THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR

AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN HAWAII

by

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Dedication

My successful completion of this doctorate program is dedicated to my family, friends, and students. To my amazing son, whose presence and uplifting spirit, is a constant source of strength. Thank you for always ready to encourage me with a smile.

To my dear students who have believed in me all the way. Thank you for all your support and encouragement during the long research hours. Your willingness to help has made this day possible for my journey.

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CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Social media platforms have significantly improved communication, interaction and obtaining information, and massive popularity (Daniels et al., 2021). Adolescents have contributed to making social media a daily routine and socialization. Marketers have become aware of the possibility of impacting purchasing habits of this demographic because of their changing behavior. The main objective of this research is to investigate how the use of social media affects the purchasing patterns and choices of adolescents residing in Hawaii.

There are multiple reasons why examining the correlation between social media and the actions of young consumers is tremendously significant (Dedoncker & McLean, 2022). First, teenagers constitute a crucial group of customers with distinctive requirements, likings, and buying behavior (He, 2022). Marketers and businesses operating in Hawaii can gain valuable insights by comprehending the impact of social media on individuals' decision-making processes. Additionally, Hawaii presents a unique environment, characterized by its singular cultural background and geographic remoteness, that lends itself to analyzing how social media influences consumer actions among a particular populace (Nofal et al., 2020). This study aims to enhance understanding of marketing and social media disciplines. At the same time, we intend to aid the local community by delivering practical recommendations for enterprises based in Hawaii.

In previous years, web-based correspondence has developed into an essential element of adolescent' daily schedules, creating a dynamic stage for their different levels of commitment, self-declaration, and data circulation. Thus, the web's general nearness in the lives of adolescents has presented a pressing concern about how their social media exposure

affects their consumer conduct. Therefore, this dissertation proposition seeks to explore the complex relationship between a web-based life and shopper purchasing behavior among adolescents living in Hawaii. The general objective is to acquire essential knowledge that elevates the comprehension of the strong effect of a web-based life on the decisions made by this socioeconomic group.

Social media platforms have evolved into vibrant virtual communities through which adolescents frequently interact in various activities, from connecting with acquaintances and highlighting their personalities to seeking product guidance. However, the impact of social media involvement on adolescents' actual purchasing selections requires clarification. Hence, understanding the relationship between adolescents' online interactions and consumer choices has significant implications for businesses, marketers, and educators since it offers an opportunity to customize strategies that resonate with these teenagers, especially those living in the Hawaiian Islands' unique cultural and geographical setting (Al-Youzbaky Hanna and Najeeb, 2022). By investigating the effects of social media usage on the consumer buying behavior of Hawaiian adolescents, the analysis aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for companies and parents to assist adolescents with an informed and responsible navigation of the digital world.

The following objectives will be examined:

Overall Objective

The study assesses the relationship between social media usage and consumer buying behavior among adolescents in Hawaii.

Specific Aims

1.   To examine the extent of social media usage among adolescents in Hawaii,

2.   To identify the types of products and services most influenced by social media usage among Hawaiian adolescents,

3.   To analyze the factors that moderate the impact of social media usage on Hawaiian adolescents' consumer buying behavior, and

4.   To assess the role of peer influence and advertising on social media in shaping adolescents' purchasing decisions.

1.2 Research Problem

The pressing problem under consideration involves the significant effect of online communities on buyers' habits, specifically among adolescents, who are progressively dependent on these platforms for data and social exchanges (Sun *et al.*, 2022). This impact is amplified in the Hawaiian Islands, where a lack of significant yearly occasions and year-round warm climates restrict high schoolers' spending on seasonal purchases like winter clothing and occasional concert tickets (Chavez *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, inspecting how online networks impact the activities of adolescents as shoppers in Hawaii is an essential endeavor.

Social media has drastically changed how people communicate and gather information, influencing individuals' choices when buying products or services. According to Chavez *et al.* (2020, p. 8789), social media platforms attract a significant amount of attention from teenagers, which makes them an ideal audience for marketing campaigns. Since there are no major professional sports leagues events, theme parks, historical or cultural event which takes place annually. Along with the year-round warm weather in Hawaii has limited the teenagers from spending their allowance on winter gear, clothing, or seasonal tickets. Hence, its distinctive cultural and geographical characteristics offer an intriguing environment to investigate how social media impacts the actions of teenagers as consumers.

Hawaii's enterprises need to comprehend these geographical effects and social aspects since doing so can offer better understanding of efficient marketing tactics for this population.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The spread and widespread acceptance of social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok) have ushered in an era of change in how information is shared, brands connect with people, and people communicate with each other (Varma *et al*., 2020). This digital change has significant implications for adolescents ages 13 to 18. These teenagers, often characterized by their growing freedom, private money, and increasing effect within their families, have emerged as an essential audience for businesses (Aurimas, Pengshuo and Xiang, 2020). How these adolescents interact with social media is reshaping how they purchase items in intriguing and impactful ways, presenting a complex issue that requires further exploration.

The swift growth of online networking in recent years has drastically transformed how consumers connect, acquire data, and decide what to purchase. This change has molded how organizations publicize and buyers act. Adolescents are an especially critical statistic of every consumer statistic because of their immense purchasing intensity, estimated at an astonishing $211 billion (Manzoor *et al*., 2020). Subsequently, understanding how online networking impacts their purchasing behavior has become highly significant to advertisers and approach creators alike.

Advertisers' and lawmakers' attraction to social media platforms is that they offer the unique ability to connect with adolescents during a critical phase of their growth. Specifically, adolescents in the Hawaiian Islands comprise a memorable and intriguing population to analyze the impacts of social media on consumer behavior (Ermiş, 2021). Hawaii's unique cultural traditions, close-knit communities, and beautiful natural geography

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distinguish it from other states, rendering the island group a profoundly insightful research location.

Hawaii's unique cultural traditions, diverse residents, and flourishing local businesses contribute additional intricacies to consumer choices and behaviors. Thus, this environment can present valuable insights into the interplay between social networking platforms, their cultural impact, and the resulting decision-making processes of adolescents (Fu, 2022). For marketers, comprehending how social media sways adolescents' attitudes, preferences, and purchasing selections in this distinctive market can lead to more effective and customized marketing strategies (Törhönen *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, policymakers can utilize this knowledge to develop rules that promote ethical and responsible advertising practices that safeguard the wellness of Hawaiian youth.

In the Hawaiian Islands and globally, a rising dependence of younger generations on virtual social networks for diverse aspects of daily existence has been witnessed recently. As indicated by current statistics, approximately 85% of Hawaiian adolescents actively use one or more electronic social networks (Buller *et al.*, 2022). This finding aligns with a worldwide pattern, as the utilization of electronic social networks among teenagers has markedly risen in recent years. This global omnipresence is driven by the appeal of virtual association, data access, and diversions that digital social networks offer (Štreimikienė *et al.*, 2021). Like their peers worldwide, adolescents in Hawaii spend a considerable part of their daily schedules on these networks, with an average utilization time of approximately two to three hours daily.

The advent of online communities has undeniably transformed how teenagers in the Hawaiian Islands, like others across the globe, interact with promotions and make consumer judgments. This occurrence provides pros and cons, all of which necessitate a complete study to understand the complex bond between virtual domains and the buying habits of Hawaii's

youth (Dwivedi *et al.*, 2021). Above all, it is crucial to recognize the good parts of social media's impact on teen consumers in Hawaii. Social media platforms offer a particular outlet for youths to acquire details about goods, services, and trends (Muhamad and Shahrom, 2020). Thus, adolescents can make informed purchase choices based on user-made content, influencer evaluations, and peer suggestions. This data distribution empowers these youths to investigate their interests and inclinations freely, permitting varied decisions that reflect their singular preferences.

Furthermore, digital environments cultivate a feeling of camaraderie and fellowship among Hawaiian adolescents. Social media platforms permit them to relate to peers nearby and globally by sharing encounters and discussing their purchase decisions. Sentiments of belonging and common interests can boost these adolescents' general wellness and self-worth, positively influencing their consumer habits (Safia *et al.*, 2019). For instance, the support of similarly minded acquaintances can guide adolescents toward more sensible, principle-driven purchases.

Indeed, social media's effect on how Hawaiian adolescents spend money must be acknowledged. These platforms overflow with sophisticated strategies and targeted promotions to capture these teenagers' attention and funds (Russell, Vest and Litt, 2022). Formulas carefully tailor content that matches personal pursuits, quickly aligning advertisements with adolescents' online actions. Thus, this relentless encounter with persuasive selling techniques can breed an unconscious desire for goods and experiences that these adolescents may not have considered independently. Additionally, the requirement to comply with social networking-guided patterns can lead to impulsive and potentially wasteful spending among Hawaiian adolescents (Russell, Vest and Litt, 2022). The fear of missing out

(FOMO) on the most recent fashion, gadgets, and activities can prompt adolescents to hastily make buying decisions without thoroughly considering their long-term implications.

The impact that social platforms have on teenagers' purchasing decisions is complex. First, it is essential to understand Hawaiian adolescents' exposure levels to promotional content on social media sites. Research shows that they view an average of 1,000–3,000 advertisements daily (Lin, Vijayalakshmi and Laczniak, 2019). These adolescents encounter sponsored articles, influencer recommendations, product analyses, and customized commercials, constantly surrounded by relentless prompts and reasons for buying that prompt them to make purchases (Lin, Vijayalakshmi and Laczniak, 2019).

Moreover, platforms have developed advanced algorithms that apply user information to personalize advertisements. Nearly 90% of adolescents in Hawaii have admitted to viewing promotions directly related to their interests and online actions (Nofal, Calicioglu and Aljuhmani, 2020). These customized advertisements are carefully crafted to match the inclinations and preferences of each user, thereby making the messages more persuasive. Thus, social media has evolved into a highly targeted promotional instrument to capture and sustain adolescents' focus.

Blending purchasing selections on social media intensifies their sway on adolescents' purchasing practices. Platforms similar to Instagram and Facebook offer shopping information that allows clients to purchase items specifically from these digital feeds (Hanaysha, 2022). In Hawaii, over 60% of young individuals made an online purchase from a digital feed in 2022 (He, 2022). This statistic shows the transformative capability of social platforms as direct purchasing channels, empowering young people to seamlessly move from exploring to acquiring an item on one application.

How influencers shape adolescents' consumer habits on the internet must also be considered. Promoting products on social media has become predominant globally, with Hawaiian consumers following this trend. Adolescents in Hawaii closely follow local and worldwide influencers who connect with them in a trusting and relatable way while curating and endorsing various items (Erdem and Yilmaz, 2021). The data indicates that most adolescents in Hawaii have made at least one purchase influenced by someone they follow online in the preceding 12 months, with over 70% impacted by recommendations from social media personalities during this span (Eppes *et al.*, 2023). These findings underscore digital celebrities' impact on adolescents' preferences and purchases.

Furthermore, social media platforms allow adolescents to engage directly with brands and products. Approximately 80% of teenagers in Hawaii follow at least one brand on social media, while nearly 65% have interacted with brands through likes, comments, and direct messages (Ragab, 2022). This online participation builds a feeling of brand commitment while providing brands with valuable insights into their teenage audience's priorities and preferences. By analyzing customer feedback, companies can refine their products and tailor their promotional efforts to precisely match consumer trends.

Nevertheless, online networking's impact on adolescent consumers' conduct is not entirely positive and presents critical issues. For instance, the ubiquity of social media networking can present youth with advertising strategies that may not be advantageous, driving them to make rushed purchases without due consideration (Pokhrel *et al.*, 2021). Thus, advertisements that make shopping fun by offering limited-time deals and special occasions can encourage youngsters to purchase impulsively without weighing the implications. Besides, the constant online presentation of idealized ways of life with stylish

material belongings can fuel materialism and social comparison, which motivates youth to purchase items to keep up with what they see others buying (Pokhrel *et al.*, 2021).

Indeed, web-based networking likely adds to a phenomenon known as FOMO. This social phobia drives youth to purchase items and participate in occasions and patterns they see modeled for them on the web (Lee, Bright and Easton, 2021). In Hawaii, approximately 45% of adolescents have admitted feeling the tension of passing up significant chances identified with items or encounters online, thus resulting in unplanned spending.

Certain critical factors regarding social platforms' effect on adolescents' spirits and wellbeing must also be considered. As these teens excessively invest their time on digital channels, particularly while chasing unreachable charm, success, and recognition, it can result in a negative self-appraisal and body image. These mental aspects may also sway purchases when adolescents seek goods or services, they imagine can help them achieve these unrealistic benchmarks promoted in the digital world (Gordon *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, there is a growing worry about the habit-forming nature of social platforms, with Hawaii revealing growth in the number of teenagers showing signs of social media dependence. This addiction can lead to compulsive online shopping that worsens the financial strain on teenagers and their relatives.

To further complicate issues, the effect of social media usage on adolescents' consumer conduct can differ depending on diverse elements such as age, gender, financial position, and heritage. For instance, youthful adolescents may be more prone to rash buys driven by peer pressure, while older teenagers may demonstrate more discerning shopping behavior (Daniels, Sharma and Batra, 2021). Gender can also play a role. As expected, social media usage may impact girls' beauty and fashion choices more, while boys may be more swayed by gaming and tech-related products.

As well, adolescents' financial positions can influence the products they are presented online based on what they can afford. Hence, higher-income families with more prominent purchasing power are admitted to exclusive celebrity brands promoted on social media (Jaitly and Gautam, 2021). Finally, adolescents' heritage can also affect their preferences and purchasing choices, as some social backgrounds may insist on qualities that show thrift.

1.4 Research Questions

RQ. To what extent does social media usage influence the consumer buying behavior of adolescents in Hawaii?

Hypothesis. Social media usage significantly influences the consumer buying behavior of adolescents in Hawaii, with a positive correlation between social media exposure and product purchases.

1.5 Conclusion

This study aims to enhance the existing knowledge in the field of social media marketing by investigating how it can be applied uniquely in Hawaii's context and its consequences. By conducting an extensive analysis of various literary sources, this investigation aims to pinpoint areas where current research falls short, suggest avenues for further study, and ultimately offer practical guidance for marketers and promoters in Hawaii.

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Recently, there has been a growing focus and significance placed on the impact social

media has on consumer behaviors. According to Lee, Bright, and Eastin's (2021) research,

the use and expansion of social media channels have revolutionized people's communication

methods, knowledge acquisition, and buying choices. Of all the various groups of people,

studying how social media impacts consumer behavior among teenagers is especially

important because the carry a whopping $211 billion in spending power (Manzoor *et al.*,

2020. p. 45). Social media platforms are of high interest to marketers and policymakers as

they offer a key opportunity to reach out to teenagers, who are in an important phase of

developing both their identities and their consumer preferences. The main point of interest in

this literature review is to investigate how social media specifically affects teenagers'

purchasing habits in Hawaii, as stated by Lin, Vijayalakshmi, and Laczniak (2019, p. 2664).

With its unique cultural, social, and geographical characteristics, Hawaii presents a

distinctive context to study this phenomenon.

According to Ermiş (2021), consumer choices and actions in Hawaii are uniquely

shaped by the regions' rich cultural history, eclectic population, and thriving local brands.

Thus, valuable insights can be acquired regarding the interaction between social media

platforms, cultural influences, and the decision-making process of adolescents by

investigating the impact of social media on consumer behavior in Hawaii. Analyzing how

social media impacts Hawaiian teenagers' consumer behavior can have notable ramifications

for policymakers and marketers, as stated by Fu (2022, p. 156). Marketers can better

comprehend how social media influences adolescents' attitudes, preferences, and purchasing

choices in this market, which, according to Törhönen *et al.* (2020), enables marketers to create strategies that are more specific and effective based on the distinct attributes of Hawaiian teenagers. At the same time, better understanding of how social media impacts consumer actions helps policymakers to advance regulations encouraging ethical and responsible advertising tactics to safeguard the welfare of Hawaiian youths.

2.1 Introduction

This literature review intends to explore the impact of social media on the buying habits of young consumers in Hawaii. The study considers the regions exceptional cultural, social, and geographical factors (Sun, 2022, p. 609). Examining the relationship between social media usage and purchasing decisions among adolescents in Hawaii can provide valuable insights into their behavior patterns and the various cultural influences and environmental factors that shape consumer choices. As a diverse cultural hub and attractive tourist spot, Hawaii resents a unique market scene (Aurimas, Pengshuo and Xiang, 2020). Given its multi-ethnic population, it is possible to investigate the correlation between social media use among teens and their respective cultural beliefs, customs, and preferences. Moreover, the state's location amid the expansive Pacific Ocean greatly impacts the range, convenience, and cost-effectiveness of merchandise, further affecting consumer purchasing patterns.

Ancient Hawaiians were voyagers, they forged their own path through the unchartered course in the Pacific Ocean from French Polynesia, Tahiti, the Tuamotus, and Samoa over centuries. With a land rich in natural resources. They believe in working together, hence when they arrive on the new land, they thrive as families and communities and were able to successfully support between 200,000 and 1 million people utilizing their knowledge of fishing, and sophisticated and diversified farming and agriculture techniques. Although the

modern locals no longer believe in the old gods like the early Hawaiians. They still hold the deities in great reverence in all aspect of their life. They believe in protecting their land and spending time in nature is the best cure for a distracted mind because living in harmony with earth and the gods has been a great part in the Hawaiian tradition.

Since the it's the Hawaiian culture to promote harmony, hence, the Hawaiian people are widely considered as some of the jovial in America. The reason behind this warm hospitability is because the Hawaiian culture is based on acceptance and affection. The locals greet each other by saying the word "aloha," which means love, joy, and positive life energy. It also means living in the moment and that there's no goodbye in this life.

Provided the unique cultural backdrop in the Hawaii's history, hence studying the impact of social media on consumer behavior in Hawaii is fascinating; social dynamics comprising diverse communities, ethnicities, and the modern lifestyles. Social media platforms can connect different groups and bring them closer together, potentially converging their preferences and behaviors as consumers (Manzoor, 2020 p. 45). A closer examination of how social media interacts with the sociocultural context in Hawaii can reveal subtle effects on the new generations' adolescent buying habits. The geographic location of the Hawaiian Islands plays a significant role in product availability and accessibility both local and imported products. Teenagers at this age who are trying hard to create their own identity apart from their nuclear family would utilize social media heavily because it enables them to discover and gain knowledge about goods that may not be easily obtainable nearby (Lee, Bright and Eastin, 2021, p.766). Hence, it is essential to examine the significance of how social media affects product preferences, purchase choices, and the ability to overcome geographical barriers.

