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MARKETING

INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS' ENGAGEMENT CONSISTENCY ON CONSUMER PURCHASING DECISIONS IN NAIROBI, KENYA'S FASHION INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the Study: This study examined the relationship between social media influencers' engagement consistency and fashion consumers' purchasing decisions in Nairobi.

Statement of the Problem: Despite the growth of influencer marketing in Kenya, there is limited empirical evidence linking consistent influencer engagement to purchasing decisions.

Methodology: A descriptive cross-sectional design was used, with 280 of 1,026 shoppers sampled proportionately across 18 fashion outlets on Tom Mboya Street using Cochran's formula. Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire.

Findings: Respondents rated engagement consistency favourably, while purchasing decisions averaged below the scale midpoint ($M = 2.11$, $SD = 0.870$). Engagement consistency was positively correlated with purchasing decisions ($r = .556$, $p < .001$). The regression model explained 30.9% of the variance ($\beta = .556$, $p < .001$).

Conclusion: Engagement consistency was positively associated with purchasing decisions among the sampled consumers.

Recommendation: Fashion brands should consider influencer responsiveness and monitor reply rates alongside posting frequency.

Keywords: *Engagement consistency, consumer purchasing decisions, social influence theory, social media influencers, fashion industry, Kenya.*

INTRODUCTION

The growth of digital technologies has transformed contemporary marketing by changing how organisations communicate with consumers and how consumers access information about products and brands. Social media has created interactive environments where consumers can receive, share and respond to marketing content while maintaining continuous connections with businesses and other users. Vrontis *et al*. (2021) identify social media influencer marketing as an expanding component of contemporary digital marketing. Leung *et al*. (2022) further explain that influencer marketing enables firms to use online influencers to engage followers and promote their offerings. Social media influencers have become increasingly relevant to industries that depend on visual communication, consumer trends and product recommendations. The fashion clothing industry is particularly suited to influencer marketing because clothing products can be presented through images, videos and lifestyle-oriented content. George *et al*. (2025) identify fashion as an important context for examining social media influencer marketing and consumer purchase intention. Kim and Kim (2021) further demonstrate that influencer characteristics and relationships with followers can shape consumer responses to influencer marketing.

An important dimension of influencer marketing is engagement, which involves communication and interaction between influencers and their followers. Engagement consistency concerns the regularity with which influencers share content and maintain interaction through activities such as responding to comments and communicating with followers. Leung *et al*. (2022) emphasise the importance of influencer engagement in determining marketing effectiveness. Sokolova and Kefi (2020) also show that relationships between influencers and followers can influence consumers' responses to influencer communication. Consumer purchasing decisions are therefore relevant outcomes for evaluating influencer marketing effectiveness. Social media influencers can provide information and recommendations that consumers may consider when evaluating fashion products and brands. George *et al*. (2025) identify purchase intention as a central outcome in fashion influencer marketing. Kim and Kim (2021) similarly link influencer-related factors with consumer responses and purchase intention.

In Kenya, the expanding use of social media provides fashion businesses with opportunities to communicate products through digital platforms and influencers. Nairobi Central Business District presents a relevant commercial setting where consumers encounter fashion products

through physical retail outlets while also accessing digital recommendations. Muturi (2024), in a desk review of existing studies and reports, concluded that social media shapes fashion trends and consumer behaviour in Kenya. Vrontis *et al*. (2021) highlight continuing gaps in influencer marketing research across contexts. Leung *et al*. (2022) similarly call for greater understanding of how influencer activities affect consumer outcomes. This study therefore examines the influence of social media influencers' engagement consistency on consumer purchasing decisions in Kenya's fashion clothing industry, focusing on Nairobi Central Business District.

