

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES (CoBAMS)

SCHOOL OF STATISTICS AND PLANNING

THE INFLUENCE OF TARGETED ADVERTISING, INFLUENCER
MARKETING AND USER GENERATED CONTENT ON PURCHASE
DECISIONS AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AT MAKERERE
UNIVERSITY

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PLANNING IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF STATISTICS OF
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has never been submitted to any University or institution for any academic award.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the version of me that did this course. You showed up when it was simple, when it was difficult, when you wanted to. You dedicated time and pushed yourself because you knew this would be worth it.

And for my people that held space for me, listened to me talk about things they didn't understand and brought joy in the periods of darkness, I appreciate it.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of targeted advertising, influencer marketing, and user generated content on purchase decisions among undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning at Makerere University. The study was motivated by the rapid growth of social media marketing globally and in Uganda, and the limited empirical evidence on how these marketing dimensions influence purchase decisions among university students in the local context. The study was guided by three specific objectives: to assess the extent to which targeted advertising influences purchase decisions, to determine the effect of influencer marketing on purchase decisions, and to examine the role of user generated content on purchase decisions among undergraduate students at Makerere University.

The study adopted a quantitative research design and employed a cross sectional survey approach. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 143 undergraduate students. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, chi square analysis, and multinomial logistic regression using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.

The demographic findings revealed that the majority of respondents were male (65.7%) and aged between 18 and 21 years (71.3%). The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.50, which is acknowledged as a limitation of the study. The chi square analysis revealed that targeted advertising ($\chi^2 = 62.265$, $p = 0.081$), influencer marketing ($\chi^2 = 63.303$, $p = 0.068$), and user generated content ($\chi^2 = 36.485$, $p = 0.711$) did not have statistically significant relationships with purchase decisions at the 0.05 significance level. The multinomial logistic regression confirmed that the overall model was not significant. However, the parameter estimates revealed that targeted advertising was a significant predictor of one specific category of purchase decisions ($B = 1.611$, $Wald = 4.607$, $p = 0.032$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 5.008$).

The study concluded that social media marketing does not significantly influence purchase decisions among undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning at Makerere University. It is recommended that businesses targeting this demographic adopt more evidence-based marketing strategies, that Makerere University incorporate digital literacy programs into its curriculum, and that future researchers replicate this study across other schools and universities in Uganda using a Likert scale to improve instrument reliability.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The rapid growth of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and WhatsApp has fundamentally transformed the way businesses communicate with their customers (Chadwick 2019). Social media marketing, which involves the use of these platforms to promote products and services, has emerged as one of the most powerful tools in modern digital marketing (Tuten 2017). Unlike traditional marketing channels, social media allows for real-time interaction, targeted advertising, and user generated content that can significantly shape consumer perceptions and behavior (Shareef et al., 2019). The transition from traditional to digital marketing has been one of the most significant shifts in the history of commerce, changing how businesses allocate their marketing budgets and how consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products and services.

The global growth of social media has been extraordinary. As of 2023, there were over 4.9 billion active social media users worldwide, representing more than 60 percent of the global population, a figure that continues to grow at a remarkable rate as internet connectivity expands across both developed and developing regions of the world (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Facebook remains the largest social media platform globally with over 3 billion monthly active users, followed by YouTube with 2.7 billion users, Instagram with over 2 billion users, and TikTok which surpassed 1 billion active users within just a few years of its launch, making it one of the fastest growing social media platforms in history (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). Global spending on social media advertising surpassed 200 billion United States dollars in 2023 and is projected to exceed 300 billion dollars by 2026, reflecting the growing confidence of businesses in the ability of social media to deliver measurable marketing results. The average internet user now spends approximately two and a half hours per day on social media platforms, providing businesses with an unprecedented window of opportunity to reach and engage their target audiences with marketing messages. This extraordinary level of engagement has made social media an important marketing channel for businesses seeking to reach younger demographics, particularly university students who are among the heaviest users of these platforms globally.

