study with about seventeen faculties.

The University of Uyo operates on a multi-system campus comprising of five different campus strategized at different positions in the state. We have The University of Uyo, Town Campus at Ikpa Road, The Annex Campus at Ikot Ekpene Road, The Ime Umanah Campus, Ediene, College Health Science, Abak Road and the University of Uyo Permanent Campus at Nwanniba. These Campuses collectively houses 17 faculties, a school for continuing education as well as a Post graduate school which enables the smooth running of undergraduate and post graduate programs. As a federal university it offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs across various disciplines, including social sciences, humanities, engineering, and natural sciences. The university has grown to become

a prominent institution in Nigeria, known for its emphasis on research, innovation, and community service.

University of Uyo play a crucial role in shaping the academic and professional trajectories of undergraduate students in Akwa Ibom State, serving as a center of learning and innovation in the region. The study is relevant in University of Uyo as undergraduate students are found there and they use social media platforms for different purposes including clothing consumption.

The population of the study compromised of approximately 378 registered students from five faculties in the University of Uyo during 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 academic session. The sample size for the study consisted of 116 respondents which was determined using (30%) of the 17 faculties, (30%) of the department, and (30%) of the number of students in each of the departments. The sample size for each stratum was allocated proportionately. Stratified and Accidental sampling was used to select samples for the study. A structured instrument titled: "Social Media Platforms and Clothing Consumption of Undergraduates Questionnaire (SMPCCUQ) was used for data collection for the study. Face validation of the instrument was ascertained by three experts to ensure that the instrument is relevant to measure the variables of the study. The instruments were administered to 20 undergraduates who did not constitute part of the final study to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The data obtained was analyzed using Cronbach Alpha analysis and it yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.87. The researcher and assistants individually distributed the structured questionnaires to the respondents and collected the filled copies on the spot. Descriptive and inferential statistics (frequency, percentage, Mean and Standard Deviation) were used to answer the research questions.

Research Question 1: What are the clothing consumption practices of undergraduate students in University of Uyo?

Table : Mean Analysis of Clothing Consumption Practices of Undergraduate Students in University of Uyo.

S/N	Clothing consumption practices	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Decision
1	Buying clothing articles on impulse	2.69	1.16	7	NA
2	Checking price tags before buying clothing items	3.31	1.14	1	A
3	Shopping for clothing articles worn for multiple occasions	3.24	1.12	3	A
4	Mending clothing articles when necessary	2.83	1.16	5	NA
5	Wearing clothing articles for a long time before considering replacing them	2.69	1.16	7	NA
6	Donating clothing items instead of discarding them	2.77	1.16	6	NA
7	Reusing old clothing items instead of	2.60	1.17	8	NA

	discarding them				
8	Following care instructions for clothing articles	2.52	1.18	10	NA
9	Washing clothing articles only when necessary	2.85	1.16	4	A
10	Buying clothing articles for comfort	3.26	1.13	2	A
11	Buying clothes to fit in with social groups	2.40	1.19	14	NA
12	Discarding clothing items that are still in good condition	2.24	1.20	15	NA
13	Purchasing expensive clothing items	2.59	1.17	9	NA
14	Purchasing cheap clothing items	2.46	1.18	12	NA
15	Buying clothing articles from well-known brands	2.48	1.18	11	NA
16	Purchasing clothing items online without trying it on first	2.45	1.18	13	NA
	Grand mean	2.71			

Table 1, shows the mean analysis of clothing consumption practices of undergraduate students in University of Uyo. Findings showed that checking price tags before buying clothing items ($\bar{x}$ = 3.31) ranked 1st as the highest mean value; buying clothing articles for comfort ($\bar{x}$ = 3.26) ranked 2nd; shopping for clothing articles worn for multiple occasions ($\bar{x}$ = 3.24) ranked 3rd; washing clothing articles only when necessary ($\bar{x}$ = 2.85) ranked 4th; mending clothing articles when necessary ($\bar{x}$ = 2.83) ranked 5th; donating old clothing items instead of discarding them ($\bar{x}$ = 2.77) ranked 6th; buying clothing articles on impulse ($\bar{x}$ =2.69) and wearing clothing articles for a long time before considering replacing them ($\bar{x}$ = 2.69) both ranked 7th; reusing old clothing items instead of discarding them ($\bar{x}$ = 2.60) ranked 8th; purchasing expensive clothing items ($\bar{x}$ = 2.59) ranked 9th; following care instructions for clothing articles ($\bar{x}$ = 2.52) ranked 10th; buying clothing articles from well-known brands ($\bar{x}$ = 2.48) ranked 11th; purchasing cheap clothing items ($\bar{x}$ = 2.46) ranked 12th; purchasing clothing items online without trying it on first ($\bar{x}$ = 2.45) ranked 13th; buying clothes to fit in with social groups ($\bar{x}$ = 2.40) ranked 14th; while discarding clothing items that are still in good condition ($\bar{x}$ = 2.24) ranked 15th. The grand mean is 2.71 which is greater than the cut off mean of 2.50 implying that the clothing consumption practices are adopted by undergraduate students in University of Uyo. From this description, checking price tags before buying clothing items has the highest ($\bar{x}$ = 3.31) implying that undergraduate students check price tags before buying clothing items. Overall, the findings indicate that undergraduate students in the University of Uyo are more concerned with affordability, comfort, and utility in their clothing choices rather than status-driven or trend-based consumption. However, sustainable practices such as reusing, donating, and following proper care instructions remain weak, pointing to the need for greater awareness and orientation toward sustainable fashion consumption among young people.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of Pinterest on Clothing Consumption of Undergraduate Student in University of Uyo?

