SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT MARKETING INFLUENCE ON PURCHASING DECISIONS IN KENYA

[1*] **Jerom Mutwiri Kithinji**
jeromkithinji@gmail.com

[2**] **Daniel Kipkirui Langat**
dlangat@cuk.ac.ke

[3***] **Denis Kamau Muthoni**
dkamau@cuk.ac.ke

[1,2,3] *The Co-operative University of Kenya*

Purpose: *Consumers are becoming more informed in their purchasing decisions. Businesses are embracing digital marketing tactics like social media content marketing to influence customers' purchase decisions as a marketing strategy to remain competitive. The research sought to determine how social media content marketing influences Kenyan customers' purchase decisions.*

Methodology: *The research employed a descriptive research design, and the study utilized questionnaires to collect data from social media users residing in Nairobi. Distribution of questionnaires was facilitated via email and various social media platforms.*

Findings: *The study established that quality social media content significantly improves consumer buying decisions, suggesting that marketing tactics and purchase decisions correlate positively. Regression analysis showed that social media marketing activities influenced the buying decision, suggesting that a higher degree of marketing techniques will result in more consumer purchases.*

Keywords: *Social Media Content Marketing, Digital Consumers, Purchase Decision*

INTRODUCTION

The expansion of the internet has brought forth both prospects and risks for businesses. The web has empowered customers with knowledge and information, thus enabling them to make informed purchase decisions (Farooq & Raju, 2019). Whereas for companies, the web has expanded the areas of operations by making the world a global village. Companies can sell and ship to any place quickly, promoted by efficient technology like e-commerce (Farooq & Raju, 2019). The availability of information and the expansion of international marketing have necessitated companies to adopt technologically akin solutions to avail as much information to customers and attract consumers worldwide to remain competitive, such as digital marketing solutions.

Social media marketing has become an essential tactic for businesses in Kenya looking to sway consumers' decisions about what to buy. The utilization of social media-based marketing has surged over the past decade, attributed to the decreased costs of smartphones and improved internet connectivity. Moreover, the Kenyan government has actively encouraged the adoption of the digital economy, resulting in increased engagement in digital marketing endeavors, including Social media marketing, by businesses in the nation (Wilson & Makau, 2018). Kenya's companies have been quick to capitalize on this trend, with a growing number of businesses using social media to interact with current clients on internet channels and attract new ones, promote

products/services, and build relationships with their target audiences. Kenyan companies have adopted social media advertising, with Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn being the most widely used networks.

Companies view digital consumers as a threat due to their power compared to other types of consumers. Digital consumers' attributes that make them a threat to the company are that they are many in numbers, engage in networking activities, are aware of their needs, are mobile, and exact some control over their communication and business activities (Rakić & Rakić, 2019). These attributes have also led to a change in consumer behavior, thus the need for companies to adopt new marketing strategies. Some of the techniques that companies are adopting are social media marketing activities.

In today's technologically driven era, the market is filled with numerous brands offering similar products, each highlighting their unique values to entice consumers. To capture potential customers' attention and save time, brands leverage social media as a powerful platform to showcase their offerings and provide product information (Ansari et al., 2019). Through social media, brands aim to attract digital consumers and build strong connections by effectively communicating their value propositions (Ansari et al., 2019). By effectively utilizing social media to showcase their products and values, brands can influence consumers' purchase decisions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The influence of social media content marketing on purchasing decisions in Kenya is a topic of growing interest and importance in the field of marketing. With the rise of social media platforms and the increasing use of these platforms by consumers, businesses are recognizing the potential of social media content marketing as a tool to influence consumer behavior and drive purchasing decisions. However, there is a need for further research to understand the specific impact of social media content marketing on purchasing decisions in the Kenyan context.

Existing literature has explored the impacts of social media on consumer buying intention (Pütter, 2017). This research has identified emerging and successful strategies for improving consumer engagement through social media. Additionally, studies have examined the influence of influencer marketing, online advertising, and content marketing on purchasing decisions (Prasetya et al., 2021). These studies have focused on specific industries and populations, such as online stores in Central Java, and have found significant effects on purchasing decisions.

