

The Influence of Financial Literacy and Social Media Exposure on Skincare Product Expenditure Patterns among University Students

Hade Chandra Batubara^{1*}, Baihaqi Ammy¹, Ade Gunawan¹

¹Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara
Jalan Kapten Mochtar Basri No.3, Medan, 20238, Indonesia

*Corresponding Email: hadechandra@umsu.ac.id

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University students increasingly allocate funds to skincare products, reflecting the influence of both financial literacy and social media exposure on their spending behavior. This study aims to analyze the individual and combined effects of these factors on skincare product expenditure patterns among students at the University of Muhammadiyah North Sumatra (UMSU). A quantitative associative design was employed, with data collected from 101 purposively sampled UMSU students who actively use social media and purchase skincare products. Multiple linear regression, t-tests, F-tests, and determination coefficients (R^2) were applied to examine relationships. Results show that financial literacy significantly influences expenditure patterns ($t = 10.296$; $p < 0.001$; $b = 0.621$), and social media exposure also has a significant positive effect ($t = 2.914$; $p = 0.004$; $b = 0.170$). Simultaneously, both factors significantly predict expenditure behavior ($F = 200.217$; $p < 0.001$), explaining 80.4% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.804$). The findings highlight the importance of strengthening financial literacy while fostering critical awareness of social media influences to promote responsible consumption behavior among university students. Universities are encouraged to integrate financial literacy programs into student development initiatives to promote rational and responsible consumption in the digital era.

Keywords: Expenditure Patterns; Financial Literacy; Skincare Products; Social Media Exposure; Student Consumption

JEL Classification: D12; D14; I21; M31

INTRODUCTION

University students represent a consumer group that is increasingly influenced by lifestyle trends and digital consumption culture. Although students generally face financial limitations, many continue allocating a substantial portion of their expenditures to lifestyle-related products, including skincare. Data from [ZAP Clinic \(2024\)](#) indicate that skincare expenditure has become a significant component of monthly spending behavior, particularly among young consumers. In the university context, skincare consumption is no longer driven solely by functional needs but is also shaped by social trends, self-image, and digital marketing exposure ([Apriani & Zahrah, 2026](#)). Consequently, understanding student expenditure patterns requires attention not only to economic considerations but also to behavioral and social influences.

Expenditure patterns refer to the way individuals allocate financial resources to fulfill needs and wants ([Roring et al., 2022](#)). In the context of university students, expenditure patterns reflect consumption priorities and financial decision-making processes under limited financial resources. Previous studies suggest that expenditure behavior is influenced by both internal and external factors, including financial literacy, social environment, and media exposure ([Rahmawati & Nuris, 2021](#)). Within skincare consumption behavior, these factors become particularly relevant because skincare products are frequently associated with lifestyle identity, trend-following behavior, and emotional purchasing decisions.

Financial literacy represents an individual's ability to understand and manage financial resources effectively through budgeting, financial planning, and rational decision-making ([Lestari et al., 2024](#); [Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014](#); [Sirait et al., 2025](#)). Students with higher financial literacy tend to evaluate purchases more carefully, differentiate between needs and wants, and avoid impulsive consumption behavior ([Teoh et al., 2026](#)). Conversely, limited financial literacy may increase vulnerability to uncontrolled expenditure behavior, particularly for lifestyle-oriented products such as skincare. Prior studies have shown that financially literate students demonstrate more disciplined expenditure behavior and stronger awareness of long-term financial priorities ([Rahmawati & Nuris, 2021](#)).

In addition to financial literacy, social media exposure has emerged as a significant determinant of student consumption behavior. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube function not only as communication channels but also as digital marketing ecosystems that intensively promote beauty and skincare products ([Hartawan et al., 2021](#)). Through influencer endorsements, algorithm-based advertising, and peer-generated content, students are continuously exposed to skincare trends and product recommendations. This exposure may encourage impulsive purchasing behavior and increase expenditure allocation for skincare products, particularly when students experience fear of missing out (FOMO) and social comparison pressures ([Corinna & Cahyono, 2020](#)). Therefore, social media exposure can substantially shape expenditure patterns among university students.

