

# **Influencer Marketing and Its Impact on Purchasing Behaviour of Young Adults in Kenya**

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<b>Abstract</b>		
<p>Like in other parts of the World, digital marketing strategy is increasingly becoming popular in Kenya. Unfortunately, limited scholarly evidence exists investigating how the rising trend in marketing affects consumer purchasing behaviour.</p> <p>This study therefore aimed to identify the impact of influencer marketing on the purchasing behaviour of young adults in Kenya.</p> <p>It applied a quantitative survey methodology to answer two research questions. The first research question was focused on establishing the type of influencer with the biggest impact on influencer marketing, while the second one was focused on establishing the impact of the perceived value of influencer marketers on purchase behaviour. Answering these two questions enabled the answering of the main research question focused on establishing the impact of influencer marketing on purchasing behaviour.</p> <p>The results reveal that micro-influencers have the most substantial influence on purchasing behaviour. Respondents consistently reported that micro-influencers are the most followed and trusted for product recommendations, while nano-influencers also demonstrated notable impact. Macro- and celebrity influencers had a comparatively lower effect. In terms of value, the respondents generally indicated their perception of value has a noteworthy impact on purchasing behaviour. Credibility and engagement were particularly identified as the most valued attributes of influencer content.</p> <p>In general, the study established that influencer marketing has a moderate influence on young adults' decisions but traditional factors such as price and product quality also play a significant role in purchasing decisions. It highlights the effectiveness of micro- and nano-influencers in the Kenyan market. Their ability to foster credibility and engagement makes them the most influential in shaping consumer behaviour.</p>		
Keywords:		
Influencer marketing, purchasing behavior, young adults, Kenya, micro-influencers, social media.		

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## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

Influencer marketing has proven to be a significant and effective form of digital marketing. Marketers worldwide are increasingly leveraging the influence and popularity of influencers to reach a growing audience of online platform users. This trend is highlighted by the fact that the global market size for influencer marketing grew by more than 300% from 2019 to 2024, to reach an approximate size of 24 billion U.S. dollars (Statista Research Department 2024). The growth is expected to continue. Data from Statista (2024) indicates that the market will experience a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9.91% from 2024 to 2019, to reach an expected market volume of US \$56.28 billion by the end of that period (Statista 2024.)

While influencer marketing can be applied to people of all ages, various reports indicate that it is more effective among young adults (18-34 years) (Lebow 2022; Rodrugue 2023; Zink et al. 2023). E-market for instance indicate that 40% of Gen Z (13-28 years) and Millennials (19-44 years) compared to 9% of baby boomers (61-70 years) are likely to trust and be influenced by influencers (Lebow 2022). Hubspot, a reputable business-to-business (B2B) firm offering online marketing solution and services, reports similar statistics. According to this company, 72% of Gen Z and millennials were subscribed to social media influencers by 2022 (Rodrugue 2023.) A separate report indicates that the number of Gen Z and millennials using social media increased from 51% to 61% in 2019 to 2023 (Zink et al. 2023). Despite the slight difference in statistics, these reports generally confirm that influencer marketing is not only popular among young adults, but its popularity is also increasing (Lebow 2022; Rodrugue 2023; Zink et al. 2023). (See table 1 for summary of statistics).

<b>Metric</b>	<b>Gen Z &amp; Millennials</b>
Trust in influencers	40%
Subscribed to influencers (2022)	72%
Social media usage (2019–2023)	Increased from 51% to 61%

Table 1: Summary of Influencer Marketing Trends among age groups

Most importantly, scholarly work confirms the evidence reported by industry and market analysis reports. Morton (2022), for instance, indicates that young adults are key demographics of influencer marketing because they are relatively more active on social media, are open to new service and product experiences, and are generally more susceptible to influencer recommendations. Similarly, Kutz et al. (2024) found that influencer marketing enjoys popularity and significantly influences the purchasing behaviour of young adults.

58% of the respondent in their study linked their purchasing decisions directly to influencer marketing (Kutz et al. 2024.) Walzhofer et al. (2022) made similar observation. According to these researchers, Austria banks can better reach young adults and enhance their engagement in financial products by leveraging the influencers' ability to engage and persuade young social media audiences (Walzhofer et al. 2022).

Similar trends and observations regarding influencer marketing have been made in Kenya. Specifically, marketing reports suggest that influencer marketing will experience robust growth in the country (Elvis 2024; Growthpad Consulting Group 2024; Statista 2024a.) For instance, Kwetu Market Agency, a prominent digital marketing agency in Kenya, projects that influencer marketing strategy will experience an annual growth rate of 15% between 2024 and 2029 (Elvis 2024). Another consulting firm, Growthpad Consulting Group, suggests that 40% of marketers in the country have allocated a budget for influencer marketing. Of those already engaging in the marketing strategy, 80% have reported it as effective (Growthpad Consulting Group 2024.) A Statista report further corroborates these statistics. The report indicates that spending on influencer marketing in Kenya may increase by a CAGR of 7.29% between 2025 and 2029 to attain a market value of US\$ 3.17 by the end of the period (Statista 2024a). Attaining that market value is plausible, considering that 75% of companies surveyed by Kwetu Market Agency report planning to increase their budgets for influencer marketing (Elvis 2024). (See table 2, for summary of results as per previous studies).

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Details</b>
Projected Annual Growth Rate	Influencer marketing to grow at 15% annually (2024–2029)
Marketers Allocating Budget	40% of marketers in Kenya have a budget for influencer marketing
Perceived Effectiveness	80% of marketers already using influencer marketing report it as effective
Projected Market Value	Spending to grow at 7.29% CAGR (2025–2029), reaching US\$3.17 million by 2029
Companies Planning Budget Increase	75% of companies plan to increase their influencer marketing budgets

Table 2: Trends and Statistics of influencer marketing in Kenya

Like in other parts of the world, young adults, defined under the Kenyan Constitution, Article 260, as individuals aged between 18 and 34 years (National Gender and Equality Commission Youth and Children), form the primary target market for influencer marketing. This demographic is particularly attractive, as it constitutes the largest portion (80%) of Kenya's population (KNBS 2022.) Specifically, regarding influencer marketing, young adults make up 71% of the user base on digital platforms such as Instagram and Facebook (Cowling

2024). In addition, people within that age bracket, particularly those aged 21-35 years, were reported to be spending an average of about three hours per day on social media (Wamuyu 2019).

The significant presence of young adults on social media and their usage patterns makes this demographic appealing for influencer marketing strategies aimed at influencing their purchasing behaviour. Surveys targeting Kenyan consumers indicate that influencer marketing significantly influences young adult purchasing decisions. For example, a geo survey found that 69% of respondents made purchases based on influencer recommendations (Kibuach, 2020.) Elvis (2024) also noted that 68% of surveyed Kenyans trust product recommendations from influencers, compared to 51% who trust traditional ads.

While plenty of evidence points to the rise and significance of influencer marketing, particularly in influencing consumer behaviour, there is a notable gap in studies investigating this phenomenon in Kenya. This gap is concerning, particularly as Kenyan companies increasingly allocate budgets to influencer marketing. With young adults constituting approximately 80% of Kenya's population and representing 71% of users on social media platforms, there is a critical opportunity for businesses to engage effectively this demographic through tailored marketing strategies (KNBS 2022; Cowling, 2024.)

However, the lack of comprehensive research on how influencer marketing specifically affects the purchasing behaviour of young adults' forces marketers to rely on anecdotal evidence and industry reports from other companies or marketing agencies. While such evidence may offer some indication of the effect of influencer marketing on buyers purchasing decisions, it often fails to delve deeper into the mechanisms underlying the relationship between these two variables. Additionally, relying on industry exposes companies to potential biased information, which may be driven by ulterior motives. For instance, digital marketing agencies might have a vested interest in promoting their own services, which could influence the objectivity of their reports.

## 1.2 Thesis Objectives, Research Questions and Limitations

### **Thesis Objectives**

Given the scarcity of research, it is crucial to conduct a study aimed at providing scholarly and scientific evidence on the impact of influencer marketing on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya. Specifically, the study will investigate how different types of influencers affect young adults' purchasing behaviour and examine how consumers' perceptions of the value offered by influencers influence their purchase decisions. This research will

help businesses select the most appropriate influencers to reach their target audience. Additionally, influencers can gain insights into the types of value that consumers seek; by providing this value in their recommendations, they can encourage buyers to act on those suggestions.

## **Research Questions**

To achieve its objective, the study's main research question is:

1. What is the impact of influencer marketing on purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya?

The main question will be answered using the following sub-questions.

1. What type of influencer marketers (nano, micro, macro, & Celebrity influencers) have the major impact on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya?
2. How does young Kenyan adults' perception of the value of influencer marketing impact their purchase decisions?

## **Limitations**

The study will strive to provide an in-depth evaluation of the effect of influencer marketing on the purchasing behaviour of young adults in Kenya. Nevertheless, it is subject to certain limitations that may affect its reliability and validity. Limitations are generally weaknesses in study methodology and design. While researchers strive to eliminate these limitations, some are often outside their control (Mishra & Alok 2022.) Specifically, the study encounters limitations related to sample size and selection, reliance on self-reported data, assumptions about digital usage and competencies, and the dynamic nature of the social media and influencer landscape.

Regarding sample size and selection, the study will utilize the convenience sampling method, which lacks random selection and may therefore introduce bias (Golzar et al. 2022). The bias undermines the generalizability of the finding to the overall Kenya population of young adults. The bias risk is aggravated by the reliance on self-reported data. Self-reported data through surveys may introduce bias because it may allow respondents to provide socially favoured answers instead of their true point of view or behaviours (Golzar et al. 2022; Mishra & Alok 2022.)

The study also assumes a certain level of digital literacy among young adults. However, this may vary significantly across different regions and socio-economic backgrounds in Kenya (Kerkhoff & Makubuya 2022). The variability could affect the understanding and interpretation of influencer marketing. As such, some of the answers may be the result of external factors associated with digital literacy. Lastly, social media and influencer marketing are constantly evolving at a rapid pace (Ziwa & Dizon 2020). That could imply the results of the research may become irrelevant as new trends and platforms emerge. The study's outcome may only be relevant for a limited period.

### 1.3 Theoretical Framework

Social exchange theory will be applied in this study to explain how influencer marketing affects the purchasing behaviour of young adults in Kenya. First proposed in 1961 by Homans as both a sociological and psychological theory, it has been utilized across various fields, including business. The theory posits that human interaction is driven by a series of reciprocal relationships aimed at maximizing benefits and minimizing costs. This process involves the issuer providing a gift to the receiver, who evaluates it to determine whether the benefits outweigh the costs. If the benefits exceed the costs, the receiver reciprocates by gifting the giver in return (Morton 2020; Ahmad et al. 2023.)

In the scope of influencer marketing, the influencer content is a gift provided to the follower. The follower is likely to evaluate, consciously and/or subconsciously, the gift and if the benefits outweigh the costs, they reciprocate by providing a gift of their own. For instance, followers may decide to act on the purchase recommendation of the influencer if they perceive the influencer to have provided highly valuable product information and/or recommendations (Morton 2020.)

The study applies the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). UGT is a mass communication theory that emerged in the 1940s. Scholars such as Denis McQuail, Jay Blumler, and Elihu Katz, who sought to establish why people consume certain media, popularized it. The theory assumes that people actively select and use media to satisfy their needs (Shahid et al. 2019; Sichach 2023.) While UGT was established to study traditional media such as Television, Radio, and Newspapers, the theory has been recently applied to analyse new media, particularly social media. Research has generally shown that individuals engage with social media primarily to fulfil ten types of needs. These are interaction purposes, seeking information, sharing of information, passing of time, relaxation, entertainment, communication, expressing of opinion, enjoying conveniences, and surveying (Morton 2020; Sichach 2023.)