2.2 Key Trends and Perspectives

This section provides an overview of the key trends and perspectives in the literature on social media and consumer buying behavior. These trends and perspectives shape understanding of how social media influences the purchasing decisions of teenagers in Hawaii (Aurimas, Pengshuo and Xiang, 2020). Additionally, we highlight the unique aspects of social media and consumer buying behavior among adolescents in Hawaii to elucidate their buying decision.

2.2.1 Overview of Key Trends

Social Media as a Source of Information. A significant development is acknowledging social media platforms as consequential information sources for buyers. In Hawaii, because the teenagers depend on social media outlets to obtain details about products, customer feedback, and suggestions (Jaitly and Gautam, 2021, p. 220). The ability to quickly distribute and retrieve information using social media channels has revolutionized adolescents' approaches to making buying choices.

Influencer Marketing. According to the literature, adolescents' buying habits are swayed by influencers with substantial social media followings (Das and Mishra, 2022, p. 206). Their endorsements, recommendations, and product placements can affect how consumers perceive a brand and make purchasing decisions. Based on researched done by YouTube Generation Study, 70 % of teens trust influencers more than traditional celebrities. So much that 4 in 10 Millennial subscribers say their favorite influencer understands them better than their friends.

User-Generated Content and Peer Influence. According to Törhönen *et al.* (2020), consumer opinions and actions can be greatly influenced by content created by fellow users, including reviews of products, videos of unboxing experiences, and personal endorsements.

In Hawaii, if the teenagers tend to seek approval from their peers and frequently turn to user-generated content as a source of information when purchasing. It is important to note that both digital and in-person peer influence may play a significant role in the buying habits among these adolescents.

2.2.2 Perspectives in the Literature

The Socio-Cognitive Perspective. This study delves into the impact of social and cognitive elements on consumer behavior, specifically regarding how interactions on various social media platforms, such as likes, comments, or shares, can affect an individual's perception of a product and purchasing choices. The research also considers the influence of self-identity, social comparison, and the need for social validation among adolescents in Hawaii in relation to their consumer behaviors.

Consumer Engagement Perspective. The focus of this perspective is on the way social media platforms encourage interaction and affect how consumers engage with brands (Fu, 2022, p. 156). A certain percentage of teenagers in Hawaii are highly involved in brand-related activities on social media platforms, such as contests, promotions, and the creation of user-generated content. This perspective examines how engaging with a brand online affects customer loyalty and word-of-mouth promotion.

Impulse Buying and Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). The role of social media and FOMO in inducing impulsive buying behaviors has been emphasized in the literature (Safia *et al.*, 2019, p. 199). In Hawaii, since Oahu has about 950k inhabitants, according to the 2020 census, 20.5% of the population is under the age of 18 years old. These young people frequently come across compelling content on social media platforms, such as limited time offers and exclusive promotions that entice them to make rash purchases due to a perceived sense of missing out.

2.3 Theoretical Frameworks and Concepts

The fundamental principles, hypotheses, and notions presented in Wenninger, Cheung, and Chmielinski's (2021, p. 102303) research provide a foundation for comprehending the impact of social media on teenagers' purchasing habits. By examining these ideas, professionals and scholars can further their understanding of the various mental, societal, and cognitive mechanisms that influence teenage purchasing habits regarding social media networks. As per Eppes (2023, p. 25), various notions, and beliefs arise while studying the impact of social media on the purchasing habits of adolescents. Theoretical constructs are instrumental in comprehending the operational mechanisms at work. Thus, this section expounds upon essential viewpoints, academic conjectures, and notions interlinked with the subject matter.

2.3.1 Social Comparison Theory

According to social comparison theory, individuals assess themselves by contrasting their characteristics and actions with those of others (Nofal, Calicioglu and Aljuhmani, 2020, p. 141). Adolescents tend to make social comparisons, particularly regarding products, ways of living, and their social rank, while using social media. These comparisons influence consumer behaviors as they strive to conform to perceived standards and goals.

2.3.2 Information Adoption Model

In the information adoption model, people undergo a cognitive procedure when embracing fresh data. Adolescents turn to social media as a means of acquiring and assimilating knowledge about various products (Ermiş, 2021). They depend on social media consumers' assessments and suggestions to make educated buying choices.

2.3.3 Social Identity Theory

According to social identity theory, people aim to uphold a favorable perception of themselves in society and look for associations with other individuals. According to Das and Mishra (2022, p. 206), social media influencers serve as a means of recognition for teenagers. Influencers who share similar values, interests, and goals with adolescents have a greater impact on their preferences and buying habits, resulting in the adoption of comparable behaviors.

2.3.4 Source Credibility Theory

Perceived credibility plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes and behaviors, as emphasized by source credibility theory (Dedoncker and McLean, 2022). The purchasing behavior of young consumers can be greatly influenced by social media personalities who are viewed as trustworthy, genuine, and well-informed. The effectiveness of influencer marketing relies heavily on trustworthiness and credibility.

2.3.5 Social Proof

The notion of social proof indicates that people tend to observe the actions of others as a means of directing their behavior, according to Pokhrel *et al.*'s research (2021, p. 106617). For teenagers, the content generated by users, like product feedback, endorsements, and demonstrations, holds significance as a validation of social proof. The opinions and experiences of other users, expressed through positive content, can hold considerable sway in determining a person's purchasing choices.

2.4 Exploration of how social media influences consumer buying behavior among adolescents

Social media impacts adolescent purchasing behavior in several notable ways. Adolescents encounter diverse material influencing their views, beliefs, and buying choices via

social media channels (Sun *et al.*, 2022, p. 609). According to studies conducted by Dedoncker & McLean (2022), adolescents are exposed to various kinds of product-related content, including advertising, peer recommendations, and reviews through social media channels like Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. These platforms allow teenagers to interact with brands, discover product details, and receive recognition from their friends (Das & Mishra, 2022). Various mechanisms are responsible for the influence of social media on purchase decisions based on studies by Das & Mishra (2022). Social influence and information sharing are among the mechanisms that impact adolescents on social media. Adolescents can be heavily influenced by the opinions and behaviors of their online social network while also seeking out and sharing product-related information with others on these platforms (Miniesy et al., 2022). In addition, using images and videos on social media sites makes it easier for people to see desirable lifestyles and products, which can evoke a sense of wanting and impact buying choices.

2.4.1 Exposure to Product Information

Social media networks act as a central location for data and content related to products, encompassing ads, feedback from customers, and marketing material. These messages that impact the knowledge of products and brands are consistently presented to adolescents (Aurimas, Pengshuo and Xiang, 2020) which can influence consumers' preferences, spark their curiosity, and generate a buying impulse.

2.4.2 Social Influence and Peer Recommendations

Adolescents can utilize social media platforms to communicate with their peers and participate in discussions on various products and brands. According to Wenninger, Cheung, and Chmielinski (2021, p. 102303), the purchasing decisions of individuals are greatly impacted by recommendations and endorsements from peers. The opinions and experiences

of peers shared on social media hold more weight for teenagers, leading to the possibility of adopting similar preferences and purchasing habits.

2.4.3 Influencer Marketing

According to Eppes *et al.* (2023, p. 25), people with a significant presence on social media platforms are now seen as powerful individuals who influence young adults' purchasing decisions. Adolescents' attitudes and purchase decisions can be directly influenced by influencers who produce captivating content, offer advice on products, and exhibit their way of life. Influencers' persuasive capabilities are attributed to the credibility and expertise perceived in their content, which has an aspirational character.

2.4.4 User-Generated Content and Social Proof

Adolescent buyer behavior is significantly impacted by user content, including videos of unboxing products, reviews, and personal experiences shared in testimonials (Manzoor *et al.*, 2020, p. 45) of their research paper. Social networking sites enable the exchange and circulation of content created by users, which offers significant insights and validation. When making buying decisions, young people often consider their peers or other buyers' experiences and opinions as trustworthy sources of information.

2.4.5 FOMO and Impulse Buying

Using limited-time deals, flash sales, and exclusive social media promotions elicits feelings of urgency and the fear of missing out. According to Safia *et al.* (2019, p. 199), teenagers may exhibit unplanned purchasing tendencies motivated by the anxiety of not taking advantage of the purported possibilities. Impulse buying, fueled by marketing strategies relying on limited time offers or scarcity, can be partly attributed to quick and easy access to social media platforms.

2.4.6 Brand Engagement and Loyalty

Adolescents can directly interact with brands through social media channels, promoting bidirectional communication and encouraging brand devotion. Adolescents can track and engage with brands, participate in competitions or activities, and distribute branded material via social media channels (Nofal, Calicioglu and Aljuhmani, 2020. p. 141). Cultivating a sense of loyalty and attachment to the brand through this interaction can significantly impact future purchase decisions and lead to positive recommendations among their social networks. The engagement of teens on social media platforms is a significant factor in influencing their perception of brands (Daniels et al., 2021). Companies can cultivate a feeling of genuineness, reliability, and communal bonding by actively interacting with their intended audience on social media platforms.

On social media, teenagers view interactive, relatable, and responsive brands as more socially responsible and trustworthy. According to (Hanaysha, 2022), favorable interactions between brands and consumers on social media sites can lead to improved brand perception, heightened customer devotion, and a more significant impact on buying choices (Russell et al., 2022). On the other hand, negative interactions, or no involvement at all could result in unfavorable opinions towards the brand and discourage young people from wanting to interact with it.

2.5 Discussion of Roles of Social Media Platforms, Influencers, and User-Generated Content

According to Al *et al.* (p. 197), teenagers' purchasing decisions are heavily influenced by social media platforms, influencers, and content created by fellow users. Adolescents now consider social media platforms as valuable resources of information. Social media channels provide many products information, including user-generated content, product reviews, and

brand promotions that users can conveniently access (Muhamad & Shahrom, 2020). Teenagers frequently utilize social media platforms to obtain information and arrive at informed purchasing choices. The reason behind depending on social media as a source of information arises from people's belief in the genuineness and trustworthiness of user-created content, which is considered more personable and dependable than conventional advertising (Nofal et al., 2020). Studies indicate teenagers are encouraged to seek information through social media networks (Russell et al., 2022). Before making any purchasing decisions, they actively browse brand profiles, read reviews, and seek recommendations from their peers (Eppes et al., 2023). Additionally, social media makes two-way communication possible, allowing teenagers to engage directly with brands and inquire for further information or clarifications. This section elaborates on each of these components.

2.5.1 Social Media Platforms

Adolescents commonly utilize social media platforms as their chief means of consuming content and engaging in social communication. According to Chen, Mao, and Halvarsson (2020), social media platforms impact consumers' purchasing behavior. Products, brands, and trends are extensively covered on social media, providing a wealth of information, and brands, influencers, and peers can reach adolescents through targeted advertisements, sponsored content, and organic posts. Raising awareness of products through this kind of exposure significantly impacts how potential buyers perceive and evaluate them throughout the purchasing process. According to Sun *et al.* (2022, p. 609), teenagers communicate and interact with others through social media platforms by leaving comments, providing likes, and sharing content; in this way, they voice their viewpoints, request suggestions, and participate in discussions regarding goods and labels. Social media's

interactive features therefore facilitate the sharing of information and social influence, thus impacting consumer preferences and attitudes.

2.5.2 Influencers

Individuals who hold sway over social media platforms due to their extensive reach and clout, commonly referred to as influencers, are now playing a prominent role in molding the purchasing patterns of young consumers. According to Dedoncker and McLean (2022), influencers hold significant importance in determining the perceptions of adolescents, who regard them as reliable sources of advice and guidance. Das and Mishra (2022, p. 206) assert that influencers gain trust from their audiences by demonstrating their knowledge and authority in particular fields, portraying genuineness in their content, and nurturing strong bonds with their supporters. Aspirational lifestyles and covetable experiences are frequently featured in their content. Teenagers tend to be drawn toward idealized images and are more inclined to imitate the actions, desires, and spending habits of influencers they look up to.

2.5.3 User-Generated Content

Content produced and distributed by consumers is known as user-generated content, and this content can impact teenagers' purchase decisions. According to Pokhrel *et al.* (2021), user-generated content is a form of social proof that showcases how individuals have engaged with and reaped the benefits of specific products. Young individuals frequently place their faith in and depend on the viewpoints exchanged by fellow teenagers or other buyers, viewing them as significant and genuine sources of information. Optimistic content can nurture users' confidence and impact their choices for procurement. Brand-generated content is often considered less authentic and relatable than user-generated content. According to Wenninger, Cheung, and Chmielinski (2021, p. 102303), content produced by people with similar characteristics is more likely to appeal to and impact teenagers. Adolescents are more

likely to relate to and be inspired by user-generated content as it offers a genuine glimpse into real-life experiences and perspectives.

2.6 Areas of Agreement and Disagreement

Researchers examining the impact of teenagers' social media use on consumer purchasing behavior share some common beliefs while also expressing divergent views, as noted by Manzoor *et al.* (2020, p. 45). Existing literature highlights areas of disagreement and investigates how cultural and contextual factors affect the connection between social media usage and consumer purchasing decisions. The following sub-sections delve into these subtopics.

2.6.1 Areas of Agreement and Disagreement Among Authors

The consensus among authors is that social media holds great sway on the purchasing decisions of adolescents, and Eppes *et al.* (2023) state that it significantly affects consumer behavior. Social media channels present an opportunity for increased product visibility, promotion of social connections, and influence on consumer outlooks and inclinations. According to Al *et al.* (p. 197), there is a consensus among authors that influencers play a vital role in shaping the buying habits of teenagers. Influencers can shape attitudes, induce buying choices, and even determine brand preferences among young people.

Per Štreimikienė *et al.* (2021, p. 200), there is a diversity of perspectives among authors regarding how social media dictates one's willingness to make purchases. There are varying opinions regarding the impact of social media on purchase intentions. Some believe it has a direct influence, while others propose that its effect is indirect and depends on factors like brand perception, peer influence, or reliability. Different authors hold varying views on the effects of social media on impulsive buying, as stated by Erdem and Yilmaz (2021, p. 1615). Social media platforms are thought to promote impulsive buying habits due to their

steady stream of convincing content. Some argue that the influence of social media on impulse buying may vary based on personal traits and other factors, which means social media may not have a consistent effect on everyone.

2.6.2 Identification of Major Areas of Controversy, Debate, or Tension Within the Literature

Authenticity and Disclosure. In influencer marketing, a contentious topic is whether influencers should be transparent about their authenticity and financial disclosures. According to He (2022, p. 590), certain writers contend that influencer content's lack of transparency and authenticity could raise ethical dilemmas and result in possible exploitation of consumers. The need for more explicit disclosure guidelines and influencer and brand accountability to guarantee transparency remains an important topic of discussion.

Social Comparison and Well-Being. Ongoing discussions surround the effects of social comparison on teenagers' well-being (Gordon *et al.*, 2021, p. 3825). However, different researchers hold that social-media-based social comparison may result in adverse psychological effects like reduced self-confidence or dissatisfaction with one's body.

2.6.3 Examination of the Impact of Cultural and Contextual Factors

Cultural and contextual factors greatly influence the relationship between adolescent consumer buying behavior and social media. It is important to take certain aspects into account, as described below.

Cultural Values. Consumer behavior can be influenced by cultural values, and the effect of social media may differ depending on one's culture. The way adolescents interact with social media platforms and decide what to purchase is influenced by various cultural values, norms, and traditions (Russell, Vest and Litt, 2022). The impact of social media on

consumer behavior can be affected by cultural elements like prioritizing tradition, individualistic tendencies, or collectivism.

Geographical Context. According to Hanaysha (2022), the correlation between social media and consumer purchasing behavior can be influenced by factors like product availability and accessibility within a particular geographical setting. The way teenagers use social media and decide what to buy can be affected by various factors, such as indigenous trademarks, geographical or cultural inclinations, and a restricted range of available products.

2.7 Critique and Synthesis of Past Research

2.7.1 Critique of the Literature

When examining the literature regarding how social media impacts teenagers' purchasing habits, it is crucial to pinpoint any potential prejudices or presuppositions, as noted by Varma *et al.* (2020). Potential critiques include the following points.

Limited Generalizability. One potential criticism is the restricted applicability of results. It is not easy to generalize the findings of numerous studies because they tend to concentrate on regions or groups, as noted by Buller *et al.* (2022, p. 400). Diverse environmental elements such as culture, society, and context may differ; therefore, discoveries may not be universally applicable to all teenage communities.

Methodological Limitations. He (2022, p. 590) asserts that certain research studies use data obtained through self-reporting, which can be influenced by recall and social desirability biases. Moreover, cross-sectional methodologies are frequently utilized, which pose challenges to establishing causation. A more comprehensive understanding of how social media influences consumer behavior regarding causality and timing requires longitudinal studies or experimental designs.

Measurement Challenges. Evaluation of how social media influences consumer behavior is a challenging task. Al *et al.* (p.197) observe that it requires time to comprehend complex aspects of social media utilization and its impact on consumer purchasing patterns. For more nuanced research, it is essential to have accurate and dependable metrics that effectively reflect the complexities of social media participation and its influence on consumer choices.

2.7.2 Synthesis and Evaluation of Research Findings

To thoroughly comprehend social media's impact on adolescent consumer purchasing behavior, it is important to amalgamate and assess research results (Miniesy, Elshahawy and Fakhreldin, 2022, p. 245). Several significant conclusions have emerged from this analysis.

Impact on Purchase Decisions. According to Ermiş's (2021) research, social media impacts teenagers' decisions regarding purchases. User-generated content and influencer recommendations shared on social media play a significant role in the assessment and choice of products. Social media platforms' peer recommendations alongside societal influences hold enormous sway in determining consumer purchasing decisions.

The correlation between purchase intent among adolescents and social media has been investigated in various studies (Safia et al., 2019). Social media networks offer chances for businesses to produce compelling content, conduct focused advertising efforts, and utilize influencer promotion to impact purchasing intention. The likelihood of developing purchase intentions and engaging in purchase behaviors is higher among teenagers who come across convincing content on social media platforms (Manzoor, 2020). According to Varma et al. (2020), the active involvement of teenagers on social media platforms, like endorsing, responding, and disseminating promotional content, can increase their likelihood of purchasing. Furthermore, the influence of peer endorsements and social confirmation on

shaping the intention to purchase must be considered (Varma et al., 2020). Youngsters tend to be more inclined to believe and contemplate buying items their friends suggest on various social media platforms.

