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RESEARCH ARTICLE

DIGITAL BUYING BEHAVIOR OF COLLEGE STUDENTS PURCHASING PRE-LOVED CLOTHES IN NASUGBU: BASIS FOR A STUDENT-CENTERED MARKETING FRAMEWORK

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the digital buying behavior of college students purchasing pre-loved clothes in Nasugbu, Batangas, with emphasis on influencer marketing, social proof, digital word-of-mouth, online reviews, personalization, and customization features. It also determined whether respondents' perceptions significantly differed when age and sex were considered and used the findings as a basis for a student-centered marketing framework. The study employed a quantitative research approach using a structured questionnaire administered to 215 respondents. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage for the respondents' profiles, weighted mean and standard deviation for the respondents' perceptions, and independent-samples t-test and one-way ANOVA to determine significant differences based on sex and age, respectively.

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital world, the shopping habits and purchasing choices of young consumers have changed significantly. College students are a notable group that actively

engages with online platforms when looking for and buying secondhand clothes. Secondhand clothing is popular not only because it's affordable but also due to the growing awareness of sustainability and environmental protection. As the digital landscape evolves, marketers need to understand what influences college students' decisions when they shop for secondhand clothes. This understanding will help them create effective, student-focused strategies.

The promotion and marketing of secondhand clothing online is governed by various legal frameworks that protect consumers and ensure ethical advertising practices. These include data privacy laws such as the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act No. 10173) in the Philippines, which mandates the responsible handling of personal information. Additionally, regulations on truthful advertising, such as the Consumer Act of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 7394), require marketers to provide accurate and non-deceptive information about their products. Marketers must also adhere to guidelines set by the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) concerning online advertising, ensuring transparency and accountability in digital marketing activities.

The rise of social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook has opened new channels for marketing and affecting consumer choices. Influencer marketing has become a strong tool for shaping opinions and encouraging purchase decisions among young audiences. Wang et al. (2022) points out that influencers' perceived status and trust greatly influence college students' willingness to buy secondhand clothes online. When influencers display fashionable, affordable secondhand items and share their experiences, they create a sense of social proof that prompts students to follow their lead. User-generated content like reviews and testimonials enhances this effect, making social proof a key part of digital marketing.

Likewise, Lee et al. (2021) stress the significance of digital word-of-mouth and online reviews in shaping students' views on secondhand clothing. Positive reviews and honest feedback about the quality and authenticity of secondhand items build trust and encourage

purchases. In an age of information overload, students often depend on the opinions of their peers and online communities to validate their choices. This digital word-of-mouth adds authenticity, reassuring students that their transactions are secure and that the secondhand clothes are worth their investment.

Another important factor that affects online shopping behavior is personalization and customization. Kim et al. (2022) discovered that students are more likely to buy secondhand clothes when they feel a sense of uniqueness and that the items match their personal style. Personalization makes students feel that their preferences are recognized; enhancing their online shopping experience. Thus, marketers who offer tailored recommendations and customizable options can effectively attract and keep college-aged customers.

Understanding these factors through influencer marketing, digital word-of-mouth, online reviews, and personalization gives valuable insights into the online buying behavior of college students. These insights form the basis for developing a marketing framework that not only suits students' preferences but also promotes sustainable consumption of secondhand clothes. This study aims to examine these influences in Nasugbu, a lively community where young consumers are increasingly using online platforms to find fashionable and eco-friendly clothing.

By investigating the views and behaviors of college students in Nasugbu, this research seeks to identify the main factors that impact their buying decisions. The findings will help create a marketing framework specifically designed to meet students' needs and preferences, supporting a more effective and ethical approach to secondhand fashion marketing. Ultimately, this study hopes to contribute to both academic knowledge and practical marketing strategies, encouraging a more sustainable and student-focused approach to fashion consumption in the digital age.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the related literature and research studies pertinent to the investigation of the digital buying behavior of college students purchasing pre-loved clothes. The purpose of this review is to identify and explore key concepts, theories, and developments that underpin the study, providing a solid foundation for understanding the variables involved. The literature cited herein addresses various perspectives on student-centered marketing, digital consumer behavior, and the factors influencing secondhand clothing purchases among young consumers. By examining these relevant studies, this chapter aims to familiarize readers with current trends, insights, and frameworks that support and contextualize the present research**.**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

his study, therefore, aims to fill this gap by examining the digital buying behavior of college students in Nasugbu regarding preloved clothes. It seeks to identify the most influential online factors, understand the perceptions of trust and authenticity, and determine how these perceptions translate into actual purchasing behavior. The ultimate goal is to develop a student-centered marketing framework that brands and sellers can utilize to better engage this demographic, promote sustainable fashion choices, and foster responsible online shopping habits.

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:

    1.1. Age; and

    1.2. Sex?

2. What is the perception of the respondents regarding the digital buying behavior of college students when purchasing preloved clothes in terms of:

    2.1. Influence of influencer marketing and social proof;

2.2. Impact of digital word-of-mouth and online reviews; and

2.3. Effectiveness of personalization and customization features?

3. Is there a significant difference in the perception of the respondents on the digital buying behavior of preloved clothes when the profile is considered?