A recent study that focused specifically on why social media users consume content from influencers identified key underlying needs. These are information, inspiration, communication, entertainment, and surveillance needs (Morton 2020.) Therefore, in regards, to the current study, the theory provides a framework for understanding whether influencers meet the needs of young consumers, which in turn influences the consumer purchasing behaviour.

#### 1.4 Research Approach, Methodology and Data Collection

##### **Research Approach**

A research approach refers to the overarching plan or strategy that a researcher employs to conduct a study. Therefore, it is essential to choose an approach that aligns with the research's purpose, goals, and objectives. The chosen approach determines the type of data collected, as well as how it is analysed and interpreted. There are two main types of research approaches: deductive and inductive. The deductive approach is hypothesis- or theory-driven and follows a top-down method to test a theory or hypothesis. It involves developing theory-based hypotheses that are tested and validated during the research process (Okoli 2023.)

Alternatively, the inductive approach is a bottom-up reasoning that involves conducting research without basing it on any established theory. The researcher collects, analyses, and interprets data to come up with new theories and conclusions. This approach is generally conducted to come up with a new theory or modify an existing one that can explain the findings of the study (Okoli 2023.) Specifically, the proposed study will adopt a deductive research approach. That will involve collecting data and analysing them from the perspective of SET and UGT theories.

##### **Research Methodology**

The research will employ a quantitative research approach. This method will involve collecting numerically based data that can be analysed using appropriate statistical tools to objectively test the hypothesis and determine the relationship between the variables. It contrasts with the qualitative method. Qualitative methods involve collecting subjective text-based data (Okoli 2023; Mishra & Alok 2022).

Using quantitative method will allow the research to quantify the relationship between influencer marketing and buyer purchasing behaviour. For instance, the research will use descriptive statistics to portray respondent opinions about the types of influence with the greatest

impact on their purchasing decision and determine the relationship between the type of influencer and purchasing decision (Okoli 2023.)

### **Data Collection Methods**

The research will employ an online survey method to collect primary information from the sample. Primary data refers to information gathered for the first time for the specific study in question (Stewart 2025). This data will be collected to directly address the research questions of the study using a structured questionnaire, which will consist exclusively of closed-ended questions that quantify responses based on a 5-point Likert scale.

### 1.5 Thesis structure

This thesis is structured into six main chapters. Chapter one provides the foundation of the study. It outlines the research background, objectives, research questions, limitations, and the theoretical frameworks. It also introduces the deductive and quantitative research approach, detailing the data collection method involving structured online surveys. Chapter two presents an in-depth review of literature related to influencer marketing. It also contextualizes influencer marketing within the Kenyan market, highlighting existing trends and research findings. Chapter three shifts focus to purchasing behaviour. It explores its definitions, components, types, and the influence of various kinds of influencers, particularly with respect to perceived value and consumer decision-making.

Chapter Four is devoted to the empirical research and data analysis. It starts by describing the survey design, participant demographics, and the data collection process. It then presents the results through descriptive statistics. The analysis directly addresses the research questions by examining the type of influencers with the greatest impact and the perceived value dimensions influencing purchasing behaviour.

Chapter five discusses the findings in relation to the existing literature and provides insights into their implications for Kenyan businesses. Finally, chapter Six summarizes the overall study. It reinforces the conclusions drawn and suggest areas for future research. This structured layout ensures a logical progression from conceptual grounding to empirical validation and practical application.

## 2 Influencer Marketing

### 2.1 Defining Influencer Marketing

Scholars have defined influencer marketing in multiple, albeit similar, ways. These definitions generally indicate that influencer marketing is a digital marketing strategy that leverages the reach and credibility of people with a large following on social media channels to publicize products, services, or brands (Gu & Palmatier 2022; Leung et al. 2022.) The people, referred to as influencers, have established credibility within specific niches and, through their content, can influence their audience's purchasing decisions. Influencers can range from ordinary individuals to influential figures such as celebrities and politicians. (Leung et al. 2022.)

The general basis of this strategy is that the influencers can influence other people's purchasing behavior. According to research, influencers derive their influence from different sources, such as their power, position, knowledge, or the relationships they have with their target audiences (Leung et al. 2022; Wang & Huang 2023.) A firm that implements influencer marketing typically aims to utilize the unique resources of influencers to reach and influence the decisions of its target consumers (Gu & Palmatier 2022; Leung et al. 2022.)

### 2.2 Characteristics of Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has unique traits that include selection and incentivization, follower engagement, leveraging unique resources, authenticity, content creation, and the use of social media platforms (Gu & Palmatier 2022; Wang & Huang 2023). The traits are interrelated. In addition, they must all be present for an influencer marketing strategy to succeed. For example, firms must select and incentivize the right influencers (Leung et al. 2022). The selected and incentivized influencers must have engagement capabilities to inspire the attitudes, decisions, and actions of the targeted individuals (Leung et al. 2022). The influencers' capabilities, along with the number of followers, followers' trust, content, and personal positioning, are among the unique resources leveraged when executing influencer marketing (Leung et al., 2022; Gu & Palmatier 2022; Wang & Huang 2023).

Content creation and social media channels are also key attributes of influencer marketing, and they are directly related to each other as well as to other attributes. Influencers rely on online platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, Weibo, YouTube, and TikTok to reach their audiences. (Gesmundo et al. 2022). As indicated by Dwivedi et al. (2021), the choice of platform depends on the target market and the kind of internet content to be shared. For

example, a platform such as TikTok is best suited for sharing short video content aimed at younger generations, while Facebook is more effective for reaching older audiences using various content formats, such as text and video (Gesmundo et al. 2022; Dwivedi et al. 2021).

### 2.3 Types of Influencers

So far, a consensus exists among researchers that four types of influencer marketing, namely mega (celebrity), macro, and micro-influencer marketing, exist. Celebrity influencers are well-known personalities with large followings across multiple platforms. These include musicians, sports personalities, movie stars, politicians, and other individuals. Their following often runs into the millions (Furtana & Ögüt 2024.) Researchers have indicated that while these influencers have an extensive reach, they tend to suffer from moderate to low engagement. Audiences may also perceive them as less authentic and trustworthy due to celebrity status (Borges-Tiago 2023; Furtana & Ögüt 2024.) This implies that they may be an unfavourable choice of influencers; particularly considering that, in addition to the above disadvantages, collaborating with them is relatively more expensive. However, they can be suitable for marketing campaigns aimed at broad reach and increasing overall brand awareness (Okonkwo & Namkousse 2023.) Okonkwo and Namkousse (2023) also indicated that they are best for marketing products through endorsements, advertisements, and sponsored posts.

Macro influencers are also famous but have fewer followers compared to mega influencers. According to Sing et al (2023), if mega-influencers have millions of followers, macro-influencers have tens of thousands. However, Okonkwo and Namkousse (2023) argue that macro influencers are not significantly different from celebrity influencers. The two share almost similar advantages and disadvantages. For instance, they both have a wide reach but can suffer from lower engagement and relatable issues with the audiences (Sing et al. 2023; Okonkwo & Namkousse 2023.)

On the other spectrum, there is micro and nano influencing marketing. These strategies involve using influencers with lower number of followers, running into thousands, for micro, and hundreds, for nano (Sing et al. 2023.) Compared to mega and macro, micro and nano influencers are likely to enjoy high engagement, perceive trustworthy and authenticity from targeted audiences. This is because followers can easily relate with them. Especially, audience can easily relate and feel a personal connection with nano-influencers. When it comes to micro influencers, follower tend to trust them due to high level of specialization in a specific niche (Okonkwo & Namkousse 2023.)

While discussing types of influencer marketing, researchers have been keen on differentiating this type of marketing from other similar strategies. Leung et al. (2022), for instance, indicate that influencer marketing should not be confused with celebrity endorsement. Even mega (celebrity) influencer marketing strategy is different from celebrity endorsement, despite the two methods relying on the influence of similar or the same individuals. As noted by Schouten et al. (2021), celebrity endorsement is a relatively formal way of advertising products or services, whereby the celebrity follows scripted advertisements and techniques to promote a product. On the other hand, celebrity influencer marketing is just like any other influencer marketing strategy, with the only difference being that, in this case, celebrities employ their social media channels to advertise products in a relatively informal way. The unscripted and informal promotion of products and services in an indirect manner makes influencer marketing, including mega influencer marketing strategies, appear more genuine and authentic than celebrity endorsement (Schouten et al. 2021; Leung et al. 2022.)

Leung et al. (2022) also indicate that influencer marketing should also not be confused with seeding in viral marketing. While this strategy also uses individuals (agents) to market to consumers, it differs from influencer marketing mostly in terms of the marketing agent, promotional content, and firm control. As noted by the researcher, seeding (viral marketing) does not always use influencer marketing. Furthermore, unlike influencer marketing which often relies on user-generated content, viral marketing strategy depends on firm-generated content. In other words, the firm attempts to keep tight control on the type and structure of content used in marketing (Erwin et al. 2023.) Influencer marketing has also been differentiated from native advertising. Even though both are digital marketing strategies, they differ because native advertising involves the firm producing and distributing promotional content on relevant platforms. In other words, influencers do not promote native advertisement (Leung et al. 2022; Erwin et al. 2023.)

## 2.4 Perceived Value of Influencer Marketing

Perceived value refers to the subjective assessment of the benefits, significance, or worth of the object/subject under question (Bevan-Dye 2024). From this definition, the perceived value of the influencer content can be inferred to be a subjective assessment of the worth or usefulness of content created by influencers. This perception plays an essential role in influencing the attitudes and behaviours of the current and potential consumers of the influencers' content (Ayob et al. 2023; Lou & Kim, 2019.)

In fact, various theories, such as the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and User Gratification Theory (UGT) have indicated that content perceived to be high value could positively influence consumers. Specifically, from Social Exchange Theory (SET), perceived high value content is likely to induce a reciprocal action among followers. Followers are likely to act on the information provided by an influencer whom they perceive to be providing valuable content (Ahmad et al. 2023.) Likewise, from a UGT perspective, users may consider content as high value if it helps them fulfill one of their gratifications. According to this theory, consumers will not consume content if they do not consider it capable of fulfilling their desired gratification (Yaman & Çakın 2021). Therefore, they are likely to use influencers' ability to fulfill their gratification as one of the benchmarks for assessing the benefits of influencers' content.

Previous studies have illuminated various attributes of influencer marketing that consumers perceive as valuable. They include the influencer's credibility, attractiveness, and fit between them and the product they are marketing (Ayob et al. 2023; Lou & Kim 2019). As Ayob et al. (2023) indicate, influencer credibility encompasses their expertise and trustworthiness. Consumers may value the recommendation of influencers they consider expert and trustworthy (Lou & Kim 2019). According to Lou and Kim (2019), influencer credibility consists of four aspects, namely expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity.

Attractiveness, however, refers to more than physical beauty. It also involves factors such as similarity, likeability, and familiarity with the audience. As indicated by Ayob et al. (2019), consumers will place higher value on the influencer content if they perceive the influencer and the content as attractive. For instance, social media audiences are highly likely to be influenced by the influencer they aspire to be like. Lou and Kim's (2019) description of the perceived value of influencer marketing is closely related to the attractiveness dimension. According to the researcher, influencer content has informative and entertainment value. Content that informs and entertains their audiences is likely to be perceived as attractive (Ayob et al. 2019; Lou & Kim 2019.)

The fit between an influencer and a product refers to the degree of alignment between the influencer's brand, image, expertise, values, and target audience with the product being promoted (Ayob et al. 2019). Research indicates that influencer's content is likely to be perceived as valuable if it is aligned with the product they are promoting. For instance, an influencer perceived as an expert in technology is likely to be effective in promoting technology products vis-a-vis fashion products. Such alignment, as indicated by Lou and Kim

(2019), enhances the credibility, authenticity, and relatability of the influencer content, making it perceived as highly valuable.