In Uganda, the growth of social media has mirrored global trends, at a pace shaped by the unique technological and socioeconomic structure of the country. The Uganda

Communications Commission has reported a steady and significant increase in internet penetration over the past decade, driven largely by the affordability of smartphones and the expansion of mobile data networks across the country. By 2023, Uganda had over 20 million internet users, with social media platforms accounting for a large share of internet traffic in the country. Tiktok remains the most widely used social media platform in Uganda with millions of active users, followed by WhatsApp, which has become deeply embedded in the daily communication habits of Ugandans across all demographics{Hajji, 2014 }. Instagram and TikTok have gained particularly strong traction among young Ugandans, with university students representing one of the most active and engaged user groups on these platforms. Businesses in Uganda, ranging from small informal enterprises to large established brands, have recognized the commercial potential of this growing social media landscape and are increasingly investing in social media marketing strategies to reach the youth market.

Makerere University, as Uganda's oldest and most prestigious institution of higher learning, hosts a large and diverse student population. These students, many of whom are between the ages of 18 and 25, represent a digitally active demographic that spends a significant portion of their daily lives on social media platforms. As young consumers who are increasingly making independent purchasing decisions for the first time, Makerere University students are particularly exposed to social media marketing messages from businesses seeking to capture the youth market (Kotler, Keller et al. 2022). Their unique position as both active social media users and emerging consumers makes them an important and relevant population for studying the influence of social media marketing on purchase decisions.

Targeted advertising is one of the most powerful and widely used tools in the social media marketing. Unlike traditional broadcast advertising, which delivers the same message to a mass audience regardless of their individual characteristics or interests, targeted advertising on social media platforms uses sophisticated algorithms and data analytics to deliver highly personalized promotional content to specific consumer segments based on their age, gender, location, interests, online behaviour, and purchasing history (Shareef et al., 2019). This precision targeting capability makes social media advertising significantly more efficient and cost effective than traditional advertising, as it ensures that marketing messages reach the consumers who are most likely to be interested in the product or service being promoted. For university students who spend considerable time on social media platforms, exposure to targeted advertisements is frequent and often remarkably relevant to their specific interests and

needs, making targeted advertising a particularly potent tool for influencing their purchase decisions.

Influencer marketing has emerged as one of the most transformative and rapidly growing dimensions of social media marketing, fundamentally changing the relationship between brands, consumers, and the media through which marketing messages are communicated. Social media influencers are individuals who have built significant and highly engaged followings on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Twitter, and who leverage their reach and credibility to promote products and services to their audiences (Lou & Yuan, 2019). The influencer marketing industry has grown from a niche marketing tactic into a multi-billion dollar global industry, with brands across virtually every product category partnering with influencers to reach their target audiences in a more authentic and engaging way than conventional advertising allows. In Uganda, the influencer marketing ecosystem has developed rapidly, with a growing community of local content creators with significant followings on social media platforms and partnering with both local and international brands to promote their products to Ugandan consumers.

User generated content refers to any form of content including product reviews, ratings, testimonials, photographs, videos, and social media posts that is created and shared by consumers themselves rather than by brands or professional marketers (Cheung and Thadani 2012). The rise of user generated content as a marketing force reflects a fundamental shift in the balance of power between brands and consumers, as the widespread adoption of social media has given ordinary consumers an unprecedented ability to share their experiences with products and services with large audiences. Research has consistently shown that consumers trust user generated content significantly more than brand generated content, because it is perceived as independent, unbiased, and reflective of genuine consumer experiences rather than commercial interests. For university students who frequently consult social media before making purchase decisions, user generated content in the form of peer reviews, unboxing videos, product recommendations, and social media posts about consumer experiences represents one of the most influential sources of product information available.