A preliminary survey conducted among 48 students of the University of Muhammadiyah North Sumatra (*Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatra Utara* or UMSU) in December 2024 further supports this phenomenon. The survey revealed that 70.8% of respondents purchase skincare products regularly each month, while 60.4% acknowledged that their purchasing decisions were influenced by social media recommendations and influencer content. In addition, 79.2% of respondents admitted that they did not consistently prepare monthly financial budgets. These findings suggest that skincare expenditure behavior

among UMSU students may be closely associated with both financial literacy limitations and intensive social media exposure.

Despite the increasing number of studies discussing financial literacy and digital consumer behavior, previous research has generally examined financial literacy and social media exposure separately. Research specifically investigating the simultaneous influence of these variables on skincare product expenditure patterns among university students remains limited, particularly within Indonesian higher education settings. Accordingly, this study addresses the research gap by simultaneously examining the influence of financial literacy and social media exposure on skincare product expenditure patterns among students at UMSU. The novelty of this study lies in integrating financial literacy and digital media influence within a single empirical framework focused specifically on skincare expenditure behavior among university students.

Accordingly, this study aims to: (1) analyze the influence of financial literacy on skincare product expenditure patterns among UMSU students; (2) analyze the influence of social media exposure on skincare product expenditure patterns among UMSU students; and (3) analyze the simultaneous influence of financial literacy and social media exposure on skincare product expenditure patterns among UMSU students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Expenditure Patterns

Expenditure patterns refer to how individuals allocate financial resources to fulfill needs and wants under limited economic resources (Roring et al., 2022). In the context of university students, expenditure patterns reflect consumption priorities and decision-making behavior regarding the allocation of income or allowances toward both primary and secondary needs. Classical economic theories, including Engel's Law and Keynes' Consumption Theory, explain that consumption behavior changes according to income levels and individual preferences (Case & Fair, 2007; Deaton & Muellbauer, 1980). As income increases, individuals tend to allocate greater proportions of expenditure toward non-essential and lifestyle-oriented products, including beauty and skincare products.

Among university students, skincare expenditure has increasingly become part of modern lifestyle consumption behavior. Although students generally experience financial limitations, many continue prioritizing skincare products because skincare is closely associated with self-image, confidence, and social identity (Apriani & Zahrah, 2026). Therefore, expenditure patterns in this study refer specifically to students' tendencies to allocate financial resources toward skincare product purchases, including the frequency, priority, and intensity of expenditure decisions.

Hypotheses Development

Financial Literacy and Expenditure Patterns

Financial literacy refers to an individual's ability to understand and apply financial knowledge in budgeting, financial planning, saving, and consumption decision-making (Lestari et al., 2024; Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014; Sirait et al., 2025). Financial literacy is not limited to financial knowledge alone but also includes the ability to evaluate spending priorities and manage financial resources responsibly (Gunawan et al., 2020). Students with higher financial literacy tend to demonstrate more rational expenditure behavior because they are capable of distinguishing between needs and wants and considering long-term financial consequences before making purchases (Teoh et al., 2026).

Previous studies indicate that financial literacy significantly influences expenditure behavior among students. [Rahmawati and Nuris \(2021\)](#) found that students with limited financial literacy are more vulnerable to impulsive purchases and uncontrolled expenditure behavior. Similarly, [Perry and Morris \(2005\)](#) emphasized that individuals with stronger financial understanding generally exhibit better financial discipline and lower tendencies toward consumptive behavior. In the skincare context, financially literate students are more likely to evaluate product usefulness, compare prices, and prioritize essential expenditures before purchasing skincare products. Conversely, students with low financial literacy may prioritize emotional satisfaction and lifestyle trends over financial planning.

Based on these arguments, financial literacy is theoretically expected to influence skincare product expenditure patterns among university students.

H1: Financial literacy influences the skincare product expenditure patterns of UMSU students.

Social Media Exposure and Expenditure Patterns

Social media exposure refers to the intensity of individual interaction with digital platforms that provide information, communication, and content-sharing activities through text, images, videos, and other media formats ([Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010](#)). Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become important channels shaping students' lifestyle preferences and consumption behavior, particularly regarding beauty and skincare products.

Social media exposure influences expenditure behavior through influencer endorsements, targeted advertising, peer recommendations, and algorithm-based content personalization ([Casaló et al., 2020](#)). Continuous exposure to skincare-related content may stimulate emotional purchasing decisions, FOMO, and social comparison tendencies among students. [Hartawan et al. \(2021\)](#) explained that social media has become an effective digital marketing tool capable of increasing consumer interest and purchase intention through attractive visual content and persuasive communication strategies.

