

Following Trends or Adapting: Conformity and Consumer Behavior in the Purchase of Beauty Products Among Female Students at Mulawarman University

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ABSTRACT

The growing trend of beauty product use among female college students indicates a shift in purchasing behavior influenced by social factors. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between conformity and consumer behavior in the purchase of beauty products among female students at Mulawarman University. This study employs a quantitative approach with a correlational design. The number of participants in this study, calculated using G*Power 3.1, was 115 female students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a Likert scale to measure conformity and consumer behavior. Pearson's product-moment correlation was then used to analyze the data after testing for normality and linearity. The results of the study indicate a correlation between conformity and consumerist behavior of $r = 0.492$; $p = 0.000$, showing that the two variables are positively and significantly correlated. This means that the higher the level of conformity, the greater the tendency toward consumerist behavior, so that purchasing decisions are not entirely based on need. This study is expected to provide insight into the influence of the social environment on the consumption behavior of female students at Mulawarman University regarding the purchase of beauty products.

Keywords : Conformity, Consumer Behavior, Beauty Products, Female Students

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the beauty industry has experienced steady growth year after year, reflecting a shift in consumer behavior (Wandira & Laoli 2024). This trend is further driven by digital marketing strategies and the emergence of various new products that capture consumers' interest (Setyaningsih & Albari, 2024). Beauty products no longer merely fulfill personal care needs but have also become part of an individual's social identity (Putri & Setiawan, 2024). As beauty standards in society evolve, women tend to face social pressure to meet certain expectations, such as having fair skin and an attractive appearance (Mufidah et al., 2025). This pressure compels individuals to continually adapt to their environment, resulting in beauty product purchases that are often driven not by need but by a desire to be accepted (Juliana, 2022). This situation triggers the emergence of consumerist behavior characterized by excessive, irrational, and repetitive purchasing (Fadli et al., 2023). The group vulnerable to this phenomenon consists of female college students in early adulthood—a phase characterized by identity formation and a need for social acceptance (Salma & Falah, 2023).

Consumption driven behavior is shaped not only by internal factors but also by social factors such as conformity. Conformity is the process of adjusting one's attitudes and behaviors to be accepted within a group Baron and Byrne (as cited in Insani, 2022). Previous research indicates that conformity with consumer behavior has a positive relationship (Windayani & Astiti, 2020). Individuals with a tendency toward high conformity are likely to follow trends and group decisions, including the purchase of beauty products (Pradipta & Kustanti, 2021). Research on consumer behavior has been conducted in various areas, such as the study by Susanto and Savira (2021) which examined e-commerce marketplace users among young adult women; in contrast, this study focuses on female students at Mulawarman University regarding their purchases of beauty products, not limited to online platforms. Pradipta and Kustanti (2021) examined students' consumption behavior at coffee shops, whereas this study highlights the consumption of beauty products as a means of meeting appearance standards in social settings. Additionally, Muttaqin et al., (2022) studied adolescent girls influenced by Korean makeup trends and K-pop culture, whereas this study does not focus on any specific culture. Dewinda and Susilarini (2021) also included a self-control variable and limited their focus to Maybelline lipstick, whereas this study examines beauty products in general without restricting the analysis to a specific brand. Furthermore, previous research has primarily addressed consumer behavior in general and has not specifically examined the purchase of beauty products among female college students who actively use such products. This indicates that social pressure shapes individuals' consumption patterns.

Based on this phenomenon, this study was conducted to identify the relationship between conformity and consumer behavior regarding the purchase of beauty products among female students at Mulawarman University, as well as to contribute to research in the field of social psychology. The hypothesis of this study is that there is a positive relationship between conformity and consumer behavior.

METHODS

Participants

The participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) current female students at Mulawarman University, as social interaction among female students tends to be high, making them more susceptible to peer influence; this aligns with the findings of (Zaki & Dewi 2025) who demonstrated a positive relationship between conformity and consumer behavior; (2) Adult women aged 18–25 who are in the phase of emerging adulthood a period marked by a search for identity and influenced by social judgments and group norms, Syaadah and Abdillah (2025) found that they tend to conform their behavior and prioritize the group within their social environment; (3) As active users of beauty products—which are closely tied to a group's aesthetic values, Hasrin and Sidik (2023) explain that increased conformity and consumerist behavior can be influenced by beauty trends in one's social environment; as well as (4) purchasing beauty products approximately 2–7 times a month, a high purchase frequency that indicates a tendency toward consumerist behavior (Hafiza et al., 2024). The sample size was determined using the G*Power version 3.1 program with a significance level of 0.05, power of 0.95, and effect size of 0.3, resulting in a minimum required sample size of 115 participants.