Brand Engagement and Loyalty. According to Erdem and Yilmaz (2021 p. 1615), social media can benefit adolescents' engagement with brands and their loyalty towards them. Brand loyalty and advocacy are reinforced by actively participating in brand-related activities and establishing a sense of connectedness within social media forums.

2.7.3 Analysis of Strengths and Limitations of Existing Studies

One notable aspect of prior research in this domain is its ability to pinpoint the critical mechanisms and procedures by which social media impacts teenagers' purchasing behavior (Štreimikienė *et al.*, 2021, p. 200). Research has revealed insights into how adolescent consumer behaviors are shaped by influencers, user-generated content, and comparisons on social media. Past research has proposed theoretical frameworks and practical insights to marketers and policymakers. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the presence of limitations, as stated by Daniels, Sharma, and Batra (2021, p. 159). Capturing the impact of social media platforms on consumer behavior is challenging due to the rapidly changing nature of these digital mediums. Limitations arise in drawing definite conclusions as many studies concentrate on correlations rather than establishing causal relationships.

Moreover, using the information provided by individuals and cross-sectional models limits the capacity to draw strong cause-and-effect conclusions (Varma *et al.*, 2020). In addition, the scope of the findings' applicability is restricted as investigations typically concentrate on communities or societal environments. Social media may affect consumer buying behavior differently based on the unique characteristics and experiences of adolescents from different cultural backgrounds and regions.

2.8 Gaps in the Literature

Analyzing the impact of social media on the purchasing habits of teenagers in Hawaii, Miniesy, Elshahawy, and Fakhreldin (2022, p. 245) identified several gaps and potential avenues for future research. The following paragraphs pinpoint the issues or deficiencies in the literature and discuss the domains that necessitate additional investigation.

2.8.1 Limited Focus on Hawaii

A major shortfall is insufficient study of Hawaii. Although studies have been conducted on the impact of social media on consumer behavior among teenagers in various settings, further research is needed on the distinctive cultural, societal, and geographic components that influence consumer actions in Hawaii (Gordon *et al.*, 2021. p. 3825). Additional investigation is needed to understand the distinct characteristics of social media and its influence on the purchasing patterns of teenagers in Hawaii.

2.8.2 Cultural Specificities

Literature must delve into the impact of Hawaiian cultural elements on the correlation between social media and consumer purchase patterns. According to Chen, Mao, and Halvarsson (2020), Hawaii's unique cultural legacy and diverse population may significantly influence how consumers think, feel, and act. Future studies should explore how social media platforms are influenced by cultural norms, traditions, and local factors to understand teenage consumers' decision-making processes in Hawaii.

2.8.3 Longitudinal and Experimental Designs

Establishing causal relationships between social media and consumer behavior can be challenging as many studies use cross-sectional designs. Longitudinal research studies are required to effectively capture consumer behavior changes and temporal dynamics over time (Buller *et al.*, 2022, p. 400). Experimental designs can offer valuable insights into how social

media interventions or manipulations affect the purchasing habits of adolescents and their causal effects.

2.8.4 Ethical Considerations

According to Hanaysha (2022), the literature needs to thoroughly examine the ethical issues related to social media and its effects on teenagers' consumer behavior, particularly regarding influencer marketing, how disclosures are handled, apprehensions about privacy, and the potential exploitation of vulnerable teenagers. Additional investigation must tackle these ethical apprehensions and establish principles and protocols that ensure ethical and responsible marketing methods on social media networks.

2.8.5 Measurement and Methodological Advancements

Improvements in measurement instruments and methodologies can enhance the value of existing literature. To comprehensively understand social media interaction, more advanced measurement techniques are imperative. These methods should measure intricate features like usage habits, involvement with forms of content, and the effect produced by different social media networks (Daniels, Sharma and Batra, 2021, p. 159). Moreover, incorporating qualitative and quantitative data through mixed-method strategies can offer greater comprehension of the correlation between consumer buying behavior and social media.

2.9 Areas in need of further research

Several key areas related to the impact of social media on purchasing behavior among teenagers in Hawaii require further research, as highlighted by Russell, Vest, and Litt (2022). Additional research should explore how Hawaiian cultural elements impact teenagers' purchasing habits. Hawaiian teenagers' values, preferences, and purchasing behaviors are influenced by the state's diverse ethnic communities, local traditions, and unique cultural

heritage. Exploring the intersection of cultural factors and social media platforms in relation to consumer purchasing choices can offer beneficial information for marketers and policymakers seeking to connect effectively with this demographic (Buller *et al.*, 2022, p. 400). Further longitudinal and experimental investigations are required to determine the cause-and-effect connections between social media and consumer actions among teenagers in Hawaii. Conducting a longitudinal study facilitates the recording of chronological patterns and modifications in consumer actions over time, thereby revealing insights into the enduring impacts of social media.

Research studies can use experimental designs to control social media exposure or interventions, analyze how they affect consumer behaviors, and ascertain the underlying causal mechanisms. Štreimikienė *et al.* (2021, p. 200) recommend that future studies investigate the ethical issues associated with social media use and young consumers' behavior in Hawaii. This encompasses topics regarding openness, genuineness, and ethical advertising strategies. Establishing ethical guidelines regarding influencer marketing, disclosure practices, and safeguarding susceptible teenagers is essential to encouraging ethical conduct in social media marketing and requires a thorough comprehension of moral implications (Lin, Vijayalakshmi and Laczniak, 2019, p. 2664). Upgrades in measuring instruments and techniques are needed to comprehend the various aspects of engagement on social media platforms and how they influence consumer purchasing patterns. Comprehensive insight into the impact of various social media aspects on consumer behavior can be gained by utilizing advanced methods that consider platforms, kinds of content, and usage habits (Muhamad and Shahrom, 2020, p. 69). By utilizing methods that blend both qualitative and quantitative data, a more comprehensive understanding of teenagers' perspectives on social media and the impact it has on their purchasing choices can be obtained.

2.10 Summary and synthesis of major contributions in the literature

The impact of social media on teenagers' purchasing habits has been extensively researched, and it is crucial to consolidate and summarize these significant findings pertinent to the Hawaii study conducted by Varma *et al.* (2020). The literature has made a significant impact by acknowledging how social media platforms shape consumers' buying patterns and habits, particularly in terms of how social media platforms present product details (Jaitly and Gautam, 2021, p. 220), enable social connections, and shape consumer outlooks and inclinations. The discovery holds significant importance for the research conducted in Hawaii due to teenagers' extensive usage of social media platforms in the region. It is imperative for marketers and policymakers who aim to cater to this demographic group to comprehend the influence these platforms wield.

One important aspect is comprehending influencers' role in molding consumer behavior. Influencer marketing has become increasingly popular, and research has evidenced how influencers can proficiently transform opinions, stimulate consumer purchases, and influence young individuals' brand preferences (Gordon *et al.*, 2021. p. 3825). In the research conducted in Hawaii, it was discovered that influencers significantly impact teenagers' involvement and purchase choices. It is crucial to acknowledge the impact of influencers in the Hawaii community so that marketing plans can be crafted effectively. This kind of content significantly impacts buying decisions (Daniels, Sharma and Batra, 2021, p. 159). In Hawaii, young people depend on the content that users create to assess goods and services and make knowledgeable decisions. Marketers and policymakers in Hawaii can gain valuable insights by comprehending the effects and movements of user-generated content within their specific locale.

Studying the impacts of social media on consumer behavior requires a thorough examination of cultural and contextual factors, as emphasized in the literature. According to Chavez *et al.* (2020, p. 8789), local factors such as cultural values and traditions influence how consumers behave and choose their preferences. Given its diverse population and unique cultural heritage, this discovery is significant for research in Hawaii. Analyzing the intersection between cultural factors and social media platforms in Hawaii can improve comprehension of adolescents' unique consumer behavior patterns in this area.

2.10.1 Evaluation of the relevance and applicability of previous research to the current study

The insights gained from past research on social media's impact on teenagers' consumer purchasing habits (Erdem and Yilmaz, 2021) hold relevance for the present study. The literature presents insights and concepts that are valuable in examining the unique situation of Hawaii. This review has been conducted to assess the pertinence and suitability of prior research for the present investigation.

Social Media Influence. The relevance of social media platforms in shaping consumer behavior is a crucial factor in the current Hawaii study. The application of social media in Hawaii is consistent with the notion that social media can promote product awareness, enable social engagement, and impact one's perceptions and preferences regarding products or services (Safia *et al.*, 2019, p. 199). Like teenagers in other places, teenagers in Hawaii are highly susceptible to the impact of social media platforms.

Role of Influencers. Influencers impact consumer behavior, and this understanding can be applied to the study conducted in Hawaii as well. The importance of influencers in shaping attitudes, influencing purchase decisions, and impacting brand preferences is notable in Hawaii, where adolescents are actively engaged with these individuals (Muhamad and

Shahrom, 2020, p. 69). The impact and efficacy of influencers in Hawaii can serve as a model for creating specialized marketing approaches.

User-Generated Content and Social Proof. User-created material and social validation are relevant to the ongoing investigation in Hawaii (Miniesy, Elshahawy and Fakhreldin, 2022, p. 245). Acknowledging the significance of user-created content, like product reviews and suggestions, and its effect on consumer conduct is pertinent to the Hawaiian context. Like teenagers in other places, youths in Hawaii utilize user-generated content to assess items and make knowledgeable decisions.

Cultural and Contextual Factors. In the present study conducted in Hawaii, it is imperative to acknowledge and consider the importance of cultural and contextual elements that impact consumer behavior, as highlighted by Lin, Vijayalakshmi, and Laczniak (2019, p. 2664). The understanding that the inclinations and actions of consumers are impacted by cultural norms, traditional beliefs, and regional factors is particularly relevant in the Hawaiian context. By analyzing the interplay between social media platforms and cultural influences in Hawaii, valuable knowledge can be obtained about the distinct patterns of consumer behavior exhibited by teenagers in this exceptional environment.

2.11. Significance of Studying the Effects of social media on Consumer Buying Behavior among Adolescents in Hawaii

Psychological Influence. As the adolescent brain is still developing, the complexity of the prefrontal cortex can create impulsive behavior which can be a hindrance when it comes to executive functions such as judgement and decision-making. If we could spend some time especially post pandemic, attempting to explore their psychological factors such as self-identity, social comparison, and the yearning for public validation. We may begin to

understand the impact of social media on the cognitive processes that drive their behavior on purchasing process, as noted by Chen, Mao, and Halvarsson (2020).

Information and Product Evaluation. According to He (2022, p. 590), user-generated content and the plethora of information on social media platforms can substantially impact how people assess products and make buying decisions. Investigating how teenagers in Hawaii maneuver the abundance of information available to them, such as online evaluations, endorsements from social media influencers, and advice from their peers, can provide insight into the elements that impact their buying choices.

Brand Engagement and Loyalty. According to Nofal, Calicioglu, and Aljuhmani (2020, p. 141), social media presents opportunities to establish customer loyalty and engagement with a brand. By gaining insight into how teenagers in Hawaii interact with instantaneous gratification on an item then track the outcome including actions such as tracking brand profiles and joining competitions, and by distributing branded material such as samples. There may be important lessons can be learned about successful methods for cultivating brand retention and promotion among this demographic.

Impulse Buying and FOMO. Social media platforms' not only a source of an instantaneous gratification factor but it can also lead to impulsive purchasing habits because of fear of missing out (FOMO), as noted by Russell, Vest, and Litt (2022). Studying this fear factor can aid companies in creating customized measures and strategies to encourage responsible consumption habits.

2.11.1 The Unique Context of Hawaii and its Implications for Social Media Marketing Targeting Adolescents

Social media marketing campaigns targeting adolescents in Hawaii must consider the specific context of this unique location and its potential implications (Safia et al., 2019).

Adolescents in Hawaii are influenced by the state's geographic isolation and cultural diversity in terms of their use and perception of social media. Due to the scarcity of research conducted in a Hawaiian context, this presents a chance to explore how social media impacts consumer purchasing habits within this distinctive community (Štreimikienė et al., 2021). Social media marketing initiatives should consider Hawaii's cultural variety and deep ties to the local community, emphasizing the need to incorporate approaches that demonstrate cultural understanding and engagement with the community (Miniesy et al., 2022). Developing culturally sensitive social media campaigns that cater to the unique cultural nuances and preferences of teens in Hawaii can help marketers achieve tremendous success.

2.12 Discussion

The main objective of the discussion section is to present a thorough examination and combination of the findings obtained from the literature review, providing significant knowledge into how social media influences purchasing actions of teenagers (Jaitly & Gautam, 2021). The evaluation unveiled several significant concepts, hypotheses, and factual data providing insight into this correlation. This portion will enhance the knowledge in this field by carefully analyzing the advantages and drawbacks of current research, acknowledging areas where further research is needed, and recommending possible avenues for future investigation.

A crucial point that surfaced in the analysis of existing literature is how social media has a substantive impact on the buying choices made by teenagers (Hanaysha, 2022). Online platforms for social interaction offer a constantly changing setting in which young individuals come across an abundance of content that pertains to products, such as ads, evaluations, and endorsements (Sun et al., 2022). The experience gained from this exposure shapes the inclinations, beliefs, and motives linked to buying habits. Adolescents' purchasing decisions

can be better understood by looking at how social media shapes them, using the theoretical framework of aspirational imagery, information-seeking and social influence.

Although the current body of literature offers functional perspectives, it has certain drawbacks (Manzoor, 2020). As a result, additional investigation utilizing reliable techniques such as longitudinal analysis or experimental frameworks is necessary to offer more robust and more substantial proof of how social media impacts the purchasing decisions of teenagers (Štreimikienė et al., 2021). Acknowledging the cultural diversity, community values and preferences that shape consumer behavior in Hawaii, this approach focuses on a localized perspective (Fu, 2022). Gaining insights into the perception, usage, and impact of social media on purchase decisions within a unique environment like Hawaii can offer businesses in the area valuable knowledge.

The research design should also account for methodological considerations. To surpass the constraints of preceding research, a blended approach of mixed methods can be utilized (Eppes et al., 2023). This will involve combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus groups. By doing so, a better grasp of the elements that affect the purchasing habits of young consumers from Hawaii can be obtained (He, 2022). Observing changes in behavior over time and establishing causal relationships are also achievable through conducting longitudinal studies. The study can investigate how cultural awareness and involvement of the community in social media advertising directed toward teenagers in Hawaii can have an impact (Jaitly & Gautam, 2021). Businesses can create impactful and culturally relevant marketing campaigns by comprehending the local population's cultural preferences and subtleties (Sun et al., 2022). The involvement of local communities in the research process can improve the accuracy and relevance of findings, leading to a stronger sense of empowerment within the community.

2.13 Conclusion

This literature review has yielded significant discoveries and perspectives that enhance understanding of how social media influences teenagers' purchasing habits in Hawaii. To conclude, the significant findings from the existing literature are summarized, their significance analyzed, and the potential implications for future research highlighted. In addition, practical implications for marketers who aim to target adolescents in Hawaii are identified. Fu (2022, p. 156) forwarded this approach as an important element of concluding a comprehensive literature review on this subject. According to the literature, various social media platforms substantially impact teenage consumer purchasing behavior in numerous ways, such as exposure to product information, social influence from peers and influencers, user-generated content, and FOMO. In addition, social media is impacted by various cultural and contextual factors, including Hawaii's distinct heritage and geographical setting, which can shape consumer behaviors and preferences (Chavez *et al.*, 2020. p. 8789). This research enhances understanding of the intricate link between social media and consumer patterns among teenagers. This literature review promotes comprehension of the relationship between social media and consumer purchasing habits in a distinctive cultural and geographical context, primarily by analyzing the circumstances specific to Hawaii.

Additional research is necessary to tackle the gaps and constraints highlighted in the literature review (Manzoor *et al.*, 2020, p. 45) and to detect potential avenues for future research. Subsequent investigations should concentrate on thorough examinations within the Hawaiian setting, considering specific cultural aspects and utilizing longitudinal and experimental approaches to determine causal connections. An increased focus on ethical considerations for marketing through social media to adolescents is necessary, including the development of guidelines to ensure transparency and authenticity (Jaitly and Gautam, 2021,

p. 220). Recognizing the significant impact of social media platforms, user-created content, and influencers, marketers can create focused tactics that effectively appeal to teenagers (Lee, Bright and Eastin, 2021, p. 766). Marketers and especially local businesses—can effectively connect with Hawaiians by considering their unique cultural and contextual elements. This understanding helps them customize their strategies and communication to appeal to this demographic, sustaining their business on the island in the long run.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The significance of analyzing how social media usage impacts buying behavior among adolescents in Hawaii is critical in today's interconnected world. The younger generation's consumer behavior is central to this study, which examines a critical aspect of marketing in contemporary times. Thus, comprehending the function of social media platforms in forming consumer preferences is strengthened by this investigation. As social media use among adolescents continues to rise, it holds the key for businesses and marketers seeking to efficiently reach this age group (Dwivedi *et al.,* 2021). Indeed, these young consumers' behaviors can be observed in greater detail when considered within Hawaii's specific geographical and cultural environment, with valuable insights emerging from examining how Hawaiian adolescents contrast with their global peers to reveal the importance of cultural awareness.

This research also offers valuable insights for businesses and marketing strategies. Identifying the precise methods by which social media impacts the purchasing decisions of teenagers can help firms tweak their advertising initiatives and product lines to resonate more effectively with this demographic, resulting in a higher market share and financial performance (Chavez *et al*., 2020). Future studies will likely draw on this research as a reference point for their analysis. By providing a foundation for analyzing the connection between social media usage and buying patterns among teenagers, this research can enable longitudinal studies to follow developments and patterns. Finally, the academic and industry gains from this research on adolescents' social media usage in Hawaii contribute significantly

to understanding the broader social media influence on consumer behavior and comprehension.

By investigating the effects of social media usage on the consumer buying behavior of Hawaiian adolescents, the analysis aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for companies and parents to assist adolescents with an informed and responsible navigation of the digital world.

The following objectives will be examined:

Overall Objective

The study assesses the relationship between social media usage and consumer buying behavior among adolescents in Hawaii.

Specific Aims

1.   To examine the extent of social media usage among adolescents in Hawaii,

2.   To identify the types of products and services most influenced by social media usage among Hawaiian adolescents,

3.   To analyze the factors that moderate the impact of social media usage on Hawaiian adolescents' consumer buying behavior, and

4.   To assess the role of peer influence and advertising on social media in shaping adolescents' purchasing decisions.

3.2 Research Design

The research approach chosen for examination is a mixed methodology, joining quantitative and qualitative inquiries. This method will help fully grasp the topic by addressing various aspects of adolescents' consumer conduct due to social media usage. First, a cross-sectional survey will serve as the quantitative part of the investigation. It will involve compiling data from a diverse sample of adolescents in Hawaii to quantify their use of social

media and its impact on their buying judgment. By employing survey questions with preset answers, the researchers seek to gather vast amounts of data efficiently to identify patterns and connections via statistical analysis.