Several previous studies support this relationship. [Alalwan \(2018\)](#) found that intensive exposure to social media marketing positively affects consumer purchasing behavior, particularly for lifestyle-related products. Similarly, [Voorveld et al. \(2018\)](#) demonstrated that strong interaction with digital content increases consumer engagement and purchasing tendencies. In the context of skincare consumption, students who are frequently exposed to influencer reviews and skincare promotions may allocate more financial resources toward skincare purchases, even when the products are not urgently needed. Therefore, social media exposure is theoretically expected to influence skincare product expenditure patterns among university students.

H2: Social media exposure influences the skincare product expenditure patterns of UMSU students.

Financial Literacy, Social Media Exposure, and Expenditure Patterns

Financial literacy and social media exposure simultaneously shape students' expenditure behavior. Social media exposure continuously encourages consumptive behavior through digital trends and persuasive marketing, whereas financial literacy functions as an internal control mechanism that helps students evaluate expenditure decisions more rationally. Students with strong financial literacy are generally more

selective in responding to social media influences because they can assess financial priorities and avoid unnecessary purchases.

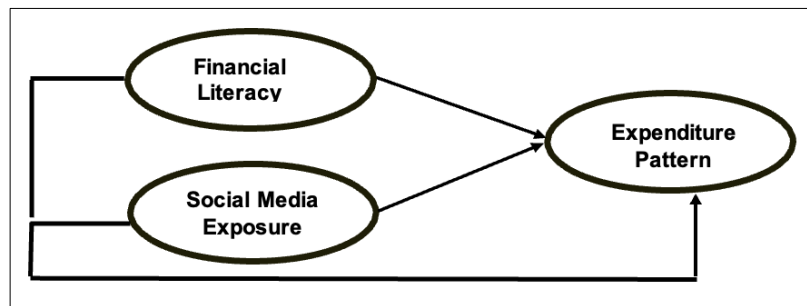
Previous studies suggest that financial literacy can reduce excessive consumptive behavior triggered by digital marketing exposure. [Sinuantoro \(2020\)](#) concluded that financial literacy and social media simultaneously influence student consumption behavior. Likewise, [Gunawan et al. \(2020\)](#) argued that financially literate individuals are less likely to follow consumption trends promoted through social media platforms. However, previous studies have generally examined these variables separately, and research specifically investigating their combined influence on skincare product expenditure patterns among university students remains limited.

H3: Financial literacy and social media exposure simultaneously influence the skincare product expenditure patterns of UMSU students.

Conceptual Framework

The study framework model is depicted in [Figure 1](#).

Figure 1. Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research method with an associative approach to examine the relationship and influence between variables. The research aimed to analyze the influence of financial literacy (X1) and social media exposure (X2) on skincare product expenditure patterns (Y) among students at UMSU, located at Jalan Kapten Mughtar Basri No. 3, Glugur Darat II, East Medan District, Medan City, North Sumatra 20238. Quantitative methods were selected because the analysis focuses on numerical data processed statistically to test the proposed hypotheses.

Population and Sampling

The population of this study comprised all active UMSU students, totaling 18,425 students. Purposive sampling was employed as the sampling technique because not all members of the population satisfied the research objectives. Respondents were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) active enrollment as a UMSU student; (2) active use of social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, or YouTube); and (3) purchase of at least one skincare product within the preceding six months. The determination of sample size followed the recommendation of [Hair et al. \(2018\)](#), which stipulates that the minimum sample size in multivariate research should be 5–10 times the number of indicators. With 20 indicators across three variables—financial literacy, social media exposure, and expenditure patterns—the minimum required sample ranged from 100 to 200 respondents. The final sample consisted of 101 respondents, which satisfied the

minimum requirement and was considered adequate for multiple linear regression analysis.