The impact of social media marketing on purchase decisions has been widely documented in marketing literature. (Kotler, Keller et al. 2022) describe the consumer decision making process as involving need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, the actual purchase decision, and post purchase behavior. Social media has become deeply embedded in this process, particularly during the information search and evaluation stages where consumers

increasingly turn to social media platforms for product information, reviews, and recommendations. (Hajji 2014) found that social media interactions significantly affect all stages of the consumer decision making process, making it a powerful tool for influencing purchase decisions. At Makerere University, where students at the School of Statistics and Planning are among the most analytically minded and digitally active students in Uganda, understanding the extent to which targeted advertising, influencer marketing, and user generated content drive their purchase decisions is of significant academic and practical importance, yet this relationship remains underexplored in the local context. This study therefore seeks to fill this gap by empirically examining the influence of these three dimensions of social media marketing on purchase decisions among undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning at Makerere University.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Globally, social media has become a dominant communication channel with businesses using it increasingly as a marketing tool to influence consumer behaviour. Despite this growth, much of the existing research on social media marketing and purchase decisions has been conducted in developing countries leaving a gap in knowledge within African the Ugandan context. Ugandan businesses are increasingly investing in social media marketing to reach a wider population including students yet it isn't clear how much these efforts generate sales. Makerere University students are among the most active social media users in Uganda which makes them a significant target market for businesses but their purchasing behaviour in response to social media marketing strategies targeting this demography group is unclear. This study seeks to examine quantitatively the influence of social media marketing on purchase decisions among undergraduate students at the school of statistics and planning, Makerere university.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

1.3.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To examine the influence of social media marketing on purchase decisions among undergraduate students at School of Statistics and planning, Makerere University.

1.3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- i. To assess the extent to which social media advertising influences purchase decisions among undergraduate students at School of Statistics and planning, Makerere University.
- ii. To determine the effect of social media influencers on purchase decisions among undergraduate students at School of statistics and planning, Makerere University.
- iii. To examine the role of user-generated content on purchase decisions among undergraduate students at School of Statistics and planning, Makerere University.

1.4 SCOPE

This study is limited to undergraduate students at School of statistics and planning at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. The subject scope is confined to examining the influence of social media marketing, specifically social media advertising, social media influencers, and user-generated content, on purchase decisions. The study will be conducted within Makerere University's main campus at the School of Statistics and planning. Data will be collected during the academic year 2025/2026. The findings of this study may not apply BEYOND THE SELECTED POPULATION DUE TO THE NATURE OF THE STUDY SETTING.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE

This study will be significant to several stakeholders. First, it will benefit businesses and marketers by providing evidence on how social media marketing influences the purchase decisions of university students which will enable them to design more effective and targeted marketing strategies. Second, the study will contribute to academic knowledge by adding to the growing body of literature on social media marketing and consumer behaviour in the Ugandan and African context, filling the existing gap in local research. Finally, the study will serve as a reference point for future researchers who wish to explore related topics in digital marketing and consumer behaviour in developing economies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces a summary of the research and information that have been done so far on the effect of social media marketing on purchase decisions by undergraduate students at school of statistics and planning in Makerere University.

2.2 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social media marketing has been studied extensively, with scholars across the globe examining its various dimensions and their effects.

(Diventy, Rahadhini et al. 2020) define social media as a group of internet-based applications built on ideological and technological foundations of the web that allow the creation and exchange of content, arguing that these platforms have fundamentally disrupted traditional marketing by enabling direct, real-time engagement. As social media platforms have grown in reach, businesses have increasingly adopted targeted advertising, influencer marketing and user generated content as their primary tools for access to consumers.

2.3 TARGETED ADVERTISING

Targeted advertising refers to the delivery of personalized promotional content to specific consumer segments based on demographic characteristics, interests and location. (Alalwan, Rana et al. 2017) conducted a study examining the impact of social media advertising features on consumer purchase intention and found that perceived informativeness, entertainment value and personalization are strong influences of social media purchases. (Cheung 2012) established that social media marketing activities including targeted advertising positively influences consumer purchase decisions particularly among young consumers who are high engaged with digital platforms and spend considerable time interacting with content. (Kim and Ko 2012) established that social media marketing activities including targeted advertising positively and significantly influence consumer purchase intention, particularly among young consumers who are highly engaged with digital platforms and spend considerable time interacting with social media content. Furthermore, the algorithm precision with which targeted advertisements are delivered ensures that students are exposed to products and services that are highly relevant to their interests and needs increasing the conversion rates.