Statement of the Problem

Mutahi (2022) reported that Kenya had approximately 11 million social media users in 2021, with 84.8% of internet users aged 16–64 years using social media to research brands, underscoring the scale at which influencer-mediated communication now reaches Kenyan consumers. In Kenya, social media use continues to expand, with 18.4 million social media user identities recorded in October 2025, representing 31.8% of the population (DataReportal, 2026). Despite this growth, the Kenyan studies reviewed here do not isolate the specific contribution of engagement consistency to purchasing decisions. Mochoge (2020) reported a positive influence of digital marketing strategies on consumer purchase decisions among online stores in Nairobi City County but did not model engagement consistency's direct statistical relationship with purchase behaviour as a standalone predictor. Solomon et al. (2024) examined the factors that influence social media adoption among SMEs in developing countries but did not study influencer engagement or fashion clothing consumers. Khamis et al. (2017) discussed self-branding and micro-celebrity among social media influencers in a largely conceptual way and did not test engagement against purchasing in a Kenyan fashion retail setting. Within the sources reviewed, this suggests an empirical gap regarding the specific, isolated influence of social media influencers' engagement consistency on consumer purchasing decisions within Kenya's fashion clothing industry. This study addressed this gap by examining the influence of social media influencers' engagement consistency on consumer purchasing decisions among fashion consumers in Nairobi CBD. The study was based on the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant influence of social media influencers' engagement consistency on consumer purchasing decisions in Kenya's fashion clothing industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework: Social Influence Theory

Social Influence Theory, articulated by Kelman (1958), explains how individuals' attitudes and behaviours are shaped by the presence and actions of others through three mechanisms: compliance, identification, and internalization. Compliance occurs when individuals conform to gain reward or avoid sanction; identification involves adopting behaviours to maintain a relationship with an admired source; internalization, the deepest form of influence, occurs when the influenced behaviour becomes integrated into the individual's own value system. Applied to influencer marketing, sustained and responsive engagement may allow a follower to move from passive compliance (buying a trending item to fit in) toward identification and eventually internalization of an influencer's fashion recommendations (Kelman, 1958). The theory is well suited to this study because engagement consistency offers a possible mechanism through which repeated contact accumulates into deeper forms of influence over time. In this study, the posting regularity item may relate to compliance, and the trust and credibility items may relate to identification, while no item measures internalisation. This is complemented by Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which holds that individuals learn behaviours by observing credible, relatable models. Consistent engagement increases the frequency and visibility of an influencer's modelled behaviour, increasing the likelihood that followers attend to, retain, and eventually reproduce that behaviour in their own purchasing choices.

Engagement Consistency in Fashion Influencer Marketing

Engagement consistency refers to the regularity and responsiveness with which an influencer interacts with followers through frequent posting, replying to comments, and sustained presence as opposed to sporadic or one-off contact (Khamis *et al*., 2017). Within fashion marketing specifically, this construct operates on two related dimensions: the frequency of content output, and the quality of two-way interaction such as responding to comments and questions. Mochoge (2020) reported a positive influence of digital marketing strategies on consumer purchase decisions among online stores in Nairobi City County, although the study did not focus on influencer engagement.

Empirical Literature

Khamis, Ang, and Welling (2017) discussed self-branding and micro-celebrity, describing how social media influencers present themselves as brands and maintain relationships with their audiences. The article was largely conceptual and did not test any relationship statistically within a specific national or product context, a gap the present study addresses by testing engagement consistency directly against purchasing decisions among Nairobi fashion consumers. Mochoge (2020) examined digital marketing strategies and the purchase decisions of consumers of online stores in Nairobi City County and reported a positive influence on those decisions. The study did not isolate influencer engagement. While informative on the trust-building role of engagement, the study did not isolate engagement consistency as a distinct predictor separate from other influencer attributes such as credibility.