Daimi and Tolunay (2021) expand the dimension of the perceived value of influencer marketing. According to the researchers, the perceived value of influencer marketing is derived from a combination of influencer-related factors, content-related factors, and follower-related factors. Influencer-related factors refer to how the influencer is perceived by the followers. The researchers specifically focused on four characteristics namely, originality, attractiveness, reliability, and expertise. Content-related factors refer to the attributes of the influencer-generated content, such as consistency, quality, and interactivity, while follower-related content refers to the attributes and needs of the influencer, such as social, ego, and self-actualization needs (Daimi & Tolunay 2021.)

## 2.5. Influencer Marketing in Kenya

Several studies have investigated influencer marketing within the context of the Kenyan market. Kariuki et al. (2024) systematic literature review for instance examined the efficiency of influencer marketing techniques on the beauty industry market share in Kenya. The researchers noted that most of the past paper they included in their review revealed that there is a positive connection between influencer marketing and increase market share and brand awareness. That implies that strategic partnering with influence can increase brand awareness, loyalty, and ultimate market share. Okong'o et al. (2024) did indeed establish that influencers can have a positive impact on strategic communication. The researchers specifically investigated the impact of digital influencers on strategic marketing communications, specifically focusing on boutique owners in Nairobi, Kenya. They employed a descriptive research design using questionnaires and purposive sampling to examine how digital influencers function as opinion leaders. Key findings revealed a strong positive correlation between digital influencer engagement and positive brand perception, although not statistically significant.

Likewise, another qualitative study comparing traditional marketing to influencer marketing established that the latter strategy could offer unique benefits to small and startup businesses (Wafula 2022). According to Wafula (2022), influencer marketing is superior to traditional media because it allows startups and small businesses to build a customer base rapidly through social media hype. Such businesses can use it to create audience-specific marketing campaigns that are likely to be more effective than traditional marketing. The campaigns are effective because consumers can relate to them on a personal

level. Okong'o et al. (2024) also note that influencer marketing is a low-budget way to promote a business. Businesses with limited resources can easily market themselves by, for instance, hiring relatively affordable nano- and micro-influencers.

Likewise, another qualitative study comparing traditional marketing to influencer marketing established that the latter strategy could offer unique benefits to small and startup businesses (Wafula 2022). According to Wafula (2022), influencer marketing is superior to traditional media because it allows start-ups and small businesses to build a customer base rapidly through social media hype. Such businesses can use it to create audience-specific marketing campaigns that are likely to be more effective than traditional marketing. The campaigns are effective because consumers can relate to them on a personal level. Okong'o et al. (2024) also note that influencer marketing is a low-budget way to promote a business. Businesses with limited resources can easily market themselves by, for instance, hiring relatively affordable nano- and micro-influencers. Komen (2023) does indeed confirm the positive impact of influencer marketing on low-budget and start-up businesses. The researchers established that employing influencers could lead to higher customer acquisition and retention. (Okong'o et al. 2024).

Ziwa and Dizon (2024) also highlighted influencer marketing as a leading significant online marketing strategy that businesses in Kenya can use to achieve their marketing objectives. These researchers came to this conclusion after conducting a quantitative study that involved surveying 390 students to investigate the relationship between online platform marketing and the online purchasing behaviour of Kenyan university students. According to the study, online platform marketing, including influencer marketing, can influence students' online buying behaviour. The researchers indicated that this marketing strategy can be particularly effective in shaping the behaviour of young adults.

### 3 Purchasing Behaviour

#### 3.1 Defining Purchasing Behaviour

Purchasing behaviour, otherwise referred to as buying behaviour, can generally be defined as the decision-making processes and actions consumers are involved in when choosing, buying, using, and discarding products and/or services (Al Shishani 2020). Various researchers have indicated that this behaviour is comprised of certain key components, namely the decision process, influencing factors, and the type of purchasing behaviour (Ridwan 2022; Zhang & Wang 2022; Salera et al. 2022). The decision-making process refers to the step consumers mostly undergo, in most cases subconsciously, before making a purchase (Ridwan 2022). Currently, there is high consensus among academicians that consumers undergo a 5-stage process that involves, problem realization, researching, alternative analysis, the buying decision, and after-purchase behaviour (Ridwan 2022; Makudza et al. 2022; Santos & Goncalves 2021).

Problem recognition involves identifying a desire or need that products or services can fulfill. Information searching entails gathering necessary insights about these products and services, while alternative evaluation involves assessing different options based on factors like accessibility, price, quality, and brand reputation. The purchase decision is the final choice to acquire the product or service, and post-purchase behavior refers to the actions or reflections a consumer adopts after the purchase. They include providing feedback about the product or service and the overall purchasing experience (Makudza et al. 2022.)

The influencing factors, as a component of purchase behaviour, refers to internal and external aspects that may influence the consumers' purchase behaviour (Ridwan 2022). Internal factors, such as personal preferences, motivations, emotions, attitudes, perceptions, and other psychological issues emanate from within the consumers. For instance, a consumer's perception of a brand could influence their behaviour towards the brand. External factors refer to elements outside the consumer's internal environment that influence their behaviour. These aspects can be grouped into cultural, social, environmental, economic, and organizational marketing activities, all of which may influence buying behaviour (Makudza et al. 2022.)

When it comes to the types of purchasing behaviour, researchers have constantly proven that this behaviour falls into four types depending on the levels of consumer involvement and perceived brand differences. These types consist of complex purchasing behavior, conflict resolution behaviours, repetitive buying behaviour, and variety-seeking behaviour (Al

Shihani 2020; Katrodia 2021.) Complex buying behaviour involves high involvement and significant brand differences. It is common when making a huge and important purchase. Dissonance-reducing behaviour also includes high engagement but few brand disparities. Habitual buying behaviour shows low engagement and few brand differences. Lastly, variety-seeking behaviour displays low involvement with significant brand differences (Katrodia 2021.)

### 3.2 Types of Influencers and Purchasing Behaviour

Studies exploring the impact of different influencer types—such as celebrities, micro-influencers, nano-influencers, and virtual influencers—on consumer purchasing behaviour have yielded interesting insights. Overall, the studies reviewed suggest that every type of influencer has the potential to influence consumers in some way. This influence may manifest in the form of changing attitudes, increasing awareness, or shaping various behaviours, including purchasing behaviour. Specifically, when it comes to consumer purchase behaviour, researchers generally suggest that smaller influencers—those with relatively fewer followers—tend to be more impactful (Chui & Ho 2023; Brewster & Lyu 2020; Ren et al. 2023.) Among the reasons cited for their higher influence, smaller influencers are often perceived as more relatable, fostering a sense of social connection, security, and familiarity with their audience.

Rahman (2022) challenges this perspective, arguing that celebrities and macro-influencers are likely to be more impactful because they inspire consumers to mimic their behaviour. It is important to note, though, that Rahman (2022) findings should be interpreted with caution since the study was theoretical in nature and did not empirically test or verify its hypotheses. Additionally, its focus was primarily on which influencers are more likely to be mimicked, rather than whether such mimicry translates into tangible actions, such as purchasing recommended products or services. A detailed discussion of these past findings is provided below.

To start with, Chui and Ho (2023) investigated the effect of different influencer types—traditional celebrities, micro-celebrities, and virtual influencers—on Chinese Gen Z's purchasing intentions. While it does not focus on nano-celebrities and macro-celebrities, it introduces a new category of emerging influencers, named virtual influencers. Virtual influencers are artificial intelligence characters or computer-generated human-like figures that act like real celebrities and influencers on social media. In general, the researcher established that each category of influencer could influence consumer purchasing behaviour depending on marketing goal, product type, and level of consumers. Traditional celebrity influencers can

be a good option for attracting attention and building brand awareness. However, Micro celebrity influencers are more likely to encourage measurable action such as actual purchase of products. The results of this study are aligned with the conclusions of other researchers who have defined and conceptualized the types of influencers (Leung et al. 2022; Sing et al. 2023; Okonkwo & Namkoisse 2023.) Also, important to note, Chui and Ho (2023) research indicates that virtual influencers can be a great source of information but their impact on behaviour is minimal due to their perceived lack of trust and authenticity.

Rahman (2022) also highlighted how different types of influences, specifically mega, macro, micro, and nano influences are likely to influence consumer behaviour. According to the researchers, these influencers are likely to influence consumer behaviour through mimicry. Mimicry, is a social learning theory that suggests that individuals shape their behaviour to replicate or mimic the behaviour of others, whom they consider role models. The researchers suggest influencers with huge followings (mega and macro) are more likely to drive mimicry and hence influence purchase behaviour. On the other hand, those with lower follower numbers (nano and micro) are less likely to drive mimicry, thus having less impact on consumer behaviour.

Rahman's (2022) argument that influencers with large followings have a stronger influence on consumer purchasing behaviour contradicts the findings of other researchers. For instance, Chui et al. (2022) found that micro and nano influencers can be quite impactful because consumers perceive them as authentic, relatable, and credible. This contradiction suggests that Rahman's (2022) study should be approached cautiously, particularly since it is theoretical in nature. Its aim was to develop a model for future researchers to study the influence of different social media influencer categories (mega, macro, micro, and nano) on consumer mimicry and well-being. Nevertheless, Rahman's findings can also be explained by factors related to perceived value. Larger influencers are likely perceived as more attractive, which has been identified as a key dimension of perceived value in influencer marketing (Ayob et al. 2023; Lou & Kim 2019.)

Brewster and Lyn (2020) are another example of a study that is in contradiction with Rahman (2022) argument. Brewster and Lyu (2020) aimed to determine the impact of social media influencers (SMIs) on consumer attitudes. The researchers found that nano-influencers could have greater impact on purchasing behaviour than micro- and macro-influencers due to their stronger Para social relationships with their followers. This was the case even though the credibility levels of these influencers did not differ significantly. While the study confirmed that credibility is important, it also implied that the strength of the relationship

between an influencer and their followers is crucial in shaping brand attitudes and influencing purchase behaviour. In situations where different types of influencers enjoy the same level of credibility, followers are more likely to be influenced by smaller influencers because they tend to feel a higher level of social connection, which can be equated to relatability. On the other hand, the influence of larger influencers, such as celebrities and mega-influencers, on consumer behaviour is likely to be weaker due to a perceived lack of social connection (Brewster & Lyn 2020.)

An experimental paper that included three studies with consumers from different countries (China, South Korea, and the United States) found that influencers with smaller followings were more likely to influence consumer purchase intention compared to celebrity influencers (Ren et al. 2023). The high influence of non-celebrity influencers was consistent across all three studies. However, the impact of the type of influencer depended on the consumers' focus. The study identified two types of focus: promotion focus and prevention focus (Ren et al. 2023.)

Prevention-focused individuals tend to be avoidant in nature and seek information related to safety and security. On the other hand, promotion-focused individuals are more open and seek information concerning growth and achievement. The researchers discovered that consumers with a prevention focus showed a significantly greater purchase intention toward non-celebrity influencers compared to celebrity influencers. In contrast, among consumers with a promotion focus, no statistically significant difference in purchase intention was observed. Importantly, like other studies, this research highlighted that non-celebrity influencers often have a stronger impact on consumer purchase intention due to a combination of factors that make them appear more relatable, trustworthy, and authentic compared to celebrity influencers (Ren et al. 2023.)

