

# SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE HEDONIST LIFESTYLE OF FISIP STUDENTS IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF UMB AND KKU THAILAND



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## **Abstract**

Hedonism has become a collective phenomenon among students, especially at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, influenced by social interaction, academic pressure, and consumerist culture through social media. This study aims to reveal the dynamics of hedonic lifestyle, the driving factors, manifestations, and their impact on students' academic and financial behaviour. A qualitative method with a phenomenological approach was used to explore the subjective meaning of the practice of hedonism. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with five informants, participatory observation, and documentation. The results showed that peer pressure, social media influence, and emotional escape are the main drivers of hedonism. Students tend to spend money on branded goods, hang out in cafes, and use financial facilities such as e-wallets and paylater. This behaviour often leads to poor financial management and negligence in studies. From the perspective of social construction theory, hedonism reflects the process of identity formation and social acceptance shaped by the campus environment and the digital world. This study concludes that hedonic tendencies are not only an individual choice but also a social reality that requires institutional attention, particularly through financial literacy education and the creation of a supportive campus environment.

**Keywords:** Hedonistic Lifestyle, University Students, Social Media, Social Construction, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu and KKU Thailand

## INTRODUCTION

Hedonism is no longer just an individual choice to pursue pleasure, but has become a collective phenomenon influenced by social, economic, and cultural dynamics. Among FISIP students, high social interaction factors, academic pressure, and the dominance of consumerist culture through social media reinforce the adoption of this lifestyle. For example, the phenomenon of hanging out in exclusive cafes or taking vacations to popular destinations is not only a recreational event, but also a symbol of status and collective identity (Trimartati, 2024).

Hedonistic lifestyles, which prioritize material pleasures and short-term gratification, are increasingly penetrating various layers of society, including the student body. This phenomenon not only reflects a shift in values but also has a significant impact on academic and social behaviour. In the campus environment, students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu are a vulnerable group. The characteristics of the major that emphasize social interaction, coupled with academic pressures and popular culture, encourage students to seek escape through the consumption of luxury goods, participation in exclusive events, or consumptive lifestyles. Worse, this condition is exacerbated by work environment factors, academic stress, and social dynamics that prioritize image over achievement (Sumana, 2021).

Previous research has identified several factors that drive hedonism. (Zahrotunnisa 2024) Emphasised the role of work environment and stress levels in shaping the hedonistic lifestyle of post-graduate students. (Trimartati 2014) Moreover, (sumana 2021) found that FISIP students are more vulnerable due to social demands and peer pressure, which lead to excessive consumption patterns. Meanwhile, (Chen & Zeng 2022) revealed a negative relationship between hedonic orientation and affective well-being and academic achievement, in contrast to eudaimonic orientation, which has a positive impact. However, these studies tend to be general and do not adequately account for the local context, such as the influence of economic and social conditions in Bengkulu, and the role of educational institutions in addressing this issue. The need to understand the phenomenon of hedonism among FISIP students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu is increasingly urgent. As an educational institution, the University has a moral responsibility to shape the character of its students, ensuring they are both academically and socially well-rounded. However, reality shows that some students are more focused on worldly pleasures, sacrificing academic achievement. This is exacerbated by the

paucity of studies linking local factors (such as the regional economy and Bengkulu culture) to the dynamics of campus hedonism. Without a more profound understanding, institutional interventions will be challenging to implement (Trimartati et al., 2014).

The interaction between Islamic values and the influence of globalization in Indonesian higher education, particularly at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu (UMB), presents complex challenges. While Islamic educational institutions aim to uphold moral and ethical standards, the embrace of bara culture often manifests in consumptive and hedonistic behaviour among students. This contradiction necessitates a strategic response to integrate Islamic principles within the context of globalization (Anugrahi Putri Ziyadatin Ilmi et al., 2025).

The phenomenon of hedonism among students at Khon Kean University (KKU) in Thailand reflects broader social transformations influenced by globalization, regardless of the University's non-Muslim cultural context. This lifestyle is shaped by multiple factors, including cultural identity, peer influence, and the pressures of modernity, which are prevalent in both urban and rural environments (Alcoba, La-onsri, and La-onsri 2024).

By using Berger and Lukmann's social construction theory, we can understand how the social reality of hedonism is formed through social interactions, norms, and structures that exist in free association, economic conditions, and the role of educational institutions on free hedonistic lifestyles, economic conditions, and the role of educational institutions are very influential in shaping students' views on hedonistic lifestyles (Anugrahi Putri Ziyadatin Ilmi et al. 2025).

A comparative analysis of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu and Universitas Khon Kean in understanding hedonism among students necessitates an examination of how the social and cultural contexts of each institution shape the meaning and legitimacy of hedonistic behaviour. Hedonism, characterized by the pursuit of pleasure and luxury, is prevalent among university students and is influenced by a range of internal and external factors. Cultural and religious contexts, particularly the perspectives at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, play an important role in shaping students' attitudes towards hedonism, contrasting with the potentially different cultural influences at Khon Kean University, this analysis can be organized into several key aspects (Devi et al. 2022).

According to Indonesia's Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), household consumption expenditure is a significant component of the economy, accounting for

56.7% of GDP in 2023. The rise in e-wallet users, projected to reach 80 million by 2024, especially among the 15-24 age group for non-essential purchases, highlights a shift in consumer behaviour. This transition is influenced by various factors, as detailed below (Statistics Indonesia 2024).