Other research has analyzed the influence of social media marketing, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), and brand awareness on purchasing decisions (Gabriella et al., 2022). These studies have highlighted the mediating role of brand awareness and the importance of social media marketing in shaping consumer behavior. Furthermore, the role of brand image as a mediator between social media marketing and purchasing decisions has been explored (Narayana & Rahanatha, 2020). These studies have found that brand image plays a significant role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

The impact of social media marketing on purchase decisions has also been examined in the context of specific products, such as coffee and food products (Tauran et al., 2022). These studies have found that social media marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions, mediated by factors such as brand image and purchase intention. Additionally, the role of purchase intention as a mediator between e-WOM, e-WOM credibility, and purchase decisions has been investigated (Arta & Yasa, 2019). These studies have found that e-WOM credibility has a positive and significant influence on purchase intention and purchase decisions.

The concept of Web 2.0 and its integration into marketing planning has been explored (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Despite the lack of an accepted definition and extensive research, the corporate world has embraced the concept of Web 2.0 and is integrating various forms of social media into their marketing strategies. This highlights the growing importance of social media in marketing practices.

Furthermore, the influence of social media marketing and brand awareness on purchase decisions, mediated by purchase intention, has been studied (Dermawan et al., 2022). These studies have found that purchase intention can act as an intervening variable between social media marketing and purchase decisions. Additionally, the active behavior of consumers in social media has been identified as a changing factor in the marketing landscape (Heinonen, 2011).

The influence of viral marketing, content creation, collaboration, and Instagram endorsement on consumer decisions has also been examined ("The Influence of Content Creation, Collaboration, Instagram Endorsement on Consumer Decisions (Case Study of "Bella Saphira's Make-Up")", 2023). These studies have found that higher levels of content creation and viral marketing can lead to higher purchase decisions. Additionally, the influence of product quality, brand ambassador, and social media marketing on online buying decisions has been investigated (Ningrum & Hayuningtias, 2022). These studies have found mixed results, with some indicating significant effects and others showing no significant influence.

Overall, while there is a growing body of research on the influence of social media content marketing on purchasing decisions, there is a need for further investigation in the Kenyan context. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the specific impact of social media content marketing on purchasing decisions in Kenya. By understanding the factors that influence consumer behavior and purchasing decisions in the Kenyan market, businesses can develop more effective social media content marketing strategies to drive sales and improve customer engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Customer purchase decisions can be explained using consumer decision models such as the AIDA Model, abbreviated Attention, Passion, Aspiration, and Effort. The framework was created by Elias St. Elmo Lewis in 1898. (Fetherstonhaugh & Worldwide, 2016). The model has been adopted in the advertising segment of marketing. It presents a framework businesses can use to develop, target, and share their advertising messages (Nevalainen, 2019). The AIDA model forwards four steps marketers should aim for and take potential customers through to make a purchase. The first step is getting the attention of the potential customers; marketers should aim to capture the attention of their target customers and make them aware of the products and services they are offering (Mumtaz, 2019). The next step in the model is to draw the target audience's interest. In this step, the marketers should present the benefits and features that appeal to the audience. After appealing to the desires of the target consumers, the next objective that the advisement or marketing strategy should aim to achieve is to create a craving or emotional connection that highlights the manner in which the product or service addresses the needs and desires of the customers. (Mumtaz, 2019). The last step is to motivate the target consumers to make or take action, which can be buying the product or service, visiting a specific website, or subscribing to a particular newsletter.

The AIDA model is effective in developing practical marketing activities that can be used to influence consumers' decisions. By applying different activities, marketers can achieve the goals of attracting and

influencing consumers' decisions (Weng et al., 2021). The AIDA model underpins an understating of how different marketing strategies help bring and influence consumer behaviors of businesses. According to Mumtaz (2019), the AIDA model is highly compatible with digital marketing. This model provides invaluable guidance to marketers as they cultivate effective marketing endeavors in the online domain, facilitating the journey of potential customers through the four stages of the purchasing process. The model in the study helped understand the different strategies and their aim in driving consumers' purchase decisions in the four steps outlined by the model.