Design

The quantitative approach used in this study employs a correlational design aimed at examining the relationship between conformity as the independent variable and consumer behavior as the dependent variable.

Procedure

The research procedure was conducted in several stages, namely the development of instruments based on a theoretical review; validity and reliability tests to assess the quality of the measurement tools; the distribution of questionnaires to participants based on predetermined criteria; and the collection and analysis of data using SPSS software. After the data were collected, data analysis was performed to address the research objectives and test the hypotheses. The instruments used in this study consisted of two psychological scales in the form of Likert scales with four response options: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. These scales consist of favorable and unfavorable items. The scales for consumptive behavior and conformity were modified based on the aspects outlined by Lina and Rosyid (as cited in Dezianti, 2020) namely impulsive buying, irrational buying, and wastefulness. The validity test results indicate that 20 items with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.372 to 0.804 were deemed valid. The reliability test, using Cronbach's alpha, yielded a value of 0.876, indicating high reliability. Meanwhile, the conformity scale was constructed based on the aspects proposed by Baron and Byrne (as cited in Insani 2022), namely normative conformity and informative conformity. The validity test results showed that there were 18 valid items with correlation coefficients ranging from 0.307 to 0.807. The reliability test yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.851, indicating that the instrument has high reliability.

Analysis Techniques

In this study, data analysis was conducted through several stages, including descriptive and inferential analysis. Descriptive analysis was performed to describe the general characteristics of the research data, such as the mean and standard deviation of both variables. Before conducting hypothesis testing, assumption tests including normality and linearity tests were performed first. The normality test was performed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method to determine whether the data were normally distributed if the significance value was greater than 0.05. Subsequently, a linearity test was conducted to determine whether the relationship between the conformity variable and consumptive behavior was linear. A p-value greater than 0.05 indicates a linear relationship. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique because it is appropriate for the characteristics of the research data, which are interval-scaled, normally distributed, and exhibit a linear relationship among the variables. The results of the correlation analysis were interpreted based on the correlation coefficients to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables of conformity and consumer behavior. Previously, data were collected using two instruments: the consumer behavior scale and the conformity scale.

Validity was tested using the Pearson Product Moment technique with a correlation coefficient of ≥ 0.30 , and reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha with a criterion of ≥ 0.70 . The results of the analysis indicate that all instruments used in this study have a good level of reliability and are therefore suitable for use as data collection tools in the study.

RESULTS

The characteristics of the study subjects are presented in the following table:

Tabel 1. Distribution of subjects by age

Category	Age	Frequency	Presentage
Age	18 -20 Years	58	50.4%
	21 - 24 Years	46	40.0%
	>24 Years	11	9.6%
Total		115	100%

From the table above, it is evident that 50.4% of the research subjects fall into the 18–20 age category, followed by the 21–24 age category at 40.0%, and the >24 age category at 9.6%.

Tabel 1. Empirical Mean and Hypothesis Mean

Variable	Mean Empirik	SD Empirik	Mean Hipotetik	SD Hipotetik	Status
Consumptive Behavior	65.89	4.148	50	10	High
Conformity	50.99	6.502	45	9	High

The results of the descriptive analysis indicate that consumptive behavior and conformity among female students at Mulawarman University fall into the high category. This can be seen from the empirical means, which are greater than the hypothetical means for consumptive behavior ($M = 65.89 > 50$) and conformity ($M = 50.99 > 45$). This indicates that the subject falls into the category of high levels of consumerism and conformity. The frequency distribution of the data for both variables is as follows:

Tabel 2. Categorization of Scores on the Consumption Behavior Scale

Tendency Interval	Score	Category	F	Persentase
$X \geq M + 1.5 SD$	>65	Very High	70	60.9%
$M + 0.5 SD < X < M + 1.5 SD$	55-65	High	45	39.1%
$M - 0.5 SD < X < M + 0.5 SD$	45-54	Moderate	0	0%
$M - 1.5 SD < X < M - 0.5 SD$	35-44	Low	0	0%
$X \leq M - 1.5 SD$	<35	Very Low	0	0%
Total			115	100%

Based on the categorization table above, it can be seen that the research subjects were predominantly in the “very high” category (60.9%, or 70 people) and the “high” category (39.1%, or 45 people).