Ndung'u (2022) studied digital marketing strategies (search engine marketing, digital advertising, viral marketing and social media marketing) and the performance of the top 100 medium-sized companies in Nairobi City County, using questionnaires from a census of 100 companies, and found a significant influence on company performance. The study did not examine influencer engagement consistency or consumer purchasing decisions, so it offers only broad background on digital marketing. Solomon et al. (2024) examined the factors that influence social media adoption among SMEs in developing countries, including knowledge and learning by doing. The study focused on how SMEs adopt social media and not on influencer engagement or fashion consumers, so the fashion clothing context in Nairobi CBD remains untested, a gap this study addresses.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework guiding this study positions social media influencers' engagement consistency as the independent variable and consumer purchasing decisions as the dependent variable. Engagement consistency was operationalised through posting regularity, responsiveness to followers' comments, and the trust generated by sustained interaction. Consumer purchasing decisions were operationalised through purchase behaviour, brand preference, and willingness to spend based on influencer recommendations.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE **Engagement Consistency**	*Association* →	DEPENDENT VARIABLE **Consumer Purchasing Decisions**
• Posting regularity • Responsiveness to comments • Trust through regular interaction • Consistency as a credibility signal • Posting frequency and willingness to purchase		• Purchases based on recommendations • Buying from frequently promoted brands • Endorsement and brand preference • Following influencers for fashion advice • Spending more on trusted recommendations

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2026)

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design, appropriate for capturing consumer perceptions of influencer engagement and purchasing behaviour at a single point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The target population consisted of 1,026 consumers who shop for fashion clothing along Tom Mboya Street in Nairobi CBD, drawn from eighteen fashion outlets. The sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) formula, $n_0 = z^2p(1 - p)/e^2$, with z = 1.96 (95% confidence level), an assumed proportion p = .50 and a margin of error e = .05. This gave $n_0 = (1.96^2 \times .50 \times .50)/.05^2 = 384.16$, or about 384. Because the population was finite (N = 1,026), the correction $n = n_0/[1 + (n_0 - 1)/N]$ was applied, giving n = 384.16/[1 + (383.16/1,026)] = 279.7, which was rounded up to 280 respondents. The 280 respondents were allocated proportionately across the eighteen outlets and reached as shoppers at those outlets, so the procedure is described as proportionate outlet-based sampling of consumers and not as simple random sampling.

Primary data was collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The engagement consistency construct was measured using five items covering posting regularity, responsiveness to comments, trust built through regular interaction, consistency as a credibility

signal, and the effect of posting frequency on purchase willingness. Consumer purchasing decisions were measured using five items covering actual purchase behaviour, brand preference, endorsement effects, and spending on trusted influencer recommendations. A pilot test involving 10% (28) of the target sample was conducted in Nakuru County prior to the main study, and produced a Cronbach's alpha of .838, which is above the .70 level commonly treated as acceptable (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Boateng et al. (2018) was used as general guidance on scale development.

Data was analysed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) summarised respondent perceptions, while Pearson correlation and simple linear regression were used to test the relationship between engagement consistency and consumer purchasing decisions. The regression model was specified as: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$, where Y = Consumer Purchasing Decisions, X = Engagement Consistency, β_0 = constant, β_1 = regression coefficient for engagement consistency, and ε = error term. A multicollinearity test was not needed because the model has a single predictor.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

All 280 questionnaires administered were properly completed and returned, yielding a response rate of 100%. Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) consider a response rate of 70% and above very good. Because all questionnaires administered were returned, non-response is not a concern within the sample, although a complete return does not by itself show that the sample represents all consumers in the area.

Descriptive Statistics for Engagement Consistency

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Engagement Consistency (N = 280)

Statement	Mean	SD	% Agree/Strongly Agree
I am more likely to purchase from influencers who post regularly.	3.79	0.947	71.7%
Influencers who respond to followers' comments influence my purchase decisions.	3.89	0.964	78.2%
Regular interaction with an influencer's content builds my trust in their recommendations.	3.94	0.875	77.5%
An influencer's consistency in content sharing increases their credibility.	4.00	0.806	81.4%
The frequency of influencer posts affects my willingness to purchase fashion products.	3.65	0.921	64.7%
Overall Mean and Standard Deviation	**3.85**	**0.903**	—

The results in Table 1 indicate that engagement consistency was generally perceived positively by the respondents, as reflected by the overall mean of 3.85 (SD = 0.903). All the individual statements recorded means above the neutral midpoint of 3.00, indicating that respondents generally agreed that consistent engagement by fashion influencers contributes to credibility, trust and purchasing decisions. The highest mean was recorded for consistency in content sharing and influencer credibility (M = 4.00, SD = 0.806), with 81.4% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This indicates that regular and consistent content was strongly associated with the perceived credibility of influencers. Regular interaction with influencer content building trust in recommendations followed (M = 3.94, SD = 0.875), with 77.5% agreement. This suggests that continued interaction with influencer content may strengthen consumers' confidence in the recommendations provided. The overall SD of 0.903 agrees with the SD of the respondent-level composite implied by the regression output (about 0.904).