Based on the 2023 Financial Services Authority (OJK) annually report, leading fintech users (including paylater) reached 12.9 million people, the majority of users were in the age range of 18-30 years (students and early career workers), paylater was used for online shopping, fashion, culinary, and lifestyle transactions, survey at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu 68% of students use the e-wallet application every day, 42% of students have used paylater services, while their main reasons are following the trend of friends (peer pressure), wanting to appear stylish on social media, as many as five informants admitted that they often owe money because of paylater without planning to pay (Financial Services Authority 2023).

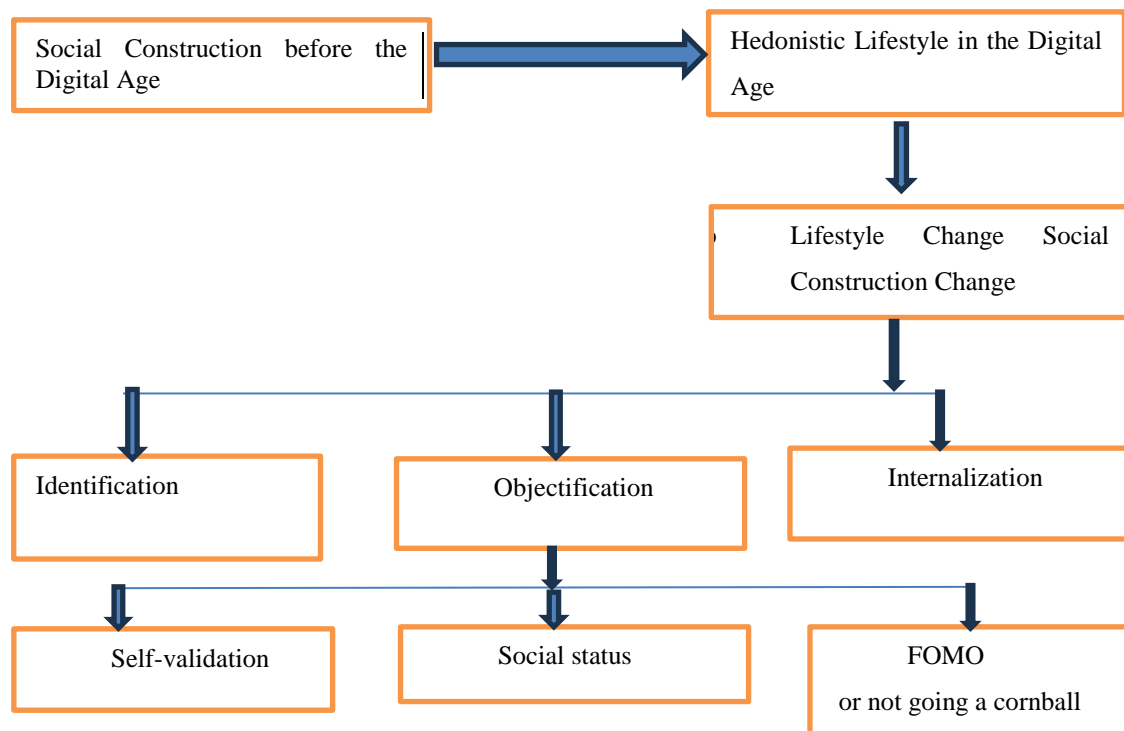
Khon Kaen University Thailand according to data from the National Statistics Office of Thailand (NSO) and the Bank of Thailand the number of e-payment users (promotoay, TrueMoney) reached 95% of the adult population paylater services such as grabfin, LINE BK, and Rabbit LINE pay Later, are popular among KKU Thailand students, 55% of students use paylater for monthly shopping, 37% feel they cannot escape this facility even though they are late paying, social media is one of the doniman factors in building a self-image of branded goods consumption (Changchit, Cutshall, and Pham 2024).

Social construction analysis of student hedonism: First externalization, students project their desire for a comfortable life through the consumption of goods/services. E-wallets and Paylater provide instant consumption facilities that align with these aspirations. Second is Objectification, hedonic consumption began to be considered normal and natural. For example, eating at expensive restaurants, buying branded products, or taking weekend vacations became a symbol of success at a young age. Third Internalization, students internalize the values of hedonic consumption as part of their identity, they see that a successful lifestyle equals high consumption, and this is reinforced by the social environment, media, and digital financial systems (Ciek Julyati Hisyam et al. 2024).

This research demonstrates that the internalization factor plays a significant role in shaping hedonic consumption behaviour among students. Students tend to internalize hedonic consumption values as part of their identity, where success is often manifested

in the form of a consumptive lifestyle. This understanding is reinforced by the influence of the social environment, media, and the development of digital financial systems that are increasingly accessible. Based on the comparison between Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu and Khon Kaen University Thailand, it can be seen that access to e-wallets such as Gopay, OVO, Dana, TruenMoney, and LINE Pay is very high, as well as the use of paylater services such as Kredivo, Akulaku, and Rabbit LINE Pay Later (Fatin oktariani et al. 2024).

Social pressure from peers and social media influencers has also contributed to the rise of consumption culture. Although the culture of consumption in Bengkulu is relatively new and growing rapidly, whereas in Thailand it is well-established, normative reactions from religion and the campus are important variables that differentiate the two contexts. Hedonism among university students is a social phenomenon that is critiqued through the interaction between financial technology, consumption culture, and social norms, where the use of e-wallets and paylater is not only a transaction tool, but also a symbol of identity and social status (Thøgersen 2023).