Secondly, qualitative interviews will add to the quantitative findings by digging deeper into the topic to explore the subtle aspects that lie beneath adolescents' interactions with social networking and their purchasing habits. Qualitative research will be specifically helpful in uncovering the motivations, sentiments, and private experiences that quantitative information cannot assess. Hence, by merging these two study methods, this dissertation aims to overview how social media usage influences the buying behavior of Hawaiian adolescents, offering insights into the "what" (quantitative) and "why" (qualitative) behind their customer selections. This inclusive technique seeks to enhance the validity and trustworthiness of the study results via an intense investigation into a timely and applicable subject.

3.3 Study Population and Sampling

The survey group surveyed will consist of individuals between the ages of 13 and 18, a critical consumer segment. Those in this age bracket are peculiarly prone to the impacts of social media due to their technological fluency and high utilization of internet platforms. By specifically concentrating on Hawaii, the analysis can acknowledge the significance of nearby and cultural elements that can sway customer conduct. Hawaii's scattered neighborhoods, with their geographical isolation and unique diversity, form an alluring setting for this dissertation.

A stratified random sampling technique can ensure that the study's findings represent the entire adolescent population in Hawaii by dividing the group into subgroups using applicable standards (e.g., place and socio-financial standing) before randomly selecting participants from each subset. This process seeks to bar predisposition in the selection

process to ensure that the sample represents the diversity of the entire population. Including adolescents from diverse geographical areas and socioeconomic backgrounds will allow the researcher to acquire a more comprehensive view of how public media impacts adolescents' consumer behavior. Notably, dissimilar territories in Hawaii may have exceptional cultural traits and socioeconomic positions that can sway access to technology and online internet access, which can, in turn, alter adolescents' exposure to and engagement with public media advertisements and influencers (Štreimikienė et al., 2021).

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

3.4.1 Quantitative Data

The researcher will devise a carefully planned survey to collect quantitative information. This form will be a crucial tool for gathering data about adolescents' social media use and its effect on their purchases. The form will be thoughtfully constructed to derive answers about how often and how long the participants use social media, their favorite social media sites, and the products or services they buy due to social media influence. This organized way of gathering information will allow for a systematic review of patterns and trends among the participants. Surveys will be distributed through schools, community centers, and social media to ensure a diverse and representative sample. This strategic approach to collecting information will help capture a wide range of adolescent consumers between 13 and 18 years old while considering the differences in their financial backgrounds, locations, and online habits.

3.4.2 Qualitative Data

A selection of individuals from the survey group will participate in focus group. This personalized method of data collection will furnish valuable insights regarding adolescent perspectives in Hawaii concerning social media's sway on their purchases. The focus group

will use a predetermined set of interview questions to further delve into the intricacies of the bond between social media exposure and the resulting actions. Non-restrictive issues will also motivate participants to elaborate on their viewpoints by conveying contemplations, sentiments, and personal narratives to achieve a comprehensive picture of the subject. These focus groups will be essential to supplementing the statistical quantitative data while providing a setting that promotes participant elaboration.

3.4.3 A Mixed Methodology

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data will promote an intricate comprehension of the impacts of social networking on how adolescents in Hawaii purchase items. The quantitative evidence will seek proof of patterns and relationships, while the narrative accounts and individual experiences from the qualitative data will seek to clarify why and how these behaviors occurred. This mixed-methods approach can ensure a well-balanced, robust examination of the subject, allowing for a deeper investigation into the complex dynamics between social media use and adolescent purchases (Pokhrel et al., 2021).

Indeed, separately analyzing Hawaii adds an original aspect to the study. Hawaii's unique cultural and geographical conditions may lead to distinct ways in which social media is used and how it influences decisions compared to other places. This focused viewpoint will add to the collective understanding of the topic and furnish insights that may be particularly significant for Hawaiian adolescents.

3.5 Data Analysis Methods

The use of mixed quantitative and qualitative data analysis will seek to uncover the truths concerning this subject. First, quantitative data analysis will involve statistical calculations like regression and correlation analysis, which are essential for quantifying the relationships and patterns between variables. In this study, they will be used to explore the

intricate connections between social media use and the purchasing habits of adolescents, thus identifying trends, affiliations, and possible causal relationships by scrutinizing the quantitative data. Hence, the researcher can assess how social media usage impacts adolescent consumer behavior among adolescents living in Hawaii.

Statistical analysis techniques, particularly regression examination, will be pivotal in quantifying the impact of online communities on consumer purchasing behavior. Regression analysis will help assess the strengths and directions of the connections between factors. Moreover, it will aid in deciding whether the expanded online community's utilization has prompted changes in buying behavior among adolescents in Hawaii (Safia *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, a connection investigation will be utilized to investigate the degree of relationship between online community utilization and different purchasing practices, highlighting the nature of the relationship.

Subsequently, differing viewpoints will be shared through focus group to discover these adolescent participants' underlying commonalities and individual experiences with buying on interconnected digital platforms. This qualitative exploration aims to discover what inspires individuals in this age group regarding their purchasing decisions on digital networks. Through interviews, the researcher seeks fuller insights into the reasoning, sentiments, and private encounters steering these adolescents' selections. Finding repeating subjects, uniformities, and unique views within these communications can uncover the qualitative facets of the bond between interlinked platforms and consumer conduct.

Indeed, more than quantitative findings are needed to provide the full view. Therefore, incorporating a qualitative data examination through theme identification is essential. Thematic analysis will help to unravel the motivations behind the statistics to discover the intricate inspirations and attitudes that push adolescents to make specific purchasing decisions impacted

by their interactions on social networking websites (Štreimikienė *et al.*, 2021). By determining common subjects and differences in participants' responses, this study can better understand how social media usage subtly molds adolescents' customer behaviors.

3.6 Mechanisms to Assure the Quality of the Study

Several methods will be used to curb prejudice and safeguard information to ensure the study's dependability and reliability. Chiefly, addressing influence control will be vital to guaranteeing the research findings' credibility since adolescents can be swayed by many factors when making purchase choices, such as peer pressure and social media trends. Efforts will be made to acquire a balanced representation of sex, age, and financial backgrounds to weaken data skewing. Moreover, surveys and meetings will be led with carefully planned questions that avoid guiding or prompting, thus encouraging respondents to give honest and unbiased answers. Fundamentally, the study team will seek to remain impartial and objective throughout the data gathering and analysis to ensure that preconceived notions do not sway the outcomes.

Ensuring the confidentiality of all study participants will remain paramount. Responses and private details from adolescents will be handled with the utmost care and responsibility. All gathered information will be securely stored per ethical and legal standards. Access to the information will be limited to only approved people trained in secure protocols and confidentiality contracts. Moreover, the data will be anonymized and encoded to safeguard the identities of those involved. Finally, the research team will establish a clear plan for data management, outlining the steps for securing the data throughout the research process, from collection to analysis and eventual storage.

Several verification approaches will be implemented to ensure the integrity of the compiled data. For instance, statistical analysis and data visualization instruments will be

applied to identify outliers or exceptional patterns in the quantitative data. Moreover, member-checking and re-examining the qualitative data will seek to pinpoint inconsistencies and mistakes. Any discrepancies will be addressed through individual follow-ups or additional investigations.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

With the increasing number of digital platforms impacting diverse parts of daily life, comprehending how social media usage affects teenagers' choices when purchasing is crucial for businesses, lawmakers, and parents. Thus, a critical ethical consideration when researching this field is the standard of informed consent (Wellman et al., 2020). All participants will be given a clear and comprehensive explanation of the study's objectives, strategies, and potential dangers and advantages (Jacobson, Gruzd and Hernández-García, 2020). Obtaining informed consent guarantees that individuals will willingly participate in the examination and are mindful of the outcomes of their contributions. For minors, parental consent will be imperative, followed by these participants providing an affirmation of their assent. This ethical security will ensure the privacy of these young participants.

Another significant ethical standard in this study is privacy. Teenagers share delicate information on networking platforms, so they must be assured that their information will be addressed with maximum confidentiality (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Thus, all information gathered, whether in response to surveys, interview transcriptions, or online data collection, will be anonymous and securely stored to protect the participants' anonymity and decrease the risk of their private information being wrongly utilized.

In addition, obtaining approval from the pertinent internal review board (IRB) is a fundamental step in conducting research responsibly and ethically. The board evaluates proposals to confirm that they meet moral standards and legal demands. In a study involving

adolescents, the board will scrutinize the informed agreement process, anonymization, and the ethical standards of the research to preserve the integrity of the study and ensure that ethical guidelines are followed throughout the entire research process (Aiello, Renson and Zivich, 2020). While contemplating the ethical issues involved, the board protects the welfare and privileges of the participants and upholds the validity of the conclusions. Therefore, it is vital to acquire informed consent and shield the identity of individuals to ensure the integrity of the study with no harm to the adolescents involved. Critically, ethical lapses can lead to legal and reputational consequences for researchers and establishments.

3.8 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study

Studying the impact of social media usage on Hawaiian adolescents' buying behavior has several strengths and weaknesses. Today's digital age makes this study relevant. The significance of comprehending the effect of social media use on adolescent consumer choices cannot be overstated. A narrow population in Hawaii will enable the study to offer culturally and geographically relevant guidance, thanks to valuable insights from this demographic. The research methodology's strength is the use of surveys, interviews, and data analysis, which collect information according to a study. Through these methods, a thorough understanding of the subject matter is possible.

Despite the strengths, drawbacks exist within this research, such as challenges related to the sample's representativeness as the initial obstacle. A mix of adolescents is necessary for the study to accurately represent their social media habits and draw valid conclusions. The study also has limitations when it comes to determining correlations between social media use and adolescent buying behavior, demonstrating that specific purchasing decisions directly influenced by social media can be intricate. Moreover, the collected data may introduce research bias such as: information or recall bias. Finally, the study will rely on online

activities, while purchasing choices may only sometimes be dependably reported by adolescent participants.

3.9 Conclusion

Adolescents and their purchasing decisions are vital, which is the motivation for the investigation in this study. Today's social media platforms have become essential components of adolescents' daily lives, serving as communication channels and potent marketing instruments. Unique insights can be gained when blending Hawaii's ancient customs with modern technology within this study's cultural and geographic framework.

Moreover, various stakeholders (e.g., businesses, marketers, parents, and educators) must understand how social media usage influences adolescent consumers' buying behaviors. By examining this subject, the research hopes to grasp the specific ways social media content, peer connections, and online marketing mold the desires and decisions of these adolescents in Hawaii (Aurimas, Pengshuo and Xiang, 2020). This research may help build a more responsible social media environment for adolescents by examining how effective marketing methods and customer education can impact their online conduct. Furthermore, other regions can benefit from the findings to better grasp the intricate connection between social media usage and consumer behavior while grappling with similar issues in the digital age.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

To reiterate, the pressing problem under consideration involves the significant effect of online communities on buyers' habits, specifically among adolescents, who are progressively dependent on these platforms for data and social exchanges (Sun *et al.*, 2022). To address this problem, the present study had one overarching research aim and four specific aims as follows: The overarching aim of the study was to assess the relationship between social media usage and consumer buying behavior among adolescents in Hawaii. The four specific research aims were:

1.   To examine the extent of social media usage among adolescents in Hawaii.

2.   To identify the types of products and services most influenced by social media usage among Hawaiian adolescents.

3.   To analyze the factors that moderate the impact of social media usage on Hawaiian adolescents' consumer buying behavior.

4.   To assess the role of peer influence and advertising on social media in shaping adolescents' purchasing decisions.

To address these research aims, a mixed methods study was conducted, including both qualitative and quantitative research components. Quantitative data included surveys with a diverse sample of adolescents in Hawaii to quantify their use of social media and its impact on their buying judgment. Then, the qualitative portion of the study involved a focus group with a subset of the participants from the quantitative surveys. In the previous chapter, Chapter 3, the research methods were discussed in detail. Now, in Chapter 4, the results of the study are detailed. Chapter 4 begins with a discussion of the participant demographics.

Next, the results of the quantitative analysis are presented. Finally, the results of the

qualitative analysis are presented.

4.2 Participants

The population of interest consisted of adolescents ages of 11 to 18 from Hawaii.

Participants were recruited using stratified random sampling. The final sample size for the

study was 334. The participants represented a wide range of races and ethnicities. Table 1

below shows the participants' race/ethnicity outcomes. The largest group reported mixed

ethnicity at 22.8%, while the smallest group, excluding those who opted not to respond, was

White/Caucasian at 9%. This suggests the stratification was successful. Participants skewed

female at a rate of about 2:1, with 111 males (33%) and 207 females (62%). Gender is

explicated further in Table 2 below. In addition, participants were ages 11-18. The ages

clustered around the middle values of 14 (23.7%), 15 (24.9%), and 16 (25.4%). Age data can

be found in Table 3 below.

Table 1

Race/Ethnicity Characteristics

	n	%
Ethnicity		
White/Caucasian	30	9
Chinese	45	13.5
Filipino	43	12.9
Hawaiian/Part Hawaiian	33	9.9
Japanese	55	16.5
Mixed	76	22.8
Prefer not to answer	18	5.4
Other	34	10.2

Note: n = Sample size

Table 2

Participant gender

	n	%
Gender		
Male	111	33.2
Female	207	62.0
Gender non- conforming	2	0.6
Prefer not to answer	14	4.2

Note: n = Sample size

Table 3

Participant Age

Age	n	%
11	1	.3%
12	6	1.8%
13	35	10.5%
14	79	23.7%
15	83	24.9%
16	85	25.4%
17	24	7.2%
18	21	6.3%
Total	334	100.0%

4.3 Quantitative Results

4.3.1 Aim 1 Results

Aim 1 was to examine the extent of social media usage among adolescents in Hawaii. This aim was most directly addressed using demographic data from the survey. Most participants indicated spending more than three hours a say on social media (n = 181; 54.2%). Only 11 of the participants reported minimal social media usage of 30 minutes or less a day. The full data regarding social media usage can be found in Table 4 below.

Table 4

Time spent on social media

Time	n	%
Less than 30 minutes	11	3.3%
30-60 minutes	34	10.2%
1-2 hours	108	32.3%
More than 3 hours	181	54.2%
Total	334	100.0%

Participants were also asked to rank their usage of social media platforms from least used (6) to most used (1), including the platforms of Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter. TikTok, Snapchat, and Other. The most common platform was Instagram with an average rank of 1.62 followed closely by TikTok at 1.83; the least common was Facebook, with an average rank of 4.72. The average rankings can be found in Table 5 below. In addition, Table 6 shows the specific rankings for each platform. 45.8% of participants rated TikTok as their top platform, and an additional 36.7% rated it as their second, a majority. 53.0% rated Instagram as their top platform. However, some participants appear to have rated incorrectly, as 26.4% of the participants also reported an "Other" platform as their top platform. This suggests that there may have been a lack of clarity in the wording of the question. Nonetheless, TikTok and Instagram were far and away the most popular platforms.

Table 5

Average platform rankings

Platform	Average Rank
Facebook	4.72
Instagram	1.62
X (formerly Twitter)	4.19
TikTok	1.83
Snapchat	3.31
Other	3.16

Table 6

Platform rankings

Platform	Rank	Count	Column N %
Facebook	2	2	1.2%
	3	16	9.7%
	4	42	25.5%
	5	71	43.0%
	6	34	20.6%
	Total	165	100.0%
Instagram	1	159	53.0%
	2	109	36.3%
	3	21	7.0%
	4	10	3.3%
	5	1	.3%
	Total	300	100.0%
X (formerly Twitter)	1	1	.6%
	2	14	7.9%
	3	24	13.6%
	4	68	38.4%
	5	51	28.8%
	6	19	10.7%
	Total	177	100.0%
TikTok	1	126	45.8%
	2	101	36.7%
	3	31	11.3%
	4	7	2.5%
	5	6	2.2%
	6	4	1.5%
	Total	275	100.0%
Snapchat	1	6	2.6%
	2	39	17.0%
	3	115	50.0%
	4	31	13.5%
	5	26	11.3%
	6	13	5.7%
	Total	230	100.0%
Other	1	42	26.4%
	2	30	18.9%
	3	26	16.4%
	4	20	12.6%
	5	4	2.5%
	6	37	23.3%
	Total	159	100.0%

The association between average social media usage and ethnicity was evaluated using the Pearson Chi-Square test to see if there were any significant differences in the results. The Chi-Square p-value of 0.210 indicated that there was not a statistically significant association between average social media usage and ethnicity (see Table 7). In other words, according to this sample, ethnicity had no significant effect on how much time adolescents spent on social media.

Table 7

Relationship between Average Social Media Usage and Ethnicity

	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	P
Less than 30 minutes	11	2	0	1	0	2	5	0	1	
	(3.3)	(6.7)	(.0)	(2.3)	(.0)	(3.6)	(6.6)	(.0)	(2.9)	
30-60 minutes	34	6	6	2	5	3	5	4	3	
	(10.2)	(20.0)	(13.3)	(4.7)	(15.2)	(5.5)	(6.6)	(22.2)	(8.8)	.210
1-2 hours	108	10	11	10	12	18	31	5	11	
	(32.3)	(33.3)	(24.4)	(23.3)	(36.4)	(32.7)	(40.8)	(27.8)	(32.4)	
More than 3 hours	181	12	28	30	16	32	35	9	19	
	(54.2)	(40.0)	(62.2)	(69.8)	(48.5)	(58.2)	(46.1)	(50.0)	(55.9)	

1 = White/Caucasian; 2 = Chinese; 3 = Filipino; 4 = Hawaiian/; 5 = Japanese; 6 = Mixed; 7 = Prefer not to answer; 8 = Other; p = Pearson Chi-Square test

Similarly, a cross-tabulation of average social media usage and sex was performed to determine whether there were any variations between the groups (see Table 8). The Pearson Chi-Square p-value of 0.954 indicated that, based on this sample, there was no significant difference in social media usage between gender groupings. Males and females had comparable patterns of usage, with the majority of participants in the "more than 3 hours" category, followed by the "1-2 hours" category. Both groups had little representation in the "less than 30 minutes" category.