2.4 INFLUENCER MARKETING

Influencer marketing has become one of the most rapidly growing and impactful dimensions of social media marketing, fundamentally changing the way businesses communicate with young customers. (Freberg 2021) describe social media influencers as a new type of independent third-party endorser who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets and other social media content, noting their perceived authenticity, expertise, relatability make them significantly more persuasive than traditional celebrities or brand advertisements. (Djafarova and Trofimenko 2019) conducted a study specifically examining the influence of Instagram influencers on the purchase decisions of young consumers and found out followers' trust influencer recommendations to the same degree that they trust advice from close friends, making influencer marketing a strong tool for driving purchase decisions.

2.5 USER GENERATED CONTENT

User Generated content has equally been recognized in the literature as a powerful driver of consumer purchase decisions, owing primarily to its credibility and authenticity.

(Christodoulides, Jevons et al. 2011) describe user generated content as any form of media content that is publicly available and created by end users rather than professionals. For university students who frequently consult peer reviews and social media recommendations before committing to a purchase, user generated content represents one of the most trusted and influential sources of product information available.

(Cheung 2012) demonstrated the electronic word of mouth and encompasses user generated content on social media platforms, has a strong, direct and statistically significant effect on consumer purchase decisions, with positive peer reviews and recommendations increases the likelihood that a consumer will proceed with a purchase.

The influence of these three dimensions of social media marketing on purchase decisions must be understood within the broad context of consumer decision making process as a five-stage model involving need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, the purchase decisions, post purchase behaviour. Marketing stimuli play a critical role at each stage of this process. (Cheung 2012) found that electronic word of mouth and user generated content are influential during the information search and evaluation stages, where consumers are actively seeking guidance and validation before making a purchase decision. (Lou and Yuan 2019) further established that the credibility and value of social media marketing content, whether delivered through targeted advertisements, endorsements, peer generated reviews, is the primary determinant of its ability to influence consumer trust and purchase

decisions. While the existing literature provides substantial evidence of the influence of social media marketing on purchase decisions globally, the majority of these studies have been conducted in developing economies, creating a significant gap in empirical knowledge regarding how these relationships operate among university students in Uganda. This study therefore seeks to quantitatively examine the effect of targeted advertising, influencer marketing, user generated content on purchase decisions among undergraduate students at Makerere University.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures that will be used to conduct this study. It describes the research design, variables, data source, statistical analysis techniques and analysis plan that will guide the process of data collection and analysis. The primary aim of this chapter is to provide a clear and systematic framework that will enable the study to answer its research questions and achieve its stated objectives. This study adopts a quantitative research approach which is appropriate for examining the influence of targeted advertising, influencer marketing and user generated content on purchase decisions among undergraduate students at Makerere University.

3.2 VARIABLES

This study involves two types of variables namely the independent variables and dependent variable. The independent variables are the three dimensions of social media marketing that influence purchase decisions.

The independent variables include targeted advertising which is the delivery of personalized promotional content to specific customer segments based on their demographics, interests and online behaviour. The second variable is influencer marketing which is the use of social media personalities to promote products and services to their audiences. The third independent variable is user generated content which refers to any content created and shared by customers themselves including reviews, ratings, testimonials and social media posts about their experiences.

The dependent variable is purchase decisions, which refers to the process by which undergraduate students at Makerere University decide to buy a product or service as a result of their exposure to social media marketing.

The relationship between these variables will be examined to determine the extent to which each independent variable influences the dependent variable.

3.3 DATA SOURCES

The data for this study will be collected from primary sources. Primary data will be gathered from undergraduate students at Makerere University through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire will be divided into five sections. Section A will capture demographic information like age, gender and social media usage patterns. Section B will contain items measuring targeted advertising. Section C will contain items measuring influencer marketing. Section D will contain items measuring user generated content. Section E will contain items measuring purchase decisions. All items in sections B through E will be measured using a

likert scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree). The questionnaire will be administered digitally through Google forms to maximize accessibility and response rates among the student population.

A stratified random sampling technique will be used to select respondents from the school of Statistics and planning.