**Figure 1. Framework The Peer Group environment and Social Media Shape Hedonism Lifestyle**

## METHODS

This research employs a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to investigate the phenomenon of hedonism among students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP) at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to reveal the subjective meanings, experiences, and social interactions that underlie the adoption of a hedonistic lifestyle, with the characteristics of social research in which the phenomenological approach is specifically used to explore how and the meaning of hedonism is formed, reproduced, or challenged in the context of student social interactions, including the contradictions between structural realities (such as academic pressure and consumerist culture) and the construction of collective identity as a form of dissolution. (Fritz et al., 2022)

Data sources and primary data collection techniques were collected through in-depth interviews conducted with FISIP students who have hedonistic lifestyle tendencies, based on criteria such as consumption patterns, social media use, and social activities. Open-ended interviews are designed to explore the subjective experience and meaning of hedonism in individual perspectives. (Aprizal, 2016). Participatory observation or direct observation of student behaviour in everyday situations, both on campus and off campus, to understand the social dynamics that influence their lifestyle. Documentation in secondary data analysis, such as social media posts, academic reports, and other relevant references, complements the context of the phenomenon of hedonism. (Fritz et al., 2022).

The technique of selecting informants is conducted through purposive sampling, a sampling technique that selects participants based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. Informant criteria include FISIP students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. Having hedonic lifestyle indicators, such as excessive consumption patterns, exclusive social activities, or the use of social media to show social status. (Keddem et al., 2021).

Data analysis uses the model (Miles and Hurbemab 2023), which consists of three stages, first data reduction which involves filtering and focusing data to identify key informants related to the driving factors, manifestations, and impacts of hedonism. Second, data presentation in the form of descriptive narratives that describe patterns and relationships between variables, such as excerpts of transcripts, interviews, observation notes, and supporting documents, Third, inferring the meaning of the data to formulate comprehensive findings about the dynamics of hedonism among students, including the role of universities and the social environment in overcoming this problem of hedonism. (Liu et al., 2023b).

This research is based on the social definition paradigm and social construction theory. The social definition paradigm views individuals as actors who act based on subjective meanings, norms, and personal interpretations of social situations (Trimartati, 2014). Meanwhile, social construction theory (Berger & Lukmann, 1996) is used to understand how the reality of hedonism is formed through student interactions and collective actions, including the reproduction of consumerism culture in the context of campus socialisation. This approach distinguishes this research from the social fact paradigm, which emphasises institutional structures, and the social behaviour paradigm, which focuses on stimulus-response, by placing emphasis on subjective meanings and interpretations. (Sumana, 2021).

This method was chosen to ensure an in-depth analysis of the issue of hedonism, which cannot be revealed through quantitative approaches. By combining a phenomenological approach, qualitative data analysis, and social theoretical frameworks, this research reveals the complexity of the relationship between structural factors, such as academic pressure and economic conditions, and the subjective dynamics of students. As a result, this research contributes to a contextual understanding of the phenomenon of hedonism on campus, as well as policy recommendations that are relevant to Bengkulu's local conditions.

Research results obtained from interviews and observations. The data obtained from research sourced from informants, totalling five people, are students and female students from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, specifically those from the 2023, 2022, and 2021 classes, who are currently at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu. The characteristics of the research object can be seen from Table 1.1.

Table 1.1. Characteristics of Research Objects

No.	Informant's Initials	Gender	Age	Alamat
1	SN	P	22 years old	Kota Bengkulu
2	LP	P	21 years old	Curup
3	A	L	22 years old	Bengkulu
4	R	P	21 years old	Bengkulu Utara
5	WS	P	22 years old	Bengkulu Selatan

**Table 1. Informant Data**

In this research, the data collection process begins with a qualitative approach through interviews with FISIP students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu (UMB) and Khon Kaen University Thailand, who are purposively selected based on consumption

patterns and the use of digital services such as e-wallets or paylater. In addition, observations were conducted to directly observe the daily behaviour of students in the campus environment and internal surveys on campus as data trigulation.(Lestari, Aprisa, dan Dewi 2024).

Data analysis was carried out using Berger and Lukmann's social construction approach, namely by looking at how the reality of hedonism is built through daily interactions (peer groups), exposure to social media, and digital economic facilities, the data was managed using open and axial coding to find patterns of meaning that underlie how students understand, interpret, and practice hedonistic lifestyles as part of their social identity in the digital era (Hadiwijaya 2023).

In this study, data validity is strengthened through triangulation of sources, methods, and theories, namely by comparing information from five informants at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu and Khon Kean University, using various data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, and referring the results of the analysis to Berger & Lukmann's social construction theory framework to ensure that interpretations remain objective, in addition, member checking is carried out by reconfirming the results of interviews with informants to validate the accuracy of the data (Marlina et al. 2024).

In the ethical aspect of research, the principle of informed consent is applied by providing a complete explanation of the objectives and procedures of the research and obtaining written consent from each informant before data collection begins, the identity of informants is kept confidential by using pseudonyms such as SN, LP, A, R, and WS to maintain privacy, researchers are also committed to maintaining neutrality, impartiality, and respect for cultural and religious norms prevailing at the University as part of moral and professional responsibility during the research process (Arellano, Alcubilla, and Leguíz amo 2023).