Measurement of Variables

The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire distributed to respondents. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The operational definitions, indicators, and measurement sources of the variables are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Operational Definition of Variables

Variable	Definition	Indicators	Source
Financial Literacy (X1)	The ability of students to understand and effectively manage financial matters, including budgeting, saving, and financial decision-making.	Financial knowledge, budgeting ability, saving behavior, and financial decision-making.	Gunawan (2022)
Social Media Exposure (X2)	The extent and intensity to which students interact with skincare-related information and content through social media platforms.	Frequency of exposure, content attractiveness, influencer recommendations, and product reviews.	Kaplan & Haenlein (2010)
Expenditure Patterns (Y)	Students' behavioral tendencies in planning, prioritizing, and allocating financial resources toward skincare product purchases. Higher scores indicate more structured and deliberate expenditure management rather than higher levels of spending.	Purchase frequency, expenditure allocation, impulsive buying tendency, and product preference.	Roring et al. (2022)

Validity and Reliability Testing

Instrument validation was conducted prior to hypothesis testing to ensure data quality. Validity testing employed the Pearson Product-Moment correlation technique; items with a corrected item-total correlation value exceeding 0.30 were retained as valid (Hair et al., 2018). Reliability testing was performed using Cronbach's Alpha; variables with a Cronbach's Alpha value exceeding 0.70 were considered reliably measuring the intended construct (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). All items and scales used in this study met both validity and reliability thresholds.

Data Collection Procedure

Primary data were collected directly from respondents through an online structured questionnaire distributed via social media platforms and student communication groups during the 2025 academic year. Prior to completing the questionnaire, respondents were

informed about the study's purpose, participation requirements, and the voluntary nature of their involvement.

Data Analysis Technique

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The analysis procedures included descriptive statistics, classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity), multiple linear regression analysis, partial tests (t-test), simultaneous tests (F-test), and the coefficient of determination (R^2 and Adjusted R^2) to examine the influence of financial literacy and social media exposure on student skincare expenditure patterns.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established research ethics principles. Respondent participation was entirely voluntary, and all participants were informed that their responses would be treated as strictly confidential and used exclusively for academic purposes. No personally identifiable information was disclosed in the research findings.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2. Respondents Demographic Profile

Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	28	27.7
	Female	73	72.3
	Total	101	100
Academic Year	1st Year	15	14.9
	2nd Year	38	37.6
	3rd Year	34	33.7
	4th Year	14	13.9
	Total	101	100
Monthly Allowance (IDR)	< 500,000	8	7.9
	500,000 – 1,000,000	34	33.7
	1,000,001 – 1,500,000	41	40.6
	> 1,500,000	18	17.8
Total		101	100

A total of 101 valid responses were collected from active UMSU students who met the inclusion criteria. As presented in Table 2, the sample was predominantly female ($n = 73$, 72.3%), consistent with the general tendency of skincare product consumption to be higher among female university students in Indonesia. The majority of respondents were in their second and third years of study (2nd year: 37.6%; 3rd year: 33.7%), with monthly allowances primarily ranging between IDR 1,000,001 and IDR 1,500,000 (40.6%). These demographic characteristics are representative of the UMSU student population and support the adequacy of the sample for multiple linear regression analysis.

Validity and Reliability Results

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Results

Variable	Number of Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation Range	Cronbach's Alpha
Financial Literacy (X1)	7	0.312 – 0.641	0.851
Social Media Exposure (X2)	7	0.301 – 0.579	0.823
Expenditure Patterns (Y)	6	0.334 – 0.698	0.879

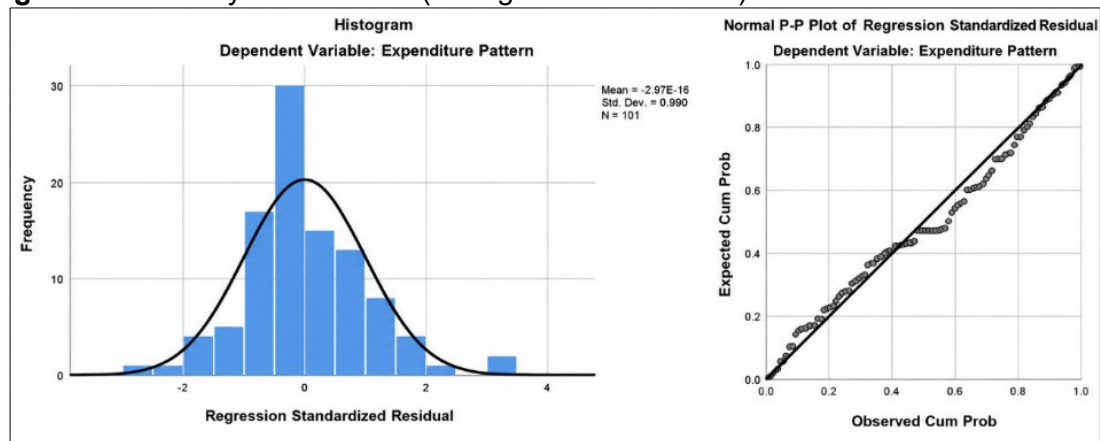
As presented in Table 3, all 20 items across the three variables demonstrated corrected item-total correlation values above the 0.30 threshold, confirming instrument validity. Cronbach's Alpha values for Financial Literacy (X1), Social Media Exposure (X2), and Expenditure Patterns (Y) were 0.851, 0.823, and 0.879, respectively—all exceeding the 0.70 reliability threshold. These results confirm that the instruments consistently and accurately measure the intended constructs.