3.4 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The data collected will be analyzed using SPSS. Content validity will be established by submitting the questionnaire to research supervisor for reviewing before data collection begins.

Descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations will be computed to summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and the responses to each questionnaire item. Pearson's correlation analysis will be used to examine the nature and strength of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Multinomial logistic regression analysis will be conducted to determine the relative contribution of each independent variable namely targeted advertising, influencer marketing, user generated content to the prediction of purchase decisions among the undergraduate students at Makerere University. Statistical significance will be determined at a P value of 0.05 or less.

3.5 ANALYSIS PLAN

The analysis of data will follow a systematic and sequential plan. In the first step, the collected questionnaires will be checked for completeness and accuracy before being coded into SPSS for analysis. In the second step, descriptive statistics will be run to provide a profile of the respondents and summarize their responses to each section of the questionnaire. In the third step, chi square analysis will be used to establish whether statistically significant relationships exist between targeted advertising, influencer marketing, user generated content and purchase decisions. In the fourth step, multiple regression analysis will be performed to determine the extent to which the three independent variables collectively and individually predict purchase decisions and to identify which variable has the strongest influence on purchase decisions among the respondents. In the final step, results will be interpreted and discussed in relation to the existing literature and the research objectives of the study. All findings will be presented in tables accompanied by written interpretations to facilitate understanding.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter presents the findings of the study on the influence of targeted advertising, influencer marketing and user generated content on purchase decisions among the undergraduate students at Makerere University School of statistics and Planning. The results presented are in the following order: response rate, demographic characteristics of respondents, reliability analysis, chi square analysis and multi nominal logistic regression analysis.

4.2 RESPONSE RATE

A total of 251 responses were expected from undergraduate students. Out of these, 168 responses were collected and 143 responses were filled fully and used for analysis representing a response rate of 56.7% which was adequate for survey research.

4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

4.3.1 AGE OF RESPONDENTS

AGE					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-22	28	19.6	19.6	19.6
	22-25	102	71.3	71.3	90.9
	Above 25	13	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

Table 1: Age of respondents

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents (71.3%) were between 22 and 25 years, 19.8% were between 18 and 22 years and 9.1% were above 25 years. This indicates that the study was predominantly composed of young adults which is consistent with the undergraduate student population. This demographic is also among the most active social media users making them a relevant population for this study.

4.3.2 GENDER OF RESPONDENTS

The results show that 65.7% were male and 34.3% were female. This gender disparity in the sample may reflect the gender distribution within the School of Statistics and planning.

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	94	65.7	65.7	65.7
	Female	49	34.3	34.3	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Gender

4.3.3 HOURS SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Hours spent on social media

Hours spent on social media					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	More than 4	50	35.0	35.0	35.0
	3-4 hours	48	33.6	33.6	68.5
	1-2 hours	36	25.2	25.2	93.7
	Less than 1 hour	9	6.3	6.3	100.0
	Total	143	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Hours spent on social media

These findings suggest that while the majority of students use social media regularly, most don't spend excessive amounts of time on these platforms which may partly explain the limited influence of social media marketing on their purchase decisions as revealed by the inferential analysis.

4.4 CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS

Chi Square analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between each independent variable and purchase decisions among undergraduate students.

4.4.1 TARGETED ADVERTISING AND PURCHASE DECISIONS

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Sig.(2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	62.265 ^a	48	0.081
Likelihood Ratio	54.980	48	0.227
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.677	1	0.195

Table 4: Targeted advertising

The Pearson value of 62.265 with 48 degrees of freedom and a significance of 0.081. Since the P value is greater than the significance level, there is no statistically significant relationship between targeted advertising and purchase decisions among the undergraduate students. This contradicts the findings of Alalwan(2018) who established that targeted advertising significantly predicts consumer purchase intentions. The finding though can be explained by the analytical nature of statistics students who may be more critical and less affected by advertising messages. It could also be attributed to the fact that students do not have the kind of money to spend recklessly.