Table 1.2. Data Collection and Analysis Procedure

Stage	Data	Destination	Implementation Technique
	Collection		
	Methods		



1	In-depth Interview	Obtaining students' subjective meanings and life experiences related to hedonism	Through face-to-face or online sessions with a semi-structured interview guide
2	Observati on	Direct observation of student behaviour and social interactions	Conducted in campus environments, social media, and popular hangouts
3	Document ation	Support data with visual and written evidence,	Journal and internal campus survey report
4	Thematic analysis	Identifying themes of meaning from the data collected	Interpretation using Berger & Lukmann's social construction theory framework

In conducting this research, the ethical aspects of research were emphasized to maintain the rights and comfort of the informants, the researcher asked for prior consent before the interview began, ensured confidentiality of identity through the use of initials, and did not force informants to answer sensitive questions. In addition, the results of the interviews were not used for purposes other than research (Lamba 2023)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This study involved five students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), Bengkulu University: SN (22 years old), LP (21 years old), A (20 years old), R (21 years old), and WS (20 years old). All participants adopted a hedonistic lifestyle through purchasing branded goods, hanging out in cafes, and adjusting their appearance

to meet social standards. The monthly pocket money received (Rp 1-3 million) is insufficient for their consumption needs, so some participants take on additional jobs or utilise financial facilities such as e-wallets and PayLater.

Of the 5 studied, 65.6% reported that hanging out in cafes and walking around were their favourite activities, while 68.75% felt that their mood improved after shopping. Peer pressure and the influence of social media (Instagram, TikTok) are the main factors, mainly to avoid the fear of missing out (FOMO). Students can afford to go into debt or use credit to fulfil symbolic needs, such as branded clothing or the latest electronic devices.

SN, a 22-year-old student from Bengkulu City, is the youngest of two children. Approximately 160 cm tall, with fair skin, and wearing a headscarf, SN presents a relaxed and confident demeanour during the interview. However, behind her calmness lies a complex story of searching for identity and happiness amidst the dynamics of campus life.

SN became interested in the hedonistic lifestyle that was prevalent among students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP). She believes that using branded goods and following the latest trends can boost her confidence and prevent her from being considered outdated. Although her parents have not been able to fulfil all her desires financially, SN tries to fulfil these needs by doing additional work.

This phenomenon aligns with research indicating that the hedonic lifestyle has a significant impact on students' consumptive behaviour. Students who are exposed to a hedonic lifestyle tend to allocate funds to buy luxury goods and follow the latest trends, often without considering the long-term impact on personal finances.

With a monthly income of around Rp 1,000,000.00, SN feels that this is insufficient to fulfil her needs and lifestyle. Therefore, she does additional work to earn more. However, the hedonistic lifestyle that SN lives hurts her financial management. Students who are influenced by a hedonistic lifestyle often exhibit poor financial management skills, which can lead to long-term financial difficulties.

SN recognises that the hedonistic lifestyle presents new challenges and brings enthusiasm to her life. She believes that by stepping out of her comfort zone and pursuing her desires, she can create a more vibrant and meaningful life. However, students need to recognise the long-term consequences of a consumptive lifestyle and learn to manage their finances effectively.

Educational institutions and communities play a crucial role in promoting financial

literacy and the importance of striking a balance between needs and wants. With the proper guidance, students like SN can find more meaningful and sustainable happiness.

LP, a 21-year-old university student, is the youngest of three children living in a village in Curup, Rejang Lebong. With a neat appearance, white skin, a hijab, and a height of approximately 165 cm, LP presented a calm demeanour during the interview. However, behind that calmness, there are interesting sociological dynamics of lifestyle to be studied.

The influence of peers became the starting point of LP's interest in the hedonistic lifestyle. The urge not to feel left behind in the circle of friends encouraged him to adopt a consumptive lifestyle. However, this was done secretly from his parents to avoid reprimand. LP currently lives in a boarding house with an annual fee of around Rp 7,500,00, which is equipped with private bathroom facilities, water, electricity, and wifi. The quiet atmosphere of the boarding house with only one neighbour contributes to a social environment with minimal interaction.

With a monthly income of Rp 2,000,000, LP chooses to allocate a large portion of her expenditure to dining at new cafes and restaurants, as well as purchasing branded goods, such as clothes, accessories, and makeup. For LP, this symbolic consumption serves as a means to enhance social status among peers, albeit with the concern of being discovered by others.

This phenomenon illustrates how social construction and peer group pressure can shape consumptive behaviour oriented towards pleasure, which in sociology is known as a hedonistic lifestyle. LP's phenomenology reflects how the social identity of students is now also shaped by the dynamics of consumptive urban lifestyles, potentially creating value conflicts between generations.

A is the first child of two brothers and lives in Bengkulu City. A is twenty years old, a student with a height of 170 cm, brown skin, and short black hair, displaying a relaxed attitude during the interview. He admitted that he became interested in the hedonistic lifestyle because of his parents' well-established financial condition. According to A, branded goods such as laptops, the latest cellphones, and branded clothes can support his confidence in the social environment.

With a monthly pocket money of around Rp 3,000,000, A feels that this amount does not cover his lifestyle, so he often asks for additional funds, in addition to the consumption of goods. In addition to the consumption of luxury goods, A also actively visits exclusive cafes and lives in a boarding house with an annual fee of Rp 9,000,000, complete with bathroom facilities, mattresses, wifi, and free electricity and water costs.