Classical Assumption Tests

Normality Test

Normality was assessed using both graphical and statistical methods. The histogram of standardized residuals displayed a bell-shaped distribution pattern, and the P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals showed data points distributed closely along the diagonal line, visually supporting the normality assumption. Figure 2 presents the normality test results.

Figure 2. Normality Test Results (Histogram and P-P Plot)



As shown in Figure 2, the histogram pattern approximates a normal distribution curve, and the residual points in the P-P plot closely follow the diagonal reference line, providing visual confirmation of normality. Statistical confirmation was obtained through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Normality Test Results (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk)

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Statistic	df	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Sig.
Unstandardized Residual	0.095	101	0.027	0.066

As shown in Table 4, the normality assumption was assessed using both graphical and statistical procedures. The histogram and Normal P-P Plot indicate that the residuals are distributed reasonably close to a normal pattern, with no substantial deviations observed. The statistical results provide mixed evidence, as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded a significance value below 0.05, whereas the Shapiro-Wilk test produced a significance value above the accepted threshold. Such differences are not uncommon in social science research and may occur because normality tests vary in their sensitivity to sample size and distributional characteristics. Considering the graphical evidence alongside the Shapiro-Wilk result, the residuals can be regarded as sufficiently normally distributed for the purposes of multiple linear regression analysis. Therefore, the normality assumption is considered adequately satisfied, supporting the validity of the subsequent regression analysis.

Multicollinearity and Heteroscedasticity Tests

Table 5. Multicollinearity and Heteroscedasticity Tests

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Glejser t-value	Sig. (Glejser)
Financial Literacy (X1)	0.847	1.181	1.024	0.308
Social Media Exposure (X2)	0.847	1.181	0.872	0.385

As presented in Table 5, the multicollinearity test was conducted by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values. Both Financial Literacy (X1) and Social Media Exposure (X2) yielded VIF values below 10 (VIF = 1.181) and Tolerance values above 0.10 (Tolerance = 0.847), indicating the absence of multicollinearity between the independent variables. The heteroscedasticity test was performed using the Glejser test; all independent variables produced significance values exceeding 0.05 (X1: Sig. = 0.308; X2: Sig. = 0.385), confirming that the regression model is free from heteroscedasticity. These results confirm that all classical assumption requirements for multiple linear regression are satisfied.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to estimate the influence of financial literacy and social media exposure on skincare product expenditure patterns.

Table 6. Multiple Linear Regression Results – Coefficients

Model	B	Std. Error	Standardized β	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.443	1.190	–	2.053	0.043
Financial Literacy (X1)	0.621	0.060	0.727	10.296	0.000
Social Media Exposure (X2)	0.170	0.058	0.206	2.914	0.004

As shown in Table 6, the resulting multiple linear regression equation is: $Y = 2.443 + 0.621X_1 + 0.170X_2$. The constant value of 2.443 indicates that when both Financial Literacy (X1) and Social Media Exposure (X2) are held constant at zero, the baseline expenditure pattern score is 2.443 units. The unstandardized coefficient for Financial Literacy (B = 0.621) indicates that each one-unit increase in financial literacy score corresponds to a 0.621-unit increase in the expenditure pattern score, holding social media exposure constant. The coefficient for Social Media Exposure (B = 0.170) indicates that each one-unit increase in social media exposure corresponds to a 0.170-unit increase in the expenditure pattern score, holding financial literacy constant.

Partial Test (T-Test)

The partial t-test results are presented in Table 6. For Financial Literacy, the t-value of 10.296 exceeds the t-table value of 1.661 (df = 98, $\alpha = 0.05$, two-tailed), and the significance value is $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, H1 is supported, confirming a significant partial influence of financial literacy on skincare product expenditure patterns among UMSU students. For Social Media Exposure, the t-value of 2.914 exceeds the t-table value of 1.661, and the significance value is $0.004 < 0.05$. Therefore, H2 is supported, confirming a significant partial influence of social media exposure on expenditure patterns. Notably, the standardized coefficient for financial literacy ($\beta = 0.727$) substantially exceeds that of social media exposure ($\beta = 0.206$), indicating that financial literacy is the dominant predictor of expenditure patterns in this study.