Empirical Review

Ansari, Ghori, Ansari, and Kazi (2019) investigated how social media content exerts influence over the decision-making process of Pakistani consumers when selecting a purchase. According to their definition, social media content marketing is a tactic companies use to produce and disseminate essential information to increase revenue. They utilized social media content marketing as an independent variable. They applied an online questionnaire approach, a sample size of 150 respondents, and a quantitative study methodology. Ansari et al. (2019) found a significant correlation between customer purchasing decisions and social media content marketing activities**.**

The study of Mgbame and Iyadi (2022) was to determine how the Nigerian non-alcoholic beverage industry's content marketing strategy affected consumer engagement. The study aimed to close the information gap about how content marketing affects consumer engagement. They took a quantitative approach to their research. The sample population comprised 274 employees from chosen businesses in Lagos State, Nigeria's non-alcoholic beverage industry. According to their findings, the content marketing approach significantly improves consumer engagement in Nigeria's non-alcoholic beverage sector. Customer engagement was correlated considerably with content marketing characteristics, such as information quality, co-creation of content, content marketing channels, and message source credibility (Mgbame & Iyadi, 2022). Moreover, their conclusion asserted that content marketing strategies boost consumer engagement within the non-alcoholic beverage industry in Nigeria.

Kitetu (2022) sought to determine how digital marketing affected Kenyan private hospitality institutions' student enrollment. They used a descriptive design for their study. The study's population comprised 7,813 students from Nairobi County's 35 hospitality institutions. There were 381 responders in the research sample population. They found that student enrollment at hospitality institutions was positively improved by content marketing. According to Kitetu (2022), digital marketing communication methods significantly increase student enrollment in Kenyan private hospitality colleges.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive research design. Descriptive research gathers information about the current status to draw a description and interpretation. The research took place in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area of Kenya due to its substantial population of digital consumers and a high concentration of internet and social media users. These areas exhibit an elevated number of users of social media within the country. Thus, the study population was individuals who actively or have used social media platforms in the research study area. Since there are no precise statistics regarding social media users, the study adopted the formula of calculating the sample size of an infinite population proposed by Singh and Masuku (2014) due to a lack of data on the target population. The sample size adopted thus was 384, with a confidence level of 95%. The 5-point Likert scale

was included in the study's structured questionnaire to gather data for the quantitative portion. The Likert scale was utilized to gauge the extent of agreement among respondents regarding a statement, ranging from 5 (strong agreement) to 1 (total disagreement). (Kothari, 2004). The study used correlation analysis to establish the nature of the current link between the dependent variable and the statistically significant independent variables. Multiple regression analysis was used in the study.

The regression equation was in the form of

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$

Where Y= Purchase Decision, β_0= Constant; β_1 =Coefficients of determination; X1= Social media content marketing; ε = Error term

RESULTS

Two hundred and eleven distributed surveys were completed and submitted, translating to a 54.95% response rate. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), analysis and reporting can be considered adequate at a 50% response rate, good at 60%, and excellent when it surpasses 70%. As a result, the research could utilize the 55% response rate to conduct its analysis.

Social Media Content Marketing Descriptive Statistics

The study objective was to evaluate the effects of social media content marketing on Kenyan digital customers' purchase decisions was the study's first objective. The results for the particular analysis from the responses received are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Social Media Content Marketing

Statement	N	SD	D	N	SA	A	Mean Statistics	Standard Deviation
I find the information in social media to express facts well	211	4.70%	14.20%	30.80%	31.20%	18.50%	3.450237	1.088996
Social media content posted by companies try to persuade me to buy a product	211	5.20%	4.70%	17.50%	39.30%	33.20%	3.905213	1.075589
I find social media content to have relevant information about products and services.	211	3.80%	9.80%	25.60%	37.90%	23.20%	3.67298	1.04956
Social media content guides my decision-making process when making a purchase	211	9.00%	13.70%	22.70%	29.90%	24.60%	3.473934	1.247949
Aggregate							3.63	1.118

The aggregate mean score of 3.63, as presented in Table 1, indicates that, on average, respondents in the study had a moderately positive perception of the impact of social media content marketing on consumers' purchase

choices. The standard deviation of 1.118 suggests that the responses were relatively dispersed around the mean but not highly variable.