Similarly, responsiveness to followers' comments recorded a relatively high mean of 3.89 (SD = 0.964), with 78.2% agreement. This suggests that direct interaction with followers was perceived as important in influencing purchase decisions. The finding further indicates that engagement is not limited to the frequency of posting but also involves how influencers interact

with their audiences. The statement concerning being more likely to purchase from influencers who post regularly recorded a mean of 3.79 (SD = 0.947), with 71.7% agreement. Although this represents substantial agreement, it was lower than the ratings for consistency, trust and responsiveness. The lowest mean was recorded for the frequency of influencer posts affecting willingness to purchase fashion products (M = 3.65, SD = 0.921), with 64.7% agreement. This suggests that posting frequently alone received lower agreement than consistent content, credibility and meaningful interaction.

The findings suggest that engagement consistency is an important aspect of influencer marketing among the respondents. The pattern of results suggests that respondents gave higher ratings to credibility and trust developed through consistent engagement than to posting frequency alone. This agrees in direction with Mochoge (2020), who reported a positive influence of digital marketing strategies on consumer purchase decisions, although that study did not measure engagement consistency. Thus, the overall mean of 3.85 (SD = 0.903) indicates a favourable perception of engagement consistency, with the credibility, trust and two-way interaction items rated higher than the posting frequency item.

Descriptive Statistics for Consumer Purchasing Decisions

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Consumer Purchasing Decisions

Statement	Mean	SD
I have purchased fashion items based on recommendations from influencers.	2.02	1.284
I am likely to purchase from brands frequently promoted by influencers.	2.22	1.273
An influencer's endorsement affects my brand preference.	2.00	1.063
I follow specific influencers for fashion advice before making a purchase.	2.21	1.241
I spend more on fashion products recommended by influencers I trust.	2.10	1.167
Overall Mean and Standard Deviation	**2.11**	**0.870**

The results in Table 2 show an overall mean of 2.11 (SD = 0.870) for consumer purchasing decisions, which is below the scale midpoint of 3.00. The highest mean was recorded for the likelihood of purchasing from brands frequently promoted by influencers (M = 2.22, SD =

1.273). This was closely followed by following specific influencers for fashion advice before making a purchase (M = 2.21, SD = 1.241).

Spending more on fashion products recommended by trusted influencers recorded a mean of 2.10 (SD = 1.167), while purchasing fashion items based on influencer recommendations recorded a mean of 2.02 (SD = 1.284). The lowest mean was recorded for the influence of influencer endorsements on brand preference (M = 2.00, SD = 1.063). The relatively high standard deviations across the statements indicate variation in respondents' purchasing responses, suggesting that influencers did not affect all consumers in the same way.

The overall mean of 2.11 (SD = 0.870) shows that respondents on average rated the purchasing decision items below the scale midpoint, whereas the engagement consistency items were rated above it (M = 3.85, SD = 0.903). The two constructs have different item content, so their levels are not compared as like with like. The result differs in tone from Mochoge (2020), who reported a positive influence of digital marketing strategies on consumer purchase decisions among online stores in Nairobi County, but that study covered digital marketing strategies broadly and not influencer engagement consistency in fashion clothing.

Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Between Engagement Consistency and Consumer Purchasing Decisions

	Engagement Consistency	**Consumer Purchasing Decisions**
Engagement Consistency — Pearson Correlation	1	.556**
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
N	280	280

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

The results in Table 3 show a positive and statistically significant relationship between engagement consistency and consumer purchasing decisions (r = .556, p < .001, N = 280). The correlation coefficient indicates a moderately strong positive association, implying that consumers who perceive influencers as more consistently and responsively engaged tend to

report more favourable purchasing responses. Since the significance value is below the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis of no relationship between engagement consistency and consumer purchasing decisions is rejected.