Model Summary – Coefficient of Determination

Table 7. Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
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0.897	0.804	0.800	1.733
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As presented in [Table 7](#), the coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.804, indicating that 80.4% of the variance in skincare product expenditure patterns can be explained by financial literacy and social media exposure combined. The Adjusted R^2 of 0.800 confirms the robustness of the model after adjusting for the number of predictors, suggesting that the model retains strong explanatory power.

Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

Table 8. ANOVA Table – Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1202.817	2	601.409	200.217	0.000
Residual	294.371	98	3.004		
Total	1497.188	100			

As shown in [Table 8](#), the F-value of 200.217 exceeds the F-table value of 3.938 ($df_1 = 2$, $df_2 = 98$, $\alpha = 0.05$), and the significance value is $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, H3 is supported, confirming that financial literacy and social media exposure simultaneously and significantly influence skincare product expenditure patterns among UMSU students. The regression model is considered statistically fit for explaining expenditure pattern variation.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Financial Literacy on Expenditure Patterns

The partial t-test results confirm that financial literacy significantly influences skincare product expenditure patterns among UMSU students ($t = 10.296$; $sig. = 0.000$; $B = 0.621$; $\beta = 0.727$). The positive coefficient indicates that students with higher financial literacy tend to exhibit more planned, deliberate, and rational expenditure behavior when purchasing skincare products. Rather than implying higher spending levels, this finding suggests that financially literate students are more capable of evaluating product necessity, prioritizing expenditures, and allocating financial resources according to their financial circumstances and long-term objectives.

This finding supports the theoretical arguments of [Lestari et al. \(2024\)](#), [Lusardi and Mitchell \(2014\)](#), and [Sirait et al. \(2025\)](#), who emphasize that financial literacy is a fundamental capability for effective financial decision-making. Financially literate individuals are generally better able to distinguish between needs and wants, assess opportunity costs, and consider the consequences of alternative spending choices. In the context of skincare consumption, where purchasing decisions are often influenced by lifestyle aspirations, self-image, and social pressures, financial literacy appears to function as a self-regulatory mechanism that encourages more rational and financially responsible expenditure behavior.

The findings are consistent with [Peng et al. \(2007\)](#), who reported that financial education promotes disciplined expenditure management, and with [Wahyuni et al. \(2023\)](#), who found that financial literacy significantly shapes financial behavior among Indonesian university students. Similarly, [Gultom et al. \(2022\)](#) demonstrated that financial literacy reduces consumptive tendencies, while [Gunawan et al. \(2020\)](#) highlighted its role in strengthening financial management behavior amid lifestyle-oriented consumption pressures. Collectively, these studies suggest that financial literacy not only enhances

financial knowledge but also improves individuals' ability to translate that knowledge into responsible consumption decisions.

More importantly, this study extends the existing literature by demonstrating that financial literacy remains a significant determinant of expenditure behavior within the skincare sector, a product category that is frequently associated with symbolic value, personal identity, and trend-driven consumption. This finding indicates that financial literacy continues to influence spending decisions even in contexts where emotional and social motivations are particularly prominent. Furthermore, the substantially larger standardized coefficient of financial literacy ($\beta = 0.727$) compared with social media exposure ($\beta = 0.206$) suggests that internal financial capabilities exert a stronger influence on expenditure patterns than external digital stimuli. While social media may shape consumer preferences and purchasing interest, financial literacy appears to play a more direct role in determining how financial resources are ultimately allocated.

These findings highlight the importance of strengthening financial literacy among university students as a means of promoting responsible consumption behavior. As digital marketing and social media increasingly influence purchasing decisions, financial literacy may help students critically evaluate consumption-related information and make expenditure decisions that are aligned with their financial priorities and long-term well-being.