With a mean of 3.45 and a standard deviation of 1089, most respondents believed that the information being shared on social media was factual, with a substantial number (30.8%) being neutral. The majority of businesses posted in an attempt to convince participants to make a purchase, according to the participants' feedback, as seen by the 3.905 mean and 1.049 standard deviations. Most participants felt that social media material influenced their purchasing decision-making, with a mean score of 3.672 and a standard deviation of 1.049. However, 22.7% expressed neutrality, with a significant number (12.6%) either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

Most respondents stated that social media information influenced their purchasing decision-making, with an average figure of 3.474 and an SD of 1.248. The results in the table above indicate that most participants were aware of their social media marketing and that most companies utilize social media as a tool for marketing purposes. The results further suggest that social media marketing substantially influenced the participants' decision to buy, as 54.5% affirmed. However, 22.7% were neutral, and 21.7% said social media marketing did not influence buying decisions. Social media significantly impacts shopping decisions for many, but not all, participants.

The study concludes that social media content marketing significantly positively impacts the purchasing decisions of digital consumers in Kenya, as indicated by a mean of 3.63. The relatively low standard deviation of 1.18 reflects reasonable consistency in the responses.

Inferential Statistics

The researcher used inferential statistics to establish the relationship between social media content marketing strategies and purchasing decisions. Correlation and regression analysis was done to determine the direction and strength of this relationship.

Correlation Analysis

Table 1 represents the correlation analysis that was done to determine the strength between social media content marketing and the decision to purchase

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

		Social media marketing	Purchase Decision
Social media Content marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.621**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	211	211
Purchase Decision	Pearson Correlation	.621**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	211	211

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

The results in Table 1 show that the Pearson's correlation coefficient for social media content advertising was (r=0.621, p=0.000). The r value indicates that social media content marketing and the decision to purchase have a relatively strong positive correlation, and given the p-value of 0.000, the correlation coefficient is statistically significant.

Regression Analysis

The researcher conducted a regression Analysis to determine the relationship between social media content marketing and purchasing decisions. The Model summary is presented in Table 2. The coefficient of determination (R squared) represents how strongly the independent and dependent variables are related. It is 0.386, indicating that social media could explain 38.6% of the variation in Purchasing Decisions, and the adjusted R square is 0.383, which accounts for the model's predictor count.

Table 3: Model Summary

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.621[a]	.386	.383	.747537594170

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social media content marketing
b. Dependent Variable: Decision to purchase

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The ANOVA analysis was done to determine the overall significance of the regression model. In particular, the F-statistic was used to measure whether the variances between groups significantly differ from those within groups. Table 3 shows the ANOVA analysis results. The F-statistic is 131.325, with a significance value of 0.000. A larger F-statistic suggests that the predictors are good at explaining variation in the dependent variable. Therefore, we can say that the model significantly explains the variance in Purchase Decision and can be used to predict the effect of social media content marketing on the decision to purchase.

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	73.386	1	73.386	131.325	.000[b]
	Residual	116.792	209	.559		
	Total	190.178	210			

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social media content marketing

Coefficients of Determinants

The researcher sought to establish the coefficients of the independent variables and how they affect the dependent variable. Table 4 is a coefficient table result. It indicates that the Constant coefficient was 0.141, with a p-value of 0.001, which is the purchase decision when social media content marketing is zero. The coefficient for the decision to purchase is 0.402, with a p-value of 0.000.

Table 5: Coefficients Table

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.141	.227		3.306	.001
	Social media marketing	.402	.070	.343	11.460	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

The regression model is thus y=0.141+0.402x. The regression results imply that with each unit increase in social media marketing, there is a parallel increase of 0.402 units in purchase choices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The research focused on investigating the effects of social media content on purchase decisions from various perspectives, including the satisfaction of social media users with content provided by different companies. Descriptive statistics indicated that most participants trust social media content and perceive it as high quality. Subsequent correlation analysis unveiled a robust and positive relationship between social media content and purchasing decisions. Additionally, the regression analysis indicated that social media content, as one of the factors, notably influenced the purchase decisions of digital consumers. As a result, the study concludes that incorporating high-quality social media content enhances consumers' purchase decisions.

Based on the data analysis and findings, the study recommends that businesses keep putting resources into creating excellent social media content that appeals to their target audience. They should also regularly assess and improve the quality and relevance of social media content to maintain and strengthen consumer trust.

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