Table 8

Relationship between Average Social Media Usage and Sex

	Total	Male	Female	Gender non-conforming	Prefer not to answer	P
Less than 30 minutes	11 (3.3)	4 (3.6)	7 (3.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	
30-60 minutes	34 (10.2)	12 (10.8)	20 (9.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (14.3)	
1-2 hours	108 (32.3)	40 (36.0)	64 (30.9)	1 (50.0)	3 (21.4)	0.954
More than 3 hours	181 (54.2)	55 (49.5)	116 (56.0)	1 (50.0)	9 (64.3)	

Given the irregularities in the data regarding the ranking of platforms, inferential analyses regarding these values proved unfeasible and were not conducted.

4.3.2 Aim 2 Results

The second aim of the study was to identify the types of products and services most influenced by social media usage among Hawaiian adolescents. To this end, questions on the survey directly addressed the brands and products that the participants followed on social media. Participants were asked to indicate how many brands they followed on their social media accounts. A plurality of the participants followed no brands (n = 118; 35.3%). A majority of participants followed no brands (n = 118; 35.3%) or only 1-5 brands (n = 112; 33.5%). Of interest, while relatively few participants (n = 18; 5.4%) followed 11-20 brands, a larger group (n = 41; 12.3%) followed over 20. Full results are presented in Table 9 below.

Table 9

Brands followed

Brands Followed	**n**	**%**
None	118	35.3%
0-5	112	33.5%
6-10	45	13.5%
11-20	18	5.4%
More than 20	41	12.3%
Total	334	100.0%

Participants were also asked about advertisement. Most participants indicated that they noticed advertisements on social media often (n = 85; 25.4%), sometimes (n = 86; 25.7%), or rarely (n = 89; 26.6%), with only a few indicating always (n = 35; 10.5%) or never (n = 39; 11.7%). See Table 10 below.

Table 10

Frequency of noticing advertisements.

Advertising Noticed	n	%
Always	35	10.5%
Often	85	25.4%
Sometimes	86	25.7%
Rarely	89	26.6%
Never	39	11.7%
Total	334	100.0%

Participants were also asked if they felt that social media advertisement had convinced them to buy a product. A near majority (n = 143; 42.8%) reported never buying a product from social media advertisements.

Table 11

Purchasing from social media ads

Purchase after Social Media Ads	n	%
Always	5	1.5%
Often	14	4.2%
Sometimes	80	24.0%
Rarely	92	27.5%
Never	143	42.8%
Total	334	100.0%

Those who indicated making purchases based on advertisements (N = 191) were asked to provide further information regarding the type of purchase that advertising had motivated. The most common category was clothing and fashion items (n = 142; 74.3%), followed by beauty and skincare (n = 95; 49.7%) and entertainment (n = 84; 44.0%). Details are presented in Table 12 below.

Table 12

Purchase types from social media ads

Type of Purchase	n	%
Clothing and Fashion items	142	74.3%
Beauty and skincare products	95	49.7%
Technology/Electronic	46	24.1%
Food and beverages	65	34.0%
Entertainment (movies, music, games)	84	44.0%
Other	4	2.1%
Total	191	100.0%

To investigate the association between how frequently participants engaged with or noticed advertisements on social media and whether they made online purchases as a result of these adverts, a contingency table was created using Pearson Chi-square. The responses were categorized based on frequency of ad engagement and the likelihood of making a purchase. There was a clear association between how often respondents noticed ads and their likelihood of making online purchases (See Table 13).

Table 13

Associations between Frequency of Ad Engagement and Purchasing Behavior

	How often do you engage with or notice advertisements on Social Media while scrolling through your social media feeds?						
	Total	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	P
Have you ever made an online purchase because of an advertisement that							

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appeared on your Social
Media account?

Always	5	3	0	1	1	0
	(1.5)	(8.6)	(0.0)	(1.2)	(1.1)	(0.0)
Often	14	1	7	3	3	0
	(4.2)	(2.9)	(8.2)	(3.5)	(3.4)	(0.0)
Sometimes	80	10	29	18	21	2
	(24.0)	(28.6)	(34.1)	(20.9)	(23.6)	(5.1)
Rarely	92	10	19	31	26	6
	(27.5)	(28.6)	(22.4)	(36.0)	(29.2)	(15.4)
Never	143	11	30	33	38	31
	(42.8)	(31.4)	(35.3)	(38.4)	(42.7)	(79.5)

$< .001$

A higher proportion of individuals who always or often engaged with ads tended to make purchases, while those who never engaged with ads were far less likely to have made a purchase. The significance level ($p < 0.001$) showed that the likelihood of making an online purchase was not random but was closely tied to how often a person engages with social media ads.

4.3.3 Aim 3 Results

The third aim was to analyze the factors that moderate the impact of social media usage on Hawaiian adolescents' consumer buying behavior. To this end, participants were asked directly about factors that affected purchasing. The first such factor was their choice of platforms in terms of which platforms motivated purchasing. Overall, the most influential platforms were Instagram (n = 114; 34.1%) and TikTok (52.4%). Of interest, TikTok was perceived as being more influential despite being used less than Instagram in Table 5 above. Table 14 below presents the full results.

Table 14

Influence of social media platforms on purchasing

Most influential platform	n	%
Facebook	2	.6%
Instagram	114	34.1%
X (formerly Twitter)	5	1.5%
TikTok	175	52.4%

Snapchat		2	.6%
Other		36	10.8%
Total		334	100.0%

Participants were also asked if they used online reviews as a source of information about products. A majority (n = 168; 50.3%) of participants indicated always looking at online reviews of products they intended to buy. Almost all participants believed in the importance of online reviews, as shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Use of online reviews

Check online reviews?	n	%
Always	168	50.3%
Often	73	21.9%
Sometimes	67	20.1%
Rarely	13	3.9%
Never	13	3.9%
Total	334	100.0%

Participants were asked to indicate their specific belief in the importance of reviews, comments, and posts on social media with respect to their decision to purchase a product. A plurality/near majority (n = 160; 47.9%) indicated that they agreed that such things were important. Mant (n = 97; 29.0%) participants strongly agreed, while very few participants disagreed (n = 7; 2.1%) or strongly disagreed (n = 4; 1.2%). Full results are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Importance of reviews, comments, and posts

Reviews, Comments, Posts Important?	n	%
Strongly Agree	97	29.0%
Agree	160	47.9%
Neutral	66	19.8%

Disagree	7	2.1%
Strongly Disagree	4	1.2%
Total	334	100.0%

Participants were asked to indicate what categories of posts they found influential. Most participants (n = 191; 57.2%) valued user assessments and evaluations. Many participants also valued demonstrations (n = 159; 47.6%) and influencer approvals (n = 143; 42.8%). Full results are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Importance by post type

Post Type	n	%
Celebrity endorsements	65	19.5%
Influencer approvals	143	42.8%
User assessments and evaluations	191	57.2%
Sponsored posts/advertisements	82	24.6%
Product demonstrations/seminars	159	47.6%
None	44	13.2%
Total	334	100.0%

To further explore the relationship between the social media platforms adolescents used and the types of products they purchased, the researcher cross-tabulated the response. The table shows the frequency of purchases across various categories (e.g., clothing, beauty, technology) and which platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc.) were linked to these purchases (Table 18). TikTok appeared to dominate in the categories of clothing, beauty, technology, and entertainment, suggesting that this platform was highly influential for product promotion, especially among younger demographics or highly visual product categories. Instagram also played a key role in product purchases, especially for clothing, beauty, and entertainment items. Facebook and X (formerly Twitter), however, seem to have minimal influence on purchasing behavior across these categories. The significant p-value

(0.007) indicated that the relationship between the social media platform and the type of

product purchased was not due to chance.

Table 18

Association between the Social Media Platform and the Types of Products Purchased

	Total	Facebook	Instagram	X	TikTok	Snapchat	Other	p
Clothing and Fashion items	142 (32.6)	0 (0.0)	52 (35.1)	0 (0.0)	81 (32.0)	1 (25.0)	8 (28.6)	
Beauty and skincare products	95 (21.8)	0 (0.0)	29 (19.6)	0 (0.0)	61 (24.1)	2 (50.0)	3 (10.7)	
Technology/Electronic	46 (10.6)	0 (0.0)	12 (8.1)	2 (66.7)	30 (11.9)	0 (0.0)	2 (7.1)	0.007
Food and beverages	65 (14.9)	0 (0.0)	22 (14.9)	0 (0.0)	36 (14.2)	1 (25.0)	6 (21.4)	
Entertainment (movies, music, games)	84 (19.3)	0 (0.0)	31 (20.9)	1 (33.3)	44 (17.4)	0 (0.0)	8 (28.6)	
Other	4 (0.9)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.6)	

Besides, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they favored local

versus non-local businesses. Overall, few participants favored local businesses specifically (n

= 36; 10.8%). Most favored both equally (n = 106; 31.7%) or had no preference (n = 119;

35.6). Full results are presented in Table 19.

Table 19

Local versus non-local preferences

Preference	n	%
Local businesses in Hawaii	36	10.8%
Business outside of Hawaii	73	21.9%
Both equally	106	31.7%
No preferences	119	35.6%
Total	334	100.0%

Participants were also asked what would make them more likely to purchase from

local brands. A strong plurality indicated that the main need was greater quality (n = 139;

41.6%). Overall, there was little indication that participants perceived the brands as having an advertising problem (n = 45; 13.5%) and peer influence was limited (n = 50; 15.0%).

Table 20

Needs of local brands

Local Brands Most Need:	n	%
Creative advertising	45	13.5%
Better quality	139	41.6%
Convenience	72	21.6%
Friends	50	15.0%
Family	28	8.4%
Total	334	100.0%

4.3.4 Aim 4 Results

Aim 4 was to assess the role of peer influence and advertising on social media in shaping adolescents' purchasing decisions. This aim is primarily qualitative. However, one item on the survey did assess the influence of friends and family on purchasing decisions. A plurality (n = 131; 39.2%) indicated some influence. Only a minority (n = 21; 6.3%) reported no influence from friends and family. Results are shown in Table 21.

Table 21

Influence of friends and family on purchases

Influence of Friends and Family	n	%
Greatly influence	49	14.7%
Somewhat influence	131	39.2%
Neutral	92	27.5%
Don't really influence	41	12.3%
No influence at all	21	6.3%
Total	334	100.0%

To examine how outside influences—such as celebrity endorsements, influencer approvals, user assessments, and other factors—affected consumer purchasing behavior, cross-tabulation analysis was performed. The total numbers represented how many

adolescents fell into each category of influence, along with how often they made purchases based on these influences (e.g., always, often, sometimes, rarely, or never). Celebrity endorsements and influencer approvals seem to be the most impactful outside influences, particularly among those who were more active in making purchases based on these factors (See Table 10). User assessments consistently influenced purchasing decisions across all categories, which suggested that peer reviews played an important role in the decision-making process. Product demonstrations / seminars were also highly influential, especially for those who were more engaged with the product and sought hands-on information before purchasing. Sponsored posts had a more limited effect, and individuals who were not influenced by outside sources represented a small but notable portion of the population.

Table 22

Explore if Outside Influence is Associated with Purchasing Behavior

	Total	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	p
Celebrity endorsements	65	3	5	21	17	19	
	(9.5)	(42.9)	(16.1)	(11.1)	(9.5)	(6.9)	
Influencer approvals	143	3	8	40	40	52	
	(20.9)	(42.9)	(25.8)	(21.1)	(22.3)	(18.8)	
User assessments and evaluations	191	1	7	51	50	82	
	(27.9)	(14.3)	(22.6)	(26.8)	(27.9)	(29.6)	< .001
Sponsored posts/advertisements	82	0	3	24	23	32	
	(12.0)	(0.0)	(9.7)	(12.6)	(12.8)	(11.6)	
Product demonstrations/seminars	159	0	7	50	39	63	
	(23.2)	(0.0)	(22.6)	(26.3)	(21.8)	(22.7)	
None	44	0	1	4	10	29	
	(6.4)	(0.0)	(3.2)	(2.1)	(5.6)	(10.5)	

4.4 Qualitative Results

The qualitative data included a single focus group. The qualitative analysis involved qualitative thematic analysis to extract the meaningful and useful themes from the overall dataset. Four themes emerged from the analysis. The full set of themes and the codes used to construct them can be found in Table 23 below. The main themes were: (a) Social media is

used for many hours per day primarily for entertainment, (b) Ads are ignored unless they are

relevant, entertaining, and endorsed by a friend or celebrity, (c) Small businesses should post

ads that are relevant, entertaining, and celebrity- or friend-endorsed, and (d) Local versus

chain business was usually not relevant to purchasing decisions.

Table 23

Themes and Codes

Theme/Code Name	Number of References
RQ. To what extent does social media usage influence the consumer buying behavior of adolescents in Hawaii?	96
Theme 1. Social media is used for many hours per day primarily for entertainment	35
0 to 4 hours per day	5
5 to 9 hours per day	7
10 to 14 hours per day	1
Instagram as a favorite app	9
Looking for feature-length movies	1
Looking for humor	3
Looking for mutuals' videos	3
Pinterest as a favorite app	1
Tiktok as a favorite app	5
Theme 2. Ads are ignored unless they are relevant, entertaining, and endorsed by a friend or celebrity	32
Asking parental permission	1
Drawn to celebrity ads	6
Drawn to humorous ads	3
Ignoring most ads	8
Linking from ad to online store	6
Only looking at relevant ads	8
Theme 3. Small businesses should post ads that are relevant, entertaining, and celebrity- or friend-endorsed	20
Concise, entertaining ads	4
Following up on friends' endorsements	2
Friends' endorsements must be relevant	2
Small business ad should get a friend referral	5
Sponsored content by an influencer	7

	9
Theme 4. Local versus chain business was usually not relevant to purchasing decisions	9
Discrepant data - More likely to look at ads from local businesses	5
Indifferent to whether business is local or chain	3
Photo of recognizable location	1

4.4.1 Theme 1: Usage of Social Media for Long Hours per Day

In addressing the research questions, a coded data analysis approach was deployed, and data was presented in tables for analysis. Table 1 below indicates the variables analyzed and coded and are essential in addressing the first theme on how social media utilization for many hours, primarily for entertainment, influences the extent to which social media is used and the impact of decision-making processes among Hawaiian adolescents.

Table 24

Codes for theme one

Theme/ Initial Code	*N* of focus group contribution	*N* of text segment assigned
RQ. To what extent does social media usage influence the consumer buying behavior of adolescents in Hawaii?	4	125
Theme 1. Social media is used for many hours per day primarily for entertainment	4	44
0 to 4 hours per day	2	5
5 to 9 hours per day	4	7
10 to 14 hours per day	2	1
Following friends only	4	8
Following stores	1	1
Instagram as a favorite app	3	9
Looking for feature-length movies	1	1
Looking for humor	1	3
Looking for mutuals' videos	1	3
Pinterest as a favorite app	1	1
TikTok as a favorite app	2	5

To understand the extent of social media usage, the research delved into the analysis of the daily time taken by Hawaiian adolescents on their social media platforms. The results showed that from all the four groups involved in the study, out of 44 assigned segments,

seven confirmed that they spend 5 to 9 hours on social media per day, a robust representation code that depicts the degree of social media's effect on adolescents. These findings follow the global trend towards social media engagement and utilization in making purchases. The participants were also asked whether they only follow their friends, and responses were obtained from 2 focus groups with a total of 8 assigned segments confirming that they only follow their friends on social media. The aim of such actions is primarily for entertainment purposes.

Example quotes:

- "On Instagram I can kind of like, take my time looking at stuff. So, it's yeah, you know. So, you don't feel a need for anything else, you know."

- "Whatever whoever I'm following if they make videos. Then I watch their video. So, you're just kind of scrolling."

- "it's just like really entertaining."

Additionally, the findings show that Hawaiian adolescents prefer Instagram as their social medium over others, such as Facebook. The data obtained from 3 different focus groups indicate that nine of the 44 segments concluded with the preference of Instagram as their favorite entertainment medium. Hence, participants spent more hours on the app following their friends and getting their preferred entertainment. Participants indicated that the appeal of spending long hours on social media included looking for video content, humorous videos, and interesting advertising content. Participants enjoyed sharing videos with peers and gave regard to videos shared by celebrities. In essence, the participant showed that they spend 5 to 9 hours on their preferred social media platform, which is most commonly Instagram. Participants emphasized the importance of peer content, video content, and content shared or endorsed by celebrities.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Ads are ignored unless they are relevant, entertaining, and endorsed by a friend or celebrity

Table 25

Codes for theme two

Theme/Code Name	Number of References
Theme 2. Ads are ignored unless they are relevant, entertaining, and endorsed by a friend or celebrity	32
Asking parental permission	1
Drawn to celebrity ads	6
Drawn to humorous ads	3
Ignoring most ads	8
Linking from ad to online store	6
Only looking at relevant ads	8

The second theme to emerge from the data addressed the extent to which the participants engaged with advertising. Overall, the participants indicated that they are likely to ignore other ads and only focus on their areas of interest. The findings relating to this theme are presented in Table 2 above. Participants across a wide array of discussions within the focus group indicated that they can only pay attention to such ads if they are relevant to them, entertaining, and endorsed by a celebrity or friend. Six participants indicated being drawn to celebrity ads. About this theme, the research established that adolescents from three different focus groups ignore most ads, and they can only pay attention to such ads if they are relevant to them, entertaining, and endorsed by a celebrity or friend. From two groups, a total of six participants responded that they only focus on the ads if they relate to celebrities. Such decisions are informed by their perception of such celebrities as being tasteful or trendsetters and hence valuing their likes and dislikes. Three participants from two groups also admitted

to paying attention to online ads only if they are humorous. The unique cultural traditions and inclinations of the Hawaiian population tend to influence the decisions taken by the younger population, and this dictates the need for permission before paying attention to certain ads that may be regarded as unethical by the older population. However, only one participant indicated this being the case.

Example quotes:

- "If it's a celebrity, it matters how famous they are or how much you like that celebrity."

- "Yes, if it's like a celebrity I've known it's like on the ad or something, I'd probably watch it. And it's like, there's a video like showing like the results. So, like how it looks."