4.4.2 INFLUENCER MARKETING AND PURCHASE DECISIONS

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Sig (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	63.303 ^a	48	.068
Likelihood Ratio	63.499	48	.066
Linear-by-Linear Association	.486	1	.486
N of Valid Cases	143		

Table 5: INFLUENCER MARKETING

The Chi Square test for influencer marketing and purchase decisions has a Pearson Chi Square value of 63.303 with 48 degrees of freedom. Since the p value exceeds the significance threshold, there is no statistically significant relationship between influencer marketing and purchase decisions among the respondents. This is contrary to the conclusions of Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) who found that social media influencers significantly affect the purchase decisions of young consumers. The lack of significance in this study suggests that students in this study rely more on empirical evidence and analytical reasoning than on influencer endorsements when making purchase decisions.

4.4.3 USER GENERATED CONTENT AND PURCHASE DECISIONS

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Sig(2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.485 ^a	42	.711
Likelihood Ratio	37.248	42	.679
Linear-by-Linear Association	.708	1	.400
N of Valid Cases	143		

Table 6 : User generated content and purchase decisions

The chi square analysis for user generated content and purchase decisions produced a Pearson Chi square value of 36.485 with 42 degrees of freedom. The P value is greater than 0.05 which means that there is no statistically significant relationship between user generated content and purchase decisions among respondents. This finding contradicts Jalilvand and Samiei (2012) who demonstrated that electronic word of mouth has a strong direct effect on consumer purchase decisions. The absence of a significant relationship in this study may reflect the tendency of statistics students to evaluate the reliability of user generated content before purchasing. It could also reflect the unavailability of money for university students to spend on influenced purchase decisions.

4.5 MULTINOMIAL LOGISTIC REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Multinomial logistic regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which targeted advertising, user generated content and influencer marketing predict purchase decisions among undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and planning.

4.5.1 LIKELIHOOD RATIO TESTS

The Likelihood Ratio Tests table revealed that none of the three independent variables were statistically significant predictors of purchase decisions at the 0.05 significance level. Targeted advertising recorded a chi square value of 9.038 with a significance of 0.171, influencer marketing recorded a chi square value of 4.243 with a significance of 0.644, and user generated content recorded a chi square value of 2.419 with a significance of 0.877.

Effect	Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Intercept	8.659	6	0.194
Targeted Advertising (TAA)	9.038	6	0.171
Influencer Marketing (IMA)	4.243	6	0.644
User Generated Content (UGCA)	2.419	6	0.877

Table 7: Likelihood tests

4.5.2 PARAMETER ESTIMATES

Despite the overall model not being significant, the parameter estimates revealed one notable finding. Targeted advertising was found to be a significant predictor of purchase decisions at category 1.00 of the dependent variable, with a B coefficient of 1.611, a Wald statistic of 4.607, and a significance value of 0.032. The Exp(B) value of 5.008 indicates that for every unit increase in targeted advertising, the odds of a student falling into purchase decision category 1.00 increase by approximately five times compared to the reference category.

PDA	Effect	B	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
1.00	TAA	1.611	4.607	0.032*	5.008
1.00	IMA	0.233	0.126	0.723	1.262
1.00	UGCA	-0.174	0.063	0.802	0.840
1.50	TAA	0.705	0.983	0.321	2.023
1.50	IMA	0.232	0.138	0.710	1.262
1.50	UGCA	0.217	0.110	0.740	1.242

Table 8: PARAMETER ESTIMATES

4.6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study indicate that social media marketing, measured through targeted advertising, influencer marketing, and user generated content, does not significantly influence purchase decisions among undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning at

Makerere University. These findings oppose existing literature which consistently documents a significant positive relationship between social media marketing and consumer purchase decisions (Alalwan, 2018; Lou & Yuan, 2019; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). The findings are not however without merit and offer several important insights. The predominantly analytical and quantitatively oriented nature of students in the School of Statistics and Planning may make them more resistant to social media marketing influences compared to students in other disciplines. The only significant finding, that targeted advertising significantly predicts one specific category of purchase decisions, is consistent with Alalwan (2018) who argued that personalized and relevant advertising content can influence consumer behaviour even among more analytically minded consumers.

