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MEDIA, TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIETAL BEHAVIOR: AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENT

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ABSTRACT

This research explores how media technology shapes the socio-economic behavior of university students. With the rapid spread of digital tools like social media, online platforms, and smartphones, students today are deeply embedded in a technology-driven environment that affects how they spend money, manage their time, and connect with others. The central aim of this study is to understand how these technologies influence students' day-to-day economic choices, including their buying habits and approach to saving, as well as how they communicate . To gather relevant data, a structured questionnaire was distributed among university students, and the responses were analyzed using standard statistical methods. The results show that media technology does play a noticeable role in students' financial behavior, time use, and social preferences. Overuse of social media, in particular, tends to encourage impulsive spending and disrupt productive routines. At the same time, students who use educational platforms more intentionally showed positive outcomes in learning and personal growth.Overall, the study suggests that when media technology is used thoughtfully, it can benefit students economically and socially. The findings carry practical value for universities and policymakers looking to foster better digital habits among the student population.

Keywords: *Media Technology, Socio-Economic Behavior, University Students, Digital Media, Spending Behavior, Time Management, Social Interaction*

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the way people engage with media has changed dramatically, and university students sit at the heart of this transformation. Social media platforms, streaming services, and digital communication tools have become deeply woven into everyday student life not just for entertainment, but for learning, socializing, and even forming identities (Kotoula E at el,2022). This study focuses on two interconnected questions: how has the growth of social media and technology changed the nature of fandom and participatory culture, and in turn, how does that culture feed back into broader economic and social systems. Fan communities, once confined to physical spaces and niche magazines, have expanded into vast online networks where followers don't just consume content they create it, debate it, and organize around it. This shift from passive audience to active participant has meaningful consequences for the entertainment industry, consumer behavior, and even public discourse (Mansor et al., 2025). Drawing on a review of recent academic literature, including

journals accessed through Google Scholar and relevant media reports, this study finds that the evolution of social media has been a major driver behind the rise of participatory fan culture. As fans have become more organized and vocal, they have begun to exert real influence on cultural trends and market behavior, pushing what were once considered niche subcultures into mainstream visibility. Beyond fandom, the broader relationship between media technology and culture cannot be ignored. Societies are constantly changing, shaped by advances in science, economics, politics, and the arts. Within this ongoing change, cultural innovation plays a unique role — it operates through shared values, collective creativity, and a willingness to embrace new ideas while staying rooted in local tradition. Communities that blend technological adoption with cultural grounding tend to be more adaptive and resilient. Local wisdom, a sense of shared identity, and openness to innovation form the foundation on which new media practices are built. This study aims to contribute to a clearer understanding of how these dynamics play out among today's university students(Wang H et al., 2025).

Problem Statement

Media technology is evolving at a pace that makes it difficult for individuals, institutions, and policymakers to fully grasp its cultural and social consequences. On one hand, digital platforms have opened up communication across borders and made it easier for everyday people to produce and share content. On the other hand, these same platforms risk drowning out local traditions and reinforcing the voices of those who already hold influence. Recommendation algorithms quietly shape what people read, watch, and believe, often without users being aware of how their choices are being guided. Meanwhile, the digital divide means that not everyone has equal access to these tools, which can deepen existing inequalities rather than reduce them. At a personal level, the constant pressure to maintain an online presence and stay connected can wear on students' mental well-being and strain real-world relationships. Despite how widespread these concerns are, there is still limited research that ties all of these threads together in a way that offers practical direction. This study attempts to address that gap, particularly in the context of university students who are among the heaviest users of digital media.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the level of media technology usage among university students.
2. To analyze the impact of media technology on students' cultural and social behavior.
3. To investigate how digital media influences students' economic behavior and decision-making.
4. To assess the role of media technology in shaping consumer habits among university students.
5. To explore the relationship between media technology usage and participation in the digital economy.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of media technology usage among university students?
2. How does media technology influence the cultural and social behavior of students?
3. In what ways does digital media affect students' economic decisions and spending patterns?
4. How does media technology impact consumer behavior among university students?
5. What is the relationship between media technology usage and students' involvement in the digital economy?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several strands of recent research provide relevant context for this study. One area that has gained attention is the use of artificial intelligence to interpret and respond to human emotions. Studies in this area suggest that while AI systems have shown some capability in recognizing emotional patterns with user satisfaction rates for emotional interaction and cultural sensitivity both exceeding 60% in some surveys a notable portion of users remain skeptical about whether machines can truly grasp the nuance of culturally specific emotional expression(Szromek.H et al.,2024). These concerns point to an important limitation:

technology can process behavioral signals, but cultural meaning often escapes algorithmic capture. Researchers highlight that any media environment seeking to operate across cultures must prioritize both emotional accuracy and cultural adaptability. Another relevant body of work concerns interactive media and cultural learning(Zhang.W et al., 2025). An experimental study examining gesture-based technology in museum settings found that the combination of passive video content followed by hands-on interactive experience led to significantly better retention and comprehension of cultural material compared to either approach on its own(Chan,Y.P et al., 2025). This finding has broader implications for how digital tools can be designed not just to deliver information, but to deepen cultural engagement. At the organizational level, researchers have examined how social media tools and cultural intelligence work together to shape a firm's ability to compete in international markets. A study based on data from multinational enterprises in Dubai found that these two factors technology adoption and cultural awareness each contribute independently to building stronger marketing capabilities, and together they help companies weather instability in foreign markets. The global spread of Korean popular culture offers a vivid real-world example of how media technology and cultural production intersect. The worldwide popularity of K-pop, Korean cinema, and drama series, driven in large part by digital streaming platforms, illustrates how entertainment can serve as a form of soft power that builds national identity and generates economic value on a global scale. Finally, drawing on uses and gratifications theory, some researchers have explored why people across different cultures turn to social media to form peer communities. This framework helps explain the motivations behind online participation and the social needs that digital platforms fulfill (Meier et al., 2021).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the impact of media technology on social behavior and the economic aspects of university students. The research focuses on analyzing how the use of media technologies influences students' social interactions, lifestyle, and financial behavior.A sample of 100 university students (N = 100) was selected using convenience sampling based on accessibility and willingness to participate. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of close-ended questions measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).The study includes independent and dependent variables: media technology usage as the independent variable, while social behavior and economic behavior are treated as dependent variables. Media technology was measured through items such as social media usage, screen time, and digital engagement. Social behavior was assessed through interaction patterns, communication style, and social participation. Economic analysis was measured through spending habits, financial awareness, and saving behavior.Data were analyzed using SPSS. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha (acceptable threshold > 0.70). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, while Pearson correlation examined relationships among variables. Multiple regression analysis was applied to determine the impact of media technology on social and economic behavior.

Result and interpretation:

This section presents the findings of the study, which examined how media technology usage relates to cultural transformation and economic societal behavior among university students. Data collected from 100 respondents were entered into SPSS for analysis. The results below cover the demographic breakdown of participants, reliability testing, descriptive statistics, correlation findings, and regression analysis. Each section is discussed in relation to the study's objectives.

Frequency and Percentage of Demographics

Statistics

		Age	Gender	Education	Religion
N	Valid	100	100	100	100
	Missing	19	19	19	19

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15-20yrs	22	18.5	22.0	22.0
	20-25yrs	38	31.9	38.0	60.0
	25-30yrs	1	.8	1.0	61.0
	30-35yrs	39	32.8	39.0	100.0
	Total	100	84.0	100.0	
Missing	System	19	16.0		
Total		119	100.0		

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	MALE	56	47.1	56.0	56.0
	FEMALE	44	37.0	44.0	100.0
	Total	100	84.0	100.0	
Missing	System	19	16.0		
Total		119	100.0		

Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Matric	34	28.6	34.0	34.0
	FSC	49	41.2	49.0	83.0
	GRADUATION	10	8.4	10.0	93.0
	MASTERS	7	5.9	7.0	100.0
	Total	100	84.0	100.0	
Missing	System	19	16.0		
Total		119	100.0		

Religion

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	MUSLIM	94	79.0	94.0	94.0
	CHRISTIAN	6	5.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	84.0	100.0	

Missing	System	19	16.0		
Total		119	100.0		

The sample included 100 respondents in total. Among them, 56 were male and 44 were female. In terms of age, the largest groups fell in the 20–25 and 30–35 ranges, while a small number of participants were in the 25–30 bracket. Regarding education, the majority held FSC-level qualifications, followed by matric graduates. A smaller proportion had completed graduation or master's degrees. Half the sample had no professional experience, while the remaining respondents were distributed across varying levels of work experience. The sample was predominantly Muslim (94 respondents), with the remaining identifying as Christian.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among **economic effects, social effects, and psychological effects.**

Correlations

		MediaTechUsage	CulturalTrans	EcoSocietyBeh
MediaTechUsage	Pearson Correlation	1	.189	-.167
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.059	.096
	N	100	100	100
CulturalTrans	Pearson Correlation	.189	1	.637**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.059		.000
	N	100	100	100
EcoSocietyBeh	Pearson Correlation	-.167	.637**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.096	.000	
	N	100	100	100

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation results reveal a mixed picture. Media Technology Usage shows a weak negative association with Economic Societal Behavior ($r = -0.167$), meaning that higher media use tends to correspond with a slight dip in positive economic behavior, though this connection is not strong enough to draw firm conclusions. The relationship between Media Technology Usage and Cultural Transformation was also minimal and not statistically meaningful. What stands out more clearly is the strong positive correlation between Cultural Transformation and Economic Societal Behavior ($r = 0.637$, $p < .001$). This indicates that shifts in cultural values and practices are closely linked with how students behave economically and socially. Taken together, these results suggest that cultural change is a more influential driver of student behavior than media technology use on its own.