The Influence of Social Media Exposure on Expenditure Patterns

The partial t-test results confirm that social media exposure significantly influences skincare product expenditure patterns among UMSU students ($t = 2.914$; sig. = 0.004; $B = 0.170$; $\beta = 0.206$). The positive coefficient indicates that greater exposure to social media content is associated with a stronger tendency to allocate financial resources toward skincare products. This finding supports the theoretical perspective of [Kaplan and Haenlein \(2010\)](#), which emphasizes the role of digital platforms in shaping consumer perceptions, preferences, and purchasing behavior through continuous information exchange and social interaction.

The findings are consistent with [Alalwan \(2018\)](#), who reported that social media marketing features positively influence consumer purchase intentions, and with [Casaló et al. \(2020\)](#), who demonstrated that influencers can shape consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions through opinion leadership. Similarly, [Hartawan et al. \(2021\)](#) confirmed the effectiveness of social media advertising in stimulating consumer interest in beauty-related products, while [Zhang \(2023\)](#) found that social media marketing influences consumer behavior through visually appealing content, peer recommendations, and interactive engagement. Collectively, these studies suggest that social media functions not merely as a communication channel but as a persuasive digital environment capable of influencing consumer decision-making processes.

In the context of skincare products, social media platforms provide continuous exposure to beauty trends, product reviews, influencer endorsements, and user-generated content that may increase product awareness and perceived desirability. Frequent exposure to such content can encourage consumers to compare themselves with prevailing beauty standards, follow emerging trends, and perceive skincare purchases as socially relevant or personally beneficial. Consequently, social media exposure may stimulate expenditure decisions by increasing both the informational and emotional attractiveness of skincare products.

More importantly, this study demonstrates that social media exposure remains a significant predictor of expenditure patterns among university students, highlighting the growing importance of digital media in contemporary consumer behavior. However, the relatively smaller standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.206$) compared with financial literacy ($\beta = 0.727$) suggests that although social media can influence consumer preferences and purchasing interest, its effect on expenditure decisions is weaker than that of internal financial capabilities. This finding implies that external digital stimuli may encourage consumption, but the extent to which such stimuli translate into actual expenditure decisions is still shaped by an individual's ability to evaluate and manage financial resources.

These findings contribute to the growing literature on digital consumer behavior by demonstrating that social media has become an important determinant of expenditure behavior among young consumers, particularly in lifestyle-oriented product categories such as skincare. Nevertheless, because this study employs a cross-sectional design, the observed relationship should be interpreted as associative rather than strictly causal. Future research using longitudinal or experimental approaches may provide deeper insights into the mechanisms through which social media exposure influences expenditure behavior over time.

The Simultaneous Influence of Financial Literacy and Social Media Exposure

The F-test results confirm that financial literacy and social media exposure simultaneously and significantly influence skincare product expenditure patterns among UMSU students ($F = 200.217$; sig. = 0.000). The model explains 80.4% of the variance in expenditure patterns ($R^2 = 0.804$), indicating a substantial level of explanatory power. This finding suggests that students' skincare expenditure decisions are shaped not only by their internal financial capabilities but also by the external digital environment in which consumption-related information is continuously encountered. The relatively high R^2 value further indicates that these two factors collectively capture a large proportion of the considerations underlying skincare-related expenditure decisions among the respondents.

The findings are consistent with [Sinuantoro \(2020\)](#), who reported that financial literacy and social media use jointly influence student consumption behavior. Similarly, [Gunawan et al. \(2020\)](#) argued that financial literacy plays an important role in shaping how individuals respond to lifestyle-oriented consumption pressures, suggesting that financially literate students are more selective when exposed to consumption trends promoted through digital media. [Ferli and Nursanti \(2018\)](#) likewise demonstrated that financial literacy interacts with behavioral factors to produce different expenditure patterns among students. Taken together, these studies support the view that expenditure behavior is influenced by both personal financial competencies and external environmental stimuli rather than by a single factor in isolation.

More importantly, the present findings highlight that student expenditure behavior in the digital era cannot be fully understood by examining either financial literacy or social media exposure independently. While social media provides continuous exposure to skincare trends, product recommendations, and influencer endorsements, financial literacy influences how students interpret, evaluate, and respond to such information. In other words, social media may stimulate interest and purchasing intentions, whereas financial literacy helps determine whether those intentions are ultimately translated into actual spending decisions. This complementary relationship helps explain why the combined model demonstrates strong explanatory power.