4. What student-centered marketing framework may be crafted based on the results of the study?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a descriptive-correlational research design, which is appropriate for quantitatively examining the digital buying behavior of college students purchasing pre-loved clothes in Nasugbu. The descriptive aspect aims to characterize the respondents' profiles and perceptions, while the correlational component seeks to identify relationships between variables, such as demographic factors and perceptions of digital buying behavior. This approach enables the researcher to systematically gather quantifiable data and analyze patterns or correlations that can inform the development of a student-centered marketing framework.

FINDINGS

1. Profile of the Respondents

1.1. Most of the respondents were aged 20-21 years old (42.1%), followed by those aged 22-23 years old (36.4%). Respondents aged 18-19 years old comprised 14.0%, while those aged 24 years old and above comprised 7.5%.

1.2. In terms of sex, 53.7% were female, and 46.3% were male, indicating a relatively balanced participation of both sexes in the digital purchase of pre-loved clothes.

2. Perception of the respondents regarding the digital buying behavior of college students when purchasing pre-loved clothes in terms of:

2.1. Perception of the Influence of Influencer Marketing and Social Proof: Respondents generally agreed that influencer marketing and social proof influence their purchasing decisions, obtaining a composite mean of 3.30. The highest-rated indicator was confidence in purchasing pre-loved clothes when there are positive reviews and testimonials online (WM = 3.41). The lowest-rated indicator was considering recommendations from social media influencers before purchasing pre-loved clothes (WM = 3.05), although it still received an agreement rating.

2.2. Perception of the Impact of Digital Word-of-Mouth and Online Reviews: Respondents agreed that digital word-of-mouth and online reviews affect their buying behavior, with a composite mean of 3.35. The highest-rated statement was that recommendations from friends or classmates strongly influence purchasing decisions (WM = 3.52), interpreted as Strongly Agree. The lowest-rated indicator was the influence of social media advertisements on interest in purchasing pre-loved clothes (WM = 3.24), although respondents still agreed with the statement.

2.3. Perception on the Effectiveness of Personalization and Customization Features: Respondents agreed that personalization and customization features influence their online purchasing decisions, obtaining a composite mean of 3.37. The highest-rated indicator was that customization options such as color and size increase the likelihood of purchasing pre-loved clothes online (WM = 3.46). The lowest-rated indicator was the influence of suggested items based on browsing history (WM = 3.29), although it remained within the agreement range.

3. Significant Difference in Perceptions When Profile Variables Are Considered.

Age showed a significant difference in respondents' perceptions regarding influencer marketing and social proof, digital word-of-mouth and online reviews, and personalization

and customization features, with a p-value of 0.000. Sex also showed a significant difference across all variables, with a p-value of 0.005. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that respondents' perceptions vary significantly according to their age and sex.

Student-Centered Marketing Framework for Digital Buying Behavior of College Students Purchasing Pre-loved Clothes.

Based on the findings of the study, a Student-Centered Marketing Framework was proposed to enhance the digital buying behavior of college students purchasing pre-loved clothes. The framework focuses on strengthening social proof and customer trust through reviews, ratings, and testimonials; enhancing peer influence through referral programs and student ambassador campaigns; improving personalization through tailored recommendations and targeted promotions; increasing customization options by providing product filters and preference-based features; and addressing demographic differences through age-specific and gender-sensitive marketing strategies. These proposed programs and activities are expected to increase seller credibility, customer engagement, purchase intention, customer satisfaction, and the overall effectiveness of marketing communication among college student consumers.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. College students in Nasugbu actively engage in the digital purchase of pre-loved clothes, particularly those aged 20 to 23 years old, demonstrating the growing popularity of online secondhand fashion among young consumers.

2. Influencer marketing and social proof play an important role in shaping students' purchasing decisions. However, students place greater trust in positive customer reviews, testimonials, and actual consumer experiences than in influencer endorsements alone.

3. Digital word-of-mouth and online reviews significantly affect purchasing behavior. Recommendations from friends and classmates are among the strongest influences on students' decisions to purchase pre-loved clothes online.

4. Personalization and customization features positively influence students' online shopping experiences. Students prefer platforms that provide customized options, tailored recommendations, and personalized promotions that match their individual preferences.

5. Age and sex significantly influence the perceptions of college students regarding digital buying behavior. As a result, marketing strategies should be adapted to the characteristics, interests, and preferences of different demographic groups.

6. A student-centered marketing framework that focuses on social proof, peer influence, personalized experiences, and demographic-based marketing approaches can help increase consumer trust, engagement, satisfaction, and purchase intention among college students purchasing pre-loved clothes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Online sellers of pre-loved clothes should encourage customers to provide reviews, ratings, and testimonials to strengthen social proof and increase buyer confidence. Also, they should enhance personalization and customization features by offering tailored recommendations, customized product options, and targeted promotional offers that align with students' preferences.

2. Digital marketers and online business owners should develop referral programs, student ambassador campaigns, and community-building activities that encourage students to share their purchasing experiences and recommendations with peers.

3. School administrators and educators may use the findings as reference material in marketing and consumer behavior courses to help students better understand current digital purchasing trends and sustainable fashion practices.

4. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct similar studies involving a larger population, different locations, and additional variables such as income, educational background, platform preference, sustainability awareness, and purchasing frequency to further enrich knowledge on digital buying behavior in the pre-loved clothing market.

5. The proposed Student-Centered Marketing Framework should be adopted and evaluated by online sellers and thrift shop owners to determine its effectiveness in increasing customer engagement, trust, and long-term purchasing behavior among college students.

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