Analysis of A's data reveals that A's hedonism reflects the search for identity and social recognition. Social factors also influence this behaviour. This behaviour is also influenced by the lack of family control over spending and A's desire to complete life pressures through consumption. This phenomenon is common among students who adopt hedonism as a strategy for self-existence in the dynamics of modern society.

R, a 21-year-old student from North Bengkulu, is the youngest of three children. With a height of about 150 cm, white skin, and wearing a headscarf, R presented a calm and confident figure during the interview, but behind her calmness lay a complex story about searching for happiness and self-identity amidst the dynamics of campus life. R became interested in the hedonistic lifestyle due to the influence of her friends. She felt happy when buying branded goods and following the latest trends, as this provided her with satisfaction. R admits that this hedonistic lifestyle can make him feel comfortable and accepted in his social environment.

This phenomenon aligns with research that shows the hedonistic lifestyle has a significant influence on student consumption behaviour. Students exposed to a hedonic lifestyle tend to allocate funds to purchase luxury goods and follow the latest trends, often without considering the long-term financial implications.

R grew up in a less harmonious family, where his parents often quarrelled. This situation made him feel lonely and uncomfortable at home. To avoid tension at home, he often spent time with his friends at a hangout, which ultimately increased his spending on entertainment and branded goods.

This study demonstrates that an unharmonious family environment can affect the consumptive behaviour of students or adolescents. When individuals do not receive sufficient attention and affection from their families, they often seek happiness and recognition outside the home. Often, this leads to the consumption of luxury goods and a hedonistic lifestyle, which has a negative impact on their financial management.

R's data analysis reflects the challenges faced by many students in their search for happiness and self-identity. Hedonistic lifestyles may provide misguided satisfaction, but do not always bring true happiness. Students need to recognize the long-term consequences of a consumptive lifestyle and learn to manage their finances effectively. Educational institutions and society play a crucial role in promoting financial literacy and the importance of balancing needs and wants with the proper support, enabling students like R to find more meaningful and sustainable happiness.

WS is the second of three children from one of the villages in South Bengkulu,

standing at 155 cm, with fair skin, and wearing a headscarf. During the interview, she appeared a little nervous, but it did not reduce the impression that she was an active and accomplished person in the campus environment. As a student who is active on campus, he managed to win one of the scholarships offered by the University of Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, with a scholarship fund of Rp. 5,000,000 and an additional monthly amount of around Rp. 1,500,000, causing him to change in appearance, which had previously been simple. After receiving the extra money, he made a fairly conspicuous change by using branded goods, but this also made him negligent in fulfilling his role as a student who had once been active in competitions. Now, he was even problematic for campus activities.

The analysis of WS data reflects the challenges faced by many students who get scholarships, on the one hand, they try to achieve academic achievement and take advantage of the opportunities provided, on the other hand they have to face the temptation of consumptive life that disrupts the focus and purpose of education, therefore, it is essential to assist and tame the management of scholarships wisely and focus on the main objectives of education.

## **Discussion**

This research involved five students from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, namely SN, LP, A, R, and WS. With diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, they tend to lead a hedonic lifestyle characterized by the consumption of luxury goods, leisure activities, and active involvement in social media.

The personal and social drives of each research subject reveal different reasons for adopting a hedonic lifestyle. SN and R are influenced by the need for social acceptance and escape from discomfort in their family environment. LP and WS demonstrated the influence of peer pressure and social media, while A highlighted family finances, viewing the consumption of branded goods as a means of enhancing social status.

The driving factors of hedonism include social pressure, where a person feels the need to live a hedonistic lifestyle, thereby alleviating social pressure and peer pressure from the environment, as well as pressure from the peer group. The influence of social media is evident in the sophistication of technology used for online shopping, as well as the utilization of financial facilities (e-wallets, Paylater) due to the fast access to social media. Influences a person's desire to lead a hedonic lifestyle, where a flashy appearance becomes the primary attraction for those seeking to measure their pleasure. Not staying

in the fomo culture of Indonesian society who do not wish to be left behind with what is currently trending, if a person does not follow the trend it will be a thing that is out of date, therefore many students do a hedonic lifestyle that does not stay in the trend at that time, as well as a low-income family environment (harmonious) is also a driving factor for someone to do a hedonic lifestyle, but a harmonious family can also become a hedonic. The impact caused by this hedonic lifestyle is that many students justify all means to meet existing needs such as many students who make online loans, and misappropriation of scholarship funds that should be used for academic purposes but instead are used for misguided pleasures, and also misappropriation of spp money (ukt) which is used to buy branded goods and expensive hangout activities in cafes which result in many students neglecting existing lectures and weak literacy in long-term financial planning.

Symbolic consumption as a form of student social reality, hedonistic lifestyle among FISIP students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu (UMB) and Khon Kaen University (KKU) Thailand, not only by fulfilling physical needs, but also through symbolic consumption. In Jean Baudrillard's view, modern consumption is a symbolic language in which objects are consumed not because of their utilitarian value, but because of the meaning they hold in a social context.

The interview results show that informants tend to buy goods or use certain services not because of urgency, but to create a confident self-image in front of their friends. For example, using a branded bag, the latest cell phone, or hanging out at an aesthetic cafe is often done just to be seen as successful or current, proving that consumption has become a symbolic communication tool in a digital society.