Tabel 3. Categorization of Conformity Scale Scores

Tendency Interval	Score	Category	F	Persentase
$X \geq M + 1.5 \text{ SD}$	≥ 59	Very High	14	12.2%
$M + 0.5 \text{ SD} < X < M + 1.5 \text{ SD}$	50 – 59	High	60	52.2%
$M - 0.5 \text{ SD} < X < M + 0.5 \text{ SD}$	41 – 49	Moderate	32	27.8%
$M - 1.5 \text{ SD} < X < M - 0.5 \text{ SD}$	32 – 40	Low	9	7.8%
$X \leq M - 1.5 \text{ SD}$	≤ 32	Very Low	0	0%
Total			115	100%

From the categorization table above, it can be seen that the breakdown of compliance categories is as follows: very high at 12.2%, high at 52.2%, moderate at 27.8%, and low at 7.8

Tabel 4. Hasil Uji Asumsi Normalitas

Variable	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	P	Description
Consumptive Behavior	0.095	0.092	Normal
Conformity	0.104	0.074	Normal

Based on the results of the normality assumption test, it was found that the data for consumptive behavior and conformity are normally distributed because they meet the criteria, namely a p-value > 0.05 . The normality test indicates that the data are normally distributed with ($p > 0.05$), specifically for consumer behavior ($p = 0.092$) and conformity ($p = 0.074$).

Tabel 5. Hasil Uji Asumsi Linearitas

Variable	Calculated F	Table F	p	Description
Consumptive Behavior - Conformity	1.319	3.93	0.179	Linear

Furthermore, the linearity test revealed a linear relationship between conformity and consumptive behavior, with a calculated F-value of 1.319, which is smaller than the critical F-value of 3.92, indicating the presence of a relationship. Additionally, the p-value of 0.179 is greater than 0.05, so the relationship is deemed linear.

Tabel 7 Hasil Uji *Pearson Correlations*

Variable	R hitung	P	Description
Consumptive Behavior - Conformity	0.492	0.000	Moderate Relationship

Based on the table above, it can be seen that consumer behavior and conformity show a calculated r value of 0.492, which is higher than the table r value, as well as a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). These results indicate a moderate relationship between conformity and

consumer behavior among female students at Mulawarman University, meaning that the higher the level of conformity, the higher the level of consumer behavior among female students at Mulawarman University.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal a significant and positive correlation between conformity and consumer behavior among female students at Mulawarman University. These findings suggest that conformity plays a role in increasing the tendency toward consumer behavior when purchasing beauty products. The results indicate that the higher an individual's tendency to conform to the group, the greater the likelihood that individuals will make excessive purchases of beauty products. This means that purchasing decisions are not entirely based on need, but are influenced by social pressures to follow trends and standards that are emerging in their immediate environment. These findings are consistent with Baron and Byrne's conformity theory (as cited in Insani, 2022), which states that to gain social acceptance, individuals tend to align their behavior with that of the group to avoid rejection, leading them to adopt group behavior, including the use of beauty products. In addition to conformity, several other factors influence consumer behavior, such as lifestyle, self-control, and perceptions, as well as emotions that can influence an individual's decision-making process when making purchases, meaning that purchases are not always based on needs but are also influenced by internal factors and social influences (Istiqomah et al., 2024). For female college students, the need to be accepted within a social group drives them to follow consumption patterns similar to those of their surroundings. This is supported by various previous studies. Windayani and Astiti (2020) indicates that conformity has a positive relationship with consumer behavior. Furthermore, Pradipta and Kustanti (2021) explain that individuals with a tendency toward high conformity follow group decisions when making purchases. This is consistent with the research by Rasyid et al. (2024) which found that social pressure from peers and social media trends are factors that drive the purchase of beauty products. In addition, Research by Zaki dan Dewi (2025) shows that individuals tend to follow group consumption patterns so as not to feel left behind, while Purwita et al. (2024) assert that exposure to beauty trends on social media reinforces the drive for conformity in consumer behavior. Another study by Pohan et al. (2025) also indicates that curiosity and the desire to follow trends can drive repeated purchases of beauty products even when they are not needed. From the perspective of conformity, the consumer behavior observed in this study can be explained through normative and informational conformity. Normative conformity encourages individuals to purchase products in order to be accepted by the group, while informational conformity leads individuals to believe that the group's choice is the correct one. Both forms contribute to reinforcing irrational purchasing tendencies. In addition to social factors, this situation is also influenced by the developmental characteristics of female college students in early adulthood, a stage in which individuals have a strong need for social acceptance and tend to be sensitive to the judgments of those around them (Salma & Falah, 2023). This makes individuals more susceptible to peer pressure when determining their consumption behavior. Thus, the results of this study reinforce previous findings that

conformity is one of the key factors influencing consumer behavior, particularly in the purchase of beauty products among female college students.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between conformity and the consumer behavior of female students at Mulawarman University. This indicates that the higher an individual's level of conformity, the greater their tendency toward consumer behavior when purchasing beauty products. Female students are encouraged to make more prudent decisions when purchasing beauty products by considering their actual needs and not being easily swayed by social pressure. Future researchers are encouraged to consider other relevant variables and include a broader sample to obtain more comprehensive research findings.

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