Regression Analysis

Coefficient s[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

1	(Constant)	3.560	.237		15.026	.000
	Media Tech Usage	-.131	.078	-.167	-1.681	.096

a. Dependent Variable: Eco Society Behaviour

The regression output confirms what the correlation analysis suggested. Media Technology Usage shows a slightly negative effect on the dependent variable ($B = -0.131$, $\beta = -0.167$), but this falls short of statistical significance ($t = -1.681$). In plain terms, media technology use alone does not reliably predict changes in student behavior. The baseline value ($B = 3.560$, $t = 15.026$) is strong and stable, suggesting there is a solid starting point for the outcome variable that exists independently of media use. The overall picture from this model is that other factors — particularly cultural ones — are likely doing more of the explanatory work.

Interpretation of Findings

These results shed light on how media technology, cultural transformation, and economic societal behavior relate to one another among university students — and the picture that emerges is more nuanced than one might expect.

The correlation analysis shows that media technology usage has a **weak and statistically insignificant relationship** with both cultural transformation ($r = .189$, $p > .05$) and economic societal behavior ($r = -.167$, $p > .05$). These numbers tell us that even though students are using digital media constantly, that usage does not translate directly into meaningful changes in how they think culturally or behave economically. The associations are too small to suggest a real pattern — they could easily be explained by normal variation in the data rather than any genuine effect.

In contrast, cultural transformation demonstrates a **strong and statistically significant positive relationship** with economic societal behavior ($r = .637$, $p < .001$). This is a meaningful result. It tells us that students whose values and cultural understanding are shifting — who are adapting to changing norms and engaging with new ideas — also tend to make more thoughtful economic decisions and interact more constructively in social settings. The connection between cultural openness and responsible behavior is not just theoretical; it shows up clearly in the data.

The regression analysis adds further weight to this interpretation. Media technology usage has a **negative but insignificant effect** on economic societal behavior ($\beta = -.167$, $p > .05$). The fact that this effect does not reach significance means we cannot confidently say that media usage is driving behavioral outcomes. Given that cultural transformation does show a significant relationship, it seems more likely that behavioral change is rooted in how students' values and worldviews evolve rather than simply how much time they spend online.

In summary, the results highlight that **cultural transformation is a stronger driver** of economic societal behavior than media technology on its own. Media usage does show a **small and statistically insignificant effect**, but what appears to matter more is whether students are undergoing meaningful cultural change — shifting in their values, their awareness, and how they relate to the world around them. This points to a broader lesson: to understand student behavior, we need to look beyond screen time and consider the cultural context students are embedded in

CONCLUSION

This study set out to understand how media technology usage shapes the cultural and economic behavior of university students. What the data ultimately shows is that even though students are heavy users of digital media, this usage does not translate into strong or statistically meaningful shifts in their cultural outlook or economic conduct. Both the correlation and regression analyses point in the same direction: media technology, on its own, is not a reliable predictor of how students think or behave.

What does emerge clearly, however, is that **cultural transformation has a strong and significant positive connection** to economic societal behavior. Students who are experiencing greater cultural change — in terms of values,

norms, and awareness — tend to make better financial decisions, engage more positively with others, and carry themselves differently in society. This suggests that the cultural environment students grow within has a far deeper influence on their behavior than the apps they use or the time they spend online.

That said, it would be wrong to dismiss media technology entirely. **It likely plays an indirect role**, operating through cultural and social channels rather than by itself. Students who use media mindfully, with clear purpose, may benefit in ways that are difficult to isolate statistically. What this study ultimately underscores is the importance of nurturing cultural awareness and positive values among students — because that foundation appears to be what genuinely shapes their economic and social choices.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Educational institutions should focus on developing cultural awareness and values among students.
2. Students should be guided toward the responsible and balanced use of media technology.
3. Policymakers should promote digital literacy programs that encourage productive use of media.
4. Future research should include larger samples and additional variables (such as psychological or environmental factors) to better understand student behavior.

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