"I buy the bag to look fashionable, not because I need it, but to let people know I have money" - (SN) "If I don't post about eating at a hot place, I feel out of date," - (R)

According to Berger & Lukmann's social construction theory, social reality is shaped through daily interactions and maintained by new institutions such as social media and financial technology. Social media plays a significant role in shaping students' hedonistic lifestyles. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and LINE Play are the primary spaces where students can build their identities and gain social validation. Visual content from influencers and peers often shapes unrealistic standards of success.

The influence of social media in shaping self-image is essential, as it plays a significant role in the formation of students' hedonistic lifestyles. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Line Play have become the main space for students to build identities and receive social validation, and visual content from influencers can lead peers

to form unrealistic standards of success. Students often feel the need to imitate the lifestyles they see on social media, even if it means sacrificing financial stability. This phenomenon is powerful in informants who use paylater services to fulfill these symbolic needs,

“Parents give monthly money, it's up to me what I want to use” (WS). “If I don't buy the clothes, I can be thought to be stingy with friends ”( LP)

This process illustrates how social media has become a new agent of socialisation, replacing traditional normative roles. Through social media, consumptive values are reproduced massively and quickly, making them part of the subjective realities of students.

Although the family has a moral role in shaping children's behaviour patterns, many informants stated that family control over their consumption is relatively weak. Most informants receive a monthly allowance with no specific restrictions from their parents, allowing them to freely choose how to spend it. Some families even support their children's lifestyle, assuming that appearing well-off will improve the family's reputation in the social circle.

“My parents only told me not to neglect my prayers and fasting, but by shopping for nice things they told me to look fashionable and up-to-date.” (A)

This indicates a shift in family values, where academic or spiritual achievements are no longer the primary determinants of social success. Instead, in the digital world, social status and appearance are increasingly influential. This process aligns with social contract theory, which posits that families contribute to shaping new realities about success and lifestyle.

Peer groups as new socialisation agents, the friendship environment is one of the dominant factors in the formation of a hedonist lifestyle, social pressure from friends makes it difficult for students to get out of the flow of excessive consumption, daily interactions on campus, WhatsApp groups, and social media become the arena for the role of consumptive values.

“If you don't buy the clothes, you can be considered stingy with your friends”(LP)

In social construction theory, peer groups serve as the initial focus for the formation of new social realities. The norms formed in these groups are then internalized by individuals as part of their self-identity.

Digital economy facilities, such as e-wallet and paylater services, are the primary enablers of impulsive consumption among students. The ease of cashless transactions

makes the purchase process feel carefree and not emotionally burdensome. In addition, the promotion of fintech services through digital advertisements and influencer reviews further strengthens the urge to use them.

“You can pay in instalments, so it's nice, you don't have to think about paying later” (SN)

The use of this facility shows that the digital economy infrastructure is also part of a new social institution that helps reproduce hedonistic lifestyles.

The resistance to hedonism among local and religious values at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu stems from the fact that Islamic religious values remain relatively strong, providing moral limits to consumption. However, many students separate the practice of worship from their daily lifestyles. At Khon Kean University Thailand, a more liberal local culture is associated with lower resistance to hedonism.

“I pray and fast, but why can't I shop for nice things?” (A)

This illustrates the existence of identity dualism, where students construct multiple realities, one for the spiritual realm and another for the social or digital realm.

So, through the social construction theory approach, it can be concluded that the hedonistic lifestyle of FISIP students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu and Khon Kean University Thailand does not arise naturally, but is constructed gradually through first Interaction with peer groups, Second exposure to social media, Third the influence of family and household economy, Fourth digital economic facilities, Fifth reproduction of new values that are contrary to local or religious norms.

This process creates a subjective reality in which hedonic consumption is perceived as a modern form of achieving social status and identity in the digital era. This lifestyle is perpetuated continuously through daily interactions, making it seem normal and legitimate from the students' perspective. These findings underscore the importance of financial literacy education, the regulation of fintech advertisements, and the role of campuses in shaping students' understanding of the long-term consequences of hedonistic consumption. Without these interventions, this phenomenon has the potential to become increasingly difficult to control in the younger generation.

The lack of social reflection on the role of the campus, the phenomenon of hedonistic lifestyles among students of FISIP Muhammadiyah University and Khon Kean University Thailand shows that there is a lack of meaning in the higher education process, although the campus has a moral responsibility as a character building institution,



the reality is that many students adopt consumptive values from outside the campus, this shows that social reflection on the role of the campus is still minimal, both from the management and the wider community.

Campuses are supposed to be critical spaces for producing generations that are not only academically intelligent but also socially aware and have sustainable living ethics. However, in practice, many higher education institutions focus more on academic and career aspects, while moral, economic, and digital culture issues are allowed to develop without significant intervention.

At UMB, although there are strong Islamic values, the implementation in daily life has not fully succeeded in fortifying students against the temptation of digital hedonism. At the same time, at KKU Thailand, with a more liberal culture, the campus tends to be passive towards changing student behaviour, because the primary focus is on academic achievement and improving international reputation.

This illustrates that the campus has not become an active agent of social transformation in building students' awareness of the importance of a rational lifestyle, including in financial management and consumption. The current direction of higher education has not fully responded to the challenges of the times, especially in the face of the digital revolution and the platform economy; the education curriculum remains largely static. At the same time, social and technological changes are very dynamic. As a result, many students lack financial literacy, media criticism, and consumption awareness from the beginning of their studies.

At the FISIP level, where students are expected to be future leaders and agents of change, they are ironically vulnerable to being trapped in consumptive and hedonistic lifestyles. This phenomenon reflects the misalignment between educational goals and the social realities that students face.