### 3.3 Perceived Value of Influencer Marketing and Purchasing Behaviour

Several studies from different parts of the world, such as Malaysia Ayob, Kamaruddin, & Zaidi (2023), USA (Lou & Kim, 2019), and Peru (Zirena-Berjarano, Zirena, Dela Gala- Velásquez, 2022), among other areas have investigated the relationship between perceived value of influencer marketing and consumer behaviour. Such studies have highlighted the importance of factors related to perceived value of influencer marketing on shaping consumer purchase behaviour. Factors that have been commonly cited as important include, source credibility, the role of influencer authenticity, and the effect of influencer-brand align-

ment on purchase intentions. Below is an elaborate review of what past studies have established in relation to perceived value, as a dimension of influencer marketing, and purchasing behaviour of consumers.

To begin with, Ayob et al. (2023) study that focused on young adults in Malaysia examined three key dimensions of the perceived value of influencer marketing. These include source credibility, source appeal, and the compatibility between the content creator and the endorsed product. After conducting a quantitative analysis with a sample of 388 respondents, the researcher established that these three dimensions have strong positive correlation with the purchasing behaviour of the consumers. However, source credibility was the most significant predictor. That implies that Kenyan influencers can be influential if they target consumers (audiences) who consider them credible. Also important, these influencers should strive to provide content perceived as attractive and should promote products that align with their brand as influencers.

Lou and Kim's (2019) study, which focused on U.S. consumers, specifically adolescents, reached conclusions similar to those of Ayob et al. (2023). Lou and Kim (2019) found that influencer content is perceived as valuable when it is entertaining, comes from credible sources, and helps build social connections. According to the researcher, these positive perceptions have an essential effect on the buying intention of consumers. In their study, source credibility was measured across four dimensions: expertise, trustworthiness, attractiveness, and similarity. These findings align with those of Ayob et al. (2023), who also identified source attractiveness as a major dimension of perceived value in influencer marketing. Although the two studies may have used different operational approaches and definitions to outline the dimensions of perceived value, their findings are highly consistent. For instance, the four dimensions of source credibility used by Lou and Kim (2019) closely correspond to the concept of source attractiveness highlighted by Ayob et al. (2023).

Zirena-Bejarano et al. (2022) similarly identified that influencer credibility (source credibility) may have a positive effect on the purchase decisions of consumers in Arequipa, Peru. The researchers measured credibility across four dimensions: trust, honesty, and expertise. They found that when influencer credibility is paired with strong brand value, it leads to more confident purchase decisions among millennial consumers. This alignment between credibility and brand value supports Ayob et al. (2019) findings that influencer-product alignment enhances the perceived value of influencer marketing. Influencer's recommendations are more likely to be perceived as valuable when they promote a company with a strong brand. Since individuals become influencers largely because of the strong personal brand their

followers associate with them, they should promote companies with equally strong brands. Otherwise, they may be deemed deceitful, thus losing their influential power.

Daimi and Tolunay (2021) confirm that a strong personal brand is a key attribute of perceived value in influencer marketing and can predict consumer behavior. In their study, the researchers indicated that a strong personal brand—which they equated with influencer-related factors—works in conjunction with follower-related factors to determine the perceived value consumers attach to influencer content. These two sets of factors are stronger predictors of consumer behavior than content-related factors. In other words, content-related factors, such as quality and interactivity, should not be prioritized at the expense of influencer- and follower-related factors. Regarding influencer-related factors, the researchers noted that authenticity and certain dimensions of credibility, specifically expertise and trustworthiness, have a greater impact. This impact is magnified when combined with follower-related factors. For instance, the perceived value and resulting impact of influencer marketing significantly increase when a credible influencer is capable of satisfying followers' ego needs, such as boosting self-confidence or forming genuine connections (Daimi & Tolunay 2021.) Followers-related factors include ego, self-confidence, and connection needs (Daimi & Tolunay 2021). Lou and Kim (2019) also establish that the ability to form social connections is an important dimension of the perceived value of influencer marketing. In terms of content-related factors, Daimi and Tolunay (2021) established that while high-quality content is expected, and can enhance engagement, it does not directly drive purchasing decisions.

In South African markets, findings consistent with those observed in other regions—such as the USA, Malaysia, and Peru—have been reported. This is evident in a Southern African study by Mgiba and Nyamande (2020), which examined the effect of persuasive online influencers on the purchase intentions of millennial consumers. The study established a positive and significant connection between influencer persuasion and purchase intention. Specifically, the researchers found that influencers who possess certain persuasive attributes are more likely to affect their followers' purchasing intentions. These attributes include credibility, trustworthiness, relatability, reliability, effective communication, and attractiveness (Mgiba & Nyamande 2020.) Moreover, as noted by previous studies (Ayob et al. 2023; Lou & Kim 2019), influencers with these qualities are perceived by their followers as providing valuable content.

## 4 Empirical Research and Data Analysis

### 4.1 Data Collection

This section outlines the data collection process used to investigate the impact of influencer marketing on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya. Data was collected through a structured survey methodology, which was designed to gather comprehensive information related to the study's independent and dependent variables. The questionnaire comprised four key sections: demographic information, type of influencer marketing, perceived value of influencer marketing, and purchasing behavior. Each section was designed to collect specific data aligned with the research questions and objectives.

The first section of the questionnaire facilitated the collection of demographic data to understand the characteristics of the participants relevant to the study. This section included questions on age, gender, level of education, monthly income, average hours spent on social media daily, the most frequently used social media platform, and whether the participant actively follows social media influencers. These demographic variables provided critical context for analyzing how personal characteristics influence the relationship between influencer marketing and purchasing behavior.

The second section addressed the first independent variable, which is the type of influencer marketing. This section aimed to establish the foundation for answering the first sub-research question: "What type of influencer marketers (nano, micro, macro, and celebrity influencers) has the greatest impact on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya?" Participants were asked to identify the type of influencers they engage with and their perceived influence on their purchasing decisions.

The third section focused on the second independent variable, which is the perceived value of influencer marketing. This section was designed to collect data relevant to the third research question: "How does young Kenyan adults' perception of the value of influencer marketing content impact their purchase decisions?" Participants responded to questions assessing their perception of the credibility, usefulness, and trustworthiness of influencer marketing content and its influence on their purchasing behavior.

The final section of the questionnaire focused on the dependent variable, which is purchasing behavior. This section contained questions aimed at understanding participants' purchasing habits and how these behaviors relate to the independent variables. By linking responses from this section to those on influencer type and perceived value, inferences were

drawn about the relationship between influencer marketing and consumer behavior. The final questionnaire used in the study is attached as appendix 1.

The questionnaire was converted into a Google Form for ease of distribution and data collection. A shareable link to the survey was disseminated through various social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, X, YouTube, and Reddit. The link was accompanied by a brief explanation outlining the purpose of the study, the type of data being collected, and the participants' rights, including the right to withdraw at any time. Participants were required to read the information provided and could only proceed with the survey if they understood and agreed to participate. Clicking the survey link was considered as providing informed consent. This online distribution method allowed for broad reach and increased accessibility, facilitating the data collection from a diverse sample of young adults in Kenya.

#### 4.2 Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. This statistical method is frequently employed to summarize and organize data, effectively highlighting patterns and trends (Cooksey 2020, 61). In this study, it was precisely used to summarize and organize both demographic and variable-related data. For the demographic data, it highlighted the sample profile and helped identify key characteristics relevant to the study. This information was essential for understanding the respondents' background and their relationship to the research topic. For variable-related questions, it summarized the data and revealed patterns crucial for understanding the relationship between independent and dependent variables. For instance, these analyses demonstrated how different types of influencers may affect purchasing behavior on average, how participant responses varied, and how frequently specific responses occurred. This statistical approach offered a comprehensive overview of the data and served as the foundation for further inferential analysis.

Initial descriptive analysis was performed using Google Forms' inbuilt analytical capabilities. Google Forms automatically enabled the performance and visualization of frequency distribution. The analysis was, however, expanded and refined using Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Program (JASP) software. JASP software is free open-source statistical software equivalent to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). It was selected because, in addition to having all the functional capabilities of SPSS, it is a free open-source software. Therefore, it facilitated the performance of statistical analysis despite the budgetary and resource constraints faced by the researcher.

#### 4.2.1 Frequency Distribution

Frequency distribution is a primary descriptive analysis technique used to determine how often each value occurs in a dataset (Cooksey 2020, 63). As shown in table 3 and figure 1 total of 34 participants completed the survey. There were no missing responses across any of the measured variables, ensuring a complete dataset for analysis. Participants' ages ranged across three categories, namely 18-24 years (44.1%,  $n = 15$ ), 25-29 years (20.6%,  $n = 7$ ), and 30-34 years (35.3%,  $n = 12$ ) (See figure). The fact that most of the respondents (44.1%) fell within the 18-24 age group, followed by those aged 30-34, suggests that the sample was well-distributed across the young adult population in Kenya. Such distribution is consistent with the study's purpose of targeting young adults in Kenya, who were

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
18–24	15	44.12	44.12	44.12
25–29	7	20.59	20.59	64.71
30–34	12	35.29	35.29	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	—	—
Total	34	100.00	—	—

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents

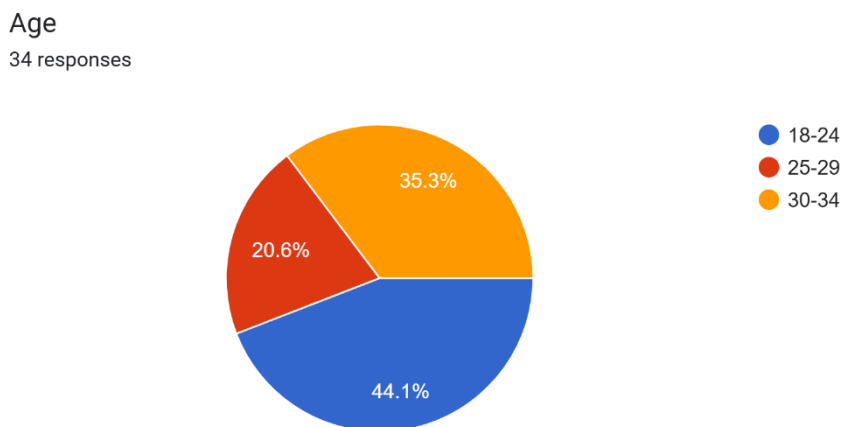


Figure 1: Frequency distribution of respondent age

In terms of gender, most of the respondents identified as female 47.1% ( $n = 16$ ), while 38.2% ( $n = 13$ ) of respondents identified as male. Only a small fraction 14.7% ( $n = 5$ ) preferred not to disclose their gender. The frequency distribution indicates that there was a

balanced representation of gender, particularly when accounting for individuals who opted not to disclose their gender. The findings therefore are unlikely to be biased towards the opinion or expression of any one gender (See table 4 and figure 2).

Gender	Fre- quency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Male	13	38.24	38.24	38.24
Female	16	47.06	47.06	85.29
Prefer not to say	5	14.71	14.71	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	—	—
Total	34	100.00	—	—

Table 4: Gender Distribution of Respondents

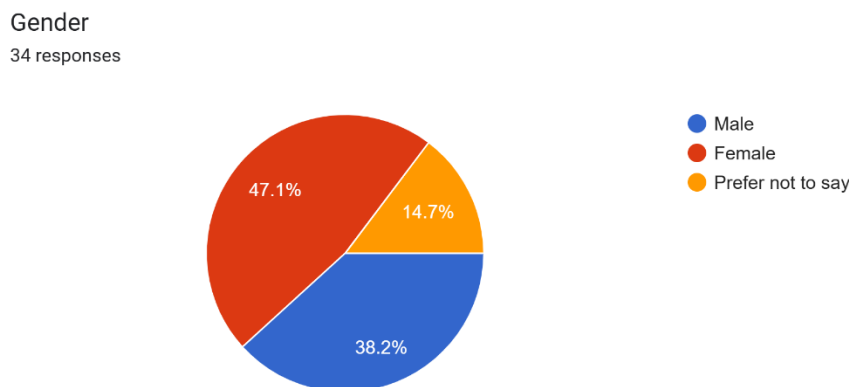


Figure 2. Frequencies distribution for Gender

Most respondents were either pursuing or have completed their higher learning. Specifically, most of them, 50% ( $n = 17$ ), reported being undergraduates. 29.4% ( $n = 10$ ) reported being postgraduates, and 20.6% ( $n = 7$ ) fell under other educational categories. The distribution reflects the young Kenyan population. Most of the country's population, especially the digitally literate population who engage with social media platforms have some form of higher learning education. The frequency distribution for level of education is summarized in table 5 and figure 3.