CHAPTER FIVE:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study, recommendations based on those conclusions, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research. The study sought to examine the influence of targeted advertising, influencer marketing, and user generated content on purchase decisions among undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning at Makerere University.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study was conducted among 143 undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning at Makerere University. The majority of respondents were male (65.7%), between the ages of 22 and 25 years (71.3%), and spent between less than one hour and two hours on social media daily (68.6%). The reliability analysis revealed a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.50, which fell below the acceptable threshold of 0.7, and this is acknowledged as a limitation of the study.

Regarding the first objective, the chi square analysis revealed that targeted advertising does not have a statistically significant relationship with purchase decisions among undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning, with a p value of 0.081. However the multinomial logistic regression parameter estimates revealed that targeted advertising was a significant predictor of one specific category of purchase decisions with a p value of 0.032 and an Exp(B) value of 5.008.

The second objective, the chi square analysis showed that influencer marketing does not have a statistically significant relationship with purchase decisions among the respondents, recording a p value of 0.068. The multinomial logistic regression similarly confirmed that influencer marketing was not a significant predictor of purchase decisions across any category of the dependent variable.

The third objective, the chi square analysis demonstrated that user generated content does not have a statistically significant relationship with purchase decisions among undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning, recording a p value of 0.711. The multinomial logistic regression analysis confirmed this finding.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn. First, targeted advertising on social media does not significantly influence the purchase decisions of undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning at Makerere University at the overall level. However targeted advertising has a significant influence on a specific category of purchase decisions, suggesting that its impact is selective rather than universal among this population. Second, influencer marketing on social media does not significantly influence the purchase decisions of undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning at Makerere University, contradicting the bulk of existing literature. Third, user generated content on social media does not significantly influence the purchase decisions of undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning at Makerere University. Overall it can be concluded that social media marketing in general does not significantly influence purchase decisions among undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning at Makerere University.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO BUSINESSES AND MARKETERS

Businesses and marketers targeting university students, particularly those in analytical disciplines such as statistics, should reconsider their reliance on conventional social media marketing strategies such as influencer endorsements and user generated content. Instead they should focus on developing more evidence based and informative marketing content that appeals to the analytical and critical thinking nature of this demographic. Targeted advertising, which was found to have some selective influence on purchase decisions, should be refined to deliver highly relevant and personalized content that addresses the specific needs and interests of students in quantitative disciplines.

5.4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

Makerere University should consider adding digital literacy and consumer awareness programs into its curriculum, particularly for students in the School of Statistics and Planning. Such programs would help students make more informed and conscious purchasing decisions by understanding how social media marketing strategies are designed to influence consumer behaviour.

5.4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO FUTURE RESEARCHERS

Future researchers should consider replicating this study across other schools and colleges at Makerere University and other universities in Uganda. Additionally future researchers should

consider using a 7 point Likert scale instead of a 5 point likert scale to improve the reliability of the research instrument. Researchers should also consider incorporating moderating variables such as academic discipline, income level, and social media usage frequency into their models.

5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was subject to several limitations. First the study was limited to undergraduate students at the School of Statistics and Planning at Makerere University, which means the findings cannot be generalized to students in other schools or universities. Second the low response rate of 56.7% may have affected the representativeness of the sample. Third the Cronbach's Alpha indicates low reliability of the research instrument. Fourth the use of a 5 point likert scale may have limited the ability of the instrument to capture the degree of respondents' agreement with each statement. Fifth the study relied entirely on self reported data, which is subject to response bias. There were reports from respondents of answering the questions without enough thought.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the limitations and findings of this study, the following areas are suggested for further research.

Future studies should extend this research to other schools and colleges at Makerere University and other universities in Uganda.

Future researchers should explore the moderating role of academic discipline on the relationship between social media marketing and purchase decisions.

Future studies should investigate the specific types of products and services that are most susceptible to social media marketing influence among university students in Uganda.

Researchers should consider conducting qualitative studies to explore the underlying reasons why social media marketing does not significantly influence purchase decisions among students in analytically oriented disciplines.

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