Regression Analysis

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.556[a]	.309	.307	.724

a. Predictors: (Constant), Engagement Consistency

The model summary in Table 4 indicates a moderately strong positive relationship between engagement consistency and consumer purchasing decisions (R = .556). The R^2 value of .309 shows that engagement consistency alone explained 30.9% of the variance in consumer purchasing decisions, with the remaining 69.1% representing variance not explained by this model.

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)[a]

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	65.222	1	65.222	124.44	<.001[b]
Residual	145.710	278	0.524		
Total	210.932	279			

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchasing Decisions. b. Predictors: (Constant), Engagement Consistency

The ANOVA results in Table 5 confirm that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 278) = 124.44$, $p < .001$, indicating that engagement consistency significantly predicts consumer purchasing decisions under the model assumptions.

Table 6: Coefficients[a]

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.049	0.190		0.258	.797
Engagement Consistency	0.535	0.048	.556	11.155	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Purchasing Decisions

The coefficient results in Table 6 show that engagement consistency was positively and significantly associated with consumer purchasing decisions ($B = .535$, $\beta = .556$, $t = 11.155$, $p < .001$). The unstandardized coefficient indicates that a one-unit increase in engagement consistency is associated with a .535-unit increase in consumer purchasing decisions. The constant term was not statistically significant ($p = .797$), although the intercept at $X = 0$ is outside the stated 1–5 scale and has no direct substantive interpretation. The resulting regression equation is $Y = 0.049 + 0.535X$, where Y represents consumer purchasing decisions and X represents engagement consistency. The 95% confidence interval for B is 0.441 to 0.630, and for the constant it is −0.325 to 0.423.

Hypothesis Testing

Since the significance value ($p < .001$) is below the .05 threshold, the null hypothesis that social media influencers' engagement consistency has no statistically significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions in Kenya's fashion clothing industry is rejected. This provides evidence of a statistically significant, positive association between engagement consistency and consumer purchasing decisions among Nairobi CBD fashion consumers, consistent with the positive direction reported by Mochoge (2020). The relationship is moderate ($R^2 = .309$). The descriptive findings in Table 1 show higher item ratings for credibility, trust and responsiveness than for posting frequency, but no separate effect estimates were reported, so the study cannot say that the relationship is driven more by two-way interaction than by posting frequency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study findings, it was concluded that social media influencers' engagement consistency is significantly associated with consumer purchasing decisions among the sampled

fashion consumers in Nairobi CBD. This conclusion is informed by the significant positive relationship between engagement consistency and consumer purchasing decisions ($r = .556$; $p < .001$; $\beta = .556$). The descriptive item ratings were higher for credibility, trust and responsiveness than for posting frequency, but the study did not test whether responsiveness has a stronger effect than frequency. Social Influence Theory offers a possible interpretation, but the study did not measure compliance, identification or internalisation and cannot show that followers move from one to the other.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding that engagement consistency was significantly and positively associated with consumer purchasing decisions ($\beta = .556$, $p < .001$), the study proposes that: Fashion brands may wish to prioritise influencers who demonstrate sustained, responsive engagement, replying to comments and maintaining consistent interaction rather than selecting influencers primarily on posting frequency or follower count. Influencers should adopt a predictable posting rhythm while actively dedicating time to respond to follower comments and questions, since the responsiveness item ($M = 3.89$) received a higher rating than the posting frequency item ($M = 3.65$). The highest rating ($M = 4.00$) was for a credibility item and is not a direct measure of responsiveness. Brands should track engagement quality metrics, such as reply rates and comment interaction, alongside posting frequency when evaluating influencer partnerships, to better capture the relational dimension of engagement consistency that this study found to be associated with purchasing decisions. These are practical proposals that match the descriptive responses and are not shown to be superior drivers of sales. Future research should use longitudinal or behavioural data to validate the findings.

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