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Undergraduate	17	50.00	50.00	50.00
Postgraduate	10	29.41	29.41	79.41
Other	7	20.59	20.59	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	—	—
Total	34	100.00	—	—

Table 5: Education Level Distribution of Respondents

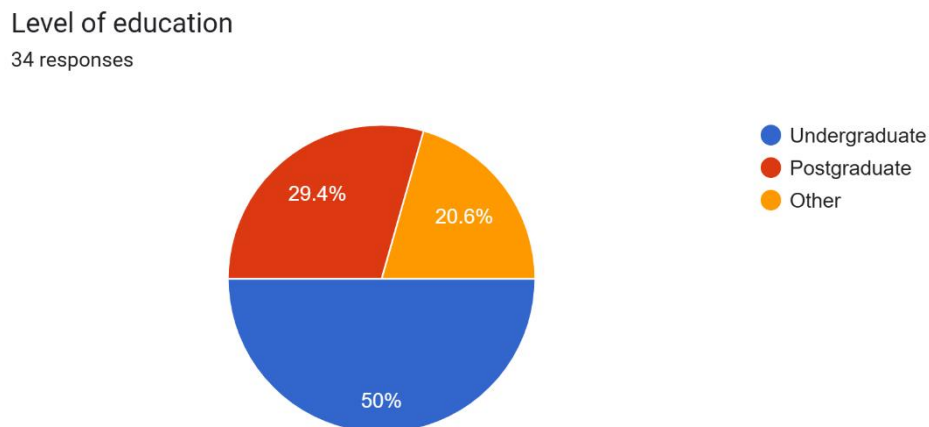


Figure 3: Frequencies for Level of Education

The frequency distribution of income levels, as highlighted in table 6 and figure 4, reflects Kenya's economic conditions. Most respondents (47.1%,  $n = 16$ ) reported earning a moderate income between Ksh 21,000 and 50,000. The second largest group (29.4%,  $n = 10$ ) earned a low income of less than Ksh 20,000. Fewer respondents reported higher incomes. Only 17.6% ( $n = 6$ ) earned between Ksh 50,000 and 100,000, with the smallest group (5.9%,  $n = 2$ ) reporting earning over Ksh 100,000.

Income Level	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Ksh 20,000	10	29.41	29.41	29.41
Between Ksh 21,000–50,000	16	47.06	47.06	76.47
Over Ksh 50,000–100,000	6	17.65	17.65	94.12

Over Ksh 100,000	2	5.88	5.88	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	—	—
Total	34	100.00	—	—

Table 6: Income Distribution of Respondents

What is your approximate monthly income

34 responses

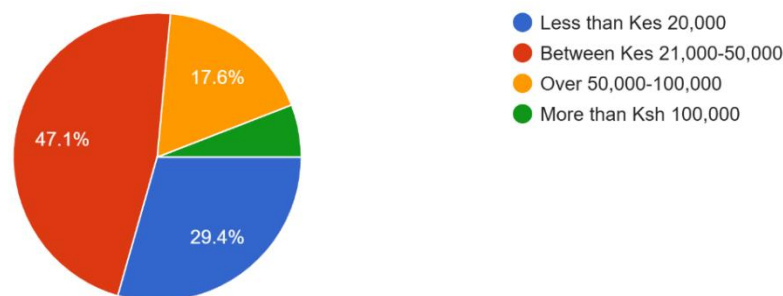


Figure 4: Frequencies distribution for Income

When it came to social media engagement, participants reported varying hours spent on social media daily. Specifically, 17.6% ( $n = 6$ ) indicated spending approximately 1 hour, 29.4% ( $n = 10$ ) reported 1-2 hours, another 29.4% ( $n = 10$ ) reported 3-4 hours, and 23.5% ( $n = 8$ ) indicated spending more than 4 hours daily on social media (see Table 7 and Figure 5). The data portrays that most participants spend a substantial amount of time on social media platforms. Such usage trend could affect their exposure to influencer content and digital marketing.

Hours Spent on Social Media	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Less than 1 hour	6	17.65	17.65	17.65
1–2 hours	10	29.41	29.41	47.06
3–4 hours	10	29.41	29.41	76.47
More than 4 hours	8	23.53	23.53	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	—	—
Total	34	100.00	—	—

Table 7: Hours Spent on Social Media by Respondents

Approximately, how many hours per day do you typically spend on social media daily?

34 responses

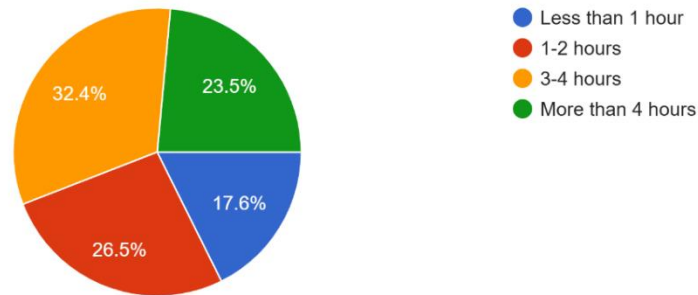


Figure 5. Frequency of hours spent on social media

When asked about their most frequently used social media platform, 38.2% (n = 13) reported using TikTok, making it the most popular platform among respondents. Instagram was used by 26.5% (n = 9), followed by Facebook at 20.6% (n = 7), Twitter at 8.8% (n = 3), and YouTube at 5.9% (n = 2). Summary of frequently used platforms is included in Table 8 and Figure 6. These results highlight TikTok's dominance among the sampled population. It suggests a shift toward video-centric platforms that prioritize short-form content.

Social Media Platform	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Instagram	9	26.47	26.47	26.47
Facebook	7	20.59	20.59	47.06
TikTok	13	38.24	38.24	85.29
Twitter	3	8.82	8.82	94.12
YouTube	2	5.88	5.88	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>—</b>

Table 8: Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms by Respondents

Which social media platform(s) do you use most frequently? (Select all that apply)

34 responses

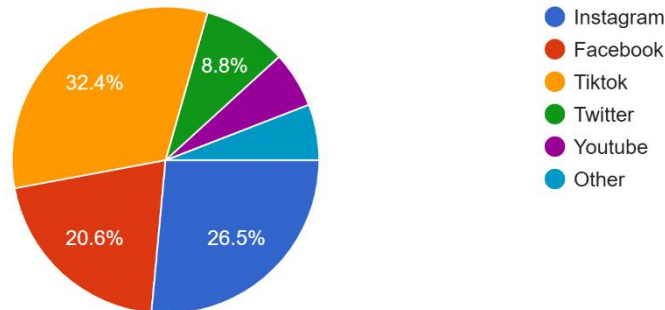


Figure 6. Most Frequently Used Social Media Platforms by Respondents

Regarding the active following of influencers on social media, 58.8% (n = 20) of participants reported that they actively follow influencers. The remaining 41.2% (n = 14) indicated that they do not. The respondents who reported actively following influencers likely do so consciously (See Table 9 and Figure 7). However, those who indicated they do not may still be influenced unconsciously by influencers through their social media usage.

Active Following of Influencers	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Yes	20	58.82	58.82	58.82
No	14	41.18	41.18	100.00
Missing	0	0.00	—	—
Total	34	100.00	—	—

Table 9: Frequency of Actively Following Influencers

Do you actively follow influencers on these platforms?

34 responses

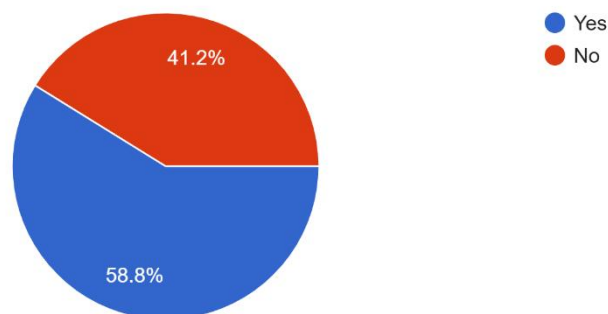


Figure 7: Frequency of Actively Following Influencers

#### 4.2.2 Measures of Central Tendencies and Dispersion

In addition to frequency distribution, the researcher conducted descriptive analysis to measure central tendency, dispersion, and distribution shape. Measures of central tendency refer to statistical analysis performed to identify the central values of data distribution (Cooksey 2020, 94.) They include statistics such as the mean, median, and mode, which help researchers understand the "average" or most representative values within a dataset. Measures of dispersion (like standard deviation, variance, and range) complement central tendency by quantifying how spread out or varied the data points are from the central value. The shape of the distribution determines how data points are spread across different values. This shape is determined using measures such as symmetry, skewness, and kurtosis. The measures highlight the overall structure of the distribution and are key in identifying the existence of outliers (Cooksey 2020, 94.)

Specifically in this study, the research calculated the mean, standard deviation, and distribution shape in terms of skewness and kurtosis. The analysis considered the coding of the demographic variable as outlined by Table 10.

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Age</b>	1	18-24
	2	25-29
	3	30-34
<b>Gender</b>	1	Male
	2	Female
	3	Prefer not to say
<b>Education Level</b>	1	Undergraduate
	2	Postgraduate
	3	Other
<b>Income</b>	1	Less than Ksh 20,000
	2	Ksh 21,000 - 50,000
	3	Ksh 50,000 - 100,000
	4	Over Ksh 100,000
<b>Social Media Engagement</b>	1	Less than 1 hour
	2	1-2 hours
	3	3-4 hours
	4	Over 4 hours

<b>Frequently Used Platform</b>	1	Instagram
	2	Facebook
	3	TikTok
	4	X
	5	YouTube
<b>Active Following Influencers</b>	1	Yes
	2	No

Table 10. Demographic Survey item coding

The mean age was 1.912 (SD = 0.900), suggesting an average age range of 18 to 29 years. The low standard deviation suggests that most participants' ages were close to the mean. Skewness was 0.181, indicating an approximately symmetrical distribution, with a slight overrepresentation of younger respondents. The kurtosis value of -1.787 (SE = 0.788) reflects a platykurtic distribution, showing that responses were widely dispersed without clustering around a central value. The mean gender value was 1.765 (SD = 0.699), indicating a skew toward female participants in the sample. The positive skewness of 0.360 (SE = 0.403) confirms a slightly higher proportion of females, while the kurtosis of -0.834 (SE = 0.788) reflects a relatively flat distribution, meaning there was no extreme dominance by any gender category.

The mean education level of 1.706 (SD = 0.799) implies that most respondents were undergraduates. The standard deviation shows a moderate spread of responses across education categories. The positive skewness of 0.597 (SE = 0.403) reflects a higher concentration of undergraduate participants, while the kurtosis value of -1.157 (SE = 0.788) suggests a flat distribution, implying a spread of responses across the three categories without a clear central peak. The income variable had a mean value of 2.000 (SD = 0.853). This indicates that most respondents earned between Ksh 21,000 and 50,000. The positive skewness of 0.623 (SE = 0.403) suggests more respondents were in the lower income brackets, while the kurtosis of 0.006 (SE = 0.788) implies that the distribution was nearly normal without extreme outliers. Daily social media usage mean of 2.588 (SD = 1.048), suggests that participants, on average, spend between 1 and 4 hours on social media. However, (skewness = -0.08) was nearly symmetrical, suggesting balanced engagement across usage tiers.