Table 2: Mean Analysis of Pinterest on Clothing Consumption of Undergraduate Students in University of Uyo

S/N	Pinterest	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Decision
1	Selecting hairstyles	2.70	1.16	1	A
2	Choosing underwear	2.21	1.20	5	NA
3	Selecting trending clothing styles	2.64	1.17	2	A
4	Getting trending shoe designs	2.50	1.18	3	A
5	Learning clothing upcycling skills	2.36	1.19	4	A
	Grand mean	3.10			

The result of the mean analysis in Table 2 revealed that Pinterest has a significant influence on the clothing consumption of undergraduate students in the University of Uyo, with a grand mean of 3.10 which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. The findings show that Pinterest is most frequently used by students for selecting hairstyles ($\bar{x}$ = 2.70) ranked 1st; choosing trending clothing styles ($\bar{x}$ = 2.64) ranked 2nd; and getting trending shoe designs ($\bar{x}$ = 2.50) ranked 3rd. This indicates that the platform serves as a major source of fashion inspiration, particularly in areas of outward appearance and style. Pinterest was also found to contribute to learning clothing upcycling skills ($\bar{x}$ = 2.36) ranked 4th; though its influence in this aspect is comparatively weaker. However, the result shows that Pinterest has little or no effect on students' choice of underwear ($\bar{x}$ = 2.21) ranked 5th, as this item was not accepted. From this description, selecting hairstyles has the highest ($\bar{x}$ = 2.70) implying that the undergraduate students select their hairstyles from Pinterest. Overall, the findings suggest that Pinterest plays a vital role in shaping the fashion-related decisions of undergraduates, especially in visible clothing items and style trends, while having limited influence on more personal clothing choices.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of Instagram on Clothing Consumption of Undergraduate Students in University of Uyo?

Table 3: Mean Analysis of Instagram on Clothing Consumption of Undergraduate Students in University of Uyo.

S/N	Instagram	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Decision
1	Selecting hairstyles	2.79	1.16	2	A
2	Choosing underwear	2.30	1.19	4	A
3	Selecting trending clothing styles	2.79	1.16	2	A
4	Getting trending shoe designs	2.51	1.18	3	A
5	Learning clothing upcycling skills	3.04	1.14	1	A
	Grand mean	3.36			

The analysis of Instagram's influence in Table 3 on clothing consumption among undergraduate students of the University of Uyo reveals that the platform plays a notable role

in shaping fashion-related choices. The highest was recorded for learning clothing upcycling skills ($\bar{x}$ = 3.04) which ranked 1st; suggesting that Instagram serves as an important source of innovative and sustainable fashion practices. Selecting hairstyles and selecting trending clothing styles ($\bar{x}$ = 2.79) both ranked 2nd; indicating that Instagram significantly guides students in making fashion and grooming choices. Getting trending shoe designs ($\bar{x}$ = 2.51) ranked 3rd; while choosing underwear recorded the lowest ($\bar{x}$ = 2.30), though still accepted, implying that Instagram exerts a lesser influence in this specific area. The overall grand mean of 3.36 shows that, on average, Instagram positively influences students' clothing consumption practices, particularly in promoting style trends and sustainable clothing behaviors. From this description, learning upcycling skills has the highest ($\bar{x}$ = 3.04) implying that undergraduate students learn clothing upcycling skills from Instagram.

Research Question 4: What is the Influence of TikTok on Clothing Consumption of Undergraduate Students in University of Uyo?