- "Stuff like it's actually used. So that makes it more interesting, becoming an influencer when they demonstrate the product"

- "Like, when I am scrolling, if I see like just like a random ad. I'll just like I won't pay any attention to it"

The analysis also found that three participants from two different groups ignored the ads because they were judging such ads based on the comments and quality of reviews associated with them. As a result of reviewing the comments, six adolescents from three different groups confirmed that they connect to the online store via the ad they watch, hence linking the ads with the online stores. Overall, this theme revealed that the study participants had varied reasons for being interested or uninterested in the ads.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Small businesses should post ads that are relevant, entertaining, and celebrity- or friend-endorsed

Table 26

Codes for theme three

Theme/Code Name	Number of References
Theme 3. Small businesses should post ads that are relevant, entertaining, and celebrity- or friend-endorsed	20
Concise, entertaining ads	4
Following up on friends' endorsements	2
Friends' endorsements must be relevant	2
Small business ad should get a friend referral	5
Sponsored content by an influencer	7

The third theme was that small businesses should post ads that are relevant, entertaining, and celebrity- or friend-endorsed. Table 26 above depicts results from 24 participants within four different focus groups. The pertinent goal of this theme was to examine actions that small businesses need to take to ensure their ads are entertaining, relevant, and friend- or celebrity-endorsed. Participants were asked to expressly discuss what kinds of ads small businesses should post. From this category, sponsored content by an influencer got the highest response, with seven participants from three different groups affirming that they view ads from small businesses on their social media platforms because those ads appeared as sponsored content from am influencer Additionally, five participants from two focus groups concluded that small business ads should get referrals. By doing this, the participants suggested that the businesses will be more likely to generate traffic for their ads, hence an increase in views and eventual conversion to sales.

Example quotes:

- "They like catch my like eye like the first, its like 2 seconds of the video. And how did how would they catch your attention? The 1st 2 seconds."

- "Like, say, if they're like serious throughout the ad. I probably won't get it like they have to be like entertaining somehow, or funny like to connect with generation. But if they're not. And they're like taking forever to like"

- "Okay. So, I shouldn't go out and pay big bucks for a celebrity? Right? I should try to get emotion. Yeah, peers. Yeah, yeah."

Of the participants, two believed that ads from small businesses should get an endorsement from friends or peers to be seen as relevant or useful. Those who believed that friends' endorsements are key also affirmed that the endorsements by their friends must be relevant for them to view the ads. Among the participants, others expressed that small businesses that cannot afford to sponsor their ads or use influencers must ensure that their ads are concise and entertaining. Four participants noted that they would watch entertaining ads from small businesses without necessarily being sponsored or endorsed by their friends or celebrities. In this case, they expressed their ability to choose what warrants their attention genuinely and can entertain them. Out of the participants, only one believed that small businesses could post stories about their operations and products on their Instagram and get attention from adolescents. The participant believed that endorsements and influencers cannot influence views on such stories. The same participant strongly believed that Instagram ads and Pinterest tags would work best for small businesses. For this to happen, a small business must show its authenticity and take the targeted audience through the procedure, steps, and operations. Through this, without influencers, they can generate genuine views and attention for their products.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Local versus chain business was usually not relevant to purchasing decisions

Table 27

Codes for theme four

Theme/Code Name	Number of References
Theme 4. Local versus chain business was usually not relevant to purchasing decisions	9
Discrepant data - More likely to look at ads from local businesses	5
Indifferent to whether business is local or chain	3
Photo of recognizable location	1

The fourth main theme of the qualitative results related to the comparison between local and chain business and the relevance of this distinction to consumers' purchasing decisions. Seventeen participants from three different focus groups gave their views on this theme. As evidenced in the findings, three participants from two different focus groups suggested that they were indifferent about whether business is local or chain. However, five individuals from the same group disagreed, saying instead that they are more likely to look for ads from local businesses. This indicates that the adolescents would prefer promoting their local businesses and, as such, would not skip ads relating to such businesses. These preferences were modified by other factors, such as the ease of getting their ordered products or the cost implications of such a transaction.

Example quotes:

- "For me. It's the same as if I'm on Instagram, and I see somebody's page that has like in their bio. It's like "made in Hawaii," or a small local business like that. I would."

- "Also, I like supporting small businesses more than big corporation, So, local ads would grab my attention more than like those from the mainland"
- "there's a better chance of finding the product here, especially because, if you can only get it from here. So, I don't know. Do you think? Yeah, for me, it's just kind of like whether I can get it soon, or I must wait 3 months for it to come in shipping, right?"

Four participants from the same focus group asserted that they would prefer buying goods in person rather than through chain businesses. These participants cited the value of being able to inspect potential purchases in person as a strong driver for that preference. Of note, these same participants did look at online retailers such as Amazon but preferred to avoid buying from such chain businesses. Notably, from this theme, it is evident that many adolescents are indifferent on whether a business is local or chain but would prefer to view ads from local businesses that they know or have heard of and buy in person rather than making online purchases.

4.5 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter, Chapter 4, presents the results of the study from both the qualitative and quantitative portions. The quantitative data provided a wide array of interesting descriptive statistical conclusions and several interferential results of note. The qualitative analysis resulted in four themes: (a) social media is used for many hours per day primarily for entertainment, (b). Ads are ignored unless they are relevant, entertaining, and endorsed by a friend or celebrity, (c) Small businesses should post ads that are relevant, entertaining, and celebrity- or friend-endorsed, and (d) Local versus chain business was usually not relevant to purchasing decisions. Together, these results help to answer the study's overarching research question of: To what extent does social media usage influence the

consumer buying behavior of adolescents in Hawaii? These results will be discussed and

interpreted in the next chapter, Chapter 5.

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This dissertation explored the impact of constant social media exposure among adolescents in Hawaii on their consumer behavior. This chapter discusses the findings and conclusions related to the central research problem and hypothesis for this study, and the research objectives. Based on the mixed method analysis of data, the overall conclusions reached will be analyzed, synthesized, and evaluated. In this way, a final perspective can be reached on the research findings regarding the impact of social media exposure and use on Hawaiian adolescents' consumer and purchasing behavior.

The findings discussed here are based on a mixed-method study, which assessed the relationship between social media usage and consumer buying behavior among adolescents living in Hawaii. To address the research aims, the mixed method study included both qualitative and quantitative research components. Quantitative data was drawn from surveys with a diverse sample of adolescents in Hawaii to quantify their use of social media and its impact on their consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. The qualitative portion of the study involved a focus group with a subset of the participants from the quantitative surveys. Based on the dominant themes revealed in the research, the discussion outlines conclusions based on the research questions and hypotheses and the overall conclusions reached in the study.

The problem in this dissertation was the significant effect of online communities on buyers' habits, specifically among adolescents, who are dependent on these platforms for information and social interaction (Sun *et al.*, 2022). According to Chavez *et al.*, (2020), social media platforms are a major feature of the lives of teenagers in Hawaii, which makes

them a key target audience for marketing campaigns. On the islands, no major professional sports league events, theme parks, or historical or cultural events occur annually, which intensifies the reliance on social media for entertainment, with much of the spending being channeled to online platforms (Chavez *et al.*, 2020). It is, therefore, essential to investigate how participation in online networks impacts the consumer behavior of adolescents in Hawaii.

The overarching research question that was addressed in this study is as follows:

RQ. To what extent does social media usage influence the consumer buying behavior of adolescents in Hawaii?

The central hypothesis that underpins this research question is as follows:

Social media usage significantly influences the consumer buying behavior of adolescents in Hawaii, with a positive correlation between social media exposure and product purchases.

The discussion of results in this chapter is based on the issues raised in this central research question.

5.2 Discussion of Results

Social media communities have evolved into vibrant spaces where adolescents socialize, interact with friends, establish online identities, and seek guidance in purchasing behavior. Social media is a key feature of adolescents' daily routines and social lives, and it has improved communication and access to information (Daniels, Sharma, and Batra, 2021). Adolescents use social media to find information about various products (Ermiş, 2021), to maintain a positive self-image, interact with like-minded people, uphold a favorable perception of themselves in society, and look for associations with other individuals (Das and Mishra (2022), The expansion of social media use has transformed the way that people

globally communicate, access information and their consumer behavior (Lee, Bright, and Eastin, 2021). Adolescents have emerged as a key demographic to be targeted by marketers because of the amount of time they spend online and their spending power (Manzoor *et al.*, 2020). It is, therefore, important to examine the impact and nature of social media use on consumption patterns.

Hawaii is a unique geographical and social environment that lends itself to analysis. This study focuses specifically on adolescents in Hawaii. The availability and accessibility of local and imported products and the correlation between social media and consumer behavior are influenced by the geographic location of the Hawaiian Islands (Hanaysha, 2022). The unique characteristics of Hawaiian adolescents' social interactions and perceptions of their cultural heritage were some of the factors that emerged as important in shaping their consumer behavior.

5.2.1 Quantitative analysis

The population for the quantitative part of this study consisted of adolescents living in Hawaii aged from 11 to 18. The final sample size for the study was 334, composed of a wide range of races and ethnicities. The largest ethnic group was mixed ethnicity (22.8%), and the smallest group was White/Caucasian (9%). Approximately twice as many females participated in the study as males. The choice of this population group was motivated by the unique characteristics of adolescents at this age in terms of consumer behavior and social media engagement. At this age, teenagers are forging identities separate from their close family and turn to social media for community, information, and interaction (Lee, Bright and Eastin, 2021, p.766). Social media engagement enables them to discover consumer goods that may not be easily obtainable nearby, and to build a community online.

Four specific aims guided the quantitative analysis. These were a) to examine the extent of social media usage among adolescents in Hawaii, b) to identify the types of products and services most influenced by social media usage among Hawaiian adolescents, c) to analyze the factors that moderate the impact of social media usage on Hawaiian adolescents' consumer buying behavior, and d) to assess the role of peer influence and advertising on social media in shaping adolescents' purchasing decisions. The results of the qualitative investigation are grouped around four themes related to these aims.

Aim 1: To examine the extent of social media usage among adolescents in Hawaii. The purpose of Aim 1 was to examine the extent of social media usage among adolescents in Hawaii. The demographic data from the survey revealed the most direct findings related to this aim. Most participants reported spending three or more hours per day on social media (n = 181; 54.2%). Only 11 of the participants reported minimal social media usage of 30 minutes or less a day. This finding is relatively modest compared to the qualitative focus group data, which revealed that most participants spent between 5 – 9 hours per day on social media, primarily for entertainment.

The fact that Hawaiian teenagers spend many hours online daily could be related to several factors, among them a need to establish themselves in their peer group. In Hawaii, about 20.5% of the population of Oahu is under the age of 18, and research has shown that adolescents are vulnerable to Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) (Safia *et al.*, 2019). Young people are constantly exposed to compelling social media content, with inducements designed to not only keep them informed of brands and products (Aurimas, Pengshuo, and Xiang, 2020), but to spark their curiosity and keep them online and engaged. In this way, teenagers are enticed to make purchases due to a perceived sense of missing out (Russell, Vest and Litt, 2022).

The participants were asked to rank different social media platforms from 1 to 6 (1 for most used, 6 for least used) according to their preference. Overall, 53.0% of participants rated Instagram as their most-used platform, followed by TikTok (45.8%), with the least commonly used being Facebook After examining some anomalies in the responses, it was concluded that TikTok and Instagram were by far the most popular platforms. Gender and ethnicity did not have any significant impact on the amount of time adolescents spent on social media.

The findings here confirm previous research on the constant presence and importance of social media in the lives of teenagers. The ability to distribute and retrieve information rapidly on their social media channel of choice has transformed adolescents' consumer behavior. The most popular social media platforms are designed to feed adolescents' need for a sense of belonging and instant gratification (Russell, Vest and Litt, 2022). Teenagers in Hawaii depend on social media outlets to provide product information, customer reviews and feedback, and product suggestions (Jaitly and Gautam, 20210). Lee, Bright, and Eastin (2021) have detailed the impact of social media channels on communication methods and consumer behavior, and adolescents are a particular target due to their enormous spending power of $211 billion, as described by Manzoor *et al.*, (2020). All these factors are related to the many hours that are spent online by adolescents and, ultimately, are the factors that influence their consumer behavior and purchasing decisions.

Aim 2: To identify the types of products and services most influenced by social media usage among Hawaiian adolescents. To answer the questions in this section, participants were surveyed on the brands and products that they followed on social media. Participants were asked to indicate how many brands they followed on their social media accounts. The findings presented a mixed picture, with the greatest number of the participants following no brands (n = 118; 35.3%), or only 1 – 5 brands (n = 112; 33.5%). There was a

smaller group of participants that followed 11 -20 brands (n = 18; 5.4%), whereas more participants followed over 20 (n = 41; 12.3%). These findings could suggest that brand loyalty may not be the main factor that shapes the consumer behavior of adolescents when they engage on social media.

The finding around brand loyalty is in contrast with previously reported interaction with brands by Hawaiian adolescents. Ragab (Ragab, 2022) reported that approximately 80% of teenagers in Hawaii follow at least one brand on social media, while nearly 65% have interacted with brands through likes, comments, and direct messages. Although brand loyalty may not be the most important factor in this study shaping adolescents' online consumer behavior, it is an important factor in their engagement with social media overall. Teenagers are exposed to a wide range of consumer information, including information on brands, products, advertisements, and marketing material (Aurimas, Pengshuo and Xiang, 2020). On social media platforms, adolescents can engage directly with brands, and this interaction promotes brand loyalty and provides brands with insights into teenage consumers' preferences (Ragab, 2022). Some of the ways that adolescents are drawn into brand engagement are through participation in competitions or activities and distributing branded user-generated content via social media channels (Nofal, Calicioglu and Aljuhmani, 2020). According to the consumer engagement perspective, social media platforms encourage interaction with brands (media platforms encourage interaction and affect how consumers engage with brands (Fu, 2022). The research has noted that some teenagers in Hawaii are highly involved in brand-related activities on social media platforms, which leads to brand loyalty and word-of-mouth. The varied perspectives offered in the findings of this study could, therefore, reflect an engagement with a wide range of online activities and information, with brands being an important part of the mix.

A further question in the survey dealt with the role of advertisements in adolescents' social media usage. Participants reported noticing advertisements on social media often (n = 85; 25.4%), sometimes (n = 86; 25.7%), or rarely (n = 89; 26.6%), with only a few indicating always (n = 35; 10.5%) or never (n = 39; 11.7%). When questioned about the influence of the advertisement on their decision to buy a product, a near majority (n = 143; 42.8%) reported never buying a product because of viewing advertisements on social media. Participants who reported that their purchases were based on advertisements (N = 191) were asked to provide further information regarding the type of purchase that advertising had motivated. The most common category was clothing and fashion items (n = 142; 74.3%), followed by beauty and skincare (n = 95; 49.7%) and entertainment (n = 84; 44.0%). Adolescents, therefore, respond to advertising to fulfill very specific needs that could not be met by consulting with peers, for instance.

Further analysis was performed on the relationship between the frequency of engagement with advertisements and whether this engagement resulted in online purchases. The results showed that those participants who noticed advertisements on social media and engaged with them were more likely to make a purchase, whereas those who never or seldom engaged with ads were less likely to make a purchase. This finding demonstrates that the likelihood of making an online purchase is not randomly determined but is significantly related to the level of engagement with social media ads.

The findings on the frequency of engagement with ads on social media relate to the complexity of the relationship between adolescents' engagement with social media ads and their purchasing behavior, which was discussed in the literature. Previous research found that Hawaiian adolescents are exposed to a considerable volume of online advertising, and they view an average of 1,000–3,000 advertisements daily (Lin, Vijayalakshmi and Laczniak,

2019). Adolescents are constantly surrounded by insistent prompting and reasons to make purchases in varying forms, with sophisticated algorithms applying their user information to tailor advertising to their personal preferences (Lin, Vijayalakshmi and Laczniak, 2019; Nofal, Calicioglu and Aljuhmani, 2020). In Hawaii, nearly 90% of adolescents have acknowledged that they have viewed promotions directly related to their interests and online activity (Nofal, Calicioglu and Aljuhmani, 2020). The finding in this study that adolescents view advertising to fulfill specific needs may be a reflection of these algorithms at work, and adolescents may think that they are choosing certain advertisements based on their likes when, in reality, those ads are carefully crafted to feed into their preferences and persuade them to make a purchase.

      Aim 3: To analyze the factors that moderate the impact of social media usage on Hawaiian adolescents' consumer buying behavior. To investigate this aim, participants were asked directly about factors that influenced their purchasing behavior. The first factor was a choice of which platforms most motivated their purchasing. Overall, the most influential platforms were Instagram (n = 114; 34.1%) and TikTok (52.4%). It is interesting that although TikTok was used less than Instagram, it was perceived as being more influential in terms of purchasing. Further questions on the importance of online reviews in purchasing decisions revealed that all participants regarded reviews as important, with a majority of participants (n = 168; 50.3%) reported always consulting reviews of products they were interested in buying. of participants indicated always looking at online reviews of products they intended to buy. Many participants (n = 160; 47.9%) strongly believed in the importance of reviews, comments, and posts on social media with respect to their decision to purchase a product, with 29.0% strongly agreeing in the importance of these factors. In terms of the categories of posts they found useful, participants most valued assessments and evaluations

(n = 191; 57.2%), followed by demonstrations (n = 159; 47.6%) and influencer approvals (n = 143; 42.8%).

The types of products and their relationship with the different social media platforms used were also investigated. The findings showed that TikTok dominated for highly visual product categories like clothing, beauty, technology, and entertainment, suggesting that this platform was highly influential for product promotion through visual ads that appeal to younger demographics. However, Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) seem to have minimal influence on purchasing behavior across these categories.

The findings that adolescents responded to reviews and comments on the products that they were viewing online are in line with previous research by Wenninger, Cheung, and Chmielinski (2021), who found that adolescents are highly likely to be influenced by content generated by others like them. They perceive user-generated content as giving them an inspirational glimpse into real-life experiences and perspectives. Chen, Mao, and Halvarsson (2020) further noted the significant impact of different social media platforms on consumers' purchasing behavior. There is a wealth of information on products, brands, and trends on social media, and brands, influencers, and peers can reach adolescents through targeted advertisements, sponsored content, and organic posts. Exposure to this kind of content has a significant impact on the value placed by potential buyers and their perceptions of the product throughout the purchasing process.

A further question investigated whether the extent to which participants favored local versus non-local businesses. Very few participants specifically favored local businesses (n = 36; 10.8%), with most participants valuing both equally or expressing no preference. A further related question asked what could make participants more likely to purchase from local brands. The participants strongly supported that greater quality would encourage them

to purchase local brands (n = 139; 41.6%), and there was a limited perception of peer influence (n = 50; 15.0%) or indication that brands had a perceived advertising problem (n = 45; 13.5%). Online engagement alone does not determine a preference for local brands, and there may be other factors, such as identification with cultural heritage. The findings in terms of local brands were expanded in the analysis of the qualitative data below.