The mean value of 2.471 (SD = 1.161) indicates an average preference for Facebook and Instagram, coded as 2 and 1, respectively. However, frequency data show that TikTok was the most frequently used platform, with the highest number of individual users ( $n =$

13). The skewness of 0.323 confirms a slight positive (right) skew, suggesting that more respondents frequently use platforms with lower codes, such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. The active following of influencers had a mean value of 1.412 (SD = 0.500). This implies that most respondents actively followed influencers. The skewness is 0.375 suggesting a slight positive (right) skew. With the coding (1 = Yes, 2 = No), the positive skew suggests that more respondents actively follow influencers (coded as 1).

The descriptive statistics, in general, indicate moderate variability across demographic variables, with most distributions exhibiting slight positive skewness and varying degrees of kurtosis. The absence of extreme skewness or kurtosis values suggests the data are reasonably distributed without significant outliers. See Table 11 below for a summary of the descriptive data.

	Age	Gen-der	Education level	In-come	Daily Us-age	Freq_used plat-form	Active fol-lower
Valid	34	34	34	34	34	34	34
Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	1.912	1.765	1.706	2.000	2.588	2.471	1.412
Std. Deviation	0.900	0.699	0.799	0.853	1.048	1.161	0.500
Coefficient of variation	0.471	0.396	0.468	0.426	0.405	0.470	0.354
Skewness	0.181	0.360	0.597	0.623	-0.080	0.323	0.375
Std. Error of Skewness	0.403	0.403	0.403	0.403	0.403	0.403	0.403
Kurtosis	-1.787	-0.834	-1.157	0.006	-1.139	-0.456	-1.979
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.788	0.788	0.788	0.788	0.788	0.788	0.788

Table 11: Descriptive statistics for demographic data

### 4.2.3 Research Question Analysis

#### Type of influencer

Descriptive statistics were also used to analyze the data directly related to the research questions. This method was particularly useful for addressing the first sub-question, which aimed to identify the type of influencer—nano, micro, macro, or celebrity—that had the greatest impact on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya. This sub-question was measured using five research items quantified on a five-point Likert scale (1 = nano influencers, 2 = micro influencers, 3 = macro influencers, 4 = celebrity influencers, and 5 = "does not matter). The five items focused on identifying different aspects of influencers' impact. One item examined the type of influencer with the greatest impact on the participant's most recent purchase. Another explored the type of influencer the participant follows most frequently. Additional items assessed the type of influencer content participants are most likely to share and the type of influencer they believe their friends (aged 18 to 34) trust most for product recommendations. These items were coded as summarized in Table 12.

Item	Code
When you think about the last time you followed an influencer's recommendation, which type of influencer was it?	Type_item 1
Right now, on the social media accounts you use for purchasing purposes, which type of influencers would you say you follow the most?	Type_item 2
Think about the last 5 purchase you made out of social media recommendation, which type of influencers had the greatest influence?	Type_item 3
Think for a minute and let me know—which type of influencers do you believe your friends (aged 18 to 34) listen to the most when they want product recommendations?	Type_item 4
When you share product recommendation content from influencers, which type of influencer content are you most likely to share from?	Type_item 5

Table 12. Type of Influencer Survey Item Coding

The descriptive statistics, as highlighted in Table 11, included measures of central tendency (mean, mode), measures of dispersion (standard deviation), frequency distributions, and shape of distribution. Table 13 below summarizes the descriptive statistics for the five survey items (Type\_item 1 to Type\_item 5). The item captures different dimensions of influencer impact on purchasing behavior. The mean scores across the five items range from 2.735 to 2.971, with the mode consistently being 2.000. This indicates that respondents predominantly selected the second option (Micro-influencers) across all survey

items. The standard deviation ranged from 1.232 to 1.507, indicating that the respondent offered varied responses.

Item	N	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
Type_item 1	34	2.735	2.000	1.310
Type_item 2	33	2.818	2.000	1.446
Type_item 3	34	2.824	2.000	1.507
Type_item 4	34	2.765	2.000	1.232
Type_item 5	34	2.971	2.000	1.507

Table 13. Type of Influencers Descriptive Statistics

Results from frequency analysis were consistent with the measures of central tendency and dispersion (See Table 14 and Figure 8). When it came to the first item, the data indicated that micro-influencers and nano-influencers are the most followed and trusted types of influencers. Specifically, 32.35% of participants mostly follow micro-influencers, while 20.59% mostly follow nano-influencers. In terms of the last five purchases, micro-influencers had the greatest influence, accounting for 29.41% of the responses. Nano-influencers also had a notable impact, with 23.53% of the responses. Macro-influencers and celebrity influencers had a lower but still notable influence, with 11.76% and 17.65% of the responses, respectively.

When it came to sharing influencer content, micro-influencers' content was the most likely to be shared, with 35.29% of the responses. Nano-influencers' content were also frequently shared, with 20.59% of the responses. Macro-influencers and celebrity influencers had lower sharing rates, with 17.65% and 17.65% of the responses, respectively. Participants believed that their friends aged 18 to 34 listened to micro-influencers the most, with 26.47% of the responses. Nano-influencers were also considered influential among friends, with 20.59% of the responses. Macro influencers and celebrity influencers were less frequently mentioned, with 11.76% and 17.65% of the responses, respectively.

Category	Type_Item 1	Type_Item 2	Type_Item 3	Type_Item 3	Type_Item 4
Nano	6 (17.65%)	7 (20.59%)	8 (23.53%)	5 (14.71%)	7 (20.59%)
Micro	11 (32.35%)	10 (29.41%)	10 (29.41%)	12 (35.29%)	9 (26.47%)
Macro	8 (23.53%)	4 (11.76%)	3 (8.82%)	6 (17.65%)	4 (11.76%)
Celebrity	4 (11.76%)	6 (17.65%)	6 (17.65%)	8 (23.53%)	6 (17.65%)
Doesn't Matter	5 (14.71%)	6 (17.65%)	7 (20.59%)	3 (8.82%)	8 (23.53%)
Missing	0 (0.00%)	1 (2.94%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)

Total	34 (100%)	34 (100%)	34 (100%)	34 (100%)	34 (100%)
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Table 14. Type of Influencers Frequency Analysis

Type of Influencer Marketer

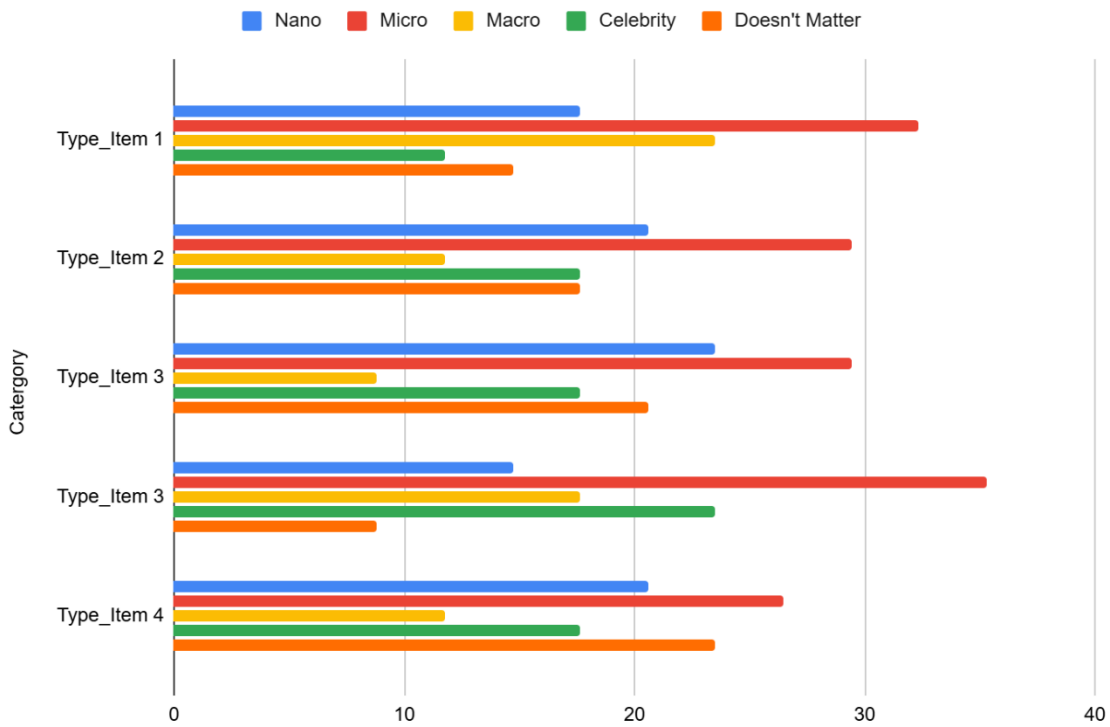


Figure 8. Type of Influencers Frequency Analysis

**Perceived value**

The perception of the value of influencer marketing was examined using a survey consisting of four items coded as PV\_1, PV\_2, PV\_3, and PV\_4 (See Table 15). Each item aimed to capture different aspects of how respondents perceive influencer content. For PV\_1 to PV\_3, a 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the perceived value of influencer content, where 1 represented "not valuable," 2 indicated "somewhat valuable," 3 reflected "neutral," 4 denoted "valuable," and 5 signified "very valuable." In contrast, PV\_4 assessed the type of perceived value respondents associated with influencers. This scale included five categories: 1 = credibility, 2 = authenticity and genuineness, 3 = relatability, 4 = ability to engage, and 5 = influencer alignment with the product they promote. This framework allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of both the perceived worth of influencer content and the specific qualities that contribute to respondents' trust and engagement.

Perceived value	Code
Thinking about your last encounter with an influencer, how valuable, did you find their content to be?	PV_1
When comparing influencers to traditional advertisements (e.g., TV commercials, billboards), how much do you trust the recommendations made by influencers?	PV_2
Do you believe the influencer you follow genuinely care about your needs and interests, or their goal is simply to promote their products	PV_3
Think about an influencer you follow and trust enough to act on their recommendations. What is the most important reason you follow and listen to them?	PV-4

Table 15: Perceived Value Survey Item Coding

Descriptive statistics were calculated for the four items (PV\_1, PV\_2, PV\_3, and PV\_4) measuring the perceived value of influencer marketing content. The number of valid responses varied slightly across items. PV\_1 had 33 valid responses with 1 missing value, PV\_2 had 32 valid responses with 2 missing values, while PV\_3 and PV\_4 each had 34 valid responses with no missing data. The mean scores reflect the average perceived value for each item. PV\_1 had a mean of 3.49 ( $SD = 1.00$ ), suggesting that respondents generally found influencer content valuable. PV\_2 recorded a mean of 3.41 ( $SD = 1.04$ ), indicating a moderate level of trust in influencer recommendations.

In contrast, PV\_3 had a lower mean of 2.59 ( $SD = 0.99$ ), reflecting that respondents were skeptical about whether influencers genuinely care about their needs when providing recommendations. PV\_4 had a mean of 2.71 ( $SD = 1.40$ ), implying that respondents hold diverse views on the most important reasons for following influencers. Their opinion on the type of value influence provides in terms of credibility, authenticity, relatability, and engagement, were diverse. The standard deviation values indicate response variability, with PV\_4 showing the highest variability ( $SD = 1.40$ ). Respondents show greater differences in how they perceive reasons for following influencers. PV\_1 had the lowest variability ( $SD = 1.00$ ), reflecting a more consistent perception of influencer content value. Overall, the descriptive analysis of central tendency and dispersion suggests that respondents largely view influencer content as valuable (See Table 16).