Table 4: Mean Analysis of TikTok on Clothing Consumption of Undergraduate Students in University of Uyo

S/N	Tiktok	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Decision
1	Selecting hairstyles	3.04	1.14	1	A
2	Choosing underwear	2.28	1.19	5	NA
3	Selecting trending clothing styles	2.83	1.16	2	A
4	Getting trending shoe designs	2.50	1.18	4	A
5	Learning clothing upcycling skills	2.54	1.18	3	A
	Grand Mean	3.30			

The analysis of TikTok's influence on clothing consumption among undergraduate students of the University of Uyo indicates that the platform significantly shapes their fashion-related decisions. The highest influence was observed in selecting hairstyles ($\bar{x}$ = 3.04), ranking first, which suggests that TikTok serves as a major source of grooming and beauty inspiration. This was closely followed by selecting trending clothing styles ($\bar{x}$ = 2.83) ranking 2nd, highlighting TikTok's role in popularizing fashion trends among students. Moderate influence was recorded in learning clothing upcycling skills ($\bar{x}$ = 2.54) ranking 3rd, and getting trending shoe designs ($\bar{x}$ = 2.50), reflecting the platform's contribution to both sustainability practices and footwear trends. The lowest mean was found in choosing underwear ($\bar{x}$ = 2.28), showing minimal reliance on TikTok for this category. The overall grand mean of 3.30 indicates that TikTok exerts a generally strong positive influence on clothing consumption, particularly in areas related to style selection and creative grooming. From this description, selecting hairstyles has the highest ($\bar{x}$ = 2.04) implying that undergraduate students select their hairstyles from TikTok.

Discussion of Findings

The mean analysis presents a comprehensive analysis of the clothing consumption practices of undergraduate students. The data showed that undergraduate students are

conscious of their spending and clothing utility, where "checking price tags before buying clothing items" has the highest mean value of 3.31 with grand mean of 2.71. The result is in line with the study of Adeoye (2023) who highlighted the role of social media in promotion of fast fashion points out that social media platforms are instrumental in accelerating the cycle of fashion trends, leading to an increase in the consumption of fast fashion items among university students where the rapid turnover can contribute to a culture of constant shopping and wardrobe updates but the study suggested a preference for budget-conscious and sustainable fashion choices among respondents.

Findings revealed that undergraduate students select hairstyles from Pinterest with a mean value of 2.70 in University of Uyo and with a grand mean of 3.10 it indicates that Pinterest is an important platform for discovering new fashion trends, clothing purchase preferences and clothing consumption practices among undergraduate students in institutions. The results supported the study of (Wang et al, 2020) who stated that Pinterest marketing influences the consumer decision making among undergraduates in higher institution. This increased engagement can lead to more significant influence on fashion trends and consumer behavior's choice. In contrast, Pinterest users may engage less frequently but are often more focused on fashion-related content and purchases.

The mean analysis on the influence of Instagram revealed that Instagram exerts a very high influence on the clothing consumption practices of undergraduate students. The influence observed was that undergraduate students learn clothing upcycling skills from Instagram with a high mean value of 3.04. The average mean of 3.36 confirms that Instagram is a key platform for shaping clothing choices, as its visually driven nature appeals to undergraduate students who seek fashion inspiration and validation online. The result supports the study of Okonkwo (2023) who studied the impact of social media on fashion consumption, revealing that Instagram facilitate trend dissemination, peer-to-peer recommendations and ultimately pivotal in driving real-time fashion trends and shaping consumer preferences on their clothing upcycling skills.

Findings revealed that Tiktok has a moderate influence on clothing consumption, with an average mean of 3.30. The study showed that undergraduate students select their hairstyles from TikTok with the highest mean value of 3.04. However, the relatively lower mean values suggest that, unlike Instagram and Pinterest, Tiktok is less impactful for fashion consumption. The platform may still be in the process of establishing itself as a source for clothing content among undergraduate students in University of Uyo which is in line with the study of Smith (2021) who was of the opinion that Tiktok's algorithm and viral content on users' fashion preferences was due to emotional, entertaining, and information dimensions of Tiktok video advertisement positively affecting consumer behavior. Tiktok's interactive features encourage users to participate in trends, creating a feedback loop that reinforces fashion consumption patterns of their choice.

Conclusion

This study sought to investigate Social Media Platforms and Clothing Consumption of Undergraduate students in University of Uyo. Findings of the study showed that, social media platforms such like Instagram, Pinterest, Tiktok etc influence undergraduate students' clothing consumption in University of Uyo.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Fashion brands targeting undergraduate students in Nigeria should make use of Instagram and Pinterest for marketing, focusing on influencer collaborations and visually appealing content to engage the undergraduate students effectively.
2. Undergraduate students should be encouraged to develop critical thinking skills regarding their clothing consumption, particularly in learning clothing upcycling skills.
3. Institutions should offer workshops and courses on digital literacy that cover the impact of social media on consumer behavior in order to curb impulse buying among undergraduate students. Teachers should implement the use of social media platforms for online class projects in helping students become aware of the adversity of social media especially in the area of clothing.

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