Higher education needs to revitalize the approach to education, not only as a place of knowledge transfer, but also as a vehicle for the formation of the whole person. At UMB, Islamic values can serve as a moral foundation to uphold the principles of frugality, simplicity, and responsibility. Meanwhile, at KKU Thailand, the campus can be more proactive in providing financial literacy programs and digital debt management.

To balance the rapid flow of globalization and digital culture, campuses must implement educational and normative interventions. This can be achieved through compulsory courses such as consumer ethics, financial literacy, digital literacy, or media literacy, as well as community service programs that encourage students to reflect on the

realities of many people's lives. Additionally, workshops and seminars can invite fintech practitioners, psychologists, and religious leaders to provide a holistic perspective. In addition, the roles of lecturers, student coaches, and student activity units (UKM) are crucial in creating an academic environment that is not only intellectually stimulating but also morally uplifting.

The future of education towards a more humanist and relevant campus, social reflection shows the need to redefine the role of the campus not only as a workforce but also as an institution that forms critical, self-aware, and socially and economically responsible individuals. This change is not easy, because it must involve various parties ranging from university leaders, lecturers, parents, to the government, but the first step we can take is to embed moral issues and digital culture as an integral part of the higher education curriculum.

Campuses like UMB and KKU Thailand, with their local roots and global orientation, have great potential to serve as an example in this regard. With the right approach, they can develop an educational model that not only excels in academics but also contributes to shaping a young generation that is wise in navigating the digital world.

The phenomenon of student hedonism in the digital era is a reflection of the education system's weakness in responding to the challenges of the times without deep socialization and collective commitment to change. Therefore, this trend will continue to be even more challenging to control.

### **Analysis of the phenomenon of Hedonism Lifestyle among Students with a Social Construction Theory Approach**

The social definition paradigm, as explained by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, states that social reality is constructed through a process of interaction and interpretation between individuals. In this research, the reality of a hedonistic lifestyle is shaped through social interactions in the campus environment and on social media. Social media reinforces the construction of this reality by creating glamorous lifestyle standards. Students internalize the values of consumerism, so that consumptive behaviour becomes part of a self-identity that is considered legitimate and desirable. The situation definition process (Thomas and Thomas) also occurs when students interpret their social reality as a situation where following trends becomes a necessity for acceptance in society. In other words, students not only adopt a hedonistic lifestyle but also reinterpret their social identity based on the meanings formed through social interactions. The hedonistic lifestyle among students is not only a matter of consumption, but also a matter of identity

search, social acceptance, and self-actualization. Social pressure from peers and social media is the most dominant factor in encouraging consumptive behaviour. Poor financial management is the most apparent impact of adopting a hedonistic lifestyle. There is also an urgent need to strengthen financial literacy education and social awareness among students to strike a balance between actual needs and misguided desires.

This research emphasizes that the hedonistic lifestyle among FISIP students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu is a complex phenomenon that must be understood through the lens of social action and social meaning construction. Individual-subjective research, such as social construction theory and the Berger and Luckmann social definition paradigm, helps us understand that consumptive behaviour is not merely a matter of economics, but a matter of meaning, identity, and social interaction.

### **Discussion of Hedonism Lifestyle and Social Construction at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu and Khon Kean University Thailand**

Hedonism, as a result of social construction in students' hedonistic lifestyle, is a global phenomenon that occurs not only in one country. Among students, there is a global phenomenon that does not occur only in one country or culture. Country or a particular culture. According to research, hedonism in college students is not a naturally occurring behaviour, but rather the result of social interactions and the internalization of specific meanings about and the internalization of certain meanings about happiness, status, and self-identity within the framework of social construction theory (Berger and Lukmann 1967).

In the context of Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu (UMB), although this campus has Islamic values as a moral foundation, some students still absorb hedonistic norms from the outside environment. This is in line with the findings that students from urban families are more susceptible to hedonism due to promiscuity and exposure to digital media. Meanwhile, at Khon Kaen University Thailand, research indicates that students are more likely to accept hedonism as part of modernity. Western pop culture, international travel, and widespread internet access accelerated the social construction process. Institutional hedonism is accepted without much opposition because there is no strong institution that makes the norm, such as the religious institution UMB.

Factors driving the construction of digital media hedonism and influencer culture in both Indonesia and Thailand, social media becomes the main factor in shaping students' perceptions of success and happiness. This study found that students at Universitas

Muhammadiyah Bengkulu often imitate the lifestyles of celebrities and influencers, including the use of the latest gadgets, branded fashion, and exclusive vacations. Meanwhile, at Khon Kean University Thailand, a similar phenomenon occurs, but with a higher intensity. According to (Nakorn 2020), Thai students are more likely to look up to Korean and Japanese influencers as role models, who often display glamorous and consumptive lifestyles. This confirms that digital media is becoming a new social construction that shifts the dominance of traditional values.

This study, conducted at Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, found that students who live away from their parents are more susceptible to hedonism because they depend on social groups to form their identity and are more easily influenced by new norms introduced by their friends, leading to a consumptive lifestyle. A similar phenomenon was also observed at Khon Kean University Thailand, where students from rural areas began to adjust their consumption patterns after entering university. Peer groups become a source of legitimization for hedonic behaviour because students feel the need to be different in order to be accepted in certain social circles.