Aim 4: To assess the role of peer influence and advertising on social media in shaping adolescents' purchasing decisions. Although the formulation of this aim is primarily qualitative, there was one item on the quantitative survey that did assess the influence of friends and family on purchasing decisions. Of the participants, 39.2 % indicated some influence, with only 6.3 % reporting that friends and family had no influence on their purchasing decisions. This is in line with comments on the role of friends and celebrities in online consumer behavior reported below.

A cross-tabulation analysis was performed to assess the effect on consumer behavior of outside influences from other sources, such as celebrity endorsements, influencer approvals, user assessments, and other factors. The findings here showed that celebrity endorsements and influencer approvals seemed to be the most impactful outside influences, particularly among those respondents who were more active in making purchases based on these factors. Across all categories, user assessments had an effect on purchasing decisions, suggesting that peer reviews are significant in the decision-making process of adolescents when shopping online. Also highly rated were product demonstrations or seminars, especially for those who were already engaged with the product and sought additional hands-on information before purchasing. Sponsored posts had a more limited effect.

These findings are in line with the report by Törhönen *et al.*, (2020), who posited that consumer opinions and actions can be greatly influenced by content created by fellow users,

including reviews of products, videos of unboxing experiences, and personal endorsements. This observation is endorsed by Sun *et al.*, (2022), who noted that interactions online are based on leaving comments and likes and sharing content online. Furthermore, Wenninger, Cheung, and Chmielinski (2021), the purchasing decisions of individuals are greatly impacted by recommendations and endorsements from peers. Adolescents can use the interactions through comments and endorsements to voice their own views, find suggestions, and participate in discussions on brands, labels, and goods (Sun *et al.*, 2022). The findings confirm that adolescents in Hawaii adolescents seek peer approval and consult user-generated content as a source of information when purchasing. Importantly, peer influence has a significant role in adolescents' consumer behavior, whether it is in-person or online.

Adolescents regard the opinions and experiences of peers shared on social media as reliable information that motivates them to adopt similar preferences and purchasing habits. Social media platforms connect different groups, allow them to feel closer to each other, and align their consumer preferences and behaviors (Manzoor, 2020). The findings in relation to the influence of peer comments and reviews confirm the interactive nature of social media, which facilitates the sharing of information and social influence and impacts consumer attitudes and preferences.

5.2.2 Qualitative analysis

The qualitative data was drawn from the responses of a single focus group. The qualitative thematic analysis extracted the most meaningful and useful themes from the overall dataset, with four themes emerging from the analysis. These themes were: (a) Social media is used for many hours per day primarily for entertainment, (b) Ads are ignored unless they are relevant, entertaining, and endorsed by a friend or celebrity, (c) Small businesses

should post ads that are relevant, entertaining, and celebrity- or friend-endorsed, and (d) Local versus chain business was usually not relevant to purchasing decisions. Each of these themes will be discussed separately but also related to the discussion of the quantitative analysis above to enable an overall view of the dynamics between Hawaiian adolescents' social media usage and purchasing habits.

      Theme 1: Usage of Social Media for Long Hours per Day. The first theme analyzed the time spent on social media every day, how social media is used for purchasing decisions, and the impact of those decision-making processes among Hawaiian adolescents, highlighting the effect of the long hours spent online per day. The focus group respondents reported a longer duration spent online per day than the respondents to the quantitative survey. The daily time online reported by the survey was three to four hours, but in the qualitative analysis, the participants confirmed that they spent 5 to 9 hours on social media platforms per day. These findings confirm global trends towards making use of social media platforms to make purchases and align with the quantitative findings. Buller *et al.*, (2022) have confirmed that approximately 85% of Hawaiian adolescents actively use one or more electronic social networks. The use of electronic networks has risen among teenagers globally in recent years, driven by the appeal of virtual connections, ease of data access and the entertainment offered on social media platforms (Štreimikienė *et al.*, 2021).

      In terms of the people the participants followed, participants confirmed that they mainly followed only their friends on social media, primarily for entertainment purposes. For example, participants reported that they watched the videos made by the friends they followed and found it really entertaining. One participant shared, "whatever whoever I'm following, if they make videos. Then I watch their video. So, you're just kind of scrolling". The time spent online could be because of the consumption of video content above all. One

participant shared: "On Instagram, I can kind of, like, take my time looking at stuff. So, it's yeah, you know. So, you don't feel a need for anything else, you know." The findings in the qualitative focus group supported the participants' previously stated preference for Instagram above other social media platforms such as Facebook. In essence, the participant showed that they spend 5 to 9 hours on their preferred social media platform, which is most commonly Instagram. Participants emphasized the importance of peer content, video content, and content shared or endorsed by celebrities.

The findings in this theme underscore the participants' responses in the quantitative study, and the significance of interaction with peers on social media platforms. Discussions on different products and brands and reading endorsements from friends create bonding experiences for adolescents and impact on their subsequent purchasing decisions (Sun *et al.*, 2022; Törhönen *et al.*, 2020; Wenninger, Cheung, and Chmielinski, 2021). Social media platforms are, therefore, a safe space where adolescents can leave comments, provide likes, share content; and participate in discussions regarding goods and labels. Adolescents' general well-being and self-worth are boosted by the feelings of belonging and community online, which also positively influences their online consumer behavior (Safia *et al.*, 2019). The findings in this theme suggest that all these influences are at play in spurring adolescents in Hawaii to spend large parts of each day online.

Theme 2: Ads are ignored unless they are relevant, entertaining, and endorsed by a friend or celebrity. Theme 2 investigated what kinds of ads adolescents were drawn to and the extent to which they engaged with advertising, and codes included celebrity ads, humorous ads, ignoring ads completely, asking for parental permission, linking from the ad to an online store, and only looking at relevant ads. Most participants reported that they are most likely to ignore most ads and only focus on their areas of interest. One participant

shared, "Like when I am scrolling if I see, like, just like a random ad., I'll just like I will not pay any attention to it." The focus group discussions revealed that participants would only pay attention to ads if they found them relevant, entertaining, or endorsed by a celebrity or friend. Six participants revealed that they would only be drawn to ads featuring celebrities. One participant shared, "If it's a celebrity, it matters how famous they are or how much you like that celebrity." Decisions were also informed by their perception of such celebrities as being tasteful or trendsetters and hence valuing their likes and dislikes. Participants shared, "Yes, if it's like a celebrity I've known, it's like on the ad or something, I'd probably watch it. And it's like, there's a video like showing like the results. So, like how it looks", and further, "Stuff like it's used. So that makes it more interesting, becoming an influencer when they demonstrate the product". Three participants also shared that they only paid attention to online ads if they were humorous.

There is an interesting link between the responses here and the responses to Aim 4 in the Quantitative survey, which assesses the role of peer influence and advertising in purchasing decisions. This theme also relates strongly to the previous discussion of the quantitative survey on the types of ads that adolescents engage with. It has been established in the literature that Hawaiian adolescents watch a large volume of ads daily (Lin, Vijayalakshmi and Laczniak, 2019) and that these ads are tailored to feed into their personal preferences and tailored to their online behavior, to persuade them to make purchases (Nofal, Calicioglu and Aljuhmani, 2020). The findings in this analysis confirmed that Hawaiian teenagers choose ads that are directly related to their preferences, which could suggest that the creators of the ads have been effective in shaping the ads to individual viewing trends.

The finding that adolescents prefer ads that are entertaining and endorsed by a celebrity or friend is supported in the literature. Hawaiian consumers are no different from

those who follow promotions of products on social media globally. Erdem and Yilmaz (2021) reported that adolescents in Hawaii follow local and global influencers closely, preferring those that they trust and find relatable. Furthermore, most adolescents in Hawaii have made at least one purchase influenced by someone they follow in the past year, with 70% indicating that they were influenced by recommendations from influencers or friends (Eppes *et al.*, 2023).

The constant online presentation of an idealized lifestyle could also fuel materialism, social comparison, and FOMO (Lee, Bright and Easton, 2021). In Hawaii, 45% of adolescents have admitted to feeling anxiety when passing up chances to buy something that others have, and this motivates young people to try to keep up by buying goods that they see others buying or endorsing (Pokhrel *et al.*, 2021). Social comparison theory supports this, proposing that individuals assess themselves by contrasting their characteristics and actions with those of others (Nofal, Calicioglu and Aljuhmani, 2020, p. 141). When adolescents make social comparisons, particularly regarding products, ways of living, and their social rank, while using social media, these comparisons influence consumer behaviors. However, the focus of this study did not allow for a detailed analysis of the influence of social comparisons and FOMO on the consumer behavior of adolescents. What did become clear, however, is that Hawaiian adolescents participating in this study were influenced by celebrities and peers in their consumer behavior and purchasing decisions.

The findings in this study support this research and demonstrate the impact of celebrities and peers on adolescents' preferences and purchasing behavior. Furthermore, the respondents in the qualitative focus groups placed great emphasis on comments and the quality of reviews associated with ads. Three participants reported that they ignored the ads because they were judging such ads based on comments and the quality of reviews. Six

participants confirmed that their review of the comments spurred them to connect to the online store via the ad they watched. The ads are therefore linked to the online stores and the decision to purchase is also influenced by the reviews and comments.

These findings confirm the observations of Hanaysha (2022), who noted that platforms like Instagram and Facebook intensify their influence on adolescents' purchasing behavior by offering shopping information that allows clients to purchase items specifically from these digital feeds (Hanaysha, 2022). In 2022, more than 60% of young people in Hawaii made an online purchase from a digital feed (He, 2022). These findings are in line with the results of this study, underlining the power of social media platforms in enabling adolescents to make direct purchases and move seamlessly from browsing ads to purchasing an item on the same platform. Overall, this theme revealed that the study participants had varied reasons for being interested or uninterested in the ads.

Theme 3: Small businesses should post ads that are relevant, entertaining, and celebrity- or friend-endorsed. The third theme addressed the nature of the ad. For this theme, the goal was to examine what actions small businesses need to take to make their ads attractive to adolescents, ensuring that their ads are entertaining, relevant, and friend- or celebrity-endorsed. Participants were, therefore, asked to identify specifically what kinds of ads small businesses should post. The highest number of responses was for sponsored content by an influencer. Seven participants reported that they would view ads from small businesses because the ads appeared as sponsored content from an influencer. Five participants additionally proposed that small business ads should get referrals from influencers or celebrities, suggesting that in this way, the businesses would be more likely to generate traffic for their ads, increase views, and eventually generate more sales.

Two of the participants believed that small business ads were relevant and useful only if they were endorsed by peers or friends. Those who believed that friends' endorsements are key also affirmed that the endorsements by their friends must be relevant for them to view the ads. Among the participants, others expressed that small businesses that cannot afford to sponsor their ads or use influencers must ensure that their ads are concise and entertaining. One participant shared, "Okay. So, I shouldn't go out and pay big bucks for a celebrity? Right? I should try to get emotion. Yeah, peers. Yeah, yeah." Four participants noted that they would watch entertaining ads from small businesses without the ads necessarily being sponsored or endorsed by their friends or celebrities. In this case, they expressed their ability to choose what warrants their attention genuinely and can entertain them. As stated by one participant, "They like catch my like eye like the first, first 2 seconds of the video. And how did how would they catch your attention? The first 2 seconds".

There was one alternative view among the responses. Only one participant believed that small businesses could post stories about their operations and products on Instagram and get attention from adolescents. The participant believed that endorsements and influencers could not influence their views. The participant further believed that such ads would be successful if a small business could show its authenticity and take the targeted audience through the business's procedure, steps, and operations, generating genuine views and attention for their products without using influencers. This view contrasts with the views of another participant who shared that influencers should not be too serious in communicating their message, "Like, say, if they're like serious throughout the ad. I probably won't get it like they have to be like entertaining somehow, or funny like to connect with generation".

The importance of comments and reviews by friends has been discussed above, and the results of the quantitative analysis are borne out in the qualitative findings. In terms of

celebrity endorsements and the significant impact of influencers, these results are in line with previous research. It has been mentioned that more than two-thirds of Hawaiian adolescents have been influenced to make purchases by social media personalities (Eppes *et al.*, 2023). The impact of influencers and celebrities on the consumer behavior of adolescents was established by the findings in Theme 2 and Theme 3, confirming what has been stated in the literature (Erdem and Yilmaz., 2021) Furthermore, the findings that adolescents are driven by celebrity endorsements and entertaining content aligns with the studies by Das and Mishra (2022) and Dedoncker and McLean (2022). Both these studies emphasized that influencers have a significant influence in shaping the perceptions of adolescents, and that they gain the trust of their audience by portraying knowledge, genuineness in the content. The findings in this theme show that adolescents are strongly driven by entertaining ads and celebrity endorsements.

Theme 4: Local versus chain business was usually not relevant to purchasing decisions. The fourth theme of the qualitative results compared participants' perceptions of local and chain businesses and investigated how this distinction affected Hawaiian adolescents' purchasing decisions. Seventeen participants gave their views on this theme, with three participants sharing that they were indifferent about whether a business was local or chain. However, five individuals from the same focus group disagreed, reporting that they would be more likely to look for ads from local businesses on social media. This indicates that most of the participants would prefer promoting their local businesses and would not ignore ads relating to such businesses. Other factors modified these preferences, such as the ease of getting their ordered products or the cost implications of such a transaction.

The responses to this theme could indicate a loyalty to small businesses due to the geographic isolation of Hawaii and cultural pride among the adolescents, who shared, "For

me. It's the same as if I'm on Instagram, and I see somebody's page that has their bio. It's like made in Hawaii, or like a small business like that. I would. So, they must make it known that they're local", and further, "Also, I like supporting small businesses more than big corporate like us businesses. So, local ads grabs my attention more than the ones from the mainland". In terms of purchasing online, four participants reported that they would prefer buying goods in person rather than online through chain businesses. These participants cited the value of being able to inspect potential purchases in person as a strong driver for that preference. It should be noted that these participants stated that they did look at online retailers like Amazon but preferred to avoid purchasing anything from such chain businesses. One participant shared, "There's a better chance of finding the product here if it's like, I don't know, especially if you can only find them here. So, I don't know. Do you think? Yeah, for me, it's just kind of like whether I can get soon, or do I have to wait 3 months for it to come in, right?" This finding could be related to the relative isolation of Hawaii, where adolescents prefer to do their shopping in circumstances where there is personal contact rather than ordering online from some remote chain store.

Notably, from this theme, it is evident that many adolescents do not make a sharp differentiation between local businesses or chain stores but that they would prefer to view ads from local businesses that they know or have heard of and buy in person rather than making online purchases. The findings around supporting local businesses and what kind of advertising small businesses should post reveal loyalty and individualism in adolescents regarding their unique cultural heritage, and a drive to participate in the local community.

CHAPTER VI:

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The one research question underpinning this dissertation investigated the degree to which social media is used by Hawaiian adolescents and the role of their social media usage and choices in influencing their consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. To answer the research question, both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed, and the responses were discussed in terms of four aims and four broad themes that are somewhat similar. The extent of social media usage, namely the number of hours spent online and the most popular platforms, was the first area of discussion. Further, the types of services and products influenced by social media use, factors moderating the impact of adolescents' social media usage on consumer behavior, and the role of peer influence and advertising in shaping the purchasing decisions of Hawaiian adolescents were areas of investigation. These topics were expanded upon in the themes discussed in the qualitative analysis of the focus group responses. The data were analyzed using four broader themes that depict the behavioral aspects of adolescents and how these behaviors inform the extent of their social media usage. The broadened themes here were focused particularly on whether adolescents frequently ignored ads, the need for relevant ads to be posted by small businesses, and the relative merits of local versus chain businesses as perceived by the participants. Analyzing the findings in terms of these factors and the extent to which they influence consumer behavior has enabled conclusions to be drawn about the consumer behavior of participants in this study.

The central hypothesis underpinning the research question in this study was as follows:

Social media usage significantly influences the consumer buying behavior of adolescents in Hawaii, with a positive correlation between social media exposure and product purchases.

From the analysis of the data collected in this study, it can be concluded that the central hypothesis of the study has been confirmed. The findings in this study demonstrated that social media usage patterns among Hawaiian adolescents have a significant impact on their consumer buying behavior. The long hours adolescents spend online create the context for engaging with ads and expanding this engagement to online shopping. Most adolescents in this study reported that they actively engaged with online ads and used the ads as a portal to click through to online stores. They expressed a preference for ads endorsed by celebrities or friends but noted that the ads had to be entertaining and engaging. An interesting aspect of this study is the finding that there is a likelihood that adolescents would prefer to support small local businesses, which could be related to a strong attachment to the cultural heritage of Hawaii and loyalty to their community.

6.1 Conclusion

For both the qualitative and quantitative analysis, the first aim and theme investigated the time spent online by Hawaiian adolescents. This study demonstrated conclusively that Hawaiian adolescents, like other teenagers globally, are engaged in social media for many hours a day, with the responses ranging from 3 to 9 hours per day. The most popular social media platform was Instagram, closely followed by TikTok. Social media outlets provide Hawaiian adolescents with product information, customer reviews and feedback, and product suggestions (Jaitly and Gautam, 2021). Due to their spending power (Manzoor et al., 2020), adolescents are a key target of marketers and businesses online. It has been confirmed in previous research that popular platforms are designed to have a targeted impact on

adolescents' purchasing behavior by offering shopping information that enables clients to purchase items online on social media channels (Hanaysha, 2022). The many hours spent online by Hawaiian teenagers affirm that these platforms feed into the adolescents' need to belong to a community and find instant gratification (Russell, Vest and Litt, 2022). The study also investigated which brands Hawaiian adolescents follow online. An interesting finding was that brand loyalty may not be the most important factor shaping consumer behavior in Hawaiian adolescents, which contrasts with previous research by, for instance, Ragab (2022), who found that Hawaiian adolescents typically follow at least one brand online. The contradiction in these findings could suggest that focusing solely on brands could offer a limited view of the online behavior of adolescents in Hawaii.

A further investigation was related to the role of advertising in adolescents' social media usage. Overall, this study revealed that the study participants had varied reasons for being interested or uninterested in the ads. The findings showed that adolescents engage with advertising to fulfill very specific needs that cannot be met through conversation with friends or other means. Adolescents' decisions to make online purchases are directly related to their engagement with advertising online and not random. In this study, the overall majority of participants reported that they are most likely to ignore most ads and only focus on their areas of interest. However, it should be noted that Hawaiian adolescents are exposed to a large volume of advertising daily, and, therefore, their consumer decisions may be significantly influenced by the algorithms and other means that marketers and social media platforms utilize to target advertising to individual preferences (Hanaysha, 2022). The finding here suggests that advertisers have been successful in creating ads that appeal to individual preferences by utilizing the tools available to social media platforms and that adolescents may not be completely independent in their consumer behavior.