	PV_1	PV_2	PV_3	PV_4
Valid	33	32	34	34
Missing	1	2	0	0

	<b>PV_1</b>	<b>PV_2</b>	<b>PV_3</b>	<b>PV_4</b>
Mode	4.000	<sup>a</sup> 3.000	<sup>a</sup> 2.000	<sup>a</sup> 1.000
Mean	3.485	3.406	2.588	2.706
Std. Deviation	1.004	1.043	0.988	1.404

<sup>a</sup> The mode is computed, assuming that variables are discreet.

Table 16: Perceived Value Descriptive Statistics

Frequency analysis for the items measuring the perceived value of influencer content was also performed. For item 1, PV-1, most responses were concentrated around value 4 (39.4%), indicating that respondents found the content valuable. In contrast, responses for item 1, PV-2, were more dispersed. However, a large portion (34.4%) remained neutral, expressing no strong preference between influencers and traditional advertisements regarding trustworthiness. For PV-3, most respondents (38.2%) indicated that they only somewhat believe influencers genuinely care about their needs when making recommendations. Lastly, concerning PV\_4, Value 1 and value 4 (29.4% each) were the most frequent reasons for following influencers. This indicated that most of the respondents perceived influencer content as valuable because of the influencer's credibility and ability to create engaging content (See Figure 9).

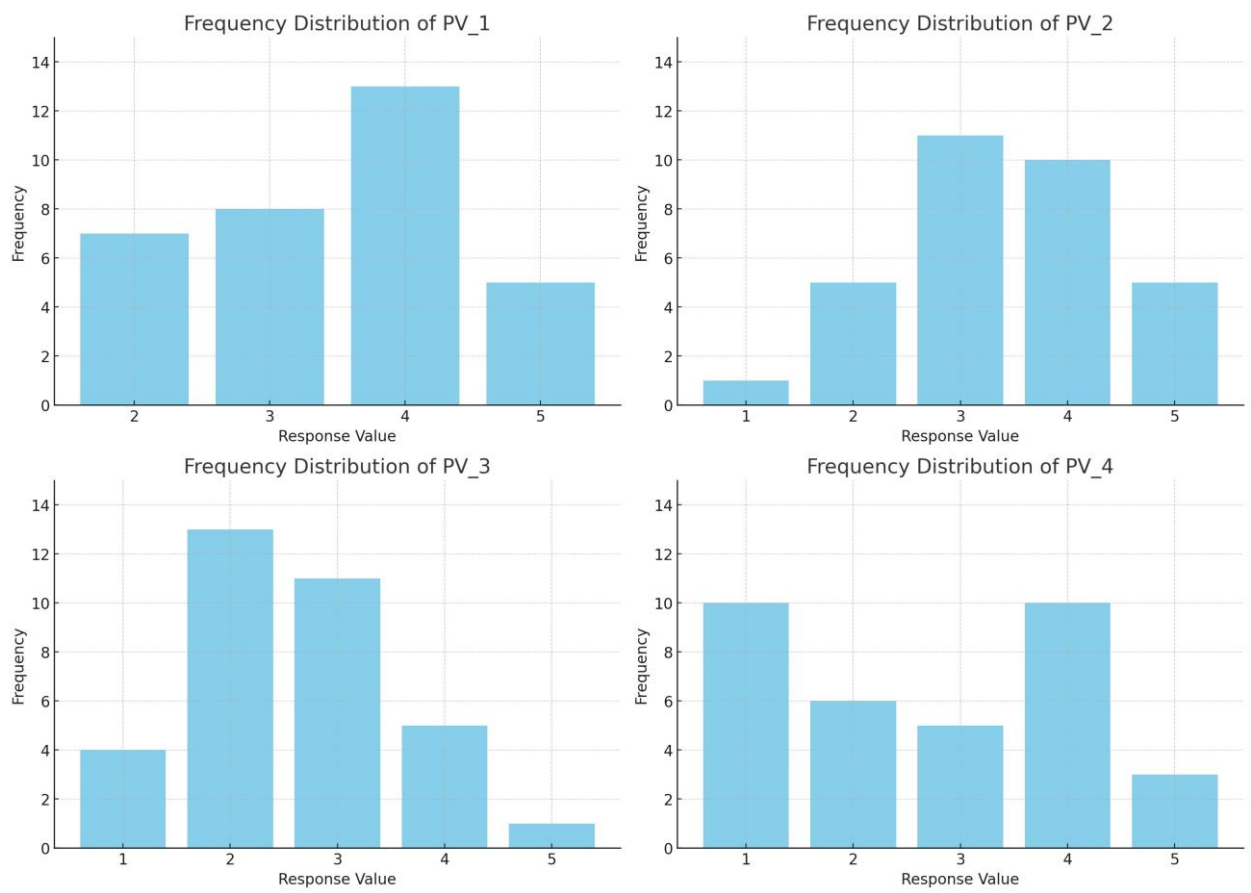


Figure 9: Perceived Value Frequency Distribution

### Purchasing behavior

The final section assessed whether influencer marketing influenced the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya. Four survey items were used to conduct this examination. Derived data was analyzed using descriptive analysis. Table 17 summarizes the means and standard deviations for each item.

Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Valid Responses	Missing Responses
PB_1 (When did you last make a purchase influenced by an influencer?)	3.000	1.518	34	0
PB_2 (Number of purchases influenced by an influencer in the past 6 months)	1.971	0.674	34	0

PB_3 (Influence of an influencer's recommendation compared to other factors)	3.000	1.000	33	1
PB_4 (Agreement with the statement that influencer recommendations impact purchasing behavior)	3.529	0.961	34	0

Table 17: Purchasing Behavior Item Coding

The findings indicated that influencer recommendations have a moderate impact on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya. Most respondents reported purchasing an item based on an influencer's recommendation within one to three months ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.518$ ), suggesting that influencer-driven purchasing decisions are relatively recent. Additionally, most respondents recalled making one to two purchases influenced by an influencer in the past six months ( $M = 1.971$ ,  $SD = 0.674$ ).

When comparing the influence of an influencer's recommendation to other factors such as price, quality, or brand reputation, respondents rated it as "moderately influential" ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.000$ ). This indicates that while influencers play a role in shaping purchasing decisions, other traditional factors remain significant. Furthermore, respondents generally agreed that influencer recommendations directly impact their purchasing behavior ( $M = 3.529$ ,  $SD = 0.961$ ), reinforcing the notion that influencers hold a persuasive, albeit not dominant, position in consumer decision-making.

The frequency analysis reveals that nearly half of the respondents (47.1%) reported making a purchase influenced by an influencer over the last month, indicating a relatively recent and active impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavior. Additionally, 29.4% could not recall the timing of their last influencer-driven purchase, suggesting that while influencers play a role, the influence may not always leave a lasting impression. Regarding the number of purchases, the majority (55.9%) reported making one to two purchases, influenced by an influencer in the past six months, while a smaller proportion (20.6%) made three to four purchases. This suggests that influencer marketing leads to occasional rather than frequent buying decisions.

When assessing the degree of influence, 38.2% of respondents rated influencer recommendations as "moderately influential," while 29.4% considered them "slightly influential." Only 8.8% viewed influencer recommendations as the "most influential" factor, implying

that while influencers play a role in purchasing decisions, other factors such as price and product quality remain critical. In terms of agreement with the impact of influencer marketing, more than half of the respondents (52.9%) agreed that influencer recommendations directly influence their purchasing behavior, while only 8.8% strongly agreed. Conversely, a small proportion (11.8%) disagreed or strongly disagreed, suggesting that while influencers are generally perceived as influential, the intensity of their impact varies among consumers. The findings, in general, indicate that while influencer marketing does affect the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya, the influence is moderate and complements other decision-making factors rather than being the sole driving force.

Item	Response	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
<b>PB_1: Last purchase influenced by an influencer</b>	Within the last week	4	11.8
	Within the last month	16	47.1
	More than 3 months ago	4	11.8
	I cannot recall	10	29.4
<b>PB_2: Number of purchases influenced by an influencer</b>	None	8	23.5
	1-2 purchases	19	55.9
	3-4 purchases	7	20.6
<b>PB_3: Influence of influencer recommendations</b>	Not at all influential	1	2.9
	Slightly influential	10	29.4
	Moderately influential	13	38.2
	Highly influential	6	17.6
<b>PB_4: Agreement with influencer impact on purchasing</b>	Most influential	3	8.8
	Strongly disagree	2	5.9
	Disagree	2	5.9
	Neutral	9	26.5
	Agree	18	52.9
	Strongly agree	3	8.8

Table 18: Frequency Distribution of Influencer Marketing Impact on Purchasing Behavior.

## 5 Conclusion

### 5.1 Answers to research questions

The study's main research question was to establish the impact of influencer marketing on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya. This research question was addressed through two sub-research questions that focused on specific aspects of influencer marketing. The first sub-question was to establish what type of influencer marketers (nano, micro, Macro, and Celebrity influencers) have the most impact on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya. The second was to establish how young Kenyan's perception of the value of influencer marketing impacts their purchase decisions. The questions were answered by conducting statistical analyses of the survey data collected from young adults in the country.

Research Question	Answer
<b>Sub-question 1: What type of influencer marketers (nano, micro, macro, &amp; Celebrity influencers) have a major impact on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya?</b>	The statistical analysis established that micro-influencers had the biggest impact on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya. The superior impact of these influencers was confirmed by different statistical measures. For instance, the frequency distributions and measures of central tendency revealed that respondents predominantly recognized micro-influencers as the most trusted and influential sources of recommendations. Nano-influencers also showed notable influence, particularly in terms of being followed and influencing recent purchases. However, the data consistently points to micro-influencers having a major influence across various dimensions of purchasing behavior among young adults in Kenya. This implies micro influencers are the most influential, followed by nano. Macro and celebrity influencers appear to have a lower but still notable influence.

<b>Sub-question 2: How does young Kenyan adults' perception of the value of influencer marketing impact their purchase decisions?</b>	Results from the survey indicated that the perceived value of influencer content plays a crucial role in shaping purchasing decisions. The analysis indicated that the purchasing behavior of the respondent is likely to be positively influenced if they perceive an influence content as valuable. The content is perceived as valuable if the respondent believes it is credible, trustworthy, useful, and resonates with them. If it has these attributes, the analysis indicated that it could positively influence their purchasing behavior. Even though the statistics suggest that the respondents were not fully certain that influencers cared about their needs, they still perceived their content as valuable. Perceived value can therefore be said to be multi-dimension. Influencers don't need to fully care about their followers' needs; they only need to create credible, useful, and engaging content to influence their audience.
<b>Main Question: What is the impact of influencer marketing on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya?</b>	Based on the answers to the first and second sub-questions, it can be concluded that influencer marketing has a moderate but notable impact on influencer marketing. Choosing the right type of influencer, particularly micro-influencers, and ensuring their content is valuable or perceived as such will enhance the impact of influencer marketing on young adults' purchasing decisions in Kenya. The data indicated that most of the respondents made purchases recently based on influence recommendation and this recommendation can be linked most to micro followed by nano-influencers. However, factors like price, quality, and brand reputation were established to have notable influence. This implies that influencer marketing is only part of the factors with influence. It acts as a complement not the sole driver of purchase decisions.

Table 19: presents the answers to the research question

## 5.2 Discussion

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research on the impact of influencer marketing conducted in various parts of the world. For instance, the findings indicating that micro-influencers, followed by nano-influencers are likely to have a relatively higher impact on purchasing behavior align with the works of researchers (Chui & Ho, 2023; Brewster & Lu 2020). Specifically, Chui and Ho (2023) argued that micro-influencers are more likely to encourage measurable action such as actual purchases compared to traditional celebrity influencers. Similarly, Brewster and Lyu (2020) identified that nano-influencers can have a greater impact on purchasing behaviour due to their stronger parasocial relationships with followers. These findings also join the group of studies that contradict Rahman's (2022) findings that macro and celebrity influencers have the greatest impact.