Economic and social mobility, students from middle to upper economic families are more vulnerable to hedonism because they have the means to buy symbols of luxury. At UMB and KKU Thailand, students from affluent families and those from lower-income backgrounds also began to adopt this hedonistic lifestyle. Students from lower middle class backgrounds follow various ways to keep up with the trend, such as taking out online loans, working, and receiving scholarships.

One of the factors that distinguishes the construction of hedonism from the two universities is the role of educational institutions in shaping the counter-narrative. At UMB, the campus is active in providing spiritual guidance and moral-based leadership training, and appeals to adopt a more frugal lifestyle. However, the effectiveness of these programs remains low due to students' limited awareness of the benefits of a better or more frugal life. In contrast, at KKU Thailand, the institution's response to hedonism is relatively minimal. There is no strong moral control mechanism, and the campus focuses more on academic aspects than character building, allowing the process of constructing hedonism to run without significant resistance.

Based on the research analysis, it can be concluded that at UMB, hedonism arises because of the duality of social construction. On the one hand, students are taught to live simply and obey religion, but on the other hand, they are exposed to hedonistic culture from the outside world, such as social media and others. In KKU Thailand, the process

of hedonism construction is more homogeneous because there is no strong norm that contradicts this new reality. Hedonism is widely accepted as part of modernity, with little conflict over its value.

Through the lens of social construction theory, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of hedonism among UMB and KCU students is not a natural phenomenon, but the result of complex interactions between individuals, society, and institutions. Although the two universities are situated in different cultural and religious contexts, both face similar challenges in addressing the growing influence of hedonism.

The difference lies in the extent to which educational institutions and local normative structures are able to form a counter-narrative to the hedonistic reality constructed by the media and global culture. With this understanding, the university is not only a place of knowledge transfer, but also an important arena in reconstructing alternative values that are more humanist and meaningful.

Through the lens of social construction theory, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of hedonism among UMB and KCU Thailand students is not a natural phenomenon, but the result of complex interactions between individuals, society, families, and educational institutions. Although both universities are grounded in different cultural and religious contexts, both face similar challenges in confronting the increasingly strong currents of hedonism.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on research on the lifestyle of hedonism among students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Bengkulu, it can be concluded that internal and external factors influence this phenomenon, internally, students tend to seek pleasure and escape from academic pressure and family problems, externally, the influence of peers, social media and the campus environment that encourages consumptive behaviour, such as purchasing luxury goods, hanging out in trendy places, and excessive use of financial facilities (e-wallet, paylater).

From the perspective of social construction theory, hedonism is not only a lifestyle but also a means of forming identity and a way for students to gain social recognition. However, this behaviour has a negative impact on financial management, as many students struggle to meet their basic needs by prioritising the wrong things.

Therefore, efforts are needed to increase financial literacy and create a campus environment that supports a balanced self. Thus, students can be wiser in managing

finances and avoid the trap of a hedonistic lifestyle that is temporary and has the potential to harm their future.

Students' hedonistic lifestyle is not a natural phenomenon, but rather the result of social construction formed through daily interactions and maintained by new institutions such as social media and financial technology. This process occurs in the stages of externalization, objectivation, and internalization according to Berger & Lukmann's social construction theory. In this context, consumption is no longer just a matter of functional needs, but rather a search for identity and social validation.

Social media plays a central role in shaping the new self-image of success standards among university students. Visual content from influencers and peers shapes the perception that a hedonistic style equals a successful life. In addition, e-wallets and paylater services facilitate access to consumption without time and place limits, thus increasing the risk of impulsive consumption and dependence on digital debt.

The peer group environment has a significant influence on shaping new consumptive values. Social pressure makes students feel obliged to follow trends in order to be accepted in their group. On the other hand, families tend to be passive in controlling the family's social reputation.

Campuses have not fully responded to the challenges of the digital era in shaping student character. The higher education curriculum still focuses on academic aspects, while moral, economic, and digital culture issues are allowed to develop without significant intervention. Universities should be an educational space that gives birth to a generation not only intellectually intelligent but also wise in managing themselves amid the onslaught of digital culture.

Although local values and religion still play a significant role, many students have begun to separate their spiritual practices from their daily lives. This phenomenon suggests a duality of identity—one for the spiritual realm and the other for the digital social realm. Without deep social reflection and collective commitment to change, the trend of digital hedonism will continue and become increasingly difficult to control in the younger generation.

Students need to raise self-awareness about the importance of responsible management of personal finances and consumption. In the digital era, they should not be easily influenced by social pressure or lifestyles displayed on social media. As a first step, students can start by creating a monthly budget, limiting the use of Paylater services, and being more selective in choosing the circle of friends. On the campus side, higher

education institutions such as UMB and KCU Thailand offer media literacy seminars and character development programs that are oriented towards local and religious values. In addition, campuses can provide a forum for critical discussions on the long-term impact of hedonistic consumption and how to manage it in academic and professional life.

Local governments play a crucial role in creating an educational and economic ecosystem that fosters the development of innovative and responsible young generations. One concrete step that can be taken is to work with campuses and financial institutions to organize regular digital financial literacy campaigns, particularly for students and young people. In addition, the local government can also encourage the drafting of local regulations governing the promotion of fintech services, such as Paylater, to prevent exploitation of vulnerable groups, including students. Through collaboration among the campus, government, and community, an educational space will be created that helps students remain rational in navigating the flow of digitized culture without losing their local identity and moral values.

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