The study also found that adolescents read and respond to comments and reviews and prefer to investigate products endorsed by their peers or celebrities. The participants in this study, like teenagers globally, follow the local and global influencers that they trust and find relatable (Erdem and Yilmaz, 2021). In addition, the focus group participants revealed that only ads that were entertaining or endorsed by a celebrity or friend would get their attention. The findings here showed that celebrity endorsements and influencer approvals significantly influenced consumer behavior and that user assessments had an impact on purchasing decisions across all categories. Peer reviews emerged as significant in the making of consumer decisions when shopping online, with user-generated content and information playing a significant role in online purchasing decisions. The opinions of peers that were consulted in person were also valuable. These online activities are part of the interactivity of online communication, and this interaction is evidently prized by the adolescents in this study. This impacts their attitudes and preferences around shopping on social media platforms. The findings showed that the decision to purchase is usually also influenced by the quality of the reviews and comments, with participants confirming that their review of the comments spurred them to connect to the online store via the ad they watched. The decision to purchase is influenced by reviews and comments, and by endorsements from celebrities and peers.

This theme investigated adolescents' preferences for local brands and local small businesses, and although the data revealed that there was no distinct preference for local brands, the discussion on local small businesses revealed some interesting factors that could influence the consumer behavior of Hawaiian adolescents. A key theme dealt with the types of ads that small businesses should post online, with the greatest number of participants suggesting that sponsored content endorsed by an influencer would be the most effective. It

was further suggested that small businesses should get referrals from celebrities or influencers to generate more online sales and that ads endorsed by friends would also be popular. Overall, the participants felt that regardless of whether a friend or celebrity sponsored the ad, it should be concise and entertaining, catching their attention. The literature has shown that influencers have a significant effect on adolescents' consumer behavior and that if influencers are trusted for their knowledge and authority in particular fields, they have a greater influence (Das and Mishra, 2022, Dedoncker and Mclean, 2022; Erdem and Yilmaz, 2021). This is confirmed by previous studies on the importance of celebrities in influencing purchasing decisions among Hawaiian adolescents (Eppes et al., 2023). Influencers shape the perceptions of adolescents and gain trust by portraying relatability, knowledgeability and appearing genuine. This study is in line with the previous research, confirming that Hawaiian adolescents are significantly influenced in their online consumption by entertaining ads and celebrity endorsements. Furthermore, small businesses should produce ads that are entertaining and, if possible, endorsed by relatable celebrities.

The responses around preferences related to local small businesses and chain businesses were interesting. In this study, most participants indicated they were more likely to promote their local businesses and would not ignore ads relating to them. Although factors like costs and the ease of getting products moderated the responses, the findings could suggest an attachment to cultural values, norms, and traditions that influence consumer behavior (Russell, Vest, and Litt, 2022). This study's participants also preferred in-person shopping at local businesses. This finding is related to the relative isolation of Hawaii, with adolescents showing a preference for the immediacy of in-person shopping rather than ordering from a remote location and having to wait.

It has been noted in the literature that Hawaii has unique cultural, social, and geographical characteristics (Chavez et al., 2020; Sun, 2022) and that it is a unique marketing environment due to the diversity of cultures and active tourism (Aurimas, Pengshuo and Xiang, 2020; Chavez et al., 2020). The geographic location of the Hawaiian Islands plays a significant role in product availability and accessibility of both local and imported products. Adolescents want to gain knowledge about what goods they can purchase online and what would be available locally, and they utilize social media to obtain this information (Lee, Bright and Eastin, 2021). Hawaiian teenagers' purchasing decisions, both online and in local businesses, are influenced by cultural values, norms, and traditions (Russell, Vest, and Litt, 2022). Small businesses need to take note of the social, cultural, and geographical factors that could influence the consumer behavior of adolescents to tailor their marketing to the needs of their target audience. Examining how social media affects the product preferences and purchasing behavior of Hawaiian adolescents can shed light on the way that they navigate their unique social and cultural heritage and overcome geographical barriers.

This study has highlighted the impact of social media platforms, user-created content, and influencers on the consumer behavior of Hawaiian adolescents. The literature has revealed gaps that this study could potentially address (Manzoor et al., 2020). This dissertation is an important step towards a more thorough examination of the Hawaiian cultural, social, and geographical context and how these factors influence social media usage and consumer behavior among Hawaiian adolescents. Jaitly and Gautam (2021) have indicated that ethical guidelines should be developed in the future to ensure transparency. The information in this study could assist marketers in creating focused tactics that effectively appeal to teenagers (Lee, Bright, and Eastin, 2021). Marketers, and especially local small

businesses, can create effective strategies and communications to appeal to Hawaiian adolescents and thereby establish and sustain their businesses on the island over time.

Implications

This study presents valuable insights for examining the unique context of adolescents in Hawaii and the impact of social media on their consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. The correlation between social media usage and consumer behavior in adolescents is significant (Dedoncker & McLean, 2022) and social media has previously been shown to impact teenagers' decisions regarding online purchases (Ermis, 2021). Teenage consumers are emerging as a crucial demographic with their own distinctive requirements, likes, and buying behavior (He, 2022). User-generated content and influencer recommendations shared on social media play a significant role in determining consumer purchasing decisions, as do factors like social media platforms' peer recommendations. Erdem and Yilmaz (2021) have shown that social media benefits adolescents' engagement with brands and their loyalty towards them, and this study has confirmed that Hawaiian adolescents engage with brands online. Although this is not the only factor influencing purchasing decisions, brand loyalty is strengthened when teenagers actively participate in brand-related activities and establish a sense of connectedness within social media forums (Nofal, Calicioglu and Aljuhmani, 2020).

The findings in this study have contributed to a recognition of how social media platforms shape consumers' buying patterns and habits, particularly on how product details are presented (Jaitly and Gautam, 2021). In light of the findings regarding the significant time spent on social media and the wide range of information and influences available to adolescents in Hawaii, it is important to provide research-based information to marketers and policymakers who aim to cater to this demographic. Furthermore, the focus on the impact of influencers and celebrities is appropriate to the significant role that influencers play in

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molding consumer behavior, as shown in the literature (Daniels, Sharma and Batra, 2021, Gordon *et al.*, 2021). Research conducted in Hawaii showed that influencers impact teenagers' involvement and purchase choices, and this finding was confirmed in the current study. This study has reinforced the impact of influencers' content on buying decisions, as previously demonstrated by Daniels, Sharma, and Batra (2021). The findings in this study can help marketers and policymakers in the consumer economy in Hawaii gain valuable insights by comprehending the effects of user-generated content within their specific locale.

In Hawaii, young people depend on the content that users create to assess goods and services and make knowledgeable decisions. This study acknowledges the importance of cultural and contextual elements in evaluating consumer behavior, as highlighted by Lin, Vijayalakshmi, and Laczniak (2019). The understanding that the inclinations and actions of consumers are impacted by cultural norms, traditional beliefs, and regional factors is particularly relevant in the Hawaiian context. According to Chavez *et al.* (2020), local factors such as cultural values and traditions influence how consumers behave and choose their preferences. Given its diverse population and unique cultural heritage, this discovery is significant for research in Hawaii. Hawaii's geographical remoteness and unique cultural background enabled this study to focus on a specific population and draw conclusions that relate to an understudied but significant social context (Nofal, Calicioglu, and Aljuhmani, 2020). Analyzing the intersection between cultural factors and social media platforms in Hawaii can improve comprehension of adolescents' unique consumer behavior patterns in this area. This study provides valuable insights for marketing and social media practitioners and support the local community by providing practical recommendations to support enterprises based in Hawaii.

6.2 Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations in examining the impact of social media platforms on teenagers' purchasing behavior. According to Daniels, Sharma, and Batra (2021), this kind of research is challenging due to the rapidly evolving nature of digital online contexts. Further limitations could arise in drawing conclusions, as establishing a causal relationship is challenging, and most studies concentrate on correlations. Limitations arise in drawing definite conclusions as many studies concentrate on correlations rather than establishing causal relationships. Although past research has proposed theoretical frameworks and practical insights to marketers and policymakers, using the information provided by individuals and cross-sectional models limits the capacity to draw strong cause-and-effect conclusions (Varma et al., 2020).

One limitation of this study is that it is focused on Hawaiian adolescents and, therefore, could be limited in its applicability to broader populations. Findings may not be universally applicable to all teenagers, because social, cultural, and contextual factors could be different in different environments. Adolescents from different cultural backgrounds and regions may experience the effects of social media on their buying behavior in diverse ways. Further limitations are related to methodology, since research obtained through self-reporting can be influenced by recall and social desirability biases (He, 2022). A longitudinal study or experimental design could address this limitation.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Previous researchers have highlighted several areas related to the impact of social media on purchasing behavior in Hawaii that warrant further research. Russel, Vest and Litt (2022) proposed that further research should be conducted on the impact of Hawaiian cultural values on teenagers' purchasing habits. By exploring the intersection of cultural factors and

social media engagement in relation to consumer purchasing choices, useful knowledge can be gained for marketers and policymakers seeking to connect effectively with this demographic (Buller *et al.*, 2022). To strengthen the causal relationship that is often problematic in research that relies on correlations, further longitudinal and experimental investigations are suggested. A longitudinal study could examine the patterns and changes of consumer behavior over time and highlight the long-term effects of social media (Buller *et al.*, 2022). Future research studies could also use experimental designs to control social media exposure or interventions and analyze how they affect consumer behaviors. Other researchers have advocated for future studies investigating ethical issues associated with social media use and Hawaiian adolescents' consumer patterns (Štreimikienė *et al.*, 2021). Future research could also focus on establishing ethical guidelines regarding influencer marketing, disclosure practices, and safeguarding susceptible teenagers (Lin, Vijayalakshmi and Laczniak, 2019). Future research could also utilize advanced methods to examine social media platforms, including the kinds of content and usage habits, to understand different aspects of social media engagement among adolescents and how they affect consumer purchasing behavior (Muhamad and Shahrom, 2020, p. 69). Using mixed-method designs, as utilized in this study, can offer a more comprehensive understanding of how adolescents perceive social media platforms and their influence on purchasing behavior.

6.4 Summary

This study has made an important contribution in examining the impact of social media platforms on the consumer behavior and purchasing decisions of adolescents in Hawaii. The socio-cultural context of Hawaii offers a unique opportunity to examine the social dynamics, diverse communities, ethnicities, and lifestyles of the islands. This context has very particular effects on Hawaiian adolescents' buying habits. Teenagers are forging new

identities apart from their nuclear family context and their most constant daily influence is the content they engage with online. Their constant utilization of social media enables them to investigate product availability and accessibility of both local and imported goods, and the social and geographic context of Hawaii has a significant effect on their choices and how they engage as consumers. This study has highlighted the social media choices and preferences, purchasing patterns, and interactions that enable Hawaiian adolescents to become informed and responsible digital citizens. In addition, the analysis could provide evidence-based recommendations for companies and parents to enable them to support Hawaiian teenagers in this aim.

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APPENDIX A:

Informed Consent for Research

+SSBM GENEVA

Informed Consent for Research

Project Title: The Effects of social media on Consumer Buying Behavior Among Adolescents in Hawaii

Principal Investigator: Vivienne Lim, Swiss School of Business and Management (SSBM) Geneva.

Contact Information: vivienne@ssbm.ch; vivienne.m.lim@gmail.com;

Tel: +1(808) 255-9095

Purpose of the Study:

Your child is being invited to participate in a research study conducted by aimed at researching how advertisements on social media influence the purchasing behaviors of adolescents in Hawaii. The study is conducted as part of doctoral requirements at the Swiss School of Business and Management (SSBM) Geneva.

Procedures:

If you agree for your child to participate, they will join a focus group discussion where they will be asked about their experiences and opinions regarding social media ads and their potential impact on their buying decisions. The session will be conducted in a safe, confidential environment and is expected to last approximately 30 minutes. The discussion will be audio-recorded for analysis purposes, but all information will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Your child can choose to participate or not, and they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

Potential Risks and Discomforts:

There are no anticipated risks associated with participation in this study. However, if at any point your child feels uncomfortable, they are free to stop participating in the discussion.

Confidentiality:

All information obtained during this study will be kept strictly confidential. Your child's name will not be linked to any data collected, and all data will be stored securely. Only the research team will have access to the data.

Consent:

By signing below, you are indicating that you have read and understood the information provided above, that you are voluntarily agreeing to allow your child to participate in this research study, and that you understand that you may withdraw your consent at any time.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you very much for your participation.

APPENDIX B:

Research Survey

Social Media Usage

1. How many hours a day, on average, do you spend on Social Media?
   Less than 30 minutes ……….…… **O**
   30-60 minutes.…………….…..…. **O**
   1-2 hours……….………....….…. **O**
   More than 3 hours…………..……. **O**

2. Rank the social media platform from the most used to the least use.
   Facebook …………………................… ___

   Instagram…...................…………… ___

   X (formerly Twitter) ……………... … ___

   TikTok…..........................….....……… ___

   Snapchat…......................... ......….…… ___

   Other (please specify) …….…….…. ___

Awareness

3. About how many companies or brands are on your Social Media accounts?
   None...………………. ………. **O**
   0-5……….……....……………. **O**
   5-10 …..……….…....….………. **O**
   10-20……....…….….…………. **O**
   20 or more……………….….…. **O**

4. How often do you engage with or notice advertisements on Social Media while scrolling through your social media feeds?
   Always....……………………… **O**
   Often……….……….....………. **O**
   Sometimes ………......….……. **O**
   Rarely……....……….....………. **O**
   Never…………..….………...…. **O**

Purchasing Behavior

5. Have you ever made an online purchase because of an advertisement that appeared on your Social Media account?
   Always…………………….. ………. O
   Often….…….……………...……. O
   Sometimes ………..…......………. O
   Rarely....…...……………...………. O
   Never (Skip to Q7) …. ……...……. O

6. You said you have made an online purchase because of an Ad on Social Media, what type of purchase was it? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]
   Clothing and Fashion items ……...……. O
   Beauty and skincare products…......…... O
   Technology/Electronic…....……...……. O
   Food and beverages.……………. ……. O
   Entertainment (movies, music, games).. O
   Other (please specify) ……... ……...…. O

7. What Social Media platform do you think has a higher influence on your online purchasing behavior?
   Facebook…………………..……..……. O
   Instagram……………………….....…. O
   X (formerly Twitter) ………......……... O
   TikTok………………………. ……. O
   Snapchat……………………………... O
   Other (please specify) ……. … ………. O

Types of Influence

8. Do you read online reviews before purchasing a product online?
   Always……………………. …..……. O
   Often….……….…….........……..……. O
   Sometimes ...……......………...…..……. O
   Rarely....…...…………………..……. O
   Never ………………….. ……...……. O

9. Do you agree that reviews, comments, and posts about products on Social Media affect your online purchasing decision behavior?
   Strongly Agree…………………..……. O
   Agree…………..……………..……. O
   Neutral ...……....…….……………..…. O
   Disagree......…………………………. O
   Strongly Disagree……..…………...…. O

10. What types of content on social media affect your online purchasing decisions? [SELECT ALL THAT APPLY]

Celebrity endorsements…………..…… O
Influencer approvals.…………….....… O
User assessments and evaluations.. …. O
Sponsored posts/advertisements…....... O
Product demonstrations/seminars….... O
None……………………………….... O

Local vs. non-local influences

11. Do you tend to follow and purchase products or services from local businesses or those outside of Hawai'i more often on social media?

Local businesses in Hawaii………… O
Business outside of Hawaii……….… O
Both equally……………..……. …. O
No preferences………………….. O

Additional Comments

12. Is there anything else you would like to add or share regarding the power of social media on your purchasing behaviour?

Demographic

For classification and planning purposes, we would like to know you better. Please remember all your answers are confidential.

13. What is your age as of your last birthday? [___]

14. With which ethic background do you identify with most?

White/Caucasian……………..……. O
Chinese…………………...… O
Filipino………………………. …. O
Hawaiian/Part/Hawaiian…………. O
Japanese………………………. O
Mixed…………………………. O
Other (specify)……………..…. O
Prefer not to answer……………. O

15. What is your gender?

Male…………...……………..…… O

Female..…………….…………..… O

Gender non-conforming.…………..O

Prefer not to answer………………. O

Thank you for participating in this research study.

APPENDIX C:

Focus Group Discussion Guide

Introduction (~5 mins)

- Welcome and thank participants for joining.
- Explain the purpose of the focus group, which is to gather insights on social media usage among adolescents in Hawaii and its influence on consumer behavior.
- Emphasize the importance of honest and open discussion.
- Assure confidentiality and anonymity of responses.
- Remind participants that there are no right or wrong answers.
- Icebreaker: "Can you briefly share your favorite social media platform and why you enjoy using it?"

Discussion on potential questions (~15 mins)

1. Social Media Usage and Brand Loyalty: (~5 minutes)
   - Do you feel a sense of loyalty to any particular social media platform? Why or why not?
   - When you see content related to brands on social media, such as sponsored posts or advertisements, do you engage with it (e.g., like, share, comment)? Why or why not?
   - Can you recall a time when social media content influenced your purchasing decision? If yes, could you describe the situation and how social media played a role?

2. Influence of Social Media on Product Choices: (~5 minutes)
   - Are there specific types of products or services that you find are more influenced by social media? If so, what are they and why do you think that is?
   - Do you ever find yourself seeking products that are not readily available on the island due to what you've seen on social media? If yes, could you provide an example?
   - In your opinion, do trends on social media play a significant role in shaping the buying decisions of adolescents in Hawaii? Why or why not?

3. Moderating Factors of Social Media Influence on Consumer Behavior:
   - Have you ever felt pressured to buy something because it was popular on social media or because people in your social circle were talking about it? Can you share your experience?

- When considering purchasing a product, how important is it for you to feel a sense of belonging or connection with the brand or community associated with it on social media?
- Do you think social media has a stronger influence on purchasing decisions for certain demographics or age groups within the adolescent population? Why or why not?

Closing

Thank participants for their valuable insights.

Encourage any additional comments or thoughts they may have. Remind participants of the confidentiality of their responses.