When it comes to perceived value, this study again collaborates the findings arrived at by previous researchers in different parts of the world. For instance, it collaborates with researchers such as Ayob et al. (2023), Brewster and Lyu (2020), and Lou and Kim (2019), who emphasized the importance of source credibility, authenticity, relatability, and higher engagement rates dimension of perceived value in enhancing the impact of influencer marketing. Findings from past researchers, such as Brewster and Lyu (2020), suggesting that influencers tend to create strong parasocial relationships, could explain why respondents perceived influencer content as valuable despite being sceptical about whether influencers genuinely care about them. A parasocial relationship is a one-sided connection in which individuals feel a strong bond with a public figure (Brewster & Lyu, 2020). In such relationships, the audience does not need to feel that the influencer personally cares for them. They follow the influencer's recommendations if they perceive the content as valuable.

The findings of the study can also be explained using the SET and UGT. The SET clarifies why followers act on influencers' recommendations. For instance, followers are likely to act on the recommendation because they believe the benefits (the identified value of the content) outweigh perceived costs or risks (such as scepticism or discussion). Young adults are likely to act on the recommendation of micro and nano influencers because the perceived relatability, authenticity, and credibility, are higher than any disadvantage associated with following these influencers. The UGT theory explains why young adults may

opt to consume influence content. This study revealed that young adults purposefully consume influencer content to satisfy a range of gratifications. This include obtaining reliable product information, enjoying entertainment, and forging a sense of connection. When influencers successfully meet these needs, the content's impact on purchasing decisions is amplified. However, the moderate overall influence observed suggests that while the content's value is worthwhile, it operates alongside other decision-making factors, such as price and quality considerations.

### 5.3 Implications and Recommendations for Kenyan Firms

The findings have significant implications for marketers and firms in Kenya. Firms and marketers can use these findings to harness the full potential of influencer marketing. The fact that this study has established smaller influencers have a bigger impact on consumer purchasing behavior implies that organizations should prioritize partnering with such influencers. They should particularly prioritize micro-influencers followed by nano-influencers. Such influencers are not only more impactful, but they are arguably more cost-effective and hence will return a higher rate of investment compared to larger influencers (macro and celebrities).

Secondly, firms, marketers, and influencers are advised to enhance the quality and authenticity of their influencer content. The recommendation is issued considering the quality, authenticity, and credibility of the content have been established as dimensions of perceived value likely to influence consumers' purchase decisions. Marketers should strive to identify specifically which content they perceive as valuable and train or make sure the micro and nano influencers they partner with are able to deliver such content.

While the study identified micro and nano influencers as the most impactful, it also established that larger influencer have some notable influence. These insights coupled with the fact that studies have indicated that each type of influence can serve a different role in marketing should encourage marketers and businesses to diversify their influencers' portfolio. Smaller influencers can be used for hyper-local and niche targeting, while larger influencers (macro and celebrity) can be used occasionally for brand visibility. Adopting such a balanced portfolio approach can lead to the establishment of a resilient marketing strategy.

#### 5.4 Suggest Future Research

Despite the study's valuable contributions, several limitations should be acknowledged. One notable limitation is the limited sample size. Due to time constraints, whereby only a few respondents were available, the study was forced to rely on a sample of only 34 young adults. Such a sample size may not fully capture the diversity of the Kenyan market. This small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings. Future research should aim to include a larger and more heterogeneous sample to enhance representativeness. Secondly, the study, due to the small sample size relied on descriptive statistics. While descriptive statistics provided meaningful insights into trends and patterns, the lack of advanced inferential analyses limits the ability to make causal claims. Future studies should consider combining descriptive with inferential statistics. While these limitations are, in part, a reflection of resource constraints, they provide a roadmap for future research endeavours.

#### 5.5 Validity and Reliability

Content validity was guaranteed by carefully designing the survey questionnaire to comprehensively capture all relevant aspects of the research objectives. Each item was directly aligned with the core constructs being investigated, namely the type of influencer marketing, perceived value of influencer content, and purchasing behaviour. To enhance content validity, the questionnaire items were reviewed and refined with reference to established academic literature and expert opinion in marketing and consumer behaviour research. This process helped confirm that the survey questions adequately represented the theoretical dimensions under study and minimized the risk of omitting important elements related to influencer marketing and purchasing behaviour among young adults in Kenya.

In terms of reliability, internal consistency analysis was performed because this was a quantitative study, Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis was conducted. Cronbach's alpha is a statistical method used to measure the degree to which survey items that propose to measure the same general construct produce similar scores. A Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.7 or higher is generally considered acceptable for demonstrating good reliability (Izah, Sylva, & Hait, 2023). In general, the analysis showed satisfactory internal consistency levels. The "Type of Influencer Marketing Impact" scale, comprising five items, had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.774, indicating acceptable reliability. The "Perceived Value of Influencer Content" scale, with 4 items, demonstrated excellent internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.947. Lastly, the "Purchasing Behavior Influence" scale, consisting of

four items, yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.788, also reflecting acceptable reliability. Table 20 below summarizes the Cronbach's alpha reliability results for the scale used.

<b>Construct/Scale</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Type of Influencer Marketing Impact	4	0.774	Acceptable internal consistency
Perceived Value of Influencer Content	4	0.947	Excellent internal consistency
Purchasing Behaviour Influence	4	0.788	Acceptable internal consistency

Table 20: Reliability Results of Item Lists

## 6 Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the impact of influencer marketing on the purchasing behavior of young adults in Kenya. It focused on how the types of influencers and the perceived value of their content affect consumer purchasing behaviour. The study was necessitated by the lack of empirical study covering the young Kenyan market. Background research established that, like in other parts of the world, influencer marketing is in upward trajectory within Kenya. Unfortunately, the number of studies investigating how these marketing affecting consumers' purchasing behaviour is limited.

The research applied Social Exchange Theory (SET) and the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to explain the reciprocal nature of influencer-follower relationships and the motivations behind media consumption. These frameworks provided insights into why young adults trust and act on influencer recommendations. A quantitative research methodology, utilizing structured online survey distributed via social media platforms, was utilized. Collected data were analysed using the JASP software.

After analysis, the thesis established that micro-influencers have the most substantial impact on purchasing behavior. Across multiple survey items, micro-influencers consistently emerged as the most followed and the most trusted for product recommendations. Nano-influencers also exhibited notable influence, while macro- and celebrity influencers had a comparatively lower impact. Respondents indicated that micro-influencers' content was the most likely to be shared and that their peers also relied on micro-influencers for purchasing decisions.

Perceived value was also established to be a crucial determinant of influencer effectiveness. The study measured this through dimensions such as credibility, authenticity, reliability, and engagement. It established that participants value influencer content that is credible and engaging the most. Despite the perceived trustworthiness of influencers compared to traditional advertisements, there was scepticism about whether influencers genuinely prioritize audience interests over commercial motives.

When the two variables (type of influencer and perceived values) were linked to Purchasing behavior, it was noted that influencer marketing has a moderate effect on young adults' decisions. Approximately 47.1% of respondents had made a purchase influenced by an influencer within the last month, and the majority reported making one to two purchases in the past six months. However, while influencers play a significant role, other factors such as price and product quality remain influential in final purchasing decisions.

To conclude, this study underscores the strategic importance of leveraging micro- and nano-influencers in the Kenyan market. Their perceived credibility and ability to engage audiences make them the most effective at influencing consumer behaviour. These insights can inform businesses seeking to optimize influencer marketing strategies and contribute to the scholarly understanding of influencer marketing in emerging economies.

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## Appendix 1. Survey Questionnaire

### **Background**

Questionnaire on Influencer Marketing and Purchasing Behaviour of Young Adults in Kenya

### **Section A: Demographic Information**

**1. Age:**

- 18-24
- 25-29
- 30-34

**2. Gender:**

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

**3. Level of Education:**

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What is your approximate monthly income?**

- Less than KES 20,000
- Less than KES 20,000
- KES 50,001 - 100,000

- More than KES 100,000

**5. Approximately, how many hours per day do you typically spend on social media?**

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 3-4 hours
- More than 4 hours

**6. Which social media platform(s) do you use most frequently? (Select all that apply)**

- Instagram
- Facebook
- TikTok
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Do you actively follow influencers on these platforms?**

- Yes
- No

**Section C: Type of Influencer Marketers**

Section B

(In this section select by ticking (✓), the answer that most apply to your situation)

Section B: Social Media Usage *Instructions: Please answer the following questions. For statements, indicate your level of agreement using the following scale by ticking the arrow that applies to (✓)*

**8. When was the last time you saw an influencer recommending a product or brand in general?**

No.	Question	Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)
1	Today	
2	One day ago	
3	Approximately one week Ago	
4	Approximately a month ago	
5	About 6 – 1 year ago	

**9. Which type of product (brand) do you believe the influencer recommend?**

No.	Question	Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)
1	Fashion/Clothing/Beauty products	
2	Electronics	
3	Food/Beverages	
4	Health/Fitness Products	
5	Travel/Leisure	

**10. Did you check on the number of followers the influencer had, if yes approximately how many followers?**

No.	Question	Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)
1	Not at all	
2	Slightly	
3	Depends	
4	Somewhat yes	
5	Absolutely yes	

11. When you think about it, how likely are you to act on a recommendation from an influencer with a few thousand followers compared to one with hundreds of thousands or even a million followers?

No.	Question	Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)
1	Rarely	
2	Sometimes	
3	Depends	
4	Often	
5	Very often	

#### Section D: Perceived Value

12. Thinking about your last encounter with an influencer, how valuable did you find their content to be?

No.	Question	Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)
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1	Not valuable	
2	Somewhat valuable	
3	Not sure	
4	Valuable	
5	Very valuable	

13. When comparing influencers to traditional advertisements (e.g., TV commercials, billboards), how much do you trust the recommendations made by influencers?

No.	Question	Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)
1	Much less trustworthy	
2	Somewhat trustworthy	
3	Not sure	
4	Trustworthy	
5	Much more trustworthy	

14. Do you believe the influencer you follow genuinely care about your needs and interests, or their goal is simply to promote their products

No.	Question	Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)
1	Not all	
2	Somewhat they do	

3	Not sure	
4	They care	
5	They care a lot	

15. Think about an influencer you follow and whose recommendations you trust enough to act on. What is the most important reason you follow and listen to them?

No.	Question	Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)
1	Their credibility (expertise or knowledge in what they promote)	
2	Their authenticity and genuineness	
3	Their relatability (they feel like someone I can connect with personally)	
4	Their ability to create engaging or entertaining content	
5	Their alignment with the product they promote (eg Model promoting beauty product, car mechanic promoting auto spares).	

### Section E: Impact on Purchasing Behavior

16. When did you last make a purchase that you attribute, at least partly, to an influencer's recommendation?

<b>No.</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)</b>
1	Within the last week	
2	Within the last month	
3	Within the last 1–3 months	
4	More than 3 months ago	
5	I cannot recall	

17. In the past six months, how many purchases can you recall that were influenced by an influencer's recommendation?

<b>No.</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)</b>
1	None	
2	1–2	
3	3–4	
4	5 or more	
5	I cannot recall	

18. Compared to other factors (e.g., price, quality, or brand reputation), the influencer's recommendation played a?

<b>No.</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)</b>
1	Not at all influential	
2	Slightly influential	
3	Moderately influential	

4	Highly influential	
5	The most influential factor in my purchase decision.	

19. Overall, I agree that influencer recommendations directly impact my purchasing behaviour.

<b>No.</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Tick the best option (Only one option) (✓)</b>
1	Strongly Disagree	
2	Disagree	
3	Neutral	
4	Agree	
5	Strongly Agree	

**The End**