The findings also contribute to the growing literature on consumer behavior by emphasizing the simultaneous importance of internal and external determinants of expenditure decisions. In the context of skincare consumption, students are exposed to increasingly persuasive digital marketing content, yet their responses to such influences appear to depend substantially on their financial knowledge and decision-making capabilities. This suggests that responsible consumption behavior is not solely a function of reducing exposure to digital influences but also of strengthening individuals' capacity to make informed financial decisions.

From a practical perspective, the results imply that efforts to promote responsible expenditure behavior among university students should adopt a balanced approach. Educational institutions should not only strengthen financial literacy through financial education programs but also encourage critical awareness of digital marketing practices and social media content. By developing both financial capability and digital consumption awareness, students may be better equipped to navigate modern consumption environments and make expenditure decisions that are aligned with their needs, priorities, and long-term financial well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to examine whether financial literacy and social media exposure influence skincare product expenditure patterns among students at UMSU. The results demonstrate that both factors are important in explaining how students make spending decisions related to skincare products. However, financial literacy emerged as the more influential factor, indicating that expenditure behavior is shaped not only by exposure to digital content but also by an individual's ability to evaluate information, prioritize needs, and manage financial resources responsibly.

The findings reveal that students are constantly exposed to skincare-related information through social media, including product reviews, influencer endorsements, promotional content, and emerging beauty trends. Such exposure can encourage interest in products and affect purchasing preferences. Nevertheless, the way students respond to these influences appears to depend largely on their level of financial literacy. Students with stronger financial capabilities are more likely to approach purchasing decisions carefully, consider the necessity and affordability of products, and avoid expenditure decisions driven primarily by social pressure or temporary consumption trends.

An important insight from this study is that expenditure behavior in the digital era cannot be understood solely through the lens of marketing influence or consumer desire. The findings suggest that external influences and internal capabilities operate simultaneously in shaping consumption decisions. While social media creates opportunities and incentives for consumption, financial literacy provides the capacity to evaluate those opportunities critically and make choices that are consistent with personal financial priorities. This highlights the continuing relevance of financial literacy in an environment where purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by digital platforms and algorithm-driven content.

The practical implications extend beyond the skincare context. Universities and educational institutions have an important role in helping students develop financial decision-making skills that can be applied to everyday consumption choices. At the same time, greater awareness of how social media shapes perceptions and purchasing behavior may help students engage with digital content more critically. Strengthening both financial literacy and digital consumption awareness may therefore contribute to

more responsible spending habits and better financial well-being among young consumers.

LIMITATION

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the research was conducted exclusively among 101 students at UMSU, limiting the generalizability of the results to broader student populations and different institutional contexts. Second, the study relied entirely on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be subject to response bias and social desirability effects, particularly in relation to financial management and consumption behavior. Third, the cross-sectional research design captures relationships at a single point in time and therefore does not allow causal inferences regarding the influence of financial literacy and social media exposure on expenditure patterns. Finally, although the model demonstrated substantial explanatory power, the study focused on only two independent variables. Other factors that may influence student expenditure behavior, such as income level, peer influence, self-control, impulsive buying tendencies, and FOMO, were not incorporated into the analysis. Future studies may address these limitations by employing broader and more diverse samples, longitudinal research designs, and additional explanatory variables to develop a more comprehensive understanding of expenditure behavior in digital consumption settings.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

1st Author

Hade Chandra Batubara is a permanent lecturer at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara (UMSU). He completed his Master of Management degree in 2015. His research interests include digital financial literacy, consumer behavior, and management education. He is currently affiliated with the Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, UMSU, Medan, Indonesia.

Email: hadechandra@umsu.ac.id

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8268-8157>

2nd Author

Baihaqi Ammy is a permanent lecturer at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara (UMSU). He completed his Master of Accounting degree in 2015. His research focuses on financial accounting, management accounting, and financial literacy. He is currently affiliated with the Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economics and Business, UMSU, Medan, Indonesia.

Email: baihaqiammy@umsu.ac.id

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9505-8402>

3rd Author

Ade Gunawan is a permanent lecturer at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara (UMSU). He completed his Master of Management degree and has published extensively in the areas of financial literacy, Islamic financial literacy, and financial behavior among university students, including the monograph *Pengukuran Literasi Keuangan Syariah dan Literasi Keuangan* (UMSU Press, 2022). He is currently affiliated with the Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, UMSU, Jalan Kapten Muchtar Basri No. 3, Medan 20238, North Sumatra, Indonesia.

Email: adegunawan@umsu.ac